



Armenian Bar Association

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Via Email

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The Honorable Prime Minister
Government Building 1
Republic Square
Yerevan 0010, Republic of Armenia

Open Letter to the Government of the Republic of Armenia

Dear Prime Minister Pashinyan:

We write to express our deep concern and discontent regarding your recent statements indicating your express inclination to withdraw the Republic's international legal complaints against Azerbaijan for its wholesale violations of human rights. We find that this is a reckless and short-sighted approach, which would incapacitate efforts to achieve sustainable peace, justice, and accountability for the grievous crimes committed against the Armenian people. International accountability for crimes and violations of international human rights law serves as a meaningful restraint on Azerbaijan's conduct and the interethnic animus behind it.

The pursuit of justice through legitimate legal mechanisms must not become an expendable tool to be traded away at the bargaining table, even if under duress; rather, it is a fundamental pillar of international law and a prerequisite for the genuine redress of grievances and reconciliation of peoples. In initiating legal proceedings for Azerbaijan's grave human rights violations against ethnic Armenians, Armenia assumed responsibility for seeking justice and accountability on the victims' behalf. The case for justice is as strong as ever: Azerbaijan has not relented in its discrimination against Armenians and continues to advocate for the destruction of any Armenian state or presence in the South Caucasus. Should you now go forward with your stated inclination to withdraw the actions, you will be sending an astounding message out to the whole world: that Azerbaijan had a license to discriminate against and kill ethnic Armenians, to ethnically cleanse Armenian homelands, and that such actions may continue with impunity.

Armenia's relatively recent ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) signaled a commitment to holding perpetrators accountable for crimes of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. To now abandon legal avenues, particularly while credible evidence of crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, and grave human rights violations persist, undermines the legal protection that all Armenians enjoy under international law.

The withdrawal of international legal complaints would have severe negative repercussions, including but not limited to:

1. **Betraying Victims and Survivors** – The forced displacement of over 120,000 Armenians from Artsakh, the unlawful detention and documented torture of Armenian civilians, prisoners of war (POWs) and hostages, the systematic state-

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led Armenophobic, racist discourse against Armenia and Armenians, as well as the ongoing destruction of Armenian cultural heritage, are grossly inconsistent with international law and merit a strong legal response. The abandonment of legal proceedings will leave thousands of Armenian families without the possibility of justice, reinforcing a dangerous precedent that aggressors can act with, and be rewarded for, their impunity and invites further violent and illegal aggression.

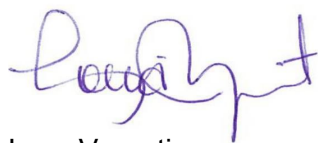
2. **Endangering Individual Claims** – In addition to the state-level cases currently pursued by Armenia, several individuals have filed lawsuits against Azerbaijan at the ECHR in their personal capacities. Withdrawing Armenia's interstate claims against Azerbaijan could directly or indirectly impact these individual complaints, imperiling victims' legal recourse and property claims. Many affected individuals have relied on Armenia to advocate for their rights internationally, and such a disengagement could deprive them of crucial support in seeking justice.
3. **Promoting Impunity and Undermining Historical Justice** – Even if Azerbaijan agrees to reciprocally retreat from its legal complaints against Armenia, crimes committed against the Armenian people should not be left unanswered. The failure to ensure proper accountability will set a dangerous precedent that encourages future violations and reinforces a pattern of impunity. This decision will also have far-reaching historical consequences, further obstructing the long-standing pursuit of justice for the Armenian Genocide and similar crimes against humanity. By abandoning legal avenues, Armenia risks eroding its and others' ability to advocate for historical justice on an international level.

The Armenian people have endured decades of injustice, systematic aggression, and violations of fundamental human rights. It is the responsibility of the Armenian state to utilize every legal tool available to ensure accountability, deter further aggression, and establish a framework for a just and lasting peace. Indeed, reconciliation and accountability have been key elements of transitional justice to ensure lasting peace in countless interethnic conflicts around the world. Withdrawing legal proceedings today without any meaningful avenue for historical justice and accountability will not bring peace tomorrow; rather, it will embolden those who seek to erase our existence.

We urge you, Mr. Prime Minister, to reconsider and reaffirm Armenia's insistence on legal accountability for the crimes and human rights violations committed at the hands of Azerbaijan. Justice is neither negotiable nor degradable—it is a bare necessity for the security, sustainable peace, dignity, and future of the Armenian nation and humanity as a whole.

Sincerely,

ARMENIAN BAR ASSOCIATION



Lucy Varpetian
Chairwoman