

Russia Urges Azerbaijan to Unblock Access to Karabakh

By [AFP](#)

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A checkpoint in the Lachin corridor in Nagorno-Karabakh. **Alexander Patrino / TASS**

Russia on Friday urged Azerbaijan to unblock access to Nagorno-Karabakh as concern grows over a deepening humanitarian crisis in the breakaway region.

Residents of Karabakh reported new shortages of food and medicine after the International Committee of the Red Cross said Azerbaijan had blocked access for convoys delivering aid to the Armenian-populated region last week.

"We call on Baku to fully unblock traffic along the Lachin corridor," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

She said Baku's move violated Russia-mediated agreements between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed region and escalated tensions.

Moscow also urged Armenia to take part in trilateral talks.

Karabakh has been at the center of a decades-long territorial dispute between the Caucasus enemies.

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Karabakh has been hit by a humanitarian crisis since December, when Azerbaijani activists blocked a key road to protest illegal mining.

Azerbaijan insisted that civilian transport and aid convoys could go through the Lachin corridor unimpeded.

But on Monday, the Armenian branch of the Red Cross said it could no longer bring humanitarian supplies to the disputed territory, including medicines.

Armenia and Azerbaijan have fought two wars for control of Karabakh, in the 1990s and again in 2020, when thousands were killed in six weeks of fighting.

The violence ended with a Russian-sponsored ceasefire that saw Armenia cede swathes of territories it had controlled for decades.

Under the ceasefire agreement, Azerbaijan must guarantee safe passage through the corridor.

Armenia has repeatedly accused Moscow peacekeepers of failing to protect ethnic Armenians living in the breakaway region.

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