



Plenary sitting

B10-0141/2024

21.10.2024

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 136(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Azerbaijan, violation of human rights and international law
and relations with Armenia
(2024/2890(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

B10-0141/2024

European Parliament resolution on the situation in Azerbaijan, violation of human rights and international law and relations with Armenia (2024/2890(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous reports and resolutions on Azerbaijan and Armenia,
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950, ratified by Azerbaijan in 2002,
 - having regard to the relevant documents and international agreements, including but not limited to the United Nations Charter, the Helsinki Final Act of 1 August 1975 and the Alma-Ata Declaration of 21 December 1991,
 - having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Azerbaijan, of the other part, signed on 22 April 1996¹,
 - having regard to Rule 136(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas 300 people remain in detention in Azerbaijan on politically motivated charges; whereas prominent human rights defender and climate advocate, Anar Mammadli, has been in pre-trial detention since 30 April 2024 on bogus charges of conspiracy to bring illegal foreign currency into the country and his health has deteriorated significantly while in custody; whereas economist and political activist Gubad Ibadoghlu was moved to house arrest on 22 April 2024 after 274 days in detention;
- B. whereas Azerbaijan has also intensified its repression against the remaining independent media, such as Abzas Media and Toplum TV, through detentions and judicial harassment;
- C. whereas the Azerbaijani laws regulating the registration, operation and funding of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are highly restrictive and arbitrarily implemented, thus effectively criminalising unregistered NGO activity;
- D. whereas Freedom House's 2024 index ranks Azerbaijan among the least free countries in the world, below Russia and Belarus;
- E. whereas on 19 September 2023, after a nine-month illegal blockade of the Lachin corridor and disregarding both the commitments it made in the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020 and an International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling, Azerbaijan launched an offensive on the remaining parts of Nagorno-Karabakh not already under its control;
- F. whereas more than 100 000 Armenians had to flee the territory, including 30 000

¹ OJ L 246, 17.9.1999, p. 3, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/1999/614/oj.

children, resulting in Nagorno-Karabakh being almost entirely emptied of its Armenian population, who had been living there for centuries; whereas this amounts to ethnic cleansing;

- G. whereas the Russian peacekeeping force did not act in accordance with its mandate, as laid down in the trilateral statement of 9 November 2020, taking no action against Azerbaijan's blockade of the Lachin corridor, the establishment of the Azerbaijani checkpoint at the entrance to the corridor or the offensive in Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2023;
- H. whereas the Azerbaijani leadership continues to make irredentist statements with reference to the sovereign territory of Armenia; whereas the Azerbaijani army continues to occupy no less than 170 km² of the sovereign territory of Armenia;
1. Stresses its profound concern regarding the human rights situation in Azerbaijan;
 2. Urges the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all human rights defenders, journalists, environmental, political and other activists prosecuted under fabricated and or politically motivated charges; recalls in this context the names of Tofiq Yagublu, Akif Gurbanov, Bakhtiyar Hajiyev, as well as human rights defenders and journalists including Ulvi Hasanli, Sevinj Vagifgizi, Nargiz Absalamova, Hafiz Babali and Elnara Gasimova, Aziz Orujov, Rufat Muradli, Avaz Zeynalli, Elnur Shukurov, Alasgar Mammadli and Farid Ismayilov; underlines that since April 2024, Azerbaijan has carried out further arrests of civil society activists on bogus charges, including Farid Mehralizade, Iqbal Abilov, Bahruz Samadov, Emin Ibrahimov and Famil Khalilov;
 3. Recalls the need to lift the travel ban in force against Gubad Ibadoghlu and drop all charges against him, and calls on Azerbaijan urgently to ensure an independent medical examination by a doctor of his own choosing, and allow him to receive treatment abroad;
 4. Reminds the Azerbaijani authorities of their obligations to respect human dignity and fundamental freedoms in accordance with their international commitments and calls on them to repeal repressive legislation that drives independent NGOs and media to the margins of the law;
 5. Calls for the EU to impose sanctions under its global human rights sanctions regime on Azerbaijani officials who have committed serious human rights violations; reiterates its position that the EU should be ready to impose sanctions on any individuals and entities that threaten the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Armenia;
 6. Recalls that the 1996 EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which is the legal basis for bilateral relations, is based on respect for democracy and the principles of international law and human rights and that these have been systematically violated in Azerbaijan;
 7. Reiterates the EU's unequivocal support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of Armenia; strongly supports the normalisation of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the basis of the principles of the mutual

recognition of territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders based on the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration;

8. Recalls its previous condemnation of the pre-planned and unjustified military attack by Azerbaijan of 19-20 September 2023 against the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, which led to the expulsion of the entirety of the ethnic Armenian community which had been living there for centuries, amounting to ethnic cleansing; recalls that this attack resulted in the complete dissolution of the structures of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh and the establishment of full Azerbaijani control over the region; demands the release of all remaining Armenian political prisoners and prisoners of war;
9. Reiterates its demand for the withdrawal of Azerbaijan's troops from the entirety of the sovereign territory of Armenia; rejects and expresses its grave concern regarding the irredentist and inflammatory statements made by the Azerbaijani President and other Azerbaijani officials threatening the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Armenia; warns Azerbaijan against any potential military adventurism against Armenia proper; highlights that Azerbaijan's connectivity issues with its exclave of Nakhchivan should be resolved with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Armenia;
10. Calls on Azerbaijan to genuinely engage in a comprehensive and transparent dialogue with the Karabakh Armenians to ensure respect for their rights and guarantee their security, including their right to return to and live in their homes in dignity and safety, overseen by an international presence, to access their land and property rights, to maintain their distinct identity and to fully enjoy their civic, cultural, social and religious rights;
11. Calls for the establishment of an ad hoc committee within the European institutions to identify or develop international mechanisms to guarantee the collective, safe, dignified and sustainable return of the inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh to their ancestral land; calls for the creation of a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the reports and resolutions adopted by Parliament on Nagorno-Karabakh;
12. Urges Azerbaijan to refrain from further destroying, neglecting or altering the origins of cultural, religious or historical heritage in the region, bearing in mind the destruction of cultural, religious and historical heritage that has occurred since the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and calls on it to instead strive to preserve, protect and promote this rich diversity; demands the protection of the Armenian cultural, historical and religious heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh in line with UNESCO standards and Azerbaijan's international commitments;
13. Recognises the urgent need to strengthen the cooperation between the EU and Armenia in the field of security and defence; welcomes the fact that Armenia has frozen its participation in the Collective Security Treaty Organization; notes the added value of regular EU-Armenian Political and Security Dialogues, as an umbrella platform for all security related matters; welcomes the actions undertaken by several Member States to provide defensive military support to Armenia and urges other Member States to consider similar initiatives;
14. Expresses its support for the decision of Armenia to discontinue the presence of Russian Federal Security Service border guards at the international airport in Yerevan, and its

- understanding for the suspension of relations with Belarus;
15. Calls for the EU to end its dependency on gas exports from Azerbaijan; is seriously concerned about Azerbaijan's import of Russian gas and the substantial Russian share in the production and transportation of Azerbaijani gas for the EU, which contradicts the EU's objective of undermining Russia's capacity to continue its war of aggression against Ukraine by cutting its revenues from oil and gas exports to the EU; urges the Commission to investigate suspicions that Azerbaijan actually exports Russian gas to the EU;
 16. Calls for the suspension of all imports of oil and gas from Azerbaijan to the EU; recalls its demand, in the light of Azerbaijan's 2023 invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh, for the suspension of the Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy between the European Union and Azerbaijan;
 17. Supports all initiatives and activities that could lead to the establishment of peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the signing of a long-awaited peace agreement; believes that if a peace agreement is to be lasting, it requires genuine engagement from the parties, not the escalation of rhetoric and demands; welcomes the recent achievement in the Commission on Delimitation and Border Security of a preliminary agreement on the delimitation of several sectors of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border;
 18. Welcomes the new momentum in bilateral relations between the EU and Armenia, which is strongly supported by the authorities in Yerevan; takes good note of Armenia's European aspirations, as expressed by the Armenian foreign minister, among others; recalls its previous position that, pursuant to Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, any European state may apply to become a member of the European Union provided that it adheres to the Copenhagen criteria and the principles of democracy, respects fundamental freedoms and human and minority rights, and upholds the rule of law; considers that, should Armenia be interested in applying for candidate status and continuing on its current path of sustained reforms consolidating its democracy, this could set the stage for a transformative phase in EU-Armenia relations; calls on the Commission and the Council to actively support Armenia's desire for increased cooperation with the EU, not only in the area of economic partnership but also in political dialogue, people-to-people contacts, sectoral integration and security cooperation; believes that the experience stemming from the Association Agreements / Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova should serve as a good basis for closer EU-Armenia cooperation, in particular in relation to a gradual sectoral integration with the single market;
 19. Welcomes the decision of 22 July 2024 to launch the visa liberalisation dialogue with Armenia, which is the first step towards achieving a visa free regime for short stays in the EU; welcomes further the decision to adopt the first assistance measure under the European Peace Facility (EPF) in support of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia, worth EUR 10 million; calls for the EU to cease all technical and financial assistance to Azerbaijan that might contribute to strengthening its military or security capabilities; calls on the Member States to freeze exports of all military and security equipment to Azerbaijan;

20. Condemns the Baku Initiative Group's repeated attempts to denigrate and destabilise EU Member States; condemns in particular its support for irredentist groups and disinformation operations targeting France, especially in the French departments and territories of New Caledonia, Martinique and Corsica; recalls that these methods were used against Germany in 2013; denounces the smear campaigns targeting Denmark; strongly opposes the allegations made by Ilham Aliyev himself at the Baku Initiative Group meeting in Baku in November 2023;
21. Condemns the arbitrary arrests of EU citizens based on spurious accusations of espionage and their disproportionate sentencing;
22. Regrets the smear campaign aimed at damaging France's reputation by calling into question its capacity to host the 2024 Olympic Games, launched by actors suspected of being close to the Azerbaijani regime;
23. Strongly condemns the intimidation, death threats and assassination attempts against opponents of the Azerbaijani Government, including in EU countries, and against Azerbaijani citizens who have been granted political asylum by Member States, such as Mahammad Mirzali in France; calls on the Member States to cooperate, if necessary, in the investigation into the murder, in September 2024, of Vidadi Isgandarli, an Azerbaijani political opponent residing in France; stresses that for the Member States, preventing any act of retaliation on their territory is a matter of democracy, human rights, security and sovereignty; insists that Europol should closely monitor this matter;
24. Strongly condemns the public insults and direct threats made by Azerbaijani diplomatic or government representatives, or members of the Azerbaijani Parliament, targeting elected officials of EU Member States; demands, in this regard, that access for all Azerbaijani officials to EU institutional buildings be denied until further notice;
25. Welcomes the fact that the Republic of Armenia formally deposited the instrument of ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in 2023 and that the statute entered into force for Armenia on 1 February 2024;
26. Deplores steps taken by Azerbaijan towards the secessionist entity in occupied Cyprus, which are against international law and the provisions of UN Security Council Resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984); calls on Azerbaijan to respect the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and to not invite the secessionist entity in occupied Cyprus to any meetings of the Organization of Turkic States;
27. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Member States and the President, Government and Parliament of Azerbaijan.