

PacificMUN

Dare to Speak



UNSC-Topic A
Backgrounder Guide



The Armenian-Azerbaijan Conflict - UNSC

Topic A



PacificMUN



Letter from the Director

My name is Tamerlan Nuhiyev and I have the great honor of serving as your director for the United Nations Security Council. I am currently a Grade 12 student attending Port Moody Secondary and I am extremely excited to participate in PacificMUN 2019!

I have been involved in Model United Nations for the past three years. Besides Model United Nations, I have great love of cooking, binge watching TV shows for unhealthy periods of time and volunteering. I also am quite the history buff, something that was key to me entering Model United Nations. Like many people, I was dragged and coaxed into joining Model UN by my friends and just like many other people, I was instantly hooked. The intensity and the world of politics drew me in. I still remember how timid and shy I was at my first conference. Looking back it is incredible to see how far I have come in terms of my leadership and my public speaking abilities. By pushing me outside of my comfort zone, Model UN has allowed me to meet amazing people from incredibly diverse origins, possessing a variety of different viewpoints that have challenged my view of the world.

It is these experiences that I hope you are able to have, both at PacificMUN and all the future conferences that you go to. In this committee, you will absolutely be pushed outside of your comfort zone. You will be pushed to harness your creativity, develop your public speaking abilities, collaborate with other students and establish yourself as a leader like you have never done before. It is one of the most invigorating committees that a Model United Nations conference can offer and PacificMUN's United Nation Security Council Committee will most definitely not break this tradition.



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at unsc@pacificmun.org.

Best Regards,

Tamerlan Nuhiyev
Director of UNSC
PacificMUN 2019

Committee Overview

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was established as one of the main organs of the United Nations (UN) after the Second World War in 1946. The statesmen who crafted the United Nations desired to create an institution that would prevent a calamity like the Second World War from ever happening again. The United Nations Security Council was key to this mission. Since its creation, it has operated at the centre of the UN as a key player in the mediation and resolution of international conflicts. The security council consists of five permanent members with the power to veto any resolution - the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, along with ten rotating members that are elected to serve two year terms. The ten non-permanent members currently consist of Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland and Sweden.¹ The UNSC's primary objective is to establish international peace and security but also works to develop friendly relations between nations, aid in the maintenance and enforcement of human rights, and facilitate multilateral and international plans of action.² The UNSC is the only organ in the UN which has the ability to produce resolutions that UN member states are obligated to implement. The UNSC has a variety of methods to enact their resolutions. Diplomatic talks, dispatching envoys, and ceasefire directives are commonly used; if necessary, the UNSC also has the ability to deploy peacekeeping forces, create sanctions and blockades, sever diplomatic ties, or create a military coalition.³ Additionally, the UNSC has considerable influence within the UN as they are responsible for recommending the appointment of the Secretary-General and the judges of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).⁴ The UNSC also operates a

¹ <http://www.un.org/en/sc/members/>

² <http://www.un.org/en/sc/about/>

³ Ibid.

⁴ <http://www.un.org/en/sc/about/functions.shtml>



variety of subsidiary organs that aid in its work, such as the Military Staff Committee and different international courts and tribunals. The UNSC meets at the UN headquarters in New York City. A representative of each UNSC member state is required to be present at the UN headquarters at all times in case the urgent need for a meeting should arise.

Topic A: The Armenian-Azerbaijan Conflict

Introduction

Despite occurring nearly 30 years ago, the political ramifications from the collapse of the Soviet Union can still be felt today. Perhaps one of the most long-lasting and of these ramifications remains the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the states of Azerbaijan and Armenia have fought over the mountainous region of Nagorno-Karabakh residing inside the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan. Before the conflict, during the rule of the Soviet Union, the region of Nagorno-Karabakh was home to a mix of Azeris and Armenians with the Armenians representing 3/4ths majority of the populations. When Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev implemented his policy of Glasnost “openness” upon coming to power in 1985 allowing for criticism of the Soviet system, the leaders of the Regional Soviet of Karabakh decided to vote in favor of unifying the autonomous region with Armenia. This would ignite ethnic tensions resulting in the Nagorno-Karabakh war between the majority ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh backed by the Republic of Armenia, and the Republic of Azerbaijan. As the war escalated, ethnic cleansing of both Armenians and Azerbaijanis occurred, resulting in a mass exodus of both Azerbaijani refugees from Armenia and Armenian controlled areas of Nagorno-Karabakh, and of Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan. The war would come to an end on May 12, 1994 with the introduction of the Bishkek Protocol leaving the Armenians as the clear military victor. At the end of the war, Armenia maintained control over seven Azerbaijani provinces outside of Nagorno Karabakh. Due to this fact and many others, there have been multiple border clashes over the years since the end of the war. The conflict was brought to the attention of the UN during both the initial war and subsequent border clashes. For the past 30 years, multiple international organizations have worked to create peace between the two-state such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Minsk Group, and most importantly, the United Nations Security Council. With regional and international powers such as Turkey, Russia, and Iran having vested interests in the outcome of the dispute, the possibility of escalation remains ever present. In order to understand the conflict and create a solution, delegates will need to gain an understanding of the fundamental factors which lead to the secession of Karabakh and the Armenian



