
ARMENIA MAY SCRAP ACCORDS ON NORMALIZING TIES WITH TURKEY, SARKISIAN TELLS UN

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21.09.2017

RFE/RL, September 20, 2017

In his address to the United Nations General Assembly, Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian has said that Yerevan will declare two protocols aimed at normalizing relations with Turkey "null and void" if Ankara does not show any progress toward their implementation.

"The leadership of Turkey are mistaken if they think that those documents can be held hostage forever and ratified only at the most opportune occasion from their very point of view," Sarkisian told the UN General Assembly in New York on September 19.

The two protocols, signed by the Armenian and Turkish foreign ministers in Zurich in October 2009, would have established diplomatic relations between Ankara and Yerevan as well as reopened the countries' mutual border.

But parliaments in both countries have failed to ratify the documents,

Yerevan accuses Ankara of linking the ratification of the protocols to the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Meanwhile, Turkey says a ruling by Armenia's Constitutional Court had preconditions and restrictive provisions impairing the letter and spirit of the documents.

Speaking at the UN General Assembly, Sarkisian denied the Turkish claim and said that Armenia "will declare those two protocols null and void since they continuously lacked any positive progress toward their implementation."

"We will enter the spring of 2018 without those, as our experience has demonstrated, futile protocols," he added.

On the conflict over Azerbaijan's breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh, Sarkisian called on Baku to "recognize and respect the right of the people of Artsakh to decide its own future through a free expression of will."

In a February 2017 referendum organized by the separatists controlling Nagorno-Karabakh, the region's name was changed from the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic to the Republic of Artsakh. However, the two names are being treated as synonymous.

Azerbaijan and Armenia have been locked in a conflict over Azerbaijan's breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh for years.

Nagorno-Karabakh, populated mainly by ethnic Armenians, declared independence from Azerbaijan amid a 1988-94 war that claimed an estimated 30,000 lives and displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

Internationally mediated negotiations with the involvement of the OSCE's so-called Minsk Group have failed to result in a resolution. The Minsk Group is co-chaired by France, Russia, and the United States.

Sarkisian also accused Azerbaijan of committing "a number of war crimes against civilian population and the prisoners of war" in 2016.

"Hate speech and 'Armenophobia' was made part and parcel of the Azerbaijan's state policy," he also said.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev is scheduled to deliver his address to the UN General Assembly later on September 20.

Kaynak/Source: