

GENOCIDE WARNING: NAGORNO KARABAKH

Conditions are present for genocide against the indigenous Armenian population of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh).

On December 12, the government of Azerbaijan imposed a blockade on Nagorno Karabakh and its 120,000 Armenian residents, preventing food, medicine, gas, and other vital goods from transiting through the Lachin Corridor, the only land route into the region.

The government of Azerbaijan has long promoted official hatred of Armenians, has fostered impunity for atrocities committed against Armenians, and has issued repeated threats to conquer not only Nagorno Karabakh, but also Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, by force.

The present blockade is designed to, in the words of the Genocide Convention, “deliberately inflict conditions of life calculated to bring about the end of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group in whole or in part.”

All 14 risk factors for atrocity crimes identified by the UN Secretary General’s Office on Genocide Prevention are now present.

The current Azerbaijani aggression against the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh conforms to a long pattern of ethnic and religious cleansing of Armenian and other Christian communities in the region by the government of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Turkey, the Ottoman Empire, and their partisans.

We call on all contracting parties to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, particularly the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Russian Federation, to fulfill their obligations, through the UN Security Council, to prevent another chapter of the Armenian Genocide.

We also call on the UN Security Council to act to ensure unrestricted humanitarian access for all international organizations to Nagorno Karabakh, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Signed:

Christian Solidarity International

The Baroness Cox, Independent Member of the House of Lords

American Friends of Kurdistan

Armenian Bar Association

Armenian National Committee of America

Hellenic American Leadership Council

Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust

In Defense of Christians

International Christian Concern

The Philos Project

Prof Armen T. Marsoobian, 1st Vice President, International Association of Genocide Scholars



Risk Factors for Genocide

“Today we see consistent actions which make more and more real the concern that Azerbaijan is indeed planning genocide in Nagorno-Karabakh.”

- Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister of Armenia, 12 December 2022

Risk Factor 1: Situations of armed conflict or other forms of instability.

Azerbaijan has launched two major assaults against Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh since September 2020, and violations of the 9 November 2020 ceasefire are frequent.

Risk Factor 2: Record of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

The atrocity crimes committed by Azerbaijani forces against Armenians in the 2020 attack on Nagorno Karabakh, and the 2022 attack on Armenia, are well-documented, not least by Azerbaijani soldiers who recorded their crimes and uploaded them to social media channels.

Risk Factor 3: Weakness of State structures.

Azerbaijan is an absolute familial dictatorship; the Republic of Artsakh is an unrecognized state with limited self-defense capabilities.

Risk Factor 4: Motives or incentives.

Azerbaijan has repeatedly declared its intention to conquer Nagorno Karabakh, as well as part of the Republic of Armenia, framing it as a national goal.

Risk Factor 5: Capacity to commit atrocity crimes.

Azerbaijan’s military is well-equipped and enjoys competitive advantage in the region. It receives consistent support in its military activities from the Republic of Turkey.

Risk Factor 6: Absence of mitigating factors.

Russia, which has restrained Azerbaijan’s aggression in the past, is visibly less engaged in the region since its invasion of Ukraine.

Risk Factor 7: Enabling circumstances or preparatory action.

Azerbaijan has imposed a total blockade on the civilian population.

Risk Factor 8: Triggering factors

Military tensions in the region have been very high since Azerbaijan’s 2020 attack on Nagorno Karabakh, and especially its 2022 attack on Armenia; the two regional powers, Russia and Turkey, are both involved in multiple ongoing and unpredictable conflicts. Turkey is due to have general elections in June 2023.

Risk Factor 9: Intergroup tensions or patterns of discrimination against protected groups.

Ethnic Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh were discriminated against under the rule of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic from 1921 to 1988; Azerbaijani rule in the region came to an end as a result of six years of ethnic warfare.

Risk Factor 10: Signs of an intent to destroy in whole or in part a protected group.

Azerbaijan's president, Ilham Aliyev, has referred to Armenians as "dogs" and "rats" and pledged to "drive them out of our lands."

Risk Factor 11: Signs of a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population.

Azerbaijan has imposed a total blockade on the civilian population; the region is completely surrounded by Azerbaijani military forces.

Risk Factor 12: Signs of a plan or policy to attack any civilian population.

Azerbaijan has repeatedly bombed Armenian civilian settlements in Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia since September 2020; Armenian civilians captured by Azerbaijani forces have been routinely executed or kidnapped.

Risk Factor 13: Serious threats to those protected under international humanitarian law.

Azerbaijan has imposed a total blockade on the civilian population.

Risk Factor 14: Serious threats to humanitarian or peacekeeping operations.

The Russian peacekeeping mission in Nagorno Karabakh is currently in a standoff with Azerbaijani activists and military personnel in the Lachin corridor.