



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER OF ARMENIA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER OF ARTSAKH



## JOINT AD HOC PUBLIC REPORT

### THE HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES OF BLOCKING THE ONLY ROAD CONNECTING ARTSAKH WITH ARMENIA AND THE WORLD



**YEREVAN  
STEPANAKERT  
DECEMBER 15, 2022**

## **FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

1. On December 12, 2022, at around 10:30 am (GMT+4), a group of Azerbaijanis in civilian clothes, posing as alleged environmental activists blocked the only road (Goris-Stepanakert highway which passes through the Berdzor (Lachin) corridor) connecting Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh, hereafter Artsakh) to Armenia, and to the world, in violation of the obligations assumed by Azerbaijan through trilateral ceasefire statement of November 9, 2020<sup>1</sup>.
2. In accordance with Point 6 of the Statement: (...) “The Lachin corridor (5 km wide) which will ensure the communication between Nagorno Karabakh and the Armenia and at the same time will circumvent the city of Shushi, shall remain under the control of the peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation”
3. The Azerbaijani side violates the provisions of the Statement and thus fails to fulfill its international obligations assumed by it.
4. The road, which is under the control of the Russian Peacekeeping contingent, is used only for passage of people and goods intended for the civilian population of Artsakh. This act has resulted in the blocking and stopping of the movement of people, and food and medical supplies and other vital goods.
5. This is the second attempt of the Azerbaijani side to block the Lachin corridor. Previously, on December 3, 2022, a group of Azerbaijanis, posing as environmental activists, had blocked the Lachin corridor again, under fabricated ecological concerns, mainly the exploitation of mines by Artsakh. As a result of negotiations, the road was reopened.<sup>2</sup>
6. As a direct result of the blocking of the road, 120.000 people have appeared under complete blockade and siege. Additionally, in cold winter conditions, 1100 persons, including older persons, women, and 270 children have been stuck on the road in the Stepanakert-Sushi and Lisagor-Sushi sectors of the Goris-Stepanakert highway. Additionally, several communities of the Shushi region have been completely isolated and cut off from the rest of Artsakh and Armenia, including the communities of Lisagor, Mets Shen, Hin Shen and Eghtsahogh.
7. As the Lachin corridor is the only road connecting Artsakh with Armenia and the outside world, and as of great humanitarian importance, its blocking is causing, and will further cause, grave humanitarian consequences. Currently, food, medical and energy supplies to Artsakh are completely stopped. About 400 tons of essential goods, including grain, flour, vegetables, fruits, economic goods, etc., are imported to Artsakh from Armenia daily. Moreover, according to the information provided by the Stepanakert Republican Medical Center and the Ministry of Healthcare of Artsakh, due to the continuous blocking of the Lachin corridor, the transfer of patients in critical condition for urgent treatment and hospitalization in the specialized medical centers of Armenia has become impossible.
8. Moreover, on December 14, 2002, at around 6:00 pm, the Azerbaijani authorities cut the natural gas supply to Artsakh, during these severe winter conditions, depriving the peaceful

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2020/11/10/Announcement/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nJV7WWN6GahrzIZ5EVGO6fltMRnn8DX/view>

population of Artsakh from heating, hot water, and other basic necessities. As a result of the cut of the only natural gas pipeline, medical institutions in Artsakh are unable to provide primary medical care, the educational process in the educational institutions of Artsakh has been stopped, the work of state bodies and agencies have been disrupted, and there has been a lack of fuels for vehicles, etc.

9. The disruption of the supply of natural gas to Artsakh as a method of terrorizing the peaceful civilian population, has already been employed by the Azerbaijani authorities earlier in 2022. In particular, on March 2022, under the guise of repair works of a gas pipeline (transferring gas from Armenia to Artsakh, which crosses regions occupied by Azerbaijan during the 44-day war of 2020) which had allegedly exploded, the Azerbaijani installed a valve on the pipeline, with the intention of turning it off at any given time. After the alleged repair works, the Azerbaijani side disrupted the supply of natural gas.<sup>3</sup>
10. Numerous threats and hate speech containing publications, a large dose of Armenophobia and the fact that the representatives of the Azerbaijani public share the anti-Armenian and genocidal policies of their leaders is evidence of state-sponsored actions. "It is needless to remind that Karabakh Armenians receive electricity and gas from Armenia via cables and a pipeline that is under Azerbaijani control"<sup>4</sup> commented Rasim Musabekov, deputy of the Milli Majlis on December 13. The overwhelming majority of comments in publications made by Azerbaijani social media users state that the Lachin corridor should have been closed long ago, and that the Azerbaijani authorities should have taken steps in this direction, and that Azerbaijan will do all as it wishes with the Karabakh territories, etc. Statements such as "Armenian separatists (separatists), Armenian fascists. "We should not hesitate to create our own checkpoint in the Lachin corridor."<sup>5</sup> are common in the publications of Azerbaijani social media users.
11. The governments and international actors involved in the resolution of the conflict should use all possible diplomatic measures to stop the siege and blockade of Artsakh, restore the natural gas supply, and stop the impending humanitarian disaster and to guarantee the rights of the people living in Artsakh. The international community should urgently take a unanimous and unambiguous stance, as well as targeted actions to condemn, punish and prevent Azerbaijan from continuing to act with a sense of absolute impunity and realizing its ultimate goal – the depopulation of Artsakh from its native Armenian population and their eventual extermination.
12. Under the Statute of the International Criminal Court, extermination, defined as including "the intentional infliction of conditions of life, inter alia, the deprivation of access to food and medicine, calculated to bring about the destruction of part of a population", constitutes a crime against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [https://ombuds.am/en\\_us/site/ViewNews/2174](https://ombuds.am/en_us/site/ViewNews/2174)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/musabayovrasim/posts/pfbid0cjSHnm6NN2B3ZYVOrFHFbCik5eM73wPB9FFve8FA4xLgeYmuwdwCyMwN8iSMet1wI>

<sup>5</sup> <https://az.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3676475.html>

<sup>6</sup> ICC Statute, Article 7

13. Moreover, “wilfully impeding relief supplies” as part of the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is a war crime in international armed conflicts.<sup>7</sup>
14. The blockade of Artsakh is not an isolated episode but must be seen as part of wide-spread and systematic policy of Azerbaijan aimed at complete expulsion of the people of Artsakh from their native land. Since the establishment of the ceasefire guaranteed by the Trilateral Statement of November 9, 2020, Artsakh’s Ombudsman has repeatedly reported on the recurrence of similar threats and provocations from the Azerbaijani side. Over the past two year, Azerbaijan *inter alia* has:
  - (a) deliberately and numerously attacked the infrastructure of Artsakh with the aim of terrorizing and intimidating the population of Artsakh;
  - (b) left the entire population of Artsakh without gas and water supplies for weeks;
  - (c) disrupted the seasonal agricultural work by targeting the peaceful villagers;
  - (d) constantly subjected the Armenian communities in close vicinity to their military positions to psychological pressure by loudspeakers;
  - (e) tried to spread disinformation and panic among people by carrying out cyber-attacks on the state media outlets of Artsakh.
15. The data of this report reflects only the facts of December 12-14, 2022.

### **The artificial nature of the “environmental activism” and links to the Azerbaijani Government**

16. According to the information gathered by the Human Rights Defenders’ Offices, the “environmental protests” are orchestrated by the Azerbaijani authorities. The alleged “environmental protests” are widely covered by a large number of Azerbaijani journalists, who are ensuring the media coverage of “protests” in real-time. Moreover, the journalists are constantly trying to provoke the Russian peacekeepers and disrupt and discredit their mission by attempting to break through their positions of deployment, and even provoking physical confrontation.<sup>8</sup>
17. Moreover, a large number of the “environmental activists” are representatives of Azerbaijani non-governmental organizations, which are directly and exclusively financed by the Azerbaijani government, or the Heydar Aliyev Fund headed by the first vice president and first lady of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, evidence has been registered that representatives of the Azerbaijani special services are also amongst the alleged “environmental activists” who are currently blocking the only lifeline of Artsakh.
18. To "guarantee" the freedom of assembly of Azerbaijani "environmentalists" who blocked the vital road, new groups of "activists" in civilian clothes are being transported to the place where the “protest” is held by the Azerbaijani side.

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<sup>7</sup> ICC Statute, Article 8(2)(b)(xxv)

<sup>8</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Xc4xKTNYJ4PS2TfFfLzCJgPcFrkfzTR5/view>

19. Moreover, there is undeniable proof that there are servicemen of the Azerbaijani special service among the people who have blocked the road. In particular:
- **Telman Qasimov** - Personal page on social networks (<https://www.facebook.com/irevan.agridag>) shows that he is a military with strong anti-Armenian views for many years, who, according to some sources, and is an officer of the military special intelligence service.<sup>9</sup> Kasimov has also published a picture depicting him standing side-by-side with Ramil Safarov, who murdered an Armenian serviceman in his sleep during a NATO-sponsored training seminar in Hungary. He is also affiliated with the ultra-nationalist and fascist Grey Wolves organization (In some of the photos, he is wearing the logo of the) (for the profile of "activists" go to Annex 1).
  - **Fuad Salahov**, who is an officer of the special purpose unit of the Ground Forces of Azerbaijan, is one of the organizers of the action. (<https://www.facebook.com/fuad.salahov.775> ). The personal page on social networks shows strong Armenophobic views, the pictures of Armenian servicewomen killed during the Azerbaijani attack on the Republic of Armenia in September 2022, are widely disseminated accompanied by degrading comments (See Annex 2).
20. The majority of the participants of the "protest" are representatives of non-governmental organizations who are exclusively financed by the Azerbaijani state:
- **Ruhiyye Mammadova** - President of the Public Union "Support to the Elderly and Single Persons"; the NGO operates with the funding of the "Heydar Aliyev Fund" headed by the First Vice President and First Lady of Azerbaijan (<https://www.facebook.com/Ruhiyye> )
  - **Elmira Ismayilova** - President of the Ganja branch of the "Organization of Disabled Women"; funded by the Government of Azerbaijan (<https://www.facebook.com/dwganja>)
  - **Gamze Yusubova** - Chairman of the Public (State) Council for Environmental Protection and Natural Resources (<https://www.facebook.com/qamze.yusubova>)
  - **Bülür Mammadova** - Editor of the Aktual TV news agency, founder and editor-in-chief of the VETEN TV news agency; both media agencies are pro-governmental and operate with Government support/funding (<https://www.facebook.com/bullurcavadqizi>)
  - **Zulfiya Nuriyeva** - Member of the Public Council of the Local Self-government Body of Absheron Administrative Region; President of the NGO "Support to socio-economic and agricultural development"; funded by the Government of Azerbaijan (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100041525952232>)
  - **Naila Ismayilova** - President of "New Life" a humanitarian and social NGO; funded by the Government of Azerbaijan. (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1790328133>)
  - **Samir Adgyozelli** - Director of the "Center for Socio-Political Processes and International Studies"; funded by the Government of Azerbaijan (<https://www.facebook.com/samir.adigozelli>)
  - **Casarat Huseynzada** - editor of QHT.az website. The news agency operates under the "State Support to Non-Governmental Organizations" agency. This agency was

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<sup>9</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1odzeoVVeD1lu4JIHZKSjHWAbc4y0KItH/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1odzeoVVeD1lu4JIHZKSjHWAbc4y0KItH/view?usp=share_link)

established by the President of Azerbaijan on April 9, 2021, and coordinates the activities of most of the non-governmental organizations operating in the country (<https://www.facebook.com/jasarat23>)

- **Nezaket Hasanova** - President of the "Public Union for Material and Moral Support to the Families of the Victims"; funded by the Government of Azerbaijan (<https://www.facebook.com/nezaket.hesenova.5076>)
- **Konul Turan** - Turkustan.az website editor. The news agency is pro-governmental and has funding from the Government of Azerbaijan (<https://www.facebook.com/konul.turan.5>)
- **Cemile Abdulova** - President of the "Social assistance for people with speech and hearing impairment" public association; funded by the Government of Azerbaijan (<https://www.facebook.com/caqayeva>)
- **Dilara Efendiyeva** - President of the "Association for the Protection of Women's Rights in Azerbaijan" Center, President of the "Armenia-Azerbaijan Public Peace" Platform; funded by the Government of Azerbaijan (<https://www.facebook.com/Dilara.Efendieva>).

#### **Right to healthcare / humanitarian relief:**

21. Humanitarian crises create complex and persistent issues related to the realization of the human right to health and healthcare. In this regard, the Azerbaijani act of blocking the Lachin corridor has created various complications in relation to the right of the civilian population of Artsakh to health and access to life-saving health care. Further aggravating the situation, and with the intention of causing a humanitarian catastrophe, the Azerbaijani authorities cut the supply of natural gas to Artsakh.
22. It should be further stressed that for urgent healthcare issues, professional medical services to patients living in Artsakh have been ensured in cooperation with the specialized medical institutions providing secondary medical care in different hospitals of Armenia, mainly in Yerevan.
23. As a direct result of the Azerbaijani acts, the transfer of patients in critical condition for urgent treatment and hospitalization in the republican medical centers of Armenia has become impossible. According to the information registered by the Human Rights Defenders Offices, the lives of these patients are at high risk as a direct result of the Azerbaijani acts.
24. In accordance with the details provided by the Hospital of Stepanakert, the following 5 patients need urgent-life saving healthcare in Yerevan, Republic of Armenia:
  - Sh. A., born in 1972 - in a critical condition. Since December 11, he has been connected to an apparatus of lung ventilation; he has an acute respiratory failure, exacerbation of bronchial asthma, and multifocal pneumonia. Immediate transfer to Yerevan is recommended.
  - M. N., born in 1980- in severe condition, and underwent cardiopulmonary resuscitation; the patient has a general intoxication of the body, he receives program hemodialysis. Immediate transfer to Yerevan to continue treatment is indicated.

- Av. S., born in 1960- in stable heavy condition. On December 12, coronary angiography was performed; urgent transportation to Yerevan is needed for an open-heart operation - aortocoronary bypass grafting. He has coronary heart disease, stable angina pectoris, arterial hypertension of the second degree, and diabetes mellitus.
  - D. M., born in 1966- progressively deteriorated condition. A week ago, she was transferred to the hospital with an acute cerebrovascular accident - a stroke, with a diagnosis of sphenoids, and a high probability of cavernoma (haematous formations in the brain). An urgent examination in Yerevan is needed for appropriate treatment.
  - Ab. K., born in 1983- For almost two weeks, she has been suffering from hyperthermia of unknown etiology (high body temperature). An immediate examination is needed in Yerevan.
25. Moreover, as a result of the cutting of the natural gas supply, medical institutions in Artsakh are deprived of the possibility to provide adequate primary health care, and scheduled surgeries are temporarily halted in Artsakh medical institutions, further deteriorating the realization of the human right to health of the civilian population.
  26. A civilian population in need is entitled to receive humanitarian relief essential to its survival, in accordance with international humanitarian law. States are under the obligation to allow the free passage of relief that is of an exclusively humanitarian and impartial nature and is indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.
  27. Article 23 of GCIV prescribes the obligation for each High Contracting Party **to allow the free passage of all consignments of medical and hospital stores (...)** only for civilians of another High Contracting Party, even if the latter is its adversary. It shall likewise permit the free passage of all consignments of essential foodstuffs, clothing and tonics intended for children under fifteen, expectant mothers and maternity cases.
  28. At the same time, Article 70 of API states that: *“1. If the civilian population of **any territory under the control of a Party to the conflict, other than occupied territory, (...). In the distribution of relief consignments, priority shall be given to those persons, such as children, expectant mothers, maternity cases and nursing mothers, who, under the Fourth Convention or under this Protocol, are to be accorded privileged treatment or special protection.** 2. The Parties to the conflict and each High Contracting Party shall allow and facilitate **rapid and unimpeded passage of all relief consignments, equipment and personnel provided in accordance with this Section, even if such assistance is destined for the civilian population of the adverse Party.**”*
  29. Under the Article 18.2 of APII, if the civilian population is suffering undue hardship owing **to a lack of the supplies essential for its survival, such as foodstuffs and medical supplies,** relief actions for the civilian population which are of an exclusively humanitarian and impartial nature and which are conducted without any adverse distinction shall be undertaken subject to the consent of the High Contracting Party concerned.

**Rights of the child:**

30. During humanitarian crises, such as the one currently developing in Artsakh, children are amongst the most vulnerable groups. Therefore, their rights and interests require specific attention. The right to security, right to education, and right to life with a family were violated.
31. According to the information gathered by the Human Rights Defenders' Offices, 270 children, about 70 of them without their parents (they were attending the Junior Eurovision Song Contest which was being held in Armenia, being accompanied by their teachers) were not able to pass through the Lachin corridor back home.<sup>10</sup> These children are now accommodated in Goris, Syunik province, and in Yerevan.
32. As stated above, the right to education of the children of Artsakh has been disrupted as well. The heating problem has greatly affected the normal functioning of the educational process in Artsakh, as there are a large number of gas-heated educational institutions - kindergartens, schools, secondary vocational, and higher education institutions. Since December 14, due to the absence of a gas supply, they have indefinitely ceased their activities, and children are forced not to attend educational processes.
33. Under Article 79 of API, part 1, four categories of persons who must be given priority are specifically mentioned. In particular, in the distribution of relief consignments, priority shall be given to those persons, such as **children**, expectant mothers, maternity cases and nursing mothers, who, under the Fourth Convention or under this Protocol, are to be accorded privileged treatment or special protection.
34. In addition, the right to education should be ensured under all circumstances and protected in all situations, including crises and emergencies resulting from civil strife and war. Moreover, the GCIV states that "Occupying Power shall, with the cooperation of the national and local authorities, facilitate the proper working of all institutions devoted to the care and education of children." (Article 50).

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<sup>10</sup><https://www.1lurer.am/hy/2022/12/13/%C2%AB%D5%84%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%B6-%D4%B5%D5%BE%D6%80%D5%A1%D5%BF%D5%A5%D5%BD%D5%AB%D5%AC%C2%BB-%D5%B4%D6%80%D6%81%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B5%D5%A9%D5%A8-%D5%A4%D5%AB%D5%BF%D5%A5%D5%AC%D5%B8%D6%82-%D5%A5%D5%AF%D5%A1%D5%AE-%D5%A1%D6%80%D6%81%D5%A1%D5%AD%D6%81%D5%AB-%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%A5%D5%AD%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%A8-%D5%B9%D5%A5%D5%B6-%D5%AF%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%B8%D5%B2%D5%A1%D5%B6%D5%B8%D6%82%D5%B4-%D5%B0%D5%A1%D5%B5%D6%80%D5%A5%D5%B6%D5%AB%D6%84-%D5%BE%D5%A5%D6%80%D5%A1%D5%A4%D5%A1%D5%BC%D5%B6%D5%A1%D5%AC/848855>



**ANNEX 1**  
**PROFILES OF “ACTIVISTS”**  
**TELMAN QASIMOV**

IMAGES TAKEN FROM THE PUBLIC FACEBOOK ACCOUNT



Photo of T.Q. with Ramil Safarov



T.Q. with Military awards



T.Q. with “wolf hand” salute



Logo of “Grave Wolves”

The note on the wall: "Our main target is Yerevan, long live United Azerbaijan"

**ANNEX 2**  
**PROFILES OF "ACTIVISTS"**  
**FAUD SALAHOV**

IMAGES TAKEN FROM THE PUBLIC FACEBOOK ACCOUNT



An image of notorious Ottoman genocidaire Enver Pasha with the inscription "Armenian, don't run! You'll die anyway, just exhausted."





Fuad Salahov

16 September · 🌐

İrix cıx olublar c..... 😂😂😂

🇷🇺Военнослужащая-контрактник Ануш Абетян погибла в результате агрессии Азербайджана.

У неё осталось 3 детей. Ануш родилась в селе Мргашат Армавирской области.

Вечная память!!!!



90

38 comments 3 shares

👍 Like

➦ Share

Most relevant



Konul Kerimova  
Sulalece yetim qalsinlar, nesilləri, toxumları kesilsin  
😡 İfritenin necə də qorxulu sifəti var.

Like See translation 12 w Edited



İlham Gadir  
Daha bu Вечная память!!!! nə idi?

Like See translation 12 w



Şakir Ələkbərov  
Ariğin qoruqda nə işi var ki, vurub da qılçın qırılar.

Like See translation 12 w

**Translation from Azerbaijani:**

“Torn into pieces” ... 😂😂

The Contractor-Servicewomen Anush Abetyan was killed during the aggression of Azerbaijan” She has 3 children. She was born in Mrgashat village of Armavir province. Eternal Memory!”



Fuad Salahov

18 September · 🌐

Cırx cırx olmuş, bayrağın sahibləri oldular 5 Ayə bularda kişi yoxmuş ki?)

Beləliklə, ORDUMUZ tərəfindən məhv edilən dişi terroristlər Suzanna Qriqoryan, Anuş Apetyan, Alisa Melkonyan, İrina Qasparyan, Qayane Abqaryan.

Ümidvaram məhv edilmə yaxın məsafədən olub.



[t.me/mubarizler](https://t.me/mubarizler)

👍😂❤️ 80

16 comments 2 shares

👍 Like

➦ Share

View 6 previous comments

Most relevant



Leyla Art  
Это айканушики?

Like See translation 12 w



Leyla Art  
Когда нет мужчин то погибают женщины. Печально 😂😂😂

Like See translation 12 w



İrada Polad  
Bunların baş daşı olacaq, Məncə gorbəgər olanın baş daşı olmur)) bunlarsa adətdir, baş daşı yerinə qırıq süpürgə qoyurlar.. Hətta ərcikləri baş daşlarında belə yazdırır, aykanış getsin, gəlməsin)))

Like See translation 12 w



Zahid Rustamov  
Сынep

Photo of killed Armenian Servicewomen

**Translation from Azerbaijani:**

“The owners of the flag, that were torn into pieces become 5”. (then the names of the killed Armenian Servicewomen are listed “

“I hope that the destruction was at close range. 😊”