

STATEMENT

TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS TO TAKE URGENT, ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE STEPS TO STOP THE ONGOING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARTSAKH (NAGORNO-KARABAKH)

Coalition to Stop Violence against Women

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բռնության կոալիցիա

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against women

On September 27, in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic, the Azerbaijani armed forces launched missile attacks along the entire line of contact in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) targeting also the peaceful settlements.¹ The reports from international sources² indicates that Syrian fighters from jihadist groups have also been recruited by Turkey and transited to reach Nagorno-Karabakh, which is existential threat to the lives and health of children, women, elderly and the entire population of Artsakh.

Villages, towns and the capital Stepanakert have been intensively attacked, which caused numerous casualties and injuries among civilians. As of 12 October, 2020, 31 civilians including 1 child and 8 females have been killed. 60 % of civilians were killed at the places of their residence.³

Azerbaijan continuously and deliberately targets the civilian population. On September 27, 2020 a 13-year-old boy was injured while leaving home in Martakert (Artsakh), which was being shelled by Azerbaijani forces. He was in a coma for 5 days and still continues to be treated in the intensive care unit⁴. Azerbaijan's strategy of targeting children continues in Armenia as well. On October 14, 2020 while going to the field, a 14-year-old boy was injured after being hit by an Azerbaijani UAV in the territory of the Republic of Armenia⁵.

Large-scale damages have been caused to civilian objects, such as residential buildings, hospitals and schools. Since the launch of the large-scale aggression against Artsakh, Azerbaijan has been repeatedly using internationally banned weapons in areas where civilian population and civilian objects are located. By leaving behind unstable “minefields” of unexploded bomblets, they put more civilians, especially children, at risk.⁶

"All wars, whether just or unjust, disastrous or victorious, are waged against the child.⁷". Children are the first victims of war, armed conflicts and terrorism. War affects children in all the ways it affects adults, but also in different ways. First, children are dependent on the care, empathy, and attention of adults who love them. Their attachments are frequently disrupted in times of war. Second, impacts in childhood may adversely affect the life trajectory of children far more than adults: during the war, armed conflicts children lose the opportunity of schooling and of a social life.

¹ https://www.mfa.am/en/interviews-articles-and-comments/2020/09/27/mfa_st_nk/10462

² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/1/macron-says-syrian-fighters-operating-in-karabakh>
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/01/middleeast/azerbaijan-armenia-syrian-rebels-intl/index.html>

³ <https://artsakhombuds.am/sites/default/files/2020-10/Artsakh-Ombudsman-updated-second-interim-report-on-the-Azerbaijani-atrocities-in-September-October-2020-13.10.2020.pdf>

⁴ <https://armeniasputnik.am/karabah/20201013/24898995/arcaxum-canr-viravorvac-13amyarobert-5-or-komayimej-e-exel.html>

⁵ <https://www.shantnews.am/news/view/783013.html>

⁶ <https://artsakhombuds.am/sites/default/files/2020-10/Artsakh-Ombudsman-updated-second-interim-report-on-the-Azerbaijani-atrocities-in-September-October-2020-13.10.2020.pdf>

⁷ Eglantyne Jebb, British social reformer who founded the “Save the Children” organisation

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁸, the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the added Protocols⁹, the special Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergencies and Armed Conflicts adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1974¹⁰, and the International Convention of 1989 on the Rights of the Child¹¹ are the examples of legislative efforts to give effective existence to the rights of children in armed conflicts.

But the truth today is that laws during the war are cast aside and children are subjected to bomb attacks on their homes and in their schools and their basic rights continue to be routinely violated. Children, in unrecognized states rightly so, have the right to survive, learn and be safe.

Life and health of children, women and the entire population of Artsakh are still under an imminent and real threat but the international democratic community and especially international human rights organizations remain silent or neutral in situations of injustice. This silence is devastating. Urgent action is needed.

This is an urgent alarm to the international community and international human rights organizations to take urgent, active and effective steps to stop the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Republic of Artsakh and "...to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."¹²

We urge you:

- to monitor and report on the situation of children displaced from Artaskh,
- make a statement to stop azeri aggression and the bombing of civilian homes in Artsakh and Armenia where children are direct target,
- to monitor and report how many children do not have access to education due to Azerbaijani aggression,
- to provide respective assistance and humanitarian aid to children affected by the war.

⁸ <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

⁹ <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/war-and-law/treaties-customary-law/geneva-conventions/overview-geneva-conventions.htm>

¹⁰ https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.19_declaration%20protection%20women%20armed%20conflict.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

¹² United Nations Charter, Preamble, <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/preamble/>

ABOUT COALITION TO STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:

On October 1, 2010, 20-years-old Zaruhi Petrosyan died in the result of severe beatings. After the incident, the organizations concerned with that issue founded the Coalition to Stop Violence against Women (CSVW), which demanded a just investigation and prevention of such incidents. Since 2010, the CSVW acts as a platform for joint advocacy of several local non-governmental organizations in their fight against violence against women in Armenia. Throughout these years, we united our efforts to push for legislative amendments, policy changes, nation-wide awareness raising and campaigning. Elimination of violence and discrimination against women is the responsibility of the State and of the Government of Armenia. This is, unfortunately, an issue with deep roots and a wide scope and unless it is addressed and solved, dignity, human rights and democracy cannot be upheld in Armenia. Our team calls all the stakeholders to join the efforts in combatting violence against women. The “New Armenia”, which we are all trying to build, must be the state where every woman is confident that her rights to be free from violence and discrimination are protected and realized fully.

CSVW MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:



[Women's Support Center](#) (WSC) is working on preventing and responding to domestic violence. It offers confidential comprehensive support to victims of domestic violence and their children also free socio-psychological support, legal and court representation. WSC has 2 safe houses for women and their children.



[Women's Rights Center](#) (WRC) is dealing with the problems of domestic violence against women and providing women survivors with psychological and legal consulting and protection in the court.



[Women's Resource Center](#) (WRC) is a feminist human rights organization with a vision to establish equality and self-determination of women in Armenian society and to eradicate limitations and pressures of all kind women are subjected to within the existing patriarchal societal order.



[Sexual Assault Crisis Center](#) (SACC) is working with women who were sexually abused and provides psychological and legal counseling.



[Society without Violence](#) (SWV) provides gender education to various social and age groups throughout non-formal education; workshops and training sessions and advocates for the establishment of gender-sensitive educational system in formal education.



[Pink Armenia](#) is a human rights defender non-governmental organization founded in 2007. Vision of Pink Armenia is to have a society, where human rights of all are protected and everybody is accepted regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity and/or gender expression. Organization aims to create a safe space for LGBT people by promoting well-being and protection in all spheres of life.



[“Agate” Rights Defense Center for Women](#) with Disabilities advocate the development, adoption and enforcement of inclusive, gender sensitive and human rights-based legislation and policies in Armenia. It is empowering women with disabilities, developing leadership skills and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities to education, independent living, employment and political participation.



[Real World. Real People](#) (RWRP) provides care and support services to people living with HIV and their family members as well as social-psychological support, legal counseling, peer-to-peer counseling.



[Spitak Helsinki Group](#) provides free legal consultation to all citizens as well as free psychological consultation and support to women and children.