
MOSCOW STRESSES NEED TO REDUCE MISTRUST BETWEEN ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN

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There is a need to reduce the mistrust between Armenia and Azerbaijan to start a meaningful process over the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said. He made the remarks addressing a press conference following the talks with his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov in Moscow March 6.

Lavrov pledged that Russia will continue its efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

He said that during the meeting they discussed possible ways of settling the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

We think that the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is likely to be resolved. However, its necessary to reduce the mistrust between Azerbaijan and Armenia in order to begin a meaningful process over the conflicts settlement. This is indicated by the results of longstanding contacts, on the basis of which it was possible to develop a common approach towards the key issues to be resolved, said Lavrov.

These include the humanitarian problem, issued related to the return of the Armenian-controlled districts adjacent to Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the determination of the Nagorno-Karabakhs status □ obviously given the people who live there. Here also includes coordination of the

parameters of international peacekeeping forces, he added.

The Russian minister noted that most of these issues have been agreed on.

However, two or three specific topics that are key to the final package are still being discussed. And I will not dissemble, the sides are still far from coming to a common approach towards these aspects, he said.

Lavrov stressed that a couple of the key issues of the Karabakh settlement, which were discussed in Moscow, still require extra efforts.

Mammadyarov in his turn noted that Yerevan lacks the political will to resolve the conflict.

The Azerbaijani FM hailed Russia's serious efforts to resolve the conflict.

The main problem Baku faces is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Russia is making serious efforts in this direction. Today we discussed this issue in detail, said Mammadyarov, adding. In this case, it all depends not only on Azerbaijan, but also on Russia as a co-chair country of the OSCE Minsk Group. Of course, the Armenian side should play an important role in accepting the proposals that are on the table.

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 CSCE (OSCE after the Budapest summit held in Dec.1994) 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, the 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.

Kaynak/Source: