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## **THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE OSCE MINSK GROUP PLAN TO TRAVEL TO THE REGION IN MARCH**

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The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group Ambassadors Igor Popov (Russia), Stephane Visconti (France) and Richard Hoagland (the U.S.) plan to travel to the region in March, the CO-Chairs said it at their joint statement on the meeting with FMs of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Note that the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group met yesterday with the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and the Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian, separately and then jointly. The Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk, also participated in the meetings.

Then the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group release joint statement on the results of the meeting.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict entered its modern phase when the Armenian SRR made territorial claims against the Azerbaijani SSR in 1988.

A fierce war broke out between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. As a result of the war, Armenian armed forces occupied some 20 percent of Azerbaijani territory which includes Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts (Lachin, Kalbajar, Aghdam, Fuzuli, Jabrayil, Gubadli and Zangilan), and over a million Azerbaijanis became refugees and internally displaced people.

The military operations finally came to an end when Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a ceasefire agreement in Bishkek in 1994.

Dealing with the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the OSCE Minsk Group, which was created after the meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Helsinki on 24 March 1992. The Groups members include Azerbaijan, Armenia, Russia, the United States, France, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Belarus, Finland and Sweden.

Besides, the OSCE Minsk Group has a co-chairmanship institution, comprised of Russian, US and French co-chairs, which began operating in 1996.

Resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 of the UN Security Council, which were passed in short intervals in 1993, and other resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly, PACE, OSCE, OIC, and other organizations require Armenia to unconditionally withdraw its troops from Nagorno-Karabakh.

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Kaynak/Source: