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**Press Release**

**A wish to finally see all Armenian prisoners of war released  
for the 30th anniversary of the declaration of independence of Nagorno Karabakh**

The 2nd September 2021 marks the 30th anniversary of the declaration of independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) Republic, but due to the devastating war of 2020 and the pandemic, the celebration of this event is this year difficult and painful.

In the aftermath of the violent conflict that shook the region, the Nagorno Karabakh Friendship Group in the European Parliament would like to seize the opportunity of this special occasion to express its strong support to Artsakh's people and to urge once again Azerbaijan to release prisoners of war of Nagorno Karabakh immediately. It urges as well the Council and the Commission to continue using all means to put pressure on Azerbaijan to do so after the few achievements registered so far and lastly in June.

These last months, the Friendship Group in the European Parliament launched several actions to increase awareness and discuss the different issues of Artsakh in the European institutions.

The Friendship sent written questions to VPHR Josep Borrell about the situation of the POWs and, in May, due to the strong efforts of the EP-Friendship Group on Armenian Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh), the European Parliament had a debate and an urgency resolution on the situation of the Armenian POWs, still in the hands of Azerbaijan despite a ceasefire was signed in November 2020. Proofs of torture and inhumane treatment have been collected.

The debate during the European Parliament's plenary was intense and emotional, especially for the families of the POWs, who have not received any information about or from them, and the POWs themselves. A large majority of Members of the European Parliament has voted in favour of the resolution, in which a strong appeal to release the POWs was stated.

The Nagorno Karabakh Friendship Group in the European Parliament remains mobilized to keep the pressure in order to free the Armenian prisoners of war.

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