

ISSN: 1303-5304

REVIEW OF  
**ARMENIAN STUDIES**  
A Biannual Journal of History, Politics, and International Relations

Issue  
**42**  
2020

Facts and Comments

**Alev KILIÇ**

The Propaganda In Armenia Of The Five-Year  
Development Plans Implemented In The Soviet Union

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Implementation Of The EU's Normative Power In Armenia:  
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The Events In Zangezur From 1918 To 1921  
And The Transfer Of Zangezur To Armenia

**Ceyda ACİCBE**



TERAZI  
YAYINCILIK

## REVIEW OF ARMENIAN STUDIES

A Biannual Journal of History, Politics, and International Relations  
2020, Issue 42

*Altı Aylık, Tarih, Politika ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*  
Sayı 42, 2020

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**Review of Armenian Studies** is published biannually and legally classified as a Turkey-wide periodical publication.

**Review of Armenian Studies is a refereed journal.** Review of Armenian Studies is indexed in the EBSCO and TUBITAK-ULAKBIM databases. Articles submitted for publication are subject to peer review. The editorial/advisory board takes into consideration whether the submitted article follows the rules of scientific writing and grammar. The articles are sent to two referees known for their academic reputation in their respective areas. Upon their decision, the article will be published in the journal or rejected. The reports of the referees are kept confidential and stored in the journal's archives for five years.

AVRASYA BİR VAKFI (1993)

**Publication Office**

Terazi Yayıncılık Bas. Dağ. Dan. Eğt. Org. Mat. Kırt. Ltd. Şti.  
Abidin Daver Sok. No. 12/B Daire 4 06550 Çankaya/ANKARA  
**Tel:** 0 (312) 438 50 23-24 • **Faks:** 0 (312) 438 50 26  
**www.avim.org.tr**

**ISSN:** 1303-5304

**Subscription Office**

Hülya ÖNALP  
Terazi Yayıncılık Eğt. Org. Mat. Kırt. Ltd. Şti.  
Süleyman Nazif Sok. No.12/B Daire 4 06550  
Çankaya/ANKARA  
**Tel:** 0 (312) 438 50 23-24 - **Fax:** 0 (312) 438 50 26  
**E-mail:** terazi yayincilik@gmail.com

**Design**

Ruhi ALAGÖZ

**Printing**

Tek Ses Ofset Matbaacılık  
Kazım Karabekir Cad. Kültür Çarşısı 7/60 Altındağ / ANKARA

**Printing Date:** 7 December 2020

**Annual Subscription Fee - Turkey:** 72 TRY  
**Annual Subscription Fee - International:** 30 USD

**Please send your payment to the following bank account:**

For TRY - Terazi Yayıncılık, Garanti Bankası-Çankaya/ANKARA Branch 181/6296007  
Postal Check Account Ankara/Çankaya/Merkez 5859221

For USD - Garanti Bankası- Çankaya/ANKARA Branch 181/9086957  
IBAN: TR60 0006 2000 1810 009 0869 57

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**Review of Armenian Studies** yılda iki kez yayımlanır. Yaygın Süreli Yayın.

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**www.avim.org.tr**

**ISSN:** 1303-5304

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Tek Ses Ofset Matbaacılık  
Kazım Karabekir Cad. Kültür Çarşısı 7/60 Altındağ / ANKARA

**Baskı Tarihi:** 7 Aralık 2020

**Yurtiçi Yıllık Abone Ücreti:** 72 TL  
**Yurtdışı Yıllık Abone Ücreti:** 30 USD

**Aşağıdaki banka/posta çeki hesap numaralarına ödeme yapabilirsiniz:**

Terazi Yayıncılık, Garanti Bankası-Çankaya/ANKARA Şubesi 181/6296007  
Posta Çeki Hesabı: Ankara/Çankaya/Merkez 5859221  
IBAN: TR60 0006 2000 1810 009 0869 57

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Translation / Çeviri	
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## Contributors

**ALEV KILIÇ** graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University in 1968. The next year, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. Kiliç served as Ambassador to F.R. of Yugoslavia between 1996 and 1998 and Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg between 1998 and 2001. In 2001-2004, he served as the Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs of the Ministry. He served as Ambassador to Switzerland (2004-2009) and Ambassador to Mexican United States (2009-2011). He retired from the Ministry in 2011. Ambassador (R) Kiliç has been the Director of Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) since 2013.



**PhD (c) Tuğba BAYTİMUR** graduated from the Department of English Language and Literature of Ankara University in 1999. She worked as an English teacher in the academic year of 1999-2000, and as a lecturer at the School of Foreign Languages of İnönü University between 2000 and 2016. In 2017, she completed the Communication Sciences Master's Program jointly opened by İnönü University and Firat University. She continues her doctorate level education at the Public Relations and Advertising Department of Maltepe University. Her academic interests include political communication, propaganda, media literacy, and semiotic analysis.



**Res. Asst. Caner ÇAKI** graduated from the Department of Public Relations and Advertising of Karadeniz Technical University in 2012. He completed his master's degree in the Department of Communication Sciences at İnönü University in 2016. In the same year, he started his doctorate level education at the Department of Communication Sciences of Erciyes University. He has worked as a research assistant at İnönü University since 2015. His research areas include propaganda, political communication, social media, and public relations. He has pursued studies on the propaganda activities of different countries such as Germany under Nazi Party rule, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China. He has published studies on propaganda in many national and international journals. He is also the editor of three books titled "Propaganda and Communication", "Propaganda Music in Turkish Political Life", and "Propaganda Studies in Turkish Political Life".



**Lecturer Ferit Arda ARICA** graduated from the Department of Radio, Television and Cinema of Ankara University. He completed his master's degree at the Department of Communication Sciences of Inonu University in 2017. Subsequently, he started to pursue his doctorate level education at the Department of Communication Sciences of Sakarya University. In the same year, he began serving as a lecturer at the Department of Radio and Television Programming of İstanbul Gelişim University. He has conducted studies on propaganda, political communication, and social media and has published these studies in various academic journals.



**Tutku DİLAVER** graduated from the Department of International Relations of Ankara University in 2015. After her graduation, she took lectures on EU-Turkey Relations, EU Law, and EU History at the master's level in the European Union and International Economic Relations program of Ankara University's European Communities Research and Implementation Center (ATAUM). In 2020, she completed her master's degree in the Caucasus Studies Program under the Department of International Relations at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University's Institute of Social Sciences. During her undergraduate studies, Dilaver participated in the Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales (AIESEC) student community as a volunteer. In 2016, she worked as the Project Assistant in a private company dealing with European Union projects. After her completion of a six-month trainee program in the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) in August 2017, Dilaver joined AVİM as a Scholar in Residence. She has been working as an Analyst at AVİM since August 2019.



**PhD (c) Samira HABİBBAYLI** received her undergraduate and master's level law degrees from Nakhchivan State University in 2004 and 2007, respectively. Since 2018, she has been pursuing her doctorate level education on international relations at the Institute of Law and Human Rights of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS), focusing on the subject of "Azerbaijan-Georgia relations: background, developments, and prospects". At the same time, she serves as the Head of the Human Resources at the Institute of Caucasus Studies of ANAS. She is the author of 16 academic articles in the field of international relations.



**Ceyda ACİCBE** graduated from the Department of Sociology of Middle East Technical University in 2017. After completing her undergraduate degree, she began a graduate program with thesis in the Department of Sociology of the same university. During her graduate studies, she has benefited from the project-based Mevlana Exchange Programme established by the Turkish Higher Educational Council. Within the scope of the Mevlana program, she took undergraduate and graduate level courses at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv during the 2018-2019 academic year as well as taking part in two different projects as a researcher. Acicbe has been working as an Analyst at the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) since September 2019.



**A**s always, the first article in the 42nd issue of our journal is “**Facts And Comments**”. This article covers Turkey-Armenia relations as well as domestic and international developments of Armenia in the period of August to December of 2020. The period has brought about disastrous developments for Armenia, starting with an inapt handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, a sharp downturn in the economy, and disappointing failures of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s government in fulfilling its promises and carrying out reforms. To divert attention away from its failures, the government has played the radical nationalism card and has adopted a bellicose rhetoric that has led to a war with Azerbaijan, resulting in a humiliating defeat for Armenia. Turkey, having firmly expressed its support for Azerbaijan, was officially declared by Armenia to be the enemy, leading to an all-time low in bilateral relations between the two sides.

In their article titled “**The Propaganda In Armenia Of The Five-Year Development Plans Implemented In The Soviet Union**”, Tuğba Baytimur, Caner Çakı, and Ferit Arda Arıca analyze several propaganda posters prepared by the Soviet Union to convince the people of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic that the five-year development plans of Soviet Union would be beneficial for Armenia and its people and also the Soviet Union as a whole. Using Karl Bühler’s Organon Model, the authors interpret the “expressiveness”, “representation”, and “appeal” functions of the propaganda posters, thereby revealing the messages that Soviet authorities were trying to give to the masses. The authors argue that the propaganda posters did not seek to glorify Communist ideology or leadership cults, but rather emphasized the importance of work and labor.

In her article titled “**Implementation Of The EU’s Normative Power In Armenia: Transformation Or Toleration?**”, Tutku Dilaver evaluates the effectiveness of the European Union as a “normative power” in Armenia. To achieve this, she first delves into the literature of normative power and the EU’s overall stance concerning this form of power. She also comprehensively narrates the history and framework of the relations between the EU and Armenia, highlighting what the EU seeks to achieve in Armenia and how Armenia approaches the EU. Dilaver’s study reveals that the EU cannot use its normative power in Armenia effectively, both because of EU’s inconsistent and lax approach towards Armenia in the implementation reforms and Armenia’s unwillingness to carry out reforms due to the subversive influence



of Russia in the country. As such, the EU is demonstrated to be only a limited normative power in Armenia.

In her article titled “**Attempts By Armenia And Related Actors To Disrupt Azerbaijan-Georgia Relations**”, Samira Habibbayli examines the activities of Armenia (and actors related to this country through kinship or interest) carried out to negatively influence the bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia. Habibbayli begins by outlining the positions of Azerbaijan and Georgia on the one hand, and Armenia on the other hand in the South Caucasus. Feeling left out of the regional cooperation between Azerbaijan and Georgia and neighboring countries such as Turkey and threatened by the successes of its rival Azerbaijan, Armenia seeks ways to sabotage the relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia. For this, Armenia utilizes a multitude of actors, including government officials, NGOs, religious functionaries, and foreign politicians. Habibbayli argues that Armenia does manage to cause provocations and tensions in Azerbaijani-Georgia relations, but that Azerbaijani-Georgia relations enjoy a strong foundation that must nevertheless be strengthened to better resist attempts at sabotage.

In her article titled “**The Events In Zangezur From 1918 To 1921 And The Transfer Of Zangezur To Armenia**”, Ceyda Acicbe narrates the chain of events that resulted in the transfer of the Azerbaijani land of Zangezur to Armenia in a *fait accompli* manner. Acicbe explains to the reader the importance of Zangezur for the Caucasus region and how the various powers viewed this strategically important piece of land. Despite historically being an Azerbaijani land, the political situation began to turn against Azerbaijanis favor in terms of Zangezur with the excursions Tsarist Russia into the South Caucasus in the 19th century and the mass arrival of Armenians to region with the encouragement of the Russians. Through the mass violence perpetrated by radical-nationalist Armenian groups and the political machinations in the Soviet Union geared towards cutting off Azerbaijan’s ties with Turkey and the wider Turkish world, Zangezur became a part of Armenia.

Have a nice reading and best regards,

Editor

## EDITORIAL / BAŞYAZI

**To cite this article:** Alev Kılıç, “Facts And Comments”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 42 (2020): 9-79.

**Received:** 30.11.2020

**Accepted:** 04.12.2020

# FACTS AND COMMENTS

(OLAYLAR VE YORUMLAR)

Alev KILIÇ\*

**Abstract:** *This article covers Turkey-Armenia relations as well as domestic and international developments of Armenia in the period of August to December of 2020. The period has witnessed disastrous developments for Armenia, starting with inapt handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, sharp downturn in the economy, disappointing failures and visible incompetence of the Pashinyan Government to fulfill its promises and to carry out reforms, resorting to playing the radical nationalism card, pinning the blame on foreign enemies (on the usual suspects, Azerbaijan and Turkey) so as to cling to power, bellicose rhetoric leading to war with Azerbaijan followed by a humiliating defeat. As a result, large swath of occupied Azerbaijan's territory was recovered, giving the upper hand to Azerbaijan at the eventual negotiations for the final settlement. Turkey, having unwaveringly and staunchly expressed its support for Azerbaijan, was officially declared by Armenia to be the enemy, bringing relations to its yet lowest ebb.*

**Keywords:** *Nikol Pashinyan, war with Azerbaijan, Artsakh (Armenian occupied Nagorno Karabakh), Turkey-Armenia Relations*

**Öz:** *Bu incelemede Ermenistan'ın iç ve dış dinamiklerinde ve Türkiye-Ermenistan ilişkilerinde Ağustos-Aralık 2020 ayları arasındaki gelişmeler ele alınmaktadır. Ele aldığımız dönem Ermenistan bakımından felaket olarak nitelendirilebilecek gelişmelere sahne olmuştur. COVID-19*

\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5180-2896>  
Ambassador (R), Director of the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)  
Email: [akilic@avim.org.tr](mailto:akilic@avim.org.tr)

*pandemisinde kötü bir sınav verilmiş, ekonomide ciddi bir gerileme gözlenmiş, Paşinyan hükümeti halka vaatlerini yerine getirmede ve reformları gerçekleştirmede vahim yanlışlarını ve beceriksizlik ve yeteneksizliklerini örtebilmek, iktidarı sürdürebilmek amacıyla aşırı milliyetçilik kartına başvurmuş, suçu dış düşmanlara (her zaman olduğu gibi Türkiye ve Azerbaycan'a) yüklemiş, saldırgan tutumu Azerbaycan ile savaşa neden olmuş ve sonunda tam bir hezimete uğramıştır. Savaş sonunda Azerbaycan ordusu işgal altındaki topraklarının büyük bir kısmını geri almış ve öngörülen nihai barış anlaşması müzakereleri için güçlü bir konuma gelmiştir. Bu savaşta Azerbaycan'ı kararlı ve güçlü bir şekilde destekleyen Türkiye'yi Ermenistan resmen düşman olarak ilan etmiş, ilişkiler bugüne kadarki en düşük noktaya ulaşmıştır.*

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** *Nikol Paşinyan, Azerbaycan ile savaş, Artsakh (Ermenistan işgalindeki Dağlık Karabağ), Türkiye-Ermenistan ilişkileri*

## 1. Domestic developments in Armenia

The deadly fighting that erupted on the Azerbaijan-Armenian border in the strategic Tovuz region on 11-12-13 July with 17 casualties was the harbinger of the difficult days ahead. In the meantime, internal opposition was becoming vociferous. Four major opposition parties, spearheaded by ARF-Dashnaktsutyun strongly criticized the government with a joint declaration on 11 July concerning its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met on 11 August with President Armen Sarkisian to review pressing issues, reportedly, the fighting at the border with Azerbaijan, the ongoing pandemic and the economic fallout of the crisis. Revealing for the future, Pashinyan told the president:

“It is important to note that the military rhetoric being advanced by the leadership of Azerbaijan for years that advanced the myth that the Azerbaijani army had superiority over the Armenian armed forces, collapsed in a flash following ‘Tovuz’ incidents. To my mind, this has led to a completely new geopolitical and military-political situation in the region. By and large, this comes to strengthen Armenia’s long-standing position, which has been adhered to by all Armenian authorities and governments, namely that the Karabakh conflict has no military solution – it can be resolved exclusively through peaceful means. This is a reality that must be reckoned with.”

Sharing the Prime Minister’s views, President A. Sarkisian added the following:

“In the early 1990’s, when I served as ambassador to many European countries, including NATO, many diplomats and military experts told me that our efforts were doomed to failure, since we are a small country, we do not have a powerful army, while Azerbaijan has a huge army and is being backed by the neighboring country. A few years later the same people told me that Armenia has the most powerful army in the South Caucasus. Recent events have shown that Armenia has the most powerful army in the South Caucasus, which cannot be defeated. The army is not only weapons, discipline and readiness; the Armenian army boasts a high spirit that no one has in the region. I am happy that those people’s suspicions about the Armenian army were dispelled.”<sup>1</sup>

The economy was already in dire straits as a 2.6% decline was forecast early in the year. At the end of the third quarter, hard currency reserves stood at 2.5

1 “President, Prime Minister Discuss Pressing Issues Facing Armenia”, *Asbarez*, August 12, 2020, <https://asbarez.com/196144/president-prime-minister-discuss-pressing-issues-facing-armenia/>.

billion US dollars. Net external reserves amounted to 1.8 billion. A major input of the Armenian economy; remittances of workers abroad; have decreased by 15.3% to 893.3 million dollars in the period of January-July compared to the same period of the past year. According to the projection of the governor of Armenian Central Bank made on 15 September, the year 2020 would see a 6.2% negative growth rate. Overall economic activity in October 2020 saw an 8.1% decline compared to October 2019. Sales and services sectors have decreased by 21%. Foreign trade decreased by 19%, with imports decreasing by 26%.

Pashinyan appeared on 14 August in BBC's "Hardtalk" program. The moderator started with a harsh assessment, saying, "When I look at Armenia today, it seems many Armenians feel that the hopes of the 'velvet revolution' have been dashed". He also touched upon the Armenian government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, saying that it has been a real failure. He also reflected, on other issues, including the occupation of Azerbaijan territory and Nagorno Karabakh conflict, on the developments around the Constitutional Court of Armenia, noting that the removal of the three judges were connected with the detained former President Robert Kocharyan's case<sup>2</sup>. Pashinyan's remarks of denial were not convincing.

Former President Serzh Sargsyan held a press conference on 19 August. Having barely held any press conference during his tenure in 2008-2018, this unexpected move gave rise to much speculation. However, not much of substance came out of it. He criticized those blaming Russia provoking the Tovuz fighting. He said, "Russia has provided Armenia with tremendous support, and it is unacceptable to accuse it of provoking the war". He also said, "Russia is our strategic ally. Spreading such ideas is ignorance and accusing an ally of provoking a war is betrayal, is impermissible".

Pashinyan chaired another sitting of the National Security Council on 21 August, the previous being held on 10 July. He praised the "victorious battles" of the Armenian army in Tovuz and urged Azerbaijan not to speak to Armenia in the language of force, deeming it a "hopeless rhetoric". He went on to say, "the victorious battles of July proved that there is no military solution to the Karabakh issue. It is time for the Azerbaijani authorities to accept this if there is a military solution to the Karabakh issue, then the people of Karabakh have solved it long ago."<sup>3</sup>

2 "HARDtalk's Stephen Sackur to Pashinyan: People's hopes seem to have been dashed", *Panorama.am*, August 14, 2020, <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2020/08/14/HARDtalk-Pashinyan/2343886>

3 "The victorious battles in July proved that there is no military solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. PM", *I News*, August 21, 2020, <https://www.ilurer.am/en/2020/08/21/The-victorious-battles-in-July-proved-that-there-is-no-military-solution-to-the-Nagorno-Karabakh-co/298050>

The protests by the opposition, with ARF-Dashnaksutyun in the lead, against the education reform culminated in calls for the resignation of the Minister of Education. On 28 August, the Minister rejected those demands saying, “my resignation is not a matter of discussion”. He accused the protesters of lying on a number of claims including “they lie when they say that Anatolia is written in textbooks instead of Armenian Highland”. The Armenian Catholicos of Etchmiadzin Karekin II also did not spare his comments, saying that the Ministry did not make “sufficient efforts” to cooperate with the Church and demanded that Armenian church history should remain compulsory in the curriculum.

The European Bank of Reconstruction and Development announced in August that its investments in the Amulsar gold mine were due to end as protest obstructing work had been renewed at the mine site.

On 1 September, a program of Diaspora Armenian specialists of the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs was launched with the aim to prepare a path to facilitate repatriation. The representative of ARF-Dashnaksutyun noted that “during the previous government and during this government” they presented a proposal to develop a comprehensive strategy on repatriation with state sponsorship. High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs informed the public that following the 4 August explosion in Beirut, more than 1,100 Lebanese Armenians had flown to Armenia as of 2 September. He further said that “our goal is to repatriate 2 million Armenians over the next 30 years.”<sup>4</sup> The Prime Minister went even further, saying that the population of Armenia should reach at least 5 million by 2050. Azerbaijan took legal issue with the settlement of Lebanese Armenian families in Nagorno Karabakh, exposing it as “illegal settlement”.

In this context, there was a dire warning in the international press. *EU Reporter* on 23 September wrote of alarming reports that Armenia has been relocating Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) terrorists from Syria and Iraq to the occupied territories of Nagorno Karabakh to prepare for future hostilities and train Armenian militias. It was further alleged that “according to Cairo 24 News Agency and other reliable local sources, Armenia went so far as to let its top-level career diplomats negotiate a transfer plan with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan”.<sup>5</sup>

Armenian Foreign Minister announced on 1 September that Armenia planned to upgrade the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant not on loans from Russia, but on its own budget resources.

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4 “Armenia encouraging migrants following Beirut blast”, *EurasiaNet*, September 3, 2020, <https://eurasianet.org/armenia-encouraging-migrants-following-beirut-blast>

5 “PKK’s Involvement in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict would Jeopardise European Security”, *EU Political Report*, September 23, 2020, <https://www.eupoliticalreport.eu/pkks-involvement-in-the-armenia-azerbaijan-conflict-would-jeopardise-european-security/>

The Armenian Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures and Russia's Ministry of Transportation signed on 2 September a protocol for the development of South Caucasian Railway, extending to Iran.

Following the lifting of the state of emergency on 11 September on COVID-19 pandemic that had been declared six months ago, the government initiated a new legislative package, giving the executive the power to impose quarantine, which the government put into effect immediately and introduced a 4-month quarantine until 11 January. The Ministry of Health informed the public that 10% of overall public spending on health care of the 2020 budget was spent on COVID-19 since March.

The Prosecutor General's Office set up on 4 September a special division tasked with enforcing a controversial law allowing the confiscation of private properties and other assets deemed to have been acquired illegally in line with Pashinyan's repeated call that "wealth stolen from the people" must be recovered.

The Armenian parliament elected on 15 September three new members to the Constitutional Court to replace the three, including the president of the court, ousted in June. The controversially ousted three judges refused to step down, claiming that their removal was illegal and politically motivated. They appealed to the European Court of Human Rights to be reinstated.

On 21 September, the third Republic of Armenia celebrated its 29th anniversary of independence. Unlike Georgia and Azerbaijan, which identify themselves with their second independent republic, Armenia takes into account also the Soviet time republic and raises the number to three.

The Director of Armenia's National Security Service was relieved of his duties by the Prime Minister after only four months in office.

On 22 September, the ARF-Dashnaktsutyun and two other opposition parties announced that they would hold a joint anti-government rally on 8 October. They accused the government of failing everywhere and endangering the country's development prospects. They claimed the need for the formation of a new kind of national government. The rally did not take place as war started on 27 September, but the opposition hit back with vengeance after the defeat and the signing of 10 November agreement.

Protesters, with ARF-Dashnaktsutyun in the fore, started a night of riots in Yerevan over the outcome of the 2020 Karabakh War against Azerbaijan, stormed the government headquarters, ransacked the premises of the Prime Minister and the parliament, attacked the Speaker of the Parliament who was beaten in front of his wife and child to the point of being hospitalized. The

mob chanted for the resignation of the Prime Minister, which was shortly after taken up by the opposition parties and even by the President himself. A rally organized by 17 parliamentary and extra-parliamentary political parties demanded his resignation.

The ARF-Dashnaksutyun was the first to issue a formal statement to demand that the Prime Minister resigned “amicably”. It was followed by others. The ‘My Step’ party of Pashinyan came up with a defensive statement, claiming that, “the current analysis of hostilities shows that the Armenian people have fought together not only against Azerbaijan, but also against one of the world’s largest armed forces, state-of-the-art weapons, an army with unlimited human resources, mercenary terrorists and special forces recruited from different countries”. The party further challenged the opposition stating, before discussing the legitimacy of the agreement on the end of the Karabakh war,

“We suggest that the opposition state very clearly to all Armenians and the world that they:

1. Support the cancellation of the Russian mediation;
2. Support the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from the line of contact;
3. They are in favor of continuing the war.

After making this statement, the opposition forces are also obliged to present the proposed roadmap for victory in the resumed war.”<sup>6</sup>

Diaspora Armenians, again with the lead of ARF-Dashnaksutyun came up with the following statement published in an Armenian American Daily, *Asbarez*:

“Armenian Revolutionary Federation

The statement signed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan on November 10, 2020 to end the war is nothing but a defeatist and humiliating document, which is not only a great crime against the interests, desires and goals of the homeland and the entire Armenian nation, but also it unequivocally endangers and violates the absolute right of the future generations of the Armenian people to live in an independent, secure and developing country and to build a dignified future.

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6 “Armenia: My Step Parliamentary Faction Challenges Opposition to Present ‘Victory Roadmap’”, *Hetq*, November 12, 2020, <https://hetq.am/en/article/124212>



This reprehensible and unacceptable document on the complete surrender (capitulation) of Armenia and Artsakh has infuriated and angered the Armenian people, whose just demand, in order to salvage the situation, is for Nikol Pashinyan leave without incident.

In the wake of the popular uprising, the ruling regime has begun arresting opposition party leaders and other public figures in order to evade responsibility, extend its rule and silence the people by force. We strongly condemn the illegal arrests and stress that with such actions it is impossible to curb a just wave of popular protest and anger.

At the same time, we consider the resignation of Prime Minister Pashinyan vital for the implementation of the steps envisioned by the trilateral statement and the negotiations on the next stages of the settlement of the Artsakh conflict in general, in order to create an opportunity to defend the interests of the republics of Armenia and Artsakh and the Armenian people in a worthy manner.

The Prime Minister's resignation will signal that he places national interests above his personal political ambitions. If the Prime Minister really signed the tripartite statement in order to save the remnants of the Homeland, by the same logic he should resign, to allow political forces to unify our national potential and emerge from this situation. We caution the Prime Minister not to destabilize the country with his violence, persecution and provocations. We call on our people to be vigilant and not to give in to provocations.

At the very least, the Prime Minister, himself, knows full well the ARF's unconditional and unwavering devotion to the homeland. From the first moments of the war we expressed to the Prime Minister, personally, our willingness to put aside all our differences and the ARF's readiness to enlist, with its entire structure, in the Armenian Army. In the days that followed that willingness and responsibility was proven on the battlefield and on the sidelines on internal and external fronts. We conveyed this to the Prime Minister on several occasions during the entire duration of the war.

Finally, we call on our youth around the world to not to despair, not to be disappointed and not to be discouraged. Our commitment to defend our national interests is unwavering. Through our unrelenting struggle, albeit sometimes unsuccessful, we will finally achieve our national aspirations.”<sup>7</sup>

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7 “ARF Bureau Statement Addresses Trilateral Agreement”, *Armenian Weekly*, November 12, 2020, <https://armenianweekly.com/2020/11/12/arf-bureau-statement-addresses-trilateral-agreement/>

ARF-Dashnaktsutyun Western US Central Committee added the following:

“The ARF fully and unequivocally rejects this perilous and defeatist document the Prime Minister is trying to force upon the Armenian Nation, under the guise of a peaceful resolution to the war in Artsakh. This so called peace agreement that gives away one third of the former Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, displacing thousands of Artsakh’s citizenry; which gives up control over Lachin to the Azeri military, ensuring a chokehold on the lifeline of the people of Artsakh; which demands the removal of all Armenian military forces from Artsakh, placing the security of our people at the mercy of an Azerbaijani government which has repeatedly expressed its desire to ethnically cleanse them; which gives away lands secured by blood in Hadrut and Kelbajar; and finally which requires Armenia to give up land to build a route over Syunik to connect Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan, giving Turkey direct access over Armenian lands. This last condition can and will endanger Armenian’s viability by cutting off its direct access to Iran and ultimately will serve Erdogans’s Pan-Turkism dream. There isn’t a single redeeming factor within this agreement that is beneficial or favorable to Armenia and Artsakh.

We condemn this agreement and the irresponsible actions of PM Nikol Pashinyan. As the leader of the Republic of Armenia, he had the sacred duty to safeguard the interests of our Nation. As someone who preached democratic values and social justice during the Velvet Revolution, he had to be transparent and honest with the people. Instead, he engaged in deception and concealed the truth about the war and its outcome. A surrender of this magnitude and consequence proves the government’s inability to deal with the national interest of Artsakh. The Prime Minister incompetently handled the national defense and then shamefully blamed others. He must be held accountable.”

Pashinyan addressed the nation on 12 November, defending his decision by repeating that Armenia signed the document to put an end to a bloody six-week war after a series of defeats in the battlefield. He sought to reaffirm his control of the situation, stressing that restoration of an atmosphere of stability and security is a priority for his government.

In his address to the parliament on 16 November, Prime Minister Pashinyan pledged to reshuffle his cabinet. The Foreign Minister was the first to be sacked. This was no surprise. He was the front man to counsel the Prime Minister that the West would come to help. He was also the protagonist to deepen anti-Turkish rhetoric to entice third parties. Earlier, he had leaked to the press that he was unaware of the planned signing of the agreement and the

very sensitive issue of retreat from the town of Shusha, cause of mass protests, was beyond his knowledge, dealt solely by Pashinyan, was a relevant revelation of his character. A career diplomat, former deputy minister Ara Ayyvazian was appointed as Armenia's new Foreign Minister.

Minister for Emergency Situations stepped down amid continuing opposition calls for the government's resignation. An active duty general, Andranik Piloyan was appointed in his place. Minister of Defense, another minister who had misled the Prime Minister also resigned. Minister of Labor and Social Affairs was replaced by Mesrop Arekelyan, an advisor to the Prime Minister.

The fifth member of the Armenian government to resign was the Minister of Education, a close associate of Pashinyan and founding member of his party. His resignation was long demanded by the ARF as well as the Church which he resisted resolutely. It is possible to assume that he was sacrificed for political convenience. He was replaced by Vahram Dumanian, an academic at the Yerevan State University.

The sixth minister to be replaced was the Minister of Economy. He was replaced by Vahan Kerobian, a businessman.

A thorn on the side of the Prime Minister emerged to be President A. Sarkisian. After Pashinyan's announcement of the 10 November agreement and fierce reaction of the opposition became evident, the President went public, stating that he was not consulted on the end of war agreement, that he learned from the press about the circumstances as if he was not promoting the war effort all along and as if he did not hold the top office to be able to be informed of all. He then called for consultations and talked with opposition representatives, following which he said, "The government that led to the tragedy must go", again, as if he was not part of that tragedy. This was another case of revelation of character. He reiterated calls for the resignation of the government and to hold snap elections. On 26 November, in an interview with *Armenian Public Television*, he again insisted that this was a necessary condition for addressing a "deep crisis" in Armenia. The embattled Prime Minister retorted that the opposition's drive to force him to step down is not backed by most Armenians. His allies argued that only a few thousand people attended the rallies. The President responding to that argument said, "I believe we have a really deep crisis and a simple analysis will help us understand why there are no 100,000 or 200,000 people in the streets".

The President apparently wants to have a stronger influence on government policies and political process. He complained that:

“I am able to use only 5 or 10 percent of my potential for my country due to constitutional constraints or my partners not being open to cooperation ... I believe I can do much more in international relations and the investment-related, cultural and diplomatic areas but am doing very little.”<sup>8</sup>

He went on to reveal that he has drawn up a policy “roadmap” for the would-be interim government. He said it contains a set of urgent government actions which he believes are vital for Armenia in the current circumstances. “These are concrete tasks for concrete spheres,” he added without elaborating.

## **2. Occupied Azerbaijani territories of Nagorno Karabakh and adjacent provinces**

The fighting at the Armenia-Azerbaijan border in the Tovuz region on 12-14 July proved to be the precursor of what was to come in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Following the attack in Tovuz, Turkey, Ukraine, Pakistan, and Moldova issued statements supporting Azerbaijan. The Secretary General of the Turkish Council also condemned the Armenian attacks and supported the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan against the occupation of Armenia. There were no statements of support to Armenia except from the Greek Administration of South Cyprus (GASC). The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) also managed not to get involved. Commenting on the fighting, Foreign Minister of Russia blamed “a whole lot of reasons”, primarily the “unresolved” Nagorno Karabakh conflict for the resumption of tensions.

Addressing the Moscow State Foreign Relations Institute on 1 September, Foreign Minister of Russia made groundbreaking remarks for the solution of Nagorno Karabakh conflict. He pointed out the set of documents developed over almost 18 years, called “Madrid Principles”, the “Kazan Document” and also updated versions of documents that were approved by the parties as a basis for further work, envisaging a step by step approach. He also warned that suggestions to abandon these documents and start from scratch or even launch some kind of “B Plan” -an obvious reference to Armenian efforts to hinder progress and solution- would be a big mistake.

Armenia was not deterred. Armenian Foreign Minister went public, reiterating maximalist approaches and rejecting any deviation from those demands as being unilateral concessions. He declared that for Armenia, there were concrete and key priorities: the issue of the status of Nagorno Karabakh, the realization of the right of self-determination without any restrictions, and the provision of

8 “President Sarkissian Reiterates Call for Snap Elections”, *Asbarez*, November 27, 2020, <https://asbarez.com/198795/president-sarkissian-reiterates-call-for-snap-elections/>.

security. He rejected a step-by-step approach and proposed a package deal. He also called again for the change of the format of negotiations to include the illegal Armenian administration of Karabakh. He also denied the existence of any document on the peace negotiating table.

It was evident that the adamant position of Armenia was fostering even more aggression. The Minister of Defense, in tandem with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was now talking of not occupied but “liberated” lands and “more war for more land”. The illegal Armenian administration of Nagorno-Karabakh announced another provocative decision on 19 September that its seat of “parliament” would be relocated from the capital city of Hankendi to the historical Azerbaijani town of Shusha. In such an atmosphere, the mediators in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chairs issued a statement urging the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia to meet with them in the coming weeks.

The statement said:

“The Co-Chairs held intensive consultations in Paris on September 14... They discussed the situation in the region, paying special attention to new events that took place after the escalation of violence on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border in mid-July. They discussed in detail and assessed the private and public messages and concerns of the parties. They briefed the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the security situation on the ground and welcomed the concrete preparations for the resumption of monitoring activities. They had a separate telephone conversation with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan to urge the Ministers to meet with the Co-Chairs in the coming week to further clarify their positions and to resume serious substantive talks without preconditions.”<sup>9</sup>

This statement proved to be the last one to reveal how detached the co-chairs were from the realities and how they continued to ignore the grievance of the party whose territories were occupied, yet the perpetrator was nevertheless treated with impunity.

Fighting started in the occupied territories on 27 September, developing into full-fledged war to last for 44 days. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia issued a public statement the same day stating the following:

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9 “Armenia/Azerbaijan – Press Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Paris, 14 Sept. 2020)”, *France Diplomacy*, September 14, 2020, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/armenia/news/article/armenia-azerbaijan-press-statement-by-the-co-chairs-of-the-osce-minsk-group>

“Early this morning, the Azerbaijani side launched missile attacks along the entire line of contact targeting also the peaceful settlements, including the capital Stepanakert [Hankendi for Azerbaijan]. We strongly condemn the aggression of the military-political leadership of Azerbaijan against the Republic of Artsakh (the illegal administration in Nagorno Karabakh) and to deliver appropriate military and political response. The military-political leadership of Azerbaijan bears full responsibility for the consequences of their aggression.”<sup>10</sup>

The accusations of who started the war was, understandably, mutual.

Armenia appeared to be confident that it would receive international support and assistance to achieve success. To this end, propaganda warfare was given as much importance as military efforts. Prime Minister Pashinyan made the following address on 27 September:

“Dear people, proud citizens of the Republic of Armenia, proud citizens of the Republic of Artsakh, proud Armenians of the Diaspora, the adversary has launched an attack in the direction of Artsakh. The defense army is successfully withstanding the attack. The situation is rapidly developing. Information will be reported according to necessity”.

Later on, he announced the declaration of martial law and general military mobilization. The support from the Diaspora was not late in coming, not surprisingly, from the notorious ARF-Dashnaktsutyun of western United States, with an action alert for its members to contact their senators and members of the House of Representatives.

The Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, in an interview with an international TV news channel the same day, clamorously said the following:

“What happened this morning is a testament to Azerbaijan’s intentions to aggressively advance its fanatical stance against the security of our people. We consistently claim that the basis of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is the security of our people and today it was proved once again that we must ensure the security of our compatriots, the people of Nagorno Karabakh who are determined to counter this aggression to protect their security and freedom. And this aggression was not only deliberate by Azerbaijan but is accompanied by large scale support from Turkey, which has a military presence in Azerbaijan, its aggressive

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10 “Early this morning, the Azerbaijani side launched missile attacks along the entire line of contact targeting also the peaceful settlements”, *Government Representation of Armenia Before the European Court of Human Rights*, September 27, 2020, <https://www.echr.am/en/events/azerbaijan-attack-on-peaceful-settlements.html>

stance towards Armenia. This is extremely worrying, this is a large scale escalation”.

On his part the President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev, in a televised address to the nation said: “Today the Azerbaijani army is protecting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan on its own territory. Armenia is an occupying state and we must and will put an end to that occupation”.

The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement also the same day and called on the parties to immediately cease fire. US Secretary of State urged on 29 September Armenia and Azerbaijan to cease hostilities. Pope Francis of the Roman Catholic Church (the Vatican) urged people to pray for peace in the Caucasus region. Iran’s president added his voice to international calls for an end to hostilities. The United Nations Security Council, after a closed-door session, also called for an immediate end to hostilities. French President Emmanuel Macron showed himself to be the aggressive voice on behalf of Armenia. During a press conference in Latvia, voicing support to the Armenian people, he said, “I say to Armenia and to the Armenians: France will play its role”.

Religion was also instrumentalized to support Armenia. The Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America issued an appeal on 1 October to “sister churches across the country and the World to gain support for Armenia and Artsakh”. Archbishop Anoushavan, prelate of the Church’s eastern United States division, issued the following statement:

“NCC Calls for an Immediate End to the Armenia/Azerbaijan Conflict

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC) laments the increased hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the loss of life in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. As the fighting escalates, NCC opposes this unprovoked surprise attack by Azerbaijan that has brought Armenia into a state of war.

The NCC stands in solidarity with the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, the World Council of Churches, and people of goodwill everywhere in expressing our outrage and deep sadness at this conflict.

We deplore the use of military force by Azerbaijan and the Syrian rebel fighters that are funded and sent by Turkey to assist their assault on the Armenian community. The use of armor, aviation, heavy artillery, and drones suggests a planned operation. It is time that Turkey ends their involvement in the region by stopping their participation in the fight and their encouragement of the war.

We recognize that the fighters from Syria have been displaced from their homes and are desperate to feed their families which may have caused them to be recruited into this destructive conflict.

NCC calls on the United States to undertake diplomatic measures to halt the fighting. We hope and pray that the U.S. Department of State will not be indifferent to this situation. We ask our member churches to immediately convey this message to their elected officials.

We pray according to the Armenian tradition: “Listen to the cry that rises from every corner of this fragile earth, from our human family torn by violent conflict. It is to You we pray, O loving Lord —today, in the days to come, and always—for the repose of the departed, for the healing of the spiritual and moral afflictions tormenting [us], and for an end to the violence that can only lead to ruin and destruction. [Amen.]” (Armenian Church of America).

September 30, 2020”<sup>11</sup>

Aram I, Armenian Catholicos of Cilicia (Antelias/Lebanon) called Pashinyan to express his full support to the armed forces of Armenia. He said: “When the homeland is in danger, the entire Armenian nation becomes the Armenian army”. On 13 October, he published the following statement, the spiritual content of which is left to the reader to qualify:

“With the immediate sponsorship of Turkey, and with the participation of terrorists and mercenaries, the war unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh has put us before a new reality, with its military, political, legal and geopolitical aspects and consequences. Therefore, the present reality must push Artsakh and Armenia, as well as the international community, towards thinking and working in one direction: the recognition of the Republic of Artsakh. There is no alternative.

Anyone who has followed closely the latest developments of the Azerbaijan-Artsakh war, will see:

1. Azerbaijan enjoys the unreserved and total political and military alliance of Turkey and the specialized support of Israel.
2. The current war is not purely local; it has the potential to have major regional and international consequences.

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11 “Eastern Diocese Appeals to Sister Churches to Condemn Attack on Artsakh”, *Armenian Life*, October 5, 2020, <http://www.armenianlife.com/2020/10/05/eastern-diocese-appeals-to-sister-churches-to-condemn-attack-on-artsakh/>



3. Giving a new appearance and emphasis to its pan-Turanic and expansionist policy, along with its attempt to expand its influence from the Middle East and the Islamic world to the countries of Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, Turkey is trying to do the same in the Caucasus, using Azerbaijan for it.

The existing consensus between Russia, Turkey, and Iran in regards to Syria obviously push Russia and Iran to adopt a measured and cautious attitude towards the war incited by Turkey and carried out by Azerbaijan. Their cautious approach, however, cannot last long in the face of this urgent situation, full of serious dangers and grave consequences, when especially the geopolitical interests of Russia in the region begin to be compromised.

Azerbaijan has always tried to reoccupy Artsakh militarily, opposing the international decisions for a political and negotiated solution for the Artsakh dispute. This new attempt by Azerbaijan, which was boosted by the pan-Turanic efforts, pursues these new goals.

The Armenian army continues to defend heroically Artsakh, our right and our dignity. We have shed blood, we have sustained terrible destruction and damages, we have faced enormous problems, but we continue to resist. Indeed, to face the Azerbaijani attacks, fueled by Turkey's support and Israeli weapons, is a victory in itself. Alongside the army and Armenia and Artsakh's diplomatic offensive, the widespread outreach effort, the organized protests and the demonstrations in support of Armenia throughout the Diaspora have mobilized our entire people.

The situation remains extremely complicated and fragile.

For thirty years, we have told the world that Artsakh is ours, we asserted our self-determination right at the price of blood and we directed our statements, our thoughts and our work towards the international recognition of the Republic of Artsakh.

In those years we also demonstrated wise caution, allowing political negotiations. The present war, however, came to show once again that Azerbaijan does not believe in negotiations and, enjoying the full support of Turkey, will not leave us in peace, it will make use of an attrition war and, moreover, it will be taken advantage of by Turkey to achieve bigger, future objectives.

We cannot sacrifice people every few years as well as sustain horrible material and economic damages. It is vital for us to define our strategic

and defense policies, both in the short and the long terms, always with a realistic spirit and in accordance with the present geopolitical facts and circumstances.

First, it is fundamental to establish a ceasefire, at any price and immediately, and resume political negotiations.

Second, carry out methodical work for the international recognition of Artsakh. We cannot wait any longer. This goes against us, in every sense. We know that such a measure will bring with it new complications and that the international community may not be ready for it at this point. Nevertheless, there is no other alternative. What can be worse than the current war, when Azerbaijan even ignores the principles of international law that apply to wars and ceasefires?

Third, the role of Russia is key for the solution of any issue related to Artsakh. The slow and cautious reaction by Russia may invite different interpretations. Nevertheless, whatever the strategic approaches and calculations of Russia may be at the moment, Russia will never allow the presence of another power next to it in the Caucasus. With this conviction in mind, our cooperation with Russia must be based on mutual trust and common interests.

Fourth, the vitally, politically and legally important initiative of ensuring Artsakh requires a lot of preparation, a lot of outreach and diplomatic activity, and consistent work, which we must begin immediately. International law contemplates different ways, circumstances and requirements for recognition. We must study comprehensively and in detail all the issues and concrete circumstances for recognition.

We find ourselves before an existential crossroads in our history. Military success is the key, and the pro-Armenian sentiment of the international community is the driving force of our success. We need to be wise and cautious and always united.

We therefore urge the honorable Prime Minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan, to invite, right after the consolidation of the ceasefire, the heads of the political parties in Armenia, Artsakh and the Diaspora, the spiritual leaders, as well as the highest officials of Armenia and Artsakh, to discuss the present situation and the following steps. On the one hand, such a meeting will show to foreigners our united and firm stance and, on the other, it will offer the opportunity for the exchange of viewpoints and approaches. We also propose that, following such a meeting, a committee of experts be formed under the leadership of the Prime

Minister to steer the recognition work in its legal, diplomatic, political and communicational dimensions.

Catholicos Aram I”.<sup>12</sup>

On October 25, he issued a further call to arms to Armenians all over the World. Full text of the article on his call is here below:

“On Sunday, October 25, His Holiness Catholicos Aram I issued a call to arms to Armenians all over the world. In his message, His Holiness spoke about the sacrifices of the armies of Artsakh and Armenia as they fight against the Turkish-Azerbaijani aggression.

1. “The Armenian army continues to defend heroically the free and independent Republic of Artsakh and, by way of Artsakh, the security of Armenia and, by way of Armenia, the firm existence of the entire Armenian nation. This is how the Artsakh war must be seen. Therefore, this is not a conventional war: it is a war that will determine the fate of the Armenian nation and homeland.” He added that fighting for the homeland is not only a duty, but an honor and a reason for pride.

2. Turkey stands next to Azerbaijan in this war, the Catholicos said. Turkey, he said, is trying to expand its presence from the Mediterranean to Eastern Europe through a newly reformulated pan-Turkic project. “This is why the Artsakh war must be contemplated with a broader view beyond Artsakh, within the framework of the long-term objectives that drive Turkey.” Unfortunately, he added, “the Armenian people pay the price of all this.”

3. “Where is the world, and in particular the West, in view of Turkey’s racist, genocidal, imperialist and pan-Turkic policy?”, wondered His Holiness. “Indeed, when we talk about the Genocide of 1915, we often wonder where the West was when a nation was subjected to extermination plan of Ottoman Turkey.” One hundred and five years later, we wonder again “where is the international community, when the same author of the Genocide, pursuing a new genocide, roams freely far from its immediate borders?”

Catholicos Aram I added that it was “clear that enormous states are in practice participating in different manners in the war unleashed against our small nation.” He went on to quote the father of Armenian history, Movses of Khoren,

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12 “Catholicos Aram I: Artsakh Must Be Recognized”, *Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church*, October 13, 2020.

recalling the “heroism” of the Armenian soldiers in Nagorno-Karabakh, consciously sacrificing their lives to protect “the Armenian homeland”:

“The people of Artsakh has asserted its self-determination right with independent statehood,” he said. “The self-determination of a people is one of the fundamental principles of international law.” There can be no retreat from that, His Holiness said.

“Therefore, from the Mother Monastery of Antelias we issue a call to arms in which every Armenian must take part, bringing their contribution in different manners to the sublime war for the independence and security of Artsakh,” he said.

In this regard, he urged Armenia to coalesce around it all organizations from Armenia and the Diaspora to overcome the existential danger posed by this war to Artsakh and Armenia.

The Diaspora, His Holiness said, has an important role in the call to arms, contributing its potential in terms of networking, outreach, recruitment and material support. It must also help towards the recognition of the Artsakh Republic by the international community.

He concluded his message by calling on Armenians to “think, plan and act in defense of the independence of Artsakh, a thriving Armenia and the eternity of our nation.”

Karekin II, the Armenian Catholicos of Etchmiadzin also addressed the nation on 14 October:

“We are living decisive days for our motherland. We are fighting to the death for the right of our people in Artsakh to a free and independent life. Azerbaijan, ignoring the ceasefire agreement, continues military operations against Artsakh, bombing also civilian settlements and civilian population, our monuments and sanctuaries, Cathedral of Sush. Bordering communities of the Republic of Armenia have also been targeted.”

The National Council of Church in the USA (NCC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) condemned the escalation of violence and called on the international community to take diplomatic action. Christian Solidarity International (CSI), an NGO based in Switzerland, condemned on 2 October “the joint Turkish-Azerbaijani attack on Nagorno Karabakh” alleging “a renewed attempt to destroy one of the world’s oldest Christian communities”.

Pope Francis sent a handwritten letter to the Primate of the Armenian Church in Argentina on 11 October, made public on October 14, which reads as follows:

“The Artsakh conflict worries and hurts me. On the same Sunday fighting started, I was with our brother Karekin II, who was staying in this house. We talked about it, we prayed together; then he left for Yerevan and I, from the balcony of the Angelus, called for peace in the Caucasus region. Later, through the Secretary of State, and his collaborators, work began through diplomatic channels. Dear brother, I know the pain of the Armenian people and I am at your side; I pray for you and I do my best to help avoid a disaster”.

On the occasion of the visit of Catholicos Karekin II to the Vatican, an interview was published in the Italian daily *La Repubblica* on 19 October, where he said the escalating violence in the Nagorno-Karabakh region had the potential to become “another genocide” of the Armenian people. He added:

“What else is it if not genocide to indiscriminately bomb civilians, churches, the historical monuments of a people in spite of all international laws... Only by recognizing the disputed territory’s self-proclaimed independence can a possible new holocaust be avoided”.

Following the defeat of Armenia, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem addressed a letter to the President of Russia on 20 November, stressing the importance of protecting holy shrines in what he called “Artsakh”, pleading for his consideration due to “brotherly relationship between the Russian Orthodox and the Armenian Apostolic Churches”.

The WCC expressed its anger with the following statement on 13 November:

“The executive committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), meeting by video conference on 9-13 November 2020, is gathered at a pivotal and acutely painful moment for the people of the land of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh and for all Armenian people, following the announcement of an agreement between the leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia to bring an end to six weeks of intense armed conflict. We make an appeal for an end to the bloodshed and destruction this conflict has brought.

We join with His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, in praying for wisdom, unity and calm. We grieve with all those who have suffered terrible losses not only in the renewed fighting since 27 September, but throughout the long history of the

struggle for self-determination in the region, entrenching antagonism more deeply with each precious life lost.

We stand in solidarity with the Armenian communities that are threatened by the renewal of the genocide against their people, particularly in light of the egregious comments made by Turkish President Erdogan vowing to “fulfil this mission, which our grandfathers have carried out for centuries, in the Caucasus region” and in light of Turkey’s role in the current conflict. The WCC condemns any such threats, explicit or implicit, and the actions of those who have insinuated themselves in the conflict and exacerbated its violence, including by supplying internationally-banned weapons, sending mercenaries and jihadists from Syria and elsewhere, and seeking to turn it into a religious conflict. The WCC condemns the use of chemical weapons and cluster munitions, the targeting of civilians, hospitals and public infrastructure, and all other war crimes, beheadings, torture and other atrocities witnessed in the past weeks.

Furthermore, we appeal for respect for the holy sites and cultural heritage of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh, though the repeated shelling of the Ghazanchetsots Cathedral in Shushi on 8 October and the numerous reports being received of other more recent desecrations indicate a different reality. We urge UNESCO to take all possible and appropriate measures to protect these sites.

We call urgently upon all members of the international community to join in supporting efforts for the protection of such holy sites, for the return in safety and dignity of all refugees and displaced people, for protection of the Armenian people from the threat of genocide, for a lasting peace founded on justice and human rights for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh and the wider region, and to refrain from instigating or encouraging antagonism, conflict and injustice.

We lift up and accompany the continuing ministry and witness of the churches of the region, and pray that the church leaders may be given strength and wisdom to guide their people through this crisis.”

Catholicos Aram I of Antelias was more aggressive in his call to Armenians for unity. He said:

“Now it’s a crucial moment in the contemporary history of our homeland and people. Our courageous army heroically resisted the Turkish-Azerbaijani-terrorist army. Respect and honor to all our fallen heroes. The war is not over, we need to be vigilant and realistic. Armenia and

Artsakh are under danger with their peoples and statehood, present and especially future”.

On 4 October, Armenian President addressed the Diaspora, saying that a powerful and strong Diaspora is a genuine army, who support the homeland and the Armenian army. He did not feel shame from pronouncing these hateful provocative words:

“Please keep vibrant the same spirit and the same dedication because this time not only Azerbaijan but the genocidal Turkey too-with its arms, servicemen and mercenary terrorists are against us, against the freedom loving people of Artsakh”.

In a joint statement on 5 October, Foreign Ministers of the OSCE Minsk Group’s three co-chair countries strongly condemned the unprecedented and dangerous escalation of violence outside the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. Referring to the 1 October statement of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs, the ministers reiterated their call on the parties to the conflict to immediately and unconditionally establish a cease fire.

The position of the European Union was put forth by the High Representative in his address to the European Parliament on 7 October. Here are some excerpts:

“On the day that fighting erupted, I released a statement as High Representative, calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities, de-escalation and strict observance of the ceasefire. At this stage, further escalation of the conflict and involvement of regional actors, unhappily, cannot be excluded. The fighting should stop. The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs are going to have meetings this week with the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the two countries and the only way to get out of this situation is that Minsk Group co-chairs push for immediate negotiations as soon as possible. All of you have been asking to act. What do you mean by act? We will do whatever we can do in order to support the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs. If you mean by ‘act’ taking military action-is completely out of question. We are going to do what we can do as the European Union, with the resources we have in the diplomatic arena. The European Council has decided to see what is going on from now until December to review our relationship with Turkey”.

Azerbaijan and Armenia agreed on a truce on 9 October in order to exchange prisoners of war and bodies of killed soldiers. The agreement was reached after ten hours of negotiations in Moscow between the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia. These were the first diplomatic talks between

the two sides since fighting broke out on 27 September. The signed protocol is as follows:

“In response to the appeal of the President of the Russian Federation Putin and in accordance with the agreements of the President of the Russian Federation Putin, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan I. Aliyev and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia N. Pashinyan, the parties agreed on the following steps:

1. A ceasefire is declared from 12:00 pm on October 10, 2020 for humanitarian purposes for the exchange of prisoners of war and other detained persons and bodies of the dead, mediated and in accordance with the criteria of the International Committee of the Red Cross.
2. The specific parameters of the ceasefire regime will be agreed upon additionally.
3. The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs, on the basis of the basic principles of the settlement, are starting substantive negotiations with the aim of achieving a peaceful settlement as soon as possible.
4. The parties confirm the invariability of the format of the negotiation process”.<sup>13</sup>

The Minsk Group co-chairs called on Azerbaijan and Armenia to take immediate steps to fully implement their commitments made in Moscow on 10 October to prevent catastrophic consequences in the region in a statement they issued on 14 October. Russian Foreign Minister offered on 13 October to deploy military observers to monitor the cease fire as part of a verification mechanism.

Prime Minister Pashinyan, under the delusion that Minsk Group co-chair countries would come to his assistance to maintain the status quo of occupation made the following address to the nation on 14 October, following the truce agreed in Moscow:

“Dear people,

Proud citizens of the Republic of Armenia, proud citizens of the Artsakh Republic, proud Armenians of the Diaspora.

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13 “Azerbaijan, Armenia agree on ceasefire for humanitarian purposes”, *Trend News Agency*, October 10, 2020, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3314122.html>



The terrorist war unleashed by Turkey and Azerbaijan against Artsakh has been going on for 18 days already. Before referring to the situation on the battlefield, I consider it necessary to emphasize that today it is very important for us to understand the military-political situation, but for this we must first understand the causes and conditions of this war.

In the negotiation process on the Karabakh issue, Azerbaijan step by step reached a point where, in fact, it demanded from the Armenian people, the Armenians of Karabakh, to renounce their rights.

The essence of that demand was the following. Immediately hand over 5 out of 7 territories to Azerbaijan, present a concrete timetable for handing over the remaining 2 territories and state that any status of Nagorno Karabakh must be part of Azerbaijan. Moreover, the clarification of the status of Nagorno Karabakh should not have anything to do with the process of handing over the territories. In other words, territories should be handed over not for status but for peace, otherwise Azerbaijan threatened to resolve the issue through war.

Our government, which had inherited this negotiating base, or rather the negotiating ground, in fact refused to discuss the issue in that way because it was unacceptable.

In these circumstances, when we tried to state clearly that the settlement of the issue without defining the status of Artsakh is impossible, Azerbaijan rejected any serious discussion on the status, in fact saying that the only status that Artsakh can have is something autonomous within Azerbaijan, and, in fact, laid the foundation for the structures by which Karabakh was to be emptied of Armenians altogether.

At the same time, Azerbaijan was developing military rhetoric and anti-Armenian propaganda.

During the last two and a half years, we have carried out reforms and rearmament in our army, trying to create real conditions for the premise “there is no military solution to the Karabakh issue.”

The victorious battles of Tavush in July 2020 proved the unexpected for many. The Azerbaijani army is unable to resolve the Karabakh issue by military means. This protocol was shocking not only for Azerbaijan, but also for many other countries, especially Turkey.

Immediately after the July battles, an unprecedented Turkish-Azerbaijani military exercise began, a large number of Turkish troops and military equipment were transferred to Azerbaijan. During the exercise, they

reaffirmed that the Azerbaijani army is incapable of solving specific problems in the near future, and Turkey decided that it should no longer deal with the Karabakh issue.

Something unprecedented happened, Turkey openly and publicly started threatening Armenia, simultaneously transferring a large number of terrorists and mercenaries from Syria to the Karabakh conflict zone, realizing that the forces of the Azerbaijani army alone would not be enough to solve their problem.

In this situation, we tried to use strategic containment mechanisms with the simple calculation that if Turkey achieves its goals in the South Caucasus, it will inevitably lead to a chain reaction of events, and therefore to the regional and extra-regional countries that will inevitably become the object of that destabilization.

At this stage, however, a strange circumstance was recorded. A number of countries with the potential for strategic containment did not properly assess the threat, continuing to view the issue in the context of the Karabakh conflict and, in essence, believing that territories are the formula for peace that can save the situation.

This, of course, being unacceptable to us, is very similar to the 1938 Munich Agreement, when a number of European powers allegedly ceded Czechoslovakia to Germany for the sake of peace. And you all know what happened next. And now the question is whether the world will allow the formation of a new Hitler, this time in Asia Minor.

The war against Artsakh started unexpectedly for us. We knew we were waiting, the question was at what time and from where the enemy would attack.

The Artsakh Defense Army is really fighting a heroic battle from the first seconds. The alliance of Turkish-Azerbaijani mercenaries launched the strongest attack on Artsakh: tanks, armored vehicles, missiles, artillery, military aircraft, helicopters, various drones, a huge number of people, including several thousand special forces from Turkey and, according to some information, as well as mercenaries and terrorists from Syria.

The enemy did not have any strategic or territorial success during the first week, and this was in the conditions when it had no restrictions on supply and manpower, and Artsakh and Armenia were operating in the conditions of blockade. During this time, the enemy lost a huge amount of military equipment, was inflicted a large number of casualties, but

some of those casualties were mercenary terrorists, which was not difficult at all in Azerbaijan.

[On the contrary,] every drop of our blood [hurts] all of us, not to mention the enormous number of victims we already have at the moment. The statement issued in Moscow last Friday was aimed at preventing further losses - our participation in the process, which provided for a humanitarian ceasefire, full exchange of bodies, prisoners and detainees, return to the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing format with the logic of resolving the issue as soon as possible.

However, Azerbaijan, in fact, did not adhere to the ceasefire agreement for a second and still continues to attack, at the same time hindering the formation of a ceasefire monitoring mechanism.

This means that Azerbaijan continues to adhere to its political line from the beginning and has set itself the task of full occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh.

At this point, however, we can record one thing. The initial Turkish-Azerbaijani terrorist plan to occupy Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories with a blitzkrieg failed, due to the joint work and efforts of local self-government and state bodies.

During this time, however, we have had many losses. At this moment, the number of our victims is very high, and I mourn for our brave martyrs who defended the homeland, the right of their own people to live, defended our identity, dignity and future with their lives. And I bow to all our victims, martyrs, their families, their parents and especially their mothers, and I consider their loss my loss, my personal loss, the loss of my family.

Dear people, proud citizens of the Republic of Armenia, proud citizens of the Artsakh Republic, proud Armenians of the Diaspora.

During the 18 days of the war, our heroic troops retreated to the north and south. In recent days, the enemy has changed its tactics, trying to start a mess in the rear with subversive groups. Nevertheless, the Artsakh Defense Army, with heavy fighting, losses of manpower and equipment, keeps the general situation under control, causing the enemy numerous losses of manpower and equipment.

But we all need to know that a very difficult situation has arisen. I do not make this record, however, out of desperation. I pass this information because I have an obligation to speak the language of truth to our people,

unlike Azerbaijan, which hides thousands of victims from its own people and, according to our estimates, the loss of more than \$ 1 billion in military equipment.

But the main purpose of my message today is to talk about what we have to do and our strategy, and to encourage our national unity around that.

Therefore, it is necessary to state that the Turkish-Azerbaijani terrorist alliance will not stop its attack on Artsakh and Armenia.

These days, the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries - Russia, France, the United States - have made and continue to work for a ceasefire. The statement of the presidents and foreign ministers of the three countries and the statement of Moscow on October 10 were adopted.

I would like to thank the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs for their efforts.

Thank you to the United States Administration for all the efforts that have been made so far.

I thank France President Emanuel Macron for his determination to name things from the very first days of the war and for his willingness to make further efforts.

Special thanks to the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, with whom we have maintained an intensive relationship during this time. These days, Russia has been able to fulfill its role of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair and Armenia's strategic ally at a high level, and I am convinced that this role will be unequivocally carried out in accordance with the best traditions of friendship between the Armenian and Russian peoples.

And we, adhering to the logic of a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, would like to emphasize that we will be highly constructive in making the diplomatic efforts effective.

However, these efforts have so far not been enough to curb the Turkish-Azerbaijani terrorist group, because the task that the group has set itself is not only to resolve the Karabakh issue, but also to continue the traditional Turkish genocidal policy towards our people.

But at this crucial moment we will not back down, because this is a crucial war for our people.

In this situation, the Armenian people have only one thing to do: unite, concentrate all their potential, stop the enemy with a decisive blow and achieve an irreversible victory, that is, the final settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the recognition of the right of the Nagorno Karabakh people to self-determination.

The souls, spirit and strength of our other great martyrs and heroes Artashes Arka, Tigran the Great, Ashot Yerkat, Aram Manukyan, Hovhannes Baghramyan, Monte Melkonyan, Vazgen Sargsyan are with us today.

Today, Armenians are more united than ever. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians these days provide financial, economic, media and political support to Armenia and Artsakh.

In hundreds of Diaspora communities these days, our compatriots are holding thousands of peaceful rallies of solidarity, protest and support, with two specific issues on the agenda: international recognition of Artsakh's independence, condemnation of Turkish-Azerbaijani terrorist aggression.

This is the culmination of our national unity, and this culmination must be crowned with the realization of our specific national goals.

It is impossible to break the Armenian people, it is impossible to intimidate the Armenian people, it is impossible to defeat the Armenian people. We will stand until the end, we will fight until the end, and the name of that end is Free and Happy Artsakh, Free and Happy Armenia.

Today, at this crucial moment, each and every one of us, must focus on achieving this goal. Artsakh, the army, the soldier, the front line. This is what should be the focus of our efforts in the Diaspora or in Armenia. We must turn our mourning into anger, our fears into determination, and our doubts into action.

We must win, we must live, we must build our history, and we are building our history, our new epic, our new heroic battle, our new Sardarapat.”<sup>14</sup>

The 10 October cease-fire did not last long. On 14 October, Pashinyan was on record saying that only a change in Turkey's stance on Nagorno-Karabakh could prompt Azerbaijan to halt military action over the region.

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14 “Armenia PM on Karabakh conflict: Our government refused to discuss the issue in this way”, *News.am*, October 14, 2020, <https://news.am/eng/news/607851.html>

A second humanitarian truce was announced on 18 October. Pashinyan evaluated the situation on 19 October as follows:<sup>15</sup>

- “- What is this war for? The status of Karabakh.
- Could we have avoided the war? Yes, if we handed over the territories and agreed to the uncertain status of Karabakh, indefinitely in the absence of further status adjustment.
- Could we have reached Karabakh acceptable or any status through negotiations? No, because the last opportunity to do so was in 2011 in Kazan.
- Can we stop this war? Theoretically, yes, with a slightly worse formula than one mentioned in point two.
- Can war solve the status of Karabakh? Yes, if we succeed in war.
- Can we succeed in war? Yes, if we focus the national potential around that goal and sincerely and selflessly commit to that goal.”

The truce was broken again. In an interview he gave to a Russian news agency on 19 October, Pashinyan urged more Armenians to join their armed forces, claiming that Azerbaijan was rejecting any compromise solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and continuing the war in the conflict zone.

The US administration invited the Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia to Washington DC as part of its efforts to stop the war in and around Karabakh. The two ministers met separately with the US Secretary of State on 23 October. No fresh agreements were announced following those meetings. The Russian President expressed hope on this occasion that the US would assist Russia in its efforts to get the conflicting parties to respect the cease-fire brokered by Moscow on 10 October. The Democratic Party US Presidential candidate and former Vice President Joe Biden, in his fourth announcement on the war, called on 27 October on the US President Donald Trump “to get personally involved” to end the fighting.

The Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia met with the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs in Washington DC on 24 October, where they were having separate meetings with the US Secretary of State. The statement issued after the meeting repeated more of the same narrative. It was also announced that

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15 “Pashinyan: We could have avoided the war only by ceding”, *PanArmenian*, October 19, 2020, [https://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/286732/Pashinyan\\_We\\_could\\_have\\_avoided\\_the\\_war\\_only\\_by\\_ceding\\_territories](https://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/286732/Pashinyan_We_could_have_avoided_the_war_only_by_ceding_territories)

the co-chairs and the ministers agreed to meet again in Geneva on 29 October to discuss, reach agreement on and begin implementation, in accordance with a timeline to be agreed upon, of all steps necessary to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Azerbaijan's President said on 25 October that Baku was ready to halt hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh if Armenia accepts a framework peace accord put forward by the US, Russia, and France. A spokesperson for Prime Minister Pashinyan dismissed Azerbaijan President's statement. She said that the current Armenian Government has always expressed readiness to seek a compromise-based solution in contrast to Baku's "maximalist" stance.

On 30 October, Pashinyan told a British newspaper that Armenia supported the deployment of Russian peacekeepers in the Karabakh conflict zone if it will end the ongoing costly war. He also commented on that same issue in an interview he gave on 3 October to an international TV channel, but then felt the need to clarify himself for avoiding any future speculations. *ArmenPress* was authorized to present the correct transcript as follows: Question- "Would you want to see Russian peacekeepers for example in Nagorno Karabakh?" Reply- "You see those issues could be discussed in the context of the wider resolution, within the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship".

Invoking the August 1997 Treaty of "Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance" with Russia, Pashinyan formally asked the Russian President on 31 October "to define types and amount of assistance" that Moscow could provide to Armenia, saying that the fighting with Azerbaijan that broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh last month was nearing the country's frontiers. A statement issued later by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia said that "under the treaty Russia will render all necessary assistance to Yerevan if military operations take place directly on the territory of Armenia".

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group Released the following statement on 30 October:

"The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stephane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America) released the following statement today:

The Co-Chairs met separately and jointly with Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov in Geneva on October 30. The Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson in Office (PRCiO) Andrzej Kasprzyk also participated in the meetings. They also held consultations with UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and ICRC President Peter Maurer.

The Co-Chairs once again called on the sides to implement, in full, their commitments, including the immediate establishment of a humanitarian ceasefire, in accordance with the October 10 Moscow Joint Statement, which the sides reaffirmed with Paris on October 17 and in Washington on October 25.

Without prejudice to the implementation of the ceasefire or other commitments, the sides agreed to take a number of steps on an urgent basis, including:

The sides will not deliberately target civilian populations or non-military objects in accordance with international humanitarian law;

The sides will actively engage in the implementation of the recovery and exchange of remains on the battlefield by providing the ICRC and PRCiO the necessary safety guarantees for facilitation;

The sides will deliver to the ICRC and PRCiO, within one week, a list of currently detained prisoners of war for the purposes of providing access and eventual exchange;

The sides will provide in writing comments and questions related to possible ceasefire verification mechanisms in accordance with item 2 of the October 10 joint statement.

The sides engaged in an open and substantive exchange of views aimed at clarifying their negotiating positions on core elements of a comprehensive solution in accordance with item 3 of the October 10 joint statement.”<sup>16</sup>

The Co-Chairs would continue working with the sides intensively to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Peace finally came, not with the empty and procrastinating words of the Minsk Group co-chairs, but with the resolute intervention of Russia. Prime Minister Pashinyan was the first to announce the ceasefire agreement on 10 November.

Pashinyan, having signed statement with Putin and Aliyev on ending war in Karabakh, said:

“I signed a statement with the presidents of Russia and Azerbaijan on ending the Karabakh war since 01:00 (00:00 Moscow Time). The text of the published statement is inexpressibly sensitive for me personally

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16 “Press Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group”, *OSCE*, October 30, 2020, <https://www.osce.org/minsk-group/468984>



and for our people. I made the decision after a deep analysis of the military situation and the assessment by people who know it better than anyone,”

Pashinyan noted that he made “a very and very hard decision”. According to him:

“this step is based on a conviction that this is the best possible solution in the current situation... I will speak in detail about all this in the coming days. This is not victory, but there won't be a defeat unless you recognize yourself as a loser. We will never recognize ourselves as losers and this should usher in our era of national unification and revival.”<sup>17</sup>

Below is the text of the agreement:

“President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the President of the Russian Federation We, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan I. G. Aliyev, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikolai Pashinyan and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin announced the following:

1. A complete ceasefire and cessation of all hostilities in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is announced from 00:00 hours Moscow time on November 10, 2020. The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, hereinafter referred to as the Parties, stop at their positions.
2. The Aghdam region and the territories held by the Armenian Party in the Gazakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall be returned to the Azerbaijan Party by November 20, 2020.
3. Along the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh and along the Lachin corridor, a peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation is being deployed in the amount of 1,960 servicemen with small arms, 90 armored personnel carriers, 380 units of automobile and special equipment.
4. The peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation is being deployed in parallel with the withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces. The duration of the stay of the peacekeeping contingent of the Russian Federation is five years, with automatic extension for the next

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17 “Pashinyan says signed statement with Putin and Aliyev on ending war in Karabakh”, *TASS*, November 10, 2020, <https://tass.com/world/1221707>

five-year periods, if none of the Parties declares six months before the expiration of the period of intention to terminate the application of this provision.

5. In order to increase the effectiveness of control over the implementation of the agreements by the Parties to the conflict, a peacekeeping center is being deployed to control the ceasefire.

6. The Republic of Armenia will return the Kelbajar region to the Republic of Azerbaijan by November 15, 2020, and the Lachin region by December 1, 2020, leaving behind the Lachin corridor (five kilometers wide), which will ensure the connection of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia and at the same time will not affect the city of Shushi. By agreement of the Parties, in the next three years, a plan for the construction of a new traffic route along the Lachin corridor, providing communication between Stepanakert and Armenia, with the subsequent redeployment of the Russian peacekeeping contingent to protect this route will be determined. The Republic of Azerbaijan guarantees traffic safety along the Lachin corridor of citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions.

7. Internally displaced persons and refugees will return to the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas under the control of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

8. There will be an exchange of prisoners of war and other detained persons and bodies of the dead.

9. All economic and transport links in the region are unblocked. The Republic of Armenia provides transport links between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic in order to organize the unimpeded movement of citizens, vehicles and goods in both directions. Control over transport communication will be carried out by the bodies of the Border Guard Service of the FSB of Russia. By agreement of the Parties, the construction of new transport communications linking the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic with the western regions of Azerbaijan will be provided.”<sup>18</sup>

Kremlin spokesman called the ceasefire agreement a “victory of the peoples of the two countries” and said that a monitoring center with the participation

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18 “No:406/20, Statement By The President Of The Republic Of Azerbaijan”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan*, November 11, 2020, <https://mfa.gov.az/en/news/7026/view>

of Turkish troops would be set up on the Azerbaijani side<sup>19</sup>. The Turkish Parliament adopted due resolution on 17 November to implement this understanding. The text of the resolution reads as follows:

“Friendly and brotherly country Azerbaijan’s struggle to save its occupied territories has been going on for years.

In response to Armenia’s attacks against military and civilian targets along the Nagorno-Karabakh front line on 27 September 2020, Azerbaijan achieved significant success in the liberation of its occupied territories due to the counter operation launched based on the right of self-defense.

Based on international law and legitimate sovereignty rights, Turkey has supported, from the beginning of the process, Azerbaijan to defend all of its rights, including its territorial integrity. As a result, Azerbaijan’s progress in the counterattack has created a new situation in the field.

Following the agreement between Azerbaijan, Russia, and Armenia, a ceasefire was established in the region as of 00.00 on 10 November 2020, and a plan was announced to include the return of some occupied territories to Azerbaijan in line with the schedule.

According to the agreement, a Joint Center will be established in the Azerbaijani territories liberated from the occupation to inspect the compliance with the ceasefire. Upon Azerbaijan’s request, it was decided for Turkey and Russia to take place in the Center jointly.

A Joint Center, in a place to be determined by Azerbaijan (which Turkey and Russia will form together) and the activities to be carried out by Center (where the Turkish Armed Forces personnel, and if needed, civilian personnel from our country take part), under the agreement which was signed on 16 August 2010 the “Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance” between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey with the commitments of our country, under the international law, the United Nations Security Council resolutions, and the principles of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which register the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan; has been assessed that it will be for the benefit of the peace and prosperity of the people in the region and is necessary for our national interest.

