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## ARMENIA ALWAYS AVOIDS MEETINGS WITHIN PACE, SAYS AZERBAIJAN

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By Anakhanum Hidayatova – Trend

Azerbaijan has long ago expressed readiness for a meeting with the Armenian delegation in Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), however, Armenians have always avoided it, Samad Seyidov, head of the Azerbaijani delegation to PACE, told Trend Dec. 9.

Seyidov, who is also the chairman of the international and interparliamentary relations committee in Azerbaijan's Parliament, was commenting on the PACE initiative to hold such a meeting.

Earlier, President of the PACE Pedro Agramunt made a proposal to hold a meeting of Azerbaijani and Armenian delegations in the PACE.

Azerbaijan has always insisted on this meeting, however, the Armenians state that if the meetings are held in the OSCE Minsk Group format, there is no need for discussion within the framework of the Council of Europe, Seyidov said.

He added that the meetings between the delegations, as well as between the heads of communities of Nagorno-Karabakh would make it possible to review the situation on the conflict in detail.

The Azerbaijani side has repeatedly expressed its position – we are ready for a meeting. If the Armenian delegation also expresses its readiness, it will be up to PACE to organize the meeting, he said.

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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