

[Azerbaijan and Armenia Announce the Establishment of a Joint Border Commission to Address Issues Related to the Nagorno-Karabakh Region](#)

Government officials of Azerbaijan and Armenia have recently agreed to establish a joint border commission to address issues relating to the contentious Nagorno-Karabakh region. They reached the arrangement during a meeting in Brussels this past weekend. The gathering was held by the European Council, and hopes to help kickstart a wider negotiation process between the two countries. The respective leaders also agreed to hold other preliminary talks in an attempt to reach a bilateral treaty. The longstanding disputes over the Nagorno-Karabakh region flared into a recent six-week war back in late 2020, whereby Azerbaijan regained a large amount of territory. The leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia have consented to meet on the border itself within days of agreeing to hold the talks. Part of the preliminary agreement also included the reopening of the Zangezur corridor, which will allow Azerbaijan access to its Nakhchivan exclave.

The four main issues that will be discussed during these talks are border issues, connectivity, socio-economic development, and creating a more permanent peace deal. The border issues remain at the heart of the conflict and will likely be a deciding factor for the other aspects of the talks. The opening of roads and railways will also be discussed. This will hopefully allow for an easier flow of food and medical supplies. There will also be talks to further develop the economic ties first established in January of last year between the two countries. All of these issues will likely be dependent on a comprehensive deal, but the fact that an agreement was made to talk is a big step towards sustainable peace and will also hopefully lead to a stabilization of the entire region.

There may, however, be some obstacles. The Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has received harsh backlash, as a wave of protests in the Armenian capital claim that the Prime Minister is conceding too much to Azerbaijan. The opposition party in Armenia has continued to fuel the protests. This contention could have the ability to throw a wrench in the peace process, as domestic pressures could force Armenians to begin to make unrealistic demands. Russia, which has relations with both countries and had recently played the role of mediator between them, is currently occupied with its invasion of Ukraine. This destructive and widely-criticized invasion has also made them a global pariah and taken away a lot of credibility they had on the world stage.

The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the modern era over the contentious Nagorno-Karabakh region has been in existence since 1920, when the two countries first engaged in armed fighting. The Russian-backed Azerbaijanis took control of the region. When the Soviet Union began to fall apart, the occupants of Nagorno-Karabakh voted to become part of Armenia and declared independence from Azerbaijan. This led to a two-year war starting in 1992. The Armenians were able to seize the Nagorno-Karabakh region and the areas around it, with that iteration of the conflict ending in 1994 with a ceasefire agreement. However, this was largely ignored and tensions remained high with sporadic fighting that eventually escalated into the most recent war back in late 2020. Both sides have accused each other of atrocities, and there have been credible impartial findings supporting this as well. Thus, experts and observers are hopeful that the plans to remain engaged in talks will prevent the outbreak of another major armed conflict.