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19 “Peskov called the end of the war in Karabakh a victory of the two countries”, *Teller Report*, November 10, 2020, <https://www.tellerreport.com/news/2020-11-10-peskov-called-the-end-of-the-war-in-karabakh-a-victory-of-the-two-countries.SJ-35TRwYP.html>

With these considerations, to fulfill our obligations arising from the ‘Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Mutual Assistance between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey’, the establishment of a ceasefire, prevention of violations, ensuring peace and stability in the region to effectively preserve and to protect Turkey’s higher interests, in way in which the arms, weapons, limit, and extent shall be determined by the President, Turkish Armed Forces should be sent to foreign countries to act in line with the functions of the Joint Center, and these forces should be used in accordance with the principles to be determined by the President and to take every measure necessary to eliminate the risks and threats and to make arrangements that will allow them to be determined by the President of the Republic. It was thus accepted at the 16th Meeting of the General Assembly dated 17.11.2020 that this was allowed to be made in accordance with the principles to be determined, for a period of one year in line with Article 92 of the Constitution.”<sup>20</sup>

President of Georgia welcomed the agreement and said,

“A new era is beginning in the Caucasus. I congratulate our friends, Armenia and Azerbaijan for ending the tragic war. There is no alternative to peace and stability. Together we are starting a new phase of cooperation.”<sup>21</sup>

President of Iran expressed satisfaction for the adoption of the declaration of ending the war. He said,

“Being the neighbor of both countries and considering our numerous historical similarities with the regional peoples, Iran expresses satisfaction over the decision made by the leaders of the two countries mediated by Russia to end the military operations and start the process of diplomatic settlement.”<sup>22</sup>

President of France called for a “lasting political solution” within the framework of the Minsk Group which should also “preserve Armenia’s interests”. He also added that France, which is home to a strong Armenian community, “stands by Armenia at this difficult time”. He also called for

20 “1272 Sayılı Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti Arasında Stratejik Ortaklık ve Karşılıklı Yardım Anlaşması Hükümlerinden Kaynaklanan Taahhütlerimizi Yerine Getirmek, ...” *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, 18 Kasım 2020, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/fihrist?tarih=2020-11-18>

21 “A new era starts in the Caucasus. I congratulate our friends Armenia and Azerbaijan for ending a tragic war and thank all the facilitators. My sympathy to the families of the victims. Peace and stability have no alternative! We launch together a #newchapter of cooperation,” *Twitter*, username: @Zourabichvili\_S, November 10, 2020, [https://twitter.com/Zourabichvili\\_S/status/1326105187572985858](https://twitter.com/Zourabichvili_S/status/1326105187572985858)

22 “Iranian President expresses satisfaction over declaration of ending war in Nagorno Karabakh”, *ArmenPress*, November 10, 2020, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1034512.html>

“strong measures to protect the religious and cultural heritage of this region”. The French Foreign Minister on his part, said that France had taken note of the agreement and was examining its terms and implications. “Clarifications are expected in order to assess their impact” he said.

In view of this official line, it was not surprising, but nevertheless shocking, that the upper house of parliament of France, the Senate, adopted a resolution on 25 November, with 305 votes in favor, 1 against and 30 abstentions, calling on the government to recognize the illegal Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh government. Aware of the absurdity of the resolution, the Foreign Ministry shortly after announced that France does not recognize the resolution of the Senate.

The US State Department echoed France’s view, saying there were still questions needed to clarify about the deal.

President of Russia defended the agreement on 17 November and said that the deal laid the basis for long term normalization “for the disputed Nagorno Karabakh region”. Foreign Minister of Russia was more to the point. He stated that US and France were nursing “wounded pride” over the Moscow-brokered deal. In an interview with a Russian TV channel on 19 November, he said,

“In my contacts with American and French colleagues as well as in contacts between President Macron and President Putin on the Nagorno Karabakh issue over the past few days, clearly there is wounded pride. And this is sad.”<sup>23</sup>

The Russian Foreign Minister met on 18 November with the US and French co-chairs of the Minsk Group to discuss the future of the peace process. He then headed a Russian interdepartmental governmental delegation to the region, arriving in Armenia on 21 November. In a briefing he gave in Yerevan, he rejected doubts over the trilateral ceasefire agreement. He said that issues related to the implementation of the ceasefire agreement were fully discussed at the meeting with the Armenian leadership, including ensuring the operation of the Russian peacekeeping mission and conducting humanitarian actions. The delegation also included the Minister of Defense of Russia. The Armenian and Russian defense ministers signed documents regulating the framework of the actions of the Russian peacekeeping troops in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict zone.<sup>24</sup>

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23 “Putin defends Karabakh deal after France criticism”, *Yahoo News*, November 17, 2020, <https://news.yahoo.com/putin-defends-karabakh-deal-france-183053056.html>

24 “Russian interdepartmental delegation to visit Armenia – MFA”, *Public Radio of Armenia*, November 20, 2020, <https://en.armradio.am/2020/11/20/russian-interdepartmental-delegation-to-visit-armenia-mfa/>

The EU also welcomed the agreement with a declaration by the High Representative on 11 November. He called upon the sides to engage in substantive negotiations without delay under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs, without preconditions and on the basis of agreed upon principles<sup>25</sup>.

The Colonel General, former head of Army General Staff of Armenia, after resigning his post, made a disclosure on 19 November to the press that Armenia launched Russian made Iskander missiles into Azerbaijan during the latest war.

### 3. Armenia's Foreign Relations

The foreign relations and contacts of Armenia during the period under review were limited and restricted with COVID-19 conditions and fighting in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. Prime Minister Pashinyan travelled to Minsk to attend the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council. On this occasion he met and held private talks with his Russian counterpart on 17 July. Pashinyan underlined that the meeting coincided with the recent escalation on the Armenian-Azerbaijan border<sup>26</sup>. The Russian Prime Minister on his part referred to their first meeting in Almaty in January and lamented that bilateral trade had declined due to the pandemic.

The Armenian Foreign Minister had a trilateral telephone conversation with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy together with the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan on 22 July, to assess the situation following the fighting on July 12-14 at their common border. A common understanding could not be reached.

Following the 4 August harbor explosion in Beirut, Armenia's Chief Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs went to Lebanon, announcing that the Armenian government was preparing an aid package to help ethnic Armenians in Lebanon to emigrate to Armenia<sup>27</sup>.

On August 15, Foreign Minister had telephone conversation with his counterparts from Greece and GASC. The three referred to recent developments in the Aegean-eastern Mediterranean region. Armenian

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25 "EU welcomes cessation of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh", *EU Neighbors*, November 11, 2020, <https://euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/news/eu-welcomes-cessation-hostilities-nagorno-karabakh>

26 "Eurasian Intergovernmental Council session kicks off in Minsk, Belarus", *Public Radio of Armenia*, July 17, 2020, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1022117.html>

27 "Armenia encouraging migrants following Beirut blast".

Foreign Minister reaffirmed his country's unconditional support to Greece and GASC<sup>28</sup>.

Armenia's position and approach to the opposition movement in Belarussian presidential elections caused visible strains. Asked whether Armenia recognized the Belarussian presidential election results as legitimate, the Foreign Minister reminded that Pashinyan congratulated the President of Belarus. He rejected to draw parallels between Belarus protests and Armenian "velvet revolution". On the other hand, Armenia abstained from voting on the issue of investigating human rights violations in Belarus during the 45th session of the UN Human Rights Council together with Angola, Cameroon, DR of Congo, and Nigeria<sup>29</sup>.

President A. Sarkisian, having his vacation abroad, met in London, where he previously served as his country's ambassador, with UK Minister for European Neighborhood and the Americas.

On 11 September, Foreign Minister called on his Iranian counterpart. The Ministry's statement read: "A number of issues on the bilateral agenda were discussed. It was possible to develop traditional friendship dialogue based on mutual trust and to take steps to expand cooperation."<sup>30</sup>

Foreign Minister paid an official visit to Egypt in early September. He held a press conference in Cairo on 14 September, after his meeting with his Egyptian counterpart. He voiced strong support for Egypt's position in its dispute with Turkey over maritime boundaries in eastern Mediterranean and the conflict in Libya. He spoke of the "same source of destabilization" in the South Caucasus, east Mediterranean and North Africa. He also said: "We stand in solidarity with Greece and Cyprus on their inalienable rights to economic activities in the exclusive economic zone in line with international law"<sup>31</sup> and emphasized his country's solidarity and support to Egypt in the same way. He was then received by the Egyptian President. He also met with the Secretary General of the Arab League. On 15 September, on his way to Tbilisi, Egypt's Minister of Tourism and Antiquities stopped briefly in Yerevan to hold talks.

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28 "Armenian FM discusses Turkish provocations with Greek, Cypriot counterparts", *Public Radio of Armenia*, August 15, 2020, <https://en.armradio.am/2020/08/15/armenian-fm-discusses-turkish-provocations-with-greek-cypriot-counterparts/>

29 "Armenian PM comments on voting at UNHCR over Belarus", *Public Radio of Armenia*, September 16, 2020, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1027895.html>

30 "We stand in solidarity with Greece and Cyprus on their inalienable rights to economic activities in the exclusive economic zone in line with international law", *ArmlInfo*, October 10, 2020.

31 "Armenia reiterates solidarity with Greece and Cyprus". *Public Radio of Armenia*, September 14, 2020, <https://en.armradio.am/2020/09/14/armenia-reiterates-solidarity-with-greece-and-cyprus/>

Russian and Armenian top army generals met in Moscow on 5 September as troops from the two countries began a joint military exercise in Northwestern Armenia, near the Armenian-Turkish border. It involved about a thousand soldiers of the Russian military base in Gyumri, 200 tanks, artillery systems as well as two dozen Russian and Armenian war planes. The total number of Russian troops in Armenia is around 4000-5000 soldiers. In 2010, the interstate agreement on the Russian military base in Armenia was extended until 2044. In addition, servicemen of the Border Guard Department of the Russian Federal Security Service are stationed to protect the border between Turkey and Iran. Later in the month, Armenia joined the “Caucasus 2020 Joint Military Exercises” held on 21-25 September with the participation of Russia, China, Belarus, Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan, and some others<sup>32</sup>.

The second session of the strategic dialogue between the US and Armenia was held remotely on 14 September. The first was held in Yerevan in May 2019. The discussions focused on joint achievements and future cooperation to advance democratic reforms in Armenia, including anti-corruption and judicial and legal reforms. On 16 September, the 2020 session of “Armenia-US Joint Trade and Investment Council” was held. The Council was established in 2015 following the “Trade and Investment Framework Agreement” signed on 7 May 2006 for the strengthening, further deepening identification of barriers, expansion, and diversification of trade in goods and services between the parties. The trade turnover of Armenia with the US in 2019 amounted to 334,2 million dollars, with an increase of 47.8% compared to the previous year. In 2019, the main products exported from Armenia were aluminum foil, diamonds, copper scrap, scrap, alcoholic beverages, jewelry, canned fruits, nuts, and berries<sup>33</sup>.

Armenia signed a contract with an American lobbying firm headed by former US Senator Bob Dole for assisting ‘strategic’ talks with the US on 23 September. The lobbying firm is to prepare for the final round of the US-Armenia Strategic Dialogue to take place in Washington. The first session of the “strategic dialogue” was held in Yerevan in May 2019. US officials promised greater financial assistance to Armenia at the May 2019 talks. Indeed, US increased its assistance by 40%, to over 60 million dollars.

Armenian Ministry of Defense’s National Defense Research University held a virtual meeting with US Kansas National Guard State Partnership program on 23 September for talks on military models in partnership exchange.

32 “Russia, China launch massive ‘Caucasus 2020’ military exercises”, *RFI.fr*, September 21, 2020, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/international/20200921-russia-china-launch-massive-caucasus-2020-military-exercises-belarus-iran-pakistan-ukraine-us-nato>

33 “Growth In Trade Turnover Between Armenia And Russia Slows Down”, *FinPort*, September 10, 2020, [https://finport.am/full\\_news.php?id=42242&lang=3](https://finport.am/full_news.php?id=42242&lang=3)



Provocations in the US Congress continued in support of the anti-Turkish Armenian narrative as some members of Congress called on the Library of Congress to change the current subject heading “Armenian massacres” to that of “Armenian Genocide”. The Armenian Congressional Caucus introduced a resolution on 1 October “condemning Azerbaijan’s military operation in Nagorno Karabakh and denouncing Turkish interference in the conflict<sup>34</sup>. Reacting to continued pro-Armenian, anti-Turkish remarks, Turkish ambassador to the US criticized a member of Congress publicly for twisting the truth as well as realities on the ground, saying that Americans deserved to know the truth, not politically motivated distortions. At the aftermath of the defeat of Armenia and signing of the trilateral 10 November agreement, Armenian Congressional Caucus was again aggressive and audacious to write to the President Elect of the USA Joe Biden, appealing not only to come to the assistance of Armenia but also to punish Azerbaijan and engage in a thorough review of policy towards Turkey.

On 17 September, a building next to an Armenian church in San Francisco burned down, where arson was suspected. On 22 September, an Armenian school, also in San Francisco, was target of a pattern of hate crimes as police reported that shots were fired at the school building over the weekend<sup>35</sup>. The same school was vandalized by spray paints back in July. On this occasion, with historical insight to such provocations, we are pleased to be, for once, in full agreement with US Congressman Adam Schiff, a vocal advocate of Armenian community, who called that “those responsible for this act of hate must be swiftly brought to justice”. We hope and expect that those words will be followed up.

Armenia opened its embassy in Tel Aviv on September 18, one year after upgrading its relations with Israel. Armenia and Israel established diplomatic relations in 1992 but had no embassies in each other’s capitals.

Pashinyan addressed the UN General Assembly at its 75th anniversary held virtually due to the pandemic. His target was Turkey. He delivered the following jibes:

“The calls made by the international community during the July escalation were mainly about maintaining the ceasefire, dialogue and restraint of the parties. Turkey, however, in line with its destabilizing policy of expanding its influence, has spared no effort to escalate

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34 “Library of Congress Corrects ‘Armenian Massacres’ Heading to ‘Armenian Genocide’”, *Asbarez*, October 21, 2020, <https://asbarez.com/197778/library-of-congress-corrects-armenian-massacres-heading-to-armenian-genocide/>

35 “Shots fired at Armenian school in San Francisco”, *Public Radio of Armenia*, September 22, 2020, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1028360/>

tensions in neighboring regions such as the Mediterranean, North Africa, the Middle East and the South Caucasus.”

“By unilaterally supporting Azerbaijan and expanding its military presence there, Turkey is stepping up its efforts to [damage the establishment of] peace and stability in the region, [such as] the initiatives of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs to this end.”

“Turkey is directly threatening Armenia with its demonstratively belligerent stance abroad, holding provocative joint military exercises with Azerbaijan in the immediate vicinity of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh.”

Turkey builds its policy in our region on tribal traditions, manipulation of conflicts, justification of the Armenian genocide, impunity for this crime. Turkey is a security threat to Armenia and the region.”<sup>36</sup>

The Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed the following letter to the Secretary General of the UN on 16 September in response to Pashinyan’s remarks:

“Letter dated 16 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, I am writing to you concerning the statement made by the Prime Minister of Armenia during the general debate of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, as well as recent notes verbales and letters of the Permanent Mission of the said country, a list of which is attached herewith

First of all, I would like to reiterate the well-known fact that, under international law, “genocide” is a strictly defined crime with very specific conditions of proof. It was legally established for the first time in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948, according to which the authoritative determination of this crime can solely be made by a competent court, after proper investigation and adjudication. As regards the events of 1915, which predate the Convention by decades, there does not exist any such judgment. On the contrary, recent court judgments clearly point to the historic and non-justiciable nature of the events concerned and confirm that these events are indeed the subject of a legitimate debate protected under the freedom of expression.

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36 “Pashinyan Addresses UN on 75th Anniversary”, *Mirror Spectator*, October 1, 2020, <https://mirrorspectator.com/2020/10/01/pashinyan-addresses-un-on-75th-anniversary/>

Concerning Armenia's numerous absurd and unsubstantiated allegations regarding Turkey, it is ironic if not outright hypocritical that such assertions come from a country which overtly glorifies the perpetrators of the brutal terrorist attacks committed against Turkish citizens and diplomats in the 1970s and 1980s, while continuing to incite hostilities and committing international law violations in Azerbaijan's territories that it has occupied for more than a quarter of a century.

The international community should make no mistake that the current outbreak of hostilities is the direct consequence of Armenia's consistent provocations on the ground. Armenia's complete disregard of international law and blatant violation of A/75/525 S/2020/1024 2/3 20-13763 Security Council resolutions in particular have brought the region where it is today. It should also not be forgotten, despite Armenia's attempts to that end, that Azerbaijan has been exercising its inherent right of self-defence, since the hostilities are taking place exclusively on its own sovereign territory.

Moreover, Armenian armed forces continue to target the civilian population and objects along the line of contact in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, including the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The indiscriminate shelling by the Armenian armed forces has wreaked havoc on the civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, medical centres, school buildings and kindergartens. Since 4 October 2020, the armed forces of Armenia have expanded the area of their strikes against the civilian population and infrastructure of major cities of Azerbaijan, away from the combat zone, including Ganja and Mingachevir, with long-range artillery and rocket fire.

Armenia's use of foreign terrorist fighters and mercenaries from a number of countries is also well documented. Yerevan is receiving support from some terrorist groups, primarily the People's Protection Units/Kurdistan Workers' Party (YPG/PKK), which has long-standing ties with other terrorist groups, such as the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA). Since 1973, 58 Turkish citizens, including 31 diplomats and their family members, lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Armenian terrorist organizations, namely ASALA, the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG) and the Armenian Revolutionary Army (ARA). As of today, certain Armenian diaspora organizations, operating under the cover of charity, have also been instrumental in mobilizing funds and facilitating the transfer of foreign terrorist fighters to the conflict zone.

Turkey has adopted a consistent and principled position regarding the Nagorno Karabakh conflict since the beginning. We continue to support a solution to the problem on the basis of international law, within the framework of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. In this vein, we would like to remind Armenia once again of its obligation under the Charter of the United Nations to uphold without delay the relevant Security Council resolutions (resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 883 (1993)), which reflect the will and understanding of the international community, calling for the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of occupying forces in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Nevertheless, instead of taking responsibility, Armenian leadership resorts to black propaganda and defamation against Turkey, to divert attention from the gross international law violations that it continues to commit. Armenian allegations about Turkish involvement in the field and about the fighters from outside are baseless and irrational. Both Azerbaijan and the relevant authorities in Turkey totally and unequivocally rejected these Armenian fabrications. This disinformation campaign aims to portray Armenia as the victim, while it continues its illegal occupation. Armenia's baseless and hostile claims are no more credible than its practice of politicizing and distorting historical events.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 8, 35, 40 and 114, and of the Security Council.<sup>37</sup>

Armenian Foreign Minister sent a letter on 28 September to UN Secretary General, expressing concern over “Turkey’s unconditional unilateral support to Azerbaijan and its aggression”. He also alleged that “the aggression is preplanned and the statements of the Azerbaijani side about the alleged counterattack are absolute lie<sup>38</sup>”.

However, the spokesperson for the UN Secretary General told a briefing on 28 September that the UN could independently confirm or deny reports that Turkey has interfered in the current escalation in the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh. He further said the following about Ankara’s possible

37 “Letter dated 16 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General”, *United Nations*, October 16, 2020, <https://www.undocs.org/en/A/75/525>

38 “Special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council to discuss”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia*, 30 September 2020, [https://www.mfa.am/en/embassy-news/2020/09/30/OSCE\\_SP/10477](https://www.mfa.am/en/embassy-news/2020/09/30/OSCE_SP/10477)

interference: “We have no information to the veracity of this claim and many other claims that are being made.”<sup>39</sup>

The spokesperson of the Turkish Foreign Ministry gave the following answer on 13 November to a question regarding an announcement of the Human Rights Council:

“The baseless allegations mentioned in the press release of the UN Human Rights Council’s Special Procedures Mechanism are detached from the facts on the ground. The reason behind the circulation of these fake news is Armenia’s intention to divert attention away from its illegal occupation and create the perception of a supposedly “victimized country fighting against international terrorism”.

It is proven that Armenia has recorded images of the members of the Syrian National Army and circulated them on the internet as pseudo evidence. Neither these fake videos nor the comments of people paid in exchange of testimony have any credibility or validity.

The press release made without waiting for Turkey’s views and based on black propaganda products of fake images and fabricated news has undermined the credibility of the UN Special Procedures Mechanism. What is expected from the Mechanism is to work transparently and collect the views of all relevant parties, rather than make biased and misleading statements.

On the other hand, we find it positive, yet insufficient, for the statement to mention that Armenia has used foreign fighters in the clashes. It is common knowledge that Armenia deployed Syria based PKK / YPG terrorists to Nagorno Karabakh. In fact, many PKK terrorists, whose names were known to us, were neutralized by the Azerbaijani army in the fighting.

As the Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan has confessed, many ethnic Armenian citizens of third countries took part in the clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh. We would have expected the Special Rapporteurs to investigate this information, which is supported with images in open sources, in greater detail and reflect it in the statement.

Although the statement mentions deliberate attacks on civilians, we deem it a deliberate neglect not to mention that it was Armenia doing this. As stated by Prime Minister Pashinyan’s military adviser, Armenia

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39 “UN can’t confirm Turkey interfered in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict – spokesperson”, *TASS*, September 28, 2020, <https://tass.com/world/1206127>

has deliberately attacked civilian settlements in Azerbaijan with illegal cluster bombs in order to create chaos among the people, thus has committed war crimes. Armenia's violation of international law has also been recorded by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International."<sup>40</sup>

China opened its new embassy complex in Armenia on 23 September. It is said to be the largest Chinese embassy complex in the region and second largest in the former Soviet Union. President A. Sarkisian attended the inauguration ceremony, saying that its construction highlights Beijing's desire to deepen Chinese-Armenian relations.

Prime Minister Pashinyan called on President of France as fighting erupted on 27 September, to express his deep concern and the possibility of its further aggravation. President of France said that further escalation of tensions was unacceptable. He considered it necessary to take all measures to stop hostilities and defuse the tension. He stressed the need to intensify the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs to restore peace in the region. Pashinyan also called on the German Chancellor Angele Merkel and pleaded the same with her. Merkel highlighted the cessation of fire and restoration of the peace process in line with the October 1 statement of the presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries.

Armenian Foreign Minister called his Greek counterpart on 2 October, informed him of the developments and highlighted the importance of hosting him in upcoming weeks. The Greek Foreign Minister duly paid a visit to Armenia on 16 October, availing himself, in tandem with his Armenian counterpart, to abusive statements against Turkey. The Turkish Foreign Ministry reacted with the following reply:

“The remarks and claims of Nikos Dendias, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, regarding our country during his visit to Armenia is a new proof of Greece's choice for a policy of tension and escalation in its relations with Turkey, rather than good neighbourliness, dialogue and cooperation.

These claims would not cover up historical facts. Greece should not forget the atrocities it has committed in Anatolia for which it was convicted to pay compensation and should read the history correctly, renounce “megali idea” and Turkish hostility.

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40 “QA-110, 13 November 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Allegations Mentioned in the Press Release of the UN Human Rights Council's Special Procedures Mechanism”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, November 13, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc\\_-110\\_-bm-insan-haklari-konseyi-ozel-prosedurler-mekanizmasi-nin-aciklamasinda-yer-alan-iddialar-hk-sc.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-110_-bm-insan-haklari-konseyi-ozel-prosedurler-mekanizmasi-nin-aciklamasinda-yer-alan-iddialar-hk-sc.tr.mfa)

The common denominator of the solution of all problems in our region is Turkey, while the creator of the problems or the supporter of the creators of the problems is Greece.

It is Greece that supports the cruel Esad regime in Syria, the putschist Hafter in Libya, the occupier Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh, opens its doors for all terrorist organizations including PKK, PYD, FETÖ, which commit acts against Turkey, transforms Aegean sea into the grave of immigrants and pursues expansionist policies in the Aegean sea and Mediterranean.

The Greek Foreign Minister needs to differentiate between the occupier and the victim in Nagorno-Karabakh and the seven regions surrounding it, and call on the international community to condemn the illegal Armenian occupation in the Azerbaijani territories for the last 28 years despite the UN Security Council Resolutions that urge Armenia to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw.

Greece should abandon these policies and read Turkey, the realities of the region and the world correctly.”<sup>41</sup>

The Armenian President paid a visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels on 21 October, met with the NATO Secretary General, the two held a news conference after talks<sup>42</sup>. A CSTO member country president was thus accorded the opportunity of reception to accuse a NATO member of obstructing international efforts to stop hostilities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, with no reported objection to his distorted and misleading words. Those words appeared in an expanded version on October 26 in an American paper.

Below is the re-print provided by the President’s Office:

“On September 30, I drafted a special letter to several world leaders to describe to them the situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, a contested region of the Caucasus inhabited predominately by ethnic Armenians. It has been attacked aggressively by Azerbaijan, with the full support of Turkey. I could hardly anticipate the scope of the aggression and the lack of humanity in the behaviour of their forces. Then and even now, the reality on the ground that my fellow Armenians

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41 “QA-101, 16 October 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Remarks of Nikos Dendias, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, in Armenia”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, October 16, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc\\_-101\\_-yunan-disisleri-bakani-dendias-in-ermenistan-daki-ifadeleri-hk-sc.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-101_-yunan-disisleri-bakani-dendias-in-ermenistan-daki-ifadeleri-hk-sc.en.mfa)

42 “President of Armenia visits the NATO Headquarters”, *NATO Official Website*, October 21, 2020, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_179008.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_179008.htm)

are experiencing is more than alarming, and risks igniting further escalation and insecurity in the region and even beyond.

Months and even years before the military aggression by Azerbaijan on September 27, the Azerbaijani leadership was using very harsh, militaristic rhetoric and overtly voicing, at the highest levels of government, its intentions to resolve the conflict through a fully fledged war. Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia have been facing similar attempts for more than 25 years since a ceasefire was established after the first Karabakh war in 1994. Ever since then, the rhetoric and the destructive behaviour of Azerbaijan has never faded.

Nagorno-Karabakh – or Artsakh, as we call it in Armenia – has always been populated overwhelmingly by Armenians. It has never been a voluntary part of independent Azerbaijan. In 1921, Nagorno-Karabakh was given as a gift by Russia under Josef Stalin to Soviet Azerbaijan, which was not an independent state, but a part of the Soviet Union.

Following decades of continued discrimination, in 1987 and 1988 the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh began to raise their voices to re-join with Armenia. They conducted peaceful demonstrations and signed petitions. At the same time, ethnically motivated persecutions against Armenians in Soviet Azerbaijan mounted. There were pogroms and ethnic cleansing campaigns in a number of Azerbaijani cities.

During the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh declared their independence earlier than Azerbaijan. In fact, Azerbaijan declared its own independence from the Soviet Union in a separate process, without Nagorno-Karabakh. Despite this and other facts that, in Armenia's view, make Azerbaijan's claims baseless in the context of the international law, the government in Baku seeks has, for about 30 years, sought to oppress with military means the right of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh (or the Republic of Artsakh) to live in their homeland. It pursues a policy of forcibly capturing lands, cleansing them of their native inhabitants and heritage and ignoring the basic, fundamental rights.

After 30 years of rejecting any attempts at a peaceful solution, Azerbaijan, supported militarily and politically by Turkey, is once again attacking Armenia's cherished homeland. Azerbaijan's position is, in a sense, a continuation of the policies that Armenians have faced ever since the Ottoman Empire tried to perpetrate the genocide of Armenians almost 105 years ago. At that time, about 1,5 million ethnic Armenians perished, or were exiled and persecuted.



The Azerbaijani side today includes not only Turkish generals, officers and military experts, but also Turkish F-16 fighter jets and the infamous “Bayraktar” drones. Every day, these death machines and are involved in bombing Nagorno-Karabakh and even Armenia. Lethal and even prohibited weapons, such as cluster munition, have been deployed for more than three weeks against a huge number of Armenian civilians and civil infrastructure. The latter includes hospitals, houses and even kindergartens.

If you add to this the involvement of Syrian mercenaries, jihadists and radical fanatics who are now on Armenian soil killing my people, the full picture is clear. Mercenaries from international terrorist organisations fighting in the Middle East — in particular, Jabhat Al Nusra, Firqat Hamza and the Sultan Murad Division — are actively entering the fray. Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh are dealing with international terrorism.

Hence, we in Armenia remain very concerned and alert for those developments on the ground. We are also concerned by the hesitant stance of the international community, which needs to react immediately. It needs to apply pressure to Turkey to withdraw from our region with its weapons, mercenaries and cynicism. It needs to apply pressure to Azerbaijan to respect two ceasefires agreed on October 10 and 17. The war by Turkey and Azerbaijan against my nation risks creating another Syria in the Caucasus, with the potential to fuel a greater fire in the entire region and beyond.

Turkey does not hesitate to export Islamist militants and other terrorists into Azerbaijan. But, as usual, it needs an excuse for doing so. One of its excuses has been that Azerbaijanis are its ethnic kin. The reality is that that line of thinking simply doesn't work in the new world, because by that logic Turkey's ethnic kinship extends all the way into Central Asia, Mongolia, northern China and elsewhere. Is Ankara ready to interfere with any problem that its ethnic brothers may face there?

Perhaps the answer is yes — in which case, it is no wonder that modern Turkey has problematic relations virtually 360 degrees in every direction. It has had problems with Egypt. It is now involved in Libya. It speaks about the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, but in the meantime has crossed over its border with Iraq. It violates the territorial integrity of Syria. It is trying to be very present in Lebanon and in parts of the Gulf. It also has big issues in the Eastern Mediterranean. And now, it is in the Caucasus. All of this is unacceptable.

Leaders of civilised nations, regardless of their religious or ethnic identities, must act unequivocally to stop aggressors and establish long-lasting peace. We need peace, and it can only be reached through negotiation and talks. But this is what the Azerbaijani side rejects each and every time, for reasons that are horrific to the rest of us. They claim they have a legitimate right to use force – brutal, military force – against the Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh.

We need to understand that there is no military solution to this and, I would say, to any conflict. Armenians have always believed that a solution has to be reached through peaceful negotiations and in a way that does not make things worse. This is why we have refrained from officially recognising the Republic of Artsakh, so as to allow the negotiations to take place and reach a peaceful solution. But Turkey and Azerbaijan seem to have a different understanding of what a solution is, and they push only a militaristic, aggressive and, in my view, genocidal agenda.

My appeal to Muslim and Arab leaders aims at asking them to use their influence and high prestige in the international arena to immediately stop the bloodshed and human suffering.

Together, we can stop this aggression, because we are proponents of peace, who reject war, violence and terrorism.”<sup>43</sup>

In another interview he called on the West to understand that Turkey’s presence in Azerbaijan meant control over natural gas and oil from Central Asia to Europe. To a Belgian periodical, he claimed on 7 November that Turkey created instability everywhere and repeated that Turkey wanted to control the flow of energy from the Caspian Sea and Central Asia, that Europe was the main target. He was much more limitless in his vocabulary in an interview that appeared in a Greek daily on 10 November.

Following the defeat of Armenia, he hastily made two visits abroad to Muslim countries, with a view to removing the perception that the war had religious connotations. He first went to the UAE and met with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi on 15 November. He then went to Jordan on 23 November and met with the King. He publicly said that his reception showed to the Muslim world that Armenia was not alone.

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43 “Armenian President: Turkey risks setting the whole Caucasus ablaze”, *The National News*, October 23, 2020, <https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/armenian-president-turkey-risks-setting-the-whole-caucasus-ablaze-1.1097908>

On November 1 and 2 correspondingly, Russian President had phone calls with Armenian Prime Minister and Azerbaijan's President. According to the statement from Moscow, issues of the Nagorno Karabakh settlement were thoroughly discussed.

#### 4. Turkey-Armenia Relations

The heightened tension translated into bitter official statements following the fighting in the Azerbaijan-Armenian border in July that continued unabated during the period under review, bringing the relations to its lowest ebb.

In response to Armenian Foreign Ministry's statement of 15 July, branding Turkey "a security threat to Armenia and the region", the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued the following statement setting the tone for future developments:

"We observe that Armenia now tries to resort to a hypocritical smear campaign against Turkey in an effort to cover up its aggressive actions against Azerbaijan.

This two-faced attitude of Armenia, which has been illegally occupying Azerbaijani territory for many years, clearly reveals who is the real obstacle to the establishment of lasting peace and stability in the South Caucasus.

Conducting foreign policy with such out of context accusations and slanders will benefit neither the region nor Armenia.

This approach is the manifestation of a mentality which constructs its identity by solely deriving enmity based on a one-sided interpretation of history and which tries to legitimize its own aggression in contravention of international law. This defective mentality that fuels aggressive nationalism is deplorable, but not surprising for us.

Armenian authorities need to come to their senses and comprehend, as soon as possible, that they should be part of the solutions, not problems, in the South Caucasus."<sup>44</sup>

The President of Turkey as well as the Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs also admonished the aggression of Armenia in harsh words. In that same vein,

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44 "No: 154, 16 July 2020, Press Release Regarding the Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia on 15 July 2020", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, July 16, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-154\\_-ermenistan-disisleri-bakanligi-tarafindan-15-temmuz-2020-tarihinde-yapilan-aciklama-hk.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-154_-ermenistan-disisleri-bakanligi-tarafindan-15-temmuz-2020-tarihinde-yapilan-aciklama-hk.en.mfa)

four out of the five political parties represented in the Turkish Grand National Assembly signed the following joint statement, condemning the Armenian aggression and expressing solidarity with Azerbaijan.

“As the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, we strongly condemn the attack carried out by the armed forces of Armenia that started on 12 July against Azerbaijan’s Tovuz region.

Armenia is on a faulty path. This attack, which serves as an example for the known aggressive posture of Armenia, which has been occupying the Azerbaijan territory of Upper Karabakh and adjacent territories for years, is the greatest obstacle to a lasting peace and stability in the South Caucasus.

We invite the international community to show the necessary reaction in the face of this action by Armenia that spurns justice and law.

We repeat our support for a resolution to the Upper Karabakh conflict through peaceful ways in the framework of Azerbaijan’s internationally recognized borders and territorial integrity.

Armenia must adhere to the UN Security Council and OSCE resolutions and withdraw from the territories of Azerbaijan that it has occupied.

In line the understanding of two states, one nation, Turkey, which has always been a defender of peace and stability, will -with all its means- continue from now on as well to stand beside Azerbaijan in its efforts to re-establish its territorial integrity.

We hereby relay our condolences the people and Government of friendly and brotherly Azerbaijan for our Azerbaijani martyrs and wish that its wounds are healed as soon as possible.<sup>45</sup>

Armenia’s Turcophobic and irredentist ambitions were once again in display on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the defunct Treaty of Sévres of 10 August 1920. The operative part of a joint statement issued by 10 Armenian political parties is here below:

“1. The Sevres Treaty is not just a historical fact. It is an international treaty signed between states that exist today (or are their successors), the entering into force of which was suspended as a result of the shift in the military-political situation in the region.

45 “TBMM’de Dört Parti’den Ermenistan’ın Azerbaycan’a Saldırısına İlişkin Ortak Açıklama”, *TBMM Meclis Haber*, 16 Temmuz 2020, [https://meclishaber.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/haber\\_portal.aciklama?p1=149114](https://meclishaber.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/haber_portal.aciklama?p1=149114)

2. International discussions on the Sevres Treaty should be promoted by the academic communities of the Republic of Armenia and the signatory states, and the political circles should demonstrate its importance in the context of the current geopolitical and regional processes.

3. There is no other multilaterally recognized international agreement between Armenia and the Republic of Turkey, which legally resolves the border issue between the two countries.

4. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Sevres Treaty and Arbitral Award of Woodrow Wilson, it is necessary to take political initiative, demonstrating

- The hostile policy of Turkey towards the Republic of Armenia in international relations

Illegal blockade of the Republic of Armenia by Turkey

- Consistent appropriation and destruction of the Armenian historical and cultural heritage for more than a century with the complicity of the Turkish authorities
- Turkey's aggressive military-political support to Azerbaijan, its un-constructive attempts to be involved in Karabakh conflict, which are often accompanied by war threats
- Destabilization of all neighboring regions of Turkey
- Violation of human rights, including the rights of national-religious minorities in Turkey, authorised by the state.
- Incompatibility of the approaches of the Turkish authorities to the modern political processes and the challenges faced by humanity."<sup>46</sup>

Prime Minister Pashinyan, in prepared remarks for him that were read on his behalf, at a conference titled "The Treaty of Sévres and the Armenian question" hosted by Armenia's National Academy of Sciences, harped on the same claims.

In response, the same day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey issued the following statement:

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46 "10 Armenian political parties issue statement over Sevres Treaty centennial", *Hyetert*, August 12, 2020, <https://hyetert.org/2020/08/12/10-armenian-political-parties-issue-statement-over-sevres-treaty-centennial/>

“The Treaty of Sèvres which aimed at breaking up of our homeland and end our independence and sovereignty in the aftermath of WWI, was a case in point that put forward the disgraceful blueprints of invasion and destruction.

Honourable Turkish Nation sent the Sèvres to the ash heap of history through its heroic War of Liberation, followed by the Peace Treaty of Lausanne of 24 July 1923. It is not surprising to see that those who opt for drawing animosity instead of a lesson from history after the lapse of a century, hope for help from this document.

Response of the noble Turkish Nation to those who had dared to invade Anatolia and its heavy blow to imperialism are in the textbooks of history. This glorious struggle provided an example to other oppressed nations as well.

Today, after 100 years, the dare of an administration that is unable to feed even its own population, to bring forward the Sèvres document which the Turkish Nation tore up, is preposterous.

Those who entertain such insidious aims need to know well that facing the determination of Turkey to ensure its indivisibility with its homeland and nation, these will stick in their gizzard.

Armenia which continues its illegal occupation of Azerbaijani lands for years, is the real impediment before the regional peace and stability. It is time for the authorities of Armenia to abandon aggressive nationalist and jingoist policies and come to their senses.”<sup>47</sup>

The following day, the spokesperson for the Armenian Foreign Ministry responded by saying, “The Treaty of Sèvres is and will remain a historical fact, it will not be changed or scrapped”.

On 15 August, Armenian Foreign Minister had telephone talks with his counterparts from Greece and GASC where he reaffirmed Armenia’s unconditional support in the Aegean-eastern Mediterranean region, accusing Turkey of aggravating the situation.

The spokesperson of the Turkish Foreign Ministry addressed the words of the Armenian Minister with the following reply:

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47 “No: 171, 10 August 2020, Press Release Regarding the Statements of the Authorities of Armenia on the Pretext of the Centenary of the Treaty of Sèvres”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, August 10, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-171\\_-sevr-anlasmasi-nin-100-yildonumu-bahanesiyle-ermenistan-makamlarinca-yapilan-aciklamalar-hk.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-171_-sevr-anlasmasi-nin-100-yildonumu-bahanesiyle-ermenistan-makamlarinca-yapilan-aciklamalar-hk.tr.mfa)

“It is conspicuous that Armenia, who dared to propound a remark regarding the Eastern Mediterranean, is in a fallacious perception of the global geography and her place in it. The issue at hand is the Eastern Mediterranean, not Lake Sevan.

Following her provocative statement on the Treaty of Sèvres, Armenia expressing an opinion regarding the Eastern Mediterranean this time, is a novel instance of impertinence and irresponsibility.

Coming after the examples of the United Arab Emirates and France, the fact that Armenia, a country with no coastline to any sea, presumes itself worthy of speaking about the Eastern Mediterranean, unravels the dimensions of an insidious alliance that is being attempted to be forged against Turkey.

No matter what, Turkey will resolutely continue to protect both her and Turkish Cypriots’ rights in the Eastern Mediterranean stemming from international law. No alliance of malice will manage to prevent this. Those who think otherwise have not taken their lessons from history.

On this occasion, Turkey would also like to remind that, with all her means and capabilities, she stands by brotherly Azerbaijan.”<sup>48</sup>

Prime Minister Pashinyan chaired a meeting of the National Security Council on 21 August. There, he is reported to have announced a new National Security Strategy where, with regard Turkey, having said the following:

“I believe that Turkey’s destabilizing and destructive activity causes significant concerns and worries among our partners in the Middle East, the Eurasian region as well as the European region. This is an agenda which is already developed and our actions in this agenda must also become the subject of highly important discussions at the Security Council, the foreign ministry and we will discuss issues connected with this during today’s session.”<sup>49</sup>

On 31 August, Armenian media reported that the Kurdish community in Armenia held demonstration in Yerevan, outside the UN Office. It was reported

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48 “QA-77, 16 August 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Statement of Armenia on the Eastern Mediterranean”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, August 16, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc\\_-77\\_-ermenistan-in-dogu-akdeniz-aciklamasi-hk-sc.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-77_-ermenistan-in-dogu-akdeniz-aciklamasi-hk-sc.en.mfa)

49 “PM Pashinyan slams Turkey for “destabilizing and destructive” actions in region and globally”, *Artsakh News*, November 21, 2020, <https://artsakhpress.am/eng/news/131238/pobedniye-iyulskie-boi-dokazalichto-karabakhskiiy-vopros-ne-imeet-voennogo-resheniya-pashinyan.html>

that they asked for UN support for democracy in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, focusing on Turkey.

The Armenian Foreign Minister declared on 31 August, in an interview with a Russian press agency, which was also aired by the *Public Radio of Armenia*, that Turkey's actions remained a threat to Armenia's security. He made the following remarks:

“The policy of destabilization and aggression on the part of Turkey is a threat to all neighboring regions, including the eastern Mediterranean, northern Africa and the Middle East. Today Turkey is trying to export this policy of destabilization to the South Caucasus region. This is a serious concern. Turkey is pursuing an unconstructive and dangerous policy. Turkey's actions continue to pose a threat to the security of Armenia. In this regard, Armenia will work to further strengthen its security, including through cooperation with its partners.”<sup>50</sup>

The Armenian Foreign Ministry confirmed on 2 September a German magazine report that Turkey refused permission to a German military transport aircraft headed for Yerevan to fly over its airspace, condemning Turkey for obstruction of “NATO peacekeepers' operation”.

On 2 September, Foreign Ministry spokesperson said at a press conference that Armenia did not consider Turkey, a member of the Minsk Group, as a mediator in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement.

On 6 September, the Armenian community in Turkey held the annual divine liturgy in the 1100-year-old Armenian church in Van with the participation of a 25-member delegation of the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul, headed by Patriarch Sahak II Mashalyan. The event was also reported in the Armenian media.

In an official visit to Egypt, Armenian Foreign Minister reiterated on 14 September his often versed and well-worn accusations against Turkey as well as solidarity with Greece and GASC in an effort to get reciprocal Egyptian support to his country's policies against Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Not satisfied with the results of accusations he is used to hurling at Turkey, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia also came up with a novel argument that Turkey has been denying Armenia's right to access to sea. On 23 September he reiterated this accusation at an online ministerial meeting of the

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50 “Turkey's actions remain a threat to Armenia's security, Foreign Minister says”, *Public Radio of Armenia*, August 31, 2020, <https://en.armradio.am/2020/08/31/turkeys-actions-remain-a-threat-to-armenias-security-foreign-minister-says/>



group of landlocked countries. His interlocuters however must have been well aware of the irrelevance of this statement on two grounds: The reason why Turkey closed its border with Armenia was due to the occupation of Azerbaijani territory and Armenia already has a way to open seas through both Georgia and Iran.

The 75th session of the UN General Assembly witnessed Pashinyan's rhetoric against Turkey and Turkish President stating Turkey as the biggest obstacle to local peace and stability in the South Caucasus.

On 27 September, war erupted following fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh between the armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenia was quick in accusing Turkey. Prime Minister Pashinyan called on the French President the same day, inquiring his help to stop possible Turkish intervention. In the words of the Foreign Minister, to an international TV channel the next day: "this aggression is accompanied by large scale support from Turkey".

Turkish President's words were quoted in the Armenian press as follows:

“‘Defend your future’: Erdogan calls on Armenians to stand against govt as clashes with Azerbaijan resume

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called on Armenians to stand in opposition to their government, which is the “biggest threat” to peace in the region, after military hostilities resumed with Azerbaijan.

Erdogan urged the people of Armenia to safeguard their future from their country's leadership, which he claimed is using them like “puppets.”

In a series of tweets, the Turkish leader expressed hope that the “whole world” would stand with Azerbaijan in its “struggle against occupation and oppression.”

“Armenia once again showed that it is the biggest threat to peace and tranquility in the region,” Erdogan wrote. He also lashed out at the Minsk Group, which was formed by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to help facilitate a peaceful resolution to the territorial dispute between Baku and Yerevan. He accused the international body of “double standards” when dealing with the two nations, claiming that Armenian “aggression” has gone overlooked for nearly three decades.

Ankara threw its full support behind Baku after Armenian and Azeri forces clashed in the Nagorno-Karabakh region on Sunday morning. The ruling conservative Justice and Development Party, which is led by

Erdogan, released a statement condemning Yerevan for “playing with fire” and accused Armenia of threatening regional peace.

Armenia and Azerbaijan have been bitter rivals since both nations secured their independence in the 1990s. The mutual distrust comes from a years-long dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, a predominantly Armenian area landlocked inside Azeri territory. Baku claims sovereignty over the region, while Yerevan treats it as an independent nation and ally. Both nations have accused each other of sparking the latest military flare-up in the border region.”<sup>51</sup>

Turkish President’s spokesman stated:

“We believe this conflict can be resolved through peaceful negotiations, but the Armenian side has shown no interest so far other than continuing to occupy parts of Azerbaijan. That occupation must end, everybody knows where the solution lies, and the Minsk Group countries must put pressure on Armenia to stop violating international law. Turkey remains in full solidarity with Azerbaijan.”<sup>52</sup>

Turkish Minister of Defense said, “The biggest obstacle to peace and stability in the Caucuses is the hostile stance of Armenia and it must immediately turn back from this hostility that will send the region into fire”. He added that Turkey would support Baku with “all its resources”.

Spokesperson of the Turkish Foreign Ministry answered a question on the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan as follows:

“We learnt that Armenian Armed Forces launched an intense shelling with heavy arms on Azerbaijani army, in Kapanlı village of Tartar district, Çıraklı and Ortakerbent villages of Aghdam district, Alhanlı and Şükürbeyli villages of Aghdam district and Çocukmercanlı village of Cebrayıl district in violation of the ceasefire along the contact line.

We strongly condemn the Armenian attacks which constitute a clear violation of international law and caused civilian casualties. With these attacks, Armenia once again displayed that it is the biggest obstacle to peace and stability in the region.

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51 “‘Defend your future’: Erdogan calls on ordinary Armenians to stand against their government as clashes with Azerbaijan continue”, *RT*, September 27, 2020, <https://www.rt.com/news/501847-erdogan-armenia-catastrophe-azerbaijan-conflict/>

52 Andrew Kramer, “Fighting Between Armenia and Azerbaijan Risks Drawing in Bigger Powers”, *The New York Times*, September 28, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/28/world/asia/azerbaijan-armenia-nagorno-karabakh.html>

Azerbaijan will surely use its right of self defence to protect its people and its territorial integrity. In this vein, Turkey fully supports Azerbaijan with unwavering solidarity. We will stand by Azerbaijan whichever way it prefers.

We call on the international community also to stand by the righteous party.

Hereby, we wish Allah’s mercy upon Azerbaijani martyrs who lost their lives, wish a speedy recovery to the wounded and convey our condolences to the brotherly Azerbaijan.”<sup>53</sup>

Four political parties of the five represented in the Turkish Grand National Assembly issued the following Joint Declaration on 28 September:

“As the political parties that have groups in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, we strongly condemn the attacks of Armenian armed forces on September 28, 2020 by means of violating the international law and ceasefire in Upper Karabakh, hence targeting civil residential areas and soldiers of Azerbaijan by using heavy weapons.

This latest attack has showed once again that after the attacks on Tovruz, Armenia is the greatest obstacle to establishing permanent peace and stability in the region.

We support Azerbaijan’s acts of defense in order to protect its citizens and to establish its territorial integrity within the framework of its right of self defence that generates from the international law.

Upper Karabakh has been occupied by Armenia for almost 30 years. We reiterate our support to a peaceful solution in line with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in order to end this unjust occupation. We invite the international community to stand by Azerbaijan who has been suffering to date due to Armenia’s occupation and irresponsible attacks.

On this occasion, the political parties in our veteran Assembly, we wish Allah’s mercy on our martyred Azerbaijani brothers and quick recovery

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53 “QA-94, 27 September 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, in Response to a Question Regarding the Armenian Attacks on Azerbaijan Which Started This Morning”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, September 27, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc\\_-94\\_-ermenistan-in-azerbaycan-a-karsi-baslattigi-saldiri-hk-sc.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-94_-ermenistan-in-azerbaycan-a-karsi-baslattigi-saldiri-hk-sc.en.mfa)

for the veterans; we convey our condolences to our brother Azerbaijan and strongly reemphasize our nation's will of solidarity.”<sup>54</sup>

Foreign Minister of Armenia sent a letter to the UN Secretary General on 29 September in which he expressed his deep concern over Turkey's unconditional unilateral support to Azerbaijan.

Armenian Ministry of Defense alleged officially on 29 September that a Turkish Airforce jet entered its airspace from Azerbaijan and shot down an Armenian warplane, which proved out to be fake. Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not far beyond in producing fake information. It claimed that “according to credible sources, Turkey is recruiting and transporting foreign terrorist fighters to Azerbaijan”. This accusation was persistently repeated, identifying those supposed recruitments as pro-Turkish Syrian rebels affiliated with jihadi groups. The insinuation behind this ‘ingenious’ claim, no doubt, was to compliment the call on Christian audience to come to their assistance. It found some resonance, most overtly with the President of France.

The propaganda warfare against Turkey was multifaceted. One line was to provoke the Armenian community of Turkey, full-fledged Turkish citizens, by depicting that pro-Azerbaijan demonstrations in Istanbul were targeting them. Another was reporting that Georgia was allowing passage of Syrian militants and weapons from Turkey to Azerbaijan. Georgian authorities immediately and categorically denied such reports and called on the Armenian side not to rely on such misinformation and fake news.

Desperately seeking arguments to gear up pressure by the West on Turkey, Prime Minister Pashinyan, in an interview to a German daily that was also aired by the *Public Radio of Armenia* on 4 October, stretched the limits of reality, saying, inter alia, “I want to emphasize that in my opinion, Nagorno Karabakh and Armenia are at the forefront of civilization today. If the international community fails to consider the situation accurately, Europe will have to see Turkey before Vienna”. In an interview with a French press agency, this time he said on 6 October, that the escalating conflict was a “war against terrorism”. This was complimented with the allegation that Turkey had involved itself in the conflict as part of its “policy of Armenian genocide”.

In an interview he gave to a Russian press agency, he tried to provoke the sensitivities of Russia with the following words:

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54 “TBMM’de Dört Siyasi Partiden Ermenistan’a Kınama”, *TBMM Meclis Haber*, 28 Eylül 2020, [https://meclishaber.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/haber\\_portal.aciklama?p1=149410](https://meclishaber.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/haber_portal.aciklama?p1=149410) (Turkish version), [https://meclishaber.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/dosya.getir?pDosyaAdi=439697BC9C2CD432A87E48AD4817C1FC\\_1.jpg](https://meclishaber.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/dosya.getir?pDosyaAdi=439697BC9C2CD432A87E48AD4817C1FC_1.jpg) (English version)

“Of course. Answering your first question, I said that it is very possible to pay attention to the goals that Turkey has in this process. I am convinced that Turkey has returned to the South Caucasus after the well-known events of the early 20th century to continue its policy of Armenian genocide in the South Caucasus. It is very clear that this is a pragmatic goal for Turkey. Not an emotional, but a pragmatic goal, because the Armenians of the South Caucasus are the last obstacle for Turkey to move north, east and east, as I am convinced that this is a continuation of Turkey’s imperial policy. And everything that is happening in the South Caucasus must be viewed in the context of the policy pursued by Turkey in the Mediterranean, Libya, Syria, Iraq.

I have already said that this process has already gone beyond the local Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and now there is a shift. Turkey wants to transform the South Caucasus, more specifically, to take control of the entire South Caucasus, to make it its platform to the north, east and south-east for further expansion. I think that in this situation the national security interests of many countries are already specifically affected, including, first of all, the Russian Federation. I did not accidentally mention the information coming from Chechnya or Dagestan. Where did these militants come from in Chechnya and Dagestan, the Syrian militants? It is obvious to me that they were there from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. And the question is, is it a coincidence? Or a planned action to destabilize the North Caucasus to divert Russia’s attention from the current events in the South Caucasus, more specifically in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone? This is a very important nuance that should be appreciated in Russia.”<sup>55</sup>

On October 2, Turkish President reiterated, at a public gathering in Konya, Turkey’s full support for Azerbaijan. He said, “Turkey stands with and will continue to stand with friendly and brotherly Azerbaijan with all our means and all our heart”.

Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued the following statement on 4 October as the second largest city of Azerbaijan, Ganja with its 330,000 population was shelled indiscriminately by Armenian forces.

“Armenia’s attacks today, targeting the civilian population in Ganja, the second largest city of Azerbaijan, are a new manifestation of Armenia’s disregard of law. We condemn these attacks. Facing defeat in the Azerbaijani territories it occupied, Armenia attacks the civilian settlements beyond the regions that are scene of armed confrontations

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55 “Aliyev and Pashinyan mark ‘red lines’ in interviews with RIA Novosti”, *OC Media*, October 16, 2020, <https://oc-media.org/aliyev-and-pashinyan-mark-red-lines-in-interviews-with-ria-novosti/>

because of its occupation, in violation of all principles of humanitarian law, first and foremost the Geneva Conventions. These attacks are an indication of the desperation of Armenia and that it will not shy away from committing crimes against humanity in order to continue its illegal occupation. As we have said since the beginning, Armenia is the biggest obstacle to peace and stability in the region.

We support the stance of the Azerbaijani administration which has announced that it will not respond to Armenia's provocations, that it is exercising its right of self-defense arising from international law within its internationally recognized borders and that it is making every possible effort to prevent harm to the civilian population."<sup>56</sup>

A second statement on the Armenian aggression against Ganja was made public on 11 October following the violation of truce of 10 October. The statement reads:

"We strongly condemn the rocket attacks of Armenia on Ganja, second largest city of Azerbaijan, early in the morning today in violation of the humanitarian ceasefire.

This attack, which we learnt that hit an apartment building in Ganja 100 kilometers away from the conflict zone, caused nine civilian deaths and wounded 39 others, is the latest example of the provocations of Armenian administration to widen the conflict outside of the Azerbaijani territories under occupation.

At the same time, this attack once again shows that Armenia does not shy away from violating international humanitarian law for continuing its illegitimate occupation and does not understand the meaning of ceasefire.

The aggressive actions of Armenia are not surprising and constitute a clear manifestation of its well-known occupying and offensive mentality. It is time for the international community to say stop to this lawlessness.

We wish God's mercy upon the Azerbaijani martyrs who lost their lives, speedy recovery to the wounded and convey our condolences to the brotherly Azerbaijan. Turkey stands with Azerbaijan as always."<sup>57</sup>

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56 "No: 228, 4 October 2020, Press Release Regarding Armenia's Attacks on Ganja City of Azerbaijan", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, October 4, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-228\\_-ermenistan-in-azerbaycan-in-gence-kentine-saldirilari-hk.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-228_-ermenistan-in-azerbaycan-in-gence-kentine-saldirilari-hk.en.mfa)

57 "No: 241, 11 October 2020, Press Release Regarding Armenia's Attacks on Ganja", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, October 11, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-241\\_-ermenistan-in-gence-ye-saldirisi-hk.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-241_-ermenistan-in-gence-ye-saldirisi-hk.en.mfa)

Armenian President made a public call on 4 October on the Armenian Diaspora worldwide, noting that a powerful and strong diaspora is a genuine army, pleaded for their solidarity and unity in response to “Azerbaijan’s and Turkey’s jointly unleashed war” at the borders of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. On 7 October, in an interview he gave to an international American TV channel, unbecoming of his status and in breach of propriety, he claimed that “Turkey wants to carry out another genocide”. The following line was more ludicrous: “We have a sort of partnership with NATO and a NATO member is intervening”.

In another interview he gave to a British daily on 16 October, he said the following:

“I would like to see more pressure from all of our friends, including Russia, on Azerbaijan. But I would like to see much more pressure from everybody on Turkey. Turkey is the key negative factor in this conflict. The moment you take Turkey out, I assure you the war will stop in a day or two. Turkey remaining will make matters worse by sucking others in. It will be disastrous. We will end up with a huge conflict in the Caucasus that could be much worse even than Syria. Excluding Turkey is the key to peace. All international pressure—including from the UK government, from prime minister Boris Johnson—has to be directed at Turkey with the message that it has to get out of this conflict.”<sup>58</sup>

On 15 October Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued yet another statement on Armenian aggression to the civilian population of Azerbaijan, this time on the town of Terter. The statement reads as follows:

“We strongly condemn the continuing attacks of Armenia on civilian settlements in Azerbaijan. As a result of Armenia’s latest attack on Terter today, three civilians lost their lives and five others were wounded while they were attending a funeral ceremony.

Armenia continues to disregard the humanitarian ceasefire declared on 10 October for the exchange of prisoners of war and bodies of the dead. Showing no traits of humanity, Armenia does not even let our Azerbaijani brothers lay their beloveds to rest.

With this latest attack, Armenia once again demonstrated to the whole world its total disrespect for humanitarian values and laws.

Turkey stands with brotherly Azerbaijan in full and eternal solidarity.”<sup>59</sup>

58 “‘Excluding Turkey is key to peace in Caucasus’ – Armenian President tells The Critic”, *ArmenPress*, October 16, 2020, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1031761.html>

59 “No: 246, 15 October 2020, Press Release Regarding Armenia’s Attacks on Terter City of Azerbaijan”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, October 15, 2020, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no-246-ermenistan-tarafindan-azerbaycan-in-terter-sehrine-saldirisi-hk.en.mfa>

Armenian aggression on Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan was the subject of another statement of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 16 October. It reads as follows:

“We strongly condemn the rocket attack launched by Armenia from the occupied Qubadli district targeting Ordubadh district in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan.

We observe that Armenia becomes more aggressive each day as it faces defeat in the Azerbaijani territories under its occupation. The attacks on the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, with which we share a common border, are a new and dangerous manifestation of Armenia’s attempts to broaden the conflict beyond the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Armenia must abandon these reckless provocations.

Violating the humanitarian ceasefire, Armenia commits war crimes and aims to shift the conflict to another dimension. Armenia should calculate well the consequences of such aggressive actions.

Our solidarity with brotherly Azerbaijan and our Azerbaijani brothers and sisters is always steadfast.”<sup>60</sup>

On 17 October, Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia announced plans to ban the import of all Turkish goods in response to Turkey’s military support for Azerbaijan. According to the government data he cited, Armenia imported 268 million dollars’ worth of Turkish manufactured products last year.

Armenian press could not overlook the passing away of Markar Esayan on October 16, a parliamentarian of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and a member of the Turkish Armenian community, who was laid to rest following a ceremony in the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul that was attended by the President of Turkey.

On 26 October, Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesperson made the following comment on the violation of the latest ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan in reply to a question:

“The ceasefires declared on October 10 and October 18 after the clashes that started following the attack of Armenia against Azerbaijan, were breached by Armenia in a short time. Lastly, as a result of the initiatives of the USA, today a ceasefire was declared again for the exchange of

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60 “No: 248, 16 October 2020, Press Release Regarding the Armenian Attack on the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, October 16, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_248\\_-ermenistan-in-azerbaycan-in-nahcivan-ozerk-cumhuriyeti-ne-saldirisi-hk.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_248_-ermenistan-in-azerbaycan-in-nahcivan-ozerk-cumhuriyeti-ne-saldirisi-hk.en.mfa)



prisoners of war and remains of soldiers. Unfortunately, this last ceasefire was also violated by Armenia within minutes, and Armenia continued its attacks against both the Azerbaijani positions on the front line and civilian targets deep in Azerbaijan far from the conflict zone.

For the efforts of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs to yield concrete results, we deem it necessary that they take into account the violations of Armenia and initiate a result-oriented negotiation process aiming at a lasting solution in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions and international law. We believe only then the declared ceasefires would become sustainable.”<sup>61</sup>

On 28 October, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned again a renewed attack by Armenian forces to the civilian population of Azerbaijan with the following statement:

“After yesterday’s heinous attack, Armenia perpetrated yet another vicious and treacherous attack on civilians in the Azerbaijani city of Barda, outside the conflict zone. According to initial reports, 21 people lost their lives and more than 70 were wounded as a result of the attack.

We wish Allah’s mercy upon our brothers and sisters who lost their lives, a speedy recovery to the wounded, and convey our condolences and wishes of fortitude to brotherly Azerbaijan.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Armenia’s vile attacks directed against the civilian population including children, the young and the elderly without discrimination. This vicious policy Armenia employs to terrorize and murder civilians is another manifestation of the sick mindset that was behind the Khojaly massacre.

The Armenian administration, resorting to any means available to avoid withdrawing from the territories it occupied, acts without reason and conscience. This latest attack is registered as a shameful entry in the list of Armenia’s war crimes for which it will be held accountable.

It is long overdue for the international community, particularly for the Minsk Group Co-chairs, to show the necessary reaction to Armenia.”<sup>62</sup>

61 “QA-106, 26 October 2020, Statement of the Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hami Aksoy, to a Question Regarding the Ceasefire Declared Today Between Azerbaijan and Armenia and Its Violation”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, October 26, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc\\_-106\\_-azerbaycan-ve-ermenistan-arasinda-bugun-ilan-edilen-ateskes-ve-ihlali-hk-sc.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sc_-106_-azerbaycan-ve-ermenistan-arasinda-bugun-ilan-edilen-ateskes-ve-ihlali-hk-sc.en.mfa)

62 “No: 261, 28 October 2020, Press Release Regarding Armenia’s Anew Attack Today on Barda City of Azerbaijan”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey*, October 28, 2020, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-261\\_-ermenistan-nin-berde-ye-bugun-tekrar-duzenlenen-saldiri-hk.en.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-261_-ermenistan-nin-berde-ye-bugun-tekrar-duzenlenen-saldiri-hk.en.mfa)

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

**To cite this article:** Tuğba Baytimur, Caner Çakı, and Ferit Arda Arıca, “The Propaganda In Armenia Of The Five-Year Development Plans Implemented In The Soviet Union”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 42 (2020): 81-102.

**Received:** 14.10.2020

**Accepted:** 23.11.2020

# THE PROPAGANDA IN ARMENIA OF THE FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLANS IMPLEMENTED IN THE SOVIET UNION

(SOVYETLER BİRLİĞİ'NDE UYGULANAN BEŞ YILLIK KALKINMA PLANLARININ ERMENİSTAN'DAKİ PROPAGANDASI)

Tuğba BAYTİMUR\*

Caner ÇAKI\*\*

Ferit Arda ARICA\*\*\*

**Abstract:** *The Soviet Union started to carry out its five-year development plans in 1928. At this stage, it was aimed to achieve a great economic development goal within the union, especially in agriculture and industry. The Soviet Union engaged in propaganda activities to include the peoples of the socialist republics within the union in development plans. Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was one of the socialist republics where propaganda activities for the development plans of the Soviet Union were implemented. At this stage, the Soviet Union tried to encourage Armenian people to work in agriculture and industry within the scope of development plans through propaganda posters. In the study, propaganda activities regarding development plans of the Soviet Union in Armenia are examined*

\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7069-3338>

PhD Candidate, Maltepe University, Public Relations and Advertising Department  
tuba.baytimur@gmail.com

\*\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1523-4649>

Research Assistant, İnönü University, Communication Sciences  
caner.caki@inonu.edu.tr

\*\*\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1254-4537>

Lecturer, İstanbul Gelişim University, Department of Radio and Television Programming  
faarica@gelisim.edu.tr

*in the context of posters and it is aimed to reveal which propaganda messages the Soviet Union used within the scope of its five-year development plans in Armenia. 7 propaganda posters determined by using quota sampling were analyzed in the light of Karl Bühler's Organon Model (Organon Model) within the scope of the study. This study concludes that the propaganda posters did not include discourses that glorified Communist ideology or Lenin leadership cult; instead, the posters presented discourses emphasizing the importance of work and labor.*

**Keywords:** *Armenia, Soviet Union, Economy, Development, Propaganda*

**Öz:** *Sovyetler Birliği, 1928 yılında beş yıllık kalkınma planlarını uygulamaya başlamıştır. Bu aşamada başta tarım ve sanayi olmak üzere birlik içerisinde büyük bir ekonomik kalkınma hedefinin gerçekleştirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Sovyetler Birliği yönetimi; birlik içerisindeki sosyalist cumhuriyetlerdeki halkları, kalkınma planlarına dahil etmek için propaganda faaliyetleri yapmıştır. Ermenistan Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti (ESSC) de Sovyetler Birliği'nin kalkınma planlarına yönelik propaganda faaliyetlerinin uygulandığı sosyalist cumhuriyetlerden biri olmuştur. Bu aşamada Sovyetler Birliği, hazırlanan propaganda posterleri üzerinden Ermeni halkının kalkınma planları kapsamında tarımda ve sanayide çalışmasını teşvik etmeye çalışmıştır. Çalışmada Sovyetler Birliği'nin Ermenistan'da kalkınma planlarını konu alan propaganda faaliyetleri, posterler özelinde incelenerek, Sovyetler Birliği'nin beş yıllık kalkınma planları kapsamında Ermenistan'da hangi propaganda mesajlarına yer verdiğinin ortaya konulması amaçlanmaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında kota örnekleme kullanılarak belirlenen 7 propaganda posterleri, Karl Bühler'in Organon Modeli (Organon Model) ışığında analiz edilmektedir. Elde edilen bulgularda, propaganda posterlerinde Komünizm ideolojisini veya Lenin liderlik kültürünü yücelten söylemlere yer verilmediği, bunun yerine iş ve emeğin önemi vurgulayan söylemlerin posterlere aktarıldığı sonucuna ulaşılmaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Ermenistan, Sovyetler Birliği, Ekonomi, Kalkınma, Propaganda*

## **Introduction**

Joseph Stalin, who came to the leadership of the Soviet Union after the death of Vladimir Lenin in 1924, implemented the First Five-Year Plan in 1928 to strengthen the economy of the union and at the same time bring it into a certain order. The aim of the five-year development plan implemented by Stalin was to pave the way for the union to become an agriculturally self-sufficient country with a developed heavy industry. The five-year plans led to significant changes in both the economic and social life of the union. The administration of the Soviet Union tried to effectively implement the five-year plans also within the socialist republics that constituted the union. In this process, it was aimed for the people in the union to adopt and support these plans. Propaganda activities were thus carried out to obtain the support of the people of the republics within the Soviet Union.

Employed as one of the most effective forms mass media of the period, posters came to the fore in the propaganda activities implemented for the five-year plans. These plans were tried to be legitimized before the masses through the visual and written elements used in propaganda posters. At this stage, in the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia, propaganda posters about five-year plans were used with the aim of procuring the support of the Armenian people for these plans.

There are several studies that have analysed the five-year development plans of the Soviet Union. Below is a list of the relevant authors and their areas of analysis:

- Hunter<sup>1</sup> and Davies and Wheatcroft<sup>2</sup>: the first Soviet five-year plan;
- Millar<sup>3</sup>: mass collectivization and the contribution of Soviet agriculture to the first five-year plan;
- Kalesnik and Davitaya<sup>4</sup>: the economic development of the Soviet geography and its tenth five-year plan;
- Papp<sup>5</sup>: foreign investment, resources, and the tenth five-year plan;

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1 Holland Hunter, "The Overambitious First Soviet Five-Year Plan," *Slavic Review* 32, no.2 (1973): 237-257.

2 R.W. Davies & S.G. Wheatcroft, "Further Thoughts on the First Soviet Five-Year Plan," *Slavic Review* 34, no.4 (1975): 790-802.

3 James R. Millar, "Mass Collectivization and the Contribution of Soviet Agriculture to the First Five-Year Plan: A Review Article," *Slavic Review* 33, no.4 (1974): 750-766.

4 S.V. Kalesnik & F.F. Davitaya, "The Tasks of Soviet Geography in Supporting Soviet Economic Development During The 10th Five-Year Plan," *Soviet Geography* 17, no.4 (1976): 217-234.

5 Daniel S. Papp, "Soviet Resources Policy: Foreign Investment, Resources and the Tenth Five-Year Plan," *Resources Policy* 3, no.3 (1977): 195-202.

- Jensen<sup>6</sup>: the Soviet regional development policy and the tenth five-year plan;
- Micklin<sup>7</sup>: the development of irrigation during the tenth five-year plan;
- Prostiakov et al.<sup>8</sup>: the Soviet economy in the tenth five-year plan;
- Viola<sup>9</sup>: the Soviet recruitment campaign during the first five-year plan;
- Rassweiler<sup>10</sup>: the Soviet labour policy in the first five-year plan;
- Andrlle<sup>11</sup>: labour industrialization and productivity policy within the scope of the second five-year plan;
- Shabad<sup>12</sup>: the geographical aspects of the Soviet five-year plan;
- Dienes<sup>13</sup>: the Soviet oil industry in the twelfth five-year plan;
- Baum<sup>14</sup>: Komsomol's participation in the Soviet first five-year plan;
- Kepley<sup>15</sup>: Soviet cinema under the first five-year plan;
- Harrison and Davies<sup>16</sup>: Soviet military-economic effort during the second five-year plan;

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6 Robert G. Jensen, "Soviet Regional Development Policy and the 10th Five-Year Plan," *Soviet Geography* 19, no.3 (1978): 196-201.

7 Philip P. Micklin, "Irrigation Development in the USSR during the 10th Five-Year Plan (1976–1980)," *Soviet Geography* 19, no.1 (1978): 1-24.

8 I. Prostiakov, A. Balashova & N. Iakunina, "Proportions in the Soviet Economy in the Tenth Five-Year Plan," *Problems in Economics* 21, no.1 (1978): 22-42.

9 Lynne Viola, "The '25,000 ers': A Study in a Soviet Recruitment Campaign During the First Five Year Plan," *Russian History* 10, no.1 (1983): 1-30.

10 Anne D. Rassweiler, "Soviet Labor Policy in the First Five-Year Plan: The Dneprostroi Experience," *Slavic Review* 42, no.2 (1983): 230-246.

11 V. Andrlle, "How Backward Workers Became Soviet: Industrialization of Labour and the Politics of Efficiency under the Second Five Year Plan, 1933–1937," *Social History* 10, no.2 (1985): 147-169.

12 Theodore Shabad, "Geographic Aspects of the New Soviet Five-Year Plan, 1986-90," *Soviet Geography* 27, no.1 (1986): 1-16.

13 Leslie Dienes, "The Soviet Oil Industry in the Twelfth Five-Year Plan," *Soviet Geography* 28, no.9 (1987): 617-655.

14 Ann T. Baum, *Komsomol Participation in the Soviet First Five-Year Plan* (Germany: Springer, 1987).

15 Vance Kepley, Jr., "The First 'Perestroika': Soviet Cinema under the First Five-Year Plan," *Cinema Journal* 35, no.4 (1996): 31-53.

16 Mark Harrison & R.W. Davies, "The Soviet Military-Economic Effort during the Second Five-Year Plan (1933–1937)," *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no.3 (1997): 369-406.

- Rolf<sup>17</sup>: Bolshevik festivals during the first five-year plan;
- Stone<sup>18</sup>: the first five-year plan and the geography of the Soviet defense industry.

In this study, it is aimed to examine the propaganda activities of the Soviet Union in Armenia within the framework of its five-year development plans through the posters that had been used to promote these plans. The present study aims to reveal the messages given to the Armenian people through the posters and how the Armenian people were encouraged to support the five-year development plans. To achieve this aim, the study analyses the visual and written indicators used in the propaganda posters. Within the scope of the study, it is aimed to find an answer to the following question; “What was the role of posters in the propaganda activities carried out for the five-year development plans of the Soviet Union in Armenia?” The study is important in terms of providing information about the effects of the five-year plans in Armenia, shedding a light on the propaganda activities of the Soviet Union in Armenia, and revealing how the posters encouraged the masses to work within the framework of the said plans.

### **1. An Overview of the Five-Year Development Plans in the Soviet Union**

The Bolsheviks, who took the power after the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, took action to strengthen the central authority by ensuring control throughout the country. The Russian Civil War (1917-1922), which started at this time, cost the lives of thousands of people and at the same time caused a great destruction throughout the country. The leader of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Lenin, died shortly after the Red Army defeated the White Army and the Bolsheviks gained control over the country. After Lenin’s death, Joseph Stalin, the new leader of the Soviet Union, made various attempts to control the country and prevent any opposition movements that might arise. At this stage, the First Five-Year Plan (*первая пятилетка*) was initiated in 1928 for the union to develop economically and to be able to compete against Western states. “Socialism in One Country”<sup>19</sup> put forward by Stalin laid on the basis of the economic targets of the Five-Year Plan. A link was established

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17 Malte Rolf, “Constructing a Soviet Time: Bolshevik Festivals and Their Rivals during the First Five-Year Plan. A Study of the Central Black Earth Region,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, no.3 (2000): 447-473.

18 David R. Stone, “The First Five-Year Plan and the Geography of Soviet Defence Industry,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no.7 (2005): 1047-1063.

19 “Socialism in One Country” (*Социализм в отдельно взятой стране*) refers to a theory adopted by the Soviet Union as a state policy, arguing that the Soviet Union should begin to grow stronger within itself. Within the framework of this theory, there is a turn to national Communism and a move away from Marxism, which argues that socialism should be built globally.

between Bolshevism and nationalism, and the fate of the revolution was left in the hands of Russia.<sup>20</sup> Within the framework of the five-year plan, the union was entering a period of rapid industrialization and a collectivization process was being experienced in agriculture.

