



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA

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The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

I – and many others elected leaders in various communities here in our United States of America – are writing to urge you to immediately end military assistance to Azerbaijan and request emergency humanitarian aid for Artsakh amidst Azerbaijan’s ongoing humanitarian blockade of the region’s 120,000 indigenous Armenians.

Since December 12th, 2022 Azerbaijan has maintained a blockade of the Lachin Corridor – Artsakh’s only humanitarian lifeline to Armenia and the rest of the world, and the primary means by which food, fuel, medicine and other humanitarian supplies are transported to the region. Azerbaijan also shut off the gas supply to Artsakh, leaving the region’s civilian population without their primary source of heating, hot water, and power for four days at the onset of winter.

While the gas supply has been restored as a result of international pressure, the humanitarian blockade remains in effect – and continues to have a devastating impact on the region’s Armenian population. As a result of the Azeri blockade, schools have been forced to shut down, while hospitals have no means of accessing life-saving medication, conducting vital operations, and transporting patients to Yerevan for advanced care – which has already resulted in the death of one patient. As Azerbaijan continues to suffocate Artsakh and hold its civilians hostage, the risk of a humanitarian catastrophe grows more severe.

This blockade is a direct contravention of the November 9th, 2020 ceasefire agreement, and is entirely consistent with the pattern of egregious human rights abuses and aggression we have come to expect from the Azerbaijani regime. Just this past September, we witnessed Azerbaijan’s barbaric assault on the Republic of Armenia, which saw Azerbaijani forces target civilian infrastructure, displace several thousand Armenian citizens, and perpetrate horrific abuses with impunity – including reports of the mutilation of female Armenian soldiers, and the execution of several unarmed Armenian prisoners of war verified by groups including Human Rights Watch.

Additionally, over 30,000 Armenians remain permanently displaced as a result of Azerbaijan’s assault on Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, and over 100 Armenian prisoners of war continue to be illegally held in Azerbaijan where they have been subject to torture.

I am extremely disappointed by the administration's failure to hold Azerbaijan accountable for these flagrant human rights violations, and the continued waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act. In continuing to supply Azerbaijan with U.S. military assistance – amidst verifiable reports of war crimes and egregious human rights abuses – we reward Azerbaijan's aggression, and risk emboldening and enabling this type of conduct.

Since the unprovoked military attack on Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijan in 2020, no direct U.S. humanitarian assistance has been provided to the Armenian population of Artsakh. Azerbaijan's attempts to subjugate Artsakh through depriving it of the conditions necessary for life is nothing short of genocide by attrition. The U.S. must do more to provide assistance to the region to guarantee food and energy security, as well as other vital humanitarian needs to which Azerbaijan has denied access.

As the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, we once again reiterate the urgent need to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its acts of aggression. This must begin with the full enforcement of Section 907 restrictions on the provision of U.S. military assistance to Azerbaijan – but must also be expanded to include consideration of Magnitsky Act sanctions on Azerbaijan officials involved directly in the commissioning of war crimes and human rights abuses.

Our nation, and you as our President, must make it clear to Azerbaijan that the United States of America does not condone Azerbaijan's attempt to impose a military solution on this conflict through coercion and intimidation. The failure to do so will only embolden Azerbaijan by demonstrating there will be no material repercussions for its repeated acts of violence and human rights violations.

If the U.S. is serious about placing human rights and democracy at the forefront of our foreign policy – that must begin by calling out and holding to account aggressive authoritarian regimes wherever they threaten the values we hold dear as Americans.

I – and concerned civic leaders who represent communities around our country who share these concerns – would like the opportunity to speak with you and Vice President Kamala Harris as soon as possible to share the urgency of the situation and help in the response to bring this crisis to an end ensuring the life, liberty and happiness of the people of Artsakh.

We thank you for your expeditious consideration of this request.

Respectfully,



Ardy (Ardashes) Kassakhian
Mayor, City of Glendale, California