

Swiss Peace Initiative for Nagorno Karabakh holds congressional briefing in D.C.

In America's capital, members of Swiss parliament, hosted by CSI, present plan for a peace forum to negotiate Armenian Christians' safe return to their homeland

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, July 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "Does the U.S. believe that a favorable and lasting peace in the South Caucasus – a region of growing geopolitical and economic significance – can be built on the basis of ethno-religious cleansing?" Dr. John Eibner, the president of Christian Solidarity International, posed the question to a packed room in the Rayburn House Office Building on Tuesday.

"If the answer is no, then the U.S. should provide support for Switzerland's peace initiative."

Yesterday in Washington, D.C., a delegation from the [Swiss Peace Initiative](#) for Nagorno Karabakh held a congressional briefing at the U.S. Capitol. Two members of the Swiss parliament, Erich Vontobel and Lukas Reimann, as well as Dr. Eibner and Vartan Oskanian, the former foreign minister of Armenia, spoke about the Initiative and the opportunity it presents for the United States to help establish lasting peace in the South Caucasus, after 37 years of war.

A [recording](#) of the event is available to watch online.

In 2023, Azerbaijan blockaded Nagorno Karabakh (also known as Artsakh) for nine months before launching a military invasion of the region, leading to the forced exodus of its entire population – nearly 120,000 Armenian Christians. 30,000 more were forcibly displaced in the 2020 Karabakh War.



Swiss MP Erich Vontobel presents on the Swiss Peace Initiative for Nagorno Karabakh to a packed room in a Capitol Hill Briefing held in Washington on July 8, 2025.

In March of this year, the Swiss parliament passed a [motion](#) to hold an international peace forum between Azerbaijan and the representatives of the displaced Armenians, to negotiate a framework for their safe return.

Erich Vontobel, who introduced the motion in the Swiss parliament last year, spoke of meeting refugees from Nagorno Karabakh in Armenia. "They said to me, please do something so that we can return," he said. "One woman showed me a video of her house, now occupied by another family. That sight broke my heart. That's when I knew I must act."

Citing Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Vontobel pointed out "there is a real risk of renewed conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia." On a visit to southern Armenia, locals shared their fear with Vontobel that, after the fall of Nagorno Karabakh, Azerbaijan will attack their region next. "If we close our eyes" to what happened in Karabakh, he said, Azerbaijan will "see that they can do such things and there are no consequences."

Lukas Reimann, another member of the Swiss parliament, said that Azerbaijan's "state-sponsored starvation and military violence reminiscent of the Armenian Genocide" had "caused great distress in Switzerland." He pointed out that the Swiss Peace Initiative had received support from members of all 10 parties in the Swiss parliament – an unusually broad swath of support.

"We cannot accept and will not accept that these families cannot return to their home," he said. "We will help them to get back there."

Former foreign minister Vartan Oskanian, who currently chairs the Committee for the Defense of the Fundamental Rights of the People of Nagorno Karabakh, a body established by the Artsakh National Assembly in exile, pointed out that Nagorno Karabakh was "inhabited by Armenians for centuries, and in the past 30 years, Nagorno Karabakh Armenians had full self-rule and a democratic life on that territory."

Nevertheless, Oskanian said that Karabakh Armenians "have come to terms with the new realities on the ground" and are not seeking "to go back to the status quo ante. They simply want to go back home."

While Oskanian recognized that "the United States views Azerbaijan as a partner on many levels," he said that "these geopolitical considerations do not justify silence on the expulsion of 150,000 people from their homes. This sends the wrong message, and sets a very dangerous precedent."

With U.S. support, Oskanian said, the Swiss Peace Initiative could make return a reality.

"The Swiss Peace Initiative does not call for sanctions or intervention," Vontobel said. "It calls for

a table, a place for dialogue, where even the displaced have a seat.”

Vontobel noted that in the 2024 election campaign, “President Trump promised to end the ethnic cleansing of Christians” in Nagorno Karabakh. “He speaks to my heart. Our interests and values align. The Swiss Peace Initiative offers the U.S. a chance to support peace without taking on direct risk.”

“We in Switzerland can do it,” Vontobel concluded. “What we need now is broad international support – above all from the U.S. I therefore ask you to publicly endorse the Swiss Peace Initiative.”

The congressional briefing is part of a three-day visit by the delegation to policymakers in Washington. The briefing was co-organized with the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) and moderated by Mark Milosch, Congressional Staff Director for Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ). More information about the Swiss Peace Initiative is available at www.swisspeacekarabakh.com.

About CSI

Christian Solidarity International is an international human rights group campaigning for religious liberty and human dignity.

Contact: Joel Veldkamp | joel.veldkamp@csi-int.org

Joel Veldkamp

Christian Solidarity International

+41 76 258 15 74

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/829726248>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.