

**Oasis International School Model United Nations**

General Assembly

**President:** Salma Ahmed

**Vice-president:** Aly Samir

Guiding Package

**Topic 2:** the territorial dispute of Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenia vs. Azerbaijan)

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**Abstract:**

Territorial disputes have existed since the dawn of time, in which opposing countries want to seize control of land that they believe they own. For this case, Nagorno-Karabakh is a land situated in between Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Since the beginning of this conflict, Nagorno-Karabakh has been controlled by Azerbaijan but the majority of the country is being run by mostly Armenians and is being backed by the Armenian government.

The repercussions of such a dispute lead to tension between the countries. This tension causes attacks and ultimately war. This leaves the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to constantly live in fear. This also creates many casualties from far, the loss of hundreds or thousands of people and soldiers alike. This further elevates the consequences of the territorial dispute. The occupation of certain regions within Nagorno-Karabakh has also led to the displacement of many Azerbaijani citizens by Armenian Forces. This devastating outcome certainly further increases tension and fear amongst the people of both countries. No population wishes to have a forever looming fear of war which would thus lead to their death or the death of their loved ones.

Not only has the territorial dispute changed the lives of many for the worst, it also leads to a loss for the countries themselves. As the military is forced to involve in these situations to often patrol and dissuade any attempt of taking a region of land or a battle. These resources could be used for a multitude of other areas such as economic growth and government spending.

**Introduction:**

Since the late 20th century, Nagorno-Karabakh has been the main area of conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The area was controlled by Azerbaijan and the local Armenian population which represented a majority of the population wanted Nagorno-Karabakh to separate from Azerbaijan and become a part of Armenia. Several wars erupt throughout the years such as in 1990, April 2016 and most recently September 2020. The wars caused thousands of casualties and the displacement of thousands of people due to the destruction of their land or fleeing from this zone of conflict.

Other than war, heinous acts such as hate crimes were committed which also contributed to the building of tension in the conflict. Many people were displaced due to these hate crimes such as ethnic cleansings which would see hundreds if not thousands of people killed if they were not part of Armenia or Azerbaijan depending on who was committing the crime. Furthermore, massacres were frequent in the active zone of conflict which led to a large number of people fleeing in fear of their life and those of their family.

After the beginning of this conflict, peace talks were conducted to limit the amount of bloodshed and the loss of lives. These peace talks were led by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). These peace talks failed to yield any kind of results after tension soared and the death of dozens of troops on both sides of the conflict were killed later followed by a second war in September 2020.

**Key Terms:**

*Territorial dispute:* A territorial dispute or boundary dispute is a disagreement over the possession or control of land between two or more political entities

*Legislature:* The legislative body of a country or state.

*Hate Crime:* A crime, typically one involving violence, that is motivated by prejudice on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation, or other ground

*Autonomous Region:* An autonomous administrative division is a subnational administrative division or internal territory of a sovereign state that has a degree of autonomy — self-governance — under the national government.

*Escalation of Conflict:* Conflict escalation is the process by which conflicts grow in severity over time. This may refer to conflicts between individuals or groups in interpersonal relationships, or it may refer to the escalation of hostilities in a political or military context.

*Ceasefire:* A temporary suspension of fighting; a truce.

**Background Information:**

The Early stages of the conflict:

In the 1920s, the Soviet government founded Nagorno-Karabakh as an autonomous region, where 95 percent of the population is ethnically Armenian, within Azerbaijan. Under the dominion of Bolshevik, the struggle between the two countries remained in control, but, as the Soviet Union began to collapse, he also made his grip in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In 1988, the Nagorno-Karabakh legislature approved a resolution to join Armenia despite the legal position of the region within the boundaries of Azerbaijan. Since the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, the autonomous region officially declared independence. The war exploded between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the region, leaving about thirty thousand losses and hundreds of thousands of refugees.

In 1993, Armenia controlled Nagorno-Karabakh and occupied 20 percent of the territory of Azerbaijani around him. In 1994, Russia negotiated a strong fire that remained in force.

The cessation of armed hostilities:

The Nagorno Karabakh was a frozen conflict for more than a decade, but the bombing of the artillery and smaller scarcity between Armenian troops and Azerbaijanas caused hundreds of deaths. At the beginning of April 2016, they witnessed the most intense fights since 1994, killing dozens and leading to more than three hundred losses. After four days of fighting, the two sides announced that he had agreed to a new ceasefire. However, a break was followed in repeated high violation conversations and voltages remained high. Trading and mediation efforts, aimed primarily at the Minsk group, did not produce a permanent solution to the conflict.

The Minsk Group involvement:

The Minsk group, an effort of mediation led by the organization for safety and cooperation in Europe (OSCE), was created in 1994 to address the dispute and is coordinated by the United States, France and Russia.

The co-chairs organize peaks between the leaders of the two countries and have individual meetings. The group has successfully negotiated Ceasefire, but the territorial problems remain as intractable as always.

Further negotiations:

In October 2017, the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Geneva under the auspices of the Minsk Group, starting a series of deliberations on a possible solution of the conflict. However, discussions still have to produce concrete results.

Because Azerbaijan and Ethnic Armenian military forces are positioned close to each other and have little or no communication, there is a high risk that involuntary military action can lead to an escalation of conflicts. The two sides also have internal political interests that could cause the respective leaders to launch an attack.

Turkey’s Involvement:

This time, the conflict was different, analysts and former diplomats reported, because Turkey had offered direct support to Azerbaijan and because of the combat scale. Azerbaijan used sophisticated attack drones and both sides used a long and long-lasting rocket artillery during the recent attack.

Turkey's direct engagement in support of its Turkish ethnic ally, Azerbaijan, has transformed the local dispute into a regional dispute. Before the ceasefire, the attacks broke away from the front lines. The cities of Azerbaijan, Nagorno-karabakh and Armenia have been affected by the Long Range weapon drawn by fighters on both sides. The capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, Steanakert, was bombarded several times.

**UN Involvement:**

On April 30th 1993, the United Nation Security Council adopted resolution 822, where it demanded that all occupying forces withdraw from the Kelbajar district and other recently occupied areas of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Declares its support for the CSCE-led peace process. Subsequently on july 29th, resolution 853 was adopted where it demands an immediate cessation of all military action; requests that occupying forces withdraw from the district of Agdam and other recently occupied areas of the Republic of Azerbaijan; and reaffirms UN Resolution 822. Fully supports the CSCE Minsk Group's ongoing efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Afterwards in October 14 1993, resolution 874 was adopted with the purpose of reaffirming the Azerbaijani Republic's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all other States in the region; calling for the maintenance of the ceasefire, cessation of hostilities, and withdrawal of forces from recently occupied districts of the Republic of Azerbaijan; and reiterating its full support for the peace process being pursued within the framework of the CSCE and calling for the acceptance of the OSCE's "Adjusted Timetable of Urgent Steps".

Eventually on November 12th 1993, resolution 884 was put into action. As it was to condemn recent violations of the parties' cease-fire, which resulted in the reinstatement of hostilities; urges the government of Armenia to use its influence to facilitate compliance by the Armenians of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan with Resolutions 822, 853, and 874; demands from the parties involved an immediate cessation of fighting. As well as, calling for the "removal of occupying forces" from the Zangelan district and Goradiz city. Encourages the parties involved to continue their efforts to reach a negotiated settlement of the conflict through the CSCE Minsk process.

In 2020 and after six weeks of escalating conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia agreed to a ceasefire in a joint statement on November 9, resulting in the deployment of several thousand Russian peacekeepers to the enclave and border regions. Thousands of people were reportedly killed, and over 100,000 were displaced.

