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**STATUS QUO ON KARABAKH CONFLICT UNACCEPTABLE ANY MORE - FRENCH OFFICIAL**

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By Elmira Tariverdiyeva - Trend

Status quo on the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is unacceptable any more, as it causes the growth of tension and the threat of the conflict's renewal, says Harlem Desir, France's secretary of state for European affairs.

Desir made the remarks Apr. 25 at a press conference in Yerevan, Armenia, News.am reported Apr. 25.

"Our approach is that the conflict can be solved through negotiations only," he said.

All have seen numerous victims and suffering over the recent years and the conflict's continuation causes more victims and suffering, he noted.

In this context, as Desir said, Europe's opinion that the conflict isn't of its concern does not correspond to reality.

"There can be no talk about international stability as long as there is a risk of the conflict renewal in Nagorno-Karabakh," he said, adding therefore, France, as a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, and its only European co-chair, will make all the efforts for the conflict's peaceful resolution.

On the night of April 2, 2016, all the frontier positions of Azerbaijan were subjected to heavy fire from the Armenian side, which used large-caliber weapons, mortars and grenade launchers.

The armed clashes resulted in deaths and injuries among the Azerbaijani population. Azerbaijan responded with a counter-attack, which led to liberation of several strategic heights and settlements.

Military operations were stopped on the line of contact between Azerbaijani and Armenian armies on Apr. 5 at 12:00 (UTC/GMT + 4 hours) with the consent of the sides, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry earlier said. Ignoring the agreement, the Armenian side again started violating the ceasefire.

The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. As a result of the ensuing war, in 1992 Armenian armed forces occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts. The 1994 ceasefire agreement was followed by peace negotiations.

Armenia has not yet implemented four UN Security Council resolutions on withdrawal of its armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding districts.

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