
ARMENIAN, AZERBAIJANI LEADERS DEBATE NAGORNO-KARABAKH, MAKE LITTLE VISIBLE PROGRESS

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17.02.2020

RFL/RL (15 February 2020)

Armenia and Azerbaijan leaders butted heads over the frozen conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, but made little visible progress toward resolving the more-than-30-year-old dispute.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian met for a public discussion on February 15 at the Munich Security Conference.

Nagorno-Karabakh is a region within Azerbaijan that was seized by Armenia-backed separatists who declared independence amid a 1988-1994 conflict that ultimately killed at least 30,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands.

Russia brokered a fragile truce in 1994 and the region has been under the control of ethnic-Armenian forces that Azerbaijan says include troops supplied by Armenia. The region's claim to independence has not been recognized by any country.

International negotiators have struggled for years to resolve the dispute.

"Nagorno-Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan, this is the historical truth and...the territorial integrity is recognized by the whole world, and Nagorno-Karabakh is an integrated part of our country," Aliyev said.

"Over the past 25 years, 30 years, we are repeating every time the same thing. And I'm afraid that the international community is tired of hearing the same thing, and I think we need to bring some new ideas," Pashinian said.

There have been no large-scale clashes in years, though forces are dug into trenches and bunkers, and sniper shootings routinely lead to casualties.

The unresolved conflict has hobbled development in the South Caucasus.

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