



Red Flag Alert for Genocide

Azerbaijan

UPDATE #3

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The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention is issuing another red flag alert for Azerbaijan in light of a recent video recording that surfaced on Telegram on October 2, 2022, in which Azeri soldiers execute at least six unarmed and bound Armenian prisoners of war (POW). The video has been verified by Armenia's Human Rights Defender, Kristinne Grigoryan. Her office determined that the video was recorded during the recent war of aggression by Azerbaijan against Armenia (specifically on the first day of the war, September 13) and was filmed on Armenian territory. While Azerbaijani officials dispute this verification, the video bears the characteristics of a number of similarly horrific videos and photos – all independently verified – that have been released by Azeris on Telegram since the start of the 2020 war over Nagorno-Karabakh.

In light of Azerbaijan's ongoing war crimes, terrorism, genocidal language, and genocidal aims towards Armenia and Armenians, **the Lemkin Institute strongly opposes all international pressure put on Armenia to cede territory, give up Artsakh, allow access routes through the Syunik province, and/or demilitarize its borders.** All global and regional powers that have been pressuring the Armenian state to "pursue peace" with neighbors that are threatening genocide must stop immediately. **Instead, the international community must provide support for Armenia to strengthen its military and its borders – including in Artsakh – in order to protect Armenian life, and must strongly condemn Azerbaijan's actions and genocidal rhetoric.**

We call for strict economic sanctions against the Azerbaijani state and its leadership, including a ban on all military aid and the supply of weapons. Countries, such as Azerbaijan's main arms trade partners Israel, Ukraine, Russia, and Turkey, should also be sanctioned if they continue to supply Azerbaijan with weapons.

The Lemkin Institute calls out, in particular, NATO, NATO members, and the European Union, whose grotesque support for the genocidal state of Azerbaijan under its genocidal president

Ilham Aliev as well as for the dictator Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey has contributed greatly to creating the impunity with which these two states now operate. This support is egregious in light of the moral grandstanding related to the Ukraine crisis. **If NATO and the EU fail to pressure Turkey and Azerbaijan to leave Armenian territory, return Armenian POWs, disclose information on disappeared persons, recognize the legitimacy of Armenian claims for self-determination in Artsakh, and engage in truly equal negotiations over land in Nagorno-Karabakh, then these powers will continue bear much of the responsibility for any atrocity crimes committed by Azerbaijan.** We remind these powers that complicity - aiding and abetting - can trigger responsibility under international criminal law.

The Lemkin Institute further warns the world about Turkish and Azerbaijani propaganda, which is well-funded by both states and which has had a deep and enduring impact on perceptions of Armenia, Armenians, and the South Caucasus conflict since the genocide of 1915. The entire world still lives in the presence of genocidal Armenophobia. It has worked its way into scholarship, journalism, and politics. Some of this influence has been bought outright with money and gifts, but much of it is the consequence of the saturation of the global public sphere by Antiarmenianism and genocide denial. In light of this, the Azerbaijani state's tactic of "mirroring," which involves accusing Armenia and Armenians of committing the crimes that it itself has committed or is planning to commit, must be understood and carefully analyzed by anyone seeking to follow developments in the region, to sift out the truth from the lies, and to make informed policy decisions.

There are moments in history when genocide can be prevented. This is one of those moments. The world will either act with clarity and strength to protect Armenian life or it will oversee a renewal of genocidal violence by states still driven by the hateful ideology of 1915.

In such a context, the so-called peace plans and treaty negotiations into which Armenia is being forced by powerful global players are more likely to lead to atrocity crimes against Armenians, including genocide, than to any sort of 'peace'. The world should be ashamed that the Armenian people find themselves in this situation. It is not too late to act, but time is running out.