



# GSISMUN II

**Forum: Security Council**

**Question of: The Situation in Nagorno-Karabakh  
(Azerbaijan -Armenia conflict)**

**Student Officer: Sarah Kim, Assistant President**

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## **Introduction:**

The latest conflict of the Nagorno-Karabakh broke out on 27, September 2020. In the *New York Times* it states that the conflict was different from the past as , “...Turkey had offered more direct support to Azerbaijan, and because of the scale of the fighting. Azerbaijan used sophisticated attack drones and both sides used powerful, long-range rocket artillery.”<sup>1</sup> The conflict involves several major countries such as, Russia, Turkey and Iran. The tension between Azerbaijan and Armenia has a long history - a tension that has been ongoing for 30 years.

The tension goes back to World War I, during the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Russia had started to rule the region from 1823. Due to the continuous tension between the two countries, Russia decided that Karabakh would be the part of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (S.S.R); this was to ensure the initial incorporation of Karabakh into Armenia, and to plan to ensure the Armenian support of Soviet rule. However, Joseph Stalin reversed the decision, and in 1923 incorporated Nagorno-Karabakh to become an autonomous administrative region of Azerbaijan S.S.R. This decision started an endless conflict between the two nations, as 94 percent of the population in Nagorno-Karabakh was ethnic Armenian. Dissatisfied with the decision, the Armeanians protested against the status quo; however, Soviet Union was intolerant and ignored the protests.<sup>2</sup>

In 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved, and the autonomous regions officially declared independence. The Nagorno-Karabakh’s regional parliament voted to be a part of Armenia ; however, due to the ethnic clashes Armenia and Azerbaijan went into a full scale war. This war resulted in thirty thousand casualties and hundreds of thousands of refugees, but by 1993 Armenia was able to take control of Nagorno Karabakh and was able to occupy 20 percent of the surrounding territory of Azerbaijani. During this war, Turkey shut its border with Armenia and supported Azerbaijan, whereas Armenia maintained a good relation. Russia established a Russian military base in Armenia as both are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) military alliance. In 1994, Russia declared a cease-fire. However, due to the high tension, fighting happened

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<sup>1</sup> (Kramer)

<sup>2</sup> (Blakemore)

at Early April 2016, which killed dozens and resulted in three hundred casualties. This conflict lasted four days and then the two countries agreed upon a new cease fire.<sup>3</sup>

In 2018, protest leader Nikol Pashinyan became the prime minister of Armenia. After the free election Mr. Pashinian agreed with Azerbaijan's president Ilhalm Aliyev to ease the tension and set up the first military hotline between the two countries. However, in August 2019, Mr Pashinyan told ethnic Armenians that Karabakh is Armenia. This angered the people of Azerbaijan and a fight broke in July on the international border between the two countries. Later on, Turkey's military took part, which resulted in a larger scale conflict on 27 September. The conflict ended in November, as both countries signed a Russian-brokered peace deal.<sup>4</sup> However, the tension continues as it is an ongoing conflict based on historical roots.

Previous attempts have been made to provide a permanent solution to end the conflict such as efforts and negotiations made by the Minsk group. Minsk Group is a mediation effort led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which was created by co-chairs by the United States, France, and Russia to address the dispute. With the help of the Minsk Group the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Geneva, October 2017, to talk about the possible settlements. However, there hasn't been any concrete solutions established. Solutions presented in the past were not focused on the long term status between the two countries and only focused on the settlement of the ongoing short war. The involvement of other countries such as Russia promising to defend Armenia, Turkey pledging to support Azerbaijan and Iran having the large Azeri minority could escalate another crisis.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, countries will need to build new resolutions and efforts to solve this conflict for a lasting, peaceful settlement.

## Definitions:

### Human Security

As defined by the United Nations, human security "is an approach to assist the Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people." Along with development and human rights, security is one of the three major pillars that build up the United Nations. In addition, the General Assembly resolution 66/290 mentions that "human security calls for people-centered, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented responses that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all people and all communities." Connecting, the Security Council--established on October 24th, 1945--is responsible for preserving security and international peace by calling upon parties to peacefully settle disputes, reach agreements, and implement measures of adjustment and settlement for conflicted areas and disputes, such as the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> (CFR Experts)

<sup>4</sup> ("Armenia-Azerbaijan: What's Behind the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict?")

<sup>5</sup> (CFR Experts)

<sup>6</sup> ("What is Human Security?")

## **Nagorno-Karabakh**

Nagorno-Karabakh is a mountainous region between the borders of two countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and it was historically populated by mostly Armenians and an addition of Azeris, or Azerbaijanis. Although there were many Armenian churches present in the region, there was also an important citadel of Shusha in the middle of Nagorno-Karabakh, raising the value of this region by both Armenia and Azerbaijan. During the 19th century, the Russian Empire ruled this territory, but as the empire declined, this region was once again debated between the two countries. When the Soviet Union rose, it drew new borders around Armenia and Azerbaijan being its republic, with Nagorno-Karabakh becoming part of Azerbaijan as a semi-autonomous region when Armenians were the majority of the population of Nagorno-Karabakh. Even after the downfall of the Soviet Union, Armenians couldn't leave Azerbaijan nor unify with the rest of Armenia. Tensions rose and Nagorno-Karabakh became a violent region, and there was a temporary ceasefire in 1994, with Armenia occupying the region. However, Azerbaijan, with the help of Turkey, once again re-captured the city of Shusha and some other territories of Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh, forcing Armenia to surrender and creating a new ceasefire. Although the ceasefire froze the conflict, there are numerous problems remaining, such as countless displaced people, uncertainty of the territories, and the intervention of Russian Peacekeepers.<sup>7</sup>

### **Territorial Dispute**

Territorial dispute, or border war, is a type of war revolving around a disagreement about who controls a particular territory. Territorial disputes frequently lead to militarized conflict, such as the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Nagorno-Karabakh has been experiencing a territorial dispute between two countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and has recently escalated into a huge military conflict.<sup>8</sup>

### **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

As defined by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, internally displaced persons, or IDPs, are “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.” Second, the UNHCR defines refugees as “people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country.” The First Nagorno-Karabakh war displaced about 750,000 Azerbaijanis, with 150,000 of them being from Armenia. In addition, The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh has created about 90,000 displaced inhabitants of the 150,000 inhabitants.

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<sup>7</sup> (Ellis)

<sup>8</sup> ("Territorial dispute")

## Ceasefire

A ceasefire is “a temporary suspension of fighting, typically one during which peace talks take place,” defined by Oxford Languages. There was a ceasefire agreement in 1995 for Nagorno-Karabakh, which froze the conflict, but numerous problems still remain within the region, such as countless numbers of displaced Azeris, remaining tensions, and the presence of Russian Peacekeepers.

## Russian Peacekeepers

Even after the recent ceasefire, Armenia’s remaining territory in Nagorno-Karabakh did not stay independent; Russia, as a mediator of the conflict, sent 2,000 peacekeepers to the territory. However, this did not improve the situation of Armenians remaining in that region and rather incited more disagreement from Armenians.

## Key Events:

### 1920 - Soviet government established the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous

Nagorno-Karabakh was established autonomous by the new Soviet rulers after World War I and the Bolshevik revolution. The Soviet rulers had established the region into an autonomous region as a part of their divide-and-policy with ethnic Armenian Minorities, within the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan.<sup>9</sup>

### 1988 - Increased tension between the two countries

As the Soviet Union began to collapse, the grip it had on Armenia and Azerbaijan began to loosen. This resulted in the Nagorno-karabakh legislature - a resolution to join Armenia despite the region’s legal location within Azerbaijan’s borders - to pass. The parliament of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) voted to unify the region with Armenia. This increased the tension between the two countries - Armenia and Azerbaijan. The decision also resulted in the Armenian separatist movement in Soviet Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan responded to the movement by trying to crush the separatists leading to the inter-ethnic clashes between the ethnic Armenians and ethnic Azerbaijanis.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> (CFR Experts)

<sup>10</sup> ("Nagorno-Karabakh Profile")

## **1991 and Late winter of 1992 - Full-Scale War**

Azerbaijan and Armenia both declared independence from the U.S.S.R, which led to a full-out war between the two countries. During this full-out war, both countries were engaged in the ethnic cleansing. Millions of people became refugees and 30,000 people were killed.<sup>11</sup>

## **1994 - Ceasefire brokered by Russia**

The full-blown war between Armenia and Azerbaijan was an intense fight. The fight lasted four days which left a lot of casualties. The ceasefire was led by Russia due to diplomatic pressure to stop the fight. As the war had become an intense war leading to a lot of casualties, approximately 25,000 people were killed. Diplomats feared that the localised clash might lead to a wider conflict, even to a proxy war involving Russia and Turkey. Russia had treaty obligations with Armenia to defend the country when attacked, and Turkey traditionally had been supporting Azerbaijan, so the conflict may have led to a proxy and wider war. The ceasefire, also called the Bishkek Protocol, eventually ceased the fight. As laid out by the Protocol, Armenian and Azerbaijan soldiers have faced each other by the “line of contact”.<sup>12</sup>

## **2010 February 18 - Nagorno-Karabakh clash**

On February 18th, Azerbaijan and the Karabakh Armenian military forces exchanged gunfire across the line of contact. Azerbaijan confirmed that three Azerbaijan soldiers were killed and another wounded- a violation of the cease-fire.<sup>13</sup>

## **2014 November 12 - Helicopter shootdown**

On November 12th, the Azerbaijan’s defence ministry addressed, “ On November 12 an Mi-24 combat helicopter attempted to attack positions of the Azerbaijani army near [Karabakh’s] Aghdam district. The helicopter has been shot down by [the] Azerbaijani army.” However, the separatist defence ministry in Karabakh said that their helicopter was shot down by the Axerbaijan forces “while conducting a training flight as part of military drills”. Through this process three Armenian crew members died, which resulted in a firefight between two countries after the incident.<sup>14</sup>

## **2016 - April conflict**

From April 2nd to April 5th, the four-day war happened in Nagorno-Karabakh. Even though both sides accused each other of launching a military action, it was clearly shown that Azerbaijan took the initiative. The fight broke out in the morning of 2 April, as Azerbaijan's forces launched

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<sup>11</sup> (Blakemore)

<sup>12</sup>(Walker)

<sup>13</sup>(RFE/RL)

<sup>14</sup>(Agence France-Presse in Baku)

into the territory of the Armenian forces. OSW( Centre For Eastern Studies) states “...it was most likely an attempt to break through or test the Armenian lines of defence, although not to actually retake Karabakh from Armenain hands.” Both countries used heavy weapons which resulted in several casualties- at least 60 dead soldiers on both sides and several civilians, but it has been predicted that the figures may have been under-reported. The conflict ended by both sides unexpectedly announcing a ceasefire.<sup>15</sup>

## **2020 - The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war and the agreement**

On September 27th of 2020, the two countries broke into another war. The war lasted six weeks and resulted in the lives of thousands of fighters and hundreds of civilians. As Turkey intervened into the conflict, Turkey supported the Azerbaijan country. In August of 2020, the two countries held joint military exercises in Azerbaijan, and Turkey provided supplies of weapons to Azerbaijan such as advanced drones. Eventually with the help of Turkey, Azerbaijani soldiers launched an attack. Within a week, Azerbaijan had pushed 20 kilometers into Armean territory, eventually reaching the armenian border. On November 8th, Armenia surrendered and Azerbaijan won its biggest victory. The ceasefire agreement holds that the territory Azerbaijan invaded will now be Azerbaijan’s territory and 2,000 Russian soldiers will be placed in the area of Nagorno Karabakh to act as peacekeepers.<sup>16</sup>

## **Previous attempts at resolving the issue:**

The Security Council took several attempts in solving the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh. In Resolution 884 (1993), Adopted by the Security Council at its 3313th meeting, on 12 November 1993, the security council took several steps to solve the issue. For example, the resolution states “Strongly urges the parties concerned to resume promptly and to make effective and permanent the cease-fire established as a result of the direct contacts undertaker with the assistance of the Government of the Russian Federation in support of the CSCE Minsk Group, and to continuous to seek a negotiated settlement of the conflict within the context of the CSCE Minsk process and the “Adjusted timetable” as amended by the CSCE Minsk Group meeting in Vienna of 2 to 8 November 1993.”<sup>17</sup>

This attempt was successful when both sides signed the ceasefire agreement, which led to the freeze of the conflict. However, through this negotiation Armenia occupied several pieces of Azerbaijan as well as Nagorno- Karabakh which was still legally recognized as a part of Azerbaijan. Despite signing the agreement, Armenia and Azerbaijan refused to settle. Azerbaijan planned a comeback and spent tremendous money and time on training the army group. Both countries maintained a military presence along the front lines, and due to the tension between the countries

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<sup>15</sup> (Jarosiewicz and Falkowski)

<sup>16</sup> (Ellis)

<sup>17</sup> ("1993 UN Security Council Resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh")

occasional skirmishes broke out. Eventually, in 2016 April the two countries fought a war that lasted 4 days. By the end of the conflict, Turkey intervened to support Azerbaijan, which eventually led to the 2020, September war.<sup>18</sup>

## **Positions of Member Nations:**

### **United States of America**

After the six weeks of war starting from September 27th of 2020, the ceasefire was agreed upon after the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo held meetings with Armenian and Azerbaijan foreign ministers. The United States, along with Russia and France are co-chair of the OSCE Minsk group. OSCE Minsk group is an international organization tasked with providing solutions to the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>19</sup>

### **United Kingdom**

The United Kingdom has been conspicuously silent about the issue in Nagorno-Karabakh. The relationship between Azerbaijan and the United Kingdom was strongly related to the oil and gas industry. Therefore, silence of the United Kingdom was not expected. However, despite the silence the relationship shows that “by endorsing Ankara (Capital of Turkey) almost simultaneously with expressing indirect support to Baku (Capital of Azerbaijan) the UK sends an important signal to those countries (primarily France) which would like to use the ongoing conflict for isolating Turkey and Juxtaposing its “Imperial ambitions” to the Western interests.”<sup>20</sup> The positions the UK can also take is a more active, and more confident foreign policy as the nation has left the EU. For example, taking a more outwardly pro-Armenian policy in a way that promotes peace, while using aid to promote positive developments and compensating for those who have been displaced during the decades of violence.<sup>21</sup>

### **Russia**

Russia, a part of the OSCE Minsk group, was involved in the peace deal that took place in November 2020. Russia has been highly involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from the past. A Russia- brokered truce was signed in the early 1990s, but eventually Azerbaijan and Armenia broke into another war. The peace deal that took place in November 2020 was signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, and Armenia’s prime minister. The peace deal states that Azerbaijan will hold on to areas of Nagorno-Karabakh that it has taken during the conflict. Armenia has also agreed to withdraw from adjacent areas. To maintain the ceasefire,

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<sup>18</sup> (Ellis)

<sup>19</sup>(Kaymakamian)

<sup>20</sup>(Muradov)

<sup>21</sup>(Rosindell)

President Putin said that Russian peacekeeper would be deployed to patrol the frontline. Russia's defence ministry confirmed that 1,960 personnel would be involved in guarding the "Lachin corridor", which links the Karabakh capital to Armenia.<sup>22</sup>

### **China:**

Due to the geographical distance and the absence of the massive Chinese investments, China never reached the same level of intensity and cooperation with the region as it had with other traditional partnered nations. However, in recent years the relationship between China and the region has been increasing; China is becoming a new superpower, which can counterbalance the influence of Russia. China's interest in hydrocarbon resources and the potential for transportation routes through Azerbaijan and Georgia has led it to consistently penetrate the region.<sup>23</sup>

China's Belt and Road Initiative(BRI) project introduced in 2013, has enhanced the relationships between China and the countries along the new Silk Road. In 2015, Beijing and Baku intensified their political relations, and President Ilham Aliyev visited China in December calling for Chinese companies to invest in Azerbaijan. In April 2019, Aliyev attended the second BRI international meeting and met with the Chinese leader. Later on, the defense minister of Azerbaijan paid a visit to China to discuss further military cooperation, and to sign the mutual military aid and the purchase of Chinese arms.<sup>24</sup>

In the 2013 document, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China stated their position on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. "The Chinese government respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states and hopes that Armenia and Azerbaijan can speedily find a just and reasonable solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh issue through peaceful negotiations and which is acceptable to both sides. The Chinese government supports all international communities aimed at a peaceful solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and stands ready to make its own contribution in the Nations and other international gatherings for the promotion of the peaceful settlement of this issue."<sup>25</sup>

### **France**

France decided to take a neutral stance on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. France believed that taking an unbalanced posture would be doing a disservice to the quality of the bilateral relationship with Armenia, and would call into question the role they play in the framework of the Minsk Group.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> ("Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia Sign Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Deal")

<sup>23</sup>(Valiyev)

<sup>24</sup>(Valiyev)

<sup>25</sup>("Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict")

<sup>26</sup>(Cook)

## **Turkey**

Turkey stands with Azerbaijan. Both countries have strong economic, military, cultural and linguistic ties. Turkey had always supported Azerbaijan's claims over the disputed territory of the region, but had not played a significant rhetorical or military role. However, recently the military ties have deepened over the past 10 years between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Turkey trained officers in the Azerbaijani armed forces and also became Azerbaijan's third-largest supplier of weapons. Turkey pledged "unconditional" backing to Azerbaijan, when the fighting broke out between Azerbaijan and the Armenian forces in July. Before the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict broke, Azerbaijan and Turkey held joint military exercises. Turkey also supplied Azerbaijan with drones that are technologically superior. As Russia is losing influence in the conflict, Turkey aims to become an influential regional power and to have a stake in the future political settlement of the conflict.<sup>27</sup>

## **Suggested Solutions:**

### **Lasting Peaceful settlement**

Turkey and Russia are highly involved in the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh. The Peace Deal signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan was brokered by Russia and Turkey. It highlights that this agreement is not simply an agreement, but a general accord to end the armed conflict. However, Armenians are angered by the agreement as the agreement highlights the superiority of Azerbaijan and the complete defeat of Armenia.

Turkey and Russia are actively participating in the peacekeeping force, which may result in a positive outcome; however, there is a possibility that the problem may become chronic again and worse. The relationship between Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia and Turkey is highly related to political, economical and historical issues, affecting the countries stance in the conflict. Therefore, delegates should discuss upon solutions in ways which the Peace Deal will actually become a solution to end the armed conflict.

The OSCE Minsk Group - an international organization co-chaired by France, the Russian Federation and the United States - is tasked with providing solutions to the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, the settlements provided by the OSCE Minsk Group have proved elusive. The 2020 conflict resulted in a death toll of at least 1,000 lives and the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians. Military action may be successful in a short run, but will not deliver peace. Resolutions should be based on conversations and diplomacy to achieve a lasting settlement. Therefore, delegates should debate upon durable solutions such as but not limited to,

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<sup>27</sup> (Keddie)

- a) Leaders of Armenians and Azerbaijanis willing to work together towards a compromise solution,<sup>28</sup>
- b) International support in the development of such settlement and its eventual implementation,<sup>29</sup>
- c) Preparation of local populations to embrace that kind of accommodation.<sup>30</sup>

To elaborate, these solutions aim to end the conflict with conversations that will not result in the death of civilians. The situation in Nagorno-Karabakh has been a historical conflict which lacked conversation between the two countries. United Nations and international organizations should focus on helping the two countries negotiate appropriate solutions that the two countries will agree upon.

First, the United Nations should provide a way so that the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijani could communicate and negotiate without the pressure of other ally countries. Several countries such as Turkey and Russia are highly involved in the conflict; therefore, the United Nations should limit the involvement of the surrounding countries, so that leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijani can develop a negotiation that the two countries will agree upon.

Second, the settlements of OSCE Minsk Group have been proven elusive. Therefore, the OSCE group should develop settlements that will lead to an eventual implementation in the two countries. The United Nations and several other international organizations should work together so that the settlements prevent another leading conflict between the two countries.

Finally, the conflict has been continued as the local populations were not prepared to embrace the accommodations made through peace treaties. Whenever a war happened, the boundaries of Nagorno-Karabakh were adjusted which led to anger of local populations in either Armenia or Azerbaijan. Therefore, once the final settlements are made, governments of Armenia and Azerbaijani should work to educate the local populations to embrace the kind of accommodation.

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<sup>28</sup> (Cavanaugh)

<sup>29</sup> (Cavanaugh)

<sup>30</sup> (Cavanaugh)

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