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CNN falls into Orientalist inspired propaganda cliches

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This is a response to the piece published by CNN titled “Responsible to believe genocide against Armenians being committed, former ICC chief prosecutor says”, authored by Eve Brennan et al, on 12 August 2023.

The article repeats the biased and flawed conclusion arrived at in the recent report by Luis Moreno Ocampo, a former ICC chief prosecutor, whose shady past as a manager of companies “based in some of the most notorious tax havens of the world while serving as chief prosecutor at ICC” is [open knowledge](#). Moreover, “Mediapart.fr” and European Investigative Collaborations network [stated](#) that Mr. Ocampo was supporting a client who was suspected of supporting war criminals in Libya: “In 2015 the former chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Court defended the interests of a billionaire businessman with links to the former Gaddafi regime and who was a supporter of potential war criminals in Libya. Luis Moreno Ocampo, who had left the ICC in The Hague just three years before, was paid a total of 750,000 dollars for his work”.

Besides, Mr. Ocampo’s connections to Armenia’s leadership were also confirmed when he was [welcomed](#) by Armenia’s ex-president S. Sargsyan, who himself is responsible for committing the [Khojaly genocide](#) against innocent Azerbaijanis on 26 February 1992.

The so-called report prepared by Moreno Ocampo contains many factual and conceptual errors, to say the least, and the author attempts to frivolously jostle with terms like “genocide” and “blockade” without legally substantiating the aforesaid. His efforts to manipulate international law and legal terminology in order to fit his own biased narrative into the “existing international molds” is unprofessional and disrespectful to all victims of genocide.

Therefore, the Azerbaijani side has hired another legal expert, Mr. Rodney Dixon KC, to debunk the groundless accusations contained in the report prepared by Mr. Ocampo. The initial thoughts shared by Mr. Rodney Dixon have [described](#) Ocampo's report as “fundamentally flawed”, while his full assessment is underway.

For one, the [decision](#) of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 22 February which the author also alludes to, did not blame Azerbaijan for any “blockade”, contrary to Mr. Ocampo’s presentation of the case. It actually took into consideration Azerbaijan’s position that it does all within its power and disposal to ensure safe and “unimpeded” passage through the Lachin road in accordance with the Trilateral Declaration. Moreover, later on 6 July 2023, the Court rejected Armenia’s claim to modify the Court’s judgment on 22 February.

According to [Article 4](#) of the Trilateral Declaration of November 10, 2020, “The peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation shall be deployed in parallel with the withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces”. Nonetheless, the Armenian side persistently refuses to withdraw the remnants of its armed formations from the Azerbaijani lands in violation of the November 2020 declaration. Moreover, by arming its military units therein via the Lachin road Armenia further escalated the situation. Unfortunately, Armenia abused the Lachin road for the military supply and sustenance of its troops, for bringing in more landmines to Azerbaijani territories, and for instigating more sabotage and subversion against Azerbaijan.

Lachin road was also consistently misused for the illegal trafficking of Azerbaijan's natural resources extracted from Gizilbulag and Demirli gold and mineral deposits that were illegally exploited over a very long time. Previously, Azerbaijan has sent warnings to the Armenian side to stop the illegal mining of these deposits, which sadly went unheeded. On December 12, 2022, Azerbaijani people represented by the eco-activists, NGOs, students, teachers, representatives of civil society, and many others from all walks of life started to peacefully protest against the illegal exploitation of their natural resources; and finally on 23 April 2023 Azerbaijan having exercised its sovereign rights established a border checkpoint on the Lachin road in accordance with international law. Lachin Road, therefore, is not blocked, as the circulation for civilian and humanitarian purposes remains intact. Azerbaijani side also [reports](#) of vehicles belonging to the Russian peacekeepers and the International Committee of the Red Cross, people seeking medical assistance having passed through the road. It cannot, however, be used anymore for military purposes and for the illegal trafficking of Azerbaijani national assets.

However, on 15 June, 2023 Armenia militias [attacked](#) the Azerbaijani border checkpoint and injured one border officer, resulting in Azerbaijan's temporary closure of the border post for security purposes. In doing so, Azerbaijan also presented an opportunity for the Armenian population in Karabakh to receive all foodstuff and necessary supplies through Aghdam-Xankandi road, a proposal that was also [supported](#) by the European Union Council President Charles Michel following the trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia on 15 July, 2023. However, the alternative road presented by Azerbaijan was being [blocked](#) by Armenian separatists, who refused and also deprived Armenian residents of Karabakh to receive aid from Azerbaijan.

In a recently shared [press statement](#) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan it is stated that after a “series of intensive consultations and shuttle diplomacy efforts, an agreement was finally reached with respect to delivery of humanitarian cargo to the Garabagh region through various routes, as well as the organization of the meeting between the Special Representative of Azerbaijan and representatives of local Armenian residents”, which was unfortunately reneged on by Armenia and separatists in Karabakh “at a last moment by introducing politically motivated and illegitimate preconditions and various pretexts”. The statement also emphasizes that what Armenia “cynically seeks from the international community in general”, could indeed be attained had it lamentably not been filibustered by Armenia itself who by all means has chosen the paths of confrontation and propaganda against Azerbaijan.

Unfortunately, the tendentious report by Mr. Ocampo did nothing but once again showed that often personal interests and material gains could undermine one's ability to remain balanced and dedicated professional in one's work and hence yield to false narratives and fabricated hysteria. This seems to have also infiltrated into the ranks of CNN, since the above article published by the latter simply recites the so-called “findings” in Ocampo's report, without making extra effort to further dig into the real state of affairs. Apparently, Mr. Ocampo's proclivity for illegal and dubious activities in exchange for money was well exploited by Armenia's propaganda machine and it is disillusioning to see CNN also fall for this trap.

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