

At UN, CSI calls on Olympic Committee to hold Azerbaijan accountable

At Human Rights Council dialogue, Christian Solidarity International (CSI) calls on IOC president to exclude Azerbaijan from the 2024 Olympics

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, July 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, in an [oral statement](#) at the UN Human Rights Council, CSI again called on the International Olympic Committee to exclude Azerbaijan's national team and flag from the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, with Azerbaijani athletes allowed to compete as neutrals.



The International Olympic Committee has its headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland. Gzzz, CC BY-SA 4.0 , via Wikimedia Commons

“Excluding Azerbaijan from the Olympics would send the correct message: the international world of sport will not condone and ignore egregious violations of human rights,” Joel Veldkamp, CSI’s UN representative, said in a statement at a panel discussion on human rights and the Olympic ideal. Thomas Bach, the president of the IOC, was present.

Last year, the dictatorship of Azerbaijan attacked the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh after laying siege to it for nine months. The military operation resulted in the expulsion of Nagorno Karabakh’s entire population – more than 100,000 Armenian Christians.

In 2022, Veldkamp pointed out, “the IOC took the extraordinary step of excluding the Russian and Belarussian national teams from the 2024 Olympics,” after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Yet Azerbaijan has yet to face any consequences for its destruction of the millennia-old Armenian community of Nagorno Karabakh.

Veldkamp emphasized that Azerbaijan’s ethnic cleansing of Nagorno Karabakh was “conducted under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, who also serves as the president of the Azerbaijan National Olympic Committee.” Veldkamp urged “the IOC and the world of sport more generally to disassociate from the current president of the Azerbaijan National Olympic Committee.”

CSI first called on the IOC to exclude Azerbaijan from the 2024 Olympics in an open letter published in December. Last week, CSI's call was [endorsed](#) by the Committee for the Defense of the Fundamental Rights of the People of Nagorno Karabakh, a body appointed by the parliament of Nagorno Karabakh in exile to campaign for the right of Armenians to return to their homeland.

The committee is headed by Vartan Oskanian, a former foreign minister of Armenia, who will appear at the UN Human Rights Council on July 9, at a side event hosted by CSI.

Supporters of CSI's campaign to #BanAzerbaijan from the 2024 Olympics can make their voice heard by sending a message to their nation's Olympic committee from CSI's [website](#).

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