

Former Armenian FM endorses call to #BanAzerbaijan from 2024 Olympics

In a statement, Committee for Nagorno Karabakh highlights Armenian hostages in Baku

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, June 27, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Vartan Oskanian, the former foreign minister of Armenia and the head of the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the People of Nagorno Karabakh, endorsed CSI's campaign to have the Azerbaijani national team and flag excluded from the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.



Vartan Oskanian served as foreign minister of Armenia. Photo: Vartan Oskanian

A statement issued by the Committee (printed below) holds that "Azerbaijan's egregious human rights abuses, including the violent ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh in September 2023...necessitate immediate and severe international repercussions."

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Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the People of Nagorno Karabakh

Nagorno Karabakh's entire Armenian population – over 100,000 people – was expelled in a military operation launched by the Azerbaijani dictatorship last September. The campaign was widely described as an act of ethnic cleansing or even genocide.

In the aftermath of this expulsion, the elected parliament of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh (or Artsakh) set up the Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the People of Nagorno Karabakh, to campaign for the Armenians'

peaceful return to their homeland. Vartan Oskanian, who was Armenia's longest-serving foreign minister (1998-2008), was chosen to head the committee.

On July 9, Oskanian will appear at a side event at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva to

advocate for the right of return of Armenians from Nagorno Karabakh.

The Committee's statement mentioned in particular the "ongoing illegal captivity of Armenians in Azerbaijani prisons, held under inhumane and torturous conditions," as grounds for Azerbaijan's exclusion. Azerbaijan is holding dozens of Armenians, including eight current and former members of the Nagorno Karabakh government, as [prisoners in Baku](#).

"Supporting Christian Solidarity International's initiative to ban Azerbaijan from the Paris Olympics is a critical step towards ensuring justice and accountability," the committee statement concluded.

CSI first called on the International Olympic Committee to bar Azerbaijan from the Paris Games in December, citing the similar ban the IOC applied to Russia and Belarus over Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

On June 19, CSI launched an [online campaign](#) to [#BanAzerbaijan](#) from the Olympics. CSI invites its supporters to use its online platform to send letters to the heads of their national Olympic committees in support of the campaign.

The full statement of the Committee follows:

The Committee for the Defense of the Fundamental Rights of the People of Nagorno Karabakh demands that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) ban Azerbaijan's national team and flag from the Paris Olympics, supporting unequivocally the call initiated by Christian Solidarity International.

Azerbaijan's egregious human rights abuses, including the violent ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh in September 2023, its illegal occupation of sovereign Armenian territory, the systematic annihilation of Armenian cultural and religious heritage, and the unlawful detention of Armenian prisoners of war, civilians, and political leaders, necessitate immediate and severe international repercussions. Azerbaijan's actions are those of a rogue state engaged in deliberate and egregious violations of international law, international justice and core human rights values.

We call for an uncompromising stance against Azerbaijan's continued defiance of international law. Azerbaijan's actions are not mere infractions; they are flagrant violations of fundamental human rights and international norms that threaten the very fabric of global justice and peace. The ongoing illegal captivity of Armenians in Azerbaijani prisons, held under inhumane and torturous conditions, represents a stark and unacceptable breach of the Geneva Conventions and other international human rights laws. The physical and psychological torment inflicted upon these captives, alongside the anguish faced by their families, must not be tolerated by the international community.

Supporting Christian Solidarity International's initiative to ban Azerbaijan from the Paris Olympics is a critical step towards ensuring justice and accountability. Azerbaijan's continued participation in the Olympics would be a grotesque endorsement of their heinous actions, signaling to the world that such violations can be overlooked in the name of sporting diplomacy. This is an untenable position for any global institution that purports to uphold the values of unity and peace.

The IOC must recognize that the Paris Olympics, a symbol of international solidarity and harmony, cannot include a state actively and brazenly perpetrating severe human rights abuses. Excluding Azerbaijan from the Olympics would send the correct message: the international community will not condone and ignore egregious violations of human rights.

We urge the global community, human rights organizations, and individuals worldwide to support Christian Solidarity International's vital initiative to exclude Azerbaijan from the Paris Olympics. The release of Armenian captives is not simply a regional issue; it is a pressing matter of upholding universal human rights and maintaining international justice. The Committee for the Defense of the Fundamental Rights of the People of Nagorno Karabakh remains steadfast in its commitment to advocating for the rights of those unjustly imprisoned.

We call on the IOC to take decisive, immediate action against Azerbaijan's continued contempt for international law. Together, we can forge a path towards a more just and humane world, where the fundamental rights of all individuals are respected and protected.

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