

Situation in Armenia

Forum: Security Council

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Introduction

Armenia is currently having conflicts with Azerbaijan over the territory between the two countries called Nagorno Karabakh. The conflict is escalating, and it involves agreement violations, fighting, and militarization. As tensions soared, two countries started to attack one another using heavy weaponry, which killed and wounded a host of people. United Nations and other major countries failed to mediate the



A map of Nagorno Karabakh

problem as Armenia and Azerbaijan rejected their pressures. Ongoing ceasefire violations and increasing tensions are causing instability in the South Caucasus region. Some of the concerns related to this conflict are disruption of the oil industry, infringement of human rights, and political issues. Nagorno Karabakh conflict surrounds Armenia's political and ethnic factors that need to be negotiated. The government crisis is another problem that Armenia is facing. The 2018 Velvet Revolution was successful in ousting Sargsyan from power and electing Pashinyan as a new prime minister. However, the irresponsibility of government executives is negatively affecting both the political and social aspects of Armenia.

Background

Until 1918, Nagorno Karabakh or Artsakh – west of Azerbaijan and east of Armenia – was the territory of the Russian empire. As the Russian empire fell in 1918, the region was claimed by both the First Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. War took place in the 1920s, but it led to no conclusion since Soviet Union reclaimed the area as Nagorno Karabakh autonomous region. As the Soviet Union started to collapse in the late 1980s, the Nagorno legislature, with a population of 80% ethnic Armenians, voted to join Armenia. As the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, both countries and Nagorno-Karabakh declared independence. Nagorno Karabakh joined Armenia without the approval of Azerbaijan. As a result, the First Nagorno Karabakh War erupted over the area and left hundreds of thousands of refugees and casualties. In July 1994, Russia brokered a ceasefire, and ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Karabakh signed a ceasefire agreement. Conflicts, including artillery shelling and skirmishes, ensued, and mass civilians were either killed or injured. The severest dispute between two countries in the 21st century took place in early 2016. The severest fighting between two countries since 1994 took place in early 2016. It is known as the Four-day War or April War. Azerbaijani armed forces began the war, and according to them, they tried to prevent unceasing Armenian shelling of civilian areas. Dozens of people were killed, and two sides agreed on a new

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ceasefire after 4 days of fighting. However, incessant clashes and violations of ceasefire occurred, and the tensions escalated. Then, a huge conflict began on 27 September 2020. According to Artsakh authorities, the dispute started when Azerbaijan armed forces launched artillery attacks on the capital of Artsakh, Stepanakert. However, Azerbaijan forces claimed that they began the dispute as a counteroffensive to the intensive shelling of Armenian forces. Azerbaijan is supported by Turkey, which is expected to increase the range of its influence. The conflict did not end until the end of October. It destroyed private properties, damaged the civilian infrastructures and vehicles, and killed many people from both Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Aside from ongoing territorial issues, there is a governmental problem that Armenia is currently facing. The government also failed to negotiate the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Pashinyan, through a video message on Facebook, accused Azerbaijan of not trying to negotiate with the issue and further stated that there will be no diplomatic solution for a long time. With the maladministration of the Armenian government, Armenia is now having various problems on social and political sides. The 2018 Velvet Revolution was an anti-governmental protest against political corruption by the previous long-dominant political party. As a result, Serzh Sargsyan was removed from his position, and Pashinyan, the leader of the revolution, was elected as a new prime minister who served for ten years. However, several problems arose due to the misrule by government members that include the lack of political legitimacy, misunderstanding of the concept of democracy, and more. Failure to respect the rule of law led to the lack of human rights as well as infringements on the freedom of expression. In early 2020, when the COVID-19 outbreak became a major health issue in Armenia, the government didn't put effective measures to deal with it. Although they announced the public health rules, supervision of implementation did not take place until June. As a result, the pandemic is spreading in an uncontrolled manner.

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Problems Raised

Increasing Number of Refugees

With the escalation of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, more and more people are moving to find safe places to live. While 300,000 ethnic Armenians fled to Azerbaijan from 1988 to 1992, a mass number of Azerbaijanis also fled to Armenia to avoid dangers. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), or the UN Refugee Agency, up to 1.5 million people became refugees as a result of ethnic fighting in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia by 1996. The statistics from 1996 shows that 185,000 Armenians moved to Azerbaijan, and 299,000 Azerbaijanis moved to Armenia. Due to rising number of refugees, existing refugee asylums are having enormous pressures and refugees are not able to get proper humanitarian aid.



People displaced by the ongoing Nagorno Karabakh Conflict

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Internally displaced people are another serious issue caused by the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Both Armenians and Azerbaijanis are moving inside their countries to find safer places

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to live. According to the UNHCR in 1996, there were 72,000 Armenians IDPs, and 684,000 IDPs moved from Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan. This was when the Karabakh war broke out between two countries. It caused one of the world's largest number of internally displaced persons: mass exodus took place by ethnic Azeris to avoid Armenian forces. As reported by one investigation, there were about 600,000 registered Azerbaijanis IDPs in 2019. Around 40,000 of them are from Nagorno-Karabakh and other 560,000 are from the surrounding districts.

Human Rights Infringements

The Armenian government is not faithfully following the rule of law and is failing to safeguard its citizens' human rights. They have not proposed effective measure to deal with the issues raised from violence against women and the lack of care for children with disabilities. Although the Armenian government created and transformed several programs to support children-care, those programs do not include children with disabilities. As a result, children with disabilities continue to face discrimination and are not able to receive proper accommodation. Domestic violence against women is another serious ongoing issue regarding human rights. Throughout first five months of 2018, there were 223 domestic violence incidents recorded. Even though some cases were brought to the court, lower than one-third of those cases were convicted. In the first half of 2017, at least 4 women were killed due to violence, and at least 50 women were killed from 2010 to 2017. The legislation of Armenia regarding women domestic violence covers only few isolated incidents, while other cases are not taken into account. Also, due to Armenia government's failure to protect survivors from domestic violence, the well-being of women and children are in jeopardy. The government is not changing the quality and accessibility of services for survivors.

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International Actions

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

The OSCE, the largest security-oriented intergovernmental organization, has been promoting mitigating the issue of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. Since around 1994, the organization has overseen the negotiations. The OSCE Minsk group was founded by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1992. It aims to find a peaceful resolution to Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. It has shown active attitude to resolve the problems aroused from Nagorno Karabakh conflict by promoting the negotiation process with appropriate framework. On October 19th, 2020, a summit took place in Switzerland to take effective actions and decrease the tensions in bordering regions. On September 29th, 2020, the OSCE Permanent council held a special meeting to discuss possible solutions for the conflict as



OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmen with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

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tensions increased. 57 participating countries joined the meeting and sought for sustainable development.

United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees (UNHCR)

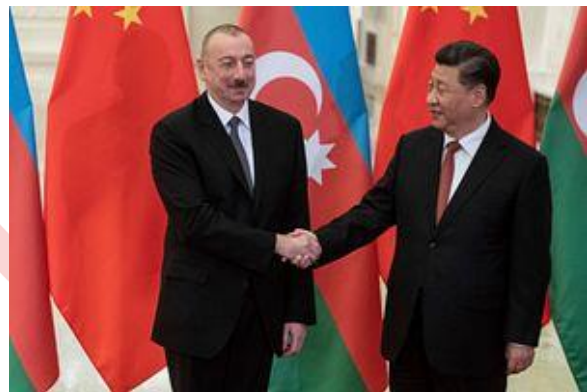
As an agency that is obligated to help and protect refugees, the UNHCR showed high concerns on the issue of Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The agency works to support those who are displaced and persecuted due to Nagorno Karabakh conflict by calling on all other UN parties to make sure that refugees' human rights are properly protected with appropriate measures and aid. Since early 1990s, when the conflict has begun, UNHCR has been assisting displaced people. It provided help to the Armenia and Azerbaijan governments to actively fulfill humanitarian needs for the displaced people and requested them for access to said people.

The P5 Nations' Stances

China

Since 2013, China gradually increased its desire to develop the south Caucasus region of Azerbaijan to create more space for China's growing economic influences. As big transportation projects emerged in the region, China invested in the "Middle Corridor" project, which is also known as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Corridor Project.

Armenia has shown interest to expand its relationship with China on various aspects such as military, politics, economics, etc. In 2019, Armenia proposed bilateral exchange programs that aim for international peacekeeping, military training, and regional security. As a result, military exchange programs were established between the two countries.



Azerbaijani president and Chinese president shaking hands during a meeting that was held in April 2019

France

France is putting huge efforts to solve Nagorno Karabakh conflict and is currently providing aid to the people situated in the region. As around 500,000 people of France population are native to Armenia, the president of France is showing keen interest to the current situation of Armenia. On November 12th, 2020, the president announced during the Paris Peace Forum that France is prepared to establish reasonable and long-lasting resolutions for both Armenia and Azerbaijan on the ongoing conflict that they are currently facing. Furthermore, France calls for the active consideration and international supervision from other nations regarding the conflict.

Russia

The Russian Federation played a key role to set a ceasefire deal to resolve the severe conflicts ongoing between Armenia and Azerbaijan for several weeks throughout late September

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to October. On November 9th, their peace deal was signed by the Russian president, Armenian president and Azerbaijani president. As this peace deal took effect, Russia deployed military forces of 2000 troops to a region called Lachin corridor, which is the area that connects the Karabakh capital to Armenia.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom created a new UK aid package to help children and injured people, provide necessities to refugees, open access to medical kits, etc. UK's support to growing numbers of civilian casualties and displaced people have been appreciated globally. UK is promoting active protection to people who suffer from Nagorno Karabakh conflict by supporting the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC Regional director for Eurasia has shown gratefulness to the UK for its considerable contribution by providing high quality funding and helping the ICRC to respond quickly to the ongoing armed conflict.

United States of America

The United States has been providing humanitarian assistance to Armenia and putting efforts to improve its relations with Armenia. US assistance programs encompass humanitarian aid as well as the long-lasting development and economic stabilization of Armenia. As a part of the Minsk group, the United States sought to resolve various problems raised by the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The United States brokered a ceasefire in October and urged nations to promote substantive negotiations.

Possible Solutions

Providing Humanitarian Support to Displaced People

Hundreds and thousands of people living in the Nagorno Karabakh region and surrounding areas are suffering from unstable environments and the lack of necessities. Nations and organizations can cooperate to provide additional humanitarian aid to the people, especially to refugees. Providing proper education to children, protecting their human rights, and offering food and shelters are urgently needed for these people. Humanitarian support can be boosted by raising public awareness through mass media and other means of communication.

Promoting Child Education

According to a report released in October 2020, around 24,000 children in Karabakh are deprived of their right to get proper education, which is mainly because of the unceasing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Therefore, nations and organizations should work to open educational access to these children so that they may not



Children in Karabakh

only foster their abilities to learn individually but also improve their communities as a whole. The United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) distributed 3,000 school bags and kits to the

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children in Karabakh. It is also establishing 15 temporary learning places in the shelters to promote children education. Considering the significant impact of children education, nations and organizations should encourage education for children who are currently deprived in learning.

Glossary

Ceasefire: temporary cessation of a war that takes place if both sides agree

Internally displaced persons (IDPs): people who are forced to flee from their home but within the country. In other words, they are refugees looking for safer place in their countries without crossing the border.



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