

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2022

The Honorable Barbara Lee  
Chairwoman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
Room HT-2, the Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Rogers:

We write to thank the Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs for your longstanding support of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). This includes the important language you incorporated into the Fiscal Year 2022 bill providing \$45 million in funding for Armenia and \$2 million in demining assistance for Artsakh. We ask that you build on these historic investments by considering the inclusion of the below provisions that will help strengthen America's standing with partner countries in the region and hold Azerbaijan accountable for its ongoing hostilities in Artsakh and Armenia.

Robust U.S. Assistance in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh)

The people of Artsakh continue to face severe hardships caused both by the deadly 44-day war Azerbaijani forces provoked in 2020 and their ongoing provocations against innocent civilians to this day. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 88 percent of the approximately 90,000 refugees displaced to Armenia were women, children, and the elderly. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) also acknowledges that an "acute humanitarian crisis" continues for many of these families, including those who have been able to return to Artsakh. Unfortunately, the \$5,000,000 in Fiscal Year 2021 funding USAID has committed to date is insufficient to address the overwhelming needs of these people.

The U.S. has historically promoted peace in Artsakh through U.S. government-funded landmine and unexploded ordnance clearance efforts and enabling rebuilding by investing in similar humanitarian assistance initiatives. We are requesting a robust humanitarian assistance package for Artsakh that lives up to American humanitarian commitments. The package would help provide Armenian refugees with the aid, housing, food security, water and sanitation, health care,

rehabilitation, and demining/UXO clearance they need to reconstruct their communities, rebuild their lives, and resettle their homes.

We urge you to include the following provision in the body of the foreign aid bill:

*Of the funds appropriated under this heading, not less than \$50,000,000 shall be made available for assistance in Nagorno-Karabakh, used to provide humanitarian demining and UXO clearance, humanitarian assistance, and rebuilding and resettlement support to the Armenian victims of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, both those residing in and those displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh. Such assistance will help to meet basic human needs, including maternity healthcare and drinking water programs.*

### Security, Economic, and Governance Assistance for Armenia

The United States remains uniquely positioned to make important diplomatic advances in the South Caucasus. This is especially true in Armenia, an ancient nation with a modern democracy that continues to make democratic reforms in a region dominated by autocratic leaders. Providing significant assistance to Armenia will help make its people more secure, bolster its democracy, sustain economic development, stabilize its civil society, and aid its ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This critical investment will build on past support for Armenia and Artsakh by the Subcommittee and will help strengthen the U.S.-Armenia strategic partnership, solidify our presence, and grow our influence in the region. We request the following language be included in this legislation:

*Of the funds appropriated by this Act, not less than \$100 million shall be made available for security, economic, governance, and rule of law assistance to Armenia. An increase in funding to accounts such as the Department of State's Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe, Eurasia, and Central Asia and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia should be made available for these purposes.*

### Prohibition on U.S. Military Aid to Azerbaijan

President Ilham Aliyev began his brutal 2020 assault on Artsakh not long after receiving over \$100 million in security assistance through the Section 333 Building Partner Capacity Program in Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019. Azerbaijani forces used advanced Turkish drones, cluster munitions, and white phosphorus to indiscriminately attack homes, churches, and hospitals killing thousands in the 44-day war. While an agreement halting the war was signed in November 2020, Azerbaijan continues its aggressive behavior in the region with troop movements and other escalatory measures into Armenian and Artsakh territories. On March 25, 2022, State Department Principal Deputy Spokesperson Jalina Porter State stated the U.S. was “deeply concerned” about these actions and called them “irresponsible and unnecessarily provocative.” It is equally concerning that Azerbaijani troops continue to carry out the desecration of Armenian Christian holy sites, weaponize major sources of natural gas for civilians, and illegally detain and abuse Armenian prisoners of war.

The Section 333 funding, paired with other U.S. funding to Azerbaijan through the IMET and FMF programs, clearly defies almost two decades of a policy of parity in security assistance to Armenia and Azerbaijan. In fact, according to a January 31, 2022, report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the State Department likely violated Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act in sending this and other assistance to Azerbaijan from 2014 to 2021. They did so by not properly consulting and communicating with Congress on what processes they used to determine whether U.S. aid to Azerbaijan could be used for offensive purposes against Armenia.

