



**Executive Council of  
Australian Jewry**

## **Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh**

**6 October 2020**

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (the ECAJ), the peak representative body of the Australian Jewish community, has been following reports of fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh, known locally as Artsakh, with growing concern. The ECAJ deplores the state-sanctioned incitement of racial and religious hatred wherever and whenever it occurs. Many civilians have already been killed, and the UN has so far failed to halt the fighting.

Artsakh is populated mainly by highland people of ethnic Armenian background. Armenian culture and the Armenian Apostolic Church are central to the country's long and rich history. Following an overwhelming vote by its people in 1991, Artsakh declared its independence.

At the time it achieved independence, the right of Artsakh to exist as a State was violently contested by way of a military attack upon it by neighbouring Azerbaijan. Artsakh won its fight for independence and has been a stable and successful democratic State ever since.

Now, for a second time, Azerbaijan has initiated military force, with the backing of Turkey's Erdogan government, with the declared aim of destroying Artsakh as an independent State. The Azerbaijan government has also stepped up incitement of racial and religious hatred against the Armenian people, and promised to divide up the spoils of conquest among Azerbaijanis once Artsakh is militarily defeated and occupied, with the consequent threat to the existing local population.

Given the history of Ottoman Turkey's systematic mass murder and expulsion of 1.5 million ethnic Armenians during the Armenian genocide between 1914 and 1923, this latest move by the Erdogan government of Turkey against the same ethnic group is especially concerning.

We express our solidarity with our friends and colleagues in the Armenian community in Australia. Many Australian Armenians have family in the region and are understandably distressed by recent events.

We call on all governments to do everything in their power to discourage the latest military assault upon Artsakh, and to raise their voices and demand an immediate halt to it.

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