

Forum: GA2- Political

Issue: Ensuring the protection of civilian infrastructure and lives in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict

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Introduction

The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, also known as the Nagorno- Karabakh dispute, is an ethnic and territorial dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which was primarily inhabited by ethnic Armenians until 2023, and seven surrounding districts, which were primarily inhabited by Azerbaijanis until they were driven out in the 1990s. Although the separatist Republic of Artsakh fully claimed and had some authority over the Nagorno-Karabakh territory, it was acknowledged globally as being a part of Azerbaijan. Over time, Azerbaijan reclaimed authority over the Nagorno-Karabakh territory and the seven neighboring regions through two wars and a conflict now lasting for more than three decades.

Definition of Key Terms

Nagorno-Karabakh

Situated in Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh is a hilly territory situated at the southernmost tip of the Karabakh mountain range. Despite being recognized by the international community as a part of Azerbaijan, the majority of its 120,000 residents are ethnic Armenians. Although they have a government that is similar to Armenia's, neither Armenia nor any other nation formally recognizes them.

Autonomous Region



A portion of a nation that maintains some autonomy or independence from outside authorities is known as an autonomous region.

Ethnic Cleansing

Refers to the systematic killing of humans based on their ethnic background. Usually done by authoritarian governments to reduce minority populations.

Cease-Fire

Cease-fire is the term used to describe the status when two states agree to suspend aggressive actions against each other for an agreed-upon period.

Background Information

Within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, the Soviet Union created the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast in 1923. The region is home to a population that is 95% ethnically Armenian. Despite Nagorno-Karabakh's nominal placement inside Azerbaijan, the regional assembly of the area approved a resolution in 1988 stating the province's wish to join the Republic of Armenia. Soon after, there was armed conflict between the two republics. As the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Nagorno-Karabakh formally declared its independence, sparking a full-scale conflict that coincided with the states of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The first Karabakh conflict, which raged from 1988 to 1994, claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and left thousands of refugees in its wake. By 1993, Armenia controlled 20% of Azerbaijan's land area and had taken over Nagorno-Karabakh. With a self-proclaimed government in Stepanakert and a truce known as the Bishkek Protocol mediated by Russia in 1994, Nagorno-Karabakh became de facto



autonomous, while it remained highly dependent on tight political, military, and economic relations with Armenia.

Intermittent fighting had resulted from the employment of attack drones, artillery, and special operations missions by the Armenian and Azerbaijani military following the two countries' acceptance of a cease-fire in 1994. The ceasefire officially lasted until September 2020. The most severe violence since 1994 broke out in early April 2016, with hundreds of people dying along the line of demarcation. Following a four-day battle, the two factions declared their agreement to end hostilities. Tensions persisted despite a breakdown in negotiations that led to accusations of ceasefire breaches by both parties.

The second Karabakh conflict

The disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjacent occupied regions saw fighting in 2020, which is known as the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War. After 44 days of fighting, Azerbaijan emerged victorious, but Armenia's opposition to the government was sparked by the loss. There were still conflicts in the area after the war, with significant ones occurring in 2022. On September 27, fighting broke out early when an Azerbaijani advance launched along the line of contact created during the First Nagorno-Karabakh War (1988–1994).

Approximately 7,000 people perished in combat on all fronts. There were also more than 170 civilian deaths, the most of them were Azerbaijanis. The bulk of those displaced from their houses in Nagorno Karabakh were Armenians, numbering about 130,000. A ceasefire declaration mediated by Russia was signed on November 9 and required the deployment of some 2,000 Russian soldiers to the area.

The cease- fire in 2020

A cease-fire in the Karabakh area was signed on November 9, 2020 by the prime minister of Armenia, the president of Azerbaijan, and the president of Russia. The necessity of stationing Russian peacekeepers in the combat zone was



acknowledged by all parties involved. A tripartite agreement on a ceasefire and all military activities in the war zone was signed on November 10, 2020 by the prime minister of Armenia, the president of Azerbaijan, and the president of Russia. The Joint Russian-Turkish Center for monitoring the ceasefire and all military actions in the conflict zone in Karabakh, which is situated on Azerbaijani territory, officially opened for business on January 30, 2021.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

OSCE Minsk Group

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is now known as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, established the OSCE Minsk Group in 1992 in an effort to promote a diplomatic, nonviolent settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Armenia

Armenia maintains that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict stems from the ethnic Armenian population's desire for self-determination. This population makes up the majority and has proclaimed independence as the Republic of Artsakh. Yerevan contends that, in light of past complaints and concerns about ethnic cleansing, the inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh have to have the freedom to choose their political status and guarantee their safety. In order to protect the rights and safety of its Armenian citizens, Armenia has pushed for international recognition of Artsakh's independence or, at the very least, a special autonomous status inside Azerbaijan. The necessity of a diplomatic agreement that takes into account humanitarian concerns like the repatriation of prisoners of war and the preservation of cultural heritage sites is another point made by the Armenian government.

Azerbaijan



The government of Azerbaijan asserts that Nagorno-Karabakh, which has been unlawfully held by Armenian forces since the early 1990s, is an essential component of its internationally recognized territory. Restoring authority over all seized lands is imperative, and Baku is adamant about the internally displaced people (IDPs) in Azerbaijan going back to their homes. Resolutions of the UN Security Council that demand that Armenian forces leave the seized regions have been used by Azerbaijan as sources of support. After regaining a large portion of its territory after the conflict of 2020, Azerbaijan is now concentrating on post-conflict rebuilding, security, and easing the return of internally displaced people. It is also pushing for a peace process that honors its territorial rights and sovereignty.

Georgia

During the height of the fighting in the area, Georgia's prime minister gave priority to peace talks along its borders. In the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Georgia has supported Azerbaijan's territorial integrity while keeping positive ties with Armenia because of its own problems with the separatist enclaves of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

France and USA

In light of the issues surrounding the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, France and the United States, in their roles as co-chairs of the Minsk Group, showed utter paralysis and a deficiency in strategic thinking. Speaking to officials of the United States and France during the co-chairs of the Minsk group meeting in Baku on December 12, 2020, President Aliyev stated that the resolution of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh has altered the regional landscape.

Türkiye and Russia

Russia and Türkiye have been attempting to elevate themselves in the South Caucasus as part of the Karabakh problem. Türkiye is still helping Azerbaijan gain more clout in the area. Russia, on the other hand, moves between Armenia and



Azerbaijan; but, in the event of a military conflict, Russia's top objective will be to mediate.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1987	The Armenian community in Nagorno Karabakh started a movement to break away from Azerbaijan and reunite with Armenia.
1992	The Conference (currently the Organization) for Security and Co-operation in Europe began mediated negotiations of the two nations under the auspices of the 'Minsk Group'
2004	Cease- fire violations, which had already been happening, start to escalate
April 2016	What was later named the "four day war" takes place, in which Azerbaijan re captures small areas resulting in the



	dynamic shifting for the first time in 20 years
2018	New Armenian president is elected with which the diplomatic discussions and relations between Armenia-Azerbaijan begin to tighten.
2020	Conflicts began in July along the internationally recognized boundary between Armenia and Azerbaijan. From September to November, there was a full-scale conflict along the Line of Contact around Nagorny Karabakh. Azerbaijan regained control of most of the lands it had lost to Armenian forces in the early 1990s, including around one-third of the territory that was initially disputed in Nagorny Karabakh proper, with a great deal of Turkish backing. In just 44 days, at least 5,300 combatants—and perhaps as many as 7,000—as well as 174 civilians were killed.
10 November 2020	A cease-fire agreement brokered by Russia that required the deployment of a 2000-person Russian peacekeeping force to areas of Nagorny Karabakh that Azerbaijan had not yet retaken and the



	construction of a small corridor connecting it to Armenia across the Lachin district of Azerbaijan for a period of five years. The proclamation also called for the restitution of all areas that Armenian troops had controlled in the 1990s and the building of a new transit route that would pass southern Armenia and connect Azerbaijan to its exclave of Nakhichevan and Turkey.
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Relevant UN Resolutions and Other Documents

- UN Security Council Resolution 822:

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/165604?ln=en&v=pdf>

30 April 1993, Demanded the urgent withdrawal of Armenian troops from Kalbadjar district and other occupied areas of Azerbaijan.

- UN Security Council Resolution 853:

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/170257?ln=en&v=pdf>

29 July 1993, Demanded the full, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from Aghdam district and other occupied areas of Azerbaijan.



- UN Security Council Resolution 874:

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/174420?ln=en&v=pdf>

14 October 1993, Demanded the withdrawal of Armenian troops from the latest occupied areas in accordance with the timetable for the settlement of the CSCE Minsk Group.

- UN Security Council Resolution 884:

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/176731?ln=en&v=pdf>

11 November 1993, Condemned the occupying forces leave Zangilan district, Horadiz settlement, and other recently occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It also denounced the occupation of these areas, as well as attacks on civilians and bombings of Azerbaijani territory.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

One of the first solution attempts had been the ceasefire in 1994 (Bishkek Protocol), which lasted two decades.

The main international organization mediating the dispute has been the OSCE Minsk Group, which is co-chaired by France, Russia, and the United States. Among the peace ideas put up by the Minsk Group were the Madrid Principles (2007) and the Kazan Document (2011). The Madrid Principles called for the handover of the surrounding areas of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan, the provision of security and self-governance guarantees for the region in an interim status, and the eventual determination of the region's final legal status through an express will agreement



that would be legally binding. Building on the Madrid Principles, the Kazan Document offered more concrete peace-building measures, but its execution proved to be contentious, ultimately preventing its adoption.

Following the "Four Day War" a cease- fire agreement was signed which was brokered by Russia but this solution did not address the root of the issue and was a temporary solution.

2020 saw a major escalation of the conflict that lasted 44 days and resulted in war. A cease-fire mediated by Russia brought the fighting to an end on November 10, 2020. The terms stipulated that Azerbaijan would take back control of the areas surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh, that Russian peacekeepers would be stationed along the Lachin corridor—the only path that connects Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia—and that refugees and internally displaced people would be allowed to return, with UNHCR supervision.

Possible Solutions

Potential solutions to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia would require a multipronged strategy that tackles both short-term security issues and long-term political stability. The formalization and implementation of a strong ceasefire agreement, supported by international peacekeepers to avert further violence, might be one possible course of action.

Discussions on fundamental matters, such Nagorno-Karabakh's ultimate status and the rights of its ethnic Armenian populace, may be facilitated by the start of extensive talks again under the supervision of the OSCE Minsk Group or another impartial international organization. Rebuilding trust between the communities may be aided by confidence-building strategies such as humanitarian endeavors, economic collaboration, and the demilitarization of tense areas.



A lasting and peaceful cohabitation may also be made possible by a legal and diplomatic framework for resolving historical grievances, guaranteeing the return of displaced people, and protecting cultural treasures.

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