

NEERJA MODI SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS'20

'Reimagining perspectives'

20-22 November, 2020

DISEC



Disarmament and International Security

Agenda: Examining the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan with an emphasis on foreign intervention and arms trade.

Background guide

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings delegates,

I am honoured to welcome all of you to the 12th edition of the Neerja Modi Model United Nations. As the President of the Disarmament and International Security committee I assure you that these three days will be some of the most memorable ones. They will be filled with heated debates, careful deliberation and of course tons of fun memories. NMMUN is not just about bringing together delegates to debate on their assigned agendas rather it is an incubator for revolutionary ideas on how to solve some of the world's most pressing challenges. Before jumping into the nitty-gritty of this year's agenda I would like to introduce you to your Presidents.

My name is Riya Agarwal and I am currently in my senior year. I have been participating in MUN's for the last five years and this my second time chairing a committee. Outside of MUN's I practice karate, enjoy reading and love pretty much anything STEM related. If you want to discuss plot points of your favourite fantasy novel, or need tips to calm those nerves before your GSL please feel free to speak to me.

My co-president this year is Nancy Kumawat, another passionate debater currently pursuing the humanities. Aside from her love for MUN's Nancy is an avid reader and writer. She has a way with words, in both English and Hindi, that is likely to leave you stunned. With her love of travelling she is the perfect person to discuss your favourite travel destinations with and get research tips from.

Disarmament is one of the most extensive problems that the world has ever faced and therefore we believe this committee's topic covers an important subject which has lacked the attention it so desperately needed. Through this committee, we aim to educate and discuss a reform for the on-going territorial conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and its impact on the security and weapon trade management in the rest of the world. Weapons trading and distribution laws are not only vague but also incoherent and lacking the much-needed powerful control and oversight. With careful deliberation we aim to tackle this issue.

The conflict between the two nations, also referred to as the Nagorno-Karabakh war, has been bubbling since the late 1980s. With the number of failed peace treaties and casualties increasing every day this issue needs our immediate attention.

To all the first timers joining us this year we understand that all of this is very new for you and that it can be an extremely nerve-wracking experience. Please do not worry too much because the EB will be there to guide you every step of the way whether that is discussing rules of procedure or the general contents of your GSL. Please feel free to reach out to us with questions or concerns on our email id disec.nmmun20@gmail.com.

Regards,
Riya Agarwal
President
Disarmament and International Security Committee

LETTER FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Greetings Delegates,

It is my immense pleasure to welcome you all to the Disarmament and International Security Committee at the 12th Edition of the Neerja Modi Model United Nations. Sitting in one of the most prestigious committees, prepare yourselves for three days of dynamic energy, deliberate questioning and fruitful debates.

My name is Aanya Mahna and this year I'll be your Vice President along with Aditi Jain. Apart from debating, I take great interest in theatre and sports. I'm also an avid reader and love interacting with people so feel free to approach me! I believe that MUN's help you realize that no one is too small to make a change and no voice can ever go unheard.

My Co-Vice President Aditi Jain is in her senior year and is a humanities student. She is a history buff and a huge fan of satirical news shows and literary content. She is a keen listener and observer and is intrigued by the musical instrument guitar. Following all her interests, she has chosen to partake in the UPSC examinations and aspires to be an IAS officer.

As we are moving towards an even more globalised and highly military armed world, facing unprecedented threats such as nuclear warfare, international cooperation has become more important than ever to ensure peace and stability. This year we are going to be focusing on the on-going territorial conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is getting worldwide attention because of the involvement of regional rivals Turkey and Russia. Other countries including The United States have limited their participation to appeals for maintaining peace. For all countries, the region is an important transit route for the supply of oil and natural gas to the European Union.

As my last remarks, I would encourage those who are still hesitant to embark on this journey with us and let your passion echo through the voice you raise, the resolution you craft and the friendship you make!

Regards,
Aanya Mahna
Vice President
Disarmament and International Security Committee

INTRODUCTION TO THE DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE

The United Nations General Assembly First Committee (also known as the Disarmament and International Security Committee or DISEC) is one of six main committees at the General Assembly of the United Nations which deals with matters concerning world peace.

The General Assembly was amongst the primarily established organs of the United Nations, holding its first meeting in 1945. The GA comprises all 193 Members of the UN with equal representation principle which is that each Member State has one vote. With this principle, the General Assembly is the only organ in which an equality of such is established. The General Assembly focuses on a broad spectrum of topics, including matters of peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary regulations. DISEC also has an agenda spanning over a wide range of topics covering disarmament and international security. Principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening the stability through lower levels of armaments is among its chief themes of discussion. “DISEC works in close cooperation with two bodies, namely Geneva based Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) which was established by the UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1978. While the Commission deals with a smaller number of items than the First Committee and in greater detail; CD focuses on negotiation of treaties. Although CD sets its own agenda, it is funded by the UN and reports to the General Assembly. Also reporting to the General Assembly, it is decided by the GA's decision that as of 2000, the UNDC would normally comprise two substantive items per year from the whole range of disarmament issues, including one on nuclear disarmament.

The sessions of DISEC are structured in three main parts of discussion: Firstly, a general debate is established for the given agenda item; Secondly, a thematic discussion is held for covering all aspects of the agenda item; and lastly member states take action on drafting a document that will be composed of possible solutions to the problem given in the agenda item. Charter of the United Nations discusses the role of its establishment as “To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, which closely parallels with every objective and asset of the Disarmament and International Security Council.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



At the heart of the decades old conflict is the Nagorno-Karabakh region. This region was an ethnic-majority Armenian region, but the Soviets gave control over the area to the Azerbaijan authorities. The countries came to blows over the region in late 1980's and early 1990's. Although they have declared three ceasefires, they have not managed to agree to a peace treaty.

The conflict between the two former Soviet Republics has wider geopolitical implications as Turkey, which shares a border with Armenia, is backing Azerbaijan, while Russia, has good ties with both countries and continues to engage in trading activities with them. The jeopardy regarding this area also acts as a danger for trade of refinery consignments for the European Union as the Nagorno-Karabakh area acts as a link for the transportation of oil and natural gas.

In recent times, this conflict has been rekindled as both the countries engaged in a series of attacks which led to a fair number of casualties.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

For centuries, Muslim Azerbaijanis and Christian Armenians, both of whom call the Nagorno-Karabakh region home, clashed over who should control it. Russian rule began in 1823, and when the Russian Empire dissolved in 1918, tensions between newly independent Armenia and Azerbaijan reignited. Three years later, Communist-controlled Russia set its sights on the independent states of the Caucasus region and began incorporating them into what would become the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

At first, it was decided that Karabakh would be part of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (S.S.R.). The initial incorporation of Karabakh and Armenia is thought to have been a plan to ensure Armenian support of Soviet rule. But the Soviets' new Commissar of Nationalities, Joseph Stalin, reversed the decision. In 1923 Nagorno-Karabakh became an autonomous administrative region of the Azerbaijan S.S.R., even though 94% of its population at the time was ethnically Armenian.

NAGORNO-KARABAKH WAR (1988-1994)

The Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh made several calls to be transferred to Armenian authority control in the following decades. But it was only as the Soviet Union began to collapse in the late 1980s that Nagorno-Karabakh's regional parliament officially voted to become part of Armenia. Azerbaijan responded by trying to crush the separatists in 1988, and clashes intensified in the region.

In 1991, both Azerbaijan and Armenia declared independence from the U.S.S.R., and the regional clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh flared into a full-out war. As a result, more than a million people became refugees, and around 30,000 people, including civilians, were killed.

Both sides engaged in ethnic cleansing in the Nagorno-Karabakh War—the Azerbaijanis against ethnic Armenians, and Armenian forces against ethnic Azeris. Despite the brutal humanitarian toll, negotiations between the sides repeatedly broke down.

THE BISHKEK PROTOCOL

In 1994, the newly independent nations of Armenia and Azerbaijan signed the Bishkek Protocol (In Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan) and a ceasefire was brokered by Russia that left Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan. Though the fighting ceased, regular peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan mediated by the OSCE Minsk Group failed to result in a peace treaty. For the last two and a half decades, Armenian and Azerbaijani troops have been divided by a contested “line of contact” laid out in the Bishkek Protocol. It has become increasingly militarized over the years, and has been called one of the world’s three most militarized borders.

REASONS FOR CONFLICT

1) The Caucasus - A strategically important and mineral rich mountainous region shared by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia. For centuries, different powers in the region - both Christian and Muslim - have vied for control there.

