



**THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**



**UPDATED AD HOC PUBLIC REPORT  
ON THE HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES OF BLOCKING THE  
LACHIN CORRIDOR: A MANIFESTATION OF THE POLICY OF  
ARMENOPHOBIA BY AZERBAIJAN**



**YEREVAN  
JUNE 16, 2023**

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## **I. Factual background:**

1. Starting from December 12, 2022, at around 10:30 am (GMT+4), a group of Azerbaijanis in civilian clothes, posing as alleged environmental activists blocked the only road (Goris-Stepanakert highway which passes through the Berdzor (Lachin corridor) connecting Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh, hereafter Artsakh) to Armenia, and to the world, in violation of the obligations assumed by Azerbaijan through trilateral ceasefire statement of November 9, 2020.<sup>1</sup>
2. In accordance with Point 6 of the Statement: (...) “The Lachin corridor (5 km wide) which will ensure the communication between Nagorno-Karabakh (NK)/Artsakh and Armenia and at the same time will circumvent the city of Shushi, shall remain under the control of the peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation”.
3. As a direct result of the road blocking, 120.000 people have appeared under complete blockade and siege. Additionally, on the first day of the blockade, and in cold winter conditions, 1100 persons, including older persons, women, and children had been stranded on the road in the Stepanakert-Shushi and Lisagor-Shushi sectors of the Goris-Stepanakert highway. Since the start of the blockade, only vehicles belonging to the Russian Peacekeepers, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have been allowed to pass through the blocked corridor, transferring much needed humanitarian assistance and the transfer of patients to Armenia.
4. This act has been accompanied by the deliberate disruption of the operation of critical infrastructure of Artsakh, such as the supply of natural gas, electricity, internet, and mobile communication, aiming at further aggravating the dire humanitarian crisis and causing further suffering to the population of Artsakh. In particular, since 9 January 2023, Azerbaijan has disrupted the electricity supply from Armenia to Artsakh through the only high-voltage power transmission line (the line was damaged, and the Azerbaijani authorities have not allowed for repair works to be conducted in the area of the damage to the power-line, which is under their control). Moreover, after regular disruptions of the supply of natural-gas to Artsakh, the Azerbaijani authorities completely blocked the gas supply into the region on March 22, 2023.
5. As a result, Artsakh has had to rely on its domestic electricity generation infrastructure, of which Sarsang reservoir accounts for almost 70% of the total capacity. During this period, three times more water has been released from the reservoir, thus the water capacity has reached critical levels, and the region is now facing not only a crisis related to power supply, but also environmental catastrophe.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2020/11/10/Announcement/>



6. On April 23, the Azerbaijani authorities installed a checkpoint on the Lachin corridor, after which the alleged environmental activists announced the end of their protest. As a result of the installation of the checkpoint on the border with the Republic of Armenia, the residents of the communities of Yeghtsahogh, Hin Shen, Metz Shen, and Lisagor of the Shushi district of the Republic of Artsakh remained under complete blockade; they were cut off both from the rest of Artsakh and from the possibility of leaving for Armenia. Additionally, the installation of the checkpoint completely disrupted the entry of humanitarian aid and fuel to Artsakh by the ICRC for 3 days, while the transportation of 28 patients by the ICRC from Artsakh to Armenia to receive adequate medical assistance was canceled in the first days of the installation of the checkpoint. Subsequently, the Azerbaijani authorities did not allow the ICRC to transfer patients in need of medical services and assistance to Armenia from April 29 till May 26 under a new regime, with passport control. Besides, the transfer of much-needed delivery of medicine and other items for local healthcare facilities through the Lachin corridor was resumed by the ICRC only on May 17.
7. On June 15, 2023, near the Hakari bridge (where the Azerbaijani authorities installed a checkpoint), the Azerbaijani servicemen crossed to the Armenian side and attempted to plant the Azerbaijani flag, as a result of which clashes erupted. Subsequently, the Azerbaijani side blocked all humanitarian transportation through the corridor, as a result of which the ICRC was unable to transport 25 patients from Artsakh to medical institutions in Armenia.
8. The ongoing blockade of the Lachin corridor, the disruption of the critical infrastructure of Artsakh, the gross violations of fundamental human rights, and the created humanitarian crisis are a direct manifestation of the policy of Armenophobia and ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani authorities, whose ultimate aim is the emptying Artsakh of its native Armenian population, through terrorizing the population, subjecting them to constant physical and psychological attacks, and disrupting their normal lives.
9. Blockades have a direct and diverse impact on the enjoyment of the human rights by the population of the targeted states, territories, and regions; there is a general international consensus (by United Nations human rights bodies, agencies, experts, etc.), proven by facts, that sanctions do violate the human rights of the population of the targeted state or territory. According to the Human Rights Defender's Office of Armenia, blockades violate the human rights of the entire population of the target state or territory, but those belonging

to vulnerable groups, such as children, older persons, and persons with disabilities are more susceptible to violations of their fundamental right to health.

10. This report presents the human rights violations of the population of Artsakh as result of the blockade of the Lachin corridor. The report further demonstrates that the blocking of the corridor is a direct manifestation of the state-sponsored policy of Armenophobia adopted by the high-level authorities of Azerbaijan.

## **II. The opinion of state officials regarding the installation of the checkpoint**

11. As noted in the Updated joint ad hoc public report of Human Rights Defenders of Armenia and Artsakh, statements regarding the placement of Azerbaijani customs checkpoints on the Lachin Corridor were being disseminated by Azerbaijani officials and public figures since September, 2021.<sup>2</sup>
12. Such statements were continuously made by Azerbaijani officials during the period covered under this report, as well. On February 18, the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev said that Azerbaijan has proposed to bilaterally establish checkpoints on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.<sup>3</sup>
13. It should be noted that Azerbaijani officials continued to blame Armenia in violations of Trilateral Statement of November, 9, 2020, as well as emphasized that the Lachin corridor is being used by Armenia for military purposes, such as transportation of weapons, ammunition, manpower and mines, as well as for other purposes which they considered illegal, such as the transportation of ‘stolen natural resources of Azerbaijan’.<sup>4</sup>
14. They further claimed that the installment of the checkpoint is needed to prevent such violations of Armenia. For example, on February 22, the MFA of Azerbaijan made a statement claiming that the proposal of Azerbaijan to install a checkpoint on the Lachin corridor is motivated by the need to prevent the abuse of corridor by Armenia for illegal purposes such as the transportation of mines and weapons, as well as to prevent the plundering of Azerbaijani natural resources and the illegal entry of the citizens of third countries into Azerbaijan.<sup>5</sup>
15. The same claim was continuously being made by official Baku, e.g. on March 27, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov emphasized the importance of the installment of the checkpoint on the border of Armenia and Azerbaijan for the prevention of illegal actions on the territory of Azerbaijan<sup>6</sup>, and on March 25, Bahruz Maharramov, a Member of the Parliament, stated that the solution for preventing or

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<sup>2</sup> Updated Joint Ad Hoc Public Report of the Human Rights Defenders of Armenia and Artsakh on the Humanitarian Consequences of Blocking the Only Road Connecting Artsakh With Armenia and the World (December 12 – January 13), paragraphs 36-43, Available <https://ombuds.am/images/files/6e5b772ddfecf896ee63396ddfae7e4a.pdf> (Accessed 01.06.2023)

<sup>3</sup> Available <https://report.az/ru/v-regione/ilhm-aliyev-bylo-by-horoshio-esli-by-armeniya-i-azerbajdzhan-v-dvustoronnem-poryadke-sozdali-kontrolno-propusknye-punkty-na-grani/> (in Russian), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g. the statement of the president of the parliament of Azerbaijan (Milli Majlis), dated January 19, 2023, Available [https://apa.az/az/xarici-siyaset/sahibe-qafarova-cex-respublikasinin-sefiri-ile-gorusub-743233?fbclid=IwAR3nSXD6Ulc7kS-usRK\\_64o\\_V0a9fvyYmaGeZpinTH5C\\_vEy-5Y7aUnqH\\_w](https://apa.az/az/xarici-siyaset/sahibe-qafarova-cex-respublikasinin-sefiri-ile-gorusub-743233?fbclid=IwAR3nSXD6Ulc7kS-usRK_64o_V0a9fvyYmaGeZpinTH5C_vEy-5Y7aUnqH_w) (in Azerbaijani)

<sup>5</sup> Available <https://www.mfa.gov.az/az/news/no08423> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 25.05.2023

<sup>6</sup> Available <https://www.mfa.gov.az/az/news/no16623> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 25.05.2023

countering Armenian provocations is the establishment of the control of Azerbaijani Armed Forces over alternative roads and the installment of checkpoints.<sup>7</sup>

16. It is also noteworthy that the necessity of the establishment of a checkpoint on the Lachin corridor was emphasized by the Ombudsperson of Azerbaijan, as well, who used the same justification and argumentation as other officials, mentioned above.<sup>8</sup>
17. Such statements were regularly made by the President of Azerbaijan, as well, who noted that Armenia used the Lachin corridor for illegal purposes both during his official meetings, as well as during interviews and other public events.<sup>9</sup>
18. Similarly, Azerbaijani officials, including MFA<sup>10</sup>, continued to state that Armenia tries to manipulate the international community by claiming that as a result of the activities of so called ‘eco-activists’, the Lachin corridor is closed, which hinders the exercise of the right to freedom of movement of ethnic Armenians living in Artsakh.
19. At the same time, Azerbaijani officials continued to claim that corridor is not closed, e.g. on January 26, Ilham Aliyev stated that Armenia’s accusations about the blockade of Lachin corridor are baseless, completely false and absurd.<sup>11</sup> On March 25, the President of Azerbaijan made a similar statement, claiming that the road is not closed, and since December 12, 2022, about 5000 vehicles belonging to the Russian peacekeepers and the ICRC, have used the road, which included the transportation of people in need of medical care and their companions.<sup>12</sup>
20. The monitoring of the Azerbaijani media conducted by the Office of the HRD allows us to conclude that similar claims are being made by Azerbaijani officials after the installment of the checkpoint, as well.
21. On April 27, after the installment of the checkpoint, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan made a statement claiming that the establishment of the checkpoint on the Azerbaijan-Armenia border is an internal matter, reiterating the allegations that Armenia was using the Lachin corridor for illegal activities, such as the transportation of weapons and mines, and has not yet fully withdrawn its armed forces from the territory of Azerbaijan. According to the statement, the installation of the checkpoint will serve to effectively prevent these illegal actions. It was further stated that “It is completely wrong to regard the establishment of the checkpoint, which will regulate the entry-exit mode from the border, as the closure of the road... As always, Azerbaijan guarantees the safe movement of citizens, vehicles, and goods on the Lachin-Khankendi road

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<sup>7</sup> Available [https://apa.az/az/xarici-siyaset/deputat-sulhmeramlilar-bolge-de-gerginliyin-artmasina-zemin-yaratmaqdadir-755767?fbclid=IwAR1ZbXeezJtwblquqX2e1dAfdJtAy\\_id1XxPq91axACHMRWYhSgJwrqFe7s](https://apa.az/az/xarici-siyaset/deputat-sulhmeramlilar-bolge-de-gerginliyin-artmasina-zemin-yaratmaqdadir-755767?fbclid=IwAR1ZbXeezJtwblquqX2e1dAfdJtAy_id1XxPq91axACHMRWYhSgJwrqFe7s) (Accessed 25.05.2023)

<sup>8</sup> Available <https://ombudsman.az/en/view/news/3782/opinion-of-the-commissioner-for-human-rights-ombudsman-of-the-republic-of-azerbaijan-regarding-armenias-next-military-provocation-on-the-khankendi-khalfali-turshsu-dirt-road-in-the-karabakh-econom> (Accessed 25.05.2023)

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g. the press release of the meeting of Ilham Aliyev with Gitanas Nauseda, the President of the Republic of Lithuania, January 18, 2023, Available <https://modern.az/aktual/390530/ilham-eliyev-litvali-hemkari-ile-grusdu-fotolar/> (in Azerbaijani)

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g. the press release of MFA from the meeting of Jeyhun Bayramov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Available <https://www.mfa.gov.az/az/news/no05023> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 25.05.2023

<sup>11</sup> Available [https://apa.az/az/resmi-xeber/prezident-ermenistan-lacin-xankendi-yolunun-guya-baglanmasi-barede-esassiz-iddialar-ireli-surur-744464?fbclid=IwAR0BlGjAxsHnm8nj-BvX\\_7sFn2EHVVP0QlAX-A51GfT7eLiK15Pu49XHlQ](https://apa.az/az/resmi-xeber/prezident-ermenistan-lacin-xankendi-yolunun-guya-baglanmasi-barede-esassiz-iddialar-ireli-surur-744464?fbclid=IwAR0BlGjAxsHnm8nj-BvX_7sFn2EHVVP0QlAX-A51GfT7eLiK15Pu49XHlQ) (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 25.05.2023

<sup>12</sup> Available <https://president.az/az/articles/view/59227> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 25.05.2023

within its obligations and will continue to take appropriate measures in this direction. The absurd claim of the Prime Minister [of Armenia] that the border checkpoint is established for "ethnic cleansing" is unacceptable. There are appropriate conditions for the transparent, safe, and organized passage of local Armenian residents of the Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan from the checkpoint in both directions".<sup>13</sup>

22. On May 23, the Azerbaijani MFA, reacting to the statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Ararat Mirzoyan, regarding the humanitarian issues and the inability of ICRC to transfer people as a result of the establishment of a checkpoint by Azerbaijan, qualified that statement as containing "unfounded allegations" and called it an "attempt to falsify the reality". It was further stated that "It is well-known that Armenian residents, the ICRC, and the Russian peacekeeping contingent pass through the checkpoint in a transparent and regulated manner in both directions".<sup>14</sup>
23. The Azerbaijani officials commended the installment of the checkpoint, mostly treating it as an important step towards the establishment of Azerbaijani control on the territory of Artsakh and considered it a "sovereign right of Azerbaijan". For instance, on April 23, Hikmet Babaoglu, the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Defense, Security and Fight Against Corruption, noted that the establishment of the checkpoint is a historic and strategically important decision from the point of view of fully ensuring the sovereignty of Azerbaijan.<sup>15</sup>
24. On April 23, Tahir Mirkishili, the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Economic Policy, Industry and Entrepreneurship, called the installment of the checkpoint a "historic event" and "great international success". He noted that "This is an important success of very professional, decisive and cold-blooded foreign and military policy of President Ilham Aliyev... the enemy always stays an enemy. They will strike at our most vulnerable moment".<sup>16</sup>
25. Thus, it can be concluded that Azerbaijani officials continued to justify the necessity of the installment of the checkpoint by accusing Armenia of abuse of the Lachin corridor, and regarded it as an important achievement.
26. Importantly, before the installment of the checkpoint, beside the official reasoning of the blockade, as well as the denial that Azerbaijani government orchestrated or assisted the protest actions on the corridor, Azerbaijani officials also implicitly or explicitly mentioned the real reasons and objectives of the blockade of the Lachin corridor. Thus, as mentioned in the Updated joint ad hoc public report of Human Rights Defenders of Armenia and Artsakh, on January 10, Ilham Aliyev said: "I want to say once again that conditions will be created for those who wish to live there under the flag of Azerbaijan. As citizens of Azerbaijan, both their rights and their safety will be ensured for them ...if someone does not want to become our citizen, then the road is not closed, but opened. They can go, or they can leave by themselves, no one will stop them, or they can leave under the awning of peacekeepers' trucks, or they can go by bus".
27. Another MP, Elman Mamedov, while talking about the significance of the protest of "eco-activists", noted: "During the protest, Armenians unequivocally understood what they have been deprived of, in what situation they have been put, and these are just unarmed, peaceful protesters, representatives of the public and NGOs. They understand what will happen if Russian peacekeepers don't bring them daily food, fuel, etc., or if the

