



THE BARONESS COX
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The Rt Hon Alicia Kearns MP
Chair: Foreign Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

12/01/2023

Dear Alicia,

The blockade of the Lachin Corridor - the only road connecting Armenia to Nagorno Karabakh (also known as Artsakh) - by so-called Azerbaijani eco-activists has now been in place for a month.

The 120,000 residents of the Artsakh Republic are facing the dire economic, humanitarian, and healthcare consequences of this disconnection from the outside world. Electricity has been rationed; shortages of food and medical supplies have increased and only a very few patients have been allowed to leave for treatment in Red Cross transports to Armenia - but there are many more, including cancer patients in need of chemotherapy, who cannot.

The Artsakh Republic Security Council have released a statement highlighting the reality of an “impending new genocide” and have appealed “to the international community to assume responsibility for preventing the terrorist actions undertaken by Azerbaijan.” To this, I add the words of a valued friend, Vardan Tadevosyan, Director of an internationally renowned Rehabilitation Centre in Stepanakert, currently experiencing the blockade first-hand:

“The people are in a state of panic. Even during the 44-day war, the Lachin corridor remained open. Now we are totally isolated. We pray and hope for the future. Please pray for us.”

“We call on the international community to stand by Artsakh, protecting Artsakh from annihilation and occupation.”

As this blockade continues, shortages have led to the indefinite closing of Kindergartens in Artsakh, and UNICEF have issued a statement of concern regarding the impact of the blockade on children's access to survival necessities, including basic food items and essential services. They add that many children have been separated from their parents or legal guardians, and have appealed to be allowed "to gain access to children in these areas."

Reports have also emerged that Azerbaijan is preventing access to damaged sections on the only electricity supply line from Armenia to Artsakh, resulting in rolling power blackouts in below freezing winter temperatures, as the region attempts to conserve its supply. This could cause death by hypothermia for vulnerable people such as the elderly.

While UK Ambassador John Gallagher has denied any culpability on the part of the UK concerning the United Nations Security Council's failure to adopt a statement on the closure of the Lachin Corridor, Vaqif Sadiqov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Belgium and Luxembourg, expressed "words of gratitude" to the UK on 31 December regarding the collapse of this statement. This has strengthened fears that our Government's good relations with Azerbaijan, associated with oil interests, will be allowed to take precedence over the lives of the people of Nagorno Karabakh.

I therefore ask the Foreign Affairs Select Committee to 1) launch an inquiry into the Nagorno Karabakh security situation, 2) present a report of these findings to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office as a matter of urgency, and 3) meet with members of the Armenian diaspora to assess the truth behind Azerbaijan's misinformation campaign.

The process of another Armenian Genocide must stop now.

Sincerely,



Caroline