occupation of western Azerbaijan during the Nagorno-Karabakh war. Delegates will be required to understand the grievances of all parties involved in order to create a lasting peace. They will be faced with issue of right to self-determination and the right of refugees to return to their homes. These questions are paramount, especially considering that the Karabakh Armenians consider themselves their own independent country, declaring the Nagorno-Karabakh region as a new nation.

Timeline

1917 - The Russian Empire collapses, subsequently followed by the declaration of independence from the states of the Caucasus.

1920-1921 - Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia are conquered and incorporated into the Soviet Union as Soviet Socialist Republics.

1923 - Stalin makes the region of Nagorno-Karabakh an autonomous oblast of Azerbaijan.

1945 - Karabakh Armenians petition Soviet authorities to unite Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia.

1988 - Local authorities of Nagorno Karabakh pass a resolution favouring unification with Soviet Armenia.

1991 - The Soviet Union collapses creating the independent state of Armenia and Azerbaijan who immediately declare war on each other over Nagorno-Karabakh.

1994: Russian mediated ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan takes effect, ending the Nagorno-Karabakh war and leaving Armenia the military victor.

1994 - The Minsk Group is created by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to provide a platform for future negotiations.

2007 - The ministers of the United States, France, and Russia - the Minsk Group - present the Madrid Principles.



2014 - Due to a lack of progress in the peace process and rising nationalistic rhetoric from both Armenia and Azerbaijan, cross-border violence breaks out in a brief war.

2016 - cross-border violence again breaks out, with Azerbaijan regaining a small amount of territory from the Armenians.

Historical Analysis

The Caucasus region has long been home to a diverse group of peoples maintaining unique cultural and linguistic traditions. Among these peoples are the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. The roots of their conflict can be found at the beginning of the 20th century with the collapse of the Russian and Ottoman Empires. At the turn of the 20th century, both the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples were split between the Russian, Ottoman and Persian empires. This would change with the coming of World War I, in which the Ottoman Empire and the Russian empire met their ends. Following popular protest against Tsar Nicholas the II, the Russian Empire would collapse in 1917. What followed was a weak interim government which would descend into a state of chaos and civil war. The peoples of the Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani people saw an opportunity to gain independence from Russia during its strife.

However, the dream of independence was soon snuffed out with the invasion of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan by the newly created Soviet Union between 1920 and 1921. It was at during this time that we find the first seed planted for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Upon conquering Armenia and Azerbaijan, it was decided by Soviet authorities that the Armenian populated Nagorno-Karabakh region would become part of Azerbaijan. This was part of the divide and conquer strategy employed by the Soviets to create tensions between the Soviet Republics so that they would not turn on the Soviet Union itself. Following this change in territory, Nagorno-Karabakh would see an influx of Azerbaijani people come to settle in the region throughout the rest of the 20th century. Karabakh Armenians would contest the region's status over the 70 years of Soviet rule and petitioned to be transferred to the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1945, 1965, 1977, and 1987.⁵ Although it is widely believed that the incorporation of Nagorno-Karabakh into Azerbaijan was carried out by the Soviets to foment tension, Azerbaijanis and Armenians lived together peacefully. This would come to end in the later half of the 20th century with the accession of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to the position of General

⁵ <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/nagorno-karabakh-obstacles-negotiated-settlement>



Secretary. With the Soviet Union near economic collapse, Gorbachev would introduce political reforms known as “glasnost” and “perestroika” to save the Soviet Union. These reforms would fail to stop the Soviet Union from dissolving in 1991, but they did lay the foundations for the next stage of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In the late 1980s, tensions between Armenians and Azerbaijanis began to intensify as the “glasnost” reforms allowed for greater criticism of the Soviet Union. Widespread demonstrations and protests by Armenians occurred, criticizing the handover of Nagorno-Karabakh to the Soviet Socialist Republic.⁶ These protests would culminate in the February of 1988 when the local authorities of Nagorno Karabakh passed a resolution favouring unification with Soviet Armenia.⁷ On February 26 of 1988, rumors began to spread that riots in Stepanakert (the capital of Nagorno Karabakh) had led to the death of an Azerbaijani. As a result, a crowd of Azeris began to march on Nagorno Karabakh, marching in columns to the bordering town of Askeran.⁸ This would lead to violent ethnic conflict that would turn into a full scale war when Armenia and Azerbaijan became independent states with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Fighting, along with numerous incidents of pogroms and ethnic cleansing, would continue to take place up until 1994 when a Russian mediated ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan took effect.⁹ The ceasefire was largely negotiated in a summit held in the city of Minsk. The Armenians would come out of the negotiations as the decisive military victor, taking control over Nagorno-Karabakh and the Lachin corridor connecting it to mainland Armenia. It also occupied seven Azeri districts (15% of Azeri territory) surrounding Karabakh.¹⁰ The war resulted in an estimated total of 25,000 to 30,000 casualties on both sides, 750,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Azerbaijan both from Karabakh and the occupied districts, and around 360,000 Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan. This refugee crisis and incredible tension that still existed between Azerbaijan and Armenian led to the creation of the Minsk Group by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1994 to provide a platform for future negotiations.¹¹

Despite the creation of the Minsk Group, the conflict would remain in a stalemate with no real progress being made. It would not be until November of 2007 when the ministers who made up the Minsk Group, from the United States, France and Russia, presented the Madrid Principles that progress was made on peace. The Madrid Principles laid out the conditions and goals of a peace settlement between

⁶ <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1615&context=etd>

⁷ <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/nagorno-karabakh-obstacles-negotiated-settlement>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ <https://www.osce.org/minsk-group/108306>



Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, both sides would fail to meet the conditions of the Madrid Principles due to disagreements with its conditions and a lack of trust. Due to a lack of progress in the peace process and rising nationalistic rhetoric from both Armenia and Azerbaijan, cross-border violence broke out in 2014. In the clash, 60 people died, with one of the more serious incidents involving the downing of an Armenian helicopter by Azeri forces in early November. Cross-border violence would occur again in 2016, with Azerbaijan regaining a small amount of territory from the Karabakh Armenians. In spite of this action, some 100,000 Karabakh Armenians would vote to rename the “Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh” into the “Republic of Artsakh” along with voting for a new constitution. Currently, the “Republic of Artsakh” operates as a fully functional government for the region of Nagorno-Karabakh and considers itself a separate country from Azerbaijan. No member of the international community recognizes the Republic of Artsakh, including Armenia itself. In addition, the United Nations still considers the Nagorno-Karabakh region as part of Azerbaijan.¹²

Current Situation

As of 2018, the peace settlement process pursued by the OSCE Minsk Group has completely halted as nationalistic rhetoric from both governments has increased. As the years have passed without resolution, ethnic hatred and resentment have further entrenched themselves in both the Azerbaijani and Armenian populations.¹³ Resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has proven a difficult task due to the multidimensional nature of political, socio-economic, and security-related issues. Among these issues are the political status of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Lachin corridor, the withdrawal of the Armenian forces from the occupied Azeri territories, security guarantees for Karabakh and Armenia when occupied territories are returned, and the return and resettlement of the Azerbaijani internally displaced persons (IDPs).¹⁴ In the territorial dispute, Armenia believes that the region of Nagorno-Karabakh should be entitled to the right of self-determination while Azerbaijan has insisted on the right of its territorial integrity since Nagorno-Karabakh is located in the internationally accepted borders of Azerbaijan.¹⁵

Current Occupied Territories and Peace Process

¹² <https://armenianweekly.com/2017/02/21/artsakh-votes-for-new-constitution-officially-renames-the-republic/>

¹³ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/moh-hamdi/black-garden-armenia-and-azerbaijan-through-peace-and-war>

¹⁴ <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/nagorno-karabakh-obstacles-negotiated-settlement>

¹⁵ Ibid.



For both Armenia and Azerbaijan, there are three outstanding issues in concerns to territory: the fate of the seven districts around the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, and the security measures needed to support the return to stability and security within the conflict zone.¹⁶ Being a part of the Lesser Caucasus mountain range, the Nagorno-Karabakh region is a largely mountainous region. Karabakh Armenians control the mountainous, densely-forested interior and the north, which is protected by the Murovdag mountain range. This mountainous terrain makes it difficult to conduct military operations, making it a key reason for why Azerbaijan has had difficulty in reclaiming Nagorno-Karabakh as the Armenians have strongly entrenched themselves. Due to this difficulty, most recent border clashes have remained on the 150-km Line of Contact that stretches from the Martakert district of Nagorno-Karabakh to the Iranian border.¹⁷ Azerbaijan has been the main instigator of these recent border clashes as it has grown increasingly frustrated with the stalled peace process. The peace process pursued by both nations and the OSCE Minsk Group has largely been stalled due to the inflexible positions of both Azerbaijan and Armenia. Armenia supports complete independence for Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan. It also insists that the withdrawal of troops from the occupied districts of Azerbaijan can only happen when consensus is reached on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and when proper international security guarantees are put in place. Contrarily, Azerbaijan refuses to abandon the goal of regaining full jurisdiction over Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan has offered to give a high level of autonomy to the region instead. Aside from the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, the most important issues for Azerbaijan are the return of its territories and the resettlement of its IDPs.¹⁸ This inflexibility in position is caused in large part due to the deep mutual distrust that exists between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has placed an embargo on Armenia and effective communication, whether between leaders, their respective governments, or military commanders in the conflict zone, are non-existent.¹⁹

Despite this existing mistrust and the halting of the peace process, a general peace plan has been developed by the Minsk Group. It is known as the Basic Principles or the Madrid Principles. There are six key actions and steps that the Minsk Group believes must occur for peace to be achieved. First, the Minsk Group believes that the Azerbaijani territories currently controlled by the Karabakh Armenians that are not part of the original Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast should be returned to

¹⁶ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/ru/europe-central-asia/caucasus/nagorno-karabakh-azerbaijan/244-nagorno-karabakhs-gathering-war-clouds>

¹⁷ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/ru/europe-central-asia/caucasus/nagorno-karabakh-azerbaijan/244-nagorno-karabakhs-gathering-war-clouds>

¹⁸ <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/nagorno-karabakh-obstacles-negotiated-settlement>

¹⁹ Ibid.

Azerbaijani control (as seen in red in Fig. 1). For the territory composing the original Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, the Minsk Group states that the region should be given interim status with guarantees of security and self-governance until a full resolution is reached (as seen in orange in Fig. 1).²⁰ Once there has been an indication in the peace process, the Minsk Group states that the final legal status of Nagorno Karabakh should be determined through a “binding expression of will.”²¹



Fig 1: Map of Disputed Territories²²

²⁰ <https://www.osce.org/mg/51152>

²¹ <https://www.osce.org/mg/51152>

²² https://www.armenianow.com/commentary/analysis/38577/armenian_azeri_border_escalation_karabakh_conflict

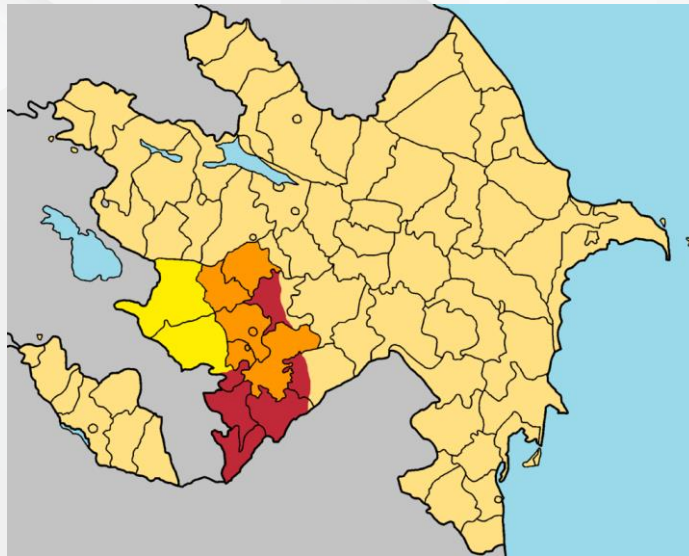


Fig. 2: Map of Proposed Territorial Changes in the Madrid Principles²³

The exact meaning of what a “binding expression of will” would look like is still unclear. In concerns to territory, the Madrid principles also state that the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, whatever the outcome, should be connected by land to its kin-state, Armenia. To accomplish this, it has been suggested that the territory of Kashatagh (Lachin) and Shahumyan (Kelbajar) (as seen in yellow in Fig. 1) should be used to provide a corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh. As to what legal status this corridor would hold, it has been suggested that separate arrangements should be made for the territories of Kashatagh and Shahumyan when the occupied Azerbaijani territories are returned.²⁴ Besides territory, the Madrid principles also mandate that all internally displaced persons and refugees from the original 1988-1994 conflict maintain the right to return to their former places of residence and that international security measures should be put in place to prevent further conflict from breaking out.²⁵

The Madrid Principles remain the strongest peace plan developed by the international community and have provided the basis for discussion between Azerbaijan and Armenia. However, there have been strong criticisms of the Madrid Principles, mainly from the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia. The Republic of Armenia believes that the return of territory and the withdrawal of troops from occupied Azerbaijani territory that the Madrid Principles call for are too swift. Armenia believes that there should be a phased process for both the withdrawal of troops and the return of territory to ensure that Armenian security is maintained. The leadership of the unrecognized Artsakh Republic insists that the territories of Kashatagh and Shahumyan should not be returned to Azerbaijan until after the region's final status is decided. The Armenians leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh also take

²³ https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madrid_Principles.png

²⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/armenia/armenian-azerbaijani-presidents-agree-preamble-madrid-principles>

²⁵ Ibid



issue with the phrase “binding expression of will” in the Madrid Principles. They believe it should be replaced by the term “referendum.”²⁶

Refugees and the Right of Return

During the original Nagorno-Karabakh war from 1988-1994, an estimated 300,000 Armenians fled their homes in Azerbaijan to Armenia. An estimated 30,000 of them resettled in Nagorno-Karabakh and the now occupied Lachin district of Azerbaijan. The number of Azerbaijanis who fled from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh is estimated to be 800,000, with 200,000 of these refugees being from Armenia, and around 600,000 from Nagorno-Karabakh and the occupied regions of Azerbaijan.²⁷ Today, most of these refugees have integrated into their respective kin-states. Most refugees from Azerbaijan and Armenia have no desire to return to their old homes. However, there is still a strong desire among Azerbaijani refugees from the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the occupied regions of Azerbaijan to return to their homes. This has been difficult due to the military occupation, the lack of financial resources that refugees possess in order to return home and the high prevalence of land-mines. Even the refugees who do not desire to return to their original homes face hardships in their kin-states. In Azerbaijan, tens of thousands of refugees live in substandard housing. In some cases, families have lived for years in individual college dormitory rooms, public facilities, and schools.²⁸ Many Armenian IDPs also still face problems with shelter. This is mainly due to that fact that many Armenian IDPs are located in rural areas in northeast Armenia at some distance from major cities and towns. When it comes to general living standards, available data shows that IDP households feel uncertain in terms of their own food security and many households reported that they often or sometimes skip meals.²⁹

Both governments have undertaken measures to improve the quality of life for IDPs which have found partial success in alleviating refugee poverty. However, particularly in Azerbaijan, there have been limited efforts to socially integrate refugees into Azerbaijani society. Azerbaijan still maintains refugee status for IDPs who have long since integrated into Azerbaijani society. This has been done to ensure that refugees will be still ready and willing to return to the homes they abandoned when a peace settlement is reached. During the Nagorno-Karabakh war, the town of Lachin in the region of Kashatagh was completely depopulated of its Azerbaijani population when they fled military occupation. Currently, the town of Lachin maintains nearly a 100% Armenian population, mainly composed of refugees who fled from Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan fears that if no Azerbaijani refugees return to Lachin and the greater Kashatagh region, Armenia will be unwilling to end its occupation due to the

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/nagorno-karabakh.htm>

²⁸ <http://www.city-data.com/forum/europe/2288097-clashes-intensify-between-armenia-azerbaijan-over.html>

²⁹ Ibid



high Armenian population.³⁰ Some Armenian refugees have also faced issues with integration. Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan were mostly Russian-speaking with a limited mastery of Armenian. This has limited the employment opportunities for Armenian refugees, especially in rural areas where Russian is less spoken.

Both Azerbaijan and Armenia hold strong views on the right of return for refugees. Azerbaijan has remained firm in its stance that “all ethnic Azerbaijanis forcibly evicted from Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent territories” retain the right to return to their homes. This has resonated with the Azerbaijani refugee population who express anger over the fact that many ethnic Armenians have settled in their former homes. Most Azerbaijani returnees in Nagorno-Karabakh are likely to be concentrated in Shusha district, which was the only town and district in Nagorno-Karabakh with an overwhelming Azerbaijani majority before the conflict.³¹ Although both Azerbaijan and Armenia disagree on the timing and conditions under which return would be possible, they do agree that it will be a gradual process. Azerbaijan believes that the return of IDPs should start with the return to five lowland districts (Aghdam, Fizuli, Gubatly, Jebrayil, Zangilan) to the east. Azerbaijan believes that this process should take place before the final status of the territory is resolved. Armenia on the other hand, believes that a return of IDPs should only take place after the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh is decided.³²

The Republic of Artsakh

Currently, the region of Nagorno-Karabakh is de facto governed by the Karabakh Armenians. Their state, the unrecognized Republic of Artsakh is democratically elected government and is home to 140,000.³³ The Nagorno-Karabakh has run its own affairs with heavy military and financial backing from Armenia since 1994. Besides supporting the Republic of Artsakh, Armenian-backed forces also hold seven Azeri districts surrounding the region.³⁴ The Republic viewed as a “puppet extension” of Armenia. Its residents are able to travel abroad on Armenian passports.³⁵ No country, including Armenia itself, has recognised the Republic of Artsakh as an independent country, with both the Minsk Group and the EU routinely issuing statements that its elections and referendums have no meaning.³⁶ The de

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/nagorno-karabakh-azerbaijan/244-nagorno-karabakhs-gathering-war-clouds>

³² http://www.c-r.org/downloads/Forced%20Displacement%20in%20Nagorny%20Karabakh%20Conflict_201108_ENG.pdf

³³ <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/nagorno-karabakh-obstacles-negotiated-settlement>

³⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/19/us-armenia-azerbaijan-conflict-idUSKBN0MF1R620150319>

³⁵ <http://www.city-data.com/forum/europe/2288097-clashes-intensify-between-armenia-azerbaijan-over.html>

³⁶ <https://euobserver.com/foreign/137017>



facto Artsakh Republic been excluded from peace talks since 1998. It has grown increasingly frustrated with its exclusion in the direct negotiations.³⁷

Foreign Influence and International Mediation

On March 23, 1995, the OSCE mandated the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group to provide a process for conflict resolution in Nagorno Karabakh, to prevent further conflict from erupting and to promote the peace process by deploying OSCE multinational peacekeeping forces.³⁸ Although the Minsk Group has laid the groundwork for the solution to the conflict, the numerous meetings it has conducted between Armenia and Azerbaijani officials have yielded no tangible results. The de facto government of Nagorno-Karabakh and civil society in both Armenia and Azerbaijan have been excluded from the peace process. This exclusion has been viewed by some observers as an undermining factor for a political solution as the Republic of Artsakh is directly involved in the conflict.³⁹ Another factor that has been seen as a destabilizing factor in the conflict has been the sale of military equipment to both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Despite being members of the Minsk Group, Russia and the United States are among the main suppliers of military equipment to both countries.⁴⁰

Since the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Russia has been a strong supporter of Armenia. Armenia maintains an “overwhelming dependence” on Russia as most of its military equipment is supplied by Russia.⁴¹ Russia possesses a military base inside Armenia and Armenia is a member of the Russian founded Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) security alliance. These factors give Russian enormous influence in negotiations.

United Nations Involvement

Since the beginning of the conflict, three UN Security Council resolutions have passed: S/RES/853, S/RES/874, and S/RES/884. The resolutions mainly consisted of condemnations of breaches in ceasefire, calls for cessation of hostilities and an end to the occupation of Azerbaijani land. On March 14, 2008, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution “reaffirming Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, expressing support for that country's internationally recognized borders and demanding the

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ <https://www.osce.org/minsk-group/108308>

³⁹ <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/nagorno-karabakh-obstacles-negotiated-settlement>

⁴⁰ <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/03/tensions-reignite-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-150303121751335.html>

⁴¹ <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1615&context=etd>



immediate withdrawal of all Armenian forces from all occupied territories there.” The resolution was opposed by all three members of the OSCE Minsk Group.⁴² The resolutions from both the General Assembly and Security Council have done little to end the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The United Nations has mainly left the role of finding a solution to territorial disputes to the OSCE. However, the United Nations has played a large role in aiding refugees and helping them reintegrate into society. In Armenia, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has found success in integrating Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan, with over 80,000 of them having acquired Armenian citizenship through a simplified naturalization scheme.⁴³ A recent program that the UNHCR has introduced has been the Community Technology Access (CTA) programme. The project is backed by corporate partners Microsoft and Pricewaterhousecoopers. The program aims at giving Armenian refugees access to computers in order to give them greater access to education and livelihood opportunities.⁴⁴

Seeking Resolution

Territorial Change and Security Guarantees

To date, the Madrid Principles created by the Minsk Group remains the most viable solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, there are still points on which Armenia and Azerbaijan vastly disagree on. Both Azerbaijan and Armenia agree that the process for troop withdrawal and the return of occupied Azerbaijani territory will be gradual but they disagree on the way in which this should happen. The return of even parts of the occupied territories would require fundamental changes in defensive structures and military facilities on the Armenian side of the Line of Contact. The loss of this strategic position would drastically increase Armenia’s defence obligations. It is unlikely that Armenia would agree to remove its troops and give back occupied Azerbaijani land unless international security guarantees were put in place or international actors covered its military costs. Both solutions have the advantages and disadvantages. Establishing either a UN or OSCE peacekeeping force might assuage Armenia’s fears, but the placement of peacekeepers could only happen once the status of Nagorno-Karabakh is settled. There is also the issue of Azerbaijan disapproving of the placement of peacekeepers. If peacekeepers were deployed, they would most likely be deployed along the Line of Contact. Azerbaijan believes that establishing peacekeepers along the Line of Contact would give the impression of a border, legitimizing the secession of Nagorno-Karabakh. Covering Armenia’s military

⁴² <https://www.un.org/press/en/2008/ga10693.doc.htm>

⁴³ <http://old.un.am/en/UNHCR>

⁴⁴ Ibid.



costs would also assuage its fears, but permanent Security Council members like the United Kingdom are against the supplying of weapons to either side.⁴⁵

Refugees Settlement

There are two possible solutions concerning IDPs and refugees, both when it comes to aiding them and resettling them. The first, would be resettlement. Resettlement is the solution that the Azerbaijani government favours the most. Under international law, IDPs have a right to return to their home of origin if forcefully displaced. This would be a straightforward solution, but also the most difficult to implement. As previously stated, both Armenia and Azerbaijan disagree when refugees should be allowed to return to their homes. It will be difficult for IDPs to return to their homes while an active conflict continues and the status of Nagorno-Karabakh is undecided.⁴⁶ However, the Security Council can work to make return easier for IDPs, by working to clear landmines near villages and towns, as well as helping IDPs financially in their return home.

The second route the Security Council could pursue would be integration. International organizations consider local integration to be the best and most realistic option for refugees. Most refugees from Armenia and IDPs see this as the most favourable option. However, Azerbaijani IDPs from Nagorno-Karabakh remain adamant in returning to Nagorno-Karabakh, fearing that they may lose their identity as Karabakh Azerbaijanis. Whether wishing to return home or to integrate, IDPs and refugees on both sides can agree that they wish to receive restitution for the property they lost. On December 16, 2005 the UN General Assembly adopted the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.⁴⁷

Article 15 of Chapter IX of the document state that a State shall provide reparation to victims for acts or omissions which can be attributed to that State. The reparation of victims would provide a straightforward solution to the issue of refugees and IDPs as each state would be responsible for compensating the refugees they created. However, this solution is complicated by the fact that abandoned properties were not privatized and technically remained state-owned at the time of

⁴⁵ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/nagorno-karabakh-azerbaijan/244-nagorno-karabakhs-gathering-war-clouds>.

⁴⁶ http://www.c-r.org/downloads/Forced%20Displacement%20in%20Nagorny%20Karabakh%20Conflict_201108_ENG.pdf

⁴⁷ Ibid.



displacement. There is also the issue of how claims for compensation for lost property would be filed and processed.⁴⁸

Bloc Positions

France and Europe

Most European states hold similar views as France on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. European states have been quick to denounce the de facto government in Nagorno-Karabakh for holding one-sided elections. The Council of Europe has called these elections illegitimate. Likewise, France and Europe believe that de facto government in Nagorno-Karabakh should not be involved directly in negotiations as it would give legitimacy to the breakaway state. When it comes to territorial solutions, France believes that Armenian forces should withdraw from occupied Azerbaijani territory while peacekeepers are deployed to oversee and implement security guarantees. France believes that trust-building measures are essential to resolving the conflict.⁴⁹

United States of America

The United States does not recognize Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent country or its leadership. The United States supports the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.⁵⁰ However, the United States believes that although Nagorno-Karabakh should remain recognized as part of Azerbaijan, the region should have de facto independence.⁵¹ The United States believes that demilitarization of the high tension areas is essential to ensure the accidental clashes do not occur.⁵² However, unlike other Security Council members, the United States believes that supplying military equipment to both Armenia and Azerbaijan is essential to maintaining peace.

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation has had a history of supporting the right to self-determination over territorial integrity in nations such as Georgia.⁵³ Russia still supports breakaway states in other post-Soviet countries: Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Georgia), Transnistria (Moldova), Donbas (Ukraine). In the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/defence-security/crisis-and-conflicts/nagorno-karabakh/events/article/armenia-azerbaijan-first-anniversary-of-the-truce-following-the-four-day-war-05>

⁵⁰ <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eur/rt/snec/c7560.htm>

⁵¹ <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/nagorno-karabakh-and-united-states-policy-caucasus>

⁵² <https://www.voanews.com/a/united-states-calls-confidence-building-measures-nagorno-karabakh/3982370.html>

⁵³ <http://foreignpolicynews.org/2016/06/03/russias-involvement-in-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-unhelpful-and-unpromising/>



Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Russian Federation has pursued a similar policy. Russian mediators have worked towards involving the Armenian separatists of Nagorno-Karabakh as a party in negotiations.⁵⁴ Besides this, the Russian Federation also supports the continuation of arms sales to both countries while supporting peaceful resolution of the conflict.⁵⁵

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom remains firm in not recognizing the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh. It remains committed to a peaceful resolution and believes peacekeeping and a step by step reconciliation process is necessary for lasting peace. The United Kingdom believes that this process must involve creating better understanding between Azerbaijani and Armenian communities.⁵⁶ The United Kingdom also supports the return of occupied territory to Azerbaijan with appropriate security guarantees. Besides this, the issue that most concerns the United Kingdom remains the increasing number of fatalities that are occurring due to the use of more advanced military equipment.⁵⁷ As of July 2, 2014, the United Kingdom has placed an arms embargo on both Azerbaijan and Armenia for any equipment that could be used in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, or on the land border between Azerbaijan and Armenia.⁵⁸

Discussion Questions

1. What are the historical causes of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict?
2. What are the current disputed and occupied territories in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict?
3. How can the occupied territories of Azerbaijan be returned without threatening Armenian security?
4. What are the benefits and flaws of the Madrid Principles as a solution to the conflict?
5. Is it practical for refugees and IDPs to return to their home of origin?
6. How can integration efforts for refugees be made more effective?
7. Should the de facto government in Nagorno-Karabakh be involved in negotiations?
8. What can be done to foster reconciliation between Azerbaijani and Armenian communities?
9. Should the sale of military equipment to both Armenia and Azerbaijan be allowed?

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ <https://www.voanews.com/a/united-states-calls-confidence-building-measures-nagorno-karabakh/3982370.html>

⁵⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fco-minister-comments-on-20th-anniversary-of-nagorno-karabakh-ceasefire>

⁵⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukazerbaijan-foreign-policy-dialogue>

⁵⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/arms-embargo-on-armenia>



10. How should the political and legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh be determined?

Further Reading

1. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/nagorno-karabakh-azerbaijan/244-nagorno-karabakhs-gathering-war-clouds>
2. http://www.c-r.org/downloads/Forced%20Displacement%20in%20Nagorny%20Karabakh%20Conflict_201108_ENG.pdf
3. <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/nagorno-karabakh-obstacles-negotiated-settlement>
4. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/moh-hamdi/black-garden-armenia-and-azerbaijan-through-peace-and-war>
5. <http://old.un.am/en/UNHCR>



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