

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 15, 2023

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield
U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield,

We write to urge you to take a strong stance at today's UN Security Council emergency meeting on the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh to address the humanitarian crisis.

For eight months, Azerbaijan has gradually tightened a blockade meant to deprive Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh access to essential goods, including food and medicine. On June 15, Azerbaijan effectively shut down the delivery of all critical humanitarian assistance, leading to severe consequences for the tens of thousands of people living there, including children, the elderly, and other residents with illnesses and disabilities. In an affront to international humanitarian law and basic human dignity, almost a month ago, Azerbaijan began denying access for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the last remaining humanitarian group able to deliver life-saving relief to vulnerable populations. The ICRC reported last month that "fruits, vegetables, and bread are increasingly scarce and costly," while "other food items such as dairy products, sunflower oil, cereal, fish, and chicken are unavailable," noting also that "people lack life-saving medicine and essentials like hygiene and baby formula." Today we know that the situation has worsened further, with journalists posting photos of empty grocery stores and reporting that ambulances no longer have fuel.

Azerbaijan's actions are nothing short of an attempt of ethnic cleansing of the Armenian community that has lived there for centuries. Indeed, earlier this month, former Prosecutor General of the International Criminal Court Luis Moreno Ocampo issued a report stating that there is "a reasonable basis to believe that a genocide is being committed."

We are encouraged that the United States supported the call for convening the meeting. In your capacity as the President of the UN Security Council for August 2023, we ask that you work with all UNSC members to pressure the Azerbaijani government to lift the blockade and prevent what the evidence suggests is a coordinated effort to ethnically cleanse the people of Nagorno Karabakh. Specifically, we urge you to introduce a resolution calling for an immediate end of the blockade and unfettered humanitarian access to the region.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator