



To Dr. Robert Banks:

We hope this correspondence finds you well. We, the USC Armenian Students Association, are reaching out to express deep concern about an event that was recently brought to our attention.

On September 29, the USC Master of Public Diplomacy program is co-sponsoring an event titled “Türkiye conference: The role of public diplomacy in Turkish foreign policy” featuring the Turkish Ambassador to the United States, Hasan Murat Mercan, as a keynote speaker.

We are writing to request that out of respect for the approximately 1,000 Armenian-American students on USC’s campus, the event be immediately canceled in light of [the recent events in Nagorno-Karabakh](#), which are being labeled a “[genocide](#)” against its ethnic Armenian population by the international community. USC’s Global Policy Institute hosted a [crisis briefing](#) regarding the humanitarian catastrophe and the USC Shoah Foundation has released a [statement](#) about the threat of genocide in the region.

Turkey’s position and direct role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are highly condemnable. At the UN General Assembly this week, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke [in support](#) of Azerbaijan’s military offensive, which U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called “[unacceptable](#)” that same day. The day following Azerbaijan’s military attacks against the civilian population of Nagorno-Karabakh, which left at least 200 dead, 400 injured and 10,000 displaced, Turkish Defense Minister Yashar Guler [congratulated](#) Azerbaijan for its military operation. A U.S. Congressional delegation led by Senator Gary Peters (D-MI) in Armenia is monitoring the situation. Additionally, Ambassador Mercan directly [upholds](#) Turkey’s policy of Armenian Genocide denial, while U.S. President Joe Biden [recognized](#) the Genocide in 2021.

An event celebrating how “Turkey uses public diplomacy to enhance its global image and support its foreign policy,” which entails genocide, is highly insensitive to the USC student community, USC staff and faculty who are of Armenian descent, and broader Armenian-American community in Los Angeles, as many grieve the loss of friends and family and grapple with these traumatic events. We have already received messages of concern from several members of our community and outside organizations. In the case the event is not canceled, we will go public with this letter to advocate for the concerns of our community.

We look forward to your response and appreciate your consideration of our request.

Thank you and best regards,
USC Armenian Students Association