

Van Nuys is a home away from home to thousands of Armenian-American residents and numerous businesses, which contribute to the well-being of our community on a daily basis.

The Van Nuys Neighborhood Council stands with the Los Angeles City Council in support of our Armenian neighbors, families, coworkers, stakeholders, business owners, and friends to strongly condemn Azerbaijan's egregious attacks against the Republic of Artsakh (also known as Nagorno-Karabakh). The VNNC offers our deepest condolences to the people of Armenia and Artsakh. They bravely defended their homeland against Azerbaijan and Turkish-backed foreign mercenaries, facing devastating drone attacks, and enduring atrocities committed by Azeri forces. We stand with Armenia and Artsakh and reaffirm our continued support for Armenia's democratic government and Artsakh's right to self-determination.

We urge the United States to immediately re-engage in the Minsk Group process, revisiting an agreement signed without the participation or consent of two of the three OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries - the U.S. and France. We also call upon the U.S. to condemn Azerbaijani and Turkish aggression and to sanction their regimes for war crimes.

We have heard our Armenian-American citizens as they cry out for change and visibility and we stood with them as they advocated peacefully for an end to the conflict. We will not sit by silently as our neighbors grieve while the human rights are being violated among their people by Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Liberty and the right to self-determination are core American values and the Van Nuys Neighborhood Council has a moral obligation to stand up and speak out on behalf of the Armenian-American citizens of Van Nuys and their people who lost innocent lives and are being displaced from their home by the tens of thousands.

The VNNC also acknowledges the Armenian Genocide as a matter of American foreign policy and we recognize the 1915 genocide of over 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. This is a fact, one on which there is no debate. The facts of the genocide were recorded in real time by US diplomats who watched the slaughter in horror. It is unfortunate that presidents from both parties, have issued statements that describe the facts of genocide, but stop short of calling it what it was. The denial of the genocide is an enduring wound to the Armenian people who descended from survivors to build lives here in the United States, in Armenia, and around the world.

For far too long, Turkey has been allowed to exercise a veto on the U.S. government's recognition of the genocide. The U.S. government, rather than supporting Turkey's denials, should pressure Turkey to come to terms with its past. A just resolution of the Armenian Genocide would decrease regional tensions, open the door to improved Armenia-Turkey relations, and contribute to an end to the cycle of genocide.

Despite the war waged by Azerbaijan and Turkey in Artsakh, Armenians around the world are one step closer to justice as the Library of Congress announced on October 21, 2020 that it will recognize the Armenian Genocide by amending the catalog entry which previously referred to

the Armenian “massacre.” This change comes after both the House and Senate overwhelmingly passed legislation recognizing the facts of the Armenian Genocide in 2019.

This change is a significant and important one, a further step in overcoming the decades- long campaign of denial that has silenced too many about this dark period of history. And this decision takes on greater importance because of current events. The genocide of a century ago feels all too present for so many families as Azerbaijan and Turkey committed atrocities in Artsakh and Armenia today. Recognizing genocide is not simply a historic issue, it is a message to Presidents Aliyev and Erdogan that this issue will not be silenced.

Although this Community Impact Statement is non-binding, we do not want to see history repeated and urge the American government to intervene. The VNNC stands in solidarity with the Armenian community in Van Nuys, far and wide.