



United States Mission to the OSCE

On Azerbaijan's military operation in Karabakh and its implications for the civilian population in the region

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter
to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna
September 20, 2023

We deplore the loss of life and casualties in Nagorno-Karabakh and deeply regret Azerbaijan's decision to commence military action on September 19th – only one day after the delivery of sorely needed humanitarian supplies through both the Lachin Corridor and the Aghdam Road. Violence can never be the answer.

We take note of today's announcement of a cessation of hostilities and resumption of talks. However, the humanitarian situation remains dire. There are currently reports of fleeing civilians who lack food, water and other essentials, including access to medical treatment. The United States repeats its calls for Azerbaijan to stand down all military actions in Nagorno-Karabakh if they have not done so already. The use of force runs counter to efforts to create a durable and dignified peace and is contrary to the core principles of the Helsinki Final Act upon which this organization was founded. Dialogue and diplomacy must prevail over the use of force.

The United States therefore calls on the sides to engage in direct talks at all levels including on urgent humanitarian issues. We reiterate that any peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan must protect the rights and security of the residents of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The United States remains ready to engage with all partners, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to help achieve a peaceful settlement.

###