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# THE AZERBAIJAN-ARMENIA PEACE PROCESS AND THE IMPACTS OF LOBBIES

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On 6 January 1992, the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh Republic was established as a result of a referendum held on 10 December 1991, in which only Armenians participated. Samvel Shahramanyan, the so-called President of the separatist entity which is not recognized by Armenia or any other country, issued a decree on 28 September 2023, declaring that the entity would be dissolved on 1 January 2024.

On 9 September 2024, the President of Armenias National Assembly, Alen Simonyan, made a statement at the National Assembly in Yerevan, stating that Nagorno-Karabakh no longer legally exists and that the purpose of the Artsakh representative building in Yerevan should be reviewed.[1]

As is known, there is a representative building of the separatist entity in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. After the dissolution, the so-called officials of the separatist entity continued their activities in this building, conducting meetings and discussions there. It is also known that Armenians who migrated from Karabakh organized protests near this building and sometimes special forces of the Armenian Interior Ministry had to intervene in these incidents.[2] There is an obvious threat to the legitimate state posed by such a building within Armenia's borders, where incidents that could disrupt the internal peace of the country occur. Moreover, it would not be wrong to think that the presence of a building in Armenia belonging to the separatist entity that dissolved itself would cause Armenia's credibility to be questioned and could also strain its diplomatic relations.

During this period, when the expected peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia is on the agenda, despite Simonyan's statements, some non-governmental organizations under the jurisdiction of various countries persistently continue their activities supporting the existence of the separatist entity and attempt to keep the issue on the agenda as a threat by pressuring the Armenian government. These organizations activities can be considered as attempts to prevent the expected peace agreement between the two states. In addition, it is also known that when the interests of the organizations do not coincide with the policies of the Armenian government, they use this situation as a threat. In countries where these lobbies have political power, they are able to influence not only the media, but also the administration of that state. Moreover, they have statements and approaches that support the extremist views of some state and administration officials.

Ultimately, the parties should build mutual trust on the path towards the peace process. Simonyan's statements are a necessary and positive development regarding both the peace process and Armenia's state interests. However, the attitudes and activities of organizations in the diaspora make the process more complicated and difficult.

*Picture: Azatutyun Radiokayan

[1] Իշխանությունը խոսում է ՀՀ-Արցախ Հանձնաժողովը Լուծարելու, Ներկայացուցչության Շենքի Նշանակությունը Փոխելու Մասին, Azatutyun Radiokayan, 9 September 2024, https://www.azatutyun.am/a/yst-alen-simonyani-petk-e-loutsarel-hayastan---artsakh-mijkhorhrdaranakan-handznazhoghovi-dzevachapy/33113078.html

[2] Հայաստանում Արցախի Ներկայացուցչության Շենքի Իմաստը Պետք Է Վերանայել. ՀՀ ԱԺ Խոսնակ, Sputnik Armenia, 9 September 2024, https://arm.sputniknews.ru/20240909/hajastanum-arcakhi-nerkajacucchutjan-shenqi-imasty-petq-e-veranajel-alen-simvonjan-80412383.html

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