

To the attention of: Mr. Jens Stoltenberg
The Secretary General of NATO

Foreign Affairs Departments of member states:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France
United States Department of State
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Canada
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Croatia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czech Republic
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia
European External Action Service of the European Union
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Netherlands
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Northern Macedonia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development
Office of the United Kingdom

Letter from Civil Society organizations in Armenia

On 14 October 2020, a number of civil society organizations had addressed James Appathurai, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as Despina Afentouli, NATO Brussels Caucasus officer, and Rosaria Puglisi, Head of NATO Liaison office in Georgia, and the

NATO Member States' embassies in Armenia, with an appeal to prevent actions aimed at military escalation of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict by Turkey, a member state of NATO.¹

In the said letter, we had informed that Turkey had supported and mediated the transfer from Syria to Azerbaijan of thousands of mercenaries, including combatants of terrorist groups known to the international community, in order to participate directly in the hostilities against Nagorno Karabakh, which is populated by ethnic Armenians. This information has been revealed through a number of journalistic investigations² and confirmed by officials of many states, including France,³ the Russian Federation,⁴ the Islamic Republic of Iran,⁵ the Syrian Arab Republic,⁶ as well as officials of the USA,⁷ the European Parliament,⁸ and the United Kingdom.⁹ Moreover, there are numerous videos online proving that mercenaries including terrorists, are engaged in military actions.¹⁰

The leading international human rights organizations have warned that, in addition to engaging terrorist mercenaries, Azerbaijan is, with Turkey's support, using against the civilian population of Nagorno Karabakh armaments that are prohibited by international humanitarian law, including cluster bombs and ballistic missiles,¹¹ and that war crimes are being committed, which have been analyzed and confirmed by the international media, among others. Some examples include the humiliation, torture, and killing of Armenian prisoners of war,¹² or Azerbaijan's refusal to exchange the bodies of killed military personnel after the ceasefire, etc. Moreover, despite the three concluded ceasefires brokered by the presidents of the three co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group, Turkey's top leaders have each time encouraged Azerbaijan to

¹ Prevent NATO member Turkey Actions toward Military Escalation of the Kharabakh Conflict. Appeal, <https://hcav.am/en/nato-urgent-appeal-from-armenian-csos/>

² <https://investigativejournal.org/turkeys-syrian-mercenaries-in-azerbaijan-feel-tricked-as-bodies-pile-up/>; <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/02/syrian-recruit-describes-role-of-foreign-fighters-in-nagorno-karabakh>; <https://www.foxnews.com/world/are-syrian-rebels-dying-azerbaijan-armenian-conflict>; <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/armenia-azerbaijan-syria-war-fighting-mercenary-russia-b912446.html>; <https://www.fr24news.com/a/2020/10/france-accuses-turkey-of-sending-syrian-mercenaries-tonagorno-karabakh-2.html>; <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/09/30/russia-says-syrialibya-fighters-deployed-to-karabakh-conflict-a71610>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-armeniaazerbaijan-putin-macron/france-accuses-turkey-of-sending-syrian-mercenaries-to-nagorno-karabakhidUSKBN26L3SB>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/armenia-azerbaijan-int/assad-blames-turkey-for-nagornokarabakh-fighting-russia-sees-terrorism-risk-idUSKBN26R1DZ>; <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/mercenaries-from-syria-being-deployed-in-nagorno-karabakh-assad644705>; <https://www.rfi.fr/en/international/20201001-macron-claims-syrian-jihadists-active-inconflict-between-armenia-and-azerbaijan-nagorno-karabakh>; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe54366616>; Middle East Monitor, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/france-fears-turkey-sending-mercenaries-caucasusturkey-emmanuel-macron-nagornokarabakh-vladimir-putin-azerbaijan-b738440.html>;

³ E. Macron, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCQqW1A5kuM&feature=emb_logo; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-armenia-azerbaijan-putin-macron/france-accuses-turkey-of-sending-syrianmercenaries-to-nagorno-karabakh-idUSKBN26L3SB>

⁴ S. Lavrov, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-armenia-azerbaijan-putin-macron/france-accuses-turkey-of-sending-syrian-mercenaries-to-nagorno-karabakh-idUSKBN26L3SB>; S. Narishkin <http://www.svr.gov.ru/smi/2020/10/o-situatsii-vokrug-nagornogo-karabakha.htm>

⁵ H. Rouhani, <http://www.president.ir/en/117707>; S. Khatibzadeh, <https://bit.ly/2I1CQea>

⁶ B. Assad, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgwonSjMlpw>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/armeniaazerbaijan-syria-assad-int-idUSKBN26R0V6>

⁷ US congressman A. Schiff, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=external&v=831208917617724>; D. Titus, <https://twitter.com/repdinatus/status/1310636287918067716>; B. Sherman, <https://twitter.com/BradSherman/status/1310335797799813122>; J. Chu, https://anca.org/press-release/members-of-congress-blast-azerbaijan-and-turkey-as-attack-on-artsakh-expands-toarmenia/?fbclid=IwAR2DrUCNcNWlc38HNr11yYDRDcK8IvHj7x1rPRZ94GcFmeIc00GrI3_5-I

