

Sofia Gevorgian

Word count: 1084

Recognizing Artsakh's Path to Stability

Since the establishment of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1918, a single issue has remained in the Caucasus: an issue that continues to threaten the security of Artsakh's citizens, an issue that has fueled three bloody wars and one that will continue claiming lives if action is not immediately taken: the question of the Republic of Artsakh's international status. With Artsakh internationally recognized as Azerbaijani territory despite maintaining an Armenian majority for millenniums, the world has turned a blind eye to this small, yet indigenous, group of Armenians, dismissing mass atrocities committed against Artsakhstis in the name of civil unrest. Though meeting all international requirements to establish a country, Artsakh has yet to be recognized as such, and this uncertainty is causing further deterioration to Artsakh's internal and external stability. However, with a population of eight million people in over one hundred countries, the Armenian diaspora has a great capacity to bring about action, and ultimately, a lasting resolution to the Artsakh conflict. Therefore, in their respective countries, diasporans must encourage and demand their legislatures to recognize Artsakh, for only through recognition will there be an ensured peace, and in turn, growth in our homeland.

The 2020 Artsakh War proved that particularly an international legal protection of the Republic of Artsakh is necessary; because the world does not acknowledge Artsakh as an independent nation, it lacks legal protections offered to sovereign countries, especially in times of war. For instance, international law defines aggression as "the use of armed force by a *State* against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of *another State*" (Rome

Statute of the International Criminal Court Article 8 bis 2). Since Artsakh is considered a part of Azerbaijan, Artsakh's borders are not recognized and cannot legally protect itself. As a result, to the international community, Azerbaijan was resolving an internal, political issue last year and did not attack an established state; under President Ilham Aliyev's command, dozens of Armenians were beheaded, ancient Armenian lands were lost, and religious and cultural monuments were destroyed, but to this day, the International Criminal Court has not prosecuted the Azerbaijani government for these atrocities. The world continues to see Artsakh as nothing more than an illegal separatist region, but recognition will ensure Artsakh peace and justice; because the international law of aggression will be activated against Azerbaijan in future transgressions, Artsakh will be protected from remaining highly susceptible to further human rights violations.

Fortunately, the Armenian diaspora has a larger role in world politics than ever before, as this generation is the most educated group of Armenians; from advancements in the medical field to positions in the White House, Armenians have proven their great abilities to bring forth change. As demonstrated in the past, diasporans who concentrate their efforts on a single cause can have legislation passed that will affect Armenia and Artsakh in the years to come, particularly if that emphasis is on Artsakh's international recognition. As such, in 2001, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) aggressively advocated for a reduction of military aid to Azerbaijan; after the ANCA's extensive lobbying for months, from sending leaflets to making calls, the US government passed Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, "prohibiting the provision of U.S. assistance to the government of Azerbaijan until" Azerbaijan "cease[s] all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh" (Public Law 102-511). Had there not been this major push from the

diaspora, the US government would have no political incentive to cease aiding the Aliyev's dictatorial regime, but since the U.S. diaspora politically united themselves in the name of supporting Armenia, Section 907 was ratified. With this major victory, diasporans saw that their actions regarding politics, even from abroad, directly impact Armenia, so realizing they have strength in numbers, the diaspora must continue collaborating to push for the recognition of Artsakh; since they have the means to bring forth change, diasporans must continue asserting pressure on their respective governments for the passage of Artsakh's recognition.

Upon receiving acknowledgement, Artsakh will have the full opportunity to flourish, for with political stability comes lower emigration rates, more foreign investment, and overall, economic growth. With Artsakh protected against aggression, the people of Artsakh will have the confidence that they are in fact safe and can then comfortably establish their lives at home in Artsakh; with this steady workforce, the economy will consistently stabilize and reach its fullest potential. Additionally, since there will be little-to-no threat of another detrimental war, investors will see Artsakh as a country capable of great success, and this impouring of finances will allow Artsakh to compete on a global scale, thereby raising the living conditions of all Artsakh's citizens back at home. Recognition as a state will also grant Artsakh access "to loans from the World Bank," which will contribute to the elimination of poverty in the region. In addition to receiving grants, Artsakh will have the opportunity to abide by international laws that allow them to participate in the interconnectivity of the world, which would otherwise be infeasible as a de facto state; services like shipping and money transfers will become more cost-effective and efficient, and in the following years, trade agreements will also be established with those around them, allowing Artsakh to finally overcome its economic stagnation and decline and instead become a center of prosperity in the Caucasus (BBC News. 10, October).

With the great importance international recognition holds for this group of Armenians highly susceptible to harm, the diaspora must push their respective governments to acknowledge the Republic of Artsakh as an independent state. As a de facto country dependent on other countries, mainly Russia, for security, Artsakh is especially vulnerable to another war. Furthermore, prosecution on the basis of aggression applies only between two states, so if Artsakh is not considered separate from Azerbaijan, it will have no foreign protection during another crisis. Additionally, recognition will allow Artsakh to establish its own trade agreements and treaties, which will further provide support for this Armenian population. Artsakh has met the requirements to be considered a country, but since the world has no economic interests to be involved in a lasting resolution, Artsakh is consistently ignored. The existence of Artsakh depends on foreign involvement, and since diasporans can speak up for Artsakh, it is imperative they pursue the question of Artsakh status; once the Republic of Artsakh is recognized as a separate entity, it will have the opportunity to join the world community and continue to thrive in the next millennium.

Works Cited

- “Trial of Saddam Hussein.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 14 Apr. 2021,
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trial_of_Saddam_Hussein#Execution.
- “United Nations Security Council and the Iraq War.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 25 Mar. 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council_and_the_Iraq_War.
- “r/Armenia - Questions on Possible US Recognition of Artsakh.” *Reddit*,
www.reddit.com/r/armenia/comments/k6wkqn/questions_on_possible_us_recognition_of_artsakh/.
- “2003 Invasion of Iraq.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 15 Apr. 2021,
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_invasion_of_Iraq.
- “The Crime of Aggression.” *Crime of Aggression | Coalition for the International Criminal Court*,
www.coalitionfortheicc.org/explore/icc-crimes/crime-aggression#:~:text=The%20crime%20of%20aggression%20means,manifest%20violation%20of%20the%20Charter.
- “Section 907.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 19 Nov. 2020,
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Section_907.
- Dr. Mahir Ibrahimov and Erjan Kurbanov. “An Experienced Armenian Lobby Opposes Azerbaijan.” *WRMEA*,
www.wrmea.org/1995-january-february/an-experienced-armenian-lobby-opposes-azerbaijan.html.
- Karapetyan, Araksya. “Exclusive: Eric Hacopian Breaks down War between Armenia and Azerbaijan.” *FOX 11 Los Angeles*, FOX 11 Los Angeles, 20 Nov. 2020,
www.foxla.com/news/exclusive-eric-hacopian-breaks-down-war-between-armenia-and-a

zerbaijan.

“World Bank.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 8 Apr. 2021,

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Bank.

“How Do You Start a Country?” *BBC News*, BBC, 10 Oct. 2017,

www.bbc.com/news/world-40803430#:~:text=the%20ultimate%20prize-,Recognition,to%20economic%20networks%3B%20and%20mechanisms.

Choi, Jieun. “The Costs of Not Being Recognized as a Country: The Case of Kosovo.”

Brookings, Brookings, 16 Nov. 2017,

www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2017/11/16/the-costs-of-not-being-recognized-as-a-country-the-case-of-kosovo/.

“r/Armenia - How Will Artsakh's Economy Be Affected If the World Recognizes Its

Independence?” *Reddit*,

www.reddit.com/r/armenia/comments/mosfdt/how_will_artsakhs_economy_be_affected_if_the/.

“StudentCam Competition.” *StudentCam Competition - Prize Winners*, C-SPAN, 2021, ‘

studentcam.org/sc2021_files/1stPrize-AGBU0418.htm.

Staff, EasyBib. “EasyBib®: Free MLA8 Citation & Bibliography Generator.” *EasyBib*, Chegg, 1

Jan. 2021, www.easybib.com/mla8/source.