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## **BAKU PROTESTS AGAINST VISIT OF ILLEGAL KARABAKH REGIME "HEAD" TO FRANCE**

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Azerbaijan strongly protests against the visit of Bako Sahakyan, the head of the illegal regime created in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, to France, one of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries, spokesman for the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry Hikmat Hajiyev told Trend Nov. 21.

Thus, the Armenian lobby, operating in the EU countries, and Armenia are trying to propagandize the illegal regime created in the occupied Azerbaijani territories and impede the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict through negotiations, Hajiyev said.

"In connection with the above-mentioned issue, a meeting with the French ambassador to Azerbaijan was held at the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry, he said. A meeting of the Azerbaijani ambassador to France is planned to be held at the French Foreign Ministry today.

We regret that France has not taken any measures to prevent this visit despite Sahakyans entry into the EU territory with the diplomatic passport of Armenia violates the Schengen rules and contradicts the commitments of France as one of the co-chair countries of the OSCE Minsk Group, he added.

Hajiyev said that on July 2, 2015, the French government at the level of foreign ministry and interior ministry sent a circular to the local prefectures and commissariats.

The circular contains warnings about the restriction of powers of local self-government bodies in the sphere of international cooperation and prohibits signing documents on international cooperation with illegal regimes not recognized by the French government, including the illegal Nagorno-Karabakh regime, he said.

Azerbaijan expects the French side, guided by this circular, to take the necessary actions with regard to the local bodies that have signed illegal documents with illegal regime created in the occupied Azerbaijani territories," Hajiyev said.

He said that taking into account the problems recently faced by the EU member states, it is necessary to pursue an unequivocal policy to curb the dangerous separatist tendencies and violation of borders, sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries.

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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Kaynak/Source: