



PRESS RELEASE

News from the Armenian Bar Association

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**ARMENIAN COMMUNITY OF EAST COAST TO PROTEST
AZERBAIJAN'S ATTACKS ON ARTSAKH (NAGORNO-KARABAKH) & ARMENIA**

New York, NY — On Saturday, October 10, the Armenian community of the East Coast will gather in front of NBC Studios on 50th Street and march to ABC Studios on 66th Street to protest recent attacks by the Azerbaijani government on the peaceful population of the Artsakh Republic.

Since September 27, Azerbaijan has launched a full offensive attack along the border of the Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh Republic in violation of a ceasefire agreement signed in 1994. Turkey has partaken in Azerbaijan's war efforts, including by providing weapons and mercenaries from Syria.

“We condemn Azerbaijan’s continued vicious attacks and war crimes against the peaceful civilian population of Artsakh and fully support the right of self-determination of the people of Artsakh,” said Grant Petrosyan, Chair of the NY-NJ-CT Chapter of the Armenian Bar Association. “Despite the indiscriminate bombing of civilian settlements and infrastructure, the international community has failed to condemn Azerbaijan and Turkey.”

Artsakh’s capital city of Stepanakert, as well as other civilian settlements, have been under constant heavy bombardment, with significant civilian casualties reported.

“The Azerbaijani government is committing war crimes and severely breaching international human rights law by shelling civilian populations,” Petrosyan said. “This is totally unacceptable. The international community, including the international media, must hold Azerbaijan accountable.”

Saturday’s demonstration aims to protest the Azerbaijani and Turkish governments, as well as raise awareness and media coverage of Azerbaijan and Turkey’s terrorism. The protest will begin at 12:30 p.m.

A fact sheet of background information with accompanying sources is attached hereto.

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Background of the attacks launched on September 27, 2020

In the early morning of September 27, 2020, Azerbaijan launched an offensive into Nagorno-Karabakh (known as Artsakh in Armenian) and Armenia. Armenia and Artsakh have a population of 3 million, while Azerbaijan has 10 million inhabitants. Artsakh also retains *de facto* control over its territory. Shortly after the attack was launched, it was [reported](#) that Azerbaijan restricted internet access for its population. International journalists were [banned](#) from entering Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan ranks 168th out of 180 countries in the [world press freedom index](#).

A number of false reports have been made by the Azerbaijani government. In one instance, it was [reported](#) that Artsakh President Arayik Harutyunyan “was found hiding in bunker by [the] Azerbaijani army and he is actually grievously wounded.” President Harutyunyan was [speaking live](#) on Facebook at the same time. The Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense has also made several claims of attacks by Armenia and/or Artsakh that have been proven false by [experts](#).

Artsakh’s capital of [Stepanakert](#), as well as surrounding civilian settlements, have been under [heavy bombardment](#) since the attacks were launched on September 27, causing considerable civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure and property. On October 8, Azerbaijan targeted the city of Shushi and [struck](#) the Holy Savior Cathedral, damaging it and [injuring](#) several international reporters. Amnesty International has [confirmed](#) the use of illegal cluster bombs by Azerbaijan.

Attacks were also [launched](#) on the internationally recognized borders of Armenia (not Artsakh). A number of international news outlets have [reported](#) on Turkey’s involvement, including its [deployment](#) of Syrian mercenaries to Azerbaijan. At least two of Turkey’s F-16 planes were [reported](#) at Ganja International Airport in Azerbaijan. On October 4, after days of bombardment on its capital and several warnings made to Azerbaijan, Artsakh retaliated by targeting the Ganja Military Airport.

A brief background on the Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) Republic

The conflict between Artsakh and Azerbaijan dates back to the early 20th century. Nagorno-Karabakh is an integral part of historic Armenia that was arbitrarily carved out in 1921 by Joseph Stalin and placed under Soviet Azerbaijani administration, but with autonomous status. Nagorno-Karabakh has never been part of an independent Azerbaijani state. During seven decades of Soviet Azerbaijani rule, the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh was subjected to discriminatory policies aimed at its removal. Even after these efforts to force Armenians from their land, Nagorno-Karabakh’s population in 1988 was over 80% Armenian. Following a peaceful demand by Karabakh’s legislative body to reunite the region with Armenia in 1988, Azerbaijan launched an ethnic cleansing campaign against individuals of Armenian descent with pogroms against civilians in several towns, including Sumgait and Baku. On September 2, 1991, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh declared independence from the Soviet Union and became the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. On December 10, 1991, Nagorno-Karabakh held an independence referendum in which 82% of all voters participated and 99% voted for independence. In response, Azerbaijan launched an all-out war against the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Since a ceasefire agreement was made in 1994, Nagorno-Karabakh has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to a peaceful, compromise resolution of the conflict.