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Statement from Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (NJ-06) for the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing, *Human Rights in Azerbaijan Since the Fall of Nagorno-Karabakh*

As the Co-Chair for the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, I would like to thank my long-time friend, Jim McGovern, and my fellow New Jerseyan, Chris Smith, for holding this important hearing today.

I would also like to thank our distinguished guests for their expert testimony that has helped shed light on the human rights abuses inflicted upon Armenians in Artsakh by the Aliyev regime.

This hearing is especially timely as we commemorate the one-year anniversary of the horrific ethnic cleansing that took place in Artsakh last fall.

The forceful removal of 120,000 Armenians came after nearly a year of forced deprivation and other deadly actions taken by Azerbaijani forces in the 2022 war.

Many Members of the Congressional Armenian Caucus and those in the Armenian American diaspora community sounded the alarm warning the international community the likelihood of atrocities being committed was high.

Much like in human rights observers in 1915, we were completely ignored until it was too late.

The shameful lack of deterrence by international actors proved that if no one stands up to a bully like Aliyev, he will continue ignoring the rules and norms that make up our international system.

Which is why I continue to unequivocally say that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has not been resolved by any means, despite what many continue to loudly protest.

It's important for Congress to hold hearings like this to bear witness to the suffering wrought by Aliyev's corrupt regime, and to keep pushing for accountability for the many crimes they have committed.

I stand with the diaspora in calling for tougher, more direct action to prevent any further military aggression in the region by Azeri troops.


This includes leveling tough sanctions against members of the regime that had a direct role in the genocidal campaign, especially Aliyev himself, and preventing any further U.S. security assistance to these human rights abusers.

The U.S. must do more to aid Artsakh refugees as they fight to pick up the pieces of their lives while they mourn the loss of their historic homeland.

I will do everything in my power to push for greater accountability of the horrific crimes committed against Armenians in Artsakh and push for an internationally protected right to return for any of these people who wish to return to their historic homeland.

Thank you to the Lantos Commission once again for holding this important hearing, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to finally get justice for the people of Artsakh.

Sincerely,


FRANK PALLONE JR.
Member of Congress