Within the framework of the five-year plans, the Soviet Union was planned to be both a modern mechanized country in agriculture and a country with a developed heavy industry. In the plans, *kolkhozes*<sup>21</sup> were created on thousands of acres of land where hundreds of thousands of peasants would work. State-owned machinery and tractor stations were created within the Soviet Union. Villagers were also allowed to use these state-owned tractors to cultivate the land. On the other hand, the rapidly industrializing regions within the framework of the plans also brought about great cultural changes. Within the framework of the plans, the Soviet Union managed to achieve a significant increase in industrial production. As a result of the five-year plans that were put into practice, important changes began to occur in social life as well as in economic life in the Soviet Union. Although the five-year plans did not reach their goals in general terms, they achieved their purpose in terms of transforming the Soviet Union into an industrial country.<sup>22</sup>

The five-year plans initiated within the Soviet Union were not limited to the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), but also in other socialist republics. One of these socialist countries was the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR).<sup>23</sup> In Armenia, as in other socialist republics affiliated to the union, a production mobilization was undertaken within the framework of the said plans.

## 2. Propaganda Activities for Five-Year Development Plans in the Soviet Union

While the administration of the Soviet Union was carrying out the five-year plans, opposition movements against the plan took place in some places within the union. These groups opposed the steps taken within the framework of the plans. As a matter of fact, the First Five-Year Plan, and the next five-year

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20 T. Ivan Berend, *20. Yüzyıl Avrupa İktisat Tarihi*. Trans. Serpil Çağlayan, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2011), 194.

21 Kolkhoz (колхоз) refers to a large agricultural enterprise organized as a cooperative in the Soviet Union. The members of a kolkhoz formally become co-owners of the means of production, whereas they do not own land owned by the state. There is also a strong state influence on kolkhozes through the kolkhoz administration appointed by the party.

22 İsmail Özsoy, "Sovyet Sisteminin Çöküşünden Tarihi ve Evrensel Dersler," *Bilig*, no.39 (2006): 167.

23 Caner Çakı, "Ermenistan Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti'nde Joseph Stalin Döneminde Kullanılan Sovyet Propaganda Posterleri Üzerine İnceleme," *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, no.61 (2018): 273.

plans created profound effects in the Soviet Union.<sup>24</sup> At this stage, the Soviet Union engaged in various propaganda activities in order to get support from the masses on the five-year plans. The propaganda activities aimed to convince people that the five-year plans were of great importance by creating the perception that these plans would lead the Soviet Union to become a strong and prosperous country. The propaganda activities also aimed to create the perception that there was a strong public opinion supporting five-year plans throughout the union.

In the process of implementing the five-year plans of the Soviet Union, there was a great need for workforce, and it was aimed that women as well as men would take an active part in working life in order to meet the needed labour force. At this stage, the Soviet Union turned towards various propaganda activities aiming for women to play an effective role in the employment process. In this context, women were encouraged to take part in working life as well as housework.<sup>25</sup> In the propaganda visuals prepared, women were depicted as working in heavy industry jobs just like men, and women were given the message that they could also work in demanding jobs traditionally attributed to men. It can be said that the propaganda of the Soviet Union aimed to create the perception that women could work in many different lines of work just like men and to ensure that women would voluntarily participate in the working life.

The propaganda activities carried out in ASSR concerning the five-year plans fit into the blueprint outlined above. In the propaganda activities carried out in Armenia, the message was given that the five-year plans would lead to abundance and prosperity in the country, and the plans were tried to be glorified in the eyes of the Armenian people.<sup>26</sup>

### **3. Method**

During the Soviet Union period, posters were employed for propaganda purposes in legitimizing the decisions taken by the Communist regime before the masses, in the adoption of the Communist ideology, and in the glorification of the leadership cults of Lenin and other Soviet leaders. Posters were also used effectively in propaganda activities for the five-year development plans of the union.

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24 V. Nicholas Riasanovsky & D. Mark Steinberg, *Rusya Tarihi*. Trans. Figen Dereli (İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları, 2011), 537.

25 Caner Çakı & Mehmet Ozan Gülada, "Komünizm İdeolojisi Altında Ermeni Kadınların Propaganda Posterlerindeki Temsili," *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, no.66 (2020): 55.

26 Sadık Çalışkan & Mehmet Barış Yılmaz, "Ermenistan Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyeti'nde Basında Yer Alan Propaganda Posterleri Üzerinden Vladimir Lenin'in Kültür Liderlik İnşası," *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, no.65 (2020): 59-60.



On the other hand, in the field that examines the use of posters for propaganda purposes, examining the relevant literature reveals that this field is not limited to the Soviet Union. There are studies examining (through the semiotic method) the use of posters for propaganda purposes concerning various countries such as for Iran<sup>27</sup>, People's Republic of China<sup>28</sup>, Italy<sup>29</sup>, and Serbia<sup>30</sup>.

In this study, the propaganda activities carried out by the Soviet Union within the framework of its five-year development plans in ASSR are examined in the context of the relevant posters. Therefore, this study seeks to thoroughly investigate the propaganda posters on the said plans in Armenia. A total of 20 propaganda posters related to the subject were found as a result of research for this study. Among the 20 propaganda posters found, 7 of them were selected as the samples to be examined based on the assessment that they reflect in the best way the overall scope of this study. These 7 propaganda posters are analysed employing the semiotics method included in qualitative research methods.

Semiotics is a method that examines meanings created through indicators<sup>31</sup>. It is a branch of science that emerged in the first half of the 20th century and has become an important research method in the field of social sciences over time. The first studies in the field of semiotics were carried out by linguists Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure<sup>32</sup>, and new concepts and models were introduced to semiotics by different experts in the following periods. One of these models is the Organon Model (Organon-Model) which was introduced by the linguist Karl Bühler (Figure 1).

27 Muharrem Çetin, Caner Çakı & Mehmet Ali Gazi, "The Examination of The Anti-USA Propaganda Posters in The Iran Revolution According to Claude Lévi-Strauss' Binary Opposition," *International Journal of Social Science* 1, no.3 (2018): 33.

28 Ferit Arda Arıca, "Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti'nde Mao Zedong Döneminde Spor Yayıncılığı Üzerine İnceleme," *TRT Akademi* 4, no.8 (2019): 394 ; Mehmet Ali Gazi, Caner Çakı, Mehmet Ozan Güllada & Gül Çakı, "Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti Kültür Devrimi Sürecinde Okuma Alışkanlığının Propaganda Posterlerinde Sunumu," *Türk Kütüphaneciliği* 34, no.3 (2020): 407.

29 Gufran Dündar, "Mussolini İtalyası'nda Spor Yayıncılığı," *TRT Akademi* 4, no.8 (2019): 310.

30 Mehmet Barış Yılmaz, Caner Çakı, & Mehmet Ali Gazi, "Nazi Almanyası İşgalindeki Sırbistan'da Antisemitist Propaganda Faaliyetleri," *Anemon Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 8, no.2 (2020): 442.

31 Mehmet Rifat, *Açıklamalı Göstergibilim Sözlüğü: Kavramlar, Yöntemler, Kuramcılar, Okullar* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2013), 99 ; John Fiske, *İletişim Çalışmalarına Giriş*, Trans. Süleyman İrvan. 5. Edition (Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, 2017), 122.

32 Caner Çakı & Gufran Dündar, "Çin Halk Cumhuriyeti'nde Birinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Döneminde (1953-1957) Kadınların Propaganda Posterlerindeki Sunumu," *Uluslararası Batı Karadeniz Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Dergisi* 3, no.1 (2019): 23.

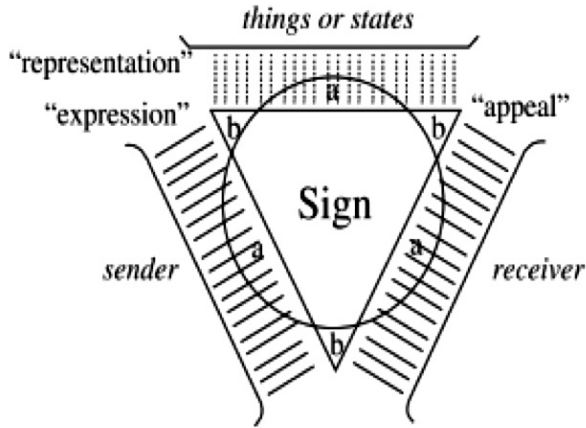


Figure 1: Karl Bühler's Organon Model<sup>33</sup>

Communication process in the Organon Model is addressed in three basic dimensions, which are; expressiveness function (*Ausdrucksfunktion*), representation function (*Darstellungsfunktion*), and appeal function (*Appellfunktion*).

The expressiveness function focuses on the source of the message directly using the indicators. This function examines how the indicators are arranged while creating meaning by the source. The representation function expresses the meanings aspired to be revealed through the indicators. It is tried to be explained which message is given to the recipient by the source. In the appeal function, with the message given via indicators, it is expressed what kind of change is intended to occur on the receiver.

## 4. Results and Discussion

In this part of the study, 7 propaganda posters on “heroism”, “future”, “employment”, “courage”, “soil”, “life”, and “collectiveness” are analysed employing the semiotics method.

### 4.1. The Propaganda Poster on Heroism

The propaganda poster with the heroism theme was made in 1948 on behalf of the Committee of Cultural and Enlightenment Institutions (*Հայկական*

33 Göran Sonesson, “The Phenomenological Semiotics of Iconicity and Pictoriality—Including Some Replies to My Critics,” *Language and Semiotic Studies* 2, no.2 (2016): 10.

ՄՍՌ Մինիստրների սովետին կից Կուլտուր-լուսավորական հիմնարկների գործերի կոմիտե) within the Armenian SSR Council of Ministers. When examined in terms of expressiveness function, it is seen that there are workers working in the cotton field in the poster. In the centre of the poster, there is an image of a man picking cotton. Visual codes reflect that the male holds the cotton seedling and smiles. It can be seen that there is also a medal on the left side of the man's chest.



Poster 1<sup>34</sup>: The Propaganda Poster on Heroism<sup>35</sup>

Considering the representation function dimension, it is revealed that the male visual in the poster is used as the metonym of the entire male population that can be employed in Armenia. The images of women on the background of the poster are also used as the metonym of the population involved in agricultural employment in Armenia. The star on the left chest of the man in the poster can create the perception that he was an Armenian soldier who fought in the Red Army against the Axis States during the Second World War. There may be an opinion that he was rewarded with a medal for taking part in the war. As a matter of fact, the preparation of the poster three years after the end of the Second World War and the “heroes” written code on the poster cause this perception to strengthen. In the poster, the message is given that the civilian people, who showed heroism during the Second World War and served their homeland, are now serving their homeland in production within the framework of their five-year development plans. The smile of the man on the poster creates the perception that he is happy with his work, and in this way,

34 The poster reads; “Long live the heroes of socialist labor - they are the most precious children of our homeland (Փառք սոցիալիստական աշխատանքի հերոսներին - մեր հայրենիքի լավագույն զավակներին և դուստրերին)”.

35 “The Propaganda Poster on Heroism,” *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed September 24, 2020. <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:907>

a general idea eventuates that the Armenian people support the five-year plans. When the function of appeal is examined, it is revealed that the Armenian people's work within the framework of five-year plans is identified with heroism. In Armenia ruled by socialism, individuals working in the fields are presented to the masses as ideal citizens. In this way, it seems possible to conclude that people are aimed to contribute more willingly to the five-year plans.

#### 4.2. The Propaganda Poster on Future

The future propaganda poster was prepared by Rafael Pogosi Nanushyan in 1955. Considering the expressiveness function, it is seen that there is a visual of a man smiling and holding a paper in the poster. The person in the poster is depicted as wearing a kind of hat.



Poster 2<sup>36</sup>: The Propaganda Poster Future<sup>37</sup>

When the representation function is examined, it can be argued that the message is given that the person in the poster is an Armenian worker. The perception that Armenia has a brighter future can be formed on the basis of working with the writings on the paper in hand of the worker. With the smile

36 The poster has the caption; “For a brighter future (*Լուսավորը վաղվա օգտին*)”.

37 “The Propaganda Poster Future,” *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed September 25, 2020. <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:233>

of the man in the poster, it can be stated that the idea that the worker wants to ensure Armenia to have a brighter future and is therefore happy to work. Considering the function of appeal, it can be said that the message is given in the poster that Armenians can work and live in a more prosperous Armenia, and that Armenians are encouraged to work at this stage.

### 4.3. The Propaganda Poster on Employment

The employment propaganda poster was prepared by Khachatur Hovhannesi Gyulamiryan in 1956. When examined in terms of expressiveness function, it is seen that there is an image of a smiling man in a wheat field in the centre of the poster. The man in the poster is depicted wearing overalls and a medal in the shape of a star on his left chest. There is a large ear of wheat in front of the male.



Poster 3<sup>38</sup>: The Propaganda Poster on Employment<sup>39</sup>

Considering the representation function dimension, the image of the man with a medal on his left chest depicts a soldier who fought in the Red Army during the Second World War, as in the first poster examined within the scope of the study. In the poster, the message is given that an Armenian man who served his country at the fronts is now serving his country by working in the field. The smile of the man in the poster creates the perception that he is satisfied with his job. When examined in general, an opinion may arise through the poster that working in agricultural employment is a service to the country,

38 The poster reads; “What makes a human perfect is the work (*Մարդը աշխատանքով է զեղեցիկ*)”.

39 “The Propaganda Poster on Employment,” *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed September 24, 2020, <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:44>

just like fighting at the warfront. The presence of a wheat ear in front of the man stands out as a symbol of agricultural production in Armenia. When examined in terms of the appeal function, it can be argued that what makes a human perfect, through the written code on the poster, is to work. In this way, it is tried to attribute value to working people and thus to encourage people to work. It can be said that a perception is being created that labour is respected and that even people who are at the front for their country during the war can work in the fields. As a result, it is aimed for people to willingly take part in agricultural employment.

#### 4.4. The Propaganda Poster on Courage

The propaganda poster on courage was prepared by Aram Borisovich Zakaryan in 1958. Considering the expression function dimension, it is seen that there are three visuals of men moving in one direction in the poster. One of the men in the poster is depicted with a bag on his back and a hammer-like tool inside the bag. When examined through visual codes, it is seen that men have a determined facial expression. On the background of the poster, there are indicators that create a perception that the place where the men are located is a mine.



Poster 4<sup>40</sup>: The Propaganda Poster on Courage<sup>41</sup>

When examined in terms of representation function, the indicators on the background of the poster lead to the perception that the men in the poster are Armenian workers employed in mines in Armenia. The decisive progress of the men creates the perception that they are trying to perform a difficult task

40 The poster reads; “Towards work, towards courage (Դեպի աշխատանք, դեպի խիզախում)”.

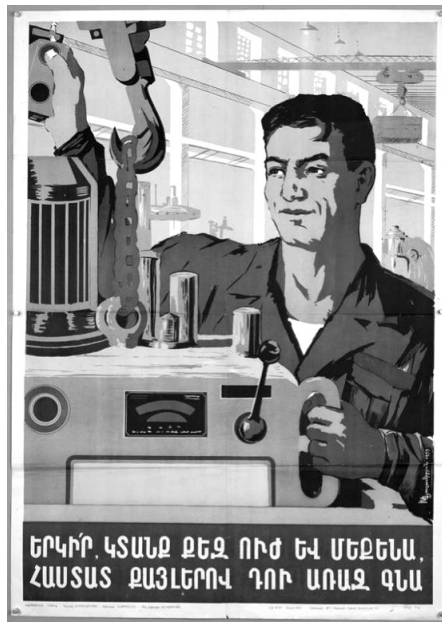
41 “The Propaganda Poster on Courage,” *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed September 24, 2020.

<https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:402>

such as working in mines with determination. Considering the appeal function dimension, the idea that Armenians go to work willingly and decisively arises from the visual and written codes on the poster. Through the creation of a general perception through the poster, it can be stated that the idea is formed that the Armenians who are employed to work in the mines are willing and determined to perform their duties. In this way, it can be argued that the willingness of Armenians to work bravely in the mines is being encouraged.

#### 4.5. The Propaganda Poster on Life

The life propaganda poster was prepared by Khachatur Hovhannesi Gyulamiryan in 1956. When examined in terms of expressiveness function, a man is depicted in the poster as operating a machine in boiler suit. It is seen that the man in the poster is smiling. From the visual codes on the poster, it is perceived that the place where the man is located is a factory.



Poster 5<sup>42</sup>: The Propaganda Poster on Life<sup>43</sup>

Considering the representation function dimension, the person working in the poster represents Armenians working in the industrial sector in Armenia. The

42 The poster reads; “Our country is advancing with firm steps with life, power and the tools used (*Երկիր, կյանք քեզ ուժ եւ մեքենա, հաստատ քայլերով դու առաջ գնա*)”.

43 “The Propaganda Poster on Life,” *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project*, accessed September 24, 2020. <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:172>

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fact that the man in the poster is in front of the machine and his smile leads to the perception that he is satisfied with his job. It can be inferred that the written codes in the poster emphasize the vehicles in the factories. Herein, a thought may arise that the production in Armenia is mechanized and the country is on the way to industrialization. With the smile of the Armenian man, the perception that the Armenians in general are also satisfied with this process can also be formed. It can be said that it is aimed to draw an ideal worker profile for men to be employed in the industrial sector in Armenia, by presenting the man in the poster in a clean overall and a clean shave. When the function of appeal is examined, it is stated that Armenia has taken firm steps forward with industrial production, and emphasis is placed on the employment of Armenian men in the industry. The growth and development of Armenia is associated with the production in the industry. In this way, it can be argued that the Armenian people are encouraged to take part in industrial employment in order to ensure the growth and development of their country.

### 4.6. The Propaganda Poster on Soil

The propaganda poster on soil was created by Khachatur Hovhannesi Gyulamiryan in 1959. Considering the expressiveness function, the poster depicts a man holding a work tool with a proud attitude. The perception that the male is a mine worker is inferred through the visual codes in the poster. As in the other posters, it is seen that the man in this poster is smiling.



Poster 6<sup>44</sup>: The Propaganda Poster on Soil<sup>45</sup>

44 The poster reads; “Earth, I’m extracting copper from within you... (Քն խոր ընդերքից պղինձ եմ հանում, երկիր քեզ դեպի բարձունք եմ ստանում)”.

45 “The Propaganda Poster on Soil,” *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project* accessed September 24, 2020. <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:361>



When analysed in terms of representation function, it is revealed that the man in the poster represents the Armenian man working in the mines in Armenia. In this respect, the mine in the background of the poster is used as the metonym of the mines in Armenia. The man in the poster wearing his overalls, a miner's helmet, and holding a work tool in his hand, creates the perception that he is content with his job. When considered at the level of the appeal function, the visual codes on the poster can create a perception that a challenging task is not as difficult as it actually appears. It can be said that, in conclusion, it was aimed to encourage the Armenian people to work in the mines.

#### 4.7. The Propaganda Poster on Collective Farm

The propaganda poster on the Collective Farm was prepared in 1970. There is no information about the artist of the poster. When examined in terms of expressiveness function, it is seen that wheat ears are positioned in the centre of the poster. There is an image of a smiling woman in overalls on the wheat with a star-shaped medal on her left chest. Under the wheat are images of a harvester and a truck. There is a mountain image on the background of the poster.



Poster 7<sup>46</sup>: The Propaganda Poster on Collective Farm<sup>47</sup>

46 “Long live the heroes of collective farms (*Փառք կոլտնտեսային դաշտերի հերոսներին*)” is written on the poster.

47 “The Propaganda Poster on Collective Farm,” *University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)-International Digital Ephemera Project* accessed September 24, 2020. <https://idep.library.ucla.edu/search#!/document/armeniaposters:207>

Considering the representation function dimension, it is revealed that unlike the other posters examined within the scope of the study, there is a female visual in the centre of the poster. The fact that women are in front of the visual and the fields on the background give the message that women are also employed in the fields in Armenia. At this point, the woman image in the poster is highlighted as a representation of all Armenian women employed in the agricultural sector in Armenia. The woman's smile creates a perception that Armenian women are happy to take place in agricultural employment. The presence of the images of a truck and a harvester emphasizes the mechanization of agricultural production in Armenia. When the appeal function is examined, it is revealed that Armenian women working in the field are represented as heroes through the written codes on the poster. Herein, an emphasis is placed on collective farms and it is inferred that Armenian women working in collective farms are being glorified through posters. In this whole process, it can be argued that the work of women in collective farms is praised in the poster, and it is aimed that Armenian women contribute to agricultural employment.

## **Conclusion**

In the propaganda posters examined in the study, it is revealed that it is aimed to support the Armenian people in their employment activities within the framework of their five-year development plans through different subjects and contents. In the posters, it is seen that the Armenian people are represented through the images of people directly involved in employment. Six of the propaganda posters examined in the study depict images of smiling people, and while one poster depicts people with more neutral facial expressions. Therefore, the posters on the whole raise the perception that the Armenian people are satisfied with their work and in fact love to work. Reflecting people as happy to work can be seen as an incentive for other people to take part in five-year development plans.

Propaganda posters prepared in the Soviet Union often feature statements that glorify the ideology of Communism and highlight the leadership cult of Lenin or Stalin. On the other hand, it is seen that the posters examined within the scope of the study do not use ideological discourses, and furthermore, there are no images of Lenin or other Soviet Union leaders. It is revealed that visual and written codes which emphasize the importance and power of labour are used in posters. At this stage, based on the findings of the study, the idea that the propaganda activities implemented in Armenia within the framework of five-year development plans were prepared over a propaganda content that glorifies work outside of socialism and the Lenin cult. Apart from the glorification of the work in the posters, it is understood that industrialization

and mechanization in Armenia are also emphasized. Through the posters, a perception is created that mechanization in agriculture and the industrialization of the country will make Armenia a prosperous country. In this way, it can be concluded that within the framework of five-year development plans, it is aimed to support mechanization in agriculture and industrialization in the country by the Armenian people.

The study is important in terms of providing information on the social and economic impact of the Soviet Union's five-year development plans in Armenia. On the other hand, the main limitation of the study is that the five-year development plans are examined only through propaganda posters and generalizations derived from these findings. In this respect, future studies will provide a more comprehensive analysis of the issue, through different mass media and the role of five-year plans in Armenia. On the other hand, it is thought that future studies will contribute to the academic literature on the five-year development plans of the Soviet Union by comparing the propaganda activities for the five-year development plans implemented in other Soviet socialist republics other than Armenia, with the findings of the present study.

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

**To cite this article:** Tutku Dilaver, “Implementation Of The EU’s Normative Power In Armenia: Transformation Or Toleration?”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 42 (2020): 103-121.

**Received:** 29.11.2020

**Accepted:** 03.12.2020

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU’S NORMATIVE POWER IN ARMENIA: TRANSFORMATION OR TOLERATION?\*

(AB’NİN ERMENİSTAN’DAKİ NORMATİF GÜÇ UYGULAMALARI:  
DÖNÜŞÜM MÜ, MÜSAMAHA MI?)

Tutku DİLAVER\*\*

**Abstract:** *The European Union, with the need of ensuring its security, established relations with the newly independent countries after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The method for providing the EU’s security was determined in the Common Foreign and Security Policy section in the Maastricht Treaty and extended with the European Neighborhood Policy. The imposition of EU values on EU’s neighbors forms the basis of these policies. By this way, it is thought that an environment of the lasting peace will be established. Ian Manners, who examined these policies, describes the EU as a normative power. According to him, the EU has the ability to change, transform, and Europeanize other countries.*

*Bilateral relations with Armenia started in 1991 and gained an institutional frame with the Partnership Agreement in 1999. However, neither PCA nor the Action Plan that was prepared for the implementation of PCA had the expected effect. Following the revising of the EU’s own foreign policy, the Eastern Partnership program was initiated, and Armenia was included this*

\* This article was produced from Tutku Dilaver’s master’s thesis titled “Avrupa Birliği’nin Güney Kafkasya’daki Normatif Gücü: Ermenistan ve Gürcistan Örneği” (“The Normative Power of the European Union in the South Caucasus: The cases of Armenia and Georgia”), which was prepared in partial fulfillment of her studies at the Caucasian Studies (International Relations) Master’s Degree Program at the Institute of Social Sciences of Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University.

\*\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3379-4313>  
Analyst, Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), [tdilaver@avim.org.tr](mailto:tdilaver@avim.org.tr).



*program. In 2017, the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement was signed. With this Agreement, the EU got a chance to act as a normative power in Armenia. The purpose of this article is to evaluate the effectiveness of the EU as a normative power in Armenia. For this purpose, the 1999 Association Agreement, the Action Plan, the Country Progress Reports, the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement and finally the implementation reports of this agreement will be examined.*

**Keywords:** *European Union, Armenia, Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement, Normative Power Approach*

**Öz:** *Avrupa Birliği 1991 yılında dağılan Sovyetler Birliği'nin ardından bağımsızlığını ilan eden ülkelerle kendi güvenliğini sağlama ihtiyacına bağlı olarak ilişki kurmaya başlamıştır. AB'nin bu güvenlik ihtiyacını sağlamak için kullanılacak yöntem Maastricht Antlaşmasının Ortak Dış ve Güvenlik Politikasında bölümünde benimsenmiş; Komşuluk Politikasıyla genişletilmiştir. Bu politikaların temelinde AB değerlerinin komşu ülkelere benimsetilmesi yatmaktadır. Bu şekilde kalıcı barış ortamının tesis edileceği düşünülmektedir. AB'nin bu politikalarından yola çıkan Ian Manners, AB'yi bir normatif güç olarak tanımlamıştır. Ona göre AB, diğer ülkeleri bu şekilde Avrupalılaştırmakta, değiştirmekte ve dönüştürmektedir.*

*Ermenistan ile 1991 yılında başlayan ikili ilişkiler 1999 yılında Ortaklık ve İşbiliği Anlaşmasının imzalanmasıyla kurumsal bir çerçeve kazanmıştır. Ancak ne Ortaklık anlaşması ne de Anlaşmanın uygulanabilmesi adına hazırlanan Eylem Planı, Ermenistan'ın AB'nin beklediği ilerlemeyi sağlamasına yaramamıştır. AB'nin kendi dış politikasını gözden geçirmesini takiben Doğu Ortaklığı programı başlatılmış ve Ermenistan'da bu programın içine alınmıştır. 2017 yılında Kapsamlı ve Genişletilmiş Ortaklık Anlaşması imzalanmıştır. Bu anlaşmayla AB Ermenistan'da normatif güç olarak varlığını sürdürebilecek bir ortam elde etmiştir. Makalenin amacı AB'nin Ermenistan'da uyguladığı politikalar üzerinden normatif bir güç olarak etkinliğinin ne olduğunu değerlendirmektir. Bu amaçla 1999 Ortaklık Anlaşması, Eylem Planı, Ülke İlerleme Raporu, Genişletilmiş ve Kapsamlı Ortaklık Anlaşması ve son olarak bu anlaşmanın uygulama raporları incelenmiştir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Avrupa Birliği, Ermenistan, Kapsamlı ve Genişletilmiş Ortaklık Anlaşması, Normatif Güç Yaklaşımı*

## Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, former Soviet republics began to declare their independence one by one. These newly independent states that were economically and politically in an unstable position became a new focusing point for European countries. European countries, which had recovered from recessions in the aftermath of the First and Second World Wars, ensured their need for a secure and peaceful environment by establishing the European Union (EU) during the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union caused the EU to confront a new challenge against the environment created over the years. The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) determined in the 1993 Maastricht Treaty was an outcome of this need.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after, the Union created the accession criteria, commonly known as Copenhagen Criteria, which are the rules that define whether a country is eligible to join the EU<sup>2</sup>. Through this, a part of the newly independent states, especially eastern European ones, became the new members of the EU.

The fifth enlargement that started in 2004 has made the EU a neighbor of more complicated regions such as the Middle East, South Caucasus, and the Mediterranean<sup>3</sup>. These regions contain some conflicts that can be seen as a threat to the security perception of the EU. Especially after the Ukraine Crisis in 2013 and the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, the threat perception of the EU has strengthened<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the importance given by the EU to its eastern neighbors has increased. The CFSP remained insufficient to meet the EU's need in this new situation. For this reason, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was developed to promote prosperity, stability, and security within the EU's neighbors<sup>5</sup>.

In this context, Armenia became a subject to the EU's foreign policy just as other South Caucasus countries. Bilateral relations between Armenia and the EU were established in 1991, and Armenia was included in the scope of the Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS). Also, a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) was signed between the two sides in 1999. In 2003 with the "Wider Europe" policy, the EU started considering Armenia as a neighbor and, since 2016, Armenia has been taking

1 Haluk Özdemir, *Avrupa Mantiği* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınevi, 2015.): 278.

2 Özdemir, *Avrupa Mantiği*, 278.

3 Hakan Samur, "Avrupa Komşuluk Politikası ve Amaçları", *Dicle Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 10-11, no. 12-13-14-15 (2006), 163-196.

4 Erdi Kutlu ve Siret Hürsoy, "Yenilenen Avrupa Komşuluk Politikası Perspektifinden Avrupa Birliği'nin Doğu Komşularına Bakışı", *Ege Stratejik Araştırmalar Dergisi* 9, no. 2 (2018): 177.

5 "New European Neighbourhood Policy", *European Commission*, accessed November 9, 2020, [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/european-neighbourhood-policy\\_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Neighbourhood%20Policy%20\(ENP,Affairs%20issues%20re,main%20a%20priority](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/european-neighbourhood-policy_en#:~:text=The%20European%20Neighbourhood%20Policy%20(ENP,Affairs%20issues%20re,main%20a%20priority)

part in the Eastern Partnership program as well. Moreover, Armenia and the EU signed the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2018, which is offering a new platform for their bilateral relations for the future.

This study aims to evaluate the policies implemented by the EU on Armenia within the theoretical framework of normative power approach, and to estimate the impacts of the normative practices. Therefore, it is necessary to define the normative power approach in the first part of the article. Afterwards, the policies implemented by the EU in Armenia will be examined within this theoretical framework.

Due the sheer number confusing technical terms and acronyms that the EU is known for using, a list of relevant terms and acronyms is provided below for ease of reading:

- Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)
- European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)
- Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS)
- Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)
- Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)
- European Currency Unit (ECU)

## 1. Normative Power Approach and the EU

In 2002, Ian Manners defined the notion of “normative power” as the ability to shape or change what is “normal”.<sup>6</sup> Universal principles such as peace, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental rights are the core elements of the European Union’s presence which are granted in the founding treaties of the EU, and these principles are the basis of the EU’s normative claim according to Manners<sup>7</sup>. Alongside with these fundamental norms, the EU has subsidiary norms such as social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development, and good governance<sup>8</sup>.

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6 Ian Manners, “Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (June 2002): 243-248.

7 Manners, “Normative Power Europe”, 238.

8 Manners, “Normative Power Europe,” 242-243.

In 2013, Manners suggested that the EU can demonstrate its normative power via several tools: “contagion”, “informational diffusion”, “procedural diffusion”, “transference”, “overt diffusion”, and “cultural filter”<sup>9</sup>. It can be useful to explain these tools to understand EU’s normative power on target countries. The first one, “contagion”, has a close attachment to the EU’s colonial history. It means that the EU might involuntarily transfer some of its values to other parties due to historical relationships between them. The second one, “informational diffusion”, is the capability to understand the EU based on international principles during the accession process or partnership negotiations. According to Manners, the legitimacy of normative power derives from the acceptance of the relevant norms by the other parties. The third tool, “procedural diffusion”, refers to “value translation”, which is used to define bringing institutions close to the standards of the EU. The fourth one is called “transference”; which aims for the convergence between the EU institutions and the people. The “Erasmus Plus” program can be a good example of transference. “Overt diffusion” is the fifth tool, which is related to the physical presence of the EU in other countries. An example of this is delegations in other countries. Finally, “cultural filter” is the compliance with the values of the EU, with the Copenhagen Criteria for the candidate countries and fundamental and secondary norms for the partner countries.<sup>10</sup>

The Normative Power approach has developed with the contributions of other scholars. Natalie Tocci argued that a real normative power must have an agenda which has determined goals and affects<sup>11</sup>. Manners agreed with Tocci and said that a normative practice can be evaluated according to the level of success of its results<sup>12</sup>.

The Normative Power approach is still an evolving approach, based on the criticisms it has so far received. Nevertheless, one aim of this article is to contribute to this approach by examining the EU’s practices in Armenia.

Manners defined the concept of Normative Power in two ways as a result of the criticisms he received. One of this is a “normative pouvoir” and another is “normative puissance”. “Normative pouvoir” is the ability to determine what is normal by using soft power or “idea force”. On the other hand, “normative puissance” is the actor that has the ability to decide what is normal<sup>13</sup>. However,

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9 Ian Manners and Richard Whitman, “Normative Power and the Future of the European Union Public,” in *European Public Diplomacy - Soft Power at Work*, eds. Maia Cross and Jan Melissen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 191-195.

10 Manners and Whitman, “Normative Power and the Future of the European Union Public”, 194.

11 Natalia Tocci, “Profiling Normative Foreign Policy: The European Union and Its Global Partners,” *CEPS Working Documents* No.279, December 2007: 11-15.

12 Manners and Whitman, “Normative Power and the Future of the European Union Public”, 193.

13 Ian Manners, “Assessing the Decennial, Reassessing the Global: Understanding European Union Normative Power in Global Politics”, *Cooperation and Conflict* 48, no. 2 (2013).

it is not always possible to understand the difference when the EU acts as a *puissance* or a *pouvoir*.

The normative power approach has also been criticized extensively for the real purpose behind the EU's policies. Some scholars have stated that the understanding of the EU as "force for good" is problematic because of its contradictions. As it can be seen in the "Arab Spring", despite the fact that EU supported the principles of democracy and human rights, it can also promote the authoritarian regimes to protect its own interests<sup>14</sup>. In accordance, the "principled pragmatism" approach in the EU's foreign policy adopted with the Global Strategy in 2016 seems to support this criticism as well<sup>15</sup>.

Despite the criticisms on the real purpose behind the EU's foreign policy, some scholars review the outputs of EU's practices which can be defined as normative. It is seen that the outputs of the EU's foreign policies can sometimes remain weak, in contrast to the EU's normative power claims<sup>16</sup>.

In the next part of the study, the EU's relations with Armenia will be evaluated within the scope of this theoretical framework. The transformative effect of the normative policies implemented by the EU on Armenia will be discussed.

## 2. EU's Policies in Armenia and the Effects of Its Normative Power

In the European Security Strategy of 2003, the importance of providing a peaceful and secure environment around Europe was highlighted. It is mentioned that Europe would become a neighbor to conflict-prone regions, and the EU should establish good and close relations with these new neighbors in order to manage the conflicts in these regions. The practices of neighbors would be harmonized with the EU, in return, easy access of these countries to the EU internal market would be provided<sup>17</sup>.

The mention of the process of harmonization with the EU norms as a prerequisite is an indication that the EU has normative claims on these countries through its policies within the framework of CFSP and neighborhood policies. The EU primarily wants to be in contact with countries that are compatible with its values or have a common value base. With this

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14 Anna Skolimowska, "The European Union as a 'Normative Power' in International Relations. Theoretical and Empirical Challenges", *The Yearbook of the Polish European Studies* 18, 2015.

15 Münevver Cebeci, "AB'nin 'Arap Baharı'na Tepkisi ve AB-Ortadoğu İlişkilerindeki Bazı Anahtar Konular", in *Avrupa Birliği Komşuluk Politikası ve Ortadoğu* (Ankara: ATAUM, 2016): 41-45.

16 Patricia Bauer, "The European Mediterranean Policy after the Arab Spring: Beyond Value and Interests", *Middle East Critique* 24, no. 1 (2015).

17 "European Security Strategy: Secure Europe in a Better World", *European Council - Council of the European Union*, 2009: 7, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30823/qc7809568enc.pdf>

understanding, they started the TACIS program in 1991 and Armenia, among other CIS countries, was included in this program.

### *Unfruitful period under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement*

TACIS, which run under the European Commission had a different agenda for each country. TACIS program aimed to synchronize the Western administration model with the post-Soviet countries. However, the Russian influence in the region kept the EU away from the region and the EU did not achieve its goals through TACIS.

In Armenia, education and nuclear safety were determined as priorities in the TACIS. On the other hand, strengthening the economic profile of the country required improvement the political situation according to the TACIS program report. To achieve these goals, Armenia had to become closer to the EU institutions and standards. In the period between 1992 and 1995, the EU spent approximately 7 million ECU/MECU (European Currency Unit, the predecessor to the euro currency) in the public administration reforms, educations, and policy advice areas<sup>18</sup>. However, the influence of the TACIS program was limited due to it being a technical support program. This meant that the EU did not get a chance to use informational diffusion and value translation as much as had initially aimed.