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<sup>13</sup> Available <https://www.mfa.gov.az/en/news/no22923> (Accessed 25.05.2023)

<sup>14</sup> Available <https://www.mfa.gov.az/en/news/no27823> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>15</sup> Available <https://apa.az/ru/vneshnyaya-politika/xikmet-babaoglu-kpp-na-granice-s-armeniei-eto-ocerednoi-vaznyi-triumf-s-tocki-zreniya-polnogo-obespeceniya-nasego-suvereniteta-519070> (in Russian), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>16</sup> Available <https://report.az/daxili-siyaset/serhed-buraxilis-menteqesinin-qurulmasi-ilham-eliyevin-xarici-ve-herbi-siyasetinin-muhum-ugurudur/> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

ICRC does not come to rescue, does not transport patients in both directions. Now Armenians discuss what will happen if Azerbaijan undertakes a stricter approach to these issues. What means to have a stricter approach? We are installing our checkpoint on the Lachin road, the Ministry of Interior Affairs controls the traffic. Armenians understood that indeed, this can happen. Thus, the protest actions in Karabakh have a great significance, they are very important, beneficial and necessary for us. We welcome the participants of the protests and express our gratitude to them.”<sup>17</sup>

28. Furthermore, Nasib Mahamaliyev, a Member of the Parliament, while talking about the protests of so called “eco-activists”, noted: “We need to fully control the Lachin corridor, force Armenians to open the corridor of Zangezur and restore our connection with Nakhichevan”.<sup>18</sup>
29. Thus, despite the official reasoning and claims that the blockade of the road and the installment of the checkpoint are needed for security reasons, the abovementioned statements of Azerbaijani officials clearly demonstrate both the fact that the protests on the corridor were supported by the government, as well as the intentions behind the closure of the corridor, i.e. depriving ethnic Armenians of Artsakh of essential goods and services by creating humanitarian crisis, which would force people to leave their homes thus leading to the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh.
30. After the installment of the checkpoint, some other statements regarding the installment of the checkpoint revealed the objectives of this action, as well, clearly indicating the threats that this poses for the rights of ethnic Armenian population of Artsakh. Thus, on April 24, an Azerbaijani MP, Javanshir Feyziyev noted that “One of the most important points is that those who until now have been living in Karabakh and intentionally violated the laws of Azerbaijan, the separatists who illegally seized the public administration and all persons who have committed criminal offences against the state of Azerbaijan and its citizens during the armed conflicts, will not be able to leave the territory of Azerbaijan on their own. The criminals who have nested in Khankendi will stand trial”.<sup>19</sup>
31. On April 25, Tamam Jafarova, a Member of Milli Majlis, stated that “...even when the eco-activists started protesting, Armenian propagandists alleged that “a humanitarian crisis is being created in Khankendi”. Currently, the Armenian side and its sponsors started to spread the same propaganda. But everyone should clearly understand that there is no place for separatists, revanchists, illegal armed groups and terrorists on the Azerbaijani territory. The Armenian population of Karabakh should also accept this reality and oppose the separatist administration, which plays games against them”.<sup>20</sup>
32. Furthermore, on May 28, Ilham Aliyev stated: “The border checkpoint installed on the border on April 23 should be a lesson for Armenians living in Karabakh region. Unfortunately, they still hope that someone will come and save them, that someone will fight with Azerbaijan. It’s all nonsense... Everyone knows that today we have all the opportunities to carry out any operation in that region (in Artsakh, HRDO’s note).
33. Considering the abovementioned, it should be reiterated that in some of their statements the Azerbaijani officials, including Ilham Aliyev, clearly indicated that the creation of a humanitarian crisis in Artsakh is intentional and deliberate, and pursues the aim of showcasing the ethnic Armenian population of Artsakh that their lives are at risk and depend on the willingness of Azerbaijan to allow the ICRC and the Russian peacekeeping mission to transfer people, food and other products via the Lachin corridor. Such statements of

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<sup>17</sup> Available <https://pravda.az/news/103470> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 25.05.2023

<sup>18</sup> Available <https://pravda.az/news/104123> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 25.05.2023

<sup>19</sup> Available <https://modern.az/aktual/407210/serhedde-buraxilish-menteqesi-qurmasin-nemi-nelerdir-cavanshir-feyziyevden-sherh/> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>20</sup> Available <https://teleqraf.com/news/siyaset/375071.html> (in Azerbaijani),



Azerbaijani officials are unambiguous and contain clear warnings or threats aimed at installing fear and panic amongst ethnic Armenians of Artsakh.

### **III. The state-sponsored policy of Armenophobia of the Azerbaijani authorities aimed at ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Artsakh**

34. The statements of Azerbaijani officials concerning their intentions related both to the blockade of the Lachin corridor, as well as the installment of the checkpoint should be viewed and considered under the light of general attitude towards Armenians, and specifically, ethnic Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is present in the statements and comments of Azerbaijani public officials.
35. In this regard, it is important to note that during the period covered under this report (January 14 – June 15, 2023), Azerbaijani officials, especially parliamentarians, continued to use degrading and offensive speech towards Armenians, describing them as vile, deceptive, cunning traitors, thieves, unworthy of trust, ungrateful, and capable of “stabbing others in the back”.
36. Thus, on March 30, 2023, Tahir Rzayev who is a Member of Azerbaijani parliament (Milli Majlis) stated that it is very difficult to bring to the right path or keep from ‘dirty deeds’ a nation which is rooted in deception and betrayal. He noted that history has proven this by the example of Armenians, and that many intellectuals and politicians had repeatedly stated that Armenians are thieves, liars, traitors and ruthless people<sup>21</sup>.
37. On May 1, Tahir Rzayev, an MP, stated that “like Armenians, the French are also bloodthirsty, cruel, tyrants, aggressors and traitors”.<sup>22</sup>
38. Furthermore, as a part of the narrative that Armenians are traitors, it is regularly stated that Armenians have slave mentality, had always been dependent on other nations and consistently betrayed or deceived those who helped them.
39. Siyavush Novruzov, a Member of the Parliament stated on February 17 that “...once [Armenians] see a beam of light elsewhere, they immediately sell their friend and look for another friend”.<sup>23</sup>
40. Another MP, Malahat Ibrahimgizi noted on February 24, 2023: “I’m confident that in a couple of years, Armenia will betray Iran, as well. Throughout its history, this country had never had eternal friendship, cooperation or partnership with anyone. They had always built insidious relationships through betrayal, flattery and cunning. The official Irevan (Yerevan, HRDO’s note) and the Armenian nation should understand that their state was built on the historic lands of Azerbaijanis in the South Caucasus. There was not a state called “Armenia” in the region”.<sup>24</sup>
41. On April 20, during a conference themed “Ancient texts and classical sources reveal Armenian falsifications or facts related to the ancient Azerbaijani-Turkish lands of Zangezur”, Aziz Alekberli, a Member of the

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<sup>21</sup> Available at <https://pravda.az/news/109343> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 15.05.2023

<sup>22</sup> Available <https://pravda.az/news/112610> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>23</sup> Available at <https://report.az/milli-meclis/siyavus-novruzov-ermenistan-istenilen-vaxt-her-bir-dovleti-sata-biler/> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 15.05.2023

<sup>24</sup> Available at <https://demokrat.az/az/news/141065/bolgede-hec-vaxt-ermenistan-adli-bir-dovlet-olmayib-deputat> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 15.05.2023

Parliament, stated that Armenian falsifications and lies are the reason of tragic events that happened with all the nations of South Caucasus during the last 200 years. He noted that Armenians are liars, traitors, as well as vile, revengeful, ungrateful and not worthy of trust. He further commented on the ethnic origin of Armenians noting that they were slaves in Assyria and Urartu, and continue to have slave mentality to this day.<sup>25</sup>

