

**Azərbaycan Respublikasının
BMT yanında Daimi
Nümayəndəliyi**



**Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Azerbaijan to
the United Nations**

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**Statement
by
H.E. Mr. Yashar Aliyev
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the United Nations
at the Security Council meeting 9397th
16 August 2023**

M-M President,

Given the statement we have just heard, I shall start by categorically rejecting all the unfounded and groundless allegations on “blockade” or “humanitarian crises” propagated by Armenia against my country.

What Armenia tries to present as a humanitarian matter, is indeed the provocative and irresponsible political campaign to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

It is Armenia that for almost 30 years had blatantly disregarded the relevant four resolutions of 1993 and series of Presidential Statements of the Security Council that unequivocally demanded full, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces from the territory of Azerbaijan.

Against this backdrop, Armenia’s actions are nothing but the embodiment of designed political hypocrisy and its appeal to the Security Council is a part of the campaign that it has been pursuing over the months to manipulate and mislead the international community.

Had Armenia been sincere in its quest to help it would have been happened immediately. It was indeed within practical reach very recently, days ago, as a result of active involvement of international actors, including some members of the SC. This did not materialize only due to the refusal by Armenia itself.

Following the series of intensive consultations and shuttle diplomacy efforts, agreements were finally reached with respect to the delivery of humanitarian cargo to the Garabagh region through various routes, as well as the organization of a meeting between a Special Representative of the Central Authorities and representatives of local Armenian residents.

On the first case, concrete blocks and all other physical barriers installed by the Armenian side on Aghdam-Khankendi road should have been removed to allow the delivery of humanitarian cargo by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to the local residents.

This should have been followed by upscaling the usage of the Lachin road by ICRC within 24 hours. All the parties involved, including the Russian peacekeeping contingent and the ICRC, were prepared to commence implementation of this deal practically within one hour. Unfortunately, the distinguished representative of OCHA did not mention that fact.

On the second case, the meeting between representatives of the central authorities and of local Armenian residents was agreed to take place in nearby city of Yevlakh.

Regrettably, on August 5, Armenia, through its illegally installed regime, backstepped from both agreements at a very last moment by introducing politically motivated and illegitimate preconditions and various pretexts.

There should be no doubt that notwithstanding the intensive engagement by Azerbaijan with the Russian Federation, the United States, the European Union and ICRC for finding ways out of the situation, Armenia has been deliberately obstructing diplomatic efforts.

There is only one explanation for that. Armenia is not willing to be a part of solution. Instead, it artificially ignites tension in the region with a view to continuing manipulation and misleading at international level.

The breach of the agreement on the delivery of humanitarian goods by the ICRC on August 5 is not the only obstruction. In fact, it is continuation of Armenia's politicization of the presence and activities of this humanitarian organization and its reckless attempt to exploit humanitarian matters for political purposes by challenging the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and preventing the reintegration of local ethnic Armenian residents.

Here are the facts that speak for themselves:

- Immediately after the end of war in 2020, Azerbaijan offered its logistics and infrastructure to the ICRC for the delivery of the goods to the Garabagh region. In 2021, goods were transported to Barda city by the ICRC to be delivered to the area. The Armenian side rejected it and prevented the ICRC from delivering humanitarian assistance.
- Right after the start of protests by eco-activists on the section of the Lachin-Khankendi route, Azerbaijan requested the ICRC to present the list of goods needed by the local residents and expressed its readiness to provide all logistical and infrastructural support for their delivery. ICRC came back with the response that the Armenian side did not want any supplies through Azerbaijan.
- Armenia resorted to the unprecedented action abusing ICRC for smuggling dual-use technologies, such as micro-chips to the Garabagh region. ICRC had to acknowledge this fact, which is a serious blow to the humanitarian mandate and reputation of the Committee.

- Armenia rejected to accept ICRC's Baku-based international medical personnel to be deployed to Khankendi. It was the proposal by the ICRC to facilitate medical evacuations and help deal with medical issues on the ground and supported by Azerbaijan.

Armenia's abuse of ICRC for its political purposes also makes it crystal clear that the calls for increased international presence, including UN-affiliated organizations, have nothing to do with the humanitarian concerns, instead, the aim is getting more tools for manipulation.

The Garabagh region is an internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenians living there are considered the residents of Azerbaijan. The Government of Azerbaijan is strongly committed to guarantee and secure the access of these residents to the necessary goods and establishing appropriate living conditions for them. These objectives are fully in line with international law and international humanitarian law principles, underscoring Azerbaijan's unwavering dedication to upholding these standards.

The so-called "Lachin Corridor" is a road within the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan, without any extraterritorial status, is primarily intended for the movement of citizens, vehicles and goods under the Trilateral Statement of November 10, 2020. Azerbaijan, in adherence to its commitments under the Trilateral Statement, has allowed movement along this road. This remains intact after the establishment by Azerbaijan of the checkpoint on its border with Armenia.

