



DECEMBER 10, 2022

Today, Azerbaijan has once again closed the only road connecting Artsakh with Armenia and the outside world under fake environmental pretexts. This provocation is yet another manifestation of the systematic and government-led policy of Azerbaijan, the ultimate goal of which is the total expulsion of the Armenian native population from Artsakh. By this action, Azerbaijan deliberately undermines any conception of peace in our region by openly neglecting the rights of 120,000 Armenians of Artsakh and intentionally disrupting their normal life.

On December 12, 2022, at around 10:30, a group of alleged Azerbaijani environmentalists and journalists blocked the Stepanakert-Goris Highway on the Shushi section in both directions. The closure of the Lachin corridor by the Azerbaijani side is a rude violation of the Trilateral Statement on ceasefire of November 9, 2020. By this action Azerbaijan blatantly violates the fundamental rights of the Artsakh population, most importantly, their freedom of movement, for which it is criminally responsible. Hundreds of vehicles, including with humanitarian, medical and food supplies, are stuck on the Highway for more than 5 hours now in harsh winter conditions. This critical situation is fraught with irreversible humanitarian consequences for the whole population of Artsakh.

Paradoxically, the Azerbaijani environmentalist community was silent, when Azerbaijan was using white phosphorous ammunition, prohibited under the international humanitarian law, against the peaceful settlements of Artsakh during the 2020 war. The usage of phosphorous ammunition by Azerbaijan, recently confirmed by an independent investigation, also caused severe damage to the natural environment of Artsakh, which the Azerbaijani side is now, all of the sudden, preoccupied about. Thus, the intentions of this fabricated environmental campaign are highly questionable and totally provocative, as it is aimed at terrorising the Armenians of Artsakh - both psychologically and physically - and making them leave their own land.

The protection of the rights of Artsakh people is not solely the responsibility of several international actors, but it is the obligation of the entire international community, which champions human rights worldwide. Therefore, the international community must take a clear stance and immediate action to condemn and prevent this provocative line led by Azerbaijan. Otherwise, the ethnic cleansing of Artsakh Armenians will be an inevitable reality, bringing humanity to yet another humanitarian failure.