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EXTENSION OF REMARKS IN RECOGNITION OF THE VICTIMS OF THE SUMGAIT
POGROMS

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Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the Sumgait pogroms, one of the most horrific attacks against the Armenian people committed by the hands of Azerbaijanis 31 years ago today.

On February 27, 1988, hundreds of Armenian civilians living in the city of Sumgait in Azerbaijan were indiscriminately killed, raped, maimed, and even burned alive for no reason other than their ethnicity. This senseless violence was instigated by hostile, anti-Armenian rhetoric from Azerbaijani citizens and officials against innocent Armenians.

For over three decades, Azerbaijan has taken steps to cover up these crimes against humanity and dismiss the atrocities at Sumgait. Even more disturbing is that the perpetrators of this event and similar violent attacks have since been lauded as national heroes by the Azerbaijani government.

It is critical for the United States government to recognize and denounce violent assaults against civilians. That is why I continue to stand with the Armenian people in condemning this horrific massacre. Tragically, the Azerbaijani government's approach toward the Armenian people has not changed much since the Sumgait pogroms were initiated. We still hear the same violent rhetoric and witness the intimidation tactics aimed at the people of the Republic of Artsakh.

If we do not condemn crimes against humanity and allow them to go unpunished and unrecognized we only strengthen the resolve of those seeking to perpetrate these crimes in the future. It is especially critical to consider this as we prepare to commemorate the 104th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in April.

I will continue to work with my colleagues on the Congressional Armenian Issues Caucus to remember the victims of the pogroms at Sumgait and condemn all acts of violence against people who are targeted simply because of their existence. I hope my colleagues will join me in rejecting violent rhetoric and intimidation and renewing our commitment to achieving a collective peace.