

ONGOING BLOCKADE PUTS THOUSANDS AT RISK IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Ethnic Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh, including 30,000 children, are completely shut off from food, medicine, electricity, and fuel by Azerbaijan.

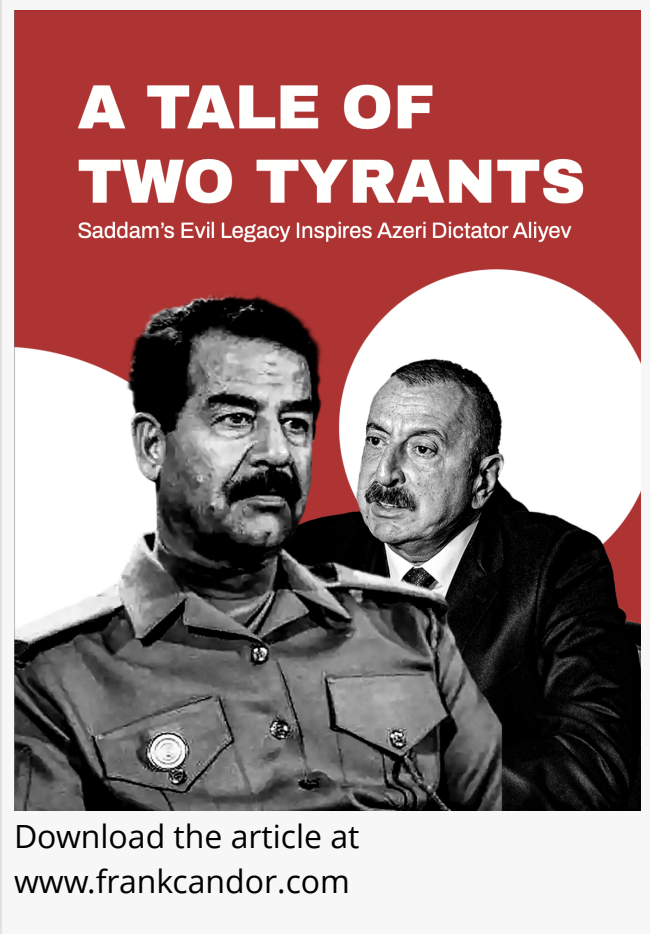
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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Atrocity Alert #358](#) issued by the [Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect](#) highlights the dire situation where populations are at risk of or are enduring, mass atrocity crimes. This alert addresses the impending genocidal atrocity that is occurring in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Today for more than seven months Azerbaijani authorities have blockaded the Lachin corridor, the sole road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia, precipitating a humanitarian crisis. The blockade has deprived over 120,000 ethnic Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh, including 30,000 children, of life-saving resources such as food, medicine, electricity, and fuel. On 28 July Armenian authorities accused [Azerbaijan](#) of denying transport of over 400 tons of humanitarian aid into Nagorno-Karabakh. In a statement issued on 25 July, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that despite persistent efforts, "the last time the ICRC was allowed to bring medical items and essential food items into the area was several weeks ago."

Deprivation of resources indispensable to survival imposes excessive burdens upon civilians that may eventually result in immense suffering and loss of life. Under International Humanitarian Law, all sides must allow and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, including medical supplies and essential food. The intentional and unlawful denial of humanitarian assistance may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but contains a majority



ethnic Armenian population that has been led by de-facto authorities since December 1991. There is a long history of armed clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan for control of Nagorno-Karabakh. Despite a 1994 ceasefire agreement, sporadic clashes have continued along the border of Nagorno-Karabakh over the past 25 years, including intense fighting in September-November 2020 that concluded after a peace deal brokered by Russia. The blockade began on 12 December 2022, after Azerbaijani environmental activists, allegedly supported by the country's authorities, blocked the Lachin corridor in protest of the alleged exploitation of minerals. Azerbaijani authorities formalized the blockade by establishing a border point at the entrance to the corridor in late April 2023. Ongoing attempts to de-escalate tensions – which have risen amidst the blockade – and broker a new peace treaty have been unsuccessful thus far.

On 25 February the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Azerbaijan to ensure free movement of all persons, vehicles, and cargo along the Lachin corridor in both directions. Meanwhile, in July the President of Nagorno-Karabakh, Arayik Harutyunyan, requested Luis Moreno Ocampo, former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, for an expert opinion on the blockade. While the opinion has no legal implications, it may help determine if the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh merits further investigation.

Azerbaijani authorities must immediately lift the blockade of the Lachin corridor and allow for unhindered and safe passage of civilians and goods along the corridor, as well as guarantee unimpeded humanitarian access in line with international law and the order by the ICJ. States must engage in further dialogue with all parties, as well as support calls from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to establish an independent fact-finding mission to assess the humanitarian situation.

The Responsibility to Protect – known as R2P – is an international norm that seeks to ensure that the international community never again fails to halt the mass atrocity crimes of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. The concept emerged in response to the failure of the international community to adequately respond to mass atrocities committed in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. The International Committee on Intervention and State Sovereignty developed the concept of R2P in 2001.

The Responsibility to Protect was unanimously adopted in 2005 at the UN World Summit, the largest gathering of Heads of State and Government in history. It is articulated in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the World Summit Outcome Document:

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