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The White House
Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

As you must know, the months-long Azerbaijani blockade of Artsakh has resulted in a massive humanitarian crisis. More than one hundred thousand residents of the region—almost all of them ethnic Armenians—have been caught in the crossfire of an international political conflict not of their own making. Those who are impacted have been systematically denied access to food, medicine, energy and other fundamental supplies for life. Leading experts are now referring to the crisis as a genocide, as defined by Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The stories that have been broadcast from Artsakh cannot reveal the full extent of the suffering, but they are shocking. We know that convoys of essential supplies from around the world have been denied entry. Necessities for life are not reaching residents, leading to starvation, disease and death. The first death as a result of starvation, attributable to the blockade, was recorded on August 15th. We must not allow any more to perish.

On behalf of our many Armenian members, our communities, and the patients we serve in Southern California, the nurses and licensed medical professionals represented by SEIU 121RN condemns in the strongest terms the genocide taking place in Artsakh. We implore you to take swift action and work with your counterparts in Azerbaijan to find a diplomatic solution which will end the blockade and allow supplies to pass. After the blockade has been lifted and access to the necessities of life has been restored, those responsible for the crime must be held accountable.

Mr. President, the history of genocide over the last century leaves us with one indelible lesson: waiting to act leads to an even greater loss of life. We must never again look back and wonder if we did enough to prevent genocide. We must be resolute.

Again, we call on you to pressure Azerbaijan to end the blockade and expand humanitarian aid to Artsakh. We have faith that the United States will lead in ending the crisis, and we look forward to seeing results.

Sincerely,

Rosanna Mendez
Executive Director SEIU 121RN

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President, SEIU 121RN

United for quality care.