

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to address the Assembly of States Parties on behalf of the Center for Truth and Justice, and [the International Partnership for Human Rights](#). CFTJ is a US based international human rights organization, documenting atrocity crimes and pursuing accountability for perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations.

Soldiers and civilians were forced to crawl on the floor like animals, slapped, kicked and beaten on their faces and stomachs with sharp metal rods and heavy weapons. An entire population imprisoned for 9 months in an “open” cage to starve to death, without food, water, electricity, & medicine. Women being tortured and mistreated so badly that death must have felt like a gift. Naked bodies on the streets, eyes gouged and replaced with stones, legs and ears cut off. Hours of inhumane and humiliating treatment in prisons, fearing every second could be the last. Executions and beheadings of POWs and civilians followed with the display of heads on dead pigs. 120.000 people forced to escape immediately, coerced by torture, and wilfull killings to abandon their homes and lands. Ghost towns are the sole remnants.

It sounds like a horror movie, but it’s not. Imagine that these terrible atrocities are happening to your fellow citizens, right at your doorstep, in your towns. Tragically, we are “only” talking about the Armenians, who have been systematically persecuted and expelled for decades by the autocratic Republic of Azerbaijan. This dictatorship disregards orders and judgements of the ICJ and ECHR and talks about the Armenians as rats, devils, barbarians, and viruses. It then treats them as such. Most importantly, Aliyev openly declares his territorial ambitions, proclaiming: "I said that [Armenia] is the land of our ancestors, that we must return there, we will return and we are already returning there. **No-one can stop us.**"

Does this sound familiar to you, like the Russian aggression in Ukraine?

The crimes committed against Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and within the sovereign territory of Armenia, have been extensively analysed by numerous organizations, including CFTJ, Freedom House, fact-finding missions, UN Special Rapporteurs and others.

The evidence is irrefutable and overwhelming: Since 2021, Azerbaijan has perpetrated war crimes and crimes against humanity, including persecution and deportation. For the crime of aggression, the case may be considered analogous (anal-a-gus) to the Myanmar/Bangladesh situation, where the ICC ordered an arrest warrant against Myanmar’s military chief. Our database contains the evidence, and a comprehensive legal analysis of the alleged crimes ready for immediate release.

But it is not on us.

It is your responsibility, dear Delegates, to refer the situation to the Office of the Prosecutor for the initiation of a preliminary investigation. It is also incumbent on the distinguished Prosecutor Khan to initiate an investigation.

With Russia’s ongoing war of aggression and its brutal strategy of retribution against those who oppose it, we already have a clear understanding of what awaits Armenians in the situation with Azerbaijan.

We urgently call on you, State Parties, to fulfil your obligations by making a collective referral to the ICC, as the OTP is overwhelmed. Only through this referral will impunity be halted and

accountability enforced, deterring dictator Aliyev from continuing its Armenophobic policies through war crimes and crimes against humanity.

If we continue to deliberately ignore the situation, there's a significant risk of another war of aggression on Europe's eastern border which could lead to an additional 3 million refugees for Europe to address. Unlike other ongoing conflicts, this one is distinctly foreseeable. The time is now.