



December 23, 2022

H.E. Mrs. Ruchira Kamboj
President of the UN Security Council

Mr. Volker Türk
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ms. Mirjana Spoljaric Egger
President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Ms. Catherine Russell
Executive Director of UNICEF

Re: Humanitarian Crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh

Dear Honorable Excellency Ruchira Kamboj, Honorable Volker Türk, Honorable Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, and Honorable Catherine Russell:

We write on behalf of the 30,000 children who are trying to survive in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh).¹ Azerbaijan has trapped them under its heavy heel and these most vulnerable members of the human race remain under complete siege. As you have undoubtedly heard, they have been wholly isolated since December 12, 2022, deprived of the only road that links them to food, supplies, and other necessities of life, including medicine.

The Lachin Corridor,² the lone land route connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to the Republic of Armenia, is blocked by provocateurs masquerading as Azerbaijani environmentalists but chanting their indubitable intention to the beleaguered Armenians: "Karabagh is Azerbaijani." Many of these so-called "environmentalists" have been exposed to be agents of the repressive Azerbaijani regime.³ As of today, that crucial road remains impassable. While Azerbaijan also cut off the gas supply to Nagorno-Karabakh for several days in freezing temperatures, for the time being at least, it has been restored.

Azerbaijan's blockade is being wielded as a political lever by the Aliyev regime and it has already created a humanitarian crisis that endangers the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable in society (notably the children and elderly). This undue duress is also imposed with the intent to

¹ Nagorno-Karabakh is an enclave that was part of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic but populated overwhelmingly by ethnic Armenians. Because of discrimination by Soviet Azerbaijani authorities, Nagorno-Karabakh exercised its right under Soviet law to secede from Soviet Azerbaijan in 1991. While its sovereign status has been disputed by Azerbaijan, we do not address that issue here to focus on the current urgent humanitarian crisis.

² Based on a 10 November 2020 ceasefire statement between the Republic of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation, Nagorno-Karabakh was left to be connected to the outside world by a sole road, which was to be protected from Azerbaijan by a peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation. Under that statement, there was to be "road safety along the Lachin corridor of citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions."

³ [Aliyev's Puppet Eco-Activists: Who Blocked the Lachin Corridor Leading to Artsakh? - FIP.AM](#)

paralyze the functioning of administrative and civil infrastructures (schools, hospitals, hospices) in Nagorno-Karabakh and to terrorize the Armenians living there. It really must be stopped.

All of the medicine in Nagorno-Karabakh must travel through the barricaded road. Dire shortages have already been registered, hospitals have suspended their planned procedures to preserve scarce supplies for new emergency patients, and there have been reported casualties owing to these privations. In addition, 270 children are separated from their parents, who were temporarily outside of Nagorno-Karabakh when the road was blocked and now cannot return to their homes.

More information about the illegal blockade is readily accessible in the following resources:

- [Karabakh-Armenia Road Still Blocked By Azerbaijan \(azatutyun.am\)](#)
- [Supplies begin to run low as Nagorno-Karabakh blockade continues | Eurasianet](#)
- [Humanitarian crisis in Karabakh worsens, Azerbaijan continues region's blockade for 8th day - CIVILNET](#)
- [The Lachin Corridor: A Looming Humanitarian Catastrophe - EVN Report](#)
- <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CmarVg3j0pR/?igshid=NDk5N2NIZjQ=>
- <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CmZcAnMIMUb/?igshid=NDk5N2NIZjQ=>
- <https://www.instagram.com/reel/CmY3Imuliar/?igshid=NDk5N2NIZjQ=>

This blockade is clearly a ploy by Azerbaijan to exploit the Armenian population as hostages to achieve political demands. Eurasianet recently reported:

Baku is not prepared to wait indefinitely on its demands for the handover of the Zangezur Corridor and the disbanding of Karabakh Armenian forces, a senior Azerbaijani official told Eurasianet. "Diplomatic options have almost been exhausted," the official said on condition of anonymity. "What if we were to install a [border] post at the entrance of Lachin and finish the whole process? How can you breathe with no air?"⁴

With its inimical actions, Azerbaijan has violated the rights of the children of Nagorno-Karabakh under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These include the right to available education (Art. 28), the right of access to health care services (Art. 24), and the right not to be separated from one's parents against their will (Art. 9). Azerbaijan has also breached its obligation under Article 38 to respect the applicable rules of international humanitarian law relevant to the child and to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.

We appealed last week to the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child to intercede but have not, to date, received a response. This week, the Security Council members condemned the blockade, but the corridor has still not been reopened. Recent reports show shortages of [flour](#) and [fruits and vegetables](#). A [pediatric neurologist](#) from Armenia who is now in Nagorno-Karabakh notes that children who have epilepsy are [running low on medication](#). Many specialists need to travel through the Lachin corridor to provide services in Artsakh and cannot travel.

In addition to asking for the immediate, unconditional and unfettered opening of the Lachin Corridor, we ask that you take steps to mobilize emergency airlifts of international humanitarian assistance to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Emergency airlifts have been deployed in many humanitarian crises from the 1947 blockade of West Berlin to operations in Japan, Indonesia, Pakistan, Haiti and numerous others in the world.⁵ In times of humanitarian crisis, you have shown that you put people first in the face of political tactics of oppression. The organization of

⁴ [Fears for new Nagorno-Karabakh crisis as Azerbaijan threatens key road link | Eurasianet](#)

⁵ [6 of the largest humanitarian missions in US military history - We Are The Mighty](#); Wings of Hope:

The U.S. Air Force and Humanitarian Airlift Operations, available at:

<https://www.amc.af.mil/Portals/12/documents/AFD-131018-056.pdf>

international airlifts is even more imperative in the case of Nagorno-Karabakh since Azerbaijan has reportedly threatened to shoot down any flying aircraft⁶ making it impossible for Armenia or Russia to airlift life-sustaining supplies.

You have the power, responsibility and, indeed, the moral authority to help the blockaded children, women, and men of Nagorno-Karabakh. We remain available to discuss these issues with you at any time.

Sincerely,

Armenian Bar Association
Association Française des Avocats et Juristes Arméniens – AFAJA
Russian Armenian Lawyers Association
Argentine Armenian Lawyers Association

⁶ [Supplies begin to run low as Nagorno-Karabakh blockade continues | Eurasianet](#)