

Hi,

I'm Megi – your friend from Armenia. Do you know why I consider you a friend? Because I understand that neither you, nor I are to blame for the hostility between our countries. First, I'd like to tell you about myself. I live in Armenia, in Sardarapat village in Armavir region. I'm a student and study at Yerevan State Conservatory after Komitas. I'm a classical singer by profession and this year I've been qualified as an Opera singer. I love singing and one of my dreams is to become a famous opera singer. By the way, I know a famous Azerbaijani tenor – Yusif Eyvazov. His singing is great. He is married to the famous opera singer Anna Netrebko. I follow them on Instagram and my friends are completely ok with it. You know, I also want to visit your Baku Opera Theatre. I've seen photos of it, you have a very nice theatre. I'd like to learn about your interests, where you study and what profession you have.

So, let me pass to the next topic. I've been to many border villages in Armenia and Karabakh and have talked to the locals asking them: "What would you like?" The answer was the following: "Peace," so they never hear shots, so they can go out of their houses into the yards without the fear that one beautiful day their lives may be interrupted by a bullet of an Azeri soldier, so they see off their sons to the army without tears but with joy, so they sleep peacefully at nights and have minds and souls free of horror.

Your and our mothers wish that their sons come back from the Army safely. I'm sure your fellow citizens, living in border villages, want the same – peace. We don't want war, we are a peaceful nation. I know the loss is great: both you and I have brothers and friends killed in war and it's the pain of loss that makes forgiveness difficult. If we continue this way, the war may resume resulting in thousands of casualties and a greater loss.

I understand that it's impossible to maintain peace by force. Peace is established through mutual understanding, and as long as we have not found peace in ourselves, we can't find peace in the external world. If you're reading my letter, then I've gone one step ahead and you want the same thing as I do.

My parents often tell me how we've once been friends, visited each other, shared bread and how your and our kids played together. If we were once friends, we can be so now, too. I refuse to accept that mankind is so tightly bound to the starless night of war that the bright sun of peace is never going to rise. I believe in the power of weaponless truth and love.

Peace starts with a smile: let's smile and say "I've forgiven."

With love,

Your friend