

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 244

Condemning Azerbaijan's blockade of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh
and ongoing human rights violations.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 8, 2023

Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the
following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Re-
lations

RESOLUTION

Condemning Azerbaijan's blockade of the Armenians of
Nagorno-Karabakh and ongoing human rights violations.

Whereas Azerbaijani forces, in violation of international obli-
gations to resolve disputes with Armenia and Nagorno-
Karabakh peacefully, conducted a large-scale, unprovoked
invasion of Nagorno-Karabakh in October 2020;

Whereas President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan has used vitri-
olic rhetoric to call for the ethnic cleansing of indigenous
Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and his regime has con-
sistently violated important international humanitarian
legal agreements during the 2020 war and up until the
present date, including the Universal Declaration of
Human Rights, the United Nations Charter, and the Ge-
neva Convention;

Whereas evidence of Azerbaijani violations of international humanitarian law during the 2020 war are well-documented by reputable nongovernmental organizations, such as Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the International Committee of the Red Cross;

Whereas mass human rights violations committed by Azerbaijani forces in the 2020 war included rocket strikes on civilian infrastructure like medical facilities and schools, the decapitation of civilians, the use of white phosphorus munitions, the torture and extrajudicial killing of Armenian prisoners of war, the hiring of foreign mercenaries, and the targeting of historic monuments, works of art, and places of worship with great cultural and spiritual significance to Armenians;

Whereas, on September 13, 2022, Azerbaijani forces mounted an illegal and unprovoked assault on Armenian territory, including the cities of Vardenis, Sotk, Artanish, Ishkhanasar, Goris, and Kapan;

Whereas Azerbaijan’s attack on Armenia, which was launched on September 13, 2022, is a flagrant violation of Armenia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and a violation of international law;

Whereas the November 9, 2020, ceasefire statement ending the 2020 war signed by Azerbaijan clearly states in Article 6, “The Lachin Corridor (5 km wide), which will provide a connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia while not passing through the territory of Shusha, shall remain under the control of the Russian Federation peacemaking forces . . . The Republic of Azerbaijan shall guarantee the security of persons, vehicles, and

cargo moving along the Lachin Corridor in both directions.”;

Whereas Armenia has made progress towards unblocking regional rail connections, including rail lines connecting Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan, in accordance with the terms of the 2020 ceasefire statement;

Whereas, on December 12, 2022, Azerbaijan created a man-made humanitarian crisis by implementing an extended blockade of the Lachin Corridor under the guise of a civilian protest;

Whereas the Lachin Corridor serves as a vital lifeline between Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia, and its blockade prevents food, critical medical supplies, and other essentials from reaching 120,000 people;

Whereas Azerbaijan has taken dangerous, escalatory steps that have severely worsened the quality of life for the people living in Nagorno-Karabakh, including 30,000 children, 20,000 elderly individuals, and 9,000 people with disabilities, through the sabotage of civilian infrastructure such as a critical natural gas pipeline, power transmission lines, and a fixed-line internet;

Whereas the Russian peacekeeping forces deployed in the region have not lived up to their role as defined by the November 9, 2020, statement, doing little to disperse Azerbaijanis blocking the Lachin Corridor, deescalate the situation, or prevent other Azerbaijani aggressions against the Armenian population in Nagorno-Karabakh;

Whereas the Department of State has warned, “Closure of the Lachin Corridor has severe humanitarian implications and sets back the peace process” and has publicly called

on the Government of Azerbaijan “to restore free movement through the corridor”;

Whereas Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken spoke with Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev on January 23, 2023, “to urge an immediate reopening of the Lachin corridor to commercial traffic” and “underscored that the risk of a humanitarian crisis in the Lachin corridor undermined prospects for peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan”;

Whereas, on February 18, 2023, the International Court of Justice ordered Azerbaijan “to ensure the unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles, and cargo along the Lachin Corridor”;

Whereas the United States serves as a co-chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe’s Minsk Group, along with France and the Russian Federation, and is committed to sustainable, long-term peace in the region; and

Whereas the United States and the international community have not been able to undertake any direct humanitarian support or relief efforts to address the needs of Armenian victims in Nagorno-Karabakh since the deadly invasion by Azerbaijani forces in October 2020: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) condemns Azerbaijan’s blockade of the
3 Lachin Corridor to Nagorno Karabakh;

4 (2) encourages the United States Government
5 and international community to petition the United
6 Nations Security Council, the Organization for Secu-

1 rity and Co-operation in Europe, and other appro-
2 priate international bodies to investigate any and all
3 war crimes committed by Azerbaijani forces against
4 Armenian civilians;

5 (3) calls on the United States Government to
6 work swiftly with international partners, including
7 civil society organizations, regarding the deployment
8 of international observers to the Lachin Corridor
9 and Nagorno-Karabakh to explore opportunities for
10 more effective and sustainable guarantees of security
11 and peaceful development;

12 (4) calls on the President to immediately sus-
13 pend any United States new, current, or pending
14 military or security assistance to Azerbaijan, and to
15 fully enforce section 907 of the FREEDOM Support
16 Act (22 U.S.C. 5812);

17 (5) supports United States sanctions under ex-
18 isting statutory authority against Azerbaijani offi-
19 cials responsible for the blockade of Nagorno-
20 Karabakh and other well-documented human rights
21 violations committed against Armenians in the re-
22 gion, such as the targeting of civilian infrastructure
23 and the destruction of historic, cultural, and places
24 of worship of great significance to Armenians; and

1 (6) supports efforts by the United States, the
2 European Union, and the international community
3 to provide humanitarian assistance to victims of Az-
4 erbajani aggression in Nagorno-Karabakh.

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