



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 5, 2023

I am compelled today to speak on the sudden and mass exodus of over 100,000 ethnic Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh since September 19. Colleagues, that is nearly the entire ethnic Armenian population of the region.

By now, you have no doubt heard the many harrowing personal stories and seen the haunting images. The visit of the UN Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan to Nagorno-Karabakh on October 1st confirmed how few of the local population remained. The UN mission was, “struck by the sudden manner in which the local population left their homes and the suffering the experience must have caused.” International media footage further shows the city seemingly abandoned, with strollers, toys, and wheelchairs now scattered across its main square.

The United States supports the Armenian government’s efforts to help displaced persons find shelter and safety and will continue to assist them in that support. Nagorno-Karabakh residents who have departed for Armenia should be able to return to their homes if they so choose, once it is safe to do so.

Further, we continue to urge Azerbaijan to maintain the ceasefire and avoid any resumption of military activities. The United States reiterates its call for an independent, international mission to provide transparency, reassurance, and confidence to the residents of Nagorno-Karabakh – including those who have recently departed – that their rights and security will be protected, consistent with Azerbaijan’s public statements.

The United States continues to believe that the only acceptable path forward in the South Caucasus is through dialogue. Azerbaijan’s recent military actions in Nagorno-Karabakh regrettably have been a setback for this process. The use of force is unacceptable and runs counter to efforts to create conditions for a just, durable, and dignified peace in the region.

The United States will continue to engage Azerbaijan and Armenia at the highest levels to find a lasting and sustainable peace agreement.

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