

Armenian Anarchist Group Rises in Besieged Artsakh

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Contents

What You Need To Know	3
Anarchist Artsakh	3
Russian Mediation?	3

What You Need To Know

The ongoing Azerbaijani blockade of food, fuel, and medical supplies from reaching the Armenian statelet of Artsakh, also known as Nagorno-Karabakh, and home to around 120,000 people has today triggered the creation of a new anarchist group – Anarchist Artsakh.

The blockade dates back to Soviet-era territorial claims both Azerbaijan and Armenia have to the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which is situated inside Azerbaijan, but in which, ethnic Armenians make up 95 per cent of the population. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, both nations took up arms against one another over the area.

The first Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, (1991–94) left Armenia with the majority of the autonomous zone. Following a 2010 strategic partnership agreement with Azerbaijan Turkey has become a key player in the conflict, supplying Azerbaijan with military aid when fighting broke out again in July 2020. This material support, alongside the aid of Syrian mercenaries, enabled Azerbaijan to recapture swaths of the Nagorno-Karabakh before a ceasefire was brokered by Russia in November 2020. The gains made by Azerbaijan in 2020 left Nagorno-Karabakh surrounded.

Anarchist Artsakh

The group, in their first post on Telegram stated, “Comrades! A new front of anarchist resistance is maturing. This time Artsakh. For almost a year now, the fascist government of Azerbaijan has kept the local Armenian population under complete blockade, seeking forced submission from the Armenians.

The dictatorial power of Ilham Aliyev is actually starving our people in order to subjugate them, assimilate them and deprive them of the freedom for which we have fought for a very long time. In the territories occupied in 2020, the occupiers are destroying our cultural objects in order to erase our traces from our own lands.

We already had the sad experience of living under the rule of the Azerbaijani leadership in the 1980s – 1990s. We will no longer allow the fascists to enslave our people. We – Armenian anarchists – will fight for the freedom of our (and not only our) people. Most likely, the Azerbaijani tyrants will soon begin a ground operation on the territory of Artsakh. We are trying to organise ourselves to resist the onslaught of the imperialists.

Comrades! We ask you to support us in our fight. After all, solidarity is our main weapon. Help spread the word about the chaos going on. Glory and freedom to all oppressed peoples!”

The current siege is the result of the December 2022 blocking of the Lachin Corridor, a lifeline between Armenia and Artsakh by Azerbaijan, which claims that Armenia has been using the corridor to smuggle arms.

Russian Mediation?

However, on early Tuesday, a truck carrying Russian humanitarian aid was given access through Azerbaijani territory to the besieged region’s capital, Stepanakert. According to DW, the Russian Foreign Ministry claimed the aid package represents “a first step” to resolving the crisis. It is unclear if this move by Russia will satisfy the clearly frustrated members of Anarchist Artsakh.

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