

AGBU Letter of Appeal to EU leaders Regarding Armenia

Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles

High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

European Union External Action Service

9 Rdpt Robert Schuman, 1046 Brussels, BE

September 20, 2022

Dear Mr. Borrell,

The recent large-scale attack by Azerbaijan on Armenia's eastern border marks a new threshold in Azerbaijan's refusal to engage constructively to achieve a lasting and peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It is a slap in the face for the EU's efforts to build a lasting peace between the two countries.

Since the ceasefire of November 9, 2020, the aggressive rhetoric used by the Azerbaijani leadership, including territorial claims on some of Armenia's southern provinces, has demonstrated Azerbaijan's expansionist ambitions and the threat of ethnic cleansing in the region.

As several members of the European Parliament have alluded*, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev has crossed a red line of international law by aggressing against Armenia on its own soil and bombing civilian infrastructure, displacing thousands from their homes. Within 24 hours, more than 200 members of the

Armenian Defense Forces were killed in this attack, which clearly represents an invasion of a sovereign state. Initial cases of horrific torture, rape and mutilation of Armenian female military personnel have also been reported by the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia**.

We urge you, Mr. Borrell, as High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy committed to promote peace and security in Europe and its neighborhood region, to take prompt action to hold Azerbaijan accountable for its actions and for this clear violation of international norms in order to prevent any further attempts to invade the territory of the Republic of Armenia, which will destabilize the entire region.

The European Union managed to come together in an unprecedented force of unity when the Russian army invaded Ukraine last February. It mustered all its diplomatic, humanitarian and military resources to come to the aid of the Ukrainian people. Armenia, contrary to Azerbaijan, is a young democracy, one of the few in the region promoting western values, that also needs protection. We ask you to understand the seriousness of the threat it faces and to take the necessary steps to enable the European Union to live up to the principles it stands for.

As President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), the largest Armenian non-profit organization in the world, I speak for a global network of hundreds of thousands of Armenians across five continents. Several generations of European Armenians serve in all spheres of government, industry, commerce and the arts. As such, I appeal to the European Union External Action Service to deploy its full diplomatic power, its arsenal of sanctions and preventive measures to prevent further ethnic cleansing in the region and to dissuade Azerbaijan from pursuing its expansionist plans at the expense of sovereign and democratic Armenia.

I thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent appeal.

Sincerely,



Berge Setrakian

AGBU President

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https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/253919/20220913_Azerbaijani%20military%20aggression_statement.pdf

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220913IPR40314/meps-call-armenia-and-azerbaijan-to-respect-the-ceasefire-agreement>

** <https://www.ombuds.am/images/files/fc7d77e1dcd3e0573173dfa7314e6c46.pdf>