

GALMUN 2024



Security Council

Research Report



Definitions

Territorial Dispute: A disagreement over the possession and control of land or territory between two or more political parties.

Displacement of Civilians: The forced relocation of people from their homes or communities due to conflict or other factors.

Infrastructure Destruction: The intentional or unintentional destruction of buildings, roads, power supplies, and other infrastructure during a conflict.

Enclave: A piece of land belonging to a certain country that has no direct land access to the main body of the country's territories. It is thus separated from the rest of the country and must depend on agreements with the surrounding country for access.

Introduction

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a long-standing territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The region of Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan but had a majority of ethnic Armenian citizens and was once under de facto Armenian Control under the Armenian Republic of Artsakh since the early 1990s. Azerbaijan attempted to regain its claimed territories but failed numerous times, leading to the loss of further land and the displacement of thousands of Azerbaijanis from their villages. The conflict remained relatively frozen until September 2020, when Azerbaijan defeated the forces of the Republic of Artsakh and Armenia, resulting in a significant loss of life and displacement of civilians. This eventually led to a renewal of the conflict in September 2023, which resulted in the total defeat of the Republic of Artsakh and the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh by the Azerbaijani forces. As a result, thousands of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh left their homes and escaped to Armenia as refugees. Tensions between both sides remain, as border disputes and the question of the rights of the residents and refugees of Nagorno-Karabakh kept the flames of conflict alive.

Background

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict dates to the late 20th century, when both Armenia and Azerbaijan were part of the Soviet Union. The region of Nagorno-Karabakh, predominantly populated by ethnic Armenians, was placed under the administrative control of Azerbaijan by the Soviet government. In the late 1980s, as the Soviet Union began to collapse, tensions between Armenians and Azerbaijanis escalated, leading to widespread protests and violence. The result of the war and the ceasefire in 1994 was the retreat of Azerbaijani forces from Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas, leading to the expulsion of many Azerbaijani refugees who also lived in the area. The Republic of Artsakh was declared in Nagorno



Karabakh, though only recognized by Armenia, represented the local Armenian population who did not wish to be part of Azerbaijan.

From the 1990s until 2019, the conflict mainly manifested with diplomatic disputes and rounds of negotiations around the status quo of Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia supported the self-determination of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh and sought recognition of its independence as the Republic of Artsakh, while Azerbaijan claimed and maintained its rights of sovereignty over the area and considered it as essential condition for preserving its territorial integrity. It also maintained its connection with the territory as a land with strong historic link with its culture and people and as part of the internationally recognized area of the Republic of Azerbaijan. As such, it demanded the return of the region and promised to protect its Armenian citizens as equal citizens in the Republic of Azerbaijan. While no other country in the world recognized the Republic of Artsakh, other than Armenia, most countries considered that the only solution to the territorial dispute is a negotiated settlement and discouraged a military solution to the matter.

From 2020 to 2023, the conflict escalated into a full-scale war between Azerbaijan and Artsakh, with massive support from Armenian forces. In October 2020 after some border skirmishes, war erupted between the two sides. It continued many weeks and saw the use of modern military technology, such as drones, and led to the complete defeat of the forces of the Republic of Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia. A ceasefire, mediated by the Russian Federation, was agreed upon in November 2020 which led to Azerbaijan regaining most of the territories in question. It also led to the introduction of Russian peacekeeping forces who monitored the situation. In addition, the Republic of Artsakh, though still having presence in parts of Nagorno-Karabakh, had only a small corridor of land, called the Lachin Corridor, that connected it to Armenia and that was to be administered by Russian Peacekeeping forces.

In September 2023, after the return of border skirmishes, Azerbaijan pushed its forces forwards, breaking the 2020 ceasefire and regaining control of all the remaining territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. This came after a total blockade of the area by Azerbaijan, leading to dire conditions for both civilians and soldiers. Since Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh did not have the means to resist the entry of Azerbaijani forces to the territories, this has led to a generally peaceful takeover but with dire consequences of local civilians. Though Azerbaijan made promises to protect Armenians in its territories and to treat them as equal citizens in Azerbaijan, hundreds of thousands of Armenians left the area as refugees through the Lachin Corridor to Armenia. This recent conflict led to the disbandment of the Republic of Artsakh. Internationally recognized Azerbaijan lands returned to Azerbaijan control. However, Nagorno-Karabakh, an area with a rich Armenian history for many centuries, became empty of its inhabitants.



Current Situation and Relevant Issues

Many months have passed since the last conflict, but tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan are rising. On the Armenian side, loss of historic lands, the destruction of Armenian communities and the large number of refugees are causing internal conflict as many within Armenian society consider the defeat in their war against Azerbaijan a betrayal by the Armenian government, with many calling for a restart of the war to regain lost territories. The large number of refugees is also causing economic strain and social tension. On the other side, the ecstasy of victory has led to many aggressive and rhetorical statements from leading Azerbaijani figures, calling for the conquering of further territories, including areas in internationally recognized Armenia. Border tensions have continued, as Azerbaijan has strived to maintain connections with its many enclaves within Armenian territory or ones that are separated by Armenia. These include enclaves located within the North of Armenia and its large enclave of Nakhichevan in the South-West of Armenia. As part of its effort to regain direct land access to some of these enclaves, Azerbaijan has, recent as March 2024, laid claim to 4 villages within Armenian territory as rightfully belonging to Azerbaijan, they include Upper Eskipara, Sofulu, Kerki and Berhudarli. It has also made pushes to have full control of the Zangezur corridor within Armenia that connects Azerbaijan with its enclave of Nakhchivan. We can see that the return of direct military conflict is a high possibility, as some Armenians might push for the reconquering of their lost territories and Azerbaijan might use force to create land connections to their many enclaves.

It is within the interest of the international community to find a peaceful conclusion to the tension in that area of the world, especially in the current unstable atmosphere of war that has engulfed the world. It must therefore address the following issues:

- Resolving the border disputes between Azerbaijan and Armenia, allowing for the preservation of territorial integrity while preserving the rights of local inhabitants.
- Settling the question of Nagorno-Karabakh.
- Addressing the needs and rights of refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh.
- De-escalating the military tension between both sides while taking into account the need to resolve the religious, cultural and ethnic tensions between them.

Involvement of International Organizations

The United Nations (UN) has called for an immediate ceasefire and urged both parties to engage in peaceful negotiations. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, co-chaired by France, Russia, and the United States, has been facilitating talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan since the early 1990s. The European Union (EU) has expressed concern over the escalation of violence and has called for a peaceful resolution



through dialogue and diplomacy. Russia and Armenia are both members of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which has led Russia to be highly involved in mediating between both sides of the conflict.

Neighbouring Countries' Involvement

Russia has played a significant role in mediating the conflict and has called for a ceasefire and negotiations. Though Russia had a strong relationship with Armenia, with both being part of the CSTO, recent tension between the leadership of both countries led Russia to have a more moderate approach to its support of Armenia, leading it to not intervene directly in the conflict. Turkey has expressed support for Azerbaijan and has provided Azerbaijan with military and economic support. It has also consistently called for Armenia to withdraw from the disputed territories. Iran has also monitored the situation with concern.

Timeline of Events:

1988: The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast declares independence from Azerbaijan as the Republic of Artsakh.

1991: The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is recognized by Armenia, but not by Azerbaijan or any other country.

1992: The First Nagorno-Karabakh conflict begins, with Azerbaijan launching a military offensive to retake the region.

1993: The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) begins mediating the conflict, but its efforts are unsuccessful.

1994: The OSCE negotiates a ceasefire agreement, both sides signed a ceasefire. However, it is not fully implemented, and the conflict and tensions continue.

1995: The OSCE establishes a mission to monitor the ceasefire and promote peaceful negotiations.

1998: The OSCE negotiates a framework for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, but it is not accepted by both sides.

2001: The OSCE continues to mediate the conflict, but progress is slow, and the situation remains unresolved.

2008: Both sides agree to negotiations mediated by the OSCE. These negotiations did not lead to substantial agreements.

2016: Border skirmishes led to a week of fighting, leading to hundreds as a result of exchanges of artillery.



September 2020: tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan escalate into a full-scale conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of soldiers and civilians on both sides and displaced thousands of people.

November 9, 2020: A ceasefire agreement, brokered by Russia, is signed.

December 2022: Azerbaijan begins a blockade on Artsakh, leaving Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh without access to essential goods and services, including life-saving medication and healthcare.

September 2023: Azerbaijan launches a large-scale military offensive, resulting in the surrender of the Artsakh authorities and the displacement of thousands of civilians.

Questions to Consider

- What is your country's position on the issue? Has it made an official statement about the matter or is it connected to either side in the conflict in any way?
- What solutions are there to the border disputes between the two countries?
- What guarantees are necessary for a de-escalation of military tension?
- What role has the international community played in the conflict?
- What should the status of Nagorno Karabakh be? Should it stay as regular Azerbaijani province? Should it stay within Azerbaijan but have local autonomy or is there a better solution?
- How can ethnic, cultural and religious tensions be resolved between the two sides?
- How can cultural and historic landmarks be protected from this conflict?

Relevant Media

Before October 2020



In November 2020





Helpful Resources

- Nagorno-Karabakh: Conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenians explained.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66852070>
- The Armenia and Azerbaijan war explained.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YU2v38hRRbg>
- “Frozen Conflict” Boils Over: Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023 and Future Implications.
<https://www.fpri.org/article/2024/01/a-frozen-conflict-boils-over-nagorno-karabakh-in-2023-and-future-implications/>
- Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict By the Center for Preventive Action.
<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/nagorno-karabakh-conflict>
- The Geopolitics of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict.
<https://www.voanews.com/a/geopolitics-of-the-nagorno-karabakh-coinflict/7389937.html>

Bibliography

- THE CONFLICT OF AZERBAIJAN AND ARMENIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NAGORNO KARABAKH: AN OVERVIEW.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351364771_THE_CONFLICT_OF_AZERB



[AIJAN AND ARMENIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NAGORNO KARABAKH AN OVERVIEW](#)

- "The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A Legal Analysis" by M. Johnson, published in the Journal of International Law. (PDF) The Karabakh Gambit | Emil Avdaliani - Academia.edu
- Four Armenian soldiers killed in new Azerbaijan border flare-up [Feb, 2024]
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68283041>
- Azerbaijan-Armenia talks focus on Zangezur corridor
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNIB8SFX4To>
- Nagorno-Karabakh profile.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18270325>
- "Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: What You Need to Know" by Al Jazeera English.
<https://www.scribd.com/document/681692638/Final-Paper-Umaymah-Maryam-3108002>
- Azerbaijan and Armenia: The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict.
<https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R46651.pdf>
- Documents of International Organizations on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict.
<https://www.mfa.gov.az/files/documents-of-international-organizations-on-the-armenia-azerbaijan-conflict.pdf>
- The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A Brief History by The Atlantic Council.
https://is.muni.cz/el/fss/jaro2019/POL587/um/Cornell_The_Nagorno-Karabakh_Conflict.pdf
- The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Causes and Consequences by International Crisis Group.
<https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/nagorno-karabakh-conflict-visual-explainer>
- Forced displacement of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh
<https://opiniojuris.org/2023/11/06/forced-displacement-of-armenians-from-nagorno-karabakh-a-response/>
- Azerbaijan: Blockade of Lachin corridor putting thousands of lives in peril must be immediately lifted
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/02/azerbaijan-blockade-of-lachin-corridor-putting-thousands-of-lives-in-peril-must-be-immediately-lifted/>