The wider South Caucasus is a crucial artery for gas and oil from Azerbaijan into Turkey and on to Europe and other world markets. Azerbaijan supplies about 5% of Europe’s gas and oil demand (helping to reduce the EU’s dependence on Russia) and the fighting in 2016 came close to a number of these pipelines which threatened Europe’s energy source.

2) Geopolitics of Turkey and Russia – The proxy war of Turkey and Russia has also intensified the conflict. Turkey attempts to leverage its influence in the South Caucasus along its eastern border, using both military and diplomatic resources to extend its sphere of influence in the Middle East, and to marginalize the influence of Russia, another regional power.

CURRENT SITUATION

The escalation of the border skirmishes took a fierce turn in 2020 making the ongoing conflict the worst ceasefire violation since 2016. The strife began in July, but came to a standstill by the 30th. Yet, a fiercer conflict started on September 25th and continues to date.

THE JULY CONFLICT

The July 2020 Armenian–Azerbaijani clashes began on 12 July 2020 between the Armenian Armed Forces and Azerbaijani Armed Forces. Initial clashes occurred near Movses in Tavush Province of Armenia, and Ağdam in Tovuz District of Azerbaijan at the Armenian–Azerbaijani state border. Both the sides have been firing artillery targeting the engineering infrastructure and technical means of the armed forces of the opposition party. The parties have been using large-calibre machine guns, grenade launchers, sniper rifles, 60, 82 and 120mm mortars and the other artillery mounts to escalate the situation.

The situation claimed 65 and 130 soldier and civilian casualties from Armenia and Azerbaijan respectively.

SEPTEMBER CONFLICT

Clashes began on the morning of 27 September 2020 along the Nagorno-Karabakh Line of Contact. In response to the clashes, Armenia and Artsakh introduced martial law and total mobilization, while Azerbaijan introduced martial law and a curfew, later declaring partial mobilization on 28 September. The war has been marked by the deployment of drones, sensors, long-range heavy artillery and missile strikes, as well as by state propaganda and the use of official social media accounts in online information warfare. Total casualties on both sides may be approaching the low thousands.

PEACEKEEPING EFFORTS

Over the course of the past 20+ years various countries have attempted to broker peace between the two warring nations. The first successful attempt was the truce that occurred in 1994 (refer to The Bishkek protocol). Since then both countries have accused each other of violating the terms of the agreement and opening fire across the disputed border. The last extreme breach happened in 2016. With over 200 casualties (exact number of casualties is disputed but lies between 200 and 2000) the conflict lasted 4 days before a ceasefire agreement was signed by the two nations in Moscow. This tussle also led to a shift in the line of control where Azerbaijan captured between 8 and 20 km² of land.

During the July skirmishes, much like the ongoing battles, various ceasefires were issued, primarily by Russia, and violated by both sides. Major conflicts resumed from September leading to a new set of ceasefire violations. After 10 hours of negotiations the countries agreed on a ceasefire beginning on October 10th however the peace was short lived. On October 17th a humanitarian ceasefire was agreed upon by both nations, this was violated leading to a truce being declared on the 26th by the Minsk group being headed by France, Russia and the U.S. the terms of this are still being violated and neither side has been successful at sticking to the ceasefires. Various NATO member countries have called for peace from both sides to no avail.

INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION AND ARMS TRADE

Many external actors have been indulging in the conflict, providing military support to the nations involved. The presence of these international interventionists in the region for their own interests has made the situation worse. Some of these external actors along with their involvement are given below:

RUSSIA

Although Russia has been selling weapons to both the parties, it possesses a military base in Armenia, and is involved in a 1992 treaty with Armenia known as the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation). Russia has been militarizing a region with deep-seated recriminations and has fuelled an arms race fulfilling its own interests. Russia has also expressed its concerns over the involvement of Turkish and Syrian troops in the region neglecting its own sale of arms. Russia expressed concern over "illegal armed units" from Syria and Libya being present in the conflict zone. Though it has also initiated ceasefires to calm down the situation they are being broken down by the main parties again and again. Official statements from the Russian foreign ministry indicate that Russia won't directly step onto the battleground right now, as there has been no direct attack on the territorial integrity of Armenia but is bound to stand with Armenia in the case of a war.