42. On May 4, Fazil Mustafa, a Member of Milli Majlis, called Armenia “a state of a nation which does not like other nations and strives to kill them”.<sup>26</sup>
43. A narrative that Armenians have deceived the international community and made them believe that they are the victims is also used and spread by Azerbaijani officials on a regular basis. In these cases, it is noted that on the contrary of what the international community might believe, Armenians are barbarians and pose danger.
44. Thus, on March 30, Kamran Bayramov, an MP, noted that with time, the international community will accept the fact that Armenians are both a stain on and dangerous for humanity.<sup>27</sup>
45. Other offences are also used towards Armenians. For instance, on May 17, Fazil Mustafa, a Member of the Parliament, called Armenian society “sick”<sup>28</sup>, and on May 23, Behruz Maharamov, another MP, referred to Armenian society as “poisonous”.<sup>29</sup>
46. It is also important to note that Armenians are considered to be ‘the enemy’ and the caricature of a treacherous, deceitful and dangerous Armenian embodies the generalized perception of an enemy. In this regard, the widespread usage of the phrase ‘the hated enemy’ is especially noteworthy, as both Azerbaijani officials and regular social media users oftentimes use this phrase when referring to Armenians.<sup>30</sup>
47. When it comes to the attitude of Azerbaijani officials towards ethnic Armenians of Artsakh, it should be noted that the general rhetoric of Armenophobia is used in parallel with other popular narratives. Oftentimes, Azerbaijani officials distinguish two “categories” of ethnic Armenians living in Artsakh: the separatists (which are the authorities of the self-proclaimed Republic of Artsakh) and the regular population.
48. A narrative is then created according to which, Azerbaijan is ready to ensure the rights and freedoms of the regular population, which would also accept this and the ‘separatists’ are hindering this process. On April 18, Ilham Aliyev noted: “Currently, the separatists who made up names for themselves (one calls himself “president”, another one “minister” and the other one “the chair of parliament”), that bunch of clowns should finally understand that they cannot play with our patience. We have repeatedly tried to explain to them in various ways that they either have to accept our view, or leave [Nagorno-Karabakh] and leave alone the Armenians living there, who have become their prisoners, hostages. I am confident that most of the Armenian population currently living in Karabakh is ready to accept Azerbaijani citizenship. Only those leeches, those predatory animals, separatists, do not allow them. They do not allow these people to live in peace, and have

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<sup>25</sup> Available at <https://report.az/daxili-siyaset/eziz-elekberli-ermenilerin-etnik-menseyi-yoxdur/> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 15.05.2023

<sup>26</sup> Available <https://demokrat.az/az/news/148272/fazil-mustafa-iran-siyasetinden-el-cekme> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>27</sup> Available <https://demokrat.az/az/news/144497/vaxt-gelecek-dunya-ermenilerin-beseriyet-ucun-tehlukeli-oldugunu-gebul-edecek> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 15.05.2023

<sup>28</sup> Available <https://teleqraf.com/news/siyaset/377487.html> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>29</sup> Available <https://pravda.az/news/115067> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>30</sup> See, e.g. Ilham Aliyev, 28.05, Available <https://president.az/az/articles/view/60027> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 29.05.2023

held them as prisoners for 30 years. Therefore, my position is, let everyone hear it, and the leadership of Armenia, and the forces behind them today. No one can influence our will. We proved it during and after the war. If necessary, we will prove it again in any way."<sup>31</sup>

49. By dividing the Armenian population of Artsakh into two groups of ‘separatists’ and ‘the regular people’, the Azerbaijani officials seek to make an impression that their hatred and animosity is not aimed towards all Armenians and targets only the ‘separatist regime’.
50. It should, however, be noted that this rhetoric is rather harsh; on many occasions, Azerbaijani officials stated their unequivocal position that ethnic Armenians of Artsakh should leave Artsakh if they do not prove their readiness to accept the citizenship of Azerbaijan.
51. On March 19, the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan stated: “The Armenian side should understand that the citizenship of the Republic of Azerbaijan is a commitment along with the right. Necessary conditions to live in Azerbaijan will be created for Armenian residents, who accept this”.<sup>32</sup>
52. On March 28, Azar Badamov, an MP, noted that “The territory of Karabakh inhabited by Armenians is the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan and with time, [Armenians of Artsakh] will have to live together with Azerbaijanis. Therefore, every belated day works against them.”<sup>33</sup>
53. Similarly, on March 28, while commenting the rejection of the representatives of Artsakh to negotiate with Azerbaijan during the meetings in Baku, Tural Gyanjaliyev, an Azerbaijani MP, noted that “Armenians of Karabakh have no other way, they should be reintegrated into Azerbaijani society. Armenian residents of Karabakh should separate themselves from separatists.”<sup>34</sup> Another MP, Jeyhun Mamadov, noted that “Armenians living in Karabakh should understand that they have two options. They should either accept Azerbaijani administration and reintegrate or leave those territories. There is no other, third way”.<sup>35</sup> Agil Mamadov, also a Member of the Parliament, expressed the same opinion.<sup>36</sup>
54. On April 18, Ilham Aliyev noted that Armenians living in Karabakh should either accept the citizenship of Azerbaijan or find another place of residence.<sup>37</sup>
55. Furthermore, it is important to note that the threats of use of force were continuously being made during the period covered under this report. On March 25, Hikmet Babaoglu, a Member of Milli Majlis, stated that “Azerbaijan is not in the mood to tolerate the criminal whims of neither the so-called peacekeepers who fail to fulfill their mission, nor Armenians living in Armenia or Karabakh. Azerbaijan can suddenly put an end to all these provocations at a convenient moment”.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Available <https://president.az/az/articles/view/59451> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 25.05.2023

<sup>32</sup> Available <https://mfa.gov.az/en/news/no15423> (Accessed 29.05.2023)

<sup>33</sup> Available <https://demokrat.az/az/news/142491/deputat-ermeniler-ne-qeder-tez-azerbaycana-reintiqrasiya-olunsa-onlarin-guzarani-da-yaxsilasar> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>34</sup> Available <https://apa.az/az/daxili-siyaset/tural-gencyev-ermeni-ictimaiyyeti-numayendelerinin-gorusden-imtinasi-yeni-texribatlarin-mujdesidir-756163> (In Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>35</sup> Available <https://apa.az/az/daxili-siyaset/qarabagda-yasayan-ermeniler-ucun-ucuncu-yol-yoxdur-rey-756156> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>36</sup> Available <https://apa.az/az/daxili-siyaset/qarabagda-yasayan-ermeniler-ucun-ucuncu-yol-yoxdur-rey-756156> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>37</sup> Available <https://president.az/az/articles/view/59451> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 22.05.2023

<sup>38</sup> Available <https://apa.az/az/xarici-siyaset/hikmet-babaoglu-rusiya-sulhmeramlilarinin-qarabagdaki-missiyasini-antisulh-missiyasi-adlandirmaq-olar-755758> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed

56. On April 13, Zahid Oruj, an MP, stated: “Be calm, our army will not leave unanswered any actions; one for one, blood for blood, a person for a person, an action for an action.”<sup>39</sup>
57. On May 28, Ilham Aliyev stated: “Even if not de facto, de jure Armenia still is independent, the term “borders of Armenia” is still somewhat accepted. They must accept our terms. If they do not want to conduct delimitation, then let there be no delimitation. What will happen next, the border will be where we say it is. They know that we can do this... Therefore, delimitation must be conducted on our conditions... I say these condition here – in the Lachin city, so that everyone sees that today, we are here and we will be here forever. Let them know that Armenian villages are visible from here. We see those villages, too, let them not forget this”.<sup>40</sup>
58. It is especially noteworthy that when talking about the necessity of military attacks on Artsakh, Azerbaijani officials often refer to these actions as “anti-terrorist operations”, in an attempt to legitimize these attacks. E.g., in early March, several MPs made remarks that in the near future, Azerbaijan will conduct anti-terrorist operations in Karabakh, referring to the possibility of a military attack on the ethnic Armenian population of Artsakh.<sup>41</sup>
59. Some of the threats of use of force contain explicit threats of ethnic cleansing, as well. E.g., on May 11, Elman Mamadov, a Member of Milli Majlis, stated: “It will be difficult to convince Armenians [to live peacefully] without completely destroying them and bringing them to their knees. ...Even if they sign a document called a “peace treaty” they will not respect its provisions until they are completely destroyed and diminished. The traces, origins, roots of Armenians must be cleansed from the entire South Caucasus region. Until they are based on our historic lands and have claims against us and Turkey, they will not want to live peacefully. We need to constantly divide them, the “iron fist” should be above their heads and hit them when they lift their heads. It will be impossible any other way”.<sup>42</sup>
60. To conclude, it should be noted that when considering the statements of Azerbaijani officials regarding the readiness of Azerbaijan to ensure the rights of ethnic Armenians of Artsakh, including their safe and free movement via the Lachin corridor, under the light of constant Armenophobic rhetoric which is being spread on the state level, as well as the blatant and explicit usage of threats of use of force both against Armenia and Artsakh, the insincerity of Azerbaijani officials becomes apparent.

#### **IV. The perception of Azerbaijani public regarding the installation of the checkpoint**

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<sup>39</sup> Available <https://modern.az/parlament/405606/komite-sedri-bu-haselerin-cox-kecmenden-cavabi-verilecek/> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

<sup>40</sup> Available <https://president.az/az/articles/view/60027> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 29.05.2023

<sup>41</sup> See, e.g. Javanshir Pashazade, 06.03, Available <https://sabahinfo.az/posts/detail/texribatlar-davam-ederse-qarabagda-yeniden-antiterror-emeliyyatlar-baslaya-biler-deputat-1678103404> (in Azerbaijani, Accessed 25.05.2023), Rasim Musabeyov, 07.03, Available <https://pravda.az/news/107220> (in Azerbaijani, Accessed 25.05.2023), Fazil Musatafa, 09.03, Available <https://telegraf.com/news/siyaset/369884.html> (in Azerbaijani, Accessed 25.05.2023)

<sup>42</sup> Available <https://pravda.az/news/113863> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 28.05.2023

61. The monitoring of social media conducted by the HRDO allows us to state that similar to public officials, the Azerbaijani public accepted the fact of the installment of the checkpoint on the corridor as an achievement, celebrating it and considering it an important step towards fully restoring Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.
62. E.g. a user on Twitter stated that this is not a regular border checkpoint but the most important step made towards ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan<sup>43</sup>, and another user called it "the continuation of our victory".<sup>44</sup>
63. Many users restated the positions expressed by public officials saying that Azerbaijan has the right to install the checkpoint as it is based on national interest of Azerbaijan<sup>45</sup>, and will prevent the transportation of weapons and ammunition via Lachin corridor.<sup>46</sup>
64. Others expressed gratitude and joy and considered the establishment of the checkpoint a direct result of protests of "eco-activists". A social media user tweeted "Our fight, which has been happening on the Lachin-Khakendi road since the first day, today shows its results. Azerbaijan established a border control checkpoint in Lachin".<sup>47</sup>
65. It is important to note that many Azerbaijanis consider this a step towards gaining control over Artsakh, e.g. a user on Twitter called the installment of the checkpoint 'a historic event' and stated that "The installment of the checkpoint on the border with Armenia by Azerbaijan will accelerate the reestablishment of control over all territories occupied by separatists, including Khankendi".<sup>48</sup>
66. Many comments of Azerbaijani social media users contained excitement about the fact that the installment of the checkpoint will allow Azerbaijani border guards to check the documents and belongings of Armenians using the road. A user stated on Facebook: "Vehicles coming from Armenia to Lachin and then to Khankendi will stop before Azerbaijani border guards and will provide their documents, as well as show what they brought. The result of protest actions continuing for months. Thank you".<sup>49</sup>
67. Many expressed hope that this will force ethnic Armenians of Artsakh to leave to Armenia, or implied that the establishment of the checkpoint will have such an effect. A Telegram user stated "Hays (the transliteration of Armenian endonym for Armenian people, often used by Azerbaijanis as an insult, HRDO's note) live there, we'll need to smoke them out [of Artsakh]". Another user wrote "The mousetrap slammed shut", and another one stated that "Now Armenians will leave [Artsakh] themselves". Jokes regarding the possible genocide were also made. Another user noted: "We need a negative flow. More people need to go to Armenia than return from there".
68. The monitoring shows that the usage of insults and other offensive speech was widespread. A Telegram user suggested that "We need to put the counter [of checkpoint] lower so that every time they have to bow down".
69. Others considered that the movement of ethnic Armenians of Artsakh to and from Armenia should be restricted or only allowed upon obtaining certain Azerbaijani documents, such as passport or temporary

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<sup>43</sup> Available <https://twitter.com/HajiyevElsevar/status/1650219587647012869> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 29.05.2025

<sup>44</sup> Available [https://twitter.com/seyidova\\_ramile/status/1650276066315968515](https://twitter.com/seyidova_ramile/status/1650276066315968515) (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 29.05.2023

<sup>45</sup> Available <https://twitter.com/MehinTunar/status/1650869150074515460> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 29.05.2023

<sup>46</sup> Available <https://twitter.com/MehinTunar/status/1650869150074515460> (In Azerbaijani), Accessed 29.05.2023

<sup>47</sup> Available <https://twitter.com/TuralNur2022/status/1650178833876754432> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 29.05.2023

<sup>48</sup> Available <https://twitter.com/ElmeddinBehbud/status/1650205436501454849> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 29.05.2023

<sup>49</sup> Available <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=5602448839855842&set=a.501581726609271> (in Azerbaijani), Accessed 29.05.2023

registration certificate, etc. A user stated that “The Khachiks (another widespread degrading form of referring to Armenians, which is formed from the word “Khach” that means “crest” in Armenian – thus referring to the fact that most Armenians are Christians) have to receive temporary registration with further departure to India”. Another user also proposed that there is a need for establishment of a migration checkpoint. “Let them prove that they have a right to receive citizenship of Azerbaijan or deport them as illegal immigrants. Let them prove the legality of their property!”.

70. Another user also suggested to “Allow everyone to exit but permit to entry only those who hold Azerbaijani passports”.
71. Others found that since Armenians of Artsakh have Armenian passports, they should move to Armenia. Many stated that Azerbaijan can do as it pleases, e.g. close the border, and do not allow Armenians to leave Artsakh, or, on the contrary, to deport everyone. A user stated “We need to chase out all Armenians back to Persia and Syria. These nomads have nothing to do in the Caucasus!”
72. It should also be noted that after the installation of the checkpoint, almost all cases of the transfer of ethnic Armenians of Artsakh through the Lachin corridor, were filmed and the video materials were disseminated by Azerbaijani media outlets and social media channels, especially on Telegram. The publication of these materials was accompanied by the notions that the corridor is not closed, and the residents of Artsakh may freely pass the checkpoint. Oftentimes, these publications received similar reactions by Azerbaijani social media users as described above, i.e. expressing their excitement regarding the fact that ethnic Armenians of Artsakh are being checked by Azerbaijani border guards, or stating that Armenians should leave Artsakh. A user noted: “After the full capture of Khankendi, we need to throw everyone who did not participate in the war out, and those who hold a weapon against us, should be exterminated”.
73. Many users also used degrading and offensive speech, and have spread hatred towards Armenians. A Telegram user, for example, noted: “They are so disgusting and their children are just as disgusting. Let them collect their stuff and leave [Artsakh] until our arrival”.
74. Another user suggested to “teach them a lesson” by restricting or limiting the working hours of the checkpoint. Suggestions to “allow everyone to leave but do not let anyone to return” were also widely posted. A commenter noted: “Hays, leave Karabakh. Either way, we will not let you live”. Many users also used degrading and offensive speech, and spread hatred towards Armenians. “Can you stop filming these monkeys?” – noted a user on Telegram.
75. Summing up, it should be noted that Azerbaijani public mainly perceived the installment of the checkpoint as an opportunity to strengthen the Azerbaijani control over Artsakh and considered it acceptable and even desirable to force ethnic Armenians of Artsakh to leave their homes or deport them, or, on the contrary, to forbid these people to leave Artsakh thus maintaining the blockade.

