

# Major Christian organizations decry Azerbaijan's human rights violations ahead of COP29

*CSI joins the WCC and the WEA in a statement calling for the release of Azerbaijan's Armenian hostages and the safe return of Armenians to Nagorno-Karabakh.*

ZURICH, SWITZERLAND, November 11, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a [joint statement](#), a coalition of organizations including the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), and [Christian Solidarity International](#) (CSI) warn that COP29 "is being used as a cover for ethnic cleansing."



COP29, the annual UN Climate Change Conference, begins in Baku, Azerbaijan's capital city, on November 11, just a year after an Azerbaijani military operation emptied the region of Nagorno Karabakh of its historic Armenian Christian population.

“

We express our solidarity with the displaced Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh. We deplore the use of the UN Climate Change Conference to cover the crimes against humanity that led to their displacement.”

*CSI-WEA-WCC Joint Statement*

The joint statement asks that states participating in the conference pressure the Azerbaijani government to release its Armenian hostages and allow the safe return of Armenians to Nagorno Karabakh.

“Azerbaijan has pledged that COP29 will be a ‘COP of peace’,” reads the statement. “Yet Azerbaijan’s actions leading up to COP29 have been anything but peaceful.”

The statement cites the Azerbaijani government’s nine-month blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh, then populated by

120,000 Armenian Christians, beginning in December 2022. The blockade intensified in February 2023 in violation of an order from the International Court of Justice, and it continued despite

repeated calls for its end, including from the WCC, the WEA, and CSI. The attack culminated in “a military operation against Nagorno Karabakh on 19 September 2023, leading to the forced displacement of the entire Armenian population.”

The statement notes that, “Azerbaijan’s well-orchestrated depopulation of Nagorno-Karabakh has been qualified by numerous authorities as ethnic cleansing.” It cites in particular a fact-finding mission by prominent human rights organizations, including Freedom House, which found “significant evidence [of] crimes against humanity and war crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.”

“We express our solidarity with the displaced Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh,” affirms the statement. “We deplore the use of the UN Climate Change Conference to cover over the crimes against humanity that led to their displacement.”

The organizations also state that Azerbaijan’s razing of Christian sites in Nagorno Karabakh, including churches, cemeteries, and entire villages, “illustrates the threat to religious freedom and pluralism in the region posed by Azerbaijan’s aggression.”

Under President Ilham Aliyev, the Baku government continues to hold hostage at least 23 Armenians captured during its blockade and military campaign against Nagorno Karabakh. These include civilians, soldiers, and political leaders. More than 80 other cases of forced disappearances have been documented, in which Armenians last seen with Azerbaijani soldiers have not been heard from since. The Aliyev regime’s recent jailing of numerous Azerbaijani academics, journalists, and other domestic critics further points to heightened authoritarianism.

In the joint statement, CSI, the WCC, and the WEA conclude by calling for Baku to “unconditionally and immediately” release “all of the Armenian hostages and Azerbaijani political prisoners.” After this first critical step, “facilitating the safe return of the Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh to their homeland and respecting their right to self-determination” is necessary for Azerbaijan “to contribute to a lasting peace in the region.”

“The Aliyev regime has made it abundantly clear it intends to use COP29 to burnish its international reputation,” CSI International President Dr. John Eibner remarks. “That alone is reason for states and NGOs to give this conference a miss. Those who do feel compelled to go to Baku should not lose the opportunity to confront this genocidal state over its actions, and advocate for the welfare of its hostages.”

[Read the full joint statement.](#)

Joel Veldkamp  
Christian Solidarity International  
+41 76 258 15 74

joel.veldkamp@csi-int.org

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[YouTube](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/758935681>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.