

RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF ARTSAKH AND IN SUPPORT OF ACADEMIC LENIENCY FOR STUDENTS AFFECTED BY THE ONGOING ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN CONFLICT

WHEREAS, this council stands in solidarity with the University's Armenian student population and recognizes the impact that the ongoing conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia has on their wellbeing.

WHEREAS, ancestral Armenian lands were colonized by Turkic empires from the 1000s to the 1700s, resulting in the displacement of many indigenous Armenians. In the historical Armenian region of Artsakh, the indigenous Armenians largely retreated to the highlands of Artsakh by the 1700s. Indigenous Armenians were also subject to ethnic cleansing at the hands of Turkey from 1915-1923, a genocide that remains unrecognized internationally to this day, despite having lasting effects on Armenians globally.

WHEREAS, Soviet authorities drew state borders such that the Armenian-inhabited highlands of Artsakh were placed into Soviet Azerbaijan in 1923. Most of these lands were drawn into the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), whose population was 89.1% Armenian in 1926¹. Notably, neighboring Armenian regions in Artsakh such as Shahumyan were excluded from the NKAO and lacked all autonomy in Soviet Azerbaijan. For decades, the Armenians of the NKAO were subject to economic and cultural discrimination by Soviet Azerbaijan and petitioned the Central Soviet repeatedly to be transferred to Soviet Armenia to no avail. Meanwhile, the Azerbaijani SSR settled Azerbaijanis into the NKAO to reduce the Armenians' demographic majority, which fell to 75.9% in 1979.²

WHEREAS, following the rise of the democratic movement for the self-determination of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh in 1987-88, Soviet Azerbaijani and later central Soviet authorities began violently persecuting and suppressing ethnic Armenians. After a series of pogroms against the Armenians of Soviet Azerbaijan, increasing ethnic clashes between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, and the forceful displacement of the Armenians of Shahumyan by Soviet full-scale war broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

WHEREAS, in a 1991 referendum on the independence of the NKAO, 99.98% of the population voted for independence from the Soviet Union in accordance with the Soviet Law of Secession with 82.17% voter turnout. The Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) successfully achieved de-facto independence from Azerbaijan with the 1994 ceasefire, but remains unrecognized internationally to this day.

¹ НАСЕЛЕНИЕ АО НАГОРНОГО КАРАБАХА (1926 г.). [1926 Soviet Census, Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast] <http://www.ethno-kavkaz.narod.ru/rnkarakabax.html>. Nagorno means mountainous, and Karabakh is the Turkic word for the region roughly corresponding to Artsakh.

² НАСЕЛЕНИЕ АО НАГОРНОГО КАРАБАХА (1979 г.). [1979 Soviet Census, Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast]. <http://www.ethno-kavkaz.narod.ru/rnkarakabax.html>.

WHEREAS, despite the 1994 ceasefire, the inhabitants of the Republic of Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia in regions bordering Azerbaijan have been subject to repeated ceasefire violations that threatened the security of indigenous Armenians.

WHEREAS, Azerbaijan has engaged in the destruction of numerous historical Armenian monuments including churches, fortresses, tombstones, cross-stones (khachkars). Additionally, Azerbaijan has engaged in historical revisionism to erase traces of Armenian presence, claiming Armenian monuments as part of Azerbaijan's "Caucasian Albanian" cultural heritage. The international intervention of Russia and Turkey has brought only hesitant protection to Armenian people and landmarks. The close relationship of Turkey and Azerbaijan represents a constant threat to the Armenian people, as leaders of both countries have verbally threatened to repeat the occurrences of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

WHEREAS, in September 2020, Azerbaijan, with the assistance of Turkey and its Syrian mercenaries, launched a full-scale war against the Republic of Artsakh, causing the deaths of at least 2350 soldiers and 50 civilians. Over 100,000 Artsakh Armenians have been displaced by the new conflict. Much of historical Artsakh is now under the full control of Azerbaijan, while the remaining portions are under the temporary protection of Russian peacekeepers. The future of Artsakh Armenians' autonomy is uncertain at best.

WHEREAS, the aggression on behalf of Azerbaijan and Turkey, deniers of the Armenian Genocide, have continued to act upon these historic genocidal tendencies and committed numerous war crimes against the Armenian people; such war crimes include the intentional targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructures with cluster munitions, the use of white phosphorus to set forests ablaze³, torture, beheadings, and mutilation⁴.

WHEREAS, hundreds of Armenian students, as well as dozens of Armenian faculty members are directly affected by the conflict, whether it be through family members living in the region and/or serving in the military, emotional ties to the land, or being a resident of Armenia. Because of this, Armenian students have an increased obligation to raise awareness, fundraise, ship humanitarian aid, or otherwise engage in aiding their homeland.

WHEREAS, the trauma and shock being resurfaced by this conflict are generational, and the deep emotional distress and fear for personal and familial well-being makes it unrealistic to focus solely on schoolwork.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that since nothing is being done on the international, national, state, or local level to recognize Artsakh or the Armenian genocide, it is the University's responsibility to look after the best interest of their Armenian and Azerbaijani students and faculty affected by this conflict.

³ <https://medium.com/dfrlab/satellite-imagery-shows-environmental-damage-of-reported-white-phosphorus-use-in-nagorno-karabakh-9826391a295>

⁴ <https://artsakhombuds.am/en/general-report>

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the council recognizes the occurrence of the Armenian Genocide, and that current measures taken by Azerbaijan are repeating this history.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the council recognizes Artsakh's sovereignty from Azerbaijan, as was voted on legitimately by the people of the region.

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the council recommends academic leniency or accommodations be given to any affected Armenian or Azerbaijani students on account of their resurfaced trauma, loss of homeland, loss of security, and potential loss of family members.