

Thousands rally in Stepanakert to demand opening of Lachin corridor



Artsakh - Thousands of Artsakh Armenians demonstrate in Stepanakert, December 25, 2022.

Thousands have gathered for a meeting in Revival Square in Artsakh's capital Stepanakert

The people of Artsakh demand that the so-called environmentalists of Azerbaijan open the road of life, which has been under complete blockade for two weeks.

Artsakh's political leaders, who organized the rally, again struck a defiant note as they addressed the large crowd that gathered in the city's central square on the 14th day of the road blockade which has led to serious shortages of food, medicines and other basic goods in the Armenian-populated region.

They appealed to the international for urgent intervention in the face of what they see as Azerbaijani efforts to drive the Art-

sakh Armenians out of their homeland.

Ruben Vardanyan, the Artsakh premier, said the local population has been left with three options.

"First, we submit and sooner or later integrate into Azerbaijan," Vardanyan said in a speech. "Second, we get out of here. Third, we fight."

"I made my decision on September 2," he said, referring to the date of his relocation from Armenia to Karabakh. "I'm here, I'm fighting and I'm not going to leave or obey Azerbaijan's conditions."

"We must oppose, counter them with our collective strength," added Vardanyan.

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EU Monitoring Capacity completes its mandate in Armenia, new planning team launched



Based on the agreement between the leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, European Council and France, the EUMCAP was deployed on 20 October along the Armenian side of the international border with Azerbaijan with the objective of monitoring, analyzing and reporting on the situation on the ground.

“The deployment of 40 European monitoring experts has proved to be effective and contributed to building confidence in an unstable situation. Today we start a new

phase in the EU’s engagement in the South Caucasus, with a transitional team that will prepare the ground for a possible longer term EU mission in Armenia, with the ultimate goal of contributing to sustainable peace in the region,” said Josep Borrell, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Against this background, the Council – in agreement with Armenia’s authorities – decided that the existing EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia) will deploy a transitional planning assistance team in Armenia to enhance the EU’s awareness of the security situation, and contribute to the planning and preparation of a possible civilian CSDP mission in the country. The transitional planning assistance team is also expected to support the President of the European Council, Charles

Michel, in the EU-facilitated normalization process between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

On the occasion of the meeting of the European Political Community held in Prague on 6 October 2022, the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan confirmed their commitment to the UN Charter and to the CIS Declaration agreed in Alma-Ata on 21 December 1991, in which both states recognize each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. They confirmed it would be a basis for the work of their respective border delimitation commissions, whose last meeting took place in Brussels on 3 November 2022.

On 17 October 2022, the Council adopted a decision for the deployment in Armenia of EU observers from EUMM Georgia until 19 December 2022.

Parliament approves Armenia’s participation in EU Creative Europe program for 2021-2027

The Armenian parliament approved the bill on ratifying the agreement with the EU on Armenia’s participation in the 2021-2027 Creative Europe program.

The bill was approved with 69 votes in favor, 1 against and 28 abstentions.

Armenia previously participated in the program’s 2014-2020 stage.

It is assumed that Creative Europe



will open an office in Armenia which will raise awareness among Armenian cultural figures, development of skills and help in finding European partners, Deputy Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Sport Artur Martirosyan said.

Creative Europe is the European Commission’s program for providing support to the cultural and audiovisual sectors.

Armenia supports France’s mission aimed at establishing international peace and stability: Pashinyan congratulates Macron on birthday

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan sent a congratulatory message to French President Emmanuel Macron on his birthday. The message reads:

“Honorable Mr. President, dear Emmanuel,

I convey to you my most sincere and warmest congratulations on your birthday.

Let me wish you unbreakable will and inexhaustible energy on behalf of the Armenian people and myself, to lead the French people and achieve new success and great achievements.

Be sure that in this difficult period full

of global challenges, Armenia supports your high mission aimed at establishing international peace and stability. The Armenian people share with friendly France the highest values of democracy, fundamental freedoms and civilization that unite us.

Mr. President, taking the opportunity, I would like to congratulate you on Christmas and New Year, wishing you success in all your endeavors.

I hope that the coming year will be full of peace and new achievements for the friendly peoples of Armenia and France, for the benefit of deepening the unique

cooperation of our countries and strengthening the unshakable friendship of our peoples.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Sincerely, Nikol Pashinyan.”



Armenian PM says Russian peacekeepers “de facto” fail to comply with provisions of trilateral statement

The humanitarian situation in Artsakh created as a result of illegal blockade by Azerbaijan remains extremely strained, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said at the government sitting on December 22.

“Hundreds of families remain separated, stranded on different sides of the blockade. There is shortage of basic commodities including food. Azerbaijan’s actions of blocking the Lachin corridor are illegal and harshly violate the international commitments undertaken by the country, namely the provisions of the November 9, 2020 trilateral statement,” PM Pashinyan said.



He reminded that point 6 of the trilateral statement stipulates that the Lachin corridor will remain under the control of the peacekeeping contingent of the Rus-

sian Federation, and the Republic of Azerbaijan shall guarantee the security of free movement of people, vehicles and cargo along the corridor.

“This provision is actually not being implemented today. De facto, the peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation also fails to comply with the provision. Of course, this is taking place because of the illegal actions of Azerbaijan, but this does not change the situation, as the key sense of the presence of the Russian peacekeepers is not to allow such illegalities and keep the Lachin corridor under control,” he said.

European Court indicates interim measure to Azerbaijan upon Armenia’s request

The European Court of Human Rights has granted Armenia’s request and indicated interim measures to Azerbaijan, the Office of Armenia’s Representative on International Legal Issues informs.

