

Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Talks

Over the past five years, the political, economic, and security architecture of the South Caucasus region has undergone major transformations. This process is a direct result of the 44-day war in Nagorno-Karabakh of 2020, followed by the exodus of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians of 2023. While the wounds of these dramatic changes are still fresh, Armenia and Azerbaijan are actively engaged in a peace process that will ultimately create new realities in the region.

Recent Developments

On December 1, 2025, the OSCE Minsk Group – a format where the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict negotiations were taking place was officially [dis-solved](#). France, Russia, and the United States were the co-chair countries mediating the negotiations, where “constructive ambiguity” was the main philosophy for this quarter-century-long peace process. While this format was the main context within which the three major powers were present together with Armenia and Azerbaijan, after the second full-scale war in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, it stopped functioning.

The dissolution of this format was a request and a precondition for future peace talks by Azerbaijan after the 44-day war. Immediately after the war, Russia sought to take a dominant position in the negotiation process, but the situation changed when the new U.S. administration (Biden-Blinken) came to power. Official Washington sought to maintain its involvement through the non-functioning OSCE Minsk Group; however, it soon became clear that this format was not viable, so the approach was to engage in a trilateral format among Washington, Yerevan, and Baku.

The first meeting between Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers to discuss the possibility of a peace document took place in Washington, D.C., where the U.S. Secretary of State was the [host](#). The parties began discussing the main principles of the future peace document bilaterally through the Washington process, while other interested parties were informed of the progress.

After several rounds of negotiations between the ministers over the next two years, in March 2025, the official Baku [announced](#) that the document was ready for signing. Azerbaijan also announced



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This illustration was inspired by the 'Epic Split' [advertisement](#) for Volvo Trucks.

that it will sign and ratify a peace agreement only if/when the OSCE Minsk Group is dissolved and Armenia changes its constitution. According to official Baku, Armenia's current Constitution contains provisions that assert territorial claims against Azerbaijan. While official Yerevan [denied](#) such claims in its Constitution, Armenia's ruling Civic Contract party [announced](#) that it will initiate constitutional amendments regardless of Azerbaijan's request.

U.S. Mediation

August 8, 2025, became a historic day in the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace negotiations. A summit took place in Washington, D.C., where U.S. President Donald Trump hosted Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev at the White House. One of the key results of this meeting was the trilateral [declaration](#)

aimed at ending hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the willingness to promote stability in the South Caucasus.

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The Washington summit also led to a new U.S.-Armenia connectivity agreement, called the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP). While the details of this agreement remain to be seen, this new route is expected to connect mainland Azerbaijan with its exclave, Nakhchivan, through Armenian territory. According to recent statements from all three parties, the reconstruc-

tion of a Soviet-era railroad is considered the first connectivity element, following possible gas and oil pipelines along the same route from Azerbaijan to Armenia and further to the West.

Another important achievement of the Washington summit is the initialing of the Peace Treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which was signed by the two countries' Foreign Ministers. As described above, this document was negotiated between Yerevan and Baku over the past two years and was announced to be completed in February 2025. The [Agreement](#) on the Establishment of Peace and Inter-State Relations consists of 17 articles and will come into force after it is signed by the official representatives of Yerevan and Baku, followed by ratification by the Armenian and Azerbaijani parliaments.

The Peace Agreement

The text of the Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and Inter-State Relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan was negotiated by the Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan beginning in 2022. After the 44-day war in Nagorno-Karabakh of 2020 and the trilateral [ceasefire statement](#) between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia, the regional security architecture had changed significantly, with Russia's unilateral peacekeeping forces present in Nagorno-Karabakh and a Russian-Turkish joint [monitoring center](#) in Aghdam.

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This Russia-brokered statement failed to provide Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians with security guarantees. In December 2022, Azerbaijan blocked the Lachin corridor under the Russian peacekeepers' watch, who had a mandate and obligation to

ensure the unimpeded movement of goods and people to and from Nagorno-Karabakh. For the following nine months, the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians [were left](#) on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe, with no food, medicaments and access to basic human needs.

With Russian peacekeepers and a Turkish-Russian monitoring center on the ground, on September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan began a deadly attack on Nagorno-Karabakh, resulting in the [exodus](#) of Armenians over the next week. Over 100 thousand Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians were forced to move to Armenia, leaving their homes and belongings behind. This marked the beginning of the end for both Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh and the Russian-Turkish monitoring center in Aghdam, dramatically changing the region's demographic, military, and security picture.

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In this context, official Yerevan and Baku continued negotiations on the Peace Agreement, reflecting the new realities of the post-Nagorno-Karabakh war era. The document was pre-signed by the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan on August 8 in the White House. To come into force, it must be ratified by the respective parliaments of the two countries and finally signed by the heads of state. Armenia has shown readiness to begin the ratification process in the aftermath of the Washington, D.C., summit, while Azerbaijan shows little interest in moving forward quickly. In my personal encounters with Azerbaijani experts linked to the Azerbaijani government, officials in Baku have indicated that progress on ratifying the Peace Agreement will come only after Armenia's 2026 June parliamentary elections.

Details of the Peace Agreement

The Armenian-Azerbaijani Peace Agreement document consists of 17 articles. The document underlines that the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan recognize each other's territorial integrity with the borders of Soviet Armenia and Soviet Azerbaijan. The parties commit to having no territorial claims from each other, including by refraining from the use of force and allowing any third party to use force against Armenia or Azerbaijan.

By signing this agreement, Yerevan and Baku take an obligation to combat discrimination, racial hate speech, and separatism in their communities, as well as violent extremism and terrorism within their respective jurisdictions (Armenia and Azerbaijan). Instead, Armenia and Azerbaijan take responsibility for building confidence and ensuring economic cooperation between the two states and nations.

A highly criticized part of this document in the Armenian political and expert circles was the article in the Peace Agreement, which obliges the parties to recall all court cases against each other before international criminal and judicial institutions, and to commit not to initiate such cases in the future. The opponents of this particular article in the document argue that Armenia has serious leverage against Azerbaijan through some of the already existing decisions of the International Criminal Court, which prove that Azerbaijan had Genocidal intent against Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, as well as committed war crimes during the 44-day war of 2020 and the 1-day war of 2023.

After the Peace Agreement comes into force, Armenia and Azerbaijan should also remove all third-party military and civilian presence from each other's borders. This particular part concerns the European Mission in Armenia ([EUMA](#)), a rough-

ly 200-member civilian group from EU countries that has been monitoring the Armenian-Azerbaijani border under Armenia's unilateral invitation since October 2022. Given the lack of trust and confidence between Armenia and Azerbaijan, this article has also been a source of worry for Armenian society.

Last but not least, the implementation of the Agreement should include an oversight committee, a bilateral body with specific tools and monitoring mechanisms to monitor and ensure the realization of this Peace Agreement. The modalities and the structure of this commission should be agreed upon between the parties after the Peace Agreement enters into force.

Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP)

As mentioned above, the August 8th Peace Summit in Washington, D.C., resulted in the announcement of the TRIPP. This unique new avenue of cooperation between the U.S. and Armenia is viewed as part of the so-called [middle corridor](#) connecting Central Asia with Europe - bypassing Russia and the Suez Canal. Even though there are already routes enabling international trade through Georgia, there is a clear need to increase the volume of goods transported through the South Caucasus region.

However, it is important to note that the TRIPP project involