



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 28, 2023

We remain deeply concerned by the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and urge Azerbaijan to maintain the ceasefire and avoid any resumption of military activities. As Secretary Blinken emphasized in his discussion with President Aliyev on September 26, the United States urges Azerbaijan to refrain from further hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh and provide unhindered humanitarian access. The use of force is unacceptable and runs counter to efforts to create conditions for a just, durable, and dignified peace in the region.

The United States also continues to be deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation inside Nagorno-Karabakh. We welcome Azerbaijan's stated commitment to the restoration of gas and water supplies and urge Azerbaijan to follow through on this commitment and others. We call for unhindered access for international humanitarian organizations to reach populations in need and for regularized humanitarian shipments and commercial access.

Additionally, we call for the sides to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers. We support the Armenian government's efforts to help the displaced find shelter and comfort in Armenia and will continue to assist the Armenian government with its support efforts.

The population of ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh should be able to remain in their homes in peace and dignity and with respect for their rights and security, if they so choose. Those who desire to leave and return should be allowed safe passage overseen by a neutral, independent third party. Azerbaijan has a responsibility to protect civilians and to ensure the humane treatment of all, including those it suspects of being combatants. Azerbaijan also has responsibility to ensure its forces comply with international law, including international humanitarian law governing the conduct of hostilities, the protection of civilians, and the humane treatment of combatants. We would expect that those Nagorno-Karabakh residents who depart for Armenia would be able to return freely to their homes once it is safe to do so.

The United States is committed to providing humanitarian assistance to the region. Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development Samantha Power announced on September 26 in Goris, Armenia, more than \$11.5 million in additional humanitarian assistance, beyond the more than \$23 million the United States has already provided in humanitarian assistance since 2020 in response to the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Finally, as Secretary Blinken discussed with President Aliyev, we reiterate our call for an independent, international mission to provide transparency, reassurance, and confidence to the residents of Nagorno-Karabakh and the international community that their rights and security will be protected, consistent with Azerbaijan's public statements. We have stressed the

importance of dialogue between Baku and the ethnic Armenian residents of Nagorno-Karabakh and hope to see future meaningful discussions.

The United States will continue to engage Azerbaijan and Armenia at the highest levels to find a lasting and sustainable peace agreement.

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