The overdue process of holding Azerbaijan accountable must begin with Congress encouraging the Administration to fully enforce Section 907, restricting the State Department's authority to waive this law, and enacting statutory prohibitions on any new U.S. military or security aid to Azerbaijan. We request that the following language be included in the final SFOPs bill:

*None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available under this Act may be provided to the Government of Azerbaijan through U.S. security assistance programs.*

#### Armenian Prisoners of War and Captured Civilians

On November 9, 2020, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia signed a tripartite statement to end the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh, where all parties agreed that the "exchange of prisoners of war, hostages and other detainees as well as the remains of the fatalities shall be carried out." However, the Government of Azerbaijan continues to detain an estimated 200 Armenian prisoners of war, hostages, and detained persons, misrepresenting their status in an attempt to justify their continued captivity. We request that the following language be included in the final SFOPs bill:

*The Committee is concerned by Azerbaijan's failure to immediately return all Armenian prisoners of war and captured civilians and, thus, (2) urges the Secretary of State to engage at all levels with Azerbaijani authorities, including through the OSCE Minsk Group process, to make clear the importance of adhering to their obligations, under the November 9 statement and international law, to immediately release all prisoners of war and captured civilians.*

Again, thank you for your leadership on the Subcommittee. We appreciate your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



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Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress



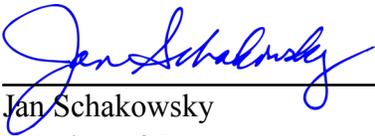
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Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



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Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



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Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress



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Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



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James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress



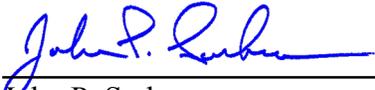
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Chris Pappas  
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Carolyn B. Maloney  
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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Cheri Bustos  
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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



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Chrissy Houlahan  
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Stephen F. Lynch  
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Diana DeGette  
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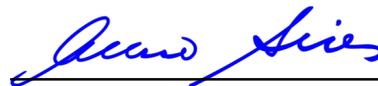
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Jake Auchincloss  
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Albio Sires  
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Salud Carbajal  
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Chellie Pingree  
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Lucille Roybal-Allard  
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Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress



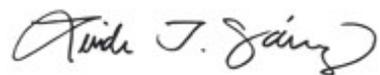
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Anna G. Eshoo  
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Kathleen M. Rice  
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Nanette Diaz Barragan  
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Lori Trahan  
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J. Luis Correa  
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Member of Congress



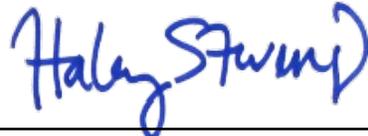
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James A. Himes  
Member of Congress



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Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress



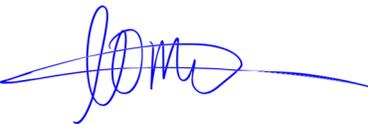
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Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



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Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



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Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



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Bradley Scott Schneider  
Member of Congress



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Mike Levin  
Member of Congress



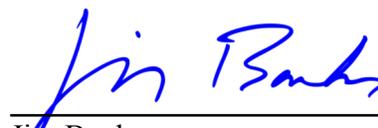
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Josh Gottheimer  
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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



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Jim Banks  
Member of Congress



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Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress



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Susan Wild  
Member of Congress



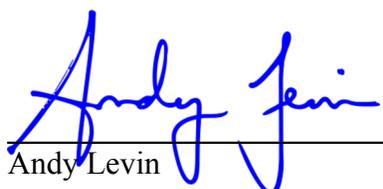
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Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



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Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress



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Andy Levin  
Member of Congress



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Richard E. Neal  
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Donald Norcross  
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Ro Khanna  
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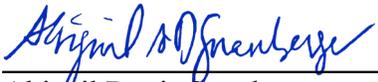
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Grace F. Napolitano  
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Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



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Abigail Davis Spanberger  
Member of Congress



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Katie Porter  
Member of Congress