



## **Red Flag Alert for Genocide**

### **Azerbaijan**

*Update #8*

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June 12 marked six months since the beginning of Azerbaijan’s blockade of Artsakh. While the so-called environmental protest has ended, Azerbaijan concurrently erected an illegal checkpoint in the Lachin Corridor on April 23rd. Azerbaijan has used this checkpoint as a means to continue abusing the Armenians of Artsakh by impeding humanitarian aid from reaching Artsakh and restricting the right to free movement and safe passage through the Lachin Corridor. The Lemkin Institute leadership team traveled to the Corridor to highlight the impact of this illegal act. This new checkpoint means that Azerbaijan remains in violation of the Feb 22nd ICJ order to unblock all channels of communication in Artsakh. On May 24th, Armenia applied to the ICJ to take notice of the fact that Azerbaijan had erected a checkpoint in violation of the Court’s Feb 22nd order.

Prime Minister Pashinyan, during talks in Moldova, stated that Armenia is ready to recognize Artsakh as part of Azerbaijan, subject to rights guarantees for the Armenians of Artsakh. The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, again parroted Azerbaijani official talking points by referring to the Armenians of Artsakh as “Armenians living in former NKAO.” This puts the European Union in a position where it is directly complicit in Azerbaijan’s denial of the legitimately elected government of Artsakh, which is in turn a denial of the right to self-determination of the Armenians of Artsakh. The Lemkin Institute believes it important to highlight that the right to self-determination is one of the most important principles and rights of contemporary international law, and in the case of Asrtakh it is a crucial component to preventing the genocide of the Armenian population. The Lemkin Institute thus demands that the international community act to compel Azerbaijan to respect these rights through mechanisms such as sanctions, penalties, and other admonitions, including arms embargoes.

Routine ceasefire violations by Azerbaijan continue on almost a daily basis. The Artsakh authorities reported ceasefire violations, occurring on June 8th and June 13th, to the Russian peacekeeping forces. Azerbaijan also opened fire on the Armenian border village of Yeraskh, which resulted in the injury of two foreign national civilian employees working for a

US-affiliated company. Further stirring the pot was Azerbaijan's request to postpone peace talks that were supposed to be hosted by the US and were slated to begin on June 12th. On June 19th, the Armenian branch of the Red Cross warned about the worsening humanitarian condition in Artsakh due to Azerbaijan's blockade. The constant ceasefire violations and ongoing blockade, accompanied by what the Armenians say is Azerbaijani misinformation purporting to place the blame on the Armenians, has sparked concerns from the Armenian side that Azerbaijan seeks to start a new war over Artsakh.

The Lemkin Institute would like to remind international actors about its previous statement regarding the danger in the way they approach the prospects of peace. Instead of pushing Armenia to reach a settlement at any cost, the international community needs to pressure Azerbaijan to respect and guarantee the political, economic, cultural, and human rights of the Armenians of Artsakh as a prerequisite to any peace agreement. Finally, the Lemkin Institute reminds the international community that the voice of the Armenians of Artsakh should be respected and taken into consideration in the peace negotiation meetings. It is only them who have the right to decide their future and it is the international community's obligation to support their will and right to self-determination as a fundamental principle of international law. People have suffered too much from the lack of respect for the principles that the majority of the States in the world have accepted as fundamental values to ensure peace and security. Let us not allow this to happen once again; the world has the opportunity to stop a possible new genocide against the Armenians and respect their long-awaited right to have an autonomous and independent state that allows for their development and survival without oppression and persecution.