

ROBERT MENENDEZ, NEW JERSEY, CHAIRMAN

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, MARYLAND  
JEANNE SHAHEEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE  
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, CONNECTICUT  
TIM Kaine, VIRGINIA  
EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
JEFF MERKLEY, OREGON  
CORY A. BOOKER, NEW JERSEY  
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII  
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND

JAMES E. RISCH, IDAHO  
MARCO RUBIO, FLORIDA  
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN  
MITT ROMNEY, UTAH  
ROB PORTMAN, OHIO  
RAND PAUL, KENTUCKY  
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA  
JOHN BARRASSO, WYOMING  
TED CRUZ, TEXAS  
MIKE ROUNDS, SOUTH DAKOTA  
BILL HAGERTY, TENNESSEE

## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

September 22, 2022

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the renewal of Azerbaijani attacks on Armenian territory, including on civilian infrastructure. These unprovoked and illegal attacks on communities like Kapan, Goris, Jermuk, Vardenis, and Tchakaten, which according to reports killed over 100 Armenians, serve to underscore the brutality of the Aliyev regime. In light of the renewed Azerbaijani aggression, I urge you to halt all security assistance to Azerbaijan and review all assistance programs to the country.

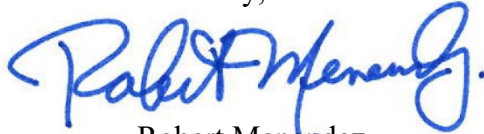
This heinous assault on Armenian territory is only the latest example in a pattern of Azerbaijani brutality. Azerbaijan's aggression during the 2020 Nagorno Karabakh War resulted in the deaths of 6,500 people, and displaced close to 100,000 ethnic Armenians. The State Department highlighted in its 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices the illegal detention of Armenian soldiers and civilians in Baku, and credible reports of unlawful killings and torture by Azerbaijan forces. Aliyev's military has reportedly used illegal cluster munitions and phosphorous bombs, and posted videos of beheadings online. Azerbaijan's unambiguous aggression cannot be tolerated.

The United States must play no part in supporting authoritarian brutality. That is why I will continue to pursue efforts in Congress to eliminate the waiver authority under the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-115) that the Administration has used annually to provide certain kinds of security assistance to the Aliyev regime. However, even under current law, there is more that the State Department is required to do in order to assess the impact of U.S. assistance on the military balance between Armenia and Azerbaijan. I commissioned a Government Accountability Office review of U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan which found that the Department of State failed to meet statutory reporting requirements to Congress on the impact of U.S. assistance during the period considered. While the Department of State has concurred with the GAO on its recommendations to ensure the necessary requirements are met to invoke the waiver, it has not yet provided action plans to the GAO on how it will address this concern.

As we bear witness to Azerbaijan's most recent attack, the Administration must not to minimize the Azerbaijani assault in an effort to appear impartial. President Biden said in his 2022 State of the Union Address, "...when dictators do not pay a price for their aggression, they cause more

chaos.” The United States has an important opportunity to stand with the Armenian people as they attempt to repel an authoritarian assault.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Menendez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Robert Menendez  
Chairman