**Major Countries and Organizations Involved:**

The Republic of Armenia: The Armenian diaspora and its powerful Armenian lobby are crucial to the country's position. Nagorno-Karabakh has been quick to rebuild, thanks to significant assistance from Armenia and the large, relatively wealthy, and influential Armenian diaspora worldwide. Furthermore, Russia provides military and political assistance to Armenia. The Russian Federation is the most effective state in the OSCE Minsk Group, which is the only peaceful mechanism for resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Azerbaijani Republic: Since the beginning of this conflict, Nagorno-Karabakh was Azerbaijani territory and is still such. Since the first war that ended in 1994, they had lost major control over the land which was taken by Armenia but still recognized as Azerbaijani land. In 2008, Azerbaijan and Turkey attempted to get a U.N. General Assembly resolution passed to reaffirm the language of "occupation" and "territorial integrity" that appeared in security council resolutions. Azerbaijanis believe that Russia is only assisting the Armenian side in the Group. In the latest developments of September 2020, Azerbaijan launched a major attack on the Nagorno-Karabakh region aided by Turkey in which they reclaimed a large portion of the land. Furthermore, they have agreed to a ceasefire which gives them more control over the region. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan will not stop until it has complete control over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Republic of Turkey: The Republic of Turkey is a neighboring country to Armenia. From the beginning of this conflict Turkey was not involved. In the past 5 years Turkey has intervened in many conflicts around the region, such as the Nagorno-Karabakh region in order for the outcomes to be favorable for the nation. This is also due to the fact that it is to be considered that Azerbaijan is the country that is the most similar to Turkey as most of the population is a Turkish ethnic group. Turkey has been aiding Azerbaijan financially and in terms of weapon supply. Currently Turkey has peacekeeping forces in the Azerbaijan controlled area of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Russian Federation: Since the beginning of this conflict, the Russian Federation has been involved. During the first war for Nagorno-Karabakh, the Russian Federation aided Armenia in securing control of the territory. It had also brokered the ceasefire talks between both countries in order to limit any further confrontation and attempt to create peace. The Russian Federation was also part of the founding countries of the OCSE, a group created to find a solution in order to maintain peace in the region. Currently, Russia has peacekeeping forces in Nagorno-Karabakh

The United States of America: In this conflict, the United States of America has only been involved in peace talks and one of the founding members of the OCSE. Most recently the USA has brokered peace talks in September of 2020 which had failed to hold almost immediately. The “humanitarian ceasefire” was signed on the 27th of September 2020 and was almost immediately broken by one of the sides in the conflict.

The Republic of France: The last of the founding members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). They have played a role in maintaining peace in the region for since the end of the end of the war in 1994. They have most recently brokered peace in early September 2020 which did not last long.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE): The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is an organization created in 1992 in order to find peaceful solutions for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In 1994 the OCSE established the Minsk Group to focus on this certain conflict and it’s Co-Chairs consist of representatives from the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the Republic of France. The Minsk Group has been deemed ineffective by the President of Azerbaijan. The Minsk Group has spearheaded many peace talks such as in Florida in 2001, the CIS summit in 2002, the 2015 in Bern, Switzerland and in Geneva in 2017. Most recently they had brokered the “humanitarian ceasefire” the 27th of September 2020 although it had been broken a couple of hours later before it could even come into effect.

**Possible Solutions:**

* To make the Nagorno-Karabakh region an autonomous zone to be controlled by its government and people.
* To divide Nagorno-Karabakh into sections that would be part of the respective countries.
* Maintaining and ensuring peace in the region
* To completely claim Nagorno-Karabakh as part of the nation.

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Which side of the conflict is your country allied to?
2. Is your country involved in peace talks?
3. What is your country's stance on the humanitarian aspect of the conflict?
4. Who does the region truly belong to?
5. What would maintain peace in the region?
6. How to ensure that the people of the region are satisfied with the decision?
7. How to limit the loss of lives in the region?
8. How to ensure that all parties involved are satisfied?

**Useful Links:**

* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54324772>
* <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26494>
* <https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/nagorno-karabakh-conflict-visual-explainer>
* <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1079302>.
* <https://www.osce.org/minsk-group/108306>

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