The border checkpoint was established in exercise of Azerbaijan's inherent right to safeguard its sovereignty and security, to prevent the consistent and blatant abuse by Armenia of this route for illegal military and other activities, such as rotation of its some 10,000 military personnel, illegally stationed in the territory of Azerbaijan, transfer of weaponry, ammunition, landmines and foreign nationals and terrorists thereto, as well as unlawful extraction and transfer of natural resources from this territory.

Is that humanitarian assistance?!

The unanimous decision by the International Court of Justice on July 6, 2023, to reject Armenia's request for an interim measure on the removal of the checkpoint, definitively dismissed Armenia's allegations that the Lachin checkpoint is illegal.

The establishment of the border checkpoint has not impeded the civilian movement along the Lachin road. There has been, in fact, a notable increase in such movement until June 15, 2023. On that date, another unwarranted provocation by Armenia unfolded when its Armed Forces attacked Azerbaijani border guards and accompanying Russian peacekeeping forces. This attack resulted in severe injury to an Azerbaijani border guard and concurrently posed a direct threat to the ICRC staff and civilians passing through the checkpoint.

M-M President,

If Armenia were genuinely concerned about the ordinary residents of the region, it would never have objected the usage of Aghdam-Khankendi road for the delivery of goods to the Garabagh region. This road is connected to the one of the major transportation routes of Azerbaijan, known

as “Silk Road” or M2 highway, which provides a reliable connection to international markets as well.

Compared to the 59 km long Lachin-Khankendi road passing through mountainous and serpentine terrain, this road is only 18 km between Aghdam and Khankendi. Today, within their visit to Aghdam, representatives of diplomatic corps, accredited in Azerbaijan, including UN Resident Coordinator’s Office and other UN institutions, had also a chance to witness that the road was functional and ready for transportation of goods.

Equally are ungrounded and false the allegations on genocide. At this point, Armenia’s manipulative and deceptive campaign involved the so-called “Opinion” by Mr. Luis Moreno Ocampo, who presents himself as an independent expert.

The flaws in Mr. Ocampo’s assertions have been identified in detail by a prominent international law expert, Mr. Rodney Dixon, in his preliminary report, which underlines that Ocampo’s Opinion lacks substantiation, is incomplete, and displays numerous inaccuracies. As such, there is no foundation for claiming that a genocide is currently being perpetrated. Specifically, Mr. Dixon finds that the Ocampo’s Opinion patently selective in the ‘facts’, in particular, given his failure to mention Armenia’s rejection of Azerbaijan’s proposals of alternative routes to supply local Armenian residents.

Such manipulations under humanitarian pretexts are not isolated from the increased illegal and provocative military activities. Over past weeks, the Armenian armed forces illegally remaining in the territory of Azerbaijan in a blatant violation of international law, as well as Armenia’s commitment under paragraph 4 of the Trilateral Statement of the leaders of Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation and Armenia of 10 November, have intensified the military-engineering works and other military build-up.

The use of radio-electronic warfare equipment illegally deployed in the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan is of particular concern. Not only civilian aircrafts of the Azerbaijani Airlines, but also those of foreign countries have been subjected to radio-electronic interference over past weeks, posing serious risk for their safety.

Today, an attempt by a reconnaissance group of the Armenian armed forces to infiltrate the territory of Azerbaijan to carry out diversion operations in the Kalbajar District was prevented and a member of the group, Voskanyan Gagik Ashotovich, DOB 1983, armed with machine-gun and ammunition, was detained.

Armenia must refrain from provocations, cease its actions undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, abstain from meddling in our internal affairs, and genuinely engage in post-conflict normalization negotiations. It is of vital importance that the historic opportunity for durable peace in the region is not missed.

Verbal statements by the leadership of Armenia on the recognition of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, including the Garabagh region, created a ground for cautious optimism that the peace is indeed within reach. Now, Armenia has to transform this statement into the real deeds and refrain from questioning the sovereignty of Azerbaijan, including under the pretext of “humanitarian needs” of the local Armenian residents of the Garabagh region of Azerbaijan.

Over the past few months, concerted efforts to intensify the normalization process with active engagement of international partners have yielded promising results. These diplomatic dialogues have played a crucial role in bridging differences and achieving tangible progress on several articles of the future bilateral agreement, aimed at establishing a lasting peace and inter-state relations.

Azerbaijan pursues the policy of reintegration of ethnic Armenian residents of the Garabagh region as equal citizens guaranteeing all the rights and freedoms envisaged in the Constitution of Azerbaijan and all relevant international human rights mechanisms that Azerbaijan is signatory to. Our adherence to both these tracks is firm as we are firm to protect our sovereignty and territorial integrity by all legitimate means enshrined in the UN Charter and international law.

We are confident that international community, and first of all, the SC will support this approach based on equal and reciprocal respect for legitimate interests of both countries through mutual recognition of and respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders.

In conclusion, M-m President, I have also something to show.

Social media outlets are full of numerous video clips and photos of local Armenian residents in Khankendi celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and all the good occasions. We wish them well.

These video/photo facts convincingly refute the allegations about starvation, famine and humanitarian crisis there.

Thank you, M-M President.