

Senator the Hon. Penny Wong,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra, ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

### **Appeal to end the humanitarian crisis in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh)**

Christian Faith and Freedom Inc. (CFF) stands beside the Armenian National Committee of Australia to appeal for your support to end the current humanitarian crisis in Artsakh. The International Association of Genocide Scholars fears this is a continuation of the Armenian Genocide which once cost the lives of 1.5 million people, for which the perpetrators have never been held to account. CFF shares the anguish of the descendants of survivors of this Genocide, many of whom who are now valued Australian citizens.

The existential threat of starvation facing the inhabitants of Artsakh due to the illegal blockade of the Lachin Corridor by Azerbaijan, compels immediate, compassionate action. Armenia and Australia are united among the 32 member nations of the International Religious Freedom Alliance “devoted to confronting religious persecution all around the world”.

Imposed by Azerbaijan on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022, the eight-month closure of the only road in and out of this Christian enclave violates international law and ensures that the 200,000 Armenian inhabitants (including 30,000 children) are deprived of essential food, fuel, and vital medical and humanitarian supplies. Many have died as a result, and thousands more are suffering malnutrition, preventable illness, and extreme hardship.

The November 2020 ceasefire agreement signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia which guaranteed unhindered freedom of movement for goods, cargo and people along the Lachin corridor – known as the ‘Road of Life’- is being continually violated by Azerbaijan with impunity.

On 22 February, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) of the United Nations ordered provisional measures against Azerbaijan to immediately lift the blockade of the Lachin corridor. It is encouraging to note that Australian Judge, Hilary Charlesworth, supported these measures.

In March 2023, the European Parliament called on the EU Council to impose sanctions against Azerbaijani government officials for failing to implement the ICJ’s order.

We appeal to the Australian government to support all international authorities calling for an end to this humanitarian crisis orchestrated by an authoritarian government notorious for its deep-rooted corruption, political suppression, collaboration with jihadists, and the persecution of Christian communities.

Quiet diplomacy has not yielded peace; it has emboldened increasingly repressive and inhumane measures imposed by Azerbaijan. In keeping with the provisions of the many international human rights covenants of which Australia is a signatory, CFF supports the call for more proactive measures. Bringing this humanitarian crisis to an end would reflect Australian values and the will of our people.

We therefore ask for your help to prevent a second Armenian Genocide by unequivocally calling on Azerbaijan to adhere to the November 9 trilateral agreement, end its illegal blockade of Artsakh and adhere to the provisional orders set out by the International Court of Justice. This would enable urgently needed aid, contributed by international aid organisations and concerned people around the world, to be rushed in to save lives.

Please support appropriate sanctions should Azerbaijan refuse to abide by international law.

With sincere thanks for your time and attention to this vital issue,

(National Director)