With the signing of the PCA in 1999, TACIS became a supportive tool of the implementation of PCA. The PCA different from TACIS in that it had a mission to promote democracy in the partner countries. To achieve this goal, the EU could make legal, economic, social, cultural, scientific, and technological contributions<sup>19</sup>. The effectiveness of the agreements in force in 2001 began to be discussed within the EU. Armenia was unwilling to implement the PCA, as was the case in the other South Caucasus countries due to the regional effects of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The failure to open the trade routes as expected caused the EU member countries to question their regional policies. This period also coincided with the questioning of the EU's understanding of foreign policy in general<sup>20</sup>.

In 2003, the EU brought a new perspective to its foreign and security policies. The policies implemented by the EU in the region were included in the ENP

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18 "EU-Armenia Relations", *European Commission*, Memo, July 10, 1996, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO\\_96\\_69](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_96_69)

19 Haydar Efe, "Foreign Policy of the European Union Towards the South Caucasus", *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 3, no. 17 (September 2012): 190.

20 Dov Lynch, "The EU towards a Strategy", in *The South Caucasus: A Challenge for EU*, ed. Dov Lynch (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, December 2003), 171-196.

framework. In this context, the EU prepared an action plans to observe the developments in the region. In parallel with this goal, the EU prepared an action plan for the implementation of PCA. In this plan, rule of law, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and strengthening of pluralization has determined as priority areas in Armenia.<sup>21</sup> A high-level mechanism consisting of EU representatives and officials from partner countries was envisaged in order to make progress on the targets set and to implement the agreement regime.<sup>22</sup> As Manners claimed, all these principles were the source of legitimacy of normative power of the EU.

When the action plan of Armenia is examined, it is seen that the emphasis on the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law as determined in the country reports is repeated. Making constitutional reforms, strengthening the human rights and democratic structure, and fighting corruption was determined as top priorities<sup>23</sup>. It was highlighted that an ombudsman institution was needed within the framework of the Paris Principles<sup>24</sup>. Renewing the electoral code according to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) standards was mentioned. Following these, the rule of law and human rights issues were determined as the second priority areas. Close cooperation with the EU, OSCE, and the Council of Europe in these areas was noted as being needed<sup>25</sup>.

ACTION PLAN FOR ARMENIA	
•	Strengthening the rule of law, democracy, and plurality
•	Making constitutional reforms
•	Making reforms on local administrations
•	Improving human rights and fundamental freedoms
•	Modernizing the business and government sectors
•	Combating corruption
•	Making reforms on tax and custom system accordance with the EU standards
•	Protecting sustainable development and environment
•	Safely decommissioning the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant
•	Making progress in resolving conflicts and improving regional cooperation

**Table 1:** Priority Areas of Armenian PCA, 1999<sup>26</sup>

21 “Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part”, *EU External Service*, 1999, [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu-armenia\\_partnership\\_and\\_cooperation\\_agreement\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu-armenia_partnership_and_cooperation_agreement_en.pdf)

22 Emma J. Stewart, “Mind The Normative Gap? The EU in the South Caucasus”, in *Normative Power Europe: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Richard Whitman (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 65-82.

23 “Action Plan of Armenia”, *European Commission*, 2006.

24 “Action Plan of Armenia”, 2006.

25 “Action Plan of Armenia”, 2006.

26 “Action Plan of Armenia”, 2006.

## Implementation Of The EU's Normative Power In Armenia: Transformation Or Toleration?

As can be seen from these priority areas, the EU had a ground to use its normative tools such as process diffusion, transmission, overt dissemination, and cultural dissemination. The aim of the EU was to transform the legal and cultural structures of Armenia in accordance with the EU norms. Accepting these norms can be interpreted as a precondition for maintaining relations with the EU, and this provided the EU an opportunity to act as a normative *puissance*. However, no serious progress was achieved by Action Plan since no time frames were specified for the implementation of the contents of the Plan. When the Armenia Action Plan is examined, it is seen that only a few articles were given the year 2006 as the deadline for implementation. However, considering that the articles to be implemented were going to expire with action plans coming into force at the end of 2006, these arrangements became meaningless<sup>27</sup>. Consequently, no significant progress was made in any of these priority areas excluding some changes such as revoking the death penalty from the constitution. Manners suggested that the success of normative power depends also on the actions of the other parties to which normative power is applied.<sup>28</sup>

The fact that the EU's policies in Armenia and even in the region were not on a consistent and stable basis undermined EU's credibility in the region, especially in Azerbaijan and Armenia. Action Plans and PCAs prepared in all three Caucasian countries were interpreted by politicians and academics as a kind of wish list.<sup>29</sup> In almost all of the reports prepared to evaluate the effectiveness of the Action Plan in the following years, it was stated that Armenia was not making notable progress on human rights and fundamental freedoms. The necessary changes were not made in strengthening democracy and the expectation of fighting against corruption fell short. It was also noted that the relevant practices were weak and there was no improvement in issues such as discrimination<sup>30</sup>.

The war that broke out between Russia and Georgia showed the importance of the South Caucasus for Europe. In such conjuncture, the EU changed its perspective to its eastern neighbors and decided to start the Eastern Partnership program in 2009. The aim of this program was similar to the PCA and Action Plan, that is to promote democracy, rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. However, the problem of achieving this goal in concrete terms had

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27 Narine Gazaryan, *The European Neighbourhood Policy and The Democratic Values of the EU: A legal Analysis* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2014).

28 Manners, "Normative Power Europe".

29 Gazaryan, *European Neighbourhood Policy*...

30 See; "Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2007", *European Commission*, 2008; "Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2008", *European Commission*, 2009 ; "Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2009", *European Commission*, 2010 ; "Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2010 - Country Report: Armenia", *European Commission*, 2011.



to be overcome. According to the dominant perspective in the literature, the EU can be seen as successful in imposing its core values to another party only during the accession process<sup>31</sup>. Nevertheless, neither PCA nor Eastern Partnership has offered membership to the eastern neighbors. Therefore, as Manners stated, accepting these principles depends on the wishes of the countries. However, there are encouragers such as visa liberalization under the Eastern Partnership program<sup>32</sup>.

In 2009, the need of the renewal of the PCA signed in 1999 came into the agenda with the Eastern Partnership. Negotiations between the two parties were concluded in 2013 and the agreement became ready for signature. It was planned to be signed at the 2013 Vilnius Summit of the European (Union) Council. However, Armenia gave up on signing the agreement and instead became a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which was established under the leadership of Russia<sup>33</sup>. In this case, it is thought that the fact that Russia was providing the border security of Armenia and that the oligarchs who held the government at that time had close commercial relations with Russia compelled Armenia to sign the EEU agreement.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, it is possible to say that some of the moves made by Russia on Nagorno-Karabakh during this period prevented Armenia from establishing close relations with the EU. For example, Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Azerbaijan with a large delegation in August 2013 and signed several agreements during this visit<sup>35</sup>. Upon these developments, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan gave up on signing the Eastern Partnership Agreement planned to be signed at the Vilnius Summit. However, it is known that Armenia considers itself a European state and many people of Armenian origin live in Europe. Therefore, Armenia must maintain European relations without confronting Russia. Therefore, negotiations were initiated again to prepare a new agreement and the agreement was signed in 2017 under the name of “Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA)”<sup>36</sup>. The EU and Armenia prepared CEPA with less conditionality and prospects by considering its membership of the Eurasian Economic Union and its membership of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

31 Thomas Diez, “Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering ‘Normative Power Europe’”, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (June 2005).

32 “Eastern Partnership”, *Polish Aid*, 2019, <https://polskapomoc.gov.pl/Eastern.Partnership.1943.html>

33 “Ermenistan’ın Avrasya seçiminin arkasında ne var?”, *Sputnik Turkey*, 24 Şubat 2015, <https://tr.sputniknews.com/analiz/201502241014148608/>

34 Tigran Yepremyan and Narek Mkrtychyan, “On Reasons Behind Armenia’s Integration Choice: EU vis-a-vis Russia-Led EEU,” in *EU Relations with Eastern Partnership: Strategy, Opportunities and Challenges* (Chisinau: Print Caro, 2016): 193-194.

35 Esmâ Özdaşlı, “Avrupa Komşuluk politikası Çerçevesinde Avrupa Birliği Ermenistan İlişkileri”, *Aksaray Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi* 8, no. 1 (2016).

36 Armen Grigorian, “Armenia and EU Sign New Partnership Agreement,” *Jamestown*, December 4, 2017, <https://jamestown.org/program/armenia-eu-sign-new-partnership-agreement/>

*The EU's as a normative pouvoir in the CEPA*

Despite this situation, CEPA creates a useful environment for the EU to implement normative power on Armenia, thus allowing the EU to exhibit either the *pouvoir* or *puissance* aspects of normative power. It is constituted by 8 parts and a preamble. The most important parts of the Agreement are mentioned under the Preamble, Political Dialog and Reform, and Justice, Freedom and Security titles.

In the Preamble section, the parties present their common goals in this agreement and future prospects due to its implementation. When it is examined closely, it can be seen that the parties will cooperate under the principle of universal norms, and Armenia declares its commitment to carry out reforms in the human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law, democracy, minority rights, and good governance areas<sup>37</sup>. This can be interpreted as the legitimate base for the EU's normative implementations even though the Agreement mostly arranges the commercial and economic issues.

After the Preamble, it is seen that Article 1 and Article 2 supports the objectives of the Agreement and the idea of embracing universal norms. In the Article 1, it is stated that cooperation between the parties will be developed based on common values and close ties; political dialogue will be established in all fields based on mutual interests will be strengthened; and tensions will be resolved to ensure international peace and regional security. There are priorities such as bringing Armenia closer to the EU *acquis* in order to increase its economic potential. In this section, the emphasis on freedom, justice, rule of law, and respect for human rights can be interpreted as these articles being essential for the Agreement. As a matter of fact, the UN Charter, Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter and the European Convention on Human Rights are listed in the general principles section in Article 2, which are indispensable for this agreement.

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37 "Joint Proposal for a COUNCIL DECISION on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Armenia, of the other part", *EUR-Lex*, JOIN/2017/037 final - 2017/0238 (NLE), September 25, 2017, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017JC0037>

**Article 3**

- to develop and strengthen political dialog on all areas of mutual interests
- to enhance the political partnership and increase the effectiveness of cooperation in the area of foreign and security policy
- to promote international peace, stability and security based on effective multilateralism
- to strengthen cooperation and dialogue between the Parties on international security and crisis management, in particular in order to address global and regional challenges and related threats;
- to strengthen cooperation in the fight against the proliferation of WMDs and their delivery systems
- to foster result-oriented and practical cooperation between the Parties for achieving peace, security and stability on the European continent
- to strengthen respect for democratic principles, the rule of law, good governance, and human rights and fundamental freedoms, including media freedom and the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and to contribute to consolidating domestic political reforms;
- to develop dialogue and to deepen cooperation between the Parties in the field of security and defence;
- to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts
- to promote the purposes and principles of the UN as enshrined in its Charter and the principles guiding relations between participating states as set out in the OSCE Helsinki Final Act
- to promote regional cooperation, develop good neighbourly relations and enhance regional security, including by taking steps towards opening borders to promote regional trade and cross-border movement

**Table 2:** The purpose of the political dialog in the CEPA<sup>38</sup>

When Article 3 and the Preamble part considered together, it is seen that the EU will cooperate closely with Armenia on issues such as developing a dialogue in the field of security and defense, supporting the resolution of conflicts, and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Article 4, titled Internal Reforms, mentions issues such as the rule of law, democratic institutions, human rights and freedoms, increasing the independence, quality and effectiveness of the judiciary, increasing the administrative capacities and impartiality of law enforcement, and combating corruption. The parties have stated that they will cooperate on these issues<sup>39</sup>.

Under the title of Justice, Freedom and Security, issues such as visa liberalization, mobility and readmission, border security, migration, fight against corruption and organized crime (within the framework of this agreement and in accordance with the aforementioned principles) were decided to be carried out in cooperation with the EU<sup>40</sup>.

38 JOIN/2017/037 final - 2017/0238 (NLE).

39 JOIN/2017/037 final - 2017/0238 (NLE).

40 JOIN/2017/037 final - 2017/0238 (NLE).

When the Armenian CEPA is examined, it is seen that to respecting and embracing the principles on which the normative power approach is based on is essential. These principles form the basis of agreements and in case of their violations, agreement may be suspended or terminated<sup>41</sup>.

The agreement has not yet fully entered into force, as it has not yet been ratified. However, the temporary enforcement process is carried out within the framework of the provisions of the Agreement. In this context, implementation reports have been prepared since 2018 to monitor the progress of EU Armenia<sup>42</sup>.

Shortly after signing the CEPA, the government changed in Armenia due to mass demonstrations. Armenian people took the streets due to the discontent with the corrupt economic and political environment in the country. After mass demonstrations that lasted for about a month led by Nikol Pashinyan, Serzh Sargsyan resigned and Nikol Pashinyan became the Prime Minister. This period became known as the “Velvet Revolution”.<sup>43</sup> These developments were also included in the 2018 progress report on Armenia, which shows that the EU closely monitors the events in Armenia. However, there has been no active EU intervention in this process.

In fact, the EU was pleased with the Pashinyan government that came to power due to it being consisted of pro-EU politicians. It was said that the newly appointed government believes in the building of open democracy and intends to carry out a series of reforms for the modernization of the country. It was mentioned that the road map of the CEPA plays a decisive role in terms of these reforms.<sup>44</sup>

Important issues such as the rule of law, combating corruption, guaranteeing human rights and fundamental freedoms became part of the agenda of the new government. In this context, it was stated that the EU would be Armenia’s biggest partner. As a matter of fact, the first Partnership Council convened in June 2018 consulted with the government on reforms regarding justice policies. For example, it was emphasized that reforms in the field of public administration had key importance.

New reforms to develop the democratic system were planned to be made according to the 1-year plan prepared by the government. It was stated that

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41 JOIN/2017/037 final - 2017/0238 (NLE).

42 JOIN/2017/037 final - 2017/0238 (NLE).

43 Rayhan Demytrie, “Why Armenia ‘Velvet Revolution’ won without a bullet fired”, *BBC*, May 1, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43948181>

44 “Partnership Implementation Report on Armenia”, *European Union*, 2019, [https://ec.europa.eu/sites/ecas/files/partnership\\_implementation\\_report\\_armenia.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/sites/ecas/files/partnership_implementation_report_armenia.pdf)

there are issues such as fighting corruption and strengthening the economy in the government's 5-year program. Based on the success of the Velvet Revolution, the importance of media and digital activism was highlighted. In this context, the importance of the decision to broadcast the parliamentary debates live, closely related to the government's own transparency, was emphasized.

The report suggested that Armenia's borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey remain closed due to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and this has an effect on the landlocked position of Armenia. It was also stated that the support given to the OSCE Minsk Group for the solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict continued. However, the EU did not show a solid attitude against the Armenian occupation in the Nagorno-Karabakh. It only made do with supporting OSCE process. This situation shows that the EU is unable to demonstrate its normative power on this issue.

It is seen that the EU has a positive approach towards Armenia because of the Velvet Revolution. This situation can be compared to the Georgian case of the 2003 Rose Revolution. Therefore, based on the example of Georgia, it can be assumed that the new government expects to adopt an attitude close to EU values regarding the rule of law, justice, judicial reforms, and combating corruption. However, despite the corruption investigation that began in Armenia, there are evidences that the new government has engaged in corruption as well.

At this point, it can be useful to mention the talks leaked to the internet between Prime Minister Pashinyan and Intelligence Chief Arthur Vanetsyan in September 2018. In this conversation, an intervention in the judicial process was being discussed to prevent the release of former President Robert Kocharyan, who was detained within the framework of the corruption investigations<sup>45</sup>. Contrary to what the EU expects from the Pashinyan government, the attempt to intervene in the judiciary shows that the principles of the rule of law and judicial independence are not being adhered to. This situation creates a parallel situation with Bauer's comment on normative power. Bauer argues that the EU's normative power remains weak in practice<sup>46</sup>. Therefore, it can be considered that the reforms made in Armenian domestic law have not been met in practice. On the other hand, the fact that the EU did not include these talks in the report causes doubts on whether the EU is conducting an objective monitoring in Armenia. This situation may confirm the views of Skolimowska and Cebeci that the EU's normative power understanding is problematic and that it can ignore some situations if it is

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45 "How Armenian Justice Really Works", *YouTube*, September 5, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZOc3HxZLLA>

46 Bauer, "The European Mediterranean Policy..."

against its own interests and that it can even support authoritarian regimes for the sake of its interests<sup>47</sup>.

On the other hand, despite the EU having a suitable platform to implement its normative power in Armenia, it hesitated to use it on issues such as the conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. In 2020, Armenia attacked Azerbaijan twice, one of these was in Tovuz province which is far from the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, and the other was in Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>48</sup> (which spiraled into an outright war between Azerbaijan and Armenia). These clashes showed that Armenia is far from achieving the goals such as promoting international peace, stability, and security based on effective multilateralism, and to strengthen cooperation in the fight against the proliferation of WMDs and their delivery systems, and to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The EU remained silent during the clashes and has ignored the aggressive attitude of Armenia. Armenia fell into political turmoil in the aftermath of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War. It remains to be seen what affect this will have on Armenia's stance on CEPA and EU's normative power in this country.

## Conclusion

When the PCA, Action Plan, and progress reports concerning Armenia are examined, it is seen that the EU tried to implement universal norms such as democracy, the rule of law, the protection of human rights, and fundamental freedoms, and the adoption of the concepts of peace as Manners claims. The information dissemination tool, which Manners named as one of the normative tools, was attempted to be used in Armenia. Reforms in domestic law of Armenia were expected in parallel with EU *acquis*, and international treaties and principles. However, it is observed that the EU does not take into account some of the important claims that have also appeared in the progress reports. Armenia has lagged in terms of EU principles in matters such as democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, judicial independence, electoral security, and discrimination. The corruption rate in Armenia is one of the highest in the region.

In the assessment made through Armenia, it is seen that the EU cannot use its normative power effectively. The main reason for this is thought to be due to the willingness precondition as Manners stated. On the other hand, it is thought that the reason behind the failure of Europeanization of Armenia by using

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47 See; Skolimowska, "The European Union as Normative..." and Cebeci, "AB'nin 'Arap Baharı'na Tepkisi'..."

48 Tutku Dilaver, "The Conflict Between Azerbaijan-Armenia From Tovuz To Nagorno Karabakh," *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, Commentary No: 2020/32, October 7, 2020, <https://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/THE-CONFLICT-BETWEEN-AZERBAIJAN-ARMENIA-FROM-TOVUZ-TO-NAGORNO-KARABAKH>

normative power until 2018 is due to Russia's effect in Armenia. However, the Velvet Revolution caused Armenia to enter a transformation process which makes it more open to EU norms. Yet, the new government has shown that it has failed to make the progress which the EU has desired. In fact, the Tovuz conflict and 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War have once again revealed how dangerous the tolerance shown to Armenia can be.

In the normative power approach, the definition of power includes both meaning as an actor, namely *puissance*, and *pouvoir* a type of power. When the normative power of the EU is examined from this point of view, it is seen that the EU does not appear as normative *puissance* in Armenia. Instead, the EU has a limited power in Armenia in terms of normative *pouvoir*.

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

**To cite this article:** Samira Habibbayli, “Attempts By Armenia And Related Groups To Disrupt Azerbaijan-Georgia Relations”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 42 (2020): 123-149.

**Received:** 27.07.2020

**Accepted:** 16.11.2020

# ATTEMPTS BY ARMENIA AND RELATED ACTORS TO DISRUPT AZERBAIJAN-GEORGIA RELATIONS

(ERMENİSTAN VE BAĞLANTILI AKTÖRLERİN AZERBAIJAN-GÜRCİSTAN İLİŞKİLERİNİ BOZMA ÇABALARI)

Samira HABİBBAYLI\*

**Abstract:** *Azerbaijan and Georgia, two of the three states that make up the South Caucasus, support peace and stability. The third state Armenia, on the other hand, deals the greatest blow to the stability and peace in the region by applying an occupation policy directly to one of these two states and indirectly to the other. As of the writing of this article, Armenia has seized more than 20 percent of the territory of the Azerbaijan Republic as a result of the occupation.*

*In Georgia, acts by Armenians have posed a threat to the territorial integrity of this state in two ways. First, the Armenians, together with the Abkhaz, fought against the Georgian state. Second, Armenians from time to time make territorial claims in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia, where they live as a community.*

*Armenia and related actors, which include diaspora Armenians living around the world (including those living in the region after the collapse of the USSR), have been making various efforts to disrupt Azerbaijani-Georgian relations since the restoration of the independence of the South*

\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0240-8814>  
Head of the Human Resources, Institute of Caucasus Studies of ANAS  
PhD Candidate of the Institute of Law and Human Rights of ANAS  
shabibbayli@gmail.com

*Caucasus states. The actors working to disrupt the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations can be listed as follows:*

- *Representatives of the Armenian state and government;*
- *Embassy of Armenia in Georgia;*
- *Media of Armenia;*
- *Pro-Armenian media representatives abroad;*
- *Sources of information of Armenian origin operating in Georgia;*
- *Armenian organizations operating in Georgia;*
- *Armenian Diaspora organizations;*
- *Population of Armenian origin in Georgia;*
- *Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia;*
- *Pro-Armenian politicians and scientists living abroad.*

*The breakdown of bilateral relations will cause economic and political losses for both Azerbaijan and Georgia, and allow Armenia to capitalize on these losses. For these reasons, the current state of relations between the two countries must be maintained and further developed, and provocations must be ignored and resolutely prevented.*

**Keywords:** *South Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Georgia, bilateral relations, Armenian diaspora*

**Öz:** *Güney Kafkasya'yı oluşturan üç devletten ikisi olan Azerbaycan ve Gürcistan barış ve istikrarı desteklemektedir. Üçüncü devlet olan Ermenistan ise, bu iki devletten birine doğrudan, diğerine dolaylı olarak işgal politikası uygulayarak bölgedeki istikrar ve barışa en büyük darbeyi vurmaktadır. Ermenistan, işgal sonucunda Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti topraklarının yüzde 20'den fazlasını ele geçirmiştir.*

*Gürcistan'da Ermenilerin eylemleri bu devletin toprak bütünlüğüne iki şekilde tehdit oluşturmaktadır. Birincisi, Ermeniler Abhazlarla birlikte Gürcistan devletine karşı savaşmışlardır. İkincisi, Ermeniler zaman zaman topluluk olarak yaşadıkları Gürcistan'ın Samtshe-Cavahetya bölgesinde toprak taleplerinde bulunmaktadır.*

*SSCB'nin dağılmasından sonra bölgede yaşayanlar da dahil olmak üzere dünyanın dört bir yanında yaşayan diaspora Ermenilerini de içeren Ermenistan ve ilgili aktörler, Güney Kafkasya devletlerinin bağımsızlığından bu yana Azerbaycan-Gürcistan ilişkilerini bozmak için çeşitli çabalar*

*göstermektedir. Azerbaycan-Gürcistan ilişkilerini bozmaya çalışan unsurları şu şekilde sıralanabilir:*

- *Ermenistan devleti ve hükümeti temsilcileri;*
- *Gürcistan'daki Ermenistan Büyükelçiliği;*
- *Ermenistan medyası;*
- *Yurtdışında Ermeni yanlısı medya temsilcileri;*
- *Gürcistan'da faaliyet gösteren Ermeni kökenli medya organları;*
- *Gürcistan'da faaliyet gösteren Ermeni örgütleri;*
- *Ermeni Diasporas örgütleri;*
- *Gürcistan'ın Ermeni kökenli nüfusu;*
- *Gürcistan'daki Ermeni Apostolik Kilisesi;*
- *Yurtdışında yaşayan Ermeni yanlısı siyasetçiler ve bilim insanları.*

*İkili ilişkilerin bozulması hem Azerbaycan hem de Gürcistan için ekonomik ve siyasi kayıplara neden olacak ve Ermenistan'ın bu kayıplardan yararlanmasına olanak sağlayacaktır. Bu nedenlerle iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin mevcut durumu sürdürülmeli ve daha da geliştirilmeli, provokasyonlara geçit verilmemeli ve kararlılıkla önlenmelidir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Güney Kafkasya, Azerbaycan, Gürcistan, ikili ilişkiler, Ermeni diaspora*

## Introduction

Azerbaijan and Georgia, two of the three countries that make up the South Caucasus, have demonstrated through their foreign policy that they are committed to peace and stability. The third country, Armenia, however, is undermining the stability and peace in the region by pursuing a policy of direct aggression against one of these two states and indirect aggression against the other. As a result of the Armenian military aggression, as of the writing of this article, more than 20% of the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been occupied.

In Georgia, acts by Armenian groups have posed a threat to the territorial integrity of this state in two ways. First, the Armenians, together with the Abkhaz, fought against the Georgian state. At present, the majority of the population of the separatist Abkhazia region are Armenians, and their number is growing.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that brutal massacres against Georgians were perpetrated by Armenian groups during the 1992 Georgian-Abkhaz war.

On the other hand, Armenians from time to time make territorial claims in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia, where they live as a community. Armenians are the second largest minority in Georgia after Azerbaijanis. According to the 2014 census of Georgia, 168,100 Armenians (4.5%) live in Georgia.<sup>2</sup> If we take the Armenians who took Georgian surnames into account, it becomes clear that the number of Armenians is even higher. Armenians were relocated to the territories where they now live in Georgia, historically inhabited by the Turks of Akhiska and Borchali, during the reign of Tsarist Russia, and strengthened their position during the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) period. Near the collapse of the USSR, beginning with M. Gorbachev's "reconstruction" period, Armenian organizations began to be actively formed in Georgia. It is known that more than 20 Armenian public organizations (according to some sources, 40) operate in Georgia.<sup>3</sup>

During the years of independence, the separatist claims of the Armenians in Samtskhe-Javakheti were always on the agenda, and even in 2007 the "solution" of the Javakheti issue was included in the "National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia." At the initial stage, they demand the annexation of Chalk municipality (about half of the population is Armenian), which is part of the Kvemo-Kartli region in terms of territorial and administrative division, to Javakheti. As a next step, they claim autonomy for Samtskhe-Javakheti,

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1 Elnur Kəlbizadə, "Ermənilərin Abxaziyada məkrli niyyətləri və hədəfi: 'Qaradənizsahili Ermənistan'", *Xalq Qazeti*, October 16, 2020, <http://xalqgazeti.com/az/news/59933>

2 "2014 General Population Census", *National Statistics Office of Georgia (GEOSTAT)*, last modified April 28, 2016, [http://census.ge/files/results/Census\\_release\\_ENG.pdf](http://census.ge/files/results/Census_release_ENG.pdf)

3 "General Population Census in 2014".

giving Armenian the status of official language and the Armenian Apostolic Church official status.<sup>4</sup> However, Armenia's occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding regions has pushed the Armenians' demands for autonomy into the background. Concerning this issue, the leader of the Georgian Freedom Party, Rezo Shavishvili, said in a statement that "if the Armenians did not raise the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, they would demand the annexation of the Armenian region in Georgia to Armenia."

### Terrorist Acts Committed by Armenians in Georgia in the Early 1990s

Armenian groups' actions that disrupt peace and stability in the South Caucasus do not end with direct and indirect opposition to the sovereignty of states. It is no secret that the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations have risen to the level of strategic partnership. Bilateral relations are multifaceted and beneficial mutual partnership has been ensured in all areas. Georgia is also represented as a close partner in all projects initiated and mainly participated by Azerbaijan.

On the one hand, Armenia sees it against its own interests for Azerbaijan to have a say in the Caucasus and the world, to become a leader in the region. On the other hand, it lacks mechanisms for having influence on Georgia. For these reasons, Armenian actors in Armenia and around the world, including those living in the region, have been trying to find other ways to disrupt Azerbaijani-Georgian relations since the restoration of the independence of the South Caucasus states after the collapse of the USSR.

The crimes committed against Azerbaijanis living in Georgia in the early 1990s not only oppressed them, but also served this purpose. During the first few months of 1990, several terrorist acts were committed against the Azerbaijani population of the Marneuli region. On March 10, a resident of Sadahli village was abducted and taken to Armenia. In April, a resident of the village of Gasimli was killed. On August 3, a resident of Arikhli village was killed. On August 11, 1993, an explosion occurred at the central collective farm market in Marneuli. As a result of the explosion, two people killed and more than 20 were injured.<sup>5</sup> In the same year, two residents of the village of Kapanakchi were taken as hostages taken to Armenia. The property of civilians was looted, cars were stolen and burned. These crimes were perpetrated by Armenians and Georgianized Armenians. These events served as a catalyst for the breakdown

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4 Ərəstü Həbibbəyli, "Ermənilər Qafqazda daha bir separatist bölgə yaradır. Gürcüstanın ərazi bütövlüyü təhlükədə - Araştırma", *Strateq.az*, last modified December 16, 2017, <https://strateq.az/manshet/220283/erm%C9%99nil%C9%99r-qafqazda-daha-bir-separatist-bolge%C9%99-yaradir.html>

5 Şahbaz Şamioğlu, *Borçalıda etnik proseslər və millətlərarası münasibətlər: XIX-XX əsrlər* (Bakı: Azərbaycan, 1997), 154.



of Azerbaijani-Georgian relations. However, the relative improvement in the public security situation in Georgia with the change of government and the consistent steps taken to improve relations with Georgia after the election of Heydar Aliyev as President of Azerbaijan have prevented the realization of the intentions by Armenian groups.

### **Armenia's Attempts to Obstruct Regional Projects Organized by Azerbaijan and Georgia**

With the flourishing of Azerbaijani-Georgian relations after the signing of the 1994 Contract of the Century, Azerbaijan embarked on a path of rapid development, bringing its natural resources to the world market. This contract, which ensured the economic independence of Azerbaijan, was also very important in terms of establishing mutually beneficial cooperation with countries with participant and transit potential. However, Armenia -like its patron Russia- did not shy away from seeking ways to prevent the signing of the contract. At that time, the Armenian National and Strategic Research Center held a round table on the Contract of the Century. The speech of the head of the economic center "Armat", Edward Agajanov, attracted special attention. The essence of his speech was that the signing of the contract should not be allowed, and the Armenian ruling circles and all political parties should be mobilized and work to prevent the signing of the contract in the following direction.

This was done by firstly informing the contract participants that Azerbaijan's oil reserves were overstated; secondly, by disseminating information about the tense internal socio-political situation in Azerbaijan and the struggle for power in accordance with civil rules; thirdly, by creating public opinion that this project was unprofitable because oil was around \$ 18-20 per barrel; fourthly, by ensuring more active and flexible activity of the Armenian Diaspora in this field -by establishing contacts with foreign companies included in the Contract of the Century and persuading them to abandon this agreement at any cost, even if necessary, through pressure, to convince them that they would fail economically. Speaking at the rostrum, Alvard Barkhudyan, in his rather absurd speech, said that at the beginning of the century, 40% of Baku's oil belonged to Armenian millionaires Mantashov, Ter-Gugasyan, Lalayan, Gulbekyan, and others. Accordingly, their heirs allegedly had shares in Baku oil and thus should also benefit from this oil. It was argued that Baku oil was their private property and according to international law, the Contract of the Century could not be signed without the consent of the Armenians.<sup>6</sup>

6 "Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin İşlər İdarəsinin - Prezident Kitabxanası Əsrin müqaviləsi, III fəsil, 'Azərbaycan neftinin dünya bazarlarına nəqli' - 'Əsrin müqaviləsi' kontraktının imzalanması Heydər Əliyev diplomatiyasının qələbəsi idi", *Preslib.az*, accessed December 3, 2020, s. 162, <http://files.preslib.az/site/10il/gl3.pdf>

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An extensive smear campaign was launched in the media on this issue. Igor Muradyan, a correspondent for the *Novosti Armenii* (Armenian News) newspaper, noted in an article that H. Aliyev had decided the fate of both himself and Azerbaijan by signing the Contract of the Century. According to the author, the agreement did not take into account the interests of the Russians, that Russia would therefore increase pressure on Azerbaijan and the Karabakh war would flare up again. The Armenian lobby did not lag behind its compatriots, trying to create a negative public opinion by acting as a protagonist in the campaign against Azerbaijan. A collaborator of the Armenian Diaspora, Caroline Anne Cox (Baroness Cox, member of the British House of Lords), addressed the British Parliament demanding that British Petroleum (BP) suspend all economic relations with Azerbaijan and tried to create a negative image of Azerbaijan by substantiating the claims of the Armenians. Analyzing the above-mentioned facts and keeping in mind the importance of the Contract of the Century, we can conclude that Armenia and pro-Armenian actors tried by all means to hinder the development of Azerbaijan, its economic independence, and beneficial cooperation with world powers, including neighboring countries.

From time to time, Armenia takes steps aimed at violating the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations. It is known that Azerbaijan and Georgia successfully cooperate in a number of international and regional projects. One of such regional projects is the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway. From the first day of the project's planning, Armenia began to take different positions, trying to take advantage of every situation.

First of all, Armenia tried to spread information claiming that the realization of the railway line was impossible. In those days, the media of Russia and Armenia published some information that the Georgian Dream coalition, which had just come to power in Georgia, did not support the BTK railway project. At the same time, it was claimed that the relevant transport line was inefficient and posed risks to Georgia's economic infrastructure. These unrealistic views were intended to debunk the project. However, when it was clarified that Azerbaijan would not allow the debunking of the project, Armenia moved to expand relations with Georgia. Thus, during the meeting of the then Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan with his Georgian counterpart, who visited Georgia in December 2017, the possibility of opening the Abkhazian railway was noted.<sup>7</sup>

It is worth to remind that this railway line connects Russia and Armenia, passing through the separatist region of Georgia, Abkhazia. The railway

7 "Gürcüstan Azərbaycanla Ermənistan Arasında Balans Saxlaya Bilərmimi?", *Kafkassam*, December 28, 2017, <https://kafkassam.com/gurcistan-az%C9%99rbaycanla-erm%C9%99nistan-arasinda-balans-saxlaya-bil%C9%99rmi.html>

through Abkhazia was suspended in 1991-1993 because of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.<sup>8</sup>

The Armenian government has been requesting for several years now from the Georgian government to open the railway, because this railway will create a direct transport link between Armenia and Russia and break the transport blockade. Thus, it will be possible to transport military cargo from Russia to Armenia by rail.

Armenia is also trying to open this road to save its economy, which is in a difficult situation after the opening of the BTK railway. One of the main goals is to undermine the Azerbaijan-Georgia strategic partnership. However, this alternative is neither economically nor politically viable for Georgia, whose territorial integrity has been violated. Under these conditions, Georgia's move -the opening of the Abkhazian railway- would be a political suicide for official Tbilisi. Georgia's consent to the opening of the Abkhazian railway would be one of the biggest threats to the country's integrity, which means the establishment of official relations with separatist Abkhazia. This means that Georgia would accept the so-called Abkhaz state.

It is no secret that the main interested side in the opening of the Abkhazian road is Armenia. For this reason, the Armenian media, supporting the country's leadership, has already spread information that the BTK project is useless and exaggerates the importance of the Abkhazian project. It was not accidental that Bidzina Ivanishvili's statement coincided with an article published by the Armenian *Lragir* newspaper. Armenia was trying to change public opinion in its favor. The *Lragir* newspaper claimed that the South Caucasus region was in a state of disrepair in terms of railway transport, which was inadequate to the region's transport potential. He also noted that the West was not satisfied with the fact that transport in the region passes only through Azerbaijan and Turkey. Although the West did not prevent this, it did not give its full consent. However, according to the newspaper, an alternative route here could be the Abkhazian railway, which can connect Russia with Georgia, Iran, the Black Sea, the Gulf of Basra, and even the Indian Ocean. It was noted that the advantage of the Abkhazian railway is not to start from scratch, but to modernize the old road, and the implementation of this project may result in the passage of the main artery of the Caucasus through Armenia.<sup>9</sup>

As a result, first, the Georgian government would be questioning the territorial integrity of its country. Second, it would amount to considering the separatist

8 "Gürcüstan Ermənistanla Ruisyanı birləşdirən Abxaziya dəmiryolunu açır", *Kafkassam*, November 20, 2017, <https://kafkassam.com/gurcistan-erm%C9%99nistanla-ruisyani-birl%C9%99sdir%C9%99n-abxaziya-d%C9%99miryolunu-acir.html>

9 "Azərbaycan-Gürcüstan əlaqələri strateji xarakter daşıyır", *Ses Qazeti*, December 25, 2012, <https://sesqazeti.az/news/analytics/326906.html>

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Abkhazia as an independent entity, thereby creating conditions for international recognition of Abkhazia. Third, in the face of Russian pressure, it would call into question the sovereignty and independence of its government. Fourth, despite so much support from Azerbaijan, Georgia would be taking steps against Azerbaijan. Fifth, it would create conditions for Russia to arm Armenia, which indirectly plays a role in the occupation of Azerbaijani lands by Armenia.

Over the past 20 years, the Azerbaijani state has invested billions of dollars in the Georgian economy. For the implementation of the BTK project alone, Georgia has been gradually allocated about 800 million dollars in soft loans.<sup>10</sup> In return for all this, Georgia's pro-Armenian and pro-Russian steps, in fact, do not serve the national interests of Georgia but create a certain incentive for new threats and pressures on this country. In fact, the current security and development of Georgia depend on Europe, Turkey, and Azerbaijan. Therefore, attempts to get too close to Russia and Armenia may displease and alienate Azerbaijan and Turkey from this country. This is Armenia's dream scenario for Azerbaijani-Georgian relations.

After a series of agreed global projects to transport Azerbaijan's natural resources to the world market, Armenia began to look for a way to exist in the region, on the one hand, and to overshadow the multifaceted relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia, on the other. The export of Azerbaijani hydrocarbon resources through Georgia has led Armenia to dream of becoming a transit country. Thus, Armenia began to draw up plans for the transportation of Iranian natural gas through its territory, first to Georgia and then to European countries.

Although the 120 million dollars natural gas pipeline project was planned in the early 1990s, it was not completed on time due to technical and financial problems.<sup>11</sup> Later, this project was implemented with the financial support of the European Union, which has a political interest in solving Armenia's energy problems. Thus, the European Union provided 30 million euros to Armenia in 2001 to prepare a technical and legal project for the construction of the Iran-Armenia natural gas pipeline. Since 2007, Iranian gas has been exported to Armenia.<sup>12</sup> The pipeline, with a capacity of 1 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year, is 141 km long. 100 km of the pipeline passes through Iran and 41 km through Armenia.<sup>13</sup>

10 "Azərbaycan-Gürcüstan əlaqələri strateji xarakter daşıyır".

11 Hatem Cabbarlı, "Ermenistan'ın İran Politikası", *Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi Uluslararası Avrasya Strateji Dergisi* 10, no. 10: 158, [https://arastirmax.com/tr/system/files/dergiler/169983/makaleler/1/1/arastrmx\\_169983\\_1\\_pp\\_147-174.pdf](https://arastirmax.com/tr/system/files/dergiler/169983/makaleler/1/1/arastrmx_169983_1_pp_147-174.pdf)

12 Vüsal Qasımlı, Zaur Şiriyev & Zülfüyyə Vəliyeva, *İran-Ermenistan münasibətləri: geosiyasi reallıq, versus, siyasi iddialar* (Bakı, 2011), s. 17.

13 Qasımlı və digərləri, *İran-Ermenistan münasibətləri...*, s. 15.

In the following years, Armenia and Iran began to plan to extend the natural gas pipeline through Armenia and Georgia to the Black Sea coast, from where it would be laid on the seabed to transport natural gas to Ukraine and eventually to Europe. Armenia tried to involve Georgia in the project to prove the profitability of it. In this regard, Armenia stressed that cooperation with Iran is in the interests of the region and that Georgia could also participate in energy projects. When this project was discussed, Russia stated its opposition. Because, if the Iran-Armenia natural gas pipeline stretches to Ukraine, both Armenia will be free from energy dependence on Russia, and an alternative source of Russian natural gas will appear in Europe, which could result in price fluctuations against Russia in the international market. A small change in the price of natural gas could cost Russia millions of dollars. From Russia's point of view, this is undesirable.

Armenian President's hasty visit to Georgia in 2015 (Serzh Sargsyan was president at the time) after Georgia announced that it would solve its energy problem with alternative sources brought the issue of Iranian natural gas transportation to Georgia via Armenia back on the agenda of the regional media. However, this attempt by Armenia also failed.

Armenia made its next move on this issue in 2019. On February 20, 2019, the 5th Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Consultative Council was held in Baku.<sup>14</sup> The meeting was attended by the heads of the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, energy ministers of the United Kingdom, the United States, Turkey, Italy, Georgia, and other European countries. In response, the Armenian Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources said in a statement that official Yerevan is ready to discuss the export of Iranian gas from Armenia to Georgia and from there to Europe via the Black Sea. Following this, the media reported that on February 27, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan paid an official visit to Iran. It seems that Armenia, which is excluded from all international economic projects in the region, is trying to get out of its isolation again.

It is no secret that the existing natural gas pipeline between Iran and Armenia cannot be extended to Georgia due to its small diameter. The construction of a new natural gas pipeline from Iran through Armenia to Georgia is very expensive. Georgia's statements about alternative energy sources are unacceptable to the Azerbaijani state. Achieving economic development with the support of Azerbaijan and Turkey, Georgia pursues a policy that threatens the overall security of the region. Russia or Iran are unlikely to sell cheaper natural gas than Azerbaijan to Georgia. Thus, Russia sells gas to Armenia, a

14 "İlham Əliyev Cənub Qaz Dəhlizi Məşvərət Şurası çərçivəsində keçirilən nazirlərin beşinci toplantısında iştirak edib", *President.az*, February 20, 2019, <https://president.az/articles/31920>

strategic ally in the region, for 165 dollars per thousand cubic meters. It is unlikely that Russia or Iran (via a non-existent pipeline) will sell natural gas to Georgia for 55-65 dollars. This can only damage the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations.

### Armenian Provocations Against Azerbaijan-Turkey-Georgia Trilateral Cooperation

Turkey is the state with which Azerbaijan and Georgia have established the closest neighborly relations and strategic partnership in the region. Cooperation between Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Georgia ensures stability, security, and sustainable development in the region. Turkey is a regional country that unequivocally supports Azerbaijan's regional policy in the South Caucasus and all its geopolitical, geo-economics, and military-geostrategic initiatives. This is not accidental. Despite regional pressures, the idea of exporting the rich oil and gas products of the Caspian Basin to world markets through Turkey is based on the Azerbaijani state. This strategic choice has increased Turkey's geopolitical, geo-economic role and prestige in Eurasia and the world as an energy and transport hub. As Azerbaijan considers Turkey its most reliable and strategic partner in the region, it has decided to implement all its energy, transport, and other relations with the West through this country.

The implementation of oil and gas pipeline projects such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE), the future dividends of new transnational gas pipelines such as TANAP, TAP, the rich gas reserves to be produced under Shah Deniz 2 phase, etc. will not only meet Turkey's energy needs but also is of great importance in terms of strengthening the country's geopolitical position in the region. In addition, the BTK railway, TRACECA and other transport and communication arteries make Turkey the center of East-West relations. Taking advantage of the favorable situation created by Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus, Turkey was able to establish a regional strategic partnership with Georgia. In particular, Turkey is actively involved in the process of bringing the Georgian military system in line with NATO standards within the framework of NATO's Partnership for Peace.<sup>15</sup>

Armenia is seriously concerned about this beneficial trilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey. The trilateral joint military exercises of these countries in 2019 caused sensation in the Armenian media. Azerbaijani, Turkish, and Georgian servicemen took part in the Eternity-2019

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15 Mete Taşkın, *Bağımsızlığından Sonra Gürcistan Türkiye İlişkileri*, yüksek lisans tez çalışması (İzmir: Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, 2016).  
<https://acikerisim.deu.edu.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12397/6721/186131.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

military exercises organized to ensure the security of the BTC oil pipeline, the BTE gas pipeline, and the BTK railway.<sup>16</sup> Tasks related to the protection of economic projects were performed during the joint training. But Armenia is more concerned about Georgia's participation in the exercises. The Armenian media reported that Tbilisi's rapprochement with Baku and Ankara was a matter of serious concern in Yerevan, given the hostile attitude of Azerbaijan and Turkey towards Armenia, which was a natural reaction.<sup>17</sup> Former Georgian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, senior researcher at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies Georgi Badridze commented on the issue:

“Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey are allies. There are a number of joint projects. During the military exercises, tasks were performed to ensure the security of the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. It is inappropriate for this to provoke another nervous reaction in Yerevan. I would like to remind my Armenian neighbors that Armenia has close economic and military ties with our northern neighbor. I do not remember Georgia giving any instructions to Armenia on who to join the alliance with. Therefore, Georgia will further develop its strategic relations with its neighbors against the background of its economic and political interests.”<sup>18</sup>

### Activities of Armenian Organizations and Media in Georgia

A letter on behalf of the Armenian people was published in the Georgian newspaper *Akhali Taoba* (New Generation). The letter stated that the Georgians, together with the Azerbaijanis, were trying to oust the Armenians from the Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo-Kartli regions.<sup>19</sup> The letter also called on the Armenian government to help prevent this process. Van Bayburtyan, an adviser to then-Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, called the letter unfounded and said it was written by the Javakh National Movement organization. According to the adviser, such a step was expected because the organization was funded by Russia. It should be noted that Bayburtyan was one of the propagandists of Armenian separatism in Samtskhe-Javakheti during Eduard Shevardnadze's rule. After the revolution in Georgia, the views of this

16 Ədalət Verdiyev, “Azərbaycanda 3 Ölkənin İştirakı ilə 3 Strateji Təlim: Ermənistanın Səfərbərlik Elan Etməsi Əbəs Yərə Deyil - Hərbi Ekspert”, *Ordu.az*, September 30, 2019, <https://ordu.az/az/news/155086/azerbaycanda-3-olkenin-istiraki-ile-3-strateji-telim-ermenistanin-seferberlik-elan-etmesi-ebes-yere-deyil-herbi-ekspert>

17 “Georgi Badridze: Gürcüstan Ermənistana göstəriş vermir, Yerevan da fikrini özünə saxlasın”, *Aqreqator.az*, September 17, 2019, <https://aqreqator.az/az/siyaset/296055>

18 “Georgi Badridze: Gürcüstan Ermənistana göstəriş vermir, Yerevan da fikrini özünə saxlasın”.

19 Nəsimə Mirzəyeva, “Gürcüstanda fəaliyyət göstərən erməni təşkilatları”, *Modern.az*, September 26, 2017, <https://modern.az/az/news/144363>

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person, who began to serve as a consultant, also changed. Bayburtyan was the editor-in-chief of the Georgian newspaper *Vrastan* for ten years, and in his articles, he also condemned the ideas of Armenian activists in Samtskhe-Javakheti.

On the other hand, there is a systematic and planned increase in anti-Azerbaijani and anti-Turkish slogans in the Georgian media. This tension in Georgian-Azerbaijani relations, on the one hand, serves to divert public attention from the real problems of the country, and on the other hand, to damage the existing good relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan.

From time to time, articles in this line are published in the media. For example, on April 17, 2017, the website of the Armenian Union in Georgia posted an article titled “Why the Georgian government should recognize the genocide of the Armenian people.” The article said that the main issue stems from moral values; the Georgian state, which considers itself part of European civilization, must recognize the massacre as a crime against all humanity; that for 26 years, the Georgian elite has been justifying its silence under the pretext of relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan, the recognition of the “Armenian genocide” in Georgia has become a matter of national security; and that the Armenians had only one way out – they must clarify with the country’s ruling circles that these circles are trying to protect Georgia’s national interests, and not the interests of any other states.<sup>20</sup>

This organization is engaged in continuous propaganda against Turks and Azerbaijanis in Georgia. On every anniversary of the so-called Armenian genocide, the activities of this organization become more active. Thus, every year on the anniversary of the claimed genocide, this union carries out a protest in front of the Turkish embassy.

Not only members of this organization, but most Armenians living in Georgia annually organize protests on April 23-24 in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region and the capital Tbilisi on the anniversary of the claimed genocide.<sup>21</sup> The “flag” of the occupying Armenian regime in Nagorno-Karabakh (“Nagorno-Karabakh Republic-NKR/Artsakh”) created in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan is also waved during the protests. Georgian authorities do not take any measures to prevent these displays of separatism of local Armenians and this provocation against Azerbaijan. In Georgia, which suffers from the occupation and recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the waving of the “flag” of the occupying Armenian regime must be stopped immediately and such cases must not be allowed to happen again.

20 Mirzəyeva, “Gürcüstanda fəaliyyət göstərən erməni təşkilatları”.

21 “Gürcüstan erməniləri Azərbaycanca qarşı tərribata əl atıblar”, *Report.az*, April 24, 2019, <https://report.az/region-xeberleri/gurcistan-ermenileri-azerbaycana-qarsi-texribata-el-atiblar/>



From time to time, in general, provocations and targeted information are spread by citizens of Armenian origin or their organizations and associations in Georgia to disrupt the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations.

### **Attempts by Armenians Living in Georgia to Disrupt Relations**

On January 20, 2019, a monument to Mikhail Avagyan, who took an active part in the operations in Nagorno-Karabakh, was inaugurated by the occupying Armenian militants in the village of Bugashen, Akhalkalaki region of Georgia.<sup>22</sup> Avagyan, who was killed during the Karabakh war, was called the “national hero” of the Armenian people in Armenia and the predominantly Armenian-populated southern regions of Georgia. Armenian media reported that Avagyan took part in military operations in Horadiz, Khojaly, Hadrut, and Füzuli regions after the start of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, and knew the Azerbaijani language (this was undoubtedly used in reconnaissance operations). His repeated involvement in the killing of unarmed civilians, as well as his involvement in the executions of the Khojaly massacre (which Azerbaijanis consider to constitute a genocide), has been confirmed. It is no coincidence that a monument to the Armenian terrorist was unveiled on the anniversary of the tragic events of January 20, 1990 in Baku. The participation of Georgian officials in this opening together with the Armenian deputies is undoubtedly a blow to the long-standing Georgian-Azerbaijani friendship.

Avagyan and his Armenian colleagues directly or indirectly participated in the expulsion, killing, and torture of thousands of Georgians. To this day, the population is unable to return to their native lands. Despite all this, a monument to such a terrorist has been erected in Georgia. This is a pre-planned action, deliberately held on the anniversary of the saddest historical day of Azerbaijan and aimed at seriously damaging the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations.

The erection of the monument is very thought-provoking in the context of Pashinyan’s visit to Georgia after the legitimization of his government and his meeting with the then Prime Minister of Georgia Mamuka Bakhtadze in Bolnisi, the historical place of Azerbaijanis. Let us pay attention to the opinion of the Georgian political scientist, historian Guram Marxulia about the erection of a statue to the terrorist:

“I could not believe it when I heard that a bust would be erected in Georgia, in my homeland, for a man who fought shoulder to shoulder with the separatists. Unfortunately, the information was confirmed. I am

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22 Ədalət Verdiyev, “Erməni separatçının abidəsi Gürcüstana nə verə bilər? – Ekspert”, *Ordu.az*, January 28, 2019, <https://ordu.az/az/news/146368/ermeni-seperatcinin-abidesi-gurcustana-ne-vere-biler-%E2%80%93-ekspert->

terribly outraged that such an incident took place in Georgia. After all, we, like our Azerbaijani brothers, are living witnesses of what ethnic separatism means. The monument in Akhalkalaki must be demolished immediately, and those who pursue this policy must immediately apologize to the Georgian and Azerbaijani peoples. Although the decision to erect a bust of Avagyan was made at the local level, the central government could not be unaware of it. The Georgian government must take this issue seriously. No step should be taken that would undermine the friendship, brotherhood and strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Georgia. It should be noted that Armenians have erected a monument to someone in Javakheti before. None of these have served the Georgian people or the Georgian government. Avagyan even fought against a people close to us, contrary to the national interests of the Georgian state. Why should a monument be erected to such a person in Georgia? I do not understand that. I think that such provocative steps should be prevented. The bureaucracy exists for this. If the construction of the monument has not been agreed with the authorities, it means that official Tbilisi no longer controls the situation in the Akhalkalaki region. How would the erection of a monument to the separatist who fought against the territorial integrity of Georgia in Azerbaijan be received in Georgia?”<sup>23</sup>

Another trace of Armenian provocation was observed on the Azerbaijani-Georgian border. On July 14, 2019, an incident took place between Azerbaijani border guards and Georgians in the Keshikchidag cave complex.<sup>24</sup> According to the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry, a group from Georgia violated the state border in the direction of Azerbaijan, attacked and insulted the border guard service near the Keshikchidag Temple Complex.

“We regret that such actions are completely contrary to the spirit of the strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Georgia, and we consider it a provocation to create a confrontation between the two countries,” the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry said in a statement.”<sup>25</sup>

After the incident, Deputy Chief of Border Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia Teymuraz Kupatadze made a statement about the incident. According to him, the locals came to the area where the Georgian and

23 “Quram Marxuliya: Qarabağ müharibəsində iştirak etmiş erməni terrorçuya Gürcüstanda büst qoyulması xalqlarımıza qarşı təxribatdır”, *Azertag.az*, January 25, 2019, [https://azertag.az/xeber/Quram\\_Marxuliya\\_Qarabag\\_muharibesinde\\_istirak\\_etmis\\_ermeni\\_terrorchuya\\_Gurcustanda\\_bust\\_qoyulmasi\\_xalqlarimiza\\_qarsi\\_texribatdir-1238197](https://azertag.az/xeber/Quram_Marxuliya_Qarabag_muharibesinde_istirak_etmis_ermeni_terrorchuya_Gurcustanda_bust_qoyulmasi_xalqlarimiza_qarsi_texribatdir-1238197)

24 “DSX Keşikçidağla bağlı bəyanat yayıb”, *Gulustan.info*, July 15, 2019, <https://gulustan.info/2019/07/15/dsx-kesikcidagla-bagli-b%C9%99yanat-yayib>

25 “Ermənilər Gürcüstan-Azərbaycan münasibətlərinin pozulmasında maraqlıdırlar - Təhlil”, *Aqreqator.az*, July 22, 2019, <https://aqreqator.az/az/siyaset/193859>

Azerbaijani border guards were, insulted them and an incident occurred. This was stated on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “As a result, the relevant Georgian authorities immediately rectified the incident and began to study the details of the incident.”

To clarify the roots of the Keshikchidag incident, if we look at history, we can see that the height where this temple complex is located was the territory of Azerbaijan during the Soviet era. After the collapse of the USSR, Azerbaijan and Georgia began delimitation and demarcation of their 480-kilometer border. For this purpose, a commission on delimitation and demarcation of state borders was established in both republics. So far, these commissions have met 11 times. In recent years, work has been carried out with the participation of experts on a distance of 168 kilometers.<sup>26</sup>

It should be noted that on the eve of Easter in 2019, Georgian border guards officially appealed to their Azerbaijani counterparts to facilitate the passage to the Keshikchidag Temple Complex in Azerbaijan, and they received a positive response in accordance with the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations. The following week, the Azerbaijani side responded to the appeal with understanding. This ancient religious site has not been so important for Georgians for many years. Strange as it may seem, the temple suddenly received increasing attention, the number of visitors increased, and it became a point of interest for the clergy. Against the background of this activation, certain people appeared and tried to create a confrontation. As a result, religious and ethnic confrontation between the two peoples was created. It is not convincing that all this was accidental.

The best way to create discord between two peoples of different religions is to dress the game around the temple character, which Azerbaijanis call Keshikchidag and Georgians call David Garechi. The high level of relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia helps in the prevention of serious dissatisfactions among ordinary citizens. The religious-ethnic direction can be considered an ideal plan for the creation of a confrontation. Azerbaijani-Georgian relations could have been radically damaged if Azerbaijani soldiers used weapons to drive away those who attacked them, resulting in injury or death. Also, in the eyes of the world, Azerbaijan could have been branded as a radical and barbaric Muslim country that takes up arms against unarmed Christians. The coolness and vigilance of the Azerbaijani soldier, the foresight of the country's leadership prevented the provocation that could have led to great problems in the future, hindered the successful implementation of the plan dressed in religious character. Looking at the sequence of events, it is clear

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26 “No:138/19, Azərbaycan və Gürcüstan Xarici İşlər nazirlərinin müavinləri arasında baş tutmuş görüş ilə bağlı mətbuat üçün məlumat”, *MFA.gov.az*, May 14, 2019, <https://mfa.gov.az/az/news/6167/no13819-azerbaycan-ve-gurcistan-xarici-isler-nazirlerinin-muavinleri-arasinda-bas-tutmus-gorus-ile-bagli-metbuat-ucun-melumat>

that the multifaceted relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia are the target of certain actors, and this is one of the provocative acts committed against the two republics.

“It should be noted that, in general, the development of this type of provocation, which completely contradicts the spirit of strategic relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia in recent months, raises certain questions.” Views such as this are already being voiced at the level of experts on both sides. It seems that the friendly relations and strategic partnership between the two neighboring countries are of serious concern to some, and there are actors trying to pit these countries and their peoples against each other. There are also certain opinions about the identity of these actors in the discussions. Undoubtedly, the latest provocation against the Azerbaijani border guards is aimed at a direct blow to relations between the two countries and therefore, the relevant authorities of both countries should conduct a serious investigation, identify the actors that perpetrated this provocation and take serious measures against them. The Georgian ambassador to Azerbaijan was invited to the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry and asked to comment on the issue. The Georgian Foreign Ministry also condemned the incident and promised to conduct a serious investigation and bring the perpetrators to justice. Assistant to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Public and Political Issues Ali Hasanov openly stated the official position of Azerbaijan on this issue and called on the society fall into provocations. This reaction significantly reduced the tension and was of exceptional importance for everyone to understand the essence of the issue.

It should be noted that not only the Georgian-Azerbaijani border has not been delimited and demarcated. The Georgian-Armenian border has also not been delimited or demarcated. The Georgian-Azerbaijani border is perhaps the most stable and secure border in the region and the world. The non-delimitation of the Georgian-Armenian border is a problem, since in recent years, about 10 nationally Azerbaijani citizens of the Republic of Georgia have been arrested for border violations, and have been detained in Armenia for a long time. Official Tbilisi has not taken the necessary steps to protect its Azerbaijani citizens. It is noteworthy that the President of Georgia Salome Zurbashvili did not raise the issue of delimitation of the Armenian-Georgian border, while making three statements of concern about the delimitation and demarcation of the Azerbaijani-Georgian border. We can substantiate that the address of the Georgian president’s concern is wrong:

First, Azerbaijan and Georgia have signed an agreement on mutual security in several variants, cooperating in the Azerbaijan-Georgia, Azerbaijan-Turkey-Georgia format. There is no security agreement between Armenia and Georgia. Even Armenia rejected Georgia’s offer in this regard.

Secondly, Georgia offered an agreement not to attack each other, but Armenia refused it.

Third, Armenia has insinuated that it does not recognize Georgia's territorial integrity and has never supported Georgia's position in the UN and other international organizations.

Fourth, Armenians living in the United States are raising money for the development of the Javakheti region and engaging in activities that could threaten Georgia's territorial integrity.

The point is that the border issue with Armenia is more dangerous for Georgia. In the years since the collapse of the USSR, Armenian border guards have been illegally "sliding" the Georgian-Armenian border into Georgia. In one area, the border was drawn more than 400 meters north, and as a result, the Georgian monastery of Khujabi, which Georgian clergy and pilgrims could not visit, came under Armenian control. Elsewhere, border sliding occurs on a similar scale. As a result, the entire Georgian-Armenian border from Turkey to Azerbaijan was illegally "moved" to the north. The Armenian government illegally "owns" tens of square kilometers of Georgian territory. This is not only harmful to the population of Georgia and the border areas, but can also be a threat to peace and security. Armenian border guards are also illegally "sliding" the territories adjacent to the Georgian-Turkish and Georgian-Azerbaijani borders. As a result, the "crossing" border areas of these territories in Georgia have now been arbitrarily pulled forward by Armenia. In addition, at the junction of the Georgian-Armenian and Georgian-Azerbaijani borders, the Armenian side illegally entered military units to the territory of Georgia. In other words, Armenia, as an aggressor, not only moved the border arbitrarily, but also illegally deployed troops there. And in fact, it has begun to provoke military operations in Georgia. The illegal occupation of the territories of Georgia by Armenia could continue until the Azerbaijani border guards capture a number of strategic heights on the border with Armenia in the Gazakh region. As a result, Armenian troops illegally occupying Georgian territories were "squeezed" between the new positions of Azerbaijani border guards and the unoccupied territories of Georgia. Thereby, the Armenian occupiers were forced to partially clear the Georgian lands adjacent to the border junction.

Pro-Armenian propagandists tried to take dividends from this failure, as well as to worsen relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan. For example, a provocative article was posted on the website *PanArmenian.net* by a nationalist Armenian publication: "Bellingcat: Azerbaijan is trying to enter the territory of Georgia." The article, cited by propagandists in a British publication, was clearly written by special order. "Azerbaijan has strengthened its position on

the new heights of Mount Babaker in the Georgian part” *Bellingcat* said in a study.

Babaker Mountain is a point where the state borders of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan meet. The reality is that when Azerbaijani border guards seized strategic heights on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border on August 16, 2019, and Armenian troops on the slopes of Mount Babaker, facing Georgia, left Georgia as soon as they were faced with the incoming Azerbaijani army.<sup>27</sup> Azerbaijani border guards have never violated Georgia’s internationally recognized borders and have never entered Georgia. However, the disinformation sources operated by Armenian actors are trying to foster indignation with provocative articles in foreign media.

The provocations committed by the Armenians within the borders of Georgia can reach the level of vandalism. Speaking at the plenary session of the 16th annual meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club in Sochi, Russia, on October 3, 2019, President Ilham Aliyev spoke about the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, drew attention to the consequences of Armenia’s policy of aggression, emphasizing that four UN Security Council resolutions on the settlement of the conflict have not been implemented for 25 years. I. Aliyev stressed that the statement of the Armenian Prime Minister N. Pashinyan that “Karabakh is part of Armenia, period” was false: “Karabakh is a historical, ancient land of Azerbaijan. Thus, Karabakh is Azerbaijan, exclamation mark.” This speech caused anger amongst nationalist Armenian groups around the world and resulted in vandalism; after the speech of I. Aliyev, the expression “Karabakh is Armenia, period” was written in four different languages on the statue of the late President Heydar Aliyev in Tbilisi.<sup>28</sup> While vandalism against a statute might seem trivial to an outside observer, the vandalism of a political figure so revered by Azerbaijanis in a neighboring country’s capital city (a country that in general enjoys close relations with Azerbaijan) should be treated seriously.

The head of the Press Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Leyla Abdullayeva commented on this provocation against the monument to H. Aliyev:

“The Ambassador of our country to Georgia immediately met with the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia in connection with the provocation committed by a group of Armenians against the monument

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27 “Gürcü torpaqlarını ələ keçirən Ermənistan separatizmi Gürcüstana ötürür”, *Ordu.az*, November 7, 2019, <https://ordu.az/az/news/156872/gurcu-torpaqlarini-ele-keciren-ermenistan-separatizmi-gurcustana-oturur>

28 “Gürcüstanda Ümummilli lider Heydər Əliyevin heykəlinə erməni təxribatı”, *Moderator.az*, October 22, 2019, <https://www.moderator.az/news/294312.html>

to the National Leader erected in the park named after Heydar Aliyev in Tbilisi, Georgia and the issue of investigating the perpetrators of provocations and severely punishing them has been raised before the relevant authorities. At present, the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs is taking appropriate measures in this direction.”

This act of vandalism foreshadowed the deterioration of relations between the two countries.<sup>29</sup>

The next attempt at disrupting Azerbaijan-Georgia relations failed at a meeting of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. At the meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on Social Affairs on February 13, 2018 in Tbilisi, a report on Georgia’s economic development and investment opportunities was heard. At the meeting, Georgian Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development Georgi Cherkeshishvili said that Azerbaijan ranks first among the countries investing in the country.<sup>30</sup>

This speech of the Deputy Minister was met with disdain by the Armenian deputies, who sought to spread false information about Azerbaijan, as well as to damage the Azerbaijani-Georgian friendly relations. Member of the Azerbaijani delegation, co-chair of the Committee on Social Affairs of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly Malahat Ibrahimgizi said that the statement of the Armenian deputies was not true. She stated that Azerbaijan has adopted very progressive laws to ensure democracy and freedom of speech, the highest level of protection of human rights, the fight against corruption: “This is confirmed by international organizations. Azerbaijan and Georgia are implementing very important projects in the region, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipelines. These projects are also important for the development and security of Europe.”<sup>31</sup>

M. Ibrahimgizi also touched upon Armenia’s military aggression against Azerbaijan:

“Unfortunately, the Armenian delegation, which lives in ignorance, hunger and poverty, and serves the interests of other countries, cannot see these realities. It is well known that Armenia is an aggressor and a state that supports terrorism. The terrorist attack in Yerevan in 1999 and

29 “Ümummilli lider Heydər Əliyevin heykəlinə erməni təxribatı - XİN-dən açıqlama”, *Eurasia Diary*, October 23, 2019, <https://ednews.net/az/news/politics/396645-umummilli-lider-heyder-eliyevin-heykeline-ermeni-texribati>

30 Xətayi Əzizov, “Avronest PA-da erməni təxribatının qarşısı alınıb”, *Azertag.az*, February 13, 2018, [https://azertag.az/xeber/Avronest\\_PA\\_da\\_ermeni\\_texribatinin\\_qarsisi\\_alinib-1136443](https://azertag.az/xeber/Avronest_PA_da_ermeni_texribatinin_qarsisi_alinib-1136443)

31 Əzizov, “Avronest PA-da erməni təxribatının qarşısı alınıb”.

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the fact that it did not liberate Azerbaijani lands prove this once again. The Armenian delegation is trying to cover it up, divert the attention of the international community from its problems, and at the same time strike a blow at the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations. I think this is unacceptable.”

M. Ibrahimgizi’s speech was positively assessed by the participants of the meeting, while Armenian deputies refused to deliver a second speech.

The Karabakh Liberation Organization (KLO)<sup>32</sup> said in a statement that it was seriously concerned about the possibility of certain Armenian individuals preparing to instigate a provocation against Azerbaijan in Georgia. It was noted that the provocation prepared in Georgia was led by Georgi Vanyan, an Armenian citizen and head of the Caucasus Peace Initiatives NGO: For a long time, he has been carrying out the provocations on behalf of the Armenian special services on the basis of a plan called the “Tekeli Process”. For this purpose, Vanyan bought a plot of land in the Marneuli region of Georgia, between the village of Takali and the checkpoint “Broken Bridge” (“Red Bridge”), and stated that he would create a “Friendship Market” in this area. He initially seized 4 hectares of land and is now trying to increase it to 100 hectares. This area is located between the village of Takali and the border checkpoint “Broken Bridge”, and is connected with Armenia. The construction of a highway from Armenia to this area has already begun. Anyone who has studied the history of actions of various Armenian groups in Georgia will be inclined to consider that the “friendly market” may be used as an excuse for provocation and threat against Azerbaijan under the name of the market. Armenian groups can commit provocations here at any time and block the access of Azerbaijanis living in Georgia to the “Broken Bridge”.<sup>33</sup>

The statement regrets that some Azerbaijanis are being used to carry out such insidious plans: Georgi Vanyan and his gang have chosen the village of Takali, where Azerbaijanis live, as their home, and hold their meetings there. The KLO also said that the Azerbaijani law enforcement agencies should immediately and seriously investigate these facts and take effective measures to neutralize the provocations against Azerbaijan:

“The Azerbaijani side must take steps to draw the attention of the Georgian special services to this issue. Tekeli processes must be

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32 The Karabakh Liberation Organization (KLO) is an Azerbaijani organization created in Baku, Azerbaijan on January 28, 2000, with the objective of liberating the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh. KLO represents cultural figures of Azerbaijan, former military soldiers, refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

33 “Gürcüstanda Azərbaycanı qarşı təxribat hazırlanır”, *Teleqraf.com*, September 18, 2014, <https://teleqraf.com/news/gundem/22841.html>



prevented, the insidious intentions of the Armenians must not be allowed to materialize. Measures should be taken against those who leave Azerbaijan and take part in Takali events. The population of the village of Takali should not allow their names to be tarnished, and the tricks set up by the Armenians there should be stopped. Azerbaijan and Georgia must act together at the state and public levels, and prevent Armenian provocations in a timely manner.”<sup>34</sup>

### Provocations Committed by the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia

It is known that throughout history, the main ideological centers of the Armenians were the Armenian churches. Unlike many other religious institutions, Armenians churches have oftentimes been instrumentalized for political pursuits.

In November 2017, a provocation against Azerbaijan was organized in Tbilisi, Georgia. An exhibition entitled “Revival” consisting of works by seven young artists from the “Nagorno-Karabakh Republic” was opened at the Ayartun Center of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Tbilisi. The exhibition was supported by the Ministry of Diaspora of Armenia, Teyekan Central Foundation, and Shusha Museums. The official opening ceremony of the exhibition was attended by the pastor of the Armenian Church in Tbilisi Virab Kazaryan, an employee of the Armenian Embassy in Georgia, and representatives of the Armenian community.<sup>35</sup> The Azerbaijani Embassy in Georgia expressed its concern to the relevant government agencies. Historian Guram Marxulia strongly condemned this step and stressed that it was a provocation that damaged the bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Meanwhile, Badri Natchkebia, director of the Georgian Center for Terrorism and Political Studies, a professor at Tbilisi State University and a political scientist, expressed concern over the opening of the exhibition:

“It is not right for Armenians to organize such an exhibition on behalf of an unrecognized so-called republic. We received information that an exhibition of Armenian artists will open. But to open an exhibition there on behalf of the so-called ‘Nagorno-Karabakh Republic’ does not fit into any ethics and political morality.”<sup>36</sup>

34 “Gürcüstanda Azərbaycanca qarşı təxribat hazırlanır”.

35 “Gürcüstanda Azərbaycanca qarşı erməni təxribatı – Tiflisdə sərgi keçirirlər”, *Dosye.org*, November 28, 2017, <https://www.dosye.org/gurcustanda-az%C9%99rbaycana-qarsi-erm%C9%99ni-%C9%99xribati-tiflisd%C9%99-s%C9%99rgi-kecirirl%C9%99r/>

36 “Gürcüstanda Azərbaycanca qarşı erməni təxribatı – Tiflisdə sərgi keçirirlər”.

### Conclusion

From the facts presented, it can be concluded that the actors working to disrupt the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations can be listed as follows:

- Representatives of the Armenian state and government,
- Embassy of Armenia in Georgia,
- Media of Armenia,
- Pro-Armenian media representatives abroad,
- Sources of information of Armenian origin operating in Georgia,
- Armenian organizations operating in Georgia,
- Armenian Diaspora organizations,
- Population of Armenian origin in Georgia,
- Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia,
- Pro-Armenian politicians and scientists living abroad.

The main directions of the actions by Armenian actors concerning Azerbaijani-Georgian relations can be listed as follows:

- Overshadowing the energy relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia, or trying to attract Georgia's attention to alternative projects;
- Achieving the opening of the Abkhazian railway, looking for both an alternative to the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway and a way for Armenia to escape isolation;
- Controlling the creation of artificial agitation behind the scenes to ignite religious and ethnic conflict;
- Disseminating misinformation about the potential danger at the Azerbaijani-Georgian border;
- At multilateral meetings, using Georgian venues to try to create a negative image of Azerbaijan;
- Engaging in provocations against territorial integrity of Azerbaijan through Armenian organizations and the churches operating in Georgia;

- Carrying out propaganda against Azerbaijan through the media;
- Carrying out a smear campaign, presenting the Armenians in Georgia as a poor people, oppressed by Georgians and Azerbaijanis, etc.

It is clear that Armenian and related actors are trying to damage the Azerbaijani-Georgian relations in a multitude of ways. In this respect, it is important for both countries to maintain and develop relations. The Azerbaijan-Georgia strategic partnership is a guarantee of stability and economic development in the region. Azerbaijan is the driving force of Georgia's economic development. Georgia, in turn, is a particularly important partner for Azerbaijan as a transit country. The two countries are also closely linked by ancient historical ties. The development of both countries is directly related to the level of relations. The two countries are partners in all areas - political, economic, transport, humanitarian, cultural and others, and jointly implement major regional projects. The breakdown of relations will therefore cause significant losses for both countries. The winner from such a breakdown of relations will no doubt be the occupying Armenia. For these reasons, the current state of relations must be maintained, further developed, and provocations must be ignored and resolutely prevented.

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## TRANSLATION / ÇEVİRİ

**To cite this article:** Ceyda Acicbe, “The Events In Zangezur From 1918 To 1921 And The Transfer Of Zangezur To Armenia”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, no. 42 (2020): 151-167.

