

All signs indicate Azerbaijan is preparing another military provocation, Armenian PM says



Chaired by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, the year-end Cabinet meeting was held on December 29.

During the Government sitting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan referred to the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh due to the closure of the Lachin Corridor, the actions of the Armenian Government aimed at managing it, and the activities of the Russian peacekeeping troops.

Below is the full text of the Prime Minister's speech:

Dear compatriots,

As a result of the closure of the Lachin Corridor for 18 days now, the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh is worsening day by day. Hundreds of families in Nagorno-Karabakh continue to be divided, being on different sides of the blockade. The shortage of essential goods is becoming more and more tangible. Shops are emptied. Food supply restrictions are introduced in public facilities, the public is in a state of social and psychological tension.

Taking all this into consideration, I have decided to form a working group headed by Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Khachatryan to support the people of Nagorno Karabakh in the management of the humanitarian crisis, whose task will be to monitor humanitarian issues together with the authorities of Nagorno Karabakh and provide the necessary urgent support, including with the help of international organizations. The working group will also include the Ministers of Health, Labor and Social Affairs, Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, as well as representatives of other departments.

The issue of providing additional support of 4 billion AMD to Nagorno Karabakh is included in the package of non-reportable issues at today's Cabinet meeting. It is an absolute necessity to provide necessary humanitarian, socio-psychological support to the people of Nagorno Karabakh. International awareness raising of the humanitarian crisis should also become part of our daily work. Partner states, international organizations

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Armenia MFA draws the attention of international partners to the blockade of Lachin Corridor



The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs draws the attention of international partners and all progressive humanity to the fact that for more than three weeks, Azerbaijan has kept Nagorno-Karabakh under siege, grossly violating the regime of the Lachin Corridor established by the tripartite statement of November 9, 2020, and blocking the road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and the whole world, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

It is already the 23rd day that Azerbaijan has been forcing the population of Nagorno-Karabakh to be deported in front of the eyes of the whole world, continuing its policy of ethnic cleansing, the Ministry said.

“The humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh is getting worse day by day. The lack of essential goods, food and medicine is becoming more and more significant. The danger of malnutrition becomes palpable. Hundreds of families remain separated, being on different sides of the Azerbaijani blockade. 120,000 peo-

ple are de facto prisoners,” the statement reads.

“The claims of the Azerbaijani side that the Lachin Corridor is actually open are completely groundless, which is evidenced at least by the fact that only the vehicles of the International Committee of the Red Cross are allowed to transport a limited number of patients to the Republic of Armenia in the event of a life-threatening situation,” the Foreign Ministry emphasizes.

“In the current situation, we emphasize the importance of the urgent meeting of the UN Security Council on December 20, 2022, which was called in response to the request of the Armenian side, in order to discuss the closure of the Lachin Corridor and its humanitarian consequences for the population of Nagorno-Karabakh. We highly appreciate the publicly expressed and clear calls by the overwhelming majority of the Security Council members to lift the blockade of the corridor by Azerbaijan and to provide access to Nagorno Karabakh by international organizations. We also welcome France’s efforts in the ten-day period following the aforementioned session of the Council of Ministers for a press statement to be adopted by the President of the Security Council regarding the situation,” the Ministry stated.

It stressed that “Armenia will continue to take targeted steps in all possible for-

mat, including within the framework of the UN Security Council and international and regional structures, in order to ensure a decisive response and actions arising from the mandate and functions of these structures, to lift the blockade of the Lachin Corridor and eliminate the resulting humanitarian crisis facing the 120 thousand people of Nagorno Karabakh.

“We also consider it necessary to send an international fact-finding mission to Nagorno-Karabakh and the Lachin Corridor to assess the humanitarian situation on the ground, as well as to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to Nagorno-Karabakh for relevant UN bodies,” the Foreign Ministry continued.

“Azerbaijan is obliged to immediately reopen the Lachin Corridor in accordance with the principles enshrined in point 6 of the tripartite statement of November 9, 2020, according to which Azerbaijan guarantees the safety of the movement of citizens, vehicles and cargo through the Lachin Corridor, and the Lachin Corridor is under the control of the Russian peacekeeping contingent stationed in Nagorno Karabakh. Since the provisions of the tripartite statement have been violated as a result of Azerbaijan’s illegal actions, we also expect Russia to make clear efforts to eliminate this gross violation without any preconditions,” the Ministry concluded.

Prime Minister visits military positions on the eve of the New Year



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, accompanied by Defense Minister Suren Papikyan, visited military positions on the occasion of the New Year and Christmas

holidays.

Nikol Pashinyan met with the soldiers and commanders carrying out combat duty at the military positions, toured the bases, got acquainted with the engineering works carried out on the front line, the service and the living conditions of the soldiers.

Nikol Pashinyan encouraged a group of soldiers who stood out for their dedication and courage during their service. The Prime Minister wished the servicemen a good and safe service. **“I thank you all for your service and wish you**

good service. We must understand that it will not be easy; we will have to endure this difficulty today so that it will be easy for tomorrow’s generation. This is our destiny and we must take it with honor and will and solve our task. And our task is to have a strong state, and today, yes, we have that opportunity. It is a political task, we, the political leadership have to solve it. The military should demand from us, and we – from the military,” said the Prime Minister and congratulated everyone on the New Year.

Armenia expects practical steps from international community as blockade of Lachin corridor enters 25th day – PM

The illegal blockade of the Lachin corridor by Azerbaijan has been continuing for 25 days now, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the government sitting on January 5.

He said this action that led to a humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh, caused a wide international response and calls to unblock the corridor.

“Despite this, Azerbaijan is not taking action to settle the issue. By closing the Lachin Corridor, Azerbaijan is grossly violating its direct commitment assumed under the Tripartite Statement of November 9, 2020, which raises serious questions about the contractual capacity of official Baku. At the same time, Azerbaijan is trying to blame Armenia for failure to fulfill its obligations, which is completely fictitious,” the Prime Minister said.

He noted that Azerbaijan is citing various reasons for the closure of the Lachin

Corridor, but, according to PM Pashinyan, “the most profound and real reason is that the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh continue to live in their homeland, and the international community has begun to respond more clearly to Azerbaijan’s visible policy of subjecting the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh to ethnic cleansing and genocide.”

“In this sense, we expect more practical steps from the international community, including the permanent member of the UN Security Council, the Russian Federation, whose peacekeeping troops are stationed in Nagorno-Karabakh, and keeping the Lachin Corridor under control is their direct commitment under the tripartite statement of November 9, 2020,” Nikol Pashinyan said.

He reminded that on December 30, 2022 a working group headed by Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Khachatryan

was established to support the people of Nagorno Karabakh in managing the humanitarian crisis established. The group has already held several meetings and is making decisions arising from the situation, and will continue operations as long as necessary.

Referring to the current situation in the region in general, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Armenia’s commitment to the tripartite statements of November 9, 2020, January 11, 2021, November 26, 2021, October 31, 2022, as well as to the arrangements reached during the quadrilateral meeting in Prague on October 6, 2022.

He emphasized that under the conditions of the ongoing blockade of the Lachin Corridor, sending of an international fact-finding mission to Nagorno-Karabakh and the Lachin Corridor is even more urgent, and stressed the need to make continuous efforts in this direction.

should be informed in detail about the humanitarian crisis and the worsening of the situation.

Dear colleagues,

Dear people,

I have had occasion to say, but I must emphasize now that the closure of the Lachin Corridor is a gross violation of point 6 of the trilateral declaration of November 9, 2020. Under this clause, two of the parties to the trilateral declaration, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation, bear obligations. Azerbaijan guarantees the safety of the movement of citizens, vehicles and cargo through the Lachin Corridor, and the peacekeeping force of the Russian Federation keeps the Lachin Corridor under control.

The statements circulated by Azerbaijan on international platforms that the Lachin Corridor is open for traffic are false and have nothing to do with reality. The Lachin Corridor has been closed by Azerbaijan, and this is a flagrant violation of its international obligations. Even if we rely on the propaganda version of Azerbaijan that the Lachin Corridor was blocked by eco-activists, according to point 6 of the trilateral declaration of November 9, 2020, ensuring the safe movement of citizens, vehicles and cargo through the Lachin Corridor is Azerbaijan’s direct obligation.

Under these circumstances, the Russian Federation’s peacekeeping troops in Nagorno-Karabakh and the Russian Federation, which has assumed specific security obligations in front of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, should bring a clear clarification of the situation. What is the Russian Federation’s assessment of the situation? What is its plan and road map to restore Lachin Corridor? These are questions that the people of the Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh are waiting for answers from the Russian Federation, which let me remind you, is also a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

If the Russian Federation is unable to ensure stability and security in Nagorno-Karabakh for objective or subjective reasons, I think that it should initiate a discussion in the UN Security Council and grant the Russian Federation’s peacekeeping force in Nagorno-Karabakh with a UN Security Council’s mandate or raise the question of sending an additional multinational peacekeeping force to Nagorno-Karabakh.

Such a question arises also because the closing of the Lachin Corridor is not the first case of Azerbaijan invading the zone of responsibility of the peacekeeping troops of the Russian Federation in

Nagorno-Karabakh. This was preceded by the Parukh events in March 2022 and the Khtsaber events in December 2020, as a result of which around three dozen citizens of the Republic of Armenia continue to remain captives. There are all signs to assert that Azerbaijan is preparing another military provocation, including in Nagorno Karabakh, and the developments of the situation raise questions that require an urgent answer regarding the activities of the peacekeeping troops of the Russian Federation in Nagorno Karabakh.

I must honestly say that the Republic of Armenia is a convinced supporter of the presence of the peacekeeping troops of the Russian Federation in Nagorno-Karabakh. But the more and more visible behavior of the peacekeeping troops of the Russian Federation of becoming a silent witness of the depopulation of Nagorno Karabakh is unacceptable for us. In any case, we have to work closely with the Russian Federation and our other international partners to clarify these issues in order to prevent further escalation of the situation and to reach a comprehensive settlement. I should also reaffirm Armenia’s willingness and determination to sign a peace treaty with Azerbaijan, to complete the border delimitation, and to open regional communications.”

Antony Blinken plans more talks with Armenian, Azeri FMs



U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will speak to the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in the coming days to try to kick-start the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process, the State Department announced on January 4

“As you know, Secretary Blinken is personally invested in this process; he’s demonstrated that personal investment by bringing together ... his counterparts from Armenia and Azerbaijan by speaking with them regularly,” the department spokesman, Ned Price, told a news briefing in Washington. “I expect he’ll have an opportunity in the coming days to re-engage by phone with his counterparts in Armenia and Azerbaijan.”

Blinken most recently hosted face-to-face talks between the two ministers in Washington on November 7. He phoned Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev later in November. He urged the two sides to “schedule further talks as agreed in Washington,” according to the State Department.

Aliyev and Pashinyan were scheduled to meet in Brussels on December 7 for further talks hosted by the European Union’s top official, Charles Michel. However, the Azerbaijani leader cancelled the summit, objecting to French President Emmanuel Macron’s participation in it.

On December 12, Azerbaijani protesters blocked the sole road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia on ostensibly environmental grounds. Yerevan condemned that as a gross violation of the Russian-brokered agreement that stopped the 2020 Armenian-Azerbaijani war.

Citing the continuing blockade, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan refused to meet with his Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov on December 23 for talks that were due to be hosted by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

In separate comments to the Armenpress news agency, Price said the United States remains concerned about the closure of Karabakh’s vital land link with Armenia.

“This sets back the peace process and undermines international confidence,” he said. “We call for the full restoration of free movement through the corridor.”



Azerbaijan rejected similar statements made by U.S. as well as European Union officials earlier. It says that the Azerbaijani protesters are right to demand that Baku be allowed to inspect “illegal” mining operations in Karabakh.

Price also announced on Wednesday the retirement of Philip Reeker, a senior State Department adviser for Caucasus negotiations and the U.S. co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group. Reeker has held that post since August.

“Since the beginning of Ambassador Reeker’s appointment in August of last year, it was always understood and expected that he would serve in this position on a short-term basis until the end of last year,” Price told journalists.

The State Department spokesman did not say whether Reeker will be replaced by another U.S. diplomat.

Armenian MFA constantly in contact with international partners regarding Lachin Corridor

The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is constantly in contact with international partners regarding the Lachin corridor, MFA Spokesman Vahan Hunanyan said in comments to Radar Armenia news agency.

“From the very first day of the illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and relevant state institutions are constantly in contact with various interna-



tional organizations to address the issues resulting from the humanitarian crisis in

Nagorno-Karabakh,” the Spokesman said.

The comments come as various representatives of the civil society are urging to apply to the UN World Food Program for providing assistance to the Armenians of Artsakh.

The Lachin Corridor – the only road linking the Republic of Artsakh to Armenia and the world – has been blocked by Azerbaijani since December 12 under fake environmental pretext.

Artsakh asks Putin, Biden and Macron to take action and open either Lachin Corridor or Stepanakert airport



Members of Parliament of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), led by the Speaker of Parliament Arthur Tovmasyan, appealed to the leaders of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairing countries - Russian President

Vladimir Putin, US President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron to take concrete actions in the direction of either opening the Lachin Corridor or launching the Stepanakert airport.

“The only road connecting Artsakh with Armenia and the outside world continues to be closed for already 25 days. The Artsakh issue was the only conflict where all OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairing countries had almost the same position. By and large, the people of Artsakh, who are facing an unprecedented humanitarian disaster, are in need of not only targeted statements, but I believe that there is the

need to take practical and visible steps in this direction. Seriously-ill patients don't have access to necessary medication and health services, Artsakh are deprived of essential supplies such as baby food and other goods. We are calling upon the civilized world, particularly the Minsk Group Co-Chairing countries, to take concrete actions in the direction of either opening the corridor or launching an air bridge – launching the Stepanakert airport, which would allow to somewhat avoid the alarming humanitarian crisis in Artsakh during the winter,” the Artsakh Speaker of Parliament said in a letter.

Critical to ensure that children in Nagorno Karabakh are protected – UNICEF

Children are being impacted by the virtual closure of access to Nagorno Karabakh via the Lachin corridor, UNICEF said in a statement.

“The longer the situation persists, the more children will experience the lack of basic food items, while access to many of the essential services they need for their survival, healthy growth and wellbeing will become more challenging. Many children have also been deprived of parental care as they have been separated from their par-



ents or legal guardians,” the UN Children's Fund said.

“UNICEF echoes [the UN Secretary-General's appeal](#) to ensure freedom and security of movement along the Lachin corridor, in line with previous agreements. This is critical to ensure that children in Nagorno Karabakh are protected and that humanitarian actors can safely and quickly reach those in needs. UNICEF continues to seek dialogue and work in coordination with all actors to gain access to children in these areas,” it added.

Russia says criticism of peacekeepers over Lachin Corridor unacceptable

Criticism of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in the context of the situation in the Lachin corridor is unacceptable, Moscow is working to improve the situation, Spokesperson for the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Maria Zakharova said at a briefing on January 1.

“We have repeatedly said that Russian peacekeepers are doing everything possible to resolve the situation on the ground. No public attacks help matters, there have

even worse situations. We are working to improve this situation,” the diplomat said.

Earlier on Thursday, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan stated at a cabinet meeting that “if the Russian Federation is unable to ensure stability and security in Nagorno-Karabakh for objective or subjective reasons, it should initiate a discussion in the UN Security Council on the issue of vesting Russian peacekeeping forces in Nagorno-Karabakh by a UN Security

Council mandate or sending additional multinational peacekeeping forces to Nagorno-Karabakh.”



Hayastan Fund Board of Trustees discuss ways to address humanitarian crisis in Artsakh

The Board of Trustees of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund held a special meeting on Tuesday, December 27, to discuss the blockade of the Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan and the humanitarian assistance to be provided by the Fund to Artsakh. The meeting was chaired by the President of the Republic, President of the Board of Trustees Vahagn Khachatryan.

Twenty members of the board of trustees, as well as representatives of the local bodies of the Foundation, participated in the meeting via video link. During the session, the President of the Republic of Armenia Arayik Harutyunyan and Minister of State Ruben Vardanyan presented the humanitarian crisis created in Artsakh and the urgent needs of the Artsakh Armenians, the ways to address those.

The participants of the session dis-



cussed the situation; the necessity of pan-Armenian unity was emphasized. The possible ways and methods of providing urgent humanitarian aid to Artsakh were presented; reference was made to the measures to be taken, including the organization of fund-raising campaigns in various formats, the possibilities of redirecting the Fund's current programs implemented in Artsakh, as well as the need for the Fund to apply to various international structures.

All affiliates that are members of the

Board of Trustees were suggested to carry out active work in order to direct the potential of their communities to the efforts to overcome the humanitarian crisis in Artsakh, as well as to ensure the stable and long-term self-sufficient development of Artsakh.

The US affiliate expressed willingness to immediately provide 500,000 USD in aid to Artsakh.

During 2021-2022, the Foundation has already implemented various humanitarian projects worth more than 32 billion drams in Artsakh, aimed at post-war reconstruction works. Hundreds of apartments and houses, more than 52 km of various strategic roads and drinking water networks in several communities were built and commissioned, and dozens of development projects in health, education, culture and other important sectors have been financed.

Artsakh temporarily stops mining, appeals for international examination



The government of the Republic of Artsakh confirms that the mining industry in Artsakh is carried out according to the highest international standards, to which the regulations defined by the legislation of the sector are also adapted.

“However, given the unhealthy environment created by the “eco-activists” of the neighboring country and the attempts to mislead the international community, the Government has decided to contact international organizations to conduct an international ecological examination of the activities of the “Base Metals” company.

Together with the leadership of the company, a decision has been made to temporarily stop the operation of the company's mine until the examination is completed.

The government of the Republic of

Artsakh has appealed to the relevant structures of the United Nations and other international professional organizations to organize the implementation of the examination in a short period of time.

“The Government of the Republic of Artsakh has always been in favor of maintaining the best international standards in the field of mining and is convinced that international environmental standards should be applicable to mining companies in the entire region,” the Government said in a statement.

Income tax rate set at 20% starting January 1

The income tax rate decreased and became 20% starting January 1, 2023.

Resident and non-resident natural persons pay income tax in Armenia. Private entrepreneurs and notaries pay income tax only for personal income.

By law, resident natural persons are people who've spent at least 183 days in Armenia in the fiscal year or whose busi-

ness is focused in Armenia. Public employees temporarily stationed abroad are also considered resident natural persons.

The gross income gained from income sources in Armenia and/or income sources abroad are subject to income tax for residents. The gross income gained from income sources in Armenia are subject to income tax for non-residents.



Dry port to solve Armenia's bad logistic dependency from world, says economy minister



The goal of opening a dry port in Shirak province is to solve one of the top problems of Armenia – its bad logistic dependency from the world, Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan told reporters.

“It’s an industrial park that Armenia

doesn’t have. But there are many industrial parks in various countries which are designed to provide necessary primary infrastructures for industrial companies. There will also be an adjacent logistical hub, a container terminal for the transfer of cargo from one transport mode to another to be implemented with the highest class possible and minimum expenses,” Kerobyan explained.

It is planned that a free economic zone will function there. Kerobyan said the dry port project was preliminarily approved during a recent meeting at the Investment Committee under the Prime Minister. Now the project is entering the specialized technical-economic study phase, which will

then be followed by the implementation of the investment program.

The investment program is planned to be implemented under a government-private partnership procedure. High class industrial parks and involvement of economic zone operators who are rather active in the region is planned. Kerobyan said they’ve had preliminary discussions with specialized companies from the UAE, Qatar and European and Asian countries.

“The dry port seeks to solve one of the main problems of our country, Armenia’s bad logistic dependency from the world. We’ve found a good way of solving our most painful problem,” Kerobyan said.

Products will be distributed to stores from state reserves to meet the basic needs of the population in Artsakh under blockade

Artsakh’s Minister of State Ruben Vardanyan chaired the sitting of the Operational Staff on January 3, Issues related to ensuring the livelihood and primary needs of the population in the conditions of the ongoing blockade of Artsakh by Azerbaijan were discussed.

The Minister of State was briefed on the current situation in the markets of food products, medicines, gasoline and diesel fuel, the existing problems were presented. It was noted that in order to ensure that primary needs of the population are met, some products will be supplied to the stores from the state re-



serves. The Minister of State highlighted the importance of proportional distribution of products so that the population has the opportunity to purchase them from all stores.

Ruben Vardanyan also emphasized the importance of direct contacts with the population and instructed a group of members of the Operational Staff, together with the deputies of the National Assembly, to hold meetings in the regions and communities to inform the population about the situation, the steps and measures taken by the Artsakh authorities and the Operational Staff.

“It is important for the population to learn first-hand about the situation and the work being done. It will help them better understand the situation and, if necessary, participate in the solution of problems, and not give in to Azerbaijani disinformation,” Ruben Vardanyan emphasized.

Thirty new Zhongtong buses arrive in Yerevan

Thirty new Zhongtong buses have arrived in Yerevan, Mayor Hrachya Sargsyan said in a Facebook post. A total of 150 China-made buses are expected to hit the streets in Yerevan this year.

The City Hall purchased another 211 Zhongtong buses last year. The buses are designed for 22 seated and 38 standing passengers.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's congratulatory message on the New Year and Christmas holidays

Dear people,
Dear compatriots,

The year 2022 is passing and minutes later 2023 will knock on our door, opening a new era in the life of each of us and our country.

This is why we love the New Year. It is a cosmic and psychological threshold, beyond which we hope to leave all our failures, all our mistakes and losses, and see our dreams realized.

This childish idea of the New Year accompanies a person throughout life, until the point when a person understands that a dream can be called a strategy in another way, and the fulfillment of the dream – a program of activities, something that is exclusively in your domain of activities, and on the way to realization of that dream, you must rely on yourself, only on yourself, and therefore your dream and actions must be precise, extremely precise, measurable and achievable.

This is perhaps what venerable old man, Yeghische Charents, had in mind when he wrote the novel “Yerkir Nairi”, which is a little-read and little-understood message among us, and today, perhaps, we bear the heavy consequences of reading it little and even less understanding it. The public activity of Hovhannes Tumanyan, the pinnacle of the Armenian mind and soul, is understood at a lesser extent, forgetting which has distorted our understanding of national and state interest.

I want to declare 2023 as the year of reading strategic pieces of Charents and Tumanyan, as a key message and strategy for state accomplishment, as a prescription for reconciliation with ourselves, as a way to formulate our dreams as a strategy and perceive the strategy as a dream, as a tool to understand what is happening to us these



days. And the following is happening. We are fighting to have an independent, sovereign, prosperous and secure state, specifically a state. We are in the biblical exodus and we are walking through the desert, moving from the Land of Nairi to the Republic of Armenia of a very specific shape and size of 29,800 square kilometers. This is a difficult and dangerous, but also inevitable journey for the sake of salvation, for the sake of the Republic, for the sake of statehood.

There is only one formula for solving the very pragmatic problem of having a sovereign, strong and secure state. We must be able to change the quality of our relations in our region, first of all, in our region, an extremely difficult political, historical and socio-psychological thing to do, in an environment where we are very often threatened, very often pierced and very often killed. But our today's dialogue is about what exactly we have to do, not others, and the formula for action is one: to love the motherland according to Charents and according to Tumanyan. This means loving the Republic of Armenia as a motherland and putting it at the base of all actions, all dreams, all strategies.

Dear people,
Dear compatriots,
2022 was a year of severe challenges.

The illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor has put our brothers and sisters of Nagorno Karabakh, all of us, in a diffi-

cult situation. I have already spoken many times about the political assessment of this situation and possible solutions. At this moment, I want to strongly hug our brothers and sisters under siege and tell them that they are the important addressees of the message about changing the quality of relations in the region, and this is an exceptional hour for pondering for all of us.

The aggression against the sovereign territory of Armenia from May 2021 to September 13 of 2022 was doubly painful because our security allies left us alone, preferring to remain in the status of passive observer or offering active observer status as an alternative.

But we were not left alone in the world and I want to thank those countries and international organizations, who were not indifferent to this situation and, having no obligation to our country, took unprecedented decisions to support the establishment of security and stability in our region.

And most importantly, today I kneel before all our martyrs, their parents and family members, their children, and my message is first of all dedicated to them, who are the strongest symbol of the future of the Republic of Armenia, because they died for Armenia to live, they fell for Armenia to rise.

This is the reason why our response to global and regional storms and new security challenges is asymmetric. The more the challenges intensify, the more we focus on the institutional, socio-economic, political, democratic reforms, development agenda, because it is the only way that will increase our resilience today and ensure tomorrow's prosperity.

In this sense, 2022 was a year of exceptional achievement. Armenia ranked 11th in the world ranking of economic freedom, receiving international

page 8 → recognition as a leading country in investment and economic freedom. This happened as a result of the fact that, against all odds, the government remained committed to implementing systemic reforms.

As a result, we are concluding the year with double-digit economic growth, which is an exceptional phenomenon of international level in a year of global crisis, and will increase the international visibility of the Republic of Armenia like it happened in 2019.

Registered jobs in Armenia crossed the threshold of 700 thousand. another unprecedented result in the history of the Third Republic. Thus, we can record that since the victory of the People's, velvet, non-violent revolution of 2018, around 153 thousand new jobs have been created in Armenia. It is important to note that compared to November of last year, the average salary of one worker in November of this year increased by about 45 thousand drams or 20 percent, which means that the fears that Armenia will face a social crisis in the conditions of global inflation did not come true. On the contrary, there is a construction boom in the Republic of Armenia, a housing construction boom. Tens of thousands of families are getting apartments in newly built buildings, including with the support of the Government. In 2022, we refunded 36.5 billion drams of income tax to the families purchasing apartments, in addition to 22.7 billion drams of the previous year.

In addition, thousands of young families benefited from mortgage loan support programs for the birth of a baby. In 2022, the amount of support under this program reached 2.1 billion drams. More than 10,000 third and every subsequent child receives 50,000 drams monthly assistance from the state, over 10,000 children.

I would like to highlight our plan to build 300 schools and 500 kindergartens, which is already launched and is gaining

momentum. During 2022, we commissioned 24 schools and 46 kindergartens that have been overhauled, reconstructed or newly built. Hundreds of new schools and kindergartens are under construction, reconstruction or major renovation. This is an integral part of the institutional reforms taking place in the country, which have not only educational, managerial, security, but also a deep historical and socio-psychological context.

The large-scale reforms we are implementing in the police system are important, the most visible result of which is the introduction of the Patrol Police with new standards in Armenia.

The deep and comprehensive reforms that have been launched in the army are of key importance. The formation of army based on a literate, patriotic, professional soldier and officer that meets modern requirements and conditions has started, which should be combined with at least doubling of military salaries, a system of social guarantees for soldiers and their families, and new weapons and equipment. But we need such an army not for war, but for peace, to protect our sovereignty and territorial integrity. We do not set eyes on others' land and we expect others not to set eyes on our land either, and with this formula we are ready to go to peace. I also consider the large-scale events that we held in Armenia in 2022 to be important. European Boxing Championship, Junior Eurovision, Starmus International Festival, International Biology Olympiad. These are events, by holding which, we appear to the world in a new way and the world recognizes Armenia in a new way.

Dear people,
My dear citizens of the Republic of Armenia,

We bring all this to life primarily thanks to the unprecedented growth of tax revenues in the state budget. The tax revenues of the 2022 state budget amounted to 1 trillion 925 billion drams, which is 670

billion drams, or 53 percent, or one and a half billion dollars more than the same indicator of 2018. But this index is primarily thanks to working, value adding people, tax-paying entrepreneurs of the Republic of Armenia, and I want to thank them for not considering the taxes paid to the state budget a financial loss, but an investment in the future of their state, themselves and their children.

It is with those funds that we repaired more than 500 kilometers of roads in 2022, started the process of doubling teachers' salaries, launched a satellite into space for the first time in the history of the Third Republic, buy new buses and trolley-buses for the capital, raised the minimum salary, in line with our promise, we have established an airline, raised the salaries of scientists, increased the funding of science by 150 percent compared to 2018, increased pensions from September 2022 and will increase them again from July 2023. Moreover, in the case of cashless trade, we have refunded about 527 million drams to pensioners and beneficiaries, and I want to express special thanks to the banks that participate in the program on an equal basis with the Government.

Thanks to these additional budgetary funds, in 2022 we served 786,000 state-ordered health care cases, which is more than double compared to 2017, by 437,000 cases or 125 percent more.

And why do we do all this? For one reason, and one reason only, because we love you, we love our country. I love you all, I love our country, our state, and where I make mistakes and stumble, where I fail, it is because of the love that might be excessive, which maybe overshadows intelligence. But in the end, love is more and all-powerful, and we will bring our ship, the Republic of Armenia, to a peaceful harbor in the stormy ocean.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

French politicians call on Macron to do everything possible to guarantee the security of Armenians in Artsakh



Eleven French lawmakers and political leaders have signed a bipartisan letter urging President Emmanuel Macron to intervene to ‘prevent irreparable damage’ and ensure the safety of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In a letter published by *Le Monde*, the politicians note that since December 12, Azerbaijan has been occupying the Lachin corridor, the only route to the outside world for the Armenian population of Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh, creating the threat of a major humanitarian disaster. About 120,000 people, including 30,000 children, have been deprived of resources, including food and medical supplies. For three days, Azerbaijan also cut off the gas supply, leaving people without heating, in freezing temperatures.

“This event marks a further escalation of the aggression perpetrated by Azerbaijan against Armenians, both citizens of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia, since September 2020; in total violation of international law, the Geneva Conventions and the negotiations within the framework of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which provide for a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue,” they note.

“There is every reason to believe that Azerbaijan will not stop there and will use every opportunity to continue its destabilization and harassment of the Armenian

populations of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia, with the stated aim of ethnic cleansing,” the letter continues.

“Attested war crimes, promotion of ethnic hatred, destruction of the Armenian cultural heritage, attack on Armenia in September 2022 and illegal occupation since then of a part of its sovereign territory, and repeated acts of violence against civilian populations: the actions of Azerbaijan are inadmissible, and would lead France to intervene anywhere and under any circumstances. Moreover, it is a threat to a friendly people, “Armenia, our valiant little ally,” in the words of Georges Clemenceau (1841-1929),” the politicians say.

They remind that Armenians and France are linked by centuries of cultural, political and economic ties. Armenians and France are linked by the trade routes to Asia and the Middle East, and by the development of textile industries, the first café in Paris, the Suez Canal, the growing of madder and apricots, and the accordions at French balls.

Armenians and France are linked by the Armenian Legion that fought under our flag during the Great War, and the sacrifice of Missak Manouchian (1906-1944), the hero of the Resistance who refused to allow barbarism to be repeated. “Finally, we are linked by the memory of our greatest literary figures, from Corneille to Nerval, Sand to Lamartine, Victor Hugo to Charles Péguy, and Romain Rolland to

Max Jacob and Aragon.”

“There are fundamental values, there are unbreakable principles that unite us and make us a nation. The great and beautiful nation of France. For the sake of these values and principles, which were born from the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, for the sake of the unbreakable ties that bind us to the Armenian people, the Senate unanimously, except for one vote, and the National Assembly unanimously adopted resolutions this November in support of Armenia, which is a victim of partial military occupation and incessant attacks,” the politicians say.

In line with the democratic will of the National Assembly and the Senate, they ask the President of the Republic to do everything possible to ensure the lasting security of the Armenians of Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia. Given that Azerbaijan has announced that it refuses any international negotiations on the Artsakh issue, the deputies and senators, appeal to Macron to intervene immediately to prevent the irreparable by taking the following measures:

- Condemn Azerbaijan for violation of international law, occupation of a part of the territory of the Republic of Armenia and war crimes,
- Plan a humanitarian presence in Artsakh and provide immediate economic assistance to Armenia.
- Meet the representatives of Artsakh,
- Mediate with partners in the EU and the United States so that they take the same steps, and establish joint economic and political sanctions against Azerbaijan,
- Mediate with partners in the EU and the United States to ensure the relaunching of the Stepanakert airport and ensure the safety of air communication with Artsakh,
- Submit a claim to the International Criminal Court with the prospect of the UN Security Council

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sending an international peacekeeping force.

“Mr. President, today you are in a position to prevent history from repeating itself and correct one of its injustices. You can prove today to the League of Nations that France is great and true to world values, to its own moral duty and honor. Mr. President, you can finally prove to all our compatriots that France is free, that it can get rid of short-sighted political or economic strategies to protect its humanistic ideals, which are the foundation of our Nation,” the lawmakers emphasize.

The letter has been signed by:

- Eric Ciotti**, President of the French Republican Party
- Olivier Faure**, General Secretary of the Socialist Party of France, Member of the French National Assembly
- Hervé Marseille**, President of the United Democrats and Independents Party of France, President of the Independents faction in the Senate
- Fabien Roussel**, General Secretary of the French Communist Party
- Christian Cambon**, President of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Armed Forces of the French Senate

- Bruno Retailleau**, President of the “Republicans” faction of the French Senate and the Senate’s international awareness group on Nagorno-Karabakh
- Éliane Assassi**, President of the Communist faction of the French Senate
- Guillaume Gontard**, President of the Environmental Protection, Solidarity and Territorial Administration faction of the French Senate
- Patrick Kanner**, President of the Socialist and Environmental Republican faction of the French Senate
- Gilbert-Luc Devinaz**, President of the “France-Armenia” friendship group of the French Senate
- Pierre Ouzoulias**, Senator



Armenian FM presents to Ambassador of France the situation created by the blocking of the Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan

On January 5, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan received the Ambassador of France to Armenia, Anne Louyot.

As Noyan Tapan was informed from MFA Armenia, Ararat Mirzoyan presented to the Ambassador the situation created by the blocking of the Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan, emphasizing that the 120,000 people of Nagorno Karabakh, who are under siege due to the illegal actions of Azerbaijan, are facing a



gradually deepening humanitarian crisis. Ararat Mirzoyan highlighted the continuous and targeted response and steps

of the international community to reopen the Lachin Corridor, which is in line with the obligations of Azerbaijan assumed by the trilateral declaration of November 9, 2020. In this context, the Foreign Minister of Armenia highly appreciated the position of the French side, expressing satisfaction with the calls made by France during

the emergency session of the UN Security Council on December 20, 2022 and the efforts it made afterwards.

“With Russia’s fading power in Ukraine, a second catastrophe looms” – CNN publishes article on Artsakh blockade

CNN published an article about the situation in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) as a result of the blockade of Lachin Corridor.

Below is the [full article published by CNN](#), written by Lara Setrakian, a journalist and the president of the Applied Policy Research Institute.

“After Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and its devastating humanitarian fallout, it would be a leap to cast Moscow in the role of a peacemaker. But in one corner of the world that’s exactly what has happened.

In the wake of a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020, Russia was left to broker a ceasefire and keep the two sides in check. The United States and the European Union, which had once played a balancing role in the South Caucasus, effectively pulled back from active diplomacy and let Russia act as the sole mediator. Moscow deployed peacekeepers on the ground to calm and monitor the situation.

But outsourcing peacebuilding to Russia was a bad idea. Now, in the shadow of the Ukraine war, that policy is enabling another humanitarian catastrophe and compromising Western interests in the region.

With Russia weakened in Ukraine, there is no effective arbiter between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan, using its significant oil and gas wealth, has been pushing for maximum advantage on the ground. At the moment, protesters with the support of the Azeri government, experts say, are blocking the Lachin Corridor, the main road linking about 120,000 ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh to the outside world. Azeri political analysts say that protests are illegal in Azerbaijan unless they have government approval.

Incoming supplies have been severely limited since December 12, 2022, when the blockade began. Grocery stores are



rationing food, with little by way of fresh fruits or vegetables, and there is a dire shortage of medical supplies, residents said in late December. Azerbaijan has said the blockade is in response to mining activities in Armenian-held areas. But rather than taking the issue to international mediation it has decided to block incoming transit until its conditions are met – a violation of international and humanitarian law.

The Armenians I’ve met from Nagorno-Karabakh are hearty people with a profound cultural identity and deep Christian faith. Even in their grim days of crisis, some tried to give their families a semblance of a Christmas holiday. But the most vulnerable are manifesting the strain of the blockade: Dr. Biayna Sukhudyán, who is stuck in Nagorno-Karabakh, told us in late December that children are showing signs of chronic stress, including nervous breakdowns. UNICEF has warned that children are lacking basic food items and essential services, some of them separated from their parents or legal guardians on the other side of the blocked road.

“People’s big concern is keeping their

children warm and fed,” Sukhudyán said in a phone interview. She described how people are surviving by helping each other out. “If there are two mothers and only one has baby formula, she will share the formula with the other woman and breastfeed a little more.”

The US, the EU, the UN Secretary-General and more than a dozen countries – including Canada and Mexico – have called for Azerbaijan to unblock the road to Nagorno-Karabakh, but those calls have gone unheeded. Armenians see it as a strategy by Azerbaijan of starving or squeezing them out of the disputed enclave.

Russia has been unable to make any significant move to defuse the problem. But it has also been reluctant to let Western countries step in to solve the standoff. It prefers to be the main power on the ground, using the resulting leverage to advance its regional interests.

A web of economic and strategic factors have tied Moscow to Turkey and its ally, Azerbaijan. With Russia sanctioned by the West and strained

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Armenians rally in Paris in support of Artsakh

Armenians in Paris gathered on the “Parvis des Droits de l’Homme” at the Trocadero esplanade near the Eiffel Tower to express their support to the population of Artsakh, Jean Eckian informs.

The rally organized by the Union Franco-Arménienne culture association was aimed at drawing attention to the human damage caused by the ongoing blockade of Artsakh by Azerbaijan and denouncing



a possible future humanitarian disaster in

Artsakh.

Various slogans were chanted slamming the destructive Aliyev-Erdogan alliance, the pro-Azerbaijani posture of the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, raising awareness about the danger for the ill people in Artsakh and the children, some of whom are stranded in Armenia since the broadcasting of the Junior Eurovision.

Los Angeles Mayor calls for an end to the blockade of Lachin corridor

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass calls for an end to the blockade of Lachin corridor.

“I stand with the Armenian community here in Los Angeles calling for an end to the blockade of the Lachin Corridor. We must clearly demonstrate our commitment to freedom by helping the people of

Artsakh. This is a crisis and will only get worse with inaction. Lives are at stake,” Bass said in a Twitter post.

The Lachin corridor – the only road connecting the Republic of Artsakh to Armenia – has been closed by Azerbaijanis since December 12 under a fake environmental pretext.



page 12 ➡ in its relations with many economic partners, Moscow has grown increasingly dependent on Turkey for trade and sanctions evasion. Turkey has become a major facilitator for the export of Russian oil and gas and the import of strategic technologies, many of which are banned from the West.

As Russian-Turkish ties have grown closer, Russia has been more reluctant to push back on Azerbaijan’s behavior. That has left the situation in freefall, moving toward more serious and potentially deadly outcomes. Like in the early days of the Srebrenica massacre, international peacekeepers are failing to act before thousands of people could lose their lives. It also sets a dangerous precedent for future conflicts, with one side choking off a rival community by cutting off its supplies, either forcing an evacuation or the acceptance of its negotiating terms.

Michael Rubin of the American Enterprise Institute, who watches the region closely, told me he worries about the risk

of ethnic cleansing if the situation is left unchecked and unattended to by world powers.

“Question number one is how do we get diplomatic or military observers into Nagorno-Karabakh,” Rubin said. “Genocide happens in the dark. If we are able to shine a light in the region then oftentimes we can proactively prevent the worst outcomes.”

The US is not powerless in this situation. It can push for a humanitarian airlift to deliver supplies to the communities of Nagorno-Karabakh or seek further action from the UN Security Council, which met on December 20 to discuss the situation. America also has direct leverage over Turkey and Azerbaijan that can stabilize the situation, using a trove of diplomatic and economic tools.

“When the Trump administration imposed just a few steel sanctions on Turkey for the release of Pastor Andrew Brunson, it created tremendous pressure on

[Turkish President] Erdogan,” said Rubin. “Why should we oppose doing that over Nagorno-Karabakh?”

Russia and Turkey have aimed to dominate the South Caucasus at the expense of their smaller neighbors. But that model has proven unsuitable to protect human life and a peaceful rules-based order. At a time when the West is competing with Russia over Ukraine – cast as a fight for democracy against autocracy – this is a vital arena to make the same point and prove that the West has real influence in the post-Soviet region.

The longer Russia and Turkey dominate the situation the harder it will be for Western powers to bring things back into balance. In other words, stabilizing the South Caucasus will become more costly with time. The US and EU unwisely left it to Russia to keep the peace in the South Caucasus. Western powers now must step in with full diplomatic weight to correct the error.”

Kim Kardashian raising awareness about Artsakh blockade

Reality star and entrepreneur Kim Kardashian is raising awareness about the blockade of Artsakh and the ensuing humanitarian situation.

In her Instagram stories Kardashian shared a post from Zartong Media about the power outages across the Republic.

“Artsakh goes dark as temperatures reach 0 °F. After power outage across the



country on the 23 of Azerbaijan’s blockade,” the message reads.

Last night, electricity was going on and off in all of the Republic of Artsakh.

Power outages in certain areas have become common lately but rarely across the entire country. Today is day 24 of Azerbaijan’s illegal blockade of the Berdzor (Lachin) Corridor, the only road connecting the Republic of Artsakh with Armenia and the rest of the World.

Serj Tankian calls on US government to pressure Aliyev as humanitarian situation worsens in blockaded Artsakh

System of a Down frontman Serj Tankian is calling on the US President and the US government to exert direct pressure on Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev amid worsening humanitarian situation in Artsakh resulting from Azerbaijan’s unlawful blockade of the Lachin Corridor.

Tankian made the comments in an interview with TYT.

In a Facebook post, the rockstar also thanked Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and Los Angeles City Council President Paul Krekorian who officially asked US

President Joe Biden to help the people of Artsakh.

Tankian called on his followers online to share the flag of Artsakh as a sign of support.

“As Azerbaijan’s genocidal blockade enters its 24th day, the Armenian Republic of Artsakh and its citizens are deprived of basic necessities and provisions.

Share this flag in support of Artsakh. Aliyev and the government of Azerbaijan do not want this flag and the people it represents to exist, so share it. Spread aware-

ness, educate, organize, and mobilize for the sake of Artsakh.

Take action against the Aliyev’s most recent ethnic cleansing efforts. #stopaliyev,” Tankian said on social media.



TUMO Labs is running a 12-week Technology Incubation Program

TUMO Labs is running a 12-week Technology Incubation Program with a focus on EdTech, GreenTech and HealthTech.

“Turn your brilliant ideas into reality and begin your entrepreneurial journey with our ideathon program, followed by a startup competition,” TUMO Labs said in a statement.

18 teams will be selected to participate and receive training and support to validate their ideas and turn them into viable startup opportunities.

Up to 6 finalists will receive a 2,000 Euro prize and participate in a pitching competition.



Up to 3 winning teams will receive a 20,000 Euro seed investment as well as incubation, fundraising and mentorship support. Each winner gets 20,000 Euros, but there is no guarantee that there will be 3 winners. There may be 1, 2 or 3, depending

on the quality of the teams.

TUMO Labs will actively assist the winning teams to find early adopters of their solution over the course of 3-6 months following the initial 12-week period.

“Learn the fundamental skills you need to kickstart your business, validate your initial proposal, test your team, find new members and turn your idea into a winning pitch. TUMO Labs will provide all-round support from designing your business model to finding the ideal acceleration program and source of investment,” Tumo Labs added.

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Armenian Identity Card

The goal of the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) non-profit organization is to unify Armenians worldwide in a common platform so that through contacts, queries and referenda they can express their views and positions regarding issues of general interest to Armenians around the world and issues of particular interest to Armenian communities in various countries.

Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) also makes it possible to establish business networks, the cardholder can participate in various charitable projects, and can obtain discounts from Armenian and non-Armenian businesses all over the world. Armenians should feel themselves to be full-fledged "citizens" of a reborn Armenia and the Armenian Identity Card is the «passport» for all Armenians.

The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID)

network is an effective environment where Armenians can implement various projects and pan-Armenian programs. At the heart of HyeID is the creation of an Armenian database which will become the reliable and objective basis to realize the potential of all Armenians around the world. Based on that database, it will be possible to implement various permanent and temporary initiatives through the Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) organization.

- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) worldwide network enables cardholders to elect and get elected to the leadership of The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) network structures.
- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can benefit from the possibility of discounts intended for HyeID cardholders when shopping for products and services in various countries of the world.
- The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders can participate in queries and referenda initiated by the HyeID network and vote on issues of national interest to Armenians.
- Ensure the security

and privacy of The Armenian Identification Card (HyeID) cardholders. The Armenian Identity Card (HyeID) cardholders who live in the Diaspora intend to utilize the possibilities made available through HyeID to form a Diaspora representative body — Diaspora Armenian Parliament — through democratic elections.

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