



## **Red Flag Alert for Genocide**

### **Azerbaijan**

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On the morning of December 3, a group of Azerbaijanis in civilian clothes blocked the route Stepanakert-Goris, the only road that connects the Armenians of Artsakh with the Republic of Armenia. For more than two hours, approximately 120,000 Artsakh Armenians were isolated from Armenia proper and surrounded by Azerbaijanis. After several hours of negotiation with the Azerbaijani regime, the route was finally reopened and communications were re-established. In light of this new development, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention is issuing another Red Flag Alert for Azerbaijan.

The Lemkin Institute reminds the international community that this recent blockade of Artsakh is not an isolated event but one in a series of criminal actions carried out by the autocratic regime of Ilham Aliyev in Azerbaijan, which continue without serious opposition from the international community. The total impunity enjoyed by Aliyev combined with the genocidal intent of his regime and many Azerbaijanis will almost guarantee the repetition and escalation of this type of violence.

Many genocidal regimes will stage rehearsals for genocide in incremental steps, gauging the international response as they go. The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention believes that Aliyev is doing just this — setting the stage for genocide by confirming international apathy on the Artsakh issue and slowly inuring international actors to the prospect of an aggressive Azerbaijani invasion of Artsakh, which is 99.7 percent Armenian and part of Armenia's integral cultural heritage. Apart from some courageous votes in the Spanish and French parliaments, as well as statements of support for the Republic of Armenia by American lawmakers, Aliyev has faced no public repercussions for the aggressive wars and the atrocities carried out by his military or for the hateful rhetoric of his regime.

Furthermore, the total isolation of the Armenian population of Artsakh is a clear violation of the tripartite agreement of November 9, 2020, which put an end to the 44-day War. Today's action is one of numerous violations of the agreement that the Azerbaijani regime has committed to date, which also include the aggressive war of September 13 against the Republic of Armenia that killed over 200 Armenians, among them civilians, and resulted in the occupation of part of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia. In addition, isolating Artsakh Armenians is a breach of international humanitarian law, international human rights law and, possibly,

international criminal law. The genocidal intent of Baku has never been clearer and the actions carried out up to the moment highly predict this outcome.

Because the international community continues to choose to ignore the claims of Armenians for survival and self-determination in Artsakh, and because the media in general fails to portray a proper image of the conflict (if they cover the conflict at all), Aliyev is convinced of his invincibility. The combination of these factors, along with the geopolitics of the region and the European community's engagement in gas-related business with the autocratic regime of Azerbaijan since the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, creates the perfect environment for the Baku regime to freely pursue its genocidal goals and territorial ambitions.

The Lemkin Institute has issued several Red Flag Alerts and Statements regarding the threats of genocide to — and the Azerbaijani criminal actions against — Armenians in both Artsakh and Armenia proper. We reiterate that we strongly believe that the international community can prevent genocide in this case by putting coordinated diplomatic pressure on both the Aliyev regime in Azerbaijan and on its ally, the Erdogan regime in Turkey. The Western world must make it clear that it does not support genocide, lest it end up overseeing yet another catastrophe for the Armenian people. Western nations are at grave risk of facilitating genocide in this case and should not believe themselves to be beyond the reach of international criminal law.