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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. RES.

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Condemning Azerbaijan's blockade of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) and ongoing human rights violations.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. PALLONE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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# RESOLUTION

Condemning Azerbaijan's blockade of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) and ongoing human rights violations.

Whereas Azerbaijani forces, in violation of international obligations to resolve disputes with Armenia and Artsakh peacefully, conducted a large-scale, unprovoked invasion of the Republic of Artsakh in October 2020;

Whereas President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan has used vitriolic rhetoric to call for the ethnic cleansing of indigenous Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and his regime has consistently violated important international humanitarian legal agreements during the 2020 war and up until the present date, including the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, the United Nations Charter, and the Geneva Conventions;

Whereas evidence of Azerbaijani violations of international humanitarian law during the 2020 war are well-documented by reputable nongovernmental organizations such as Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the International Committee of the Red Cross;

Whereas mass human rights violations committed by Azerbaijani forces in the 2020 war included rocket strikes on civilian infrastructure like medical facilities and schools, the decapitation of civilians, the use of white phosphorus munitions, the torture and extrajudicial killing of Armenian prisoners of war, the hiring of foreign mercenaries, and the targeting of historic monuments, works of art, and places of worship with great cultural and spiritual significance to Armenians;

Whereas the November 9, 2020, cease-fire statement ending the 2020 war signed by Azerbaijan clearly states in Article 6 that, "The Lachin Corridor (5 km wide), which will provide a connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia while not passing through the territory of Shusha, shall remain under the control of the Russian Federation peacemaking forces. . . The Republic of Azerbaijan shall guarantee the security of persons, vehicles and cargo moving along the Lachin Corridor in both directions.";

Whereas, on December 12, 2022, Azerbaijan created a man-made humanitarian crisis by implementing an extended blockade of the Lachin Corridor under the guise of a civilian protest;

Whereas the Lachin Corridor serves as a vital lifeline connecting the Republic of Artsakh to the Republic of Armenia and its blockade prevents food, critical medical supplies, and other essentials from reaching 120,000 people;

Whereas Azerbaijan has taken dangerous, escalatory steps that have severely worsened the quality of life for the people living in Artsakh, including 30,000 children, 20,000 elderly individuals, and 9,000 people with disabilities, through the sabotage of civilian infrastructure such as a critical natural gas pipeline, power transmission lines, and fixed-line internet;

Whereas the Russian peacekeeping forces deployed in the region have not lived up to their role as defined by the November 9, 2020, statement, doing little to disperse Azerbaijanis blocking the Lachin Corridor, deescalate the situation, or prevent other Azerbaijani aggressions against the Armenian population in Artsakh;

Whereas the Department of State has warned the “Closure of the Lachin Corridor has severe humanitarian implications and sets back the peace process”, and publicly called “on the government of Azerbaijan to restore free movement through the corridor”;

Whereas the Department of State reported that Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken spoke with Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev on January 23, 2023, “to urge an immediate reopening of the Lachin corridor to commercial traffic. He underscored that the risk of a humanitarian crisis in the Lachin corridor undermined prospects for peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan.”;

Whereas the United States serves as a Co-Chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Minsk

Group, along with France and Russia, and is committed to sustainable, long-term peace in the region; and

Whereas the United States has not been able to undertake any direct humanitarian support or relief efforts to address the needs of Armenian victims in Artsakh since the deadly invasion by Azerbaijani forces in October 2020: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2           (1) condemns Azerbaijan’s blockade of the  
3       Lachin Corridor to Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh);

4           (2) encourages the United States Government  
5       and international community to petition the Inter-  
6       national Court of Justice, European Court of  
7       Human Rights, or other appropriate international  
8       tribunals to take appropriate steps to investigate any  
9       and all war crimes committed by the Azerbaijani  
10      forces;

11          (3) calls on the United States Government to  
12      work swiftly with international partners, including  
13      authorities in Artsakh, regarding the deployment of  
14      international observers to the Lachin Corridor and  
15      Artsakh to explore opportunities for more effective  
16      and sustainable guarantees of security and peaceful  
17      development.

18          (4) calls on the President to immediately sus-  
19      pend any new, current, or pending military or secu-  
20      rity assistance from the United States to Azerbaijan,

1 and to fully enforce section 907 of the FREEDOM  
2 Support Act (22 U.S.C. 5812 note);

3 (5) supports United States sanctions under ex-  
4 isting statutory authority against Azerbaijani offi-  
5 cials responsible for the blockade of Nagorno-  
6 Karabakh and other well-documented human rights  
7 violations committed against Armenians in the re-  
8 gion such as the targeting of civilian infrastructure  
9 and the destruction of historic, cultural, and places  
10 of worship of great significance to Armenians; and

11 (6) supports a robust program of sustained  
12 United States humanitarian and development assist-  
13 ance to the Armenian victims of Azerbaijani aggres-  
14 sion in Nagorno-Karabakh, including the potential  
15 opening of an United States Agency for Inter-  
16 national Development office in Artsakh.