



2021 FEDERAL ELECTION

ANCC POLICY PRIORITIES

OTTAWA - 2021 // ARMENIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF CANADA



ABOUT ANCC

The Armenian National Committee of Canada (ANCC) is the largest and most influential Armenian Canadian grassroots political organization. Working in coordination with a network of offices, chapters and supporters throughout Canada and affiliated organizations around the world, the ANCC actively advances the concerns of the Armenian Canadian community on a broad range of issues.

The primary goals of the ANCC are:

- To foster public awareness in support of a free, united and independent Armenia;
- To influence and guide Canadian policy on matters of interest to the Armenian-Canadian community;
- To represent the collective Armenian Canadian viewpoint on issues of public policy, while serving as the liaison between the community and its elected officials.

The Armenian National Committee of Canada is active in a number of areas and engages in a wide variety of political and educational activities, including:

- Initiating legislation on issues of concern to the Armenian Canadian community, such as strengthening Armenia as a secure, prosperous and democratic state; supporting the Republic of Artsakh right to self-determination and independence within secure borders; promoting economic and democratic development; ensuring the appropriate commemoration of the Armenian Genocide; and encouraging Turkey and Azerbaijan to lift their blockades and adhere to international standards for human rights and humanitarian practices.
- Participating in the Canadian electoral process at the federal, provincial, and local levels by educating elected officials about Armenian-Canadian issues and providing voters with up-to-date information about the positions of candidates on Armenian-Canadian concerns. The ANCC regularly endorses candidates and organizes voter drives.
- Publishing testimony, position papers, press releases, fact sheets, and newsletters.





RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARTSAKH

RECOGNIZE THE REPUBLIC OF ARTSAKH AND UPHOLD ITS RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

- The November 9, 2020 trilateral ceasefire announcement between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia left many issues unresolved, the most important of which is the final political status of the Republic of Artsakh. Without a status that recognizes the independence of the Republic of Artsakh and its people's inalienable right to self-determination, the very existence of the indigenous Armenian population is threatened. The undetermined status of the Republic of Artsakh will only serve the destabilizing interests of Turkey and Azerbaijan and further embolden them to carry out military operations and eliminate the remaining Armenian population from the area. As a measure of the doctrine of "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) and by virtue of its authorization of the sale of drone technology to Turkey - which was used to commit atrocities against Armenians - Canada, along with the rest of the international community must take decisive action to implement substantial remedial measures, adopt a principled stance regarding the adoption of a permanent political status and recognize the full independence of the Republic of Artsakh.

ENFORCE A FULL BAN ON CANADIAN ARMS SALES TO TURKEY AND AZERBAIJAN

- Despite Global Affairs Canada's October 2019 moratorium on arms sales to Turkey - in the spring of 2020 - Canada exempted the export of L3Harris/WESCAM drone technology to Ankara. Soon after Azerbaijan declared war against the Republic of Artsakh in September 2020, Canadian-made WESCAM drone avionics were found on the Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 drones which illegally targeted civilians, churches, hospitals and schools in Artsakh. As has been demonstrated repeatedly, the Turkish and Azerbaijani regimes are adamant on using such weaponry to perpetuate regional instability, by threatening the peace and security of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh. Canada should not run the risk of becoming complicit in Turkish-Azerbaijani war crimes, by contributing to the expansion of their military arsenals. The sales of dangerous weaponry to a rogue state such as Turkey and Azerbaijan violate the very basic norms of Canada's arms exports regulations and pose a significant danger to domestic and regional stability. In observance of Canada's stated priorities regarding arms exports, namely preserving regional peace and security, and protecting human rights, the ANCC urges the government to go beyond cancelations and enforce a full ban on arms sales to Ankara and Baku, coupled with crippling economic sanctions aimed at containing Turkish-Azerbaijani aggression.



SUPPORT THE FULL RE-ENGAGEMENT OF THE OSCE MINSK GROUP CO-CHAIRS

- The ANCC strongly supports the peaceful resolution of the Artsakh conflict through the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship, strongly rejecting a resumption of hostilities and Azerbaijan's continuous aggression towards Artsakh. The trilateral (Armenia, Azerbaijan & Russia) ceasefire announcement of November 9, 2020, was signed without the participation or consent of two of the three OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries – the U.S. and France. The agreement forced on the Armenian side is not the result of the OSCE Minsk Group process – which has the international mandate to address status and security issues related to the Republic of Artsakh. Canada, through its participation in the OSCE must encourage the full re-engagement of the OSCE Minsk group Co-Chairs to find a lasting solution to the conflict, based on the principles of none use of force and self-determination.

PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN AID TO THE REPUBLICS OF ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH

- Aside from causing significant human casualties, the joint Turkish-Azerbaijani aggression against the Republic of Artsakh created an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the region. With thousands of people displaced and many others deprived of basic humanitarian needs, the region is in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Canada must work with the Republic of Armenia, Artsakh and other allies to provide additional aid to address humanitarian needs, alleviate the horrific consequences of the war and help in rebuilding the critical civilian infrastructure intentionally destroyed by the aggressors.

ADVOCATE FOR THE SAFE RETURN OF ARMENIAN POW'S AND THE PRESERVATION OF ARMENIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

- The November 9, 2020 ceasefire announcement specifically included a term relating to the return of Prisoners of War and exchange of the remains of fatalities. Despite such provision, a large number of Armenian Prisoners of War (POW) remain in Azerbaijani custody, without any mechanisms in place to ensure their safe return. International organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross have been tasked to facilitate the return of POW's, however, due to the malicious unwillingness of the Azerbaijani government to cooperate, they have not had much success. Following the end of hostilities, Azerbaijan has also destroyed or threatened to destroy Armenian religious and cultural sites and monuments, as well as attempting to erase evidence of the historical presence of Armenian people on the territories described in the ceasefire agreement as being returned to Azerbaijan. Thus far, Azerbaijan has refused to cooperate with UNESCO and other international authorities to determine the status of Armenian cultural sites. Canada must work with international partners and multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations, to hold Turkey and Azerbaijan accountable for their war crimes and apply the necessary pressure on the Azerbaijani government to cooperate in immediately returning POW's, provide all required information regarding missing personnel and commit to safeguarding the cultural heritage of the Armenian people.



STRONGER CANADA- ARMENIA RELATIONS

ESTABLISH A CANADIAN EMBASSY IN YEREVAN

- Canada is the only G7 country that is not permanently represented in Armenia. To substantially advance Canada-Armenia relations and build on the momentum created by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's visit to Armenia in October 2018, it is crucial for Canada to establish a permanent diplomatic mission in Yerevan. The establishment of a permanent mission will serve mutual interests in various realms, especially in increasing trade volume between the two countries. Canada represents an ideal partner in reinforcing Armenia's international engagement and enhance political ties and promote and protect Canada's and Canadians' wide-ranging interests in Armenia and the wider South Caucasus. The establishment of a permanent Canadian diplomatic mission in Yerevan is key to the realization of this effort.

SUPPORT ARMENIA'S SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

- Following Azerbaijan's Turkish-backed aggression against the Republic of Artsakh last year (2020), Azerbaijan has continuously threatened the resumption of hostilities, making unfounded territorial claims against the Republic of Armenia. Beginning on May 12, 2021, Azerbaijani forces invaded the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia and since then, they have continuously disrupted the already fragile ceasefire in the region. Daily skirmishes along the entire Armenian-Azerbaijani border are recorded almost on daily basis, resulting in various casualties. As a full member of the OSCE, Canada must take concrete steps to protect and advocate for Armenia's territorial integrity and sovereignty and work alongside other members of the international community to establish an internationally sanctioned security zone along the entirety of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border.

STRENGTHEN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN ARMENIA

- Since gaining independence in 1991, Armenia has shown outstanding commitment to strengthening its democratic standards, becoming an exemplary model in a region marred by backwardness and authoritarianism. With the current wave of changes in Armenia, Canada can play a crucial role in assisting Armenia's commitment to stronger democratic standards and important social justice issues, by; 1) Strengthening Armenia's parliamentary system of governance by promoting more rigorous oversight and accountability measures, 2) Promote efforts to depoliticize the police and the army, 3) Help Armenia establish a robust code of conduct in its military and civil service, 4) Promote efforts to secure full judicial independence in the country, 5) Ensure that the opposition in the country continues to play its parliamentary role in an unhindered fashion, believing that the key to a strong democracy is a strong opposition, 6) Promote the work of the Parliamentary Centre and ensure that they engage with all political parties represented in Parliament, 7) Increase the budget for the "Arnold Chan Initiative for Democracy in Armenia" and ensure that all funds are contributing to projects that have a direct positive impact on the population, 8) Promote public engagement and consultation in reform processes.

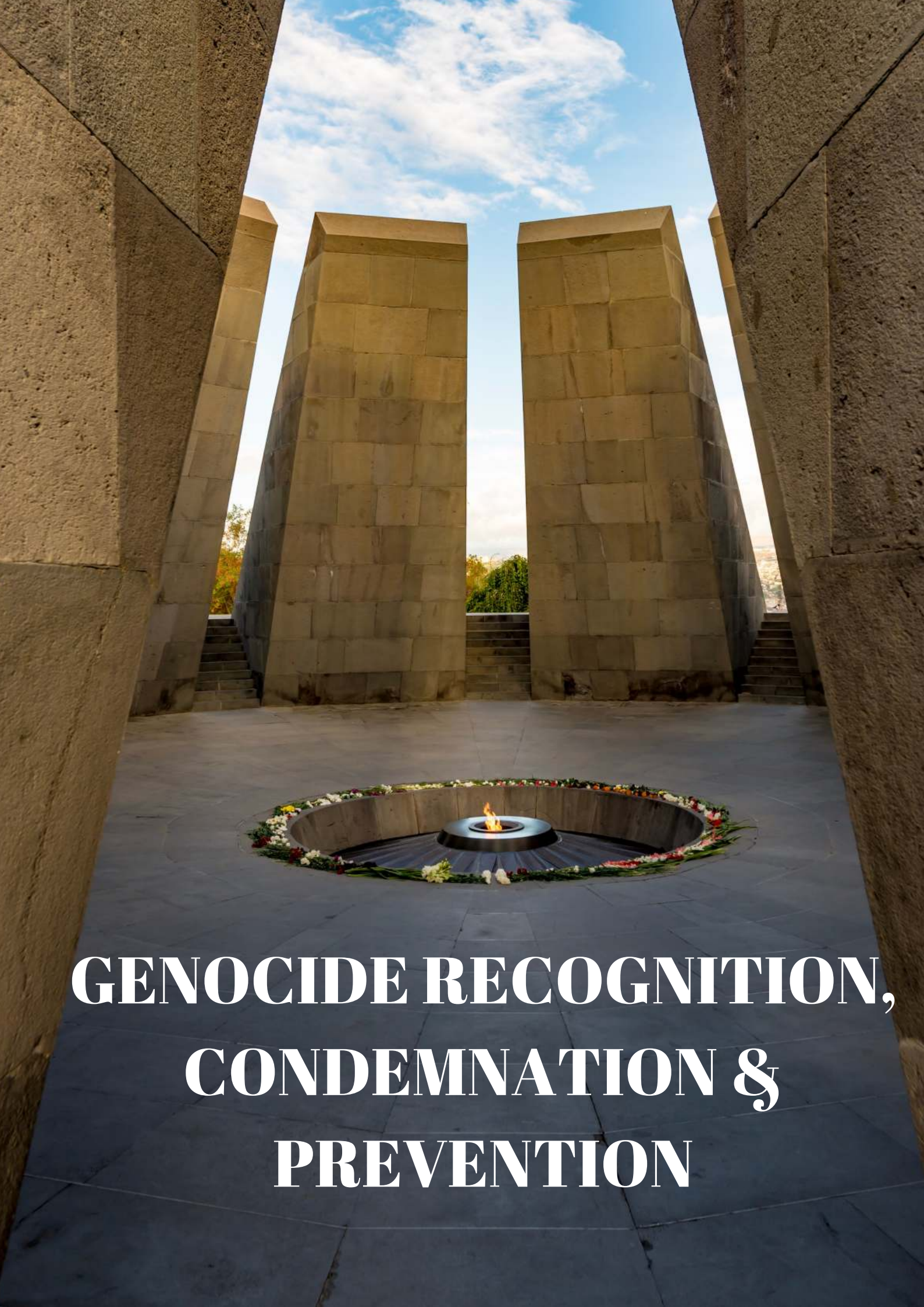
INVEST IN ARMENIA

- As a part of Canada's commitment to significantly deepen the bilateral relations between Canada and Armenia and help Armenia consolidate its democratic progress, strategic investments in key sectors and directions are crucial. Introducing a robust investment and development assistance program in Armenia will support efforts to stabilize and develop the economy, help reduce corruption and the vulnerability of citizens. This could be done through targeted investments in small to medium-sized enterprises, the health and education sectors and the country's infrastructure system. Such investments will promote a stronger and more resilient society that is committed to inclusive governance and equitable conditions for all citizens.

INITIATE A BILATERAL FREE-TRADE AGREEMENT

- A free-trade agreement between Canada and Armenia will establish a comprehensive framework between the two countries and it will facilitate a more consistent flow of trade and investments, hence, strengthening the bilateral ties between the countries and promoting more international trade. Over the last few years, Armenia's investment climate has consistently been ranked favorably by international agencies such as the Heritage Foundation and the World Bank. With various investment-friendly legislation and by its participation in the Eurasian Union (population 180 million), Armenia can serve as a gateway for Canadian businesses expanding into Eurasia and the Greater Middle East, providing a business-friendly, Western-oriented, English-speaking base for enterprises to reach large nearby markets.





**GENOCIDE RECOGNITION,
CONDEMNATION &
PREVENTION**

URGE THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO RECOGNIZE ITS DARK PAST

- Justice for the Armenian Genocide will not be served until the current Turkish government recognizes the crimes of its past and delivers a just resolution to the victims and descendants of the Armenian Genocide. The ANCC strongly advocates for a fair and comprehensive reparations package to the Armenian people, who lost nearly all their material and cultural wealth during the Genocide of 1915-23. Canada, along with other advanced western countries, can exert the necessary pressure on Turkish authorities to recognize its past and look forward to building a more open and harmonious relationship with Armenia and Armenians around the world.

ADVOCATE FOR IMPROVED TURKEY-ARMENIA RELATIONS, WITHOUT TURKISH PRE-CONDITIONS

- A just resolution of the Armenian Genocide would decrease regional tensions, open the door to improved Armenia-Turkey relations, help reform Turkey into a pluralist and tolerant society, and contribute to putting an end to the cycle of genocide. However, none of this can take place if Turkey cannot come to terms with its past, while continuing to impose pre-conditions on opening its border with Armenia.

DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

- Ensure that the rights of Christians and other ethno-religious minorities are upheld in Turkey and the Middle East. Through its participation in various international organizations, such as the United Nations, Canada should stand up for the rights of minorities in the region, address the issues facing these populations, condemn any discrimination and persecution, and allocate local funding to help build and empower communities in Turkey and the Middle East.



SUPPORTING ARMENIANS IN JAVAKHK

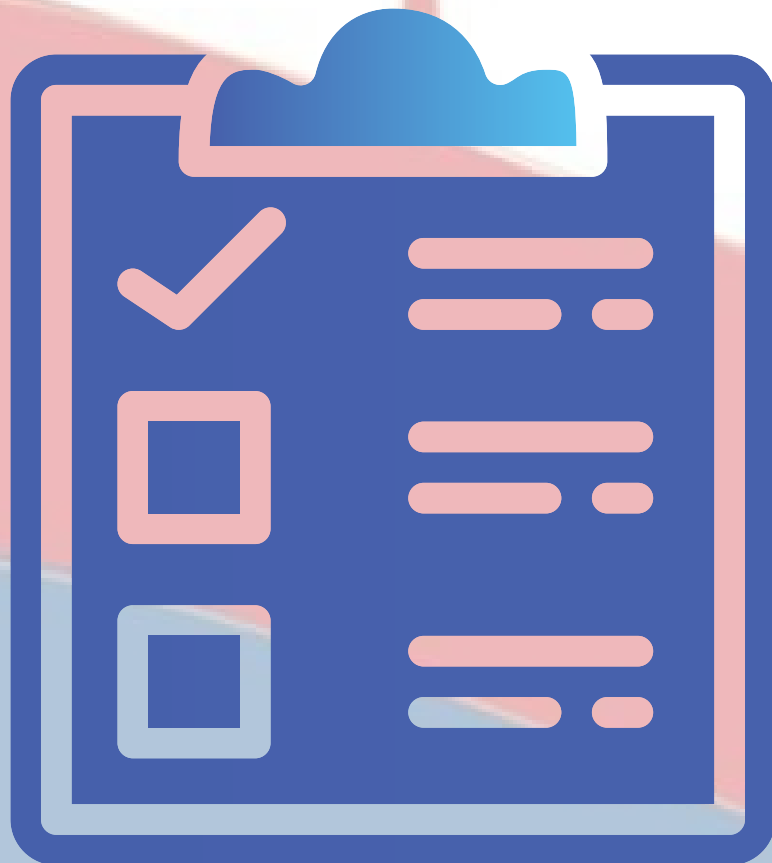
SUPPORT THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF ARMENIANS IN SAMTSKHE-JAVAKHETI REGION OF GEORGIA

