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**AZERBAIJAN SAYS IT SUPPORTS CONTINUATION OF SUBSTANTIVE KARABAKH TALKS**

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By Seba Aghayeva - Trend

Azerbaijan supports continuation of substantive talks on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Spokesman for the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry Hikmat Hajiyev told Trend July 12.

Hajiyev was commenting on the negotiations of Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov with his Armenian counterpart Edward Nalbandian in Brussels July 11.

At the meeting of the Azerbaijani and Armenian foreign ministers in Brussels, the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group proposed to hold another meeting at the ministerial level in New York within the framework of the UN General Assembly session, Hajiyev said.

The co-chairs also proposed to hold a meeting of the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia in autumn 2017, he noted.

The foreign ministers will bring the proposal of the mediators to the attention of the heads of state, Hajiyev said.

In autumn 2017, the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group will visit the South Caucasus region again, he said.

Hajiyev went on to add that the issue of creating any mechanisms was not discussed at the meeting in Brussels.

During the meeting, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov reiterated that in order to reduce tensions and ensure security in the region, the Armenian Armed Forces must be withdrawn from Azerbaijan's occupied territories according to the plan of the mediators, Hajiyev said.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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