

NAGORNO KARABAKH



MARCH 2019 – MAY 2019 BRIEFING

Key Developments

OCSE Minsk group chairperson, Miroslav Lajčák, encourages Armenia and Azerbaijan to take advantage of the recent positive momentum to build towards a resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Armenian Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, and Azerbaijani President, Ilham Aliyev met in Vienna on March 29th. The meeting was described as having had a positive mood, but yielded no major breakthroughs.

Pashinyan refuses to negotiate on behalf of Nagorno-Karabakh. He believes NKR should be its own independence party in negotiations regarding the conflict. Aliyev rejects this claim calling it “unacceptable”.

Russian foreign ministry representative, Maria Zakharova, reiterates Russia’s intention to play a continuously active role in resolving the NKR conflict.

Armenian Prime minister is willing to exchange Azerbaijani captives, who accidentally crossed the border in March, in return of Armenian citizens held captive in Azerbaijan

Humanitarian Figures

Azerbaijan controls information released from Nagorno-Karabakh while preventing civil society organisations, journalists and political figures from entering the disputed enclave. Important events and situations are kept out of the public eye, resulting in a lack of fact-finding reports and humanitarian updates from the region.

Latest Developments

> Armenian prime minister met with the president of the European council, David Tusk, to discuss relations between Armenia and the European union, as well as the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Tusk said "The conflict does not have a military solution and needs an early political settlement in accordance with international law" and that he and the European council are ready to support the “preparation of populations for peace” discussed in a meeting between Armenia and Azerbaijan and OCSE Minsk group earlier this year. Pashinyan said he appreciates the EU’s continued balanced position on the conflict which he believes is a “valuable contribution to peace and security in our region”

> Russia initiated meeting in Moscow between foreign ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia. One of the points of discussion was establishing a connection between the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan through mutual media representative visits. In 2005 a prominent Azerbaijani journalist was tried for treason because of his reporting on Nagorno-Karabakh. No Armenian journalist has been to Azerbaijan in over 15 years.

> US intends to host a meeting between Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers in the future, says William R. Gill, deputy chief of the US mission in Azerbaijan. This sentiment was later reiterated by US Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs, George Kent, who stated that the US as a co-chair to the OCSE Minsk group take their responsibilities very seriously and are ready to support the peace process.

> Armenian Football player, Henrikh Mkhitaryan, will not be travelling to Azerbaijan with the rest of the Arsenal team to compete in the Europa League Finals against Chelsea. There are severe concerns over the Mkhitaryan’s safety if he were to go to Baku. The Azerbaijan football association has stated that they are confident that there is nothing to be concerned about in regards to “safety and security”. Mkhitaryan previously faced the same issues, having missed a 2015 Dortmund match in Baku.

Key Individuals, Places and Groups

- › Artsakh: The official name for Nagorno-Karabakh
- › Stepanakert: Nagorno-Karabakh's capital city
- › Bako Sahakyan: President of Nagorno-Karabakh
- › Ilham Aliyev: President of Azerbaijan
- › Nikol Pashinyan: Prime Minister of Armenia
- › OSCE: Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Context

Nagorno-Karabakh is an ethnically Armenian region landlocked in Azerbaijan. Decades of frozen conflict, warring territorial claims, and years of peace talks have failed to lead to a resolution over the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.

In 1988, a high-intensity conflict broke out over an Azerbaijan-Armenian territorial dispute. By 1992, [Armenian forces occupied 20 per cent](#) of Azeri territory, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Nagorno-Karabakh declared autonomy from Azerbaijan and gained de facto independence. As a result of the conflict, an estimate of [30,000 lives](#) were lost, and hundreds of thousands of people were displaced.

Since the end of the war in 1994, the Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh Republic has been held under the control of Armenian forces. Russia brokered a ceasefire agreement in 1994, which has been repeatedly violated and is failing to settle conflict between Azeri and Armenian Lines of Contact.

The OSCE Minsk Group plays a significant role in negotiations over the disputed region. The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is not considered to be independent from Azerbaijan, and as a result, its sovereign status has failed to be recognised by any other UN state.

Mediation efforts are suppressing an all-out war over Nagorno-Karabakh, but [inter-ethnic tensions](#) remain as high as they were when hostilities broke out in 1988. A diplomatic solution is yet to be forged between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the decades-old conflict.

A Map of Azeri and Armenian Occupied Territories in Nagorno-Karabakh



Humanitarian Situation

Azerbaijan [prevents civil society organisations and political figures](#) from entering Nagorno-Karabakh.

The release of information has been forbidden, resulting in a lack of reports on the humanitarian situation in the region.

In the most recent census, Nagorno-Karabakh was reported to have a total population of [145,053](#). Of this total, [144,683](#) are ethnic Armenians. Approximately [400,000](#) Azeri people left the region during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.