- Samtskhe-Javakheti is one of 12 administrative regions (provinces) in Georgia. An area of 6,400km², it is located in the southern part of the country, bordering Armenia and Turkey. Armenians constitute 55% of the total population of Samtskhe-Javakheti, and are currently facing grave economic hardship, due to the isolation, and forced assimilation policies adopted by the central Georgian government. The economic well-being, civic engagement, and healthy social development of the Armenian population of Javakhk represent essential steps to a unified, independent, and democratic Georgia that both respects pluralism and promotes local self-government. The ANCC advocates for granting the region an autonomous territorial unit status within a federal Georgia with proper representation in state institutions. The use of the Armenian language in public administration, respecting the rights of the Armenian majority in the region and the end to social engineering efforts to settle ethnic Georgians in the areas populated by Armenians are equally essential to maintain the identity of the local ethnic Armenian population.

COMBATTING HATE & RACISM IN CANADA

SUPPORT THE ADOPTION OF A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT ONLINE & OFFLINE HATE

- The Government of Canada should launch a national strategy to combat online hate, by investing more in national programs of education and prevention and by working with various web-providing partners to identify, track, and prevent such discourse from being disseminated in the online world. The ANCC also encourages the Canadian government to provide consistent and additional funding to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights to expand its educational programs and to provide support for advocacy organizations as well as resettlement groups to help them in refugee integration programs.



OUR ASKS

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARTSAKH

- *Recognize the Republic of Artsakh and uphold its right to self-determination*
- *Enforce a full ban on Canadian arms sales to Turkey and Azerbaijan*
- *Support the full re-engagement of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs*
- *Provide humanitarian aid to the republics of Armenia and Artsakh*
- *Advocate for the safe return of Armenian POW's and the preservation of Armenian cultural heritage*

STRONGER CANADA-ARMENIA RELATIONS

- *Establish a Canadian Embassy in Armenia.*
- *Support Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity*
- *Strengthen democratic institutions in Armenia*
- *Invest in key sectors of the country's economy to promote better governance and a more equitable and resilient society*
- *Initiate a free-trade agreement between Canada and Armenia and encourage the application of direct foreign investments and the exchange of technological innovation with Armenia.*

GENOCIDE RECOGNITION, CONDEMNATION & PREVENTION

- *Urge the Turkish government to come to terms with its past and recognize the Armenian Genocide*
- *Improved Turkey-Armenia relations, without Turkish pre-conditions*
- *Defend the fundamental rights of Christians and other religious minorities in Turkey and other parts of the Middle East*
- *Support events and various educational programs across Canada, during Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation and Prevention Month (April).*

SUPPORTING ARMENIANS IN JAVAKHK

- *Extended protection and basic human rights to the Armenian population of the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of southern Georgia.*
- *Support civic engagement programs and the healthy social development of the Armenian population of Javakhk, through job-creation and poverty reduction initiatives.*

COMBATting HATE AND RACISM IN CANADA

- *Adopt a national strategy to combat hate online and offline.*



CONNECT WITH US...



Working in coordination with a network of offices, chapters, and supporters and affiliated organizations throughout Canada, the ANCC actively advances the concerns of the Armenian-Canadian community on a broad range of issues and works to eliminate abuses of human rights throughout Canada and the world.

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