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PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

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18 01 2023

Excellency,

I consider it extremely important to draw your attention to the fact that it has been more than a month that Azerbaijan is blocking the Lachin Corridor – which is the only route connecting Nagorno Karabakh to Armenia and thus the only lifeline to the rest of the world.

The blocking of the Lachin Corridor, which is under the control of the Russian peacekeeping contingent, constitutes a gross violation of the international obligations assumed by the Trilateral Statement of November 9, 2020, which states that “The Republic of Azerbaijan shall guarantee safe movement of citizens, vehicles and cargo in both directions along the Lachin Corridor.”

As a result of this action, 120.000 Armenian residents of Nagorno Karabakh are now effectively under siege. The blockade and isolation of thousands of people causes a dire humanitarian situation and creates existential threat for the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh. The humanitarian crisis in Nagorno Karabakh is worsening with each passing day. During the severe weather conditions, the people of Nagorno Karabakh are deprived of vital supplies of medicine, food and fuel from the outside world. Provision of healthcare and social services has been obstructed, causing life-threatening situations and human suffering. Shortage of food and other essential goods is becoming more and more noticeable; as every day more than 400 tons of supplies remain undelivered. The danger of malnutrition is becoming more palpable. 41 kindergartens and 20 schools are closed. Thousands of children are deprived from their right to education.

Moreover, this blockade prevents the free movement of the Nagorno Karabakh population. At least 1.100 civilians have been stranded along the blocked highway for the past weeks, unable to return to their homes. Children have been separated from their families. 270 minor children have to find temporary shelter across Armenia, while their parents and relatives remain in Artsakh in isolation.

This siege is nothing than a vivid continuation of Azerbaijan’s consistent policy of ethnic cleansing attempted through pressuring the population of Nagorno Karabakh to achieve their forced displacement. Such an infliction of a collective punishment upon the people of Nagorno Karabakh constitutes an existential threat to them should they be left alone vis-a-vis the Azerbaijani aggressive policy.

H.E. MR. SØREN GADE
SPEAKER OF THE FOLKETING
KINGDOM OF DENMARK
Copenhagen

Despite the claims by the authorities of Azerbaijan that the Lachin Corridor is open, the corridor in fact remains effectively closed, since only by the vehicles of the International Committee of the Red Cross the limited number of patients in the event of life-threatening situations are allowed to be transported to the Republic of Armenia.

On 9 January, 2023, amid the ongoing Azeri blockade of the Lachin Corridor, the only high-voltage power line supplying Nagorno Karabakh with electricity from Armenia was damaged. Azerbaijan has barred repair crews from accessing the area of damage.

On 10 January, 2023, during the interview with local TV channels, the President of Azerbaijan spoke about the Lachin Corridor blockade and said that the action will continue until the demands of Baku are met. "Whoever doesn't want to become our citizens can leave, the road is open. They can go by the cars of the [Russian] peacekeepers, by buses, no one will impede them", - stressed Aliyev.

On January 12, 2023, the Azerbaijani side deliberately cut the cables coming from Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh, disrupting the access to telecommunications and fixed Internet connection in Nagorno-Karabakh. The area where the cable was damaged is exactly the same place where the "activists" of Azerbaijan are located in the Lachin Corridor. Internet connection was disrupted for two days.

Today Nagorno Karabakh lives in the conditions of isolation, with extreme shortage of electricity, without access to services and goods vital for life.

The present blockade is designed to, in the words of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, "deliberately inflict conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group in whole or in part."

Number of governments, including France and the United States, alongside the European Union, the European Parliament and numerous national parliaments, the UN, human rights watchdogs, prominent international organizations dealing with genocide issues condemned this unlawful and hostile act and have called for the immediate and unconditional unblocking of the corridor.

Under these circumstances, we highlight the importance of the strong international consensus on immediate and unconditional unblocking of the Lachin Corridor which can secure the restoration of safe, and unimpeded connection between Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh.

Once again emphasizing the determination of the Armenian side to build peace and stability in the region, we urge our international partners to take adequate measures to prevent the unfolding dire situation in Nagorno Karabakh, to stop the humanitarian catastrophe.

Sincerely,



ALEN SIMONYAN