

Sunland Tujunga Community Impact Statement

This community impact statement is established in an urgent manner with conjunction to the DLANC Board in support of the City Council File 20-0004. The purpose of this impact statement letter is to bring awareness and a hopeful change to the present atrocities committed by Azerbaijan with the help of Turkey against the young Republic of Artsakh, also know as Nagorno-Karabagh.

As American citizens, violations of human rights and the non-recognition of the democratic process stand in opposition to everything we believe in. On September 2, 1991, the Republic of Artsakh (also known as Nagorno-Karabakh) was established just after the fall of the Soviet Union. As countries within the region were regaining their independence with the collapse of the Soviet Union, disputes were occurring over certain territories. As such the 1994 Nagorno-Karabakh war took place shortly after because Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh) being an 80-90% Armenian ethnic region with a predominantly Christian community and centuries of historical structures, churches, and traditions opted to be once again part of Armenia proper.

Through the democratic process in 1991, Artsakh held a referendum and with the unanimous approval of voters it successfully established an autonomy from Azerbaijan creating a presidential democracy with a unicameral legislature.

On September 27, 2020 Artsakh witnessed the military aggression of Azerbaijan causing atrocities to the civilians living within the region. The situation is detrimental to the existence of the population given artillery supplied by Turkey as a super power and ISIS mercenaries recruited from Syria and other Middle Eastern countries make it impossible for this small group of people to have a fighting chance for merely their existence. The media will refer to it as a war but a war it is not. With only a population of 170,000 people, it is currently facing the advanced (petroleum funded) military of not only Azerbaijan, but as well Turkey with a combined population well over 90 million.

Our duties as Americans is to fight injustice. We have been blessed to be one of the greatest powers in the world and with that comes the obligation to voice ourselves against any injustice anywhere in the world. As my constituents, you are all aware of how "conflict of interests" can obscure the truth within politics. Turkey is an ally of the United States, but make no mistake. These alliances are derived for military advances and not because we as Americans share the same ideologies. Let us not let the history of mankind be written by financial interests at heart but rather for moral obligations and historical truth.

As Americans it is difficult for us to fathom discrimination for the faith we hold or the ethnicity we belong to, such is not the case for the Armenians living in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh).

As your fellow constituent, I write this impact letter not just as a fellow Armenian-American citizen, but also as a descendant of a survivor from the 1915 Armenian Genocide conducted by the Ottoman Empire. When your Armenian-American community members gather every April 24th to commemorate the atrocities of 1915, one of the main slogans you'll hear is "Never Again" Unfortunately, on September 27, 2020 when the Azerbaijani military invaded and attacked the civilian region of Artsakh, the horrors of 1915 have been reignited in the hearts of every Armenian. Please join me in support of this community statement stating we stand against the attack against the people of Artsakh. We believe in democracy and support the will of the people to operate independently from Azerbaijan.

Thank you for your support,

Garbis Khanjian
(STNC member)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Garbis Khanjian' written in a cursive style.