**Received:** 21.09.2020

**Accepted:** 23.11.2020

# THE EVENTS IN ZANGEZUR FROM 1918 TO 1921 AND THE TRANSFER OF ZANGEZUR TO ARMENIA\*

(1918-1921 YILLARINDA ZENGEZUR'DA YAŞANAN OLAYLAR  
VE ZENGEZUR'UN ERMENİSTAN'A VERİLMESİ)

Ceyda ACİCBE\*\*

**Abstract:** *The Caucasus is a geography that has preserved its strategic importance throughout history. Many states, acting with economic and political interests, have focused on this geography, especially from the 18th century onwards. In the following centuries, due to the region's political struggle, the Caucasus witnessed many structural changes and transformations. Wars and migrations in the 19th and 20th centuries in this geography paved the way for changes in the political, economic, demographic, and social fields. Following the Tsarist Russian rule, the Soviet Union continued the policies of Tsarist Russia towards the South Caucasus. The conditions created by the policies of these great powers had many consequences. One such consequence was that the transfer of Zangezur to Armenia. The activities of radical-nationalist Armenian groups in and around the Zangezur accelerated the transferring of this region to Armenia. This study aims to review the process of the transfer of Zangezur to Armenia in light of the events in and around Zangezur in 1918-1920.*

**Keywords:** *The South Caucasus, Zangezur, radical-nationalist groups*

\* This is the English translation of an article in Turkish by Ceyda Acicbe that was originally published in the *Avrasya Dünyası/Eurasian World* journal. For the original article, please see: Ceyda Acicbe, “1918-1921 Yıllarında Zangezur’da Yaşanan Olaylar ve Zangezur’un Ermenistan’a Verilmesi”, *Avrasya Dünyası*, Sayı 7 (2020): 36-44.

\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2525-0658>  
Analyst, Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM), [cacicbe@avim.org.tr](mailto:cacicbe@avim.org.tr)



**Öz:** Kafkasya, tarih boyunca stratejik önemini korumuş bir coğrafyadır. Ekonomik ve siyasi çıkarlarla hareket eden pek çok devlet özellikle 18'inci yüzyıldan itibaren bu coğrafyaya ilgi duymaya başlamıştır. Takip eden yüzyıllarda söz konusu coğrafyada meydana gelen siyasi mücadeleler sonucunda Kafkasya çok sayıda yapısal değişim ve dönüşüme tanıklık etmiştir. 19'uncu ve 20'nci yüzyıllarda meydana gelen savaşlar ve göçler, siyasi, ekonomik, demografik ve sosyal alandaki değişimlerin önünü açmıştır. Çarlık Rusya yönetiminin ardından Sovyetler Birliği, Çarlık Rusya'nın Güney Kafkasya'ya yönelik politikalarını sürdürmeye devam etmiştir. Bu büyük güçlerin politikalarının yarattığı koşulların ortaya çıkardığı pek çok sonuç vardır. Bu sonuçlardan biri Zengezur'un Ermenistan'a verilmesidir. Radikal-milliyetçi Ermeni grupların Zengezur ve çevresindeki faaliyetleri, bölgenin Ermenistan'a verilme sürecini hızlandırmıştır. Bu çalışma, Zengezur ve çevresinde 1918-1920 yıllarında yaşanan gelişmeler ışığında Zengezur'un Ermenistan'a verilme sürecini gözden geçirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Güney Kafkasya, Zengezur, radikal-milliyetçi gruplar

### Introduction

The Caucasus, which has been closely paid attention to by many states throughout history, is a geography that continues to maintain its strategic importance today. For that reason, the whole region has experienced political, economic, and social transformations, and changes over the centuries. Although the frontiers of the Caucasus can be drawn relative to the academic approach, political scientists and geographers predominantly prefer to divide the Caucasus as the North Caucasus and the South Caucasus. Leaving aside the historical, ethnic, and sociological discussions regarding the borders of the region, the northern part of the Greater Caucasus Range including the part of the Russian Federation is called the North Caucasus. The region in the southern part of the mountain range, which is broadly referred to as “Transcaucasia” in the literature, where modern Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan are located, is known as the South Caucasus.

Wars and migrations to the southern part of the region in the 19th and 20th centuries led to political, economic, demographic, and social changes. For centuries, the economic and political interests of great powers have contributed to structural change in the region. For instance, when the Tsarist regime started to dominate the South Caucasus in the 18th century, it put emphasis on the policies considering the geopolitical and strategic importance of the region. The policies of the former regime towards the Caucasus were followed by the Soviet Union as well. The transfer of Zangezur to Armenia in 1921 was a product of the conditions that emerged due to these policies, together with the events that took place in and around Zangezur<sup>1</sup> from 1918 to 1921.

Radical-nationalist Armenian groups started to demand Zangezur and other Azerbaijani territories in the early 1900s, and this paved the way for the territorial disputes between the two nations, as well as the rise of internal disturbances. The territorial disputes between Azerbaijan and Armenia did not stop when both republics declared their independence after the October Revolution of 1917. From 1918 until 1920, atrocities were committed by radical-nationalist Armenian groups under the command of Andranik Ozanian, Drastamat (Dro) Kanayan, and Garegin Nzhdeh against the Turkish-Muslim population living in Baku, Zangezur, Karabakh, Nakhichevan, and other parts of the region. After the Soviet government was established in Azerbaijan and Armenia in 1920, the process of transferring Zangezur to Armenia was completed in 1921. Considering these events in the South Caucasus from 1918 to 1921, the process of transferring Zangezur to Armenia will be comprehensively examined in this study.

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1 Zangezur is a mountainous region that completes the natural border between Turkey, Armenia, Iran, and Nakhichevan. By order of the Tsar of Russia Alexander II, Zangezur was included in the administrative units of Elizavetpol (Ganja) Governorate in 1868 and remained part of Elizavetpol until 1917.

## A Brief Historical Background of the Developments in the South Caucasus in the 19th and 20th Centuries

The Russian state, which extended control over the Caucasus in the 16th century, maintained its interest in the strategically important South Caucasus through its excursions to the region in the 17th century. In the subsequent century, with the annexation of Crimea during the reign of Catherine II, the Russians continued their “Southward Policy” without slowing down. Russia, which took the Southern Caucasus under its protection by invading Georgia first, and then Baku-Nakhichevan and Yerevan, started to become a crucial power in the region from the early 19th century. Desiring to expand its sovereignty to the south, Russia entered a war with Iran in 1812 and this war ended when the Treaty of Gulistan was concluded between the Russian Empire and Iran in 1813. Russia entered another war with Iran in 1826. To conclude the war, the Treaty of Turkmenchay was signed between the parties. Russia was victorious in both wars, and due to these two agreements, Ganja, Quba, Baku, Shaki, Shirvan, Karabakh, and Talysh Khanate’s control was ceded to Russia.<sup>2</sup>

In 1827, Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire following the escalation of tensions between the two sides. According to the Treaty of Edirne (also called the Treaty of Adrianople) signed between the two parties at the end of the war in 1829, the terms favored Russia once again, and Russia further strengthened its position in the South Caucasus. Besides the Russians’ victory, the agreements signed with Iran and the Ottoman Empire had resulted in such a way that they changed the demographic structure of the region, including Zangezur. Together with the 15th article of the Treaty of Turkmenchay, the 13th article of the Treaty of Edirne paved the way for a century-long mass migration process of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and Iran to the South Caucasus.<sup>3</sup> With the Treaty of Turkmenchay, 1300 of the more than 8000 Armenian families from Iran were resettled in Karabakh and Zangezur.<sup>4</sup> Together with those who came from the Ottoman Empire, it is estimated that there were more than 10,000 Armenian families came to the South Caucasus within three years.<sup>5</sup> It was aimed to Christianize the region and to create a loyal population there through resettling Armenians near the Iran and Ottoman frontiers, where the Muslim population was densely living. The population and

2 Yusuf Sarıınay (ed.), *Azerbaycan Belgelerinde Ermeni Sorunu (1918-1920)* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 2001), VIII.

3 Nigar Gozalova, “Massacre of The Azerbaijani Turkic Population (1918-1920) According to The Documents of The British Diplomats,” *International Crimes and History*, no. 18 (2017): 49.

4 Nazim Mustafa, “Nahçıvan ile Azerbaycan’ı Birbirinden Ayırmak Üzere Tertiplenen Zengezur’un Ermenistan’a Katılma Süreci,” *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, Blog No: 2019/69, December 11, 2019, <https://avim.org.tr/Blog/NAHCIVAN-ILE-AZERBAYCAN-I-BIRBIRINDEN-AYIRMAK-UZERE-TERTIPLENEN-ZENGEZUR-UN-ERMENISTAN-A-KATILMA-SURECI-11-12-2019>

5 Sarıınay, *Azerbaycan Belgelerinde Ermeni Sorunu*, XI.

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migration policies that were instrumentalized by the Russian Empire from the 19th century onwards provide an explanation for the mass resettlement of Armenians onto the South Caucasus lands.<sup>6</sup> The conflicts between the Armenians, who immigrated to the South Caucasus, and later came under Russian rule and the local people emerged in a very short time, and the Armenians started to demand territories of Azerbaijan.

Besides the cultural and religious differences between Muslims and Armenians, economic and political activities in the region were the factors that increased antagonism between the two peoples. For instance, the Armenian community supported by Russia at that time took advantage of the economic opportunities in the region much faster than Muslims, and soon began to dominate certain economic production fields. Therefore, the economic activities of Muslims were negatively affected, and Muslims were excluded from certain economic spheres. A similar situation was experienced in terms of the labor force. Unlike Muslims, the fact that Armenians were predominantly urbanized workers in highly skilled jobs was among the factors that enabled Armenians to improve their economic conditions.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the economical dimension, Armenians were also active in the political field contrary to the Muslim community. The radical-nationalist political organizations, spearheaded by the Dashnaksutyun<sup>8</sup> and acting with the idea of “Great Armenia”, started to demand Azerbaijani lands from the late 19th century onwards. Zangezur, Shusha, Gazakh, and some parts of Ganja were included within the territories of the “Great Armenia” plan, and nationalist Armenian groups carried out terror and propaganda activities in these territories against the Turkish-Muslim people.

The 20th century began with the Russian Revolution of 1905 and this event influenced almost the entire South Caucasus. The revolutionary movements that rose in Russia played a role in escalating the conflicts between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis. Large-scale bloody skirmishes between Armenians and Turkish Muslims took place for the first time following the Russian invasion in 1905-1907. Archive documents signed by the Russians authorities reported clashes in various parts of Azerbaijan and the attacks on the villages around Zangezur by radical-nationalist Armenian groups for the first time in 1905-1906. Nonetheless, Armenians started to revolt against the indigenous people in Nagorno-Karabakh and people in the other settlements in the region and continued their territorial claims on these lands. Likewise,

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6 Gozalova, “Massacre of The Azerbaijani Turkic Population,” 49-50.

7 Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of A National Identity in A Muslim Community* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 39.

8 The Dashnaksutyun (also known as the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the Dashnak Party) is a committee founded in Tbilisi in 1890 by the nationalist Armenians to carry out revolutionary activities. In the following years, the committee started to carry out its activities in the form of a political party.

the attempts to seize Zangezur were first carried by the armed forces of the Dashnaksutyun and Hunchak Party in this period. The events became bloody with the killing of a Muslim in Baku in 1905 by the Dashnaks, spreading to Yerevan, Nakhchivan, and Shusha as of February. As a consequence of these clashes that lasted for about a year, many Armenia and Azerbaijani villages were plundered, and many lives were lost on both sides. It is known that 43 Muslim villages were destroyed in the Zangezur region alone between 1905 and 1906<sup>9</sup>, and local Muslims had to migrate to safer areas.<sup>10</sup>

Both the February Revolution of 1917 and the October Revolution (the Bolshevik Revolution) caused serious changes in the history of the South Caucasus as well as in the whole world. The Tsarist regime collapsed in the aftermath of the February Revolution of 1917 and a provisional government was established in its place. Yet another crucial development in September was the declaration of Republic and Vladimir Lenin becoming the head of the new government in Russia. Nevertheless, after the Bolshevik Revolution in October, the provisional government in Russia was overthrown under the leadership of Lenin. Shortly after the revolution, the Bolsheviks gradually strengthened their hand in Baku, and they started to spread the revolution with an intense effort from Baku to the entire South Caucasus. Meanwhile, Lenin appointed Armenian origin Stephan Shaumian, who had experience regarding the conflicts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in 1905-1906, as “Commissar Extraordinary for the Caucasus” and “the Chairman of the Baku Council of People’s Commissars”. Baku, a city where the Azerbaijani population lived densely, became a center in which the Armenian armed forces started to gather and organize at that time. Therefore, the increasing presence of the Armenian armed forces in the city became a matter of concern for Azerbaijanis.<sup>11</sup> Following the October Revolution, while the Soviet rule continued to increase its impact in the South Caucasus, all units in the region tried to act together against this newly emerged threat. During the debates concerning the separation of the South Caucasus from Russia, the Transcaucasian Commissariat, consisting of Georgians, Azerbaijanis, and Armenians, was established on November 28, 1917, and this temporarily established government decided not to recognize the Soviet central government.<sup>12</sup>

Because of the existence of important oil fields in and around Baku, it became a territory in which not only Russia but also Germany and Britain, as well as

9 Mustafa, “Zengezur’un Ermenistan’a Katılma Süreci.”

10 For detailed information regarding the conflict in and around Zangezur after 1905, see Beşir Mustafayev, “Arşiv Kaynaklarına Göre Zengezur Olayları (1905-1920),” *Journal of Qafqaz University-History, Law and Political Sciences*, no. 33 (2012): 32.

11 Fırat Karabayram, *Rusya Federasyonu’nun Güney Kafkasya Politikası* (Ankara: Lalezar Kitabevi, 2007), 46.

12 Karabayram, *Rusya Federasyonu’nun...*, 49.

for various natural causes, the Ottoman Empire was interested in during this period. Therefore, it is worthy to briefly recall the policies of these countries, especially the Ottoman Empire, towards the Caucasus. The Ottoman policies regarding the South Caucasus became apparent after the establishment of the Transcaucasian Commissariat. For instance, relations between the two governments started to be established within the scope of the Trebizond Peace Conference in the early month of 1918. As one of the parties of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed on March 3, 1918, the Ottomans made considerable efforts on the South Caucasus administration to convince them to comply with the terms of the treaty. Upon this, the delegation consisting of Georgians, Azerbaijanis, and Armenians fell into a disagreement in a short time, and this process came to an end when the negotiations held for a month produced inconclusive results. Yet, the Turkish side, intending to implement the terms of the treaty, seized Batumi and Ardahan.

The Transcaucasian Democratic Federal Republic, which included Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, was established on April 22, 1918. Considering the developments after the Trebizond Peace Conferences, this newly emerged government agreed to participate in the conferences planned to be held in Batumi to accept the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Within the scope of the conferences in Batumi, the first and only plenary session, in which Germans and the North Caucasus delegation also participated, was held on May 11. However, during these meetings, the Transcaucasian Democratic Federal Republic dissolved on May 26, and Georgia declared its independence on the very same day. The following day Azerbaijan, and finally Armenia declared their independence on May 28, 1918. In the light of these developments, the negotiations between the Ottoman Empire and the newly established states continued to be carried out separately. In total, 20 agreements were signed between the parties. According to these agreements, six of which were signed with the Republic of Armenia, Armenia was left with approximately 10,000 square kilometers.

As of August, the Ottoman army moved ahead into the Baku under Soviet rule by being adhering to the agreements concluded between the Ottoman and Azerbaijani states as a consequence of conferences at Batumi, and ended the Russian and Armenian occupation in the region. This period in which the Ottomans were influential in almost the entire Caucasus ended with the Armistice of Mudros dated October 30, 1918. Thus, towards the end of 1919, Baku was occupied by the British forces and the South Caucasus fell under British control. The aftermath of British domination, Azerbaijan, which held its independence for only 23 months, was occupied by the Red Army on April 27, 1920. Soon after, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was dissolved and on April 28, 1920, the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic was established.

Before becoming one of the Soviet Socialist Republics in late 1920, Armenia had close relations with Britain until Anton Denikin's armies were defeated by the Red Army. Having territorial disputes with Azerbaijan and Georgia, Armenia's choice to be in alliance with Britain, one of the victorious powers of the First World War, was related to Armenia's belief that Azerbaijan and Georgia would be punished and Armenia's attitude towards these countries would be supported. Moreover, the fact that Armenia did not join the military defense treaty signed between Azerbaijan and Georgia in June 1919 but rather chose to be in alliance with Britain proved that Armenia would follow a different policy from the other two states.<sup>13</sup> In the context of these historical developments in the South Caucasus, the events that took place in and around Zangezur in the years 1918-1920 and how the process of transferring of Zangezur to Armenia came to end in 1921 will be briefly reviewed in this study.

### The Events That Took Place in and around Zangezur in 1918

In 1918, the majority of Zangezur's population consisted of Turkish-Muslim people.<sup>14</sup> However, since the massacres committed against the people of Zangezur carried out by the radical-nationalist Armenian armed forces in 1905 continued in the years 1917-1918 as well, the Turkish-Muslim population in the region began to decrease gradually. Even after Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia gained their independence towards the end of May 1918, the raids of radical-nationalist groups on the Turkish-Muslim villages in Zangezur and the atrocities perpetrated by these groups against the Turkish-Muslim people did not come to an end.

To put an end to the atrocities in Zangezur, a meeting was held between the representatives of the Azerbaijani National Council and the Armenian National Council on May 29, 1918. As a result of this meeting, Fatahi Khan Khoyski<sup>15</sup> stated that the agreement was reached on the condition that Armenia's territorial claims against Azerbaijan and persecutions against the Muslim community

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13 Kamil Ağacan, "Kaderdaş Devletler: Azerbaycan-Gürcistan İlişkileri," *Avrasya Dosyası Azerbaycan Özel* 7, no. 1 (2001): 325 ; Gozalova, in her study prepared by using the reports of British diplomats, claims that the government of Armenia believed that the implementation of the "Great Armenia" plans depended especially on aid from Britain and the United States. Furthermore, she emphasizes that while Britain was expected to provide direct military support and political recognition, the US was expected to provide financial aid and adopt a mandate to rule the country (See e.g., Gozalova, "Massacre of The Azerbaijani Turkic Population", 56).

14 Nazim Mustafa states that at the beginning of the twentieth century, there were Muslims living in 314 of the 406 villages in the Zangezur region, while there were Armenians living in 92 villages (See e.g., Mustafa, "Zengezur'un Ermenistan'a Katılma Süreci"). Hacı Fahrettin Seferli states that in 1918, 116 of the 222 households in Zangezur district was consisted of Azerbaijanis (See; Hacı Mustafa Seferli, "Nahçıvan'ın Abluka Durumu Zengezur'un Ermenistan'a Bağışlanması ile Başladı," *Yeni Türkiye*, no. 60 (2014): 2).

15 The first Prime Minister of the independent Azerbaijan Democratic Republic that was established in 1918.

should end. However, with the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by the Armenian forces, this agreement between the two states lost its validity. Andranik Ozanian the commander of the Armenian Special Striking Division moved with around 10,000 men, started to seize the settlements in and around Zangezur by force to expand the borders of Armenia.<sup>16</sup>

Andranik, who joined the Hunchak Party in the 1880s and became active in an armed struggle against the Ottoman government, later continued his activities within the scope of the Dashnaksutyun. During the First Balkan War that broke out in 1912, Andranik fought against the Ottomans by following the “bag and baggage”<sup>17</sup> policy based on the idea of removing the Turkish-Muslim population from the Balkans. During the First World War, he led the first Armenian battalion of volunteers within the Tsarist forces and took part in the capture of Van and then Muş.<sup>18</sup> After the October Revolution of 1917, when the Russian army began to withdraw from Eastern Anatolia, the Armenian armed unit was left alone in the fight against the Turkish army. Then, Andranik came to Erzurum on March 2, 1918 and led an unsuccessful defense there. As a result of the counterattack of the Turkish army, the Armenians started to flee from the region. Andranik with his armed forces retreated from Eastern Anatolia and started to occupy the lands up to Zangezur. Moreover, the people of Zangezur were threatened with expulsion from their settlement unless they surrendered to the Armenian government. In retaliation for the rejection of his demands, Andranik destroyed hundreds of Turkish-Muslim villages.<sup>19</sup>

On August 15, 1918, the representative of the Azerbaijani government Mammad Yusif Jafarov sent a letter to Arshak Jamalyan, the representative of the Armenian government in Georgia, stating that part of the Zangezur region and the Shusha road was seized by Andranik and the armed forces under his command. In the response letter he sent on behalf of the Armenian government on August 17, Jamalyan stated that these forces were excluded from the Armenian national army since Andranik and his forces did not recognize and obey the authority of the Republic of Armenia. With this decision, the Yerevan government declared that they had no control over Andranik and therefore the government could not be held responsible for his activities.<sup>20</sup> After the First

16 Mustafa, “Zengezur’un Ermenistan’a Katılma Süreci.”

17 F. Begüm Yıldızeli, within the framework of the common idea of many authors, explains that this idea, which belongs to William E. Gladstone, who was the prime minister in Britain for four terms, as “sending the Turks with all their belongings from Europe to where they came from”. (For more detail see: F. Begüm Yıldızeli, “Doğu Sorunu Perspektifinden William E. Gladstone ve Ermeniler,” in *Türk-Ermeni Uyuşmazlığı Üzerine Ömer Engin Lütem Konferansları 2019*, ed. Alev Kılıç (Ankara: Terazi Yayıncılık, 2020), 2).

18 Pat Walsh, “When T. P. O’Connor Met General Andranik,” *DrPatWalsh.com*, July 29, 2018, <https://drpatwalsh.com/2018/07/29/when-t-p-oconnor-met-general-andranik/>

19 Mustafa, “Zengezur’un Ermenistan’a Katılma Süreci”.

20 Mustafa, “Zengezur’un Ermenistan’a Katılma Süreci”.



World War, with the signing of the Armistice of Mudros, the Turkish armies in the South Caucasus had to withdraw from the region. This paved the way for Andranik and his forces to act in line with their ambitions in Zangezur. One month after the agreement, Andranik declared himself the commander of the armed groups in Zangezur. Nevertheless, the atrocities committed by these armed forces in Azerbaijan were stopped by the British forces.<sup>21</sup>

All in all, the events that took place from March to May in 1918, 115 Muslim villages in Zangezur were destroyed by the armed Dashnaks under the command of Andranik. 3257 men, 2276 women, and 2196 children were killed in the region; 1060 men, 794 women, and 485 children were critically injured and 10,000 Azerbaijanis were deported.<sup>22</sup> In addition to these, the villagers' economic damage was estimated at 1 billion manats.<sup>23</sup>

### The Events That Took Place in and around Zangezur in 1919

As of February Andranik, continued his attacks and he occupied the mountainous part of the Jabrayil and Shusha districts, as well as the lands from Zangezur to Xudaferin. To that end, the Azerbaijani government took action to drive Andranik away from Zangezur. Thanks to the intense efforts of the Azerbaijani government, the commander of the British troop in the South Caucasus, General William Thomson interceded and as a result, it was announced that Andranik would move to Armenia with his armed forces. Upon this, the Armenians held the "Sisian and Zangezur Congress" on April 2, and at the congress a decision was made for Andranik to withdraw from Zangezur and for him to depart for Tbilisi. However, after Andranik's withdrawal, the atrocities in Zangezur did not come to an end, and Dro and Nzhdeh took his place.<sup>24</sup>

Another person who played a role in the events that took place in and around Zangezur in 1919 was Colonel William N. Haskell, who was appointed High

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21 According to Pat Walsh, when the geopolitical reasons of the time were considered, it is possible to claim that the prevention of Andranik's activities in Azerbaijan by the British forces was associated with the British need for a buffer state against the Bolsheviks (See e.g., Walsh, "O'Connor Met General Andranik").

22 Thomas De Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War* (New York University Press, 2003), 80 ; Nigar Gozalova states that in 1918, 7729 Azerbaijani Turks were killed in Zangezur and 50,000 people left Zangezur and became refugees (Gozalova, "Massacre of The Azerbaijani Turkic Population", 59).

23 Ayten Mustafayeva, *The Facts of The Crimes Committed by Armenian Bandit and Terrorist Organizations on The Territory of Azerbaijan* (Bakü, 2011), 36.

24 Mustafa, "Zengezur'un Ermenistan'a Katılma Süreci" ; Gozalova states that Britain's High Commissioner in the Caucasus Oliver Wardrop wrote in a report he sent to the British Foreign Office that Andranik had distributed all the weapons he had received from British Army Major Gibbon among Armenian detachments (See e.g., Gozalova, "Massacre of The Azerbaijani Turkic Population," 64).

## The Events In Zangezur From 1918 To 1921 And The Transfer Of Zangezur To Armenia

Commissioner to Armenia, representing the US, Britain, France, and Italy. Considering Haskell's early stance regarding the territorial claims of Armenians, it would not be wrong to argue that he encouraged them about those unfair claims. However, it is also true that he changed his attitude after the meeting with the Prime Minister Nasib Yusifbeyli and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1919. In other words, he started to support the idea that Zangezur and Karabakh were an integral part of Azerbaijan. Armenians, on the other hand, felt threatened because they thought that the Azerbaijani government would take control in Zangezur again. About a month after these developments, the Prime Minister of Armenia Alexander Khatisian sent an urgent telegram to the Armenian delegations at the Paris Peace Conference and reported that, by taking control of Zangezur, Azerbaijan was planning to establish contact with Turkey. Moreover, the telegram contained his explanations that several military operations had been started as a consequence of secret military agreements signed between the two states.<sup>25</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Azerbaijani government formed a special team and started military operations to restore order in and around Zangezur. Yet, the military operation called "Dığ" failed.<sup>26</sup> Following this operation, the representatives of Azerbaijani, Georgian, and Armenian government came together in Tbilisi within the scope of the peace conference and an agreement was reached on solving all problems only through peaceful ways. Despite the agreement, the Armenian side continued to occupy the Turkish-Muslim villages in Zangezur.<sup>27</sup> On December 7, it was stated by the Dashnaksutyun that Zangezur was an integral part of Armenia and that they were ready to take every measure necessary to bring these lands under the control of the Armenians.<sup>28</sup>

In the context of the events that took place in and around Zangezur in 1919, it is possible to argue that the Armenians acted to realize the idea of the "Great

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25 Mustafa, "Zengezur'un Ermenistan'a Katılma Süreci".

26 Nazim Mustafa states that the Azerbaijani government's military units under the command of Zangezur and Karabakh governor Khosrow Sultanov were included in the operation to ensure order and public security in Zangezur (See e.g., Mustafa, "Zengezur'un Ermenistan'a Katılma Süreci", 5). In a publication of "Nakhijevan" Institute of Canada, it is stated that through the mediation of the Dashnaksutyun, Nzhdeh was sent to Zangezur along with Ghazar Kocharian and Nzhdeh entered Zangezur with a group of 180 troops armed with bayonets (See; *Selected Works of Garegin Nzhdeh*, trans. Eduard L. Danielyan (Canada: Nakhijevan Institute of Canada, 2011), 138-139).

27 Hacı Fahrettin Seferli emphasizes that the Azerbaijani government had withdrawn its troops in Zangezur by adhering to an agreement consisting of 5 articles signed with Armenia in Tbilisi, however, on the contrary, the Armenian side did not send additional troops to Zangezur (See e.g., Seferli, "Zengezur'un Ermenistan'a Bağışlanması", 2). Gozalova states that in a report of December 3, 1919, Britain's High Commissioner in the Caucasus, Sir Oliver Wardrop mentioned that the Prime Minister of ADR informed him that, despite the agreement, the Armenian government was continuing military operations in Zangezur and had destroyed nine villages. In addition to that, Gozalova mentions that in a report of Wardrop sent the next day, he noted that the massacre of hundreds and the destruction of fifteen villages in Zangezur and Deralagauz (See e.g., Gozalova, "Massacre of The Azerbaijani Turkic Population", 62).

28 Mustafa, "Zengezur'un Ermenistan'a Katılma Süreci".

Armenia”, which was expressed in an international conference for the first time and later accepted by the Dashnak Parliament on 28 May 1919.

### **The Events That Took Place in and around Zangezur in 1920**

The Azerbaijani lands, which became vulnerable to the Russian conquest, were occupied on April 27, 1920. Hence, Azerbaijan’s independence was lost after 23 months and the Soviet rule was established in Azerbaijan on April 28. The arrival of Soviet forces seriously worried the Armenians who took control of a significant part of Zangezur by seizing 51 more villages. Predictably, the first move that the Soviet government did was sending a note to the Armenians government for withdrawal of the Armenians units from Karabakh and Zangezur. On the very same day, a telegram was sent to the People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union Georgy Chicherin by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia. In the telegram, it was noted that the Red Army was approaching towards Karabakh and Zangezur to unite with Turkey. In another telegram sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan on 3 May, it was stated that Karabakh and Zangezur were integral parts of Armenia. In addition, it was claimed that Zangezur was never under Azerbaijan’s rule and it was ruled by the Armenian National Council.

As a result of insufficient support from Russian circles related to the liberation of Zangezur, Nakhchivan, and Karabakh, the Azerbaijan Revolutionary Committee decided to establish an emergency commission in Karabakh and Zangezur districts with a decree dated May 18, 1920. In the following days, Sergo Ordzhonikidze came to control the situation in Karabakh and Zangezur. In the light of his observation in the region, he informed Chicherin on June 19 that the people felt a belonging to the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>29</sup> In a period in which the telegram traffic was intense, the chairman of the Azerbaijan Revolutionary Committee Nariman Narimanov sent a telegram to the members of the Communist Party. In his message, he stated that Zangezur and Karabakh should remain within the borders of Azerbaijan. However, Chicherin disagreed with Narimanov and interpreted his effort as his desire for the controversial regions to be captured by the intervention of Russia and given to Azerbaijan.<sup>30</sup> At the end of the negotiations between Soviet Russia and Armenia in May and June, it was understood that the Armenians would not accept to voluntarily give the territories to Russia, except for Karabakh. All in all, in a telegram sent by Sergo Ordzhonikidze and Boris Legran to Chicherin on July 14, it was stated that Karabakh was left to Azerbaijan, whereas the remaining parts to Armenia.

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29 Mustafa, “Zengezur’un Ermenistan’a Katılma Süreci”.

30 Mustafa, “Zengezur’un Ermenistan’a Katılma Süreci”.

Meanwhile, deciding to liberate Zangezur and establish Soviet power there, Red Army Commander Alexander Todorsky entered Nakhichevan on July 28. Dro and Nzhdeh attacked the Bolshevik troops and captured Goris. However, through the 11th Army's counterattack, Dro, Nzhdeh, and their units were deported. Thus, Sisian, Qafan, and Goris were liberated, and a peace agreement was signed between Russian and Dashnak Armenians on August 10. Yet, the agreement did not solve the problem of where the territories occupied by Soviet forces belonged to. The Armenian government announced that the agreement was not official, as the Entente States were skeptical about the agreement. Disregarding this declaration of his government, the armed forces under the command of General Dro and Nzhdeh attacked Zangezur once again. In September, Nzhdeh declared himself the commander of all Armenian armed units in Zangezur.

The deadlock regarding the Zangezur's current situation continued until the Soviet rule was established in Armenia on November 29, 1920. Following the decision on the establishment of the Soviet rule in Armenia, the Armenian Revolutionary Committee decided that Zangezur would be transferred to Soviet Armenia and the people in the mountainous part of Karabakh would have the right to self-determination. In December, Nariman Narimanov announced at a meeting that the people of Nagorno-Karabakh were given the right to self-determination, on the other hand, all military operations in Zangezur ended and the Soviet Azerbaijani army was removed from the region.<sup>31</sup> As a consequence of military and political agreement signed between the representatives of Soviet Russia and the Armenians including Dro on December 2, 1920, it was decided that in return for the Sovietization of Armenia, Russia should give Zangezur, Qazakh, and former Yerevan Provinces to Armenia without any hesitation. Following this, with his troops, Nzhdeh seized the two regions of Zangezur.<sup>32</sup>

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31 Nazim Mustafa claims that in a telegram sent by Ordzhonikidze to Lenin and Joseph Stalin on December 2, he changed Narimanov's statement and made another statement that Azerbaijan announced that Nakhichevan, Zangezur, and Nagorno-Karabakh were given to Soviet Armenia (See e.g., Mustafa, "Zangezur'un Ermenistan'a Katılma Süreci", 9). On the other hand, Svante Cornell states that this statement of the Azerbaijan Revolutionary Committee concerning the transfer of Karabakh, Zangezur, and Nakhichevan to Armenia was made under Soviet pressure (See; Svante E. Cornell, "Turkey and the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh: a delicate balance", *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 1 (1998): 53, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00263209808701209>). In addition to that, Hacı Fahrettin Seferli asserts that Narimanov was opposed to the transferring of Zangezur and Nakhchivan to Armenia, and in his letter to Lenin, it was emphasized that this concession to Armenia was a huge mistake (See e.g., "Zangezur'un Ermenistan'a Bağışlanması", 3).

32 Nazim Mustafa states that on December 25, 1920, Nzhdeh established the "Self-governing Siunik" (See e.g., Mustafa, "Zangezur'un Ermenistan'a Katılma Süreci", 10). In a book published by the "Nakhijevan" Institute of Canada, it is stated that at the All National Armenian Congress held in the Tatev Monastery, Zangezur was proclaimed "Mountainous Armenia" as long as the political situation would allow it to join with the rest of the Armenian state and Nzhdeh was recognized as the "Commander-in-Chief of Siunik" (See e.g., *Selected Works of Garegin Nzhdeh*, 58).

## The Process of Transferring of Zangezur to Armenia was Completed in 1921

In the early 1921, Dashnaks revolted against the Soviet government in Armenia and on February 18, they entered Yerevan. As a consequence of revolt, the Bolsheviks and the Red Army retreated. However, the Armenian rule in Yerevan did not last long. Yerevan was recaptured by the Bolsheviks on April 2 and the Dashnak armed forces were sent to Zangezur. Considering the regions being controlled by Nzhdeh in Zangezur as an obstacle between Yerevan and Karabakh, the Soviet Armenian administration started to negotiate with the “Mountainous Armenia” for the unification of Upper Zangezur with Armenia.<sup>33</sup> On April 21, 1921, Nzhdeh accepted the transferring of Zangezur to Armenia on the condition that Nagorno-Karabakh should unified with Armenia. However, on July 2, 1921, the 11th Army carried out new military operations in the region, and as a consequence of these operations, with his units, Nzhdeh had to flee to Iran on July 9.<sup>34</sup>



**Map 1)** Zangezur, whose borders are highlighted in the red map above, is a strategically important region for Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. Today, it is a province located within the borders of Armenia. By the transferring of Zangezur to Armenia in 1921, Azerbaijan’s access to Nakhichevan, and thus to Turkey, was physically cut off. Moreover, Zangezur subsequently started to act as a corridor that would facilitate access between Armenia and Iran.

33 Zakharov and Law state that because Nzhdeh led the defense of Zangezur in 1921, this paved the way for the purging and expulsion of the Turkish-Muslim minority in the region (See Nikolay Zakharov ve Ian Law, *Post-Soviet Racisms* (United Kingdom: Springer, 2017), 105-106).

34 Nzhdeh was tried by the Dashnaksutyun in Tabriz and condemned for the surrender of “Siunik” to the Bolsheviks. Later, he was expelled from the Dashnaksutyun (See e.g., *Selected Works of Garegin Nzhdeh*, 141).

### Conclusion

The strategic foresight of Britain about Zangezur enabling the uninterrupted connection between Azerbaijan and Turkey that would have paved the way for Turkey's access to the Turkish community in Central Asia (part of the Turkic world) was taken notice by the Soviet administration and a wedge was thus created between Turkey and Azerbaijan, as well as Turkey and the Turkic world.<sup>35</sup> On August 31, 1921, Zangezur was divided into two parts, east and west, and the western part of Zangezur was administratively assigned to Armenia as the 9th district.

In 1988, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Armenians raided Azerbaijani lands. In 1991-1994, the battles between the two country intensified and the armed forces of Armenia occupied the seven regions surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh. All in all, part of the Azerbaijani territories -the eastern part of Zangezur- fell under the control of the Armenian armed forces and more than 150 thousand people were displaced.

As in the case of Zangezur, considering the geopolitical interests, it is possible to see the policy followed by Tsarist Russia was also followed similarly in the Soviet period. Although it cannot be regarded as a single cause, it would not be wrong to argue that the transfer of Zangezur to Armenia in 1921 was a product of that policy aiming at the creation an obstacle in the establishment of relations between Azerbaijan and the rest of the Turkic world.

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35 Within the scope of this widely shared opinion, Swietochowski and Collins claim that although Zangezur was a part of Azerbaijan, through the regulations that defined the border between Azerbaijan and Armenian SSR, Zangezur was transferred to Armenia and thus Moscow was able to prevent access between Azerbaijan and Turkey (See; Tadeusz Swietochowski and Brian C. Collins, *Historical Dictionary of Azerbaijan* (Scarecrow Press, 1999), 134). In addition to that, Hacı Fahrettin Seferli argues that the transfer of a large part of Zangezur to Armenia contrary to international law by the "Soviet administration" was meant by physically cut off Nakhichevan from Azerbaijan in order to cut the ties between Azerbaijan and Turkey (See e.g., "Zengezur'un Ermenistan'a Bağışlanması," 6).

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