
US REMAINS COMMITTED TO WORKING TOWARD KARABAKH CONFLICT'S PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT

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By Leman Zeynalova - Trend

The United States remains committed to working with the parties of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict toward a peaceful settlement of the conflict, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair from the US, Ambassador Richard Hoagland told Trend Aug.16.

He noted that the issues relating to the return of territories, return of Azerbaijani refugees and IDPs to their lands, non-use of force and status for Nagorno-Karabakh are all important elements of a comprehensive settlement the parties need to discuss.

This is precisely why my fellow co-chairs and I continue to encourage the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia to meet at the earliest possible opportunity and engage in good-faith negotiations on a way forward, he said. I would like to remind that the OSCE co-chairs are mediators and facilitators. We cannot force a final decision; only the leaders of the sides can decide when it is finally time to make an historic decision that will guarantee peace and lead to eventual prosperity for the entire region.

During the increased diplomatic activity in the coming weeks and months, the co-chairs will be making a number of statements to reinforce policy and encourage highest-level negotiations, added Hoagland.

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.

Kaynak/Source: