

Resolution 2508 (2023)¹

Provisional version

Ensuring free and safe access through the Lachin Corridor

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls that for more than 30 years, Armenia and Azerbaijan have been in conflict, and that both countries committed themselves to settle the conflict through peaceful means upon accession to the Council of Europe in January 2001.
2. The Assembly has dealt with many aspects of the conflict over the years, in particular in [Resolution 1047 \(1994\)](#) and [Recommendation 1251 \(1994\)](#) “Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh”, in [Resolution 1416 \(2005\)](#) “The conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference” and in [Resolution 2391 \(2021\)](#) and [Recommendation 2209 \(2021\)](#) “Humanitarian consequences of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan / Nagorno-Karabakh conflict”. It notes that Azerbaijan regained control of parts of its territory after a 44-day war, which ended with a Trilateral Statement signed on 9 November 2020 by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin.
3. The Assembly welcomes the mutual recognition of the territorial integrity of Armenia and Azerbaijan and sees this as the first steps towards the end of a conflict which has already caused too many deaths and tragedies on both sides.
4. Following the 2020 war, which has allowed Azerbaijan to reclaim part of its territory by force, the Assembly is very concerned that that country’s leadership has not made any effort to reassure the Armenian population living on this territory that they are welcome to stay and continue living their lives there. On the contrary, the Assembly is extremely worried by events which have unfolded since the signature of the Trilateral Statement, and which culminated on 12 December 2022 with the interruption of the free and safe passage through the Lachin corridor and the subsequent deliberate cutting of electricity and gas supplies to the region.
5. While fully recognising Azerbaijan’s concern to ensure security within its territory and at its borders, the Assembly is struck by the fact that its leadership does not acknowledge the very serious humanitarian and human rights consequences stemming from the present situation.
6. The Assembly is well-aware that this is a situation with two totally opposed narratives. For this reason, and because it believes in the benefits of dialogue, it deeply deplores that the Rapporteur was not invited to Azerbaijan during his fact-finding visit, and was thus unable to travel to the Lachin corridor to see the situation on the ground and discuss further with the authorities of Azerbaijan.
7. The Assembly underlines that Azerbaijan has the responsibility to protect and ensure the security of everyone living within its internationally recognised borders and thus within its jurisdiction, pursuant to Article 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), and believes that drawing international attention to the situation at the Lachin corridor and its human rights and humanitarian consequences is necessary in recalling this responsibility.

1. *Assembly debate* on 22 June 2023 (18th sitting) (see [Doc. 15796](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, rapporteur: Mr Paul Gavan). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 22 June 2023 (18th sitting). See also [Recommendation 2256 \(2023\)](#).



8. Recognising that the absence of free and safe access through the Lachin corridor is part of a much broader issue, the Assembly is convinced that a humanitarian response alone is not sufficient and that a political solution is needed. Welcoming the negotiations underway between Armenia and Azerbaijan under the auspices notably of the European Union and the United States of America, the Assembly stresses that the current situation is not sustainable and may well lead to the Armenian population being forced to leave their homes and communities if there is no resolution to the conflict. In this context, it urgently calls for addressing the issues of the rights and security of the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh through dialogue between Baku and Khakendi/Stepanakert and a neutral international involvement in any peace implementation mechanism to be put in place.

9. Noting the interim measures decided by the European Court of Human Rights on 21 December 2022 under Rule 39 of the Rules of the Court calling on the Government of Azerbaijan “to take all measures that are within their jurisdiction to ensure safe passage through the Lachin Corridor of seriously ill persons in need of medical treatment in Armenia and others who were stranded on the road without shelter or means of subsistence”, the Assembly calls on Azerbaijan to implement this decision with no further delay.

10. Noting that the International Court of Justice [ordered](#) Azerbaijan to urgently “take all measures at its disposal to ensure unimpeded movement of persons, vehicles and cargo along the Lachin Corridor in both directions”, the Assembly calls on Azerbaijan to also comply with this order urgently.

11. While noting that the mirror applications brought by Azerbaijan against Armenia were rejected by both international courts, the Assembly believes that Armenia must also play a role in de-escalating the tensions, and that it should be open to some form of international monitoring with the aim of assessing the veracity of Azerbaijan’s allegations regarding the illegal weapons being brought into Nagorno-Karabakh.

12. The Assembly calls on Azerbaijan to invite a Council of Europe delegation to visit the Lachin corridor and Nagorno-Karabakh for a fact-finding mission, to assess the situation on the ground. It also calls on Azerbaijan to let other international organisations access the region, including United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in line with their respective mandates and relevant principles regulating international humanitarian assistance.

13. The Assembly recognises the crucial role played by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in transporting patients through the Lachin corridor, reuniting separated families and transporting medicines, medical equipment, seeds and food to the inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh, as far as it was able. It recognises, as a key point, that such interventions should not be required, and that the fact that they are is a clear evidence that there is no free and safe access through the Lachin corridor.

14. In the full recognition of Armenia’s and Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity, the Assembly calls Azerbaijan for a genuinely constructive and peaceful approach towards its neighbour Armenia and the Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh. It strongly encourages Azerbaijan to invest all efforts for a free and safe movement both ways along the Lachin corridor. In the meantime, it urges Azerbaijan to restore electricity and gas supplies without delay or impediment, and to agree with Armenians a new route for gas supplies and the electricity grid through Armenian and not Azerbaijani territory.

15. The Assembly is extremely worried by the hostile and threatening rhetoric used against Armenians at the highest level of Azerbaijan’s leadership and urges Azerbaijan to repudiate such rhetoric and take steps to tackle both hate speech, including by public and high-level officials, and hate crimes. To this end, Azerbaijan is encouraged to introduce and implement appropriate legislation with the assistance of the Council of Europe. The Assembly is also aware of hate speech being used by individuals in Armenia and likewise urges Armenia’s leadership to condemn such hate speech and the authorities to take appropriate measures to punish it.

16. Without anticipating the outcome of the peace negotiations, the Assembly believes that, regardless of the citizenship issue, which should in any case not be detrimental to the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, innovative solutions could be found to protect the rights of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, within the toolbox provided by the Council of Europe, which includes standards, instruments and programmes. The Assembly therefore calls on Armenia and Azerbaijan to take full advantage of the existing standards, instruments and programmes related to the enjoyment of minority rights, language and education, cultural heritage, decentralisation and local self-government options.

17. The consequences of the absence of free and safe access through the Lachin corridor have shown that confidence-building measures would certainly be useful in addressing certain situations. The Assembly therefore recommends Armenia and Azerbaijan to engage in confidence building measures under the

auspices of the Council of Europe, notably with the involvement of medical doctors, journalists, youth and civil society. It also invites the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe to offer her good services to establish and foster dialogue and co-operation between the Human Rights Defender of Armenia and the Commissioner for Human Rights of Azerbaijan.

18. As there is no one better placed, the Assembly invites both Armenian and Azerbaijani parliamentary delegations to discuss the possible steps towards the establishment of a conducive and fruitful dialogue based on topics of mutual interest, with a view to decreasing tensions and building sincere co-operation, which would help to dispel fears and mistrust.