The Court obliged the Government of Azerbaijan, under Rule 39 of the Rules of Court, to take all measures that are within their jurisdiction to ensure safe passage through the Lachin Corridor of seriously ill persons in need of medical treatment in Armenia and others who were stranded on the road without shelter or means of subsistence.

On Wednesday, Armenia informed the Court about the blockade of the Berdzor (Lachin) Corridor by Azerbaijan and the violation of the rights of the Artsakh people.

In their request for interim measures, initially submitted on 14 December 2022, the Armenian Government alleged that since 12 December fake Azerbaijani “environmental activists” had blocked all traffic on the motorway in the Lachin district, thereby preventing seriously ill Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh from travelling to Armenia for much-needed hospital care,



stranding other people on the road in freezing winter conditions and cutting off supplies of food and other necessities.

Azerbaijan had also cut off gas supplies to Nagorno-Karabakh, forcing schools to close. The gas supply was restored on 19 December 2022.

At the same time, Armenia requested

ECtHR to indicate interim measures against Azerbaijan and obligate Azerbaijan to unblock the Berdzor (Lachin) Corridor.

The European Court of Human Rights had given Azerbaijan time until 16:00 CET on Monday, December 19, to respond to Armenia’s request for interim measures. The court said it would make a final decision after the response.

At UN Security Council, France calls for unconditional restoration of traffic along Lachin corridor



The events of the past few days are very worrying, Nathalie Broadhurst, Deputy permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, said during the discussion on the situation in Lachin corridor at the UN Security Council.

She emphasized two points. "Firstly, the obstacles placed on traffic on the access corridor that connects Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh since December 12 are unacceptable," Broadhurst said.

"The blocking of the Lachin corridor has the direct consequence of isolating the population of Nagorno-Karabakh. It has humanitarian consequences that are getting worse every day. France calls for the un-

conditional restoration of traffic along the corridor and of supplies to Nagorno-Karabakh, while respecting the rights of the populations residing there," she noted.

"France calls for the implementation of the commitments made within the framework of the trilateral declaration of November 9, 2020. It also notes that, as the Republic of Azerbaijan has undertaken, the safety of the movement of people, vehicles and goods along the Lachin Corridor in both directions is guaranteed," the diplomat said.

"France also calls for immediate, free and unimpeded access for humanitarian organizations and United Nations agencies, in particular the UNHCR, to the populations concerned, including through the Lachin corridor. It notes that the first ICRC convoys have been organized," Nathalie Broadhurst stressed.

Secondly, she said, "France calls on Armenia and Azerbaijan to create a climate conducive to the conclusion of the negotiations in progress and to progress, exclu-

sively through dialogue and excluding any recourse to force, towards the settlement of the all outstanding issues, including that of the rights and guarantees for the population of Nagorno-Karabakh."

"Alongside the European Union, France will continue to contribute to efforts to promote dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We will support the search for progress on all the subjects under negotiation, in particular the draft peace treaty, the delimitation of the border, the humanitarian questions, and the opening of the lines of communication with the objective of a lasting peace. In the region," the Deputy Permanent Representative said.

"The Prague meeting of October 6, 2022 between the President of France, the President of the European Council, the President of Azerbaijan and the Prime Minister of Armenia, made it possible to reach important advances. France is at the disposal of the parties to contribute to these objectives, in conjunction with all the partners and stakeholders," she stressed.

Ireland supports a negotiated and sustainable settlement of the conflict, including on the long-term status of Nagorno-Karabakh

Ireland is deeply concerned by the ongoing obstruction of the Lachin corridor, which has serious consequences for the local population, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland at UN Martin Gallagher said at the Security Council discussion on Armenia and Azerbaijan.

"Without the free movement of people, goods, food and medical supplies through this vital corridor the people of Nagorno Karabakh will surely face a humanitarian crisis this winter. As Council we have to do everything we can to avoid this and to prevent another man-made catastrophe emerging on our watch," he said.

"Ireland therefore calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately and unconditionally restore movement along the Lachin corridor in line with the trilateral statement on November 9, 2020," he said.

"As States Parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Armenia and Azerbaijan have an obligation to ensure the right to peaceful assembly.



Any legitimate exercise of this right should be respected, while also ensuring that it does not compromise public safety, public health, and the rights and freedoms of others," the diplomat noted.

He stressed that "now is the time for restraint and de-escalation." "It is time to moderate rhetoric, and to refrain from threats and provocation. It is time to continue important reconciliation efforts to prevent further unnecessary loss of life."

"Concerns can, and indeed should, be addressed through dialogue and consultations with the parties involved. We welcome the steps undertaken by the leaders

of Armenia and Azerbaijan to overcome their differences and reach a durable and sustainable peace in the region," Martin Gallagher stated.

"Ireland supports a negotiated, comprehensive and sustainable settlement of the conflict, including on the long-term status of Nagorno-Karabakh. We maintain our full support to the international format of the OSCE Minsk Group to pursue this objective," he stated.

"We strongly support the continued, active engagement of the European Union to support the sides in their important work to peacefully resolve remaining issues, including through the Brussels dialogue process," the Deputy permanent Representative said.

"Together with our EU partners, Ireland supports the common goal of a South Caucasus where people can live in peace, security and prosperity. I encourage all of us around this table to do the same," he concluded.

US calls on Azerbaijan and others responsible for Lachin Corridor's security to restore free movement, deplors gas cutoff

The United States is deeply concerned by the ongoing impediments to use of the Lachin Corridor and the growing humanitarian implications of this situation, Ambassador Robert Wood, Alternative Representative for Special Political Affairs, said at the UN Security Council Meeting on Armenia and Azerbaijan.