TURKEY

Turkey is providing military support to Azerbaijan, although the extent of its support is disputed. Turkey's support for Azerbaijan is thought to be an attempt to extend its sphere of influence both by increasing the standing of Azerbaijan in the conflict and by marginalizing Russia's influence over the region. President Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey would stand against any attack on Azerbaijan, with which it has strong historical and cultural ties and is involved in joint energy projects. Turkey has also been accused of recruiting Syrian mercenaries to fight for Azerbaijan in the war. In his official address to the nation the Armenian Prime Minister stated that. "The only country that attempted not to calm the situation, but rather to inflame the violence is Turkey. Considering the destabilizing and aggressive policy of that country in its numerous neighbouring regions as well as its traditional anti-Armenian stance, expressed by the justification of the Armenian Genocide, such behaviour of Turkey was not surprising. Yet, its growing aggressiveness brings forward the need to reshape our policy, including the scope of our participation in international formats to deter Turkey's aggressive behaviour."

ISRAEL

For almost 30 years, Israel and Azerbaijan have been partners of convenience. Azerbaijan, a Shiite Muslim dictatorship, sells oil to the Jewish State, and buys advanced weapons. Armenia claims that these arms are being used by the Azeris to attack civilian targets in Nagorno-Karabakh. To such accusations Israel said that its long-standing cooperation and relations with Azerbaijan was not for offensive purposes, adding that Israel was interested in promoting relations with Armenia and was prepared to offer humanitarian aid. Israel accused Turkey of disrupting peace efforts in the region and called for international pressure on Turkey to dissuade "direct terrorism". Israel declined to comment on the possibility of halting support for Azerbaijan who had purchased weapons from Israel to the tune of \$5 billion.

IRAN

In response to a viral footage in which shipments (suspected of containing arms) are being carried inside the Iranian territory to Armenia Iranian the state-affiliated media stated that trucks depicted in the footage consisted of shipments of Kamaz trucks that the Armenian government had previously purchased from Russia. Iran stated that no military solution to the conflict existed and expressed support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, emphasizing the need for a ceasefire and political dialogue and expressing concern over the conflict.

GEORGIA

Azerbaijan's president initially stated that Georgia had not allowed the transportation of weapons through its territory and thanked Georgia, as a partner and friend. However, in a subsequent interview, he alleged that Armenia was misusing one of its Il-76 cargo planes for civil flights, to secretly transport fighters and Kornet anti-tank missiles from Russia through Georgian airspace into Armenia. Georgia responded by stating that its airspace was closed to all military and cargo flights but not for civil and humanitarian ones.

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan called for an end to Armenian occupation in Nagorno-Karabakh while calling for a cease-fire, urging the parties involved to resolve the long-standing crisis peacefully. But some sources state that terrorists from Afghanistan and its neighbour Pakistan are fighting the war from the side of Armenia.

JORDAN

Some reports state that Jordan is selling arms to Armenia, in response to these the Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan said that, "the reports on Jordan's arms sales to Armenia caused dissatisfaction in the public when Armenia's recent military provocation on the international border of the two countries has demonstrated its aggressive intentions."

SERBIA

Azerbaijan has stated that Armenia is employing Serbian weapons, alleged to have been transported via Georgia. In response, the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, stated that Serbia considers both Armenia and Azerbaijan to be friends and "brotherly nations", insisting that Serbian weapons were not being used in Nagorno-Karabakh.

CANADA

Canada has suspended the export of its drone technology to Turkey over concerns that it is using the technology in the conflict.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Does your delegation have any connections to the sale of weapons inside or outside the conflict?
- Is your country a part of any organization that has to do with the conflict?
- Has your country issued an official statement about their stance on the issue? If yes, what is their position?
- Has your delegation been involved in the ongoing conflict? If so, what has been the role of your country?

USEFUL LINKS:

- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/1/infographic-military-arsenals-of-armenia-and-azerbaijan>
- <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/1/infographic-military-arsenals-of-armenia-and-azerbaijan>
- <https://in.reuters.com/article/idINKBN26N1LA>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/28/why-are-armenia-and-azerbaijan-fighting-what-are-implications>

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“The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Presented the Position of Armenia Regarding the Recent Escalation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani Border and the Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process.” *Հայաստանի Հանրապետության Վարչապետ*, www.primeminister.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2020/07/23/Cabinet-meeting-Speech/.

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