



European Council  
Mr. Charles Michel  
President of the European Council  
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Menschenrechtsorganisation  
mit beratendem Status bei den  
UN und mitwirkendem Status  
beim Europarat

Göttingen, May 30th 2023

Dear President Michel,

as an international human rights organisation that works especially for minorities worldwide and fights against genocide and displacement, we are very concerned about the recent developments in Arzakh (Nagorno Karabach).

According to media reports, Armenia has made an offer in the course of its normalisation and peace negotiations with Azerbaijan, which provides for Armenia's renunciation or cession of the Arzakh region. The Republic of Armenia under its head of government Nikol Pashinyan apparently wants nothing more to do with the issue and is ready to recognise the sovereignty of the neighbouring state, including Arzakh, although Arzakh has never belonged to Azerbaijan and the population there is almost 100% Armenian.

Since 12 December 2022, Azerbaijan has blocked the only road connecting the Republic of Armenia and Arzakh. 120,000 people, including 30,000 children, 20,000 pensioners and 9,000 disabled people are cut off from food and medicine. Although the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Azerbaijan to open the road connecting the Lachin Corridor on 22 February 2023, this is more symbolic. The ICJ has no means to enforce its decisions.

**Spendenkonto**

Bank für Sozialwirtschaft  
IBAN: DE07 2512 0510 0000 5060 70  
BIC: BFSWDE33HAN

**Geschäftskonto**

Sparkasse Göttingen  
IBAN: DE65 2605 0001 0000 0019 17  
BIC: NOLADE21GOE

**Eingetragener Verein**

Eingetragen im Vereinsregister  
des Amtsgerichts Göttingen  
Vereinsregister Nr. 1804



We are very concerned about the residents of Arzakh. This is not about an interstate conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is about the status of Arzakh and its inhabitants. Their right to self-determination has been trampled on for decades, negotiations have been going on over their heads and now they have been cut off from supplies since December 2022. Armenia's offer to relinquish the territory is therefore illegitimate, because head of government Pashinyan cannot speak on behalf of the inhabitants of Arzakh. Here, a solution is to be forced without those people it affects, and this in a situation where those affected are in existential need.

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention recently warned of an "imminent genocide". Staff of the Institute had visited the region on 7 May 2023. As the Society for Threatened Peoples, we endorse this warning. The blockade of the Latschin Corridor fulfils the criminal offence of Art. II(c) of the United Nations Genocide Convention ("intentional imposition on the group of conditions of life likely to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part"). The lives of Arzakh Armenians are in danger from their hostile neighbour. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has made it clear on several occasions that he wants to destroy all traces of Armenian life in the region. Thus, during the 2020 war, he said of the Arzakh Armenians, "If they don't leave on their own, we will chase them away like dogs."

Against the backdrop of this dramatic situation and the acute threat facing the residents of Arzakh, we urgently call on you to act. For too long, the EU has simply accepted the blockade of Arzakh and has not set any limits for the Azerbaijani president. Over the years, he has been given the impression that he can do as he pleases with the Armenian population of Arzakh.

In the negotiations with Armenia and Azerbaijan, advocate immediate implementation of the International Court of Justice's order of 22 February 2023 and an opening of the Lachin Corridor. Threaten appropriate sanctions against Azerbaijan in case of non-compliance! Advocate for a sustainable solution in which the status of Arzakh is clarified and the right of self-determination of its inhabitants is finally respected. Only in this way is sustainable peace possible. Only in this way can Europe avoid allowing an imminent, slow genocide.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Reinke

Head of the human rights department

Society for Threatend Peoples

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