⁸ European Parliament Plenary Session,

<https://hetq.am/en/article/122709?fbclid=IwAR06a1e1mg9PQj4MWcfRc1aDqWK3ePwOqvY9YpG1nZnouGzDnhA8aPXgg>

⁹ UK Members of All-Party Parliamentary Group for Armenia, <https://en.armradio.am/2020/10/06/uk-mpscondemn-azerbaijani-attack-against-artsakh-and-armenia/>

¹⁰ Syrian Mercenaries in NK: Who they are, what they are doing, and where they have been noticed, https://citeam.org/syrian-mercenaries-in-nkr.html?fbclid=IwAR0aQlTHu_ZfOAX-qwZHesN6SJuljnQa70VEkDi2WTp22ou2SMJQ-6KTCK

¹¹ HRW: https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/23/azerbaijan-cluster-munitions-used-nagorno-karabakh?fbclid=IwAR2ux8LzqP1IUnu0R2iv4aj0I927zHnj1d9Fs-rh-EkF8QTlyA0jXjGbp_c; ICRC: <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/nagorno-karabakh-conflict-civilians-bearing-brunt-surge-violence>

¹² BBC: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54645254>

resume the fighting against Nagorno Karabakh, thereby assuming direct responsibility also for hindering the ceasefire to hold.

Despite the reports of the said crimes and violations, NATO or any of its member states have to date failed to respond to the letter of the non-governmental organizations; the position of the Alliance on the actions of its member Turkey has not been presented.

We consider that NATO, as a military-political alliance fighting against international terrorism, is obligated to take effective measures to prevent future terrorist acts and the deployment of terrorist groups in the South Caucasus or the wider region.

According to the North Atlantic Treaty, the Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.¹³ Armenia is NATO's active partner under Partnership for Peace Programme, Armenia cooperates with NATO in the defence sphere, in Afghanistan and Kosovo and on political and security issues, democratic standards, rule of law, and the fight against corruption.¹⁴ In this light, military operations by a NATO Ally towards a NATO Partner country, as well as of a NATO Partner (Azerbaijan) towards another NATO partner (Armenia) undermine the spirit of NATO Partnership for Peace and NATO's stance on encouraging peaceful resolution of Nagorno Karabakh conflict under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group.

Civil society hereby expresses concern over the fact that NATO and its Member States have failed to take any measures to prevent or stop Turkey, their ally and a NATO member state, from introducing terrorists into the South Caucasus and unfolding terrorist activities. This may be viewed as inaction and indifference towards respecting the fundamental principles of the North Atlantic Alliance.

We expect that NATO Member States will, nevertheless, take the required measures, including specific and genuine steps in line with the concerns expressed over the continuing violations of the ceasefire and the ensuing casualties during the meeting held in Brussels between

Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General of NATO, and Armen Sargsyan, the President of the Republic of Armenia.

Therefore, we hereby once again call upon the NATO Member States that are genuinely interested in settling the Nagorno Karabakh conflict by peaceful means and without use of force, in accordance with the North Atlantic Treaty, to put the following issues to an urgent discussion in the agenda of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly:

- Preventing the direct or indirect involvement of Turkey, a NATO member state, in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict;
- Precluding Turkey from recruiting terrorists and engaging them in the hostilities against Nagorno Karabakh; and
- Conducting an impartial investigation into the war crimes in the hostilities waged with Turkey's support and taking effective steps to prevent such crimes from occurring.

¹³ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm?selectedLocale=hy

¹⁴ NATO relations with Armenia, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_48893.htm

Signatories:

1. Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor Office
2. Transparency International Anti-Corruption Center
3. Asparez Club of Journalists
4. Protection of Rights without Borders
5. Open Society Foundations – Armenia
6. Legal Development and Protection Foundation
7. Analytical Centre on Globalization and Regional Cooperation (ACGRC)
8. Public Journalism Club
9. Center for Legal Initiatives NGO
10. Armenian United Nations Association
11. Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression
12. Communities Finance Officers Association
13. Peace Dialogue NGO
14. New Generation Humanitarian NGO
15. "Agate" Rights Defense Center for Women with Disabilities NGO
16. Center for Rights Development NGO
17. Centre for Policy Studies
18. "Pink" human rights defender NGO
19. Martuni Women's Community Council NGO
20. Armenian Psycho-Oncology Association
21. Country Water Partnership NGO
22. Centre for Community Mobilization and Support NGO
23. "Free Citizen" Civic Initiatives Support Center NGO
24. Queer sista platform NGO
25. Society Without Violence NGO
26. Compatriotic Union of "Artsvabuyn Zeytun" ngo
27. Sexual Assault Crisis Center NGO
28. AEGEE-Yerevan/European Students' Forum
29. Coalition to Stop Violence against Women
30. Real World Real People NGO
31. Socioscope NGO
32. "Women's Forum" NGO
33. Helsinki Committee of Armenia
34. Urban Foundation for Sustainable Development
35. Consumers Support Center NGO
36. "Shogher Union" Social-Educational NGO
37. "Caucasus" Sociological Research Centre NGO
38. World Armenian Youth Network - WostAYN
39. Social and Youth Workers
40. Regional Development and Research Center NGO

41. B2S Armenian Social Entrepreneurship Association NGO
42. Federation of Youth Clubs of Armenia
43. Human rights power NGO
44. Human Rights House Yerevan
45. Human Rights Research Center