



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter
to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna
September 12, 2023

First of all, although our colleague from Morocco is not here, I would like to use this opportunity to extend my sincere condolences to all the victims and their families who are involved in the horrific earthquake southwest of Marrakech late last week.

On behalf of the United States, I would like to thank the Chairpersonship for convening this Special Permanent Council on the situation in Nagorno Karabakh and I would like to welcome Deputy Foreign Minister Vahe Gevorgyan to the Permanent Council.

The United States is deeply troubled by the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Secretary of State Tony Blinken spoke with Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on September 9 and Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev on September 10 to express the United States' concern and to underscore the need for dialogue, compromise, and to stress the importance of building confidence between the parties. The Secretary pledged continued U.S. support for the peace process.

We note that humanitarian supplies are positioned near both the Lachin and Aghdam routes, and we repeat our call for the immediate and simultaneous opening of both corridors to allow passage of desperately needed humanitarian supplies to the men, women, and children of Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the resumption of gas and electricity flows. We also urge leaders against taking any actions that raise tensions or distract from this goal. The use of force to resolve disputes is unacceptable. Let me repeat that: The use of force to resolve disputes is absolutely unacceptable.

We have consistently said the Lachin corridor must be open to commercial, humanitarian, and private traffic, in keeping with the ICJ's February 22nd ruling, and underscore the severity and urgency of the situation facing the residents of Nagorno-Karabakh. We reiterate the call for Azerbaijan to take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles, and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions. We have conveyed this message both publicly and privately to all levels of the government of Azerbaijan on numerous occasions, and we urge the residents of Nagorno-Karabakh to accept delivery. Access to food, medicine, baby formula, and energy should never be held hostage.

I am deeply concerned that unless immediate action is taken by the sides to find a solution, the humanitarian situation inside Nagorno-Karabakh will continue to deteriorate.

In light of the recent increase in tensions in the South Caucasus, the United States will continue to strongly support efforts by Armenia and Azerbaijan to resolve outstanding issues through direct dialogue, with the aim of achieving a dignified and enduring peace. Negotiations towards a sustainable peace should be based on dialogue on the ground, the

normalization of relations on the basis of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and protections for the rights and security of ethnic Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh. This is the only way to resolve this conflict. The United States urges restraint from any action that could undermine confidence, jeopardize dialogue, or further delay the opening of the corridor.

We encourage direct talks at all levels, including between officials in Baku and representatives of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh. 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 bilaterally and multilaterally with all partners to help Armenia and Azerbaijan reach a peaceful settlement.

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