

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 16, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

Since December 12th, Azerbaijan has imposed a blockade of the Lachin Corridor, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) to Armenia. The effect has been devastating to the population, rendering 120,000 individuals without access to the route that provides much of Artsakh's food, medical supplies and transport, and other essential goods, and depriving them of their right to free movement. Additional reports¹ allege that Azerbaijan has also shut off one of the major sources of natural gas for civilians in the territory, potentially leaving tens of thousands without heating as temperatures plummet.

Azerbaijan is once again weaponizing basic human necessities to further degrade already strained living conditions for the Armenians living in Artsakh. If this situation continues, a humanitarian crisis with potentially tragic consequences is imminent. Further, Azerbaijan's actions are a direct violation of the trilateral ceasefire statement of November 9, 2020², which outlines an obligation to guarantee the secure movement of citizens, vehicles, and cargo in both directions through this route known as the Lachin Corridor.

The people of Artsakh were already in a precarious situation before December 12th, as they have not yet recovered from the humanitarian fallout of the September 2020 unprovoked military assault by Azerbaijan on Artsakh, which resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians and soldiers, the ongoing detention of prisoners of war, and the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians. Since then, despite Congressional calls for much-needed direct U.S. humanitarian assistance for the people of Artsakh, the Administration has, to date, failed to provide adequate aid, which makes decisive action by the Administration now all the more urgent.

This is only the most recent example of Azerbaijan's belligerence, which has followed a well-documented pattern of abuse against the Armenian population of Artsakh, motivated by the bombastic rhetoric of the Aliyev regime. We urge the Administration to use all tools at its disposal to ensure the safety of the people of Artsakh, now and in the future, including cessation of financial support to Azerbaijan and imposition of sanctions. We cannot allow Azerbaijan's policy of aggression and intimidation to continue.

Sincerely,

¹ <https://www.axios.com/2022/12/15/azerbaijan-protesters-key-road-nagorno-karabakh-armenia>

² <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2020/11/10/Announcement/>



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Gus M. Bilirakis
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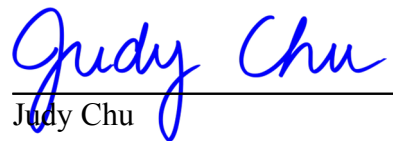
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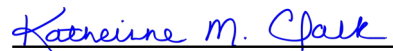
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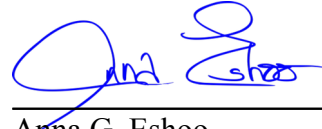
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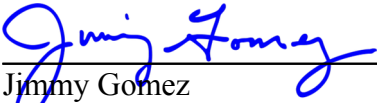
Katherine Clark
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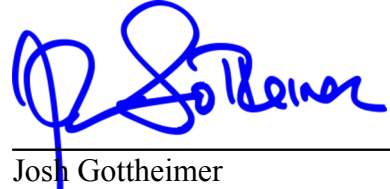
Jim Costa
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Anna G. Eshoo
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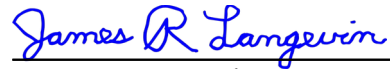
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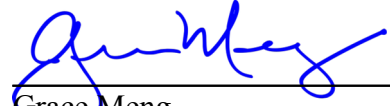
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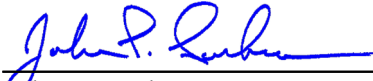
Grace Meng
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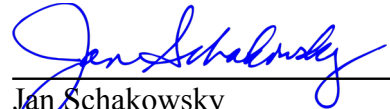
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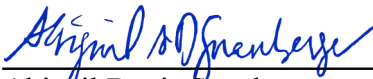
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