## **V. Human rights violations as a result of the blockade:**

### **➤ The right to life:**

76. On March 5, 2023, in a flagrant violation of the trilateral statement of November 9, 2020, the Azerbaijani armed forces killed 3 servicemen of the Artsakh Police and injured one near Stepanakert. The 3 Police officers

were in their service vehicle when they were ambushed by an Azerbaijani sabotage group, who had infiltrated through the line of contact.

77. The Azerbaijani armed forces have regularly conducted targeted shootings in the direction of Armenian civilians conducting agricultural work on their lands, which are located in the immediate vicinity of the line of contact.

➤ **The rights to freedom of movement:**

78. The blocking of the Lachin corridor by the Azerbaijani alleged environmental protesters, and subsequently by the installation of the Azerbaijani checkpoint has resulted in the complete restriction of the movement of people from and to Artsakh. Moreover, the blocking has also resulted in the stop of movement of cargo (for food and medical supplies, etc.). As a result, since December 12, 2022, only vehicles belonging to the ICRC have transported patients to Armenia, and a limited amount of supplies to Artsakh.

79. According to the information registered by the Human Rights Defender's Office, there have been cases when the Azerbaijani side has prohibited the ICRC from transporting humanitarian cargo, even after negotiations which have lasted several days. The same issue has also been registered during humanitarian cargo transportation by the Russian Peacekeepers.

80. The blockade of the Lachin corridor has resulted in the separation of families. Family members from Artsakh, and Armenia, were unable to reunite due to the closure of the road. During the blockade, the movement of people along the corridor has decreased by 201 times (around 2,276 entries and departures instead of 458,150), as compared to the movement before the blockade of the road on December 12, 2022. During this period, people were transferred in both directions through the assistance of the ICRC and the Russian Peacekeepers.

81. Only vehicles belonging to the ICRC and Russian Peacekeepers have transported patients to Armenia, and a limited amount of supplies to Artsakh. The Azerbaijani alleged "environmental protesters" banned all movement of people through the corridor.

82. In particular, when on April 4, 2022, 27 citizens living in Artsakh were returning from Goris to Stepanakert, accompanied by Russian Peacekeepers, the Azerbaijani protesters banned them from entering the blocked section of the road. At the same time, psychological intimidation was exerted on the people, as a result of which the health of 4 women deteriorated, of whom 3 fainted and were taken to the hospital in Stepanakert. The remaining persons were returned to Goris.

83. The Azerbaijani protesters displayed similar treatment when children were returning to Stepanakert. That incident will be covered in the section of the rights of the child.

84. According to the information registered by the Human Rights Defender's Office, the blockade has resulted in the prevention of around 74,800 tons of vital supplies and goods from entering Artsakh, resulting in a shortage of supply of foodstuffs in the markets of Artsakh, and in certain cases their complete absence, such as fruits and vegetables. Only an amount of 5,677 tons of supplies have entered Artsakh during this period.

85. On the first day of the blockade, according to the information gathered by the Human Rights Defenders' Offices, 270 children, about 70 of them without their parents (they were attending the Junior Eurovision Song Contest which was being held in Armenia, being accompanied by their teachers) were not able to pass through

the Lachin corridor back home. The children were accommodated in Goris and Yerevan, until they were gradually returned through the intervention of the ICRC.

86. As a result of the shortage of fuel, and the disruption of the supply of natural gas, the internal movement of both public and private transport has been severely restricted, further violating the right of the freedom of movement of the population of Artsakh.
87. Furthermore, as mentioned above, on June 15, the Azerbaijani side blocked all humanitarian transportation through the corridor thus completely depriving Armenians of Artsakh of the possibility to exercise their right to freedom of movement.

➤ **The right to health and healthcare/humanitarian assistance:**

88. The blockade of the Lachin corridor, which has cut-off Artsakh from Armenia and the world, has had a negative impact on the enjoyment of the right to health of the people living in Artsakh. The blockade has created a complex and persistent issue related to the realization of the human right to health and healthcare. Further aggravating the situation, and with the intention of causing a humanitarian catastrophe, the Azerbaijani authorities have repeatedly cut the supply of natural gas to Artsakh.
89. The blockade of the Lachin corridor has created immense difficulties in transferring patients with critical health conditions to Armenia, where they would have the opportunity to receive the required and specialized medical assistance and services.
90. In particular, as mentioned above, the movement of persons through the Lachin corridor was only conducted through the escort of the ICRC and the Russian Peacekeepers. The transfer of patients was conducted through the vehicles belonging to the ICRC, except for critically ill patients, who needed to be transported while laying down horizontally in the ambulances belonging to the Russian Peacekeepers. One case has been registered where a critically ill patient was transported while seated in a vehicle belonging to the ICRC.





91. The provision of medicines and medications, which like foodstuffs, rely heavily on supplies from Armenia, have also been stopped. As a direct result of the blocking of the corridor, shortages or lack of medications, such as pressure, and cardiac drugs, antipyretic drugs, painkillers, and other irreplaceable and essential drugs have been registered. Drugs or insulin syringes for diabetic patients are also lacking. Even the supply of medicines that are used as substitutes are in short supply. During this period, limited amounts of medications and medical provisions have been supplied by the ICRC.
92. After the installation of the Azerbaijani checkpoint on April 23, 2023, the transportation of 28 patients from Artsakh to Armenia to receive adequate medical assistance was canceled in the first days.
93. Moreover, according to the information registered by the Human Rights Defender's Office, on April 29, the Azerbaijani authorities did not allow the ICRC to transfer patients in need of medical services and assistance to Armenia, thus depriving 30 patients of the possibility to receive required healthcare. Additionally, the Azerbaijani authorities have also created obstacles for the transportation of medical supplies by the ICRC, as a result of which, it was suspended on April 29, 2023, and was resumed only on May 17, 2023. (The representatives of the Azerbaijani security forces demanded to carry out passport and car checks of the ICRC drivers and transported medical patients.) On May 26, the Azerbaijani authorities allowed the ICRC to resume the transportation of patients through the Lachin corridor.
94. According to the information registered by the Human Rights Defender's Office, in accordance with the procedure, all the passengers, including the medical staff and the patients are asked to exit the ambulance; thereafter, Azerbaijani personnel take their pictures, and check their documents and passports, after which they are allowed to cross the corridor.
95. Since the start of the blockade, 1400 people have been deprived of the opportunity to receive necessary medical treatment due to suspension of planned surgeries in all medical facilities of Artsakh. Due to the efforts of the representatives of the ICRC, as of June 14, 2023, 477 patients have been transferred from Artsakh to Armenia to receive appropriate medical care, and they were accompanied by 294 escorts, of which, 285 patients and 218 escorts have returned to Artsakh. During the period of the blockade, 1 patient died in Artsakh since it was not possible to transfer the patient to Armenia on time. The blockade has had an adverse effect on other cases of deaths of patients, as well, even though it was not the primary cause.
96. The shortage or absence of medications have been registered in pharmacies, and medical institutions; the most severe shortage is that of antibiotics, antipyretics, cardiac drugs, and medicines for general chronic diseases. Critically, hospitals are also suffering from a deficiency in cancer medications, since they are entirely imported from outside. Moreover, hygiene supplies, such as soaps, toiletries, diapers, feminine hygiene products are also of short supply.
97. Another issue that has developed in the healthcare sector in Artsakh, is the issue of repairs of the medical equipment. Spare parts of certain equipment were imported from Armenia, while others were repaired in Armenia. Since the start of the blockade, this has been impossible, and therefore certain medical equipment are damaged or malfunctioning.
98. Shortage of infant formula has been registered during the blockade, causing serious nutritional problems for hundreds of newborns. Moreover, as a result of the constant stress caused to breastfeeding mothers of newborn infants, and the lack of intake of the necessary nutrition and vitamins, it has been impossible in certain cases to continue breastfeeding the newborn infants, having a negative impact on their health, since breastfeeding provides protection from life-threatening and chronic illnesses. Moreover, the intake of

adequate nutrition by pregnant women is crucial and vital to guarantee healthy fetal development, and protection from serious diseases and illness in later stage of life.

➤ **The right to food:**

99. As a result of the continued blockade of the Lachin corridor, 74,800 tons of vital supplies and goods have been prevented from entering Artsakh, resulting in a shortage of supply of foodstuffs in the markets of Artsakh, and in certain cases their complete absence, in particular of fruits and vegetables. Only an amount of 5,677 tons of supplies have entered Artsakh during this period. In particular, 90% of the foodstuffs sold in the markets of Artsakh was imported from Armenia.
100. To counter the existing situation, the authorities of Artsakh decided to restock some products in the stores from the Artsakh State Reserve and Wartime Stocks, for the purpose of meeting the primary needs of the population. Moreover, the authorities decided to introduce a ration stamp system, which will allow for the distribution of certain foodstuffs proportionately. The ration cards will be used to buy only essential products, such as pasta, buckwheat, rice, sugar, oil, fruits, vegetables, eggs, etc.



101. During this period, limited amount of foodstuffs and necessities have been transported to Artsakh through the intervention of the ICRC. In particular, the ICRC has delivered food parcels and basic necessities to medical facilities, boarding schools for children from vulnerable families and institutions supporting older persons living in conditions of extreme poverty. The shortage of foodstuffs has brought forward a serious problem for a number of social groups which are under the care and responsibility of the State, such as children living in orphanages, nursing homes, etc. Hence, the most serious issue facing Artsakh in relation to the right to food, is the inability to meet the nutritional needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as children, pregnant women, older persons).

➤ **The right to adequate standard of living:**

102. As a direct result of the blockade and the deliberate disruptions of vital infrastructure, the living standard of population of Artsakh has been deteriorated since the start of the blockade, which compounded by the violations of the rights to health, freedom of movement and food, has resulted in a humanitarian crisis in the region.
103. The Azerbaijani authorities have deliberately disrupted the operation of critical infrastructure of Artsakh, such as the supply of natural gas, electricity, internet, and mobile communication. In particular, since January 9, 2023, the Azerbaijani side has disrupted the electricity supply from Armenia to Artsakh through the only high-voltage power transmission line (the Azerbaijani side does not let specialists from Artsakh to the site, which is under their control, to restore the power supply), and after regular disruptions of the supply of natural-gas to Artsakh, the Azerbaijani authorities completely blocked the gas supply into the region on March 22, 2023.
104. 80% of the population of Artsakh rely on the regular supply of natural gas for domestic purposes, such as for hot water, cooking, and heating. Hence the disruption of the gas supply has resulted in additional sufferings, especially during the conditions of cold weather of the severe winter.



105. Therefore, as a direct result of the disruption of the supply of natural gas and electricity, 6-hour rolling blackouts have been implemented in Artsakh, further aggravating the humanitarian consequences of the blockade of the Lachin corridor.



106. Due to the impossible operating conditions in the blockade, 860 small and medium-sized business entities have suspended their activities, which constitutes 20% of the all business entities. Moreover, 11,000 people have lost their jobs, and source of income (almost 50% of the workers of the private sector) as a result of the impact of the blockade on the economy.
107. The scarcity of cash money has also been registered in Artsakh. Money withdrawals are limited from automated teller machines (ATMs). On January 11, 2023, the authorities in Artsakh decided to restrict the withdrawal amount of cash to 50.000 AMDs (around 127 USD) daily; since the installation of the Azerbaijani checkpoint, the communities of Mets Shen, Hin Shen, Yeghtsahogh and Lisagor are no longer able to access banking services.
108. During the blockade, the Azerbaijani side also targeted the telecommunication, mobile communication, and the Internet infrastructure. For example, the Azerbaijani side damaged the fiber-optic cable supplying internet services on January 12, at the location where the alleged environmental activists were blocking the corridor, and did not allow for repair works to be conducted for a whole day, violating the right of the population to receive information and communication, especially during the conditions of blockade and uncertainty.

➤ **The right to family life - separation of families:**

109. During the period of the blockade, 3900 people (including 550 children) have been separated from their families, of which 1,669 have been reunited with the assistance of the ICRC and the Russian Peacekeepers.
110. As a result of the blockade, 550 children were deprived from the opportunity to return to their families, and homes; 60 of whom were left without parental care, while the rest with one parent. Only after the 39<sup>th</sup> day of the blockade, it was possible to return the children that were left without parental care to their families. Currently there are more than 1820 children on either side of the blockade, whose one parent is on the other side of the blocked road, and cannot return home.
111. The transport of people through the Lachin corridor is conducted within the context of the family reunification program of the ICRC. Since the setup of the checkpoint by the Azerbaijani authorities, this

process has stopped, since the Azerbaijani side is demanding a complete control and oversight over the process (including passports).

112. According to the information registered by the Human Right Defender's Office, the organizational details of the transfer of people by the Russian Peacekeepers, the people apply to the relevant bodies of the authorities of Artsakh (the Russian Peacekeepers also transport people for family reunification purposes and in certain cases, the transport of patients).
113. During the blockade, the relatives of more 36 persons from Artsakh who had died outside the region could not return their remains, and were forced to bury them in Armenia, on the condition of subsequent exhumation and reburial in Artsakh.

➤ **The rights of the child:**

114. The rights of the 30.000 children living in Artsakh as a direct result of the blockade, and the deliberate disruptions of the supply of vital supplies (foodstuffs, and medication), and critical infrastructure of Artsakh by the Azerbaijani side.
115. The severe shortage of medications, medical supplies, hygiene products, and scheduled surgeries have adversely affected the right of the children to health and healthcare. The lack, or sharp shortage of infant formula during certain periods led to serious nutritional issues for hundreds of newborns. Additionally, the lack of severe shortage of various vitamin-rich foodstuffs has endangered the stable physical and mental development.
116. The deliberate Azerbaijani policy of terrorizing the population of Artsakh, and keeping them in a constant state of uncertainty and tension has had an adverse effect on the mental health and behavior of children in Artsakh (47% increase in visits to child neurologists and psychologists has been registered after the start of the blockade).
117. The lack or severe shortage of food, the deliberate disruptions of critical infrastructure by the Azerbaijani side has adversely effected the right of the children to education, due to cancelation of classes, or the conduct of classes in unsuitable conditions.
118. In particular, due to the interruptions of the supply of natural gas, all 118 schools of Artsakh were suspended from January 18-30, depriving 20.000 children from exercising their right to education. From February 7-20, the educational process of pre-schools, 1-8 grades of elementary public schools which are gas-heated, out-of-school institutions, primary and secondary vocational educational institutions were suspended, effecting around 18,000 children.
119. As a result of the increasing shortage of food during the blockade, all 41 kindergartens, and 56 pre-school groups were closed since January 9, while 20 long-day educational institutions were working partially. As a result, 6828 children could not attend educational institutions. As of February 23, the activities of the mentioned institutions were resumed, since heating and food issues were temporarily resolved.
120. Applicants willing to study in the higher institutions of Armenia or foreign universities, are deprived of the opportunity to pass the relevant admission exams, due to the impossibility to go to Armenia, and the absence of international test centers in Artsakh.

121. 70 children, who were attending the Junior Eurovision Song Contest which was being held in Armenia without their parents, and were accompanied by their teachers were not able to pass through the Lachin corridor back home. When 19 of those children were returning home on January 17, 2023 through the Lachin corridor, accompanied by Russian Peacekeepers, their bus was stopped by the Azerbaijani “activists”, and the children were subjected to unlawful video-recording and harassment by the “activists” operating under the auspices of the Azerbaijani Government<sup>50</sup>. Psychological violence was used, creating a real danger in guaranteeing children's rights to life and healthcare<sup>51</sup>. As a result of the provocative actions of the Azerbaijanis and the deliberate behavior of creating an atmosphere of fear among children, one of the children in the car fainted.<sup>52</sup>

➤ **The rights of other vulnerable groups:**

122. Around 9,000 persons with disabilities living in Artsakh are facing additional restrictions and violations of their rights. For example, certain persons with disabilities have specific nutritional needs which cannot be appropriately met under the conditions of the blockade. Moreover, as a result of the ration card system, and the long queues to access limited quantities of food, persons with disabilities are facing additional issues related to accessibility and availability. As a direct result of the shortage of foodstuffs, and issues related to heating, the only rehabilitation center in Artsakh for persons with disabilities was unable to provide its services to almost 1200 persons.

123. Around 20,000 older persons with various special needs live in Artsakh. Many older persons suffer from chronic diseases, and are in need of constant medical assistance, which is hampered by the lack or severe shortage of medications as a result of the blockade. This issue is compounded by the shortage of food supply, since a significant part of older persons have special nutritional needs. In particular, the situation of around 160 older persons living alone has worsened, since they rely on state and social care, which have been strained due to shortage of foodstuff, and medications as a result of the blockade.

124. Approximately 60,000 women and girls are currently living in Artsakh, out of whom a significant number have special needs, and whose fundamental rights are being violated as a result of the blockade. Due to the blockade, malnutrition, and lack of medications, the reproductive health of adolescent girls is threatened. Women in Artsakh are also facing a sharp shortage of feminine hygiene items. Moreover, due to the deepening of social, and psychological problems, the risks of domestic violence has increased in Artsakh.

125. Additional suffering has been caused to displaced more than 40,000 citizens of Artsakh as a result of the 44-day war: about 15,000 of them settled in other communities of Artsakh with state support. Taking into account their situation, lack of employment, and permanent residence, the displaced citizens received the status of a social group and the state provided them with psychological support, medical care, provision of medicine, and provision of necessary food.

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<sup>50</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JFdx1rGqvJe-QjHGHZk2aFCVTKcue1qO/view>

<sup>51</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ck8Yc\\_s5u4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ck8Yc_s5u4)

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIUEGXzvMBw&t=6s>

<p>Диванный Комментатор</p> <p>Фин Бан</p> <p>А они не удивляются что с каждым днём п... в какую сторону? нам нужно негативный поток: туда в армению больше чем из армении</p> <p>16:27</p> <p>“In which direction? We need a negative flow: More people need to go to Armenia than return from there”.</p>	<p>ShirvanshaX</p> <p>Caliber Chat</p> <p>Привыкайте, это наши будущие согражда... Голодранцы какие-то. После полного взятия Ханкенди, всех кто не воевал против нас нужно выршвырнуть вон, но тех кто держал оружие должны быть уничтожены</p> <p>11 1</p> <p>edited 17:23</p> <p>“Beggars. After the full capture of Khankendi, we need to throw everyone who did not participate in the war out, and those who hold a weapon against us, should be exterminated”.</p>
<p>..</p> <p>МОЖЕТ ХВАТИТ СНИМАТЬ ЭТИХ обезьян?))</p> <p>15:43</p> <p>“Can you stop filming these monkeys?”</p>	<p>Elxan Baki</p> <p>Всех выпускать, а обратно их не впускать!</p> <p>5</p> <p>11:59</p> <p>“Allow everyone to leave but do not let anyone to return”.</p>
<p>Д *****</p> <p>Пора их немного проучить пропускать их не в режиме 7/24, а с перерывами на завтрак, обед, ужин, праздники и "профилактическое проветривание КПП. Особенно хорошо было бы удлинять провода после каждого обстрела.</p> <p>10</p> <p>15:34</p> <p>“It’s the time to teach them a lesson, let them pass the checkpoint not 24/4 but with breaks for breakfast, lunch, dinner, holidays and “preventive airing of the checkpoint”. It would be especially good to lengthen the wires after each shooting”.</p>	<p>Alqambra</p> <p>@Caliber, подскажите там наверху, что бы для наших пограничников, сделали новый штамп для паспортов, в виде железного кулака. Пусть всегда видят его в своём паспорте, а если будут пересекать границу чаще, то и весь паспорт у них будет в одних сплошных железных кулаках.</p> <p>11</p> <p>edited 21:52</p> <p>“@Caliber, tell them upstairs (meaning the authorities, HRDO’s note) to make a new stamp for the passports, in the form of an iron fist. Let them always see it in their passports, and if they will cross the border more often, then the entire passport will be in iron fists”.</p>
<p>ShirvanshaX</p> <p>Какие же они гадкие и дети у них такие же мерзкие! Собирают пусть манатки и сваливают оттуда до нашего прихода</p> <p>10</p> <p>15:30</p> <p>“They are so disgusting and their children are also disgusting! Let them collect their stuff and leave from there before our arrival”.</p>	<p>Эдик Рыбак</p> <p>Надо потихоньку гнать их в шею со всего Кавказа обратно в Персию, Сирию, и Ливан !</p> <p>10</p> <p>16:36</p> <p>“We need to little by little kick them out of Caucasus to Persia, Syria and Lebanon!”</p>

<p><b>Элик</b> Львы превратились в баранов)) 17:13</p> <p><i>"The lions became sheep" (talks about Armenians passing through the checkpoint, HRDO's note).</i></p>	<p><b>Shamil Efendlev</b> Пусть РМК способствует эвакуации армян в Армению... 13:59</p> <p><i>"Russian Peacekeeping Forces should contribute to the evacuation of Armenians to Armenia".</i></p>
<p><b>Нико</b> Геноцид на день геноцида 15:26</p> <p><i>"Genocide on the day of genocide (refers to the fact that the checkpoint was installed on April 23, and April 24 is Armenian Genocide Remembrance day)".</i></p>	<p><b>Elya Tan</b> #КОРИДОРАЦИД 15:52</p> <p><i>#Corridorocide (Merge of the words "corridor" and "genocide")</i></p>
<p><b>Seg Goo</b> Давайте будем честны, следующий шаг - спецоперация против носатых 15:27</p> <p><i>"Let's be honest, the next step is a special military operation against those big-nosed".</i></p>	<p>Армяне скоро доиграются до того что будут переходить границу на КОЛЕНЯХ 11:26</p> <p><i>"Armenians will soon have to cross the border on their knees".</i></p>
<p><b>Fake it 'til you make it</b> Хачики должны получить временную регистрацию с последующем выездом в Индию 15:27</p> <p><i>"Khachiks (refers to Armenians, HRDO's note) should receive temporary registration with further deportation to India".</i></p>	<p><b>Алла Аскерова</b> Lee SI А еще ров прорыть, заполнить водой и за... Это конечно смешно, но там живут хаи, их надо выкурить оттуда! 16:12</p> <p><i>"It's really funny but hays (refers to Armenians, HRDO's note) live there, we need to smoke them out from there!"</i></p>
<p><b>Евгений Онегин</b> До 1 июля сухопутные границы закрыты: а значит пора очищать Ханкенди от пауков в банке. 22:37</p> <p><i>"Until 1st of July the land borders are closed which means that it is the time to clean out Khankendi from the spiders in the jar".</i></p>	<p><b>Руслан</b> Главное, чтобы был список тех, кто выходил на митинги в Карабахе, чтобы их обратно не впускали. Пусть в Армении митингуют дальше edited 10:08</p> <p><i>"The main thing is that everyone who participated in the protests in Karabakh was not allowed to go back [to Artsakh]. Let them protest in Armenia".</i></p>