



WEA STATEMENT ON COP29 COVER FOR ETHNIC CLEANSING

NOVEMBER 29, 2024

As Christian leaders dedicated to climate justice and protection of the environment, we are committed to the work that the UN Climate Change conference is intended to promote. We believe this is our vocation as Christians, and an essential part of our witness in this world.

At the same time, we are profoundly disturbed by the fact that this year's UN Climate Change Conference, COP29, is being hosted in the capital city of a state that barely one year ago ethnically cleansed 120,000 Armenian Christians from their homeland of Nagorno Karabakh.

We remember in prayer the 23 Armenian hostages being held in prisons not far from the site of COP29, as well as the hundreds of Azerbaijani political prisoners still in detention, many of whom were arrested in the leadup to COP29.

We deplore the use of the UN Climate Change Conference to “greenwash” Azerbaijan’s aggression and ethnic cleansing of one of the oldest Christian communities in the world, to cover up the continued displacement and persecution of our Armenian brothers and sisters, and to erase their history by demolishing their churches, cemeteries and villages.

We call on the government of Azerbaijan to make good on its pledge of a “COP of Peace” by unconditionally and immediately releasing all of the Armenian hostages and Azerbaijani political prisoners it is currently holding. We furthermore call on Azerbaijan to contribute to a lasting peace in the region, by facilitating the safe return of the Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh to their homeland and respecting their right to self-determination.

We also call on all states participating in COP29 to raise these issues directly with the government of Azerbaijan.

We unilaterally condemn ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, and political detention wherever and whenever they take place, and call upon states to withdraw their support for these atrocities in all contexts.

COP29 Attendee Signatories: Elsa Barron, Brian Webb, Jeremy Lowney, Ned Remington, Joel Light, Aislynn Patrick, Tony Bruskiwicz, and Beatrice Shackelford.