

## Republic of Artsakh Blockade

For over one month now, the 120,000 Armenians of the Republic of Artsakh (also known as Nagorno Karabakh), including 30,000 children, have been under blockade. The shelves of groceries, drug stores and other distributors of necessities are empty. The pipeline bringing gas to the region has been periodically shut off, and electricity and internet access from Armenia have also been disrupted, creating a grave humanitarian crisis.

The Government of Azerbaijan, sending feigned “eco-activists,” has blocked the sole transportation and supply route from Armenia to Artsakh, cutting off daily supply of over 400 tons of food, and has prevented access for repairs to the latter conduits. Azerbaijan is using these unlawful tactics towards its goal of ethnic cleansing of Artsakh of its native Armenian population and subsequent annexation of the territories to Azerbaijan proper. Meanwhile, Russian peacekeepers, tasked with patrolling the transport and supply route to Armenia, have been unable to intervene effectively to stop the Azeri blockade and restore access to and from Artsakh.

Only the International Committee of the Red Cross has succeeded in occasionally delivering emergency supplies or transporting the sick for treatment in Armenia, but this is not sufficient to supply the entire population with basic necessities. These shortages have resulted in the institution of food, medicine, and electricity rationing. Medical operations have been halted, schools are closed, and lives are endangered in the harsh winter conditions of a mountainous region.

The United States government has condemned the blockade and has called upon Azerbaijan and Russia to restore access immediately. Canada, France and other European governments have also followed suit. However, these statements have not been accompanied by specific action to demonstrate intolerance of the unacceptable situation in Artsakh and to assert the gravity of the situation to the Azeri leadership.

The situation, if allowed to continue, will turn into yet another act of ethnic cleansing in the 21st century. By recognizing and compassionately addressing the unfolding humanitarian crisis, we can prevent further human suffering and the repeat of such atrocities by those who believe the world does not care.

Having persevered through a genocide and many other atrocities, we stand against the continuation of such acts into the 21st century. For this reason, the American-Armenian community of the Greater Boston area, profoundly concerned by the immediate dangers of this crisis, strongly urges that you as a humanitarian activist, take immediate action by asking the United States to pressure Azerbaijan to end the blockade and push for an international airlift of supplies and aid to Artsakh, akin to that of Berlin in 1948-49.

Sincerely,

Pan Armenian Council of New England  
&  
Armenian American Medical Association, Boston, MA, USA

