



14 January 2021

Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Minister Payne

RE: CIVILIAN CASUALTIES FROM UNLAWFUL STRIKES IN THE ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI CONFLICT OVER NAGORNO-KARABAKH

The deadly conflict between Armenian and Azerbaijani military forces regarding control over the Nagorno-Karabakh region must be scrutinised by the international community. I write to you to ask that the Australian government support such scrutiny.

During a 44-day conflict from September to November 2020, both side's military forces carried out disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks, prohibited under international humanitarian law. The majority of casualties in the conflict were soldiers, with more than 5,000 killed in all. Yet at least 94 Azerbaijani civilians were killed, and some 52 Armenian civilians were killed. The conflict also destroyed homes and key infrastructure.

Following the 10 November tripartite agreement ending the conflict, Amnesty International visited dozens of strike sites in Azerbaijan and Armenia in late November and early December 2020. We also interviewed 79 survivors, witnesses and relatives of civilians killed and injured in the strikes, in addition to local civilian and military authorities, NGO workers and journalists. Our Crisis Response team analyzed fragments of munitions used in the attacks and examined videos, photographs, and satellite images taken during the conflict. **This evidence forms a new report that I have enclosed for your information: *In the Line of Fire: Civilian casualties from unlawful strikes in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.***

I urge you to through relevant bi-lateral and multilateral means, work with the international community to:

- Monitor the situation and exert every effort to ensure that both sides are fully compliant with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, and document and publish any information where respective obligations are, or are alleged to be, violated, and

- Ensure that both sides take prompt, tangible and effective steps to investigate reported violations, identify and bring to account the perpetrators, and provide full and adequate reparation to the victims.

For further information, or to discuss and organise a meeting, please contact Joel MacKay at joel.mackay@amnesty.org.au or 0424 242 112.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'RKulak'.

Rose Kulak
Campaigner
Amnesty International Australia