

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken  
United States Secretary of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

December 14, 2023

Dear Mr. Secretary,

Yesterday, December 13, the government of Azerbaijan released 32 of its Armenian hostages, in exchange for Armenia's release of two Azerbaijani soldiers who had been detained after infiltrating sovereign Armenian territory and killing an Armenian civilian. This prisoner exchange was announced last week, after a visit to Baku by Assistant Secretary of State James O'Brien.

We are grateful for the release of these 32 hostages, all of whom were brazenly kidnapped by Azerbaijan *after* Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to a ceasefire on November 9, 2020, and most of whom had been held captive in Baku for nearly three years.

Nevertheless, the willingness of Azerbaijan to release its abductees, contrary to what State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller stated, is far from "an important confidence building measure." It is, as the Armenian National Committee of America wrote, "a minimal requirement for membership in the family of civilized nations."

As the ANCA warns, "rewarding such actions only encourages Azerbaijan to commit renewed violations, in anticipation of securing additional concessions."

Moreover, even after this prisoner release, many Armenians still languish in Baku's dungeons. The Center for Truth and Justice has identified an additional 20 Armenian hostages being held by Azerbaijan. Siranush Sahakyan, a human rights attorney acting on behalf of the hostages' families, believes there may be as many as 80 more Armenian hostages, both soldiers and civilians.

**This means that the hostages Azerbaijan has released represent as little as one-fourth of the Armenians being illegally held by Baku.**

Among the twenty known hostages whom Azerbaijan refuses to release are seven civilians that Azerbaijani forces kidnapped from Nagorno Karabakh during the 2020 war, or during Azerbaijan's nine-month blockade.

Azerbaijan is also detaining eight current and former members of the elected government of the Republic of Artsakh. We are not aware of any public calls by U.S. officials for these individuals to be released.

We urge you to publicly call for the release of all Armenians being held hostage by Azerbaijan. This call should be part of a larger program to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its aggression and ethnic cleansing, and ensure the safe return of the people of Nagorno Karabakh to their homeland.

A list of all known Armenian hostages still held by Baku follows on the next page.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

John Eibner  
President  
Christian Solidarity International

Aram Hamparian  
Executive Director  
Armenian National Committee of America

Sam Mason  
Chief Executive Officer  
Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART-UK)

The Venerable Canon Justin Murff  
Executive Director  
Anglican Office for Government & International Affairs

Dr. Gregory H. Stanton  
Founding President  
Genocide Watch

Uzay Bulut  
Journalist

## **Armenian hostages still being held by Azerbaijan:**

### Current and former members of the elected government of the Republic of Artsakh

Ruben Vardanyan – former minister of state  
Arayik Harutyunyan – former president  
Bako Sahakyan – former president  
Arkadi Ghukasyan – former president  
Davit Ishkhanyan – Speaker of the National Assembly  
David Babayan – former foreign minister  
Levon Mnatsakanyan – former minister of defense  
Davit Manukyan – former deputy minister of defense

### Civilians

Vaqif Khachatryan (age 68)  
Rashid Beglaryan (age 61)  
Madat Babayan (age 71)  
Davit Tigran Davtyan (age 30)  
Gevorg Ruben Sujyan (age 34)  
Vicken Euljekjian (age 43)  
Karen Sedraki Petrosyan (age unknown)

### Soldiers

Hambartsumyants, Davit Mikayel (age 22)  
Hovsepyan, Hayk Ararat (age 19)  
Kosrovyan, Alyosha Aramayis (age 56)  
Mkrtchyan, Lyudvig Mkrtich (age 54)  
Yeghiazaryan, Aleksandr (age 34)

*Source: Center for Truth and Justice*