



Statement from members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum calling for the immediate stop of ethnic cleansings against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh

Brussels, 21 September 2023

We, members of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum condemn the attack of the Azerbaijani military forces against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh under the pretext of an “anti-terrorist operation”, which caused deaths and casualties among the population and massive destructions. **Throughout the 24 hours of attacks that included use of artillery, drones, aviation and infantry, it is already confirmed that 200 people among which 5 children were killed and more than 400 people were wounded. The attack took place after long lasting blockade which results in shortage of all vital supplies necessary to support victims of the attack.**

The new war initiated by Aliyev’s regime took place in conditions of full inaction of the Russian so-called peacekeeping contingent, dislocated in Nagorno-Karabakh within the framework of the trilateral Declaration on the cease-fire of 9 November 2020. The hypocritical reaction of high-level Kremlin officials and reports of Russian media, clearly illustrates, that these actions by President Aliyev were coordinated with official Moscow. Russia’s leadership has explicitly stated that this is a result of Armenia’s continuous steps towards closer relationships with the EU and the Western countries as a whole.

The attack resulted in drastic worsening of the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and the existential threat of the entire population became critical. The danger of ethnic cleansing, mass deportation of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh is high as never.

Throughout the entire period of attack Aliyev ignored numerous calls to immediately stop the aggression issued by international actors including the EU, the UN, the United States, Germany, France, the Netherlands and many others.

We demand that Azerbaijani authorities stop the escalation of the conflict, respect its obligations, taken in the framework of the trilateral Declaration on the cease-fire of 9 November 2020, and withdraw all troops from the line of contact between warring parties, established at the time of the cessation of hostilities on 9 November 2020.

We call on the EU to implement strict sanctions towards Aliyev’s dictatorial regime of Azerbaijan for violation of international law and execution of ethnic cleansings towards the Armenian people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

We call on international community and, particularly, the EU, UN and OSCE for immediate and strong efforts to reach long-term and fair peace and stability in the region. Urgent mechanisms to ensure physical security of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh shall be applied by the international community. The Russian so-called peacekeeping forces in Nagorno-Karabakh and Lachin corridor that have failed to fulfill their duties and obligations should be replaced by the UN peacemaking forces.

We call of the international community to take effective measures to mediate and facilitate genuine peace talks under the international auspices, ensuring active consideration of track 2 diplomacy, with the participation of human rights defenders, and especially women human rights defenders working on peace and justice agenda

We continue to demand the immediate de-blocking of the Lachin corridor, as the co-chairmen of the Steering Committee did in their [Statement](#) on 23 December 2022, to stop the suffering of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh from lack of food and medicine and to prevent the humanitarian catastrophe.

We condemn Russia for its destructive role in the region, as elsewhere.

Any attempt at ethnic cleansing of the region is intolerable and should lead to specific legal consequences for those who organize it according to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Peaceful dialogue between Baku and Stepanakert under international mediation and with guarantees for resolving the age-old conflict and ensuring the rights and security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh should be the only option!

Co-Chairs of the EaP CSF Steering Committee

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