

Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 56th Session

Quadrennial panel discussion on promoting human rights through sport and the Olympic Ideal

Delivered by Mr. Joel Veldkamp

Christian Solidarity International shares the IOC's view that "sporting bodies have human rights responsibilities."

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine two years ago, the IOC took the extraordinary step of excluding the Russian and Belarussian national teams from the 2024 Olympics.

Yet, it has taken no action against Azerbaijan following Azerbaijan's illegal blockade and military campaign against the indigenous Armenian Christians of Nagorno Karabakh, which resulted in the expulsion of the entire population from their homeland last September.

Azerbaijan still holds dozens of Armenians hostage, and threatens further military action against the Republic of Armenia.

These acts were conducted under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, who also serves as the president of the Azerbaijan National Olympic Committee.

Elected representatives of the forcibly displaced people of Nagorno Karabakh have issued an appeal to the IOC to exclude Azerbaijan's flag and national team from the upcoming Olympic games in Paris, with Azerbaijani athletes welcome to compete as neutrals. CSI supports this appeal and urges the IOC and the world of sport more generally to disassociate from the current President of the Azerbaijan National Olympic Committee.

Excluding Azerbaijan from the Olympics would send the correct message: the international world of sport will not condone and ignore egregious violations of human rights.

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