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**PROGRESSIVE-LOOKING CHANGES IN ARMENIA MAY CREATE MORE REGIONAL CHAOS**

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by Fuad Chiragov

This week, the latest wave of escalation between Armenian and Azerbaijani armed forces along the Line of Contact culminated in the heaviest fighting between the two sides in years, which resulted in death and casualties on both sides. It was the most serious clash between the countries since April 2016 and the so-called Velvet Revolution in 2018, which gave the momentum of hope for peaceful resolution of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Unfortunately, the change of power in Armenia following the revolution has not reversed the negative trends regarding the conflict. According to the Global Militarization Index (GMI), which was compiled by Bonn International Center for Conversion, Armenia remained one of the three most militarized nations in the world for the year 2019 as it was in 2016 before Nikol Pashinyan came to power.

In April 2018, widespread corruption, mounting socioeconomic problems and mismanagement of the old corrupted oligarchic regime triggered the mass protests in Armenia, people poured into the streets and  the leadership of Pashinyan  former president Serzh Sarkisyan. Eventually, the latter was unable to remain in power as prime minister, which prolonged the Karabakh clans grip on power. The clan has ruled the country since the 1990s and had a negative impact on the lives of millions of Armenians, draining the economic and human potential of the country and depopulating Armenia, which was also in regional isolation and engaged in a conflict with neighboring Azerbaijan.

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