“Let me be clear: impediments to the use of the Lachin Corridor set back the peace process. They undermine international confidence in this process. And they carry potential severe humanitarian implications,” the Ambassador said.

“We call on the government of Azerbaijan and others responsible for the Corridor's security to restore free movement, including for humanitarian and commercial use, as soon as possible,” he stressed.

At the same time Mr. Wood noted that the US is encouraged by the restoration of gas supplies to the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and noted that “any attempt to cut off services essential to the

civilian population of Nagorno-Karabakh is unacceptable.”

“The United States will continue to call on all sides to exercise restraint, immediately cease activities that undermine the peace process, and to observe their obligations under international humanitarian law,” he said.

“Outstanding grievances between Armenia and Azerbaijan must be solved through peaceful negotiations. Negotiations are the only way to achieve lasting peace. The international community must do its part and remain engaged in efforts to diplomatically broker a lasting peace,” the diplomat noted.

“As time has shown, there can be no one-sided or military solution to this conflict. Both parties must recommit to the diplomatic process and re-establish direct lines of communication across diplomatic channels. All parties must intensify their diplomatic engagement and make progress toward normalizing their relations through

a comprehensive, sustainable peace agreement,” Robert Wood stated.

He stressed that there must be a negotiated, comprehensive settlement of all remaining issues.

“The United States remains dedicated to a sustainable ceasefire and a peaceful resolution to this conflict. We remain actively engaged bilaterally, multilaterally, and with partners as we work toward that shared goal,” the Ambassador continued.

“We remain ready to facilitate dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan bilaterally, trilaterally, and in coordination with partners like the EU and OSCE, to achieve a long-term political settlement to the conflict, in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter, as well as the Helsinki Final Act,” he said.

Robert Wood once again reaffirmed the importance of a negotiated, comprehensive settlement of all remaining issues between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

International community cannot just “weather the storm” in the hopes that it will go away: Norway on situation in Lachin Corridor

Norway has voiced regret over the recent rise in tensions and expressed concern over the developments in the Lachin Corridor and its potential for the region's further destabilization.

“The Corridor's blockage has already resulted in severe humanitarian implications and the interruption of medical supplies and evacuations,” Norway's Permanent Representative to UN Mona Juul said at the UN Security Council emergency meeting on Armenia and Azerbaijan.

“As any disruptions to the supply of essential goods and services harms the most vulnerable groups first, such disruptions can and must be avoided,” she said.

Calling on the parties to adhere to the agreements articulated in the trilateral statement on the ceasefire of 9 November 2020, she stressed that Azerbaijan in particular must guarantee safe movement.

“It is in nobody's interest to trigger an avoidable humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh,” she underscored.

“Parties must show maximum restraint, undertake steps to de-escalate the situation and return to the negotiating table in good faith and without preconditions. The international community cannot just “weather the storm” in the hopes that it will go away,” she added.

She then reiterated her country's support for the ongoing mediation efforts in the region and welcomed the endeavors of the international community to help advance negotiations.

Closure of Lachin Corridor has the potential to precipitate a humanitarian crisis, India says

The reported blockade of the Lachin Corridor may adversely affect the supply of essential items, such as food and medicine, to Nagorno-Karabakh, India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Raguttahalli Ravindra, said at the UN Security Council Emergency meeting on Armenia and Azerbaijan.

“This is concerning, as it has the poten-

tial to precipitate a humanitarian crisis,” the Ambassador said.

He joined the Secretary-General in calling for de-escalating tensions and ensuring the freedom and security of movement along the corridor in line with previously reached agreements.

Also supporting ongoing mediation in

the region, he encouraged both sides to pursue diplomatic pathways to arrive at a lasting peaceful solution.

“The global order is anchored on international law, the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States,” Raguttahalli Ravindra added.

Vice Speaker of Parliament praises “impressive and unprecedented” volume in Armenian defense industry orders



Vice Speaker of Parliament Hakob Arshakyan believes that Armenia has no alternative to an accelerated growth of the engineering sector.

He made the remarks at the Armenia Engineering Week 2022 opening ceremony.

Arshakyan said the high tech industry sector had record high figures this year and in previous years and contributed to the economic environment. “This year Armenia recorded over 13% economic growth. That was the projection. According to projections there will be 60% growth in the sector in 2022, which means that in terms of employee numbers we can speak about not 20 or 30 thousand, but over 40,000 employed people, which is truly impressive.

The turnover of high tech companies in the GDP will be within the framework of 5%,” Arshakyan said.

The Vice Speaker of Parliament said that the government is focused on science funding. In 2022, science funding grew over 80% and the growth will continue in 2023.

Fundamental changes took place in the defense industry as well, he added. “I am speaking about passing from developments to serial production, in terms of the unprecedented volumes of orders for serial production made by the defense ministry. I wouldn’t like to reveal figures now, but the results are impressive.”

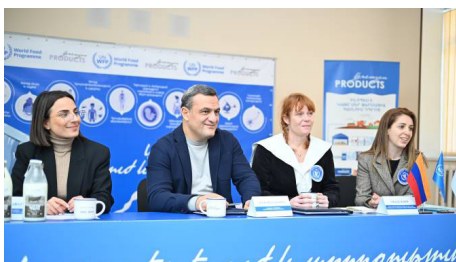
“I’d like the private sector investors and businessmen to pay attention to the fact that by increasing the science funding the state must serve its achievements for the development of the private sector, and there are some hidden risks here in terms that if there is no respective high-level cooperation between the businesses and science we could record years later that there are problems with the figures. In this case there will be questions among the public regarding the progressive increase of sci-

ence funding and development. Thus, businesses must also make orders and serve them for science,” Arshakyan said.

One of the risk circles, according to Arshakyan, is the chain of patent or intellectual property/technology creation up to commercialization. He said that technology transfer companies exist in developed countries that commercialize technologies, register them as intellectual property. Arshakyan believes that this part is absent in Armenia. “The private sector can also implement its function here. There are private agencies that cooperate with scientific-research institutes and universities and commercialize the scientific result. There can be major developments here because the High Tech Industry Ministry is now looking for innovative companies who would do that. The ministry is financing the companies in the initial stage, sharing the risks,” he said.

Arshakyan said the state has also tasks to do in the establishment of education-science-manufacturing chain and they realize that the improvement of individual components of this chain is not sufficient for rapid growth.

UN World Food Program and “Yeremyan Projects” will cooperate within the framework of the “Milk in Schools” program



The United Nations Food Programme (WFP) and Yeremyan Projects signed a cooperation agreement within the framework of the “Milk in Schools” project.

WFP, in cooperation with Yeremyan Projects, will implement the “Milk in schools” pilot in the Vayots Dzor region from January to December 2023. Around 350 schoolchildren from 5th to 8th grades

of Jermuk Gorky No. 1 and Yeghegnadzor No. 1 schools of Vayots Dzor marz are engaged in the project and will receive a glass of milk in the morning for a healthy start of the day.

“WFP appreciates the important partnership with Yeremyan projects to address nutrition and behavior change issues in Armenia. Thanks to this public-private partnership and the company’s corporate social responsibility, we give an opportunity for the children of Armenia to build healthy dietary habits and improve learning abilities”, mentions Nanna Skau, WFP Officer-in-Charge in Armenia.

WFP will implement this initiative and will further evaluate the behavioral

changes of children based on indicators of increased milk consumption and reduced consumption of sugary drinks at the end of the project.

Milk will be supplied to schools by Yeremyan Projects free of charge. Since 2019 the company developed and implemented a production based on the ‘seed to table’ approach, which is one of the most important elements of WFP’s national food security strategy.

“Since the first day of our agricultural activity, we have been carrying out public awareness campaigns, trying to form a new culture of milk consumption. Although many people are aware of the nutritious benefits of milk, ➡ page 7

EIB and KfW support TUMO Center in Ukraine



KfW and the EIB are therefore supporting the TUMO Center in Ukraine with a donation totaling EUR 125,000. The money will enable a large number of young Ukrainian refugees to continue taking part in the TUMO education programme – now online – after the TUMO Kyiv Center for Creative Technologies had to be closed in March 2022.

“Education must not be lost in sight of all the challenges posed by the war in

Ukraine. TUMO Kyiv helps young people from Ukraine to stay ‘on the ball.’ Regardless of their current location, they are taught in Ukrainian, as usual,” emphasized Stefan Wintels, CEO of KfW Group.

EIB President Werner Hoyer was enthusiastic about the concept, adding: “The students are responsible for their own learning, supported by qualified trainers. It is not only about technology, but also about responsibility. The courses in Ukrainian make it easier for young people to prepare

for their choice of work and career despite the burdens of war and being refugees.”

TUMO was established in 2011 by the Simonian Educational Foundation in Armenia. It is an inclusive digital education programme that teaches creative digital skills (programming, animation, game development, music, film, 3D modelling, and graphic design) to young people between 12–18 years of age. There are already 11 TUMO Centers in seven countries worldwide, one of which is in Berlin.

The donation is part of the “Care for Ukraine Refugees” initiative, which was approved jointly by the national promotional banks BGK (Poland), CDC (France), CDP (Italy), ICO (Spain), KfW and the EIB in March 2022. The initiative collects projects and financing that benefit internally displaced Ukrainians and refugees, and has now reached a volume of EUR 2.9 billion. KfW and the EIB contribute to the promotion of the forward-looking, innovative TUMO concept, thus setting yet another example for cooperative partnerships.

page 6 ➡ unfortunately, today it is not a part of our eating culture. I am glad, that we share the same vision with our partner, the UN World Food Programme in terms of promoting the consumption of milk as a healthy drink among children and adults in Armenia. The “Milk in Schools” project is very welcome from the perspective of forming positive milk drinking habits and behavior changes. We are willing to support the realization of this pilot project and hope it will become a successful and contagious example and that milk will become a part of both the school and everyday diet”, mentions the Director General of the organization, Davit Yeremyan.

The “Milk in schools” project will be accompanied by a public campaign with

the slogan “Milk is love, strength, and health”. the campaign aims to promote milk consumption as part of a healthy breakfast among children and adults in Armenia. This is to reduce the consumption of unhealthy drinks such as sweet tea, juices, soft drinks, and energy drinks and create a demand for milk and position it as a choice for healthy lifestyle.

The rationale behind the “Milk in Schools” project is that milk consumption by children during their important developmental

period will promote growth and nutrition, create positive milk habits, and reduce morning hunger before school meals, which in turn will improve concentration and learning abilities in the classroom and will reduce the desire to eat unhealthy snacks.



A fight between democracy and autocracy: Artsakh's Ruben Vardanyan discusses ongoing crisis with CBN

The blockade of Artsakh is sparking a crisis, Minister of State Ruben Vardanyan said in an interview with *CBN's Faithwire Friday*.

He is hoping to see the issue remedied as quickly as possible, as his citizens do not have access to travel or much-needed resources.

"They block[ed] the road ... without any negotiation with us," Vardanyan told CBN's Faithwire Friday.

The individuals responsible for the blockade say they are environmental activists upset with mining in Nagorno Karabakh, which they say is "illegal."

Vardanyan declined to speculate on the identity of those protesting but explained the blockade's impact on residents. In addition to losing access to resources and travel, natural gas was initially shut off "without explanation."

While access to this energy source has returned, residents are facing ongoing supply issues due to intentional limitations and efforts to conserve resources.

"It's tough, because it's winter and without gas and with the limited access to food we have already put some lim-



itation for people," Vardanyan said. "We don't know how long it can continue. ... We have a reserve, we prepared some reserve, but, because it was unclear how long it can go, we said, 'Let's put, from the beginning, some limits.'"

Despite the harrowing ordeal for the 120,000 residents of Nagorno-Karabakh, Vardanyan said his people have a strong resolve and a "very strong character."

He believes the constraints being placed on the people there have made them more unified.

"They have become more unified and closer to each other," he said. "And I think it was really amazing to see how people, despite all these problems, really found themselves that they are better to live to-

gether and to try to fight against these problems."

Vardanyan also discussed the region's Armenian roots and the ongoing quest for independence in Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Despite the political system, whatever happened in the past, in the 20th century, 90% of people [who were] living here [were] Armenian," he said. "And this is very important to understand."

Vardanyan continued, "Armenia has a right to keep their own language, their own culture, their own religion. Thirty-four years ago, we got [to] start the fight for independence, and it's continuing with people who live here. They don't want to be part of any other country."

He said the battle between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan is a fight between a democratic country and a non-democratic and autocratic nation.

"In Azerbaijan, everybody knows they don't have a democratic system, and we all know ... they don't have ... human rights," Vardanyan said, differentiating between the democratic ideals embraced by Nagorno-Karabakh and the restrictive governmental system in Azerbaijan.

CSTO hopes the document on joint measures to provide assistance to Armenia will be adopted after revision – Zas

The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) expects that the document on joint measures to provide assistance to Armenia will be adopted after revision, CSTO Secretary general Stanislav Zas said at a press conference, summing up the results of the organization's activity in 2022, TASS reports.

"As a result of the work of the CSTO mission in Armenia, a draft decision of the Collective Security Council on joint measures to provide assistance to the Republic of Armenia was prepared, which was considered at the session of the Collective Security Council on November 23 in Yerevan. I expect that after finalization, we will come to the adoption of two very important complementary documents – the decision of the Collective Security Council on rendering assistance to the Republic of Armenia and the statement of the CSTO Council of Foreign Ministers in support of efforts to achieve peace in the South Caucasus region," Zas said on December 19..

The Secretary General stated that the session of the CSTO Collective Security Council, held in late November in Yerevan, cannot be considered a failure.

"After the end of the session in Yerevan, I was surprised to read reports in some resources that the session was allegedly a failure, almost a collapse of some kind. Nothing of the kind. I categorically disagree with this. There was a normal working atmosphere; a whole list of very important decisions was by the heads of state. Therefore, it is inappropriate to talk about some any of failure," he stressed.

According to Zas, the CSTO is not going to turn away from Armenia.

The CSTO Secretary General noted that in 2022, the heads of the member states of the organization met three times to discuss the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border.

As Zas noted, the CSTO proposals on sending an observation mission to Armenia remain in force, and this can be organized

quite quickly.

On November 23, a CSTO summit was held in Yerevan, as a result of which Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan did not sign the draft "Declaration of the CSTO CSC on joint measures to provide assistance to the Republic of Armenia", as well as a decision on the actions of the CSTO during the escalation on September 13 on the border with Azerbaijan. Pashinyan explained this by the incompleteness of the declaration, the lack of a "clear political assessment of the situation" in it. At the same time, he called the negotiations held within the CSTO Council fair, positive and open.



Uruguay's Senate condemns blocking of Lachin Corridor, expresses solidarity with the people of Artsakh

The Senate of Uruguay adopted a motion on December 21 on the situation of the Lachin corridor, condemning the blockade of Artsakh by Azerbaijan. Since December 12, the Berdzor/Lachin land corridor, the only route of communication between Artsakh with Armenia and the outer world, remains blocked, leaving its more than 120,000 residents totally isolated, deprived of food, medicine and basic supplies, the Senators said.

They remind that “according to the trilateral statement signed on November 9, 2022 by the Presidents of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation and by Prime Minister of Armenia, the corridor is under the control of the peacekeeping forces of the Russian Federation and it is the responsibility of the Republic of Azerbaijan



guarantee the safe movement of citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions.”

In the face of the humanitarian crisis resulting from the land blockade and the persistent threat of shooting down any aircraft that tries to land or take off from Artsakh, the Senate:

- Calls on the Azerbaijani authorities to comply with their international com-

mitments and ensure free movement through the corridor that connects Artsakh with Armenia, putting an end to the harassment of the civilian population;

- Condemns of the intentional cutoff of gas supply from Armenia to Artsakh in the section that crosses the territory under the control of Azerbaijan, which between

December 13 and 16 deprived the population and civil infrastructures such as schools and hospitals of the main source of energy for heating amid winter;

- Express solidarity with the people of Artsakh, whose human rights must be respected by all the actors involved in resolving the conflict.

Armenia “Not Abandoned By Europe”

(RFE/RL) - The European Union is committed to helping Armenia overcome grave security challenges but it cannot “save” the South Caucasus nation, according to the Czech Republic’s incoming ambassador in Yerevan.

“One of my tasks as the Czech ambassador will be to prove and to show my counterparts and friends that we, as Europe and the Czech Republic, haven’t abandoned Armenia,” the diplomat, Petr Piruncik, told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service in a weekend interview.

“There are some politicians in your country that are using this situation for their own benefits,” he said. “They are speaking about “Europe leaving us, we are alone and we don’t have anyone to rely on.” That’s not true.”

“It doesn’t mean that we are going to save you,” he went on. “That’s what you

need to understand and what I want to emphasize. We are not going to save you, you know. But we are going to do our best to help you get over this mess.”

Piruncik referred to fallout from Armenia’s continuing conflict with Azerbaijan. Echoing EU statements, he expressed serious concern over Baku’s closure on December 12 of the sole road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia.

The road was blocked by groups of Azerbaijanis demanding that their government be allowed to inspect “illegal” mining operations in Karabakh and assess their environmental impact. Baku backs their demands while denying responsibility for the road blockade.

“It looks a bit silly,” Piruncik said of the official Azerbaijani explanations of the blockade. He likened Karabakh’s ethnic Armenian population to “hostages.”

The Czech envoy also said that Russia, which has peacekeeping troops stationed in Karabakh, is primarily responsible for the safe functioning of the Lachin corridor under the terms of the Russian-brokered agreement that stopped the 2020 Armenian-Azerbaijani war.

“The main side to ask what is going on and what is going to happen, what are you going to do is Russia because they have agreed that they will make sure that the corridor is open and the peace is kept,” he said.



Mayors of Paris, Lyon and Marseille call on French Government and EU to impose sanctions on Azerbaijan



The Mayors of the three largest French cities – Paris, Lyon and Marseille – have called on the French Government and the European Union to impose sanctions against Azerbaijan. The Mayors made the appeal in a joint article published by *Libération* newspaper.

The Mayors note that the Republic of Artsakh has become a victim of blockade imposed by Baku regime, and the belligerent policy gained new strength on December 12, when the only road connecting Artsakh to Armenia was blocked upon the instruction of official Baku.

Apart from that, Azerbaijan had also closed the gas supply to Nagorno Karabakh, “thus testifying to its will to suffocate this small besieged republic of the South Caucasus.”

“However, the consolidation of Western governments, and in particular the position of the French government, prompted Baku to resume gas supplies and thus fortunately avoid worsening the situation in

cold winter,” they note.

“The situation, however, remains unacceptable, and France cannot tolerate the constant threat to the 120 000 Armenians living in the Artsakh Republic (part of whose territories have been occupied by Azerbaijan). France cannot leave them to the whims of dictator Ilham Aliyev, who has been encouraging Armenophobic policies for two decades,” the Mayors say.

Reminding that the French Senate and the National Assembly recently called on the French government to take practical measures, the Mayor call on the President of the Republic of France to officially meet the elected representatives of the Republic of Artsakh.

“In parallel with that, we call for un-

conditional condemnation of the Baku regime, which has announced through the lips of its Foreign Minister that Azerbaijan will not negotiate anything else on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, in violation of its own international commitments, particularly within the framework of November 9, 2020 statement,” the official note.

They also request to initiate a European policy of sanctions against Azerbaijan, such as that adopted against Russia, starting, for example, by freezing the assets of Azerbaijani leaders and oligarchs.”

The Mayors also request that France participate in the reopening of the Stepanakert airport, noting that this air bridge will reduce the effects of the blockade and ease the lives of thousands of civilians “whose only sin is the will to live in their own land.”

Finally, they request that France and the European Union show great foresight when concluding cooperation and trade agreements with Azerbaijan.

“Ursula Van der Leyen’s initiative to get gas supply from Baku is more than disturbing to us. It is worrying that the financing of the conflict against the Republic of Artsakh is not condemned and strongly opposed by our leaders, that the peaceful victims of armed conflicts, in this case Armenians, elsewhere Ukrainians or Yemenis, are sacrificed on the altar of realpolitik,” they conclude.



Artsakh's Parliament requests the UN to send a monitoring mission



The National Assembly of the Republic of Artsakh has appealed to the United Nations to expose the provocations of the Azerbaijani authorities under the fictitious environmental pretext.

“On December 12, 2022, the blocking of the Lachine Corridor, the only road con-

necting Artsakh to Armenia and the outside world by the Azerbaijani authorities under false environmental pretext and in violation of the agreements reached by the tripartite statement of November 9, 2020, turned into a humanitarian disaster and disrupted the fragile peace and a new regional tends to destabilize,” the National Assembly said in a statement.

The National Assembly expressed gratitude to the countries concerned about the problem, international organizations, the UN Security Council, the ECHR for responding to the humanitarian crisis created in the Republic of Artsakh, which is besieged by Azerbaijan.

“The National Assembly of the Republic of Artsakh appeals to the United Nations to expose the provocations of the Azerbaijani authorities under the fictitious environmental pretext, to apply the necessary international tools, in particular to send a monitoring group to the Republic of Artsakh and adjacent areas within the framework of the UN Environment Programme, in order to learn about regional environmental problems and present appropriate conclusions,” the statement reads.

“We expect to resolve the crisis situation created in the region with effective steps,” he said.

Prolonged blocking of Nagorno-Karabakh lifeline road could lead to dire humanitarian consequences – Human Rights Watch

The sole road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia has been blocked since December 12, 2022, disrupting access to essential goods and services for tens of thousands of ethnic Armenians living there, *Human Rights Watch* said on December 21

“The blocked road also prevents Nagorno-Karabakh residents from leaving the region; over a thousand people reported to be stranded on one side or the other there are unable to reach their homes. Among them are dozens of children who had traveled to Armenia’s capital, Yerevan, on a school trip, and are now blocked from returning to their parents and homes,” HRW said.

“Prolonged blocking of the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to the outside world could lead to dire humanitarian consequences,” said Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch. “Regardless of who is blocking the road, Azerbaijan’s author-



ities and the Russian peacekeeping force deployed there should ensure that access remains open, to enable freedom of movement and ensure people have access to essential goods and services. The longer the disruption to essential goods and services the greater the risk to civilians.”

Since the morning of December 12, several dozen Azerbaijanis have been demonstrating on the Lachine road, demanding access to mining sites in Nagorno Karabakh. They claim that the authorities are illegally exploiting gold and copper

molybdenum deposits and using the Lachine road to transport those minerals to Armenia.

The protesters have erected tents along the road and continued their actions around the clock. Throughout the past week, they have expressed other grievances, including calls for setting up official Azerbaijani customs checkpoints along the Lachine corridor.

Those in control of the road and the area around it – that is Azerbaijani authorities and the Russian peacekeeping force – should ensure that vehicles with humanitarian goods can pass and that freedom of movement is not stopped, Human Rights Watch said.

“Whether the protesters have genuine environmental concerns or other grievances, Azerbaijan should facilitate the right to peaceful protest by interacting with the protesters in a way that ensures the road remains open and the protest does not deny Nagorno-Karabakh residents their rights of access to essential services and goods, and to freedom of movement,” it added.

GM Levon Aronian urges action to help people of Artsakh in blockade

Grandmaster Levon Aronian has urged support to help people in Artsakh blockade.

“At this moment while the whole world is preparing for the winter holidays, 120 thousand of Armenians living in Nagorno Karabakh are already in a blockade for 10 days. They are facing existential threat from Azerbaijan who are using different illegal methods to block the only road connecting Stepanakert to Armenia,” Aronian said in a Facebook post.

“Armenia had devastating losses during the 44 day war in 2020. The ceasefire



agreement signed between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia specified that the road will remain open and will serve all countries in the region. Right now the Russian peacekeeping forces are being taunted by

Azerbaijani “ecology activist” that block the road under different false premises,” he said.

“While we see different organizations condemning this provocative actions by Azerbaijani officials , time is passing, the kids can’t come back home, hospitals are struggling with supplies and the food shortage is imminent,” the chess player added.

“I urge everyone in their power to help my homeland by spreading the message and finding ways to help the people in a great need,” Aronian said.

Los Angeles Armenian community organizations condemn Azerbaijan’s genocidal policy against Artsakh

Los Angeles Armenian community organizations have condemned the genocidal policy of Azerbaijan and called for support to the people of Artsakh:

“The 120,000 population of Artsakh has been under a complete blockade imposed by Azerbaijan for over a week, with the closure of the Berdzor Corridor (Lachin Corridor). Deprived of food supplies, medicine, and the right to move freely, the Armenians of Artsakh are facing a serious humanitarian disaster,” the organizations said in a statement.

“We regretfully note that the efforts of the Russian peacekeepers have not yielded the desired results in curbing Azerbaijan’s provocations and anti-Armenian actions. The international community should not remain indifferent or be content with mere statements of condemnation, which will be ignored by the Aliyev regime in Baku,” they added.

“In light of this situation, Russia, European structures, and the United States of America are obliged to help the peaceful population living and working in Nagorno-Karabakh. Nations that prioritize the protection of human rights should take practical steps to provide emergency humanitarian aid to the people of Artsakh, especially amidst severe winter weather,” the signatories said.



The Armenian American community of Los Angeles strongly condemns the genocidal policy of depopulation conducted by the government of Azerbaijan, they added.

“We demand that the White House take practical measures, including establishing a humanitarian air bridge and delivering large quantities of food, medicine, hospital supplies and other necessary goods to the functioning airport in Stepanakert, in order to safeguard the physical existence of Artsakh Armenians in their historical homeland,” the Armenian organizations said.

They appealed to the Members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to join the wave of condemnation, impose sanctions against Azerbaijan, and enforce Section 907 of FREEDOM Support Act, prohibiting all types of military aid to that country.

“These recent events, including the

shutting off of gas pipelines in the region, prove once again that Nagorno-Karabakh cannot become a part of Azerbaijan. The international community should confirm this reality by recognizing the right of Artsakh Armenians to self-determination,” the concluded.

The statement has been signed by:

SDHP Western US Executive Committee

ARF Western USA Central Committee

tee

ADLP Western District Committee

Armenian Assembly of America

Armenian Bar Association

Armenian Council of America

Armenian Evangelical Union of North America

Armenian General Benevolent Union, Western District

Armenian Relief Society of Western USA, Regional Executive

Armenian Rights Council

Armenian Youth Federation Western USA, Central Executive

Gaydz Youth Organization

Homenmen Armenian Athletic Association

Organization of Istanbul Armenians

(Endorsement of above announcement by other organizations remains in progress)

Shortages of essential goods recorded in Stepanakert amid blockade

Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) is under blockade as a result of Azerbaijan's closure of the Lachin Corridor for already 12 days. The closure has led to the cut-off of food and medicine supplies, among other essential goods.

Nagorno Karabakh has been importing most of fruits and vegetables from Armenia, but now there are shortages of almost all goods in the market.



market every day.

“As of December 22, shortages of certain products are seen in major stores in Stepanakert, particularly shortages of rice, peas, groats, vegetable oil, local butter, sausage, and tobacco, while some other products have almost entirely run out in stores, particularly sugar, buckwheat, lentil, flour and the Baghramyan locally produced eggs,” he said.

Avtandilyan said their agency continues monitoring to control inflation and rule

The Director of the Department of Protection of Economic Competition of the Public Services and Economic Competi-

tion Regulatory Commission of Nagorno Karabakh Hrach Avtandilyan told ARMENPRESS that they are monitoring the

out possible profiteering attempts. He said businesses are displaying a high level of responsibility.

Nagorno Karabakh doctors “doing everything they can” to save critically-ill patients amid blockade

Planned surgeries remain suspended in hospitals of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) due to the Azerbaijani ongoing blockade of Lachin Corridor, the only connection of Nagorno Karabakh with Armenia.

The Ministry of Healthcare of Nagorno Karabakh said in a statement that 11 children are under intensive and neonatal care at the Arevik clinic. The 4-months-old baby with visceral leishmaniasis continues



to be in a serious condition.

Another 7 patients are in intensive care at the Republican Medical Center. 4 of them are in critical condition and doctors are doing everything they can to stabilize the patients.

“The Ministry of Healthcare of Artsakh is taking all possible measures to properly overcome the situation resulting from the blockade,” the ministry said.

John Evans urges to return the issue of the fate of Karabakh’s Armenians to negotiating table



Former United States Ambassador to Armenia John Evans is calling for return-

ing “the issue of the fate of Karabakh’s Armenians to the negotiating table.”

“As former U.S. Ambassador to Yerevan I no longer have significant contacts in State Department or White House, however, I urge all in authority, including Azeri and Turkish officials, to do what they can to return the issue of the fate of Karabakh’s Armenians to the negotiating table,” Evans tweeted.

John M. Evans served as U.S. Ambassador to Armenia from 2004 to 2006, until

President George W. Bush dismissed him from office. According to some reports the sudden dismissal of Evans was due to his outspoken support for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

In 2016, Evans wrote the book titled Truth Held Hostage: America and the Armenian Genocide. What Then? What Now?

In 2021, President Joe Biden became the first U.S. President to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide.

33 million viewers tuned in to Junior Eurovision 2022 held in Armenia

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) on December 21 revealed that 33 million viewers across 13 measured markets tuned in for the 20th Junior Eurovision Song Contest, which was held in Yerevan, Armenia, on Sunday, 11 December.

13 year old Lissandro from France was crowned the winner in a live broadcast from the Karen Demirchyan Sports and Concerts Complex.



The show's average TV audience increased by close to 500,000 in a year to reach 7.9 million, the third largest audience since 2011.

On average, 12.8% of all TV viewers watched the 2022 competition hosted by Armenian Public Television (AMPTV) at 16:00 CET, with most participating broadcasters seeing a boost in audiences in comparison with 2021's edition.

Hosting the competition had a huge impact on viewership in Armenia. Close to 4 in 10 Armenians tuned in to watch some part of the event and the show attracted on average 2 in 3 TV viewers.

Overall, 10 out of 13 markets delivered an audience larger than normally achieved by the broadcast channel in the slot.

In Poland, Italy, Spain, and France the

average number of viewers exceeded 1 million – with 1.9 million, Poland delivered the biggest audience for the fourth year in a row.

Italian broadcaster Rai's decision to move the show from Rai Gulp, the children's channel, to its main channel Rai 1 resulted in a huge year-on-year increase with an average 1.5 million viewers watching the show in Italy.

Spain delivered the third largest audience with 1.2 million, double the number normally achieved in that slot, and the United Kingdom returned to the competition for the first time since 2005 with the show reaching 5.2m viewers who watched for at least one minute.

The Contest delivered an 18.5% viewing share among children aged 4 to 14,

more than twice the average number normally achieved by the same group of broadcast channels of 8%.

In the Netherlands, on average 2 in 3 TV viewers aged 6 to 12 decided to watch the show on NPO 3.

And the 2.5-hour event also delivered a 14.2% viewing share among 15 – 24-year-olds, twice the average number normally achieved by the same group of broadcast channels of 7.1%.

Those numbers were also reflected online.

The Live Show was streamed live nearly half a million times on the Contest's official YouTube channel, with more concurrent online viewers than ever before.

The Junior Eurovision Song Contest website was visited nearly 2 million times on the day of the show.

On social media the Contest enjoyed its second-best year ever.

There were 9.8 million video views on TikTok and 7.1 million video views on Instagram, the Contest's most popular digital platforms, both up year on year on,

On Twitter, engagement was up 40% with posts on the channel being seen 5.5 million times in the lead up and during the event.

Content on the Contest's Facebook page reached over 3 million people.

Archaeologists discover Urartian king's temple in Van excavations

Archaeologists have discovered Urartian king's temple in Van excavations, Daily Sabah reports.

This year's excavations at the Urartian castle's site in Van's Muradiye revealed the second temple of King Menua as well as a chamber tomb.

The excavations were carried out by the Van Museum with the permission of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

The archaeological excavations, supported by the Muradiye District Governorship and Municipality and led under the scientific consultancy of Sabahattin Erdo-

gan, associate professor at the Department of Archeology of Van Yüzüncü Yıl University's (YYÜ) Faculty of Letters, had started two months ago. During the excavations, a second temple without rizalite, or corner protrusions, the remains of a masonry chamber tomb built with the technique of corbelling, as well as pottery fragments and metal artifacts were discovered.

Excavations have finished for the time being with the weather conditions becoming unyielding, but will continue next year.

Urartu, also known as Kingdom of Van, centered around Lake Van in the

historic Armenian Highlands. The kingdom rose to power in the mid-9th century BC, but went into gradual decline and was eventually conquered by the Iranian Medes in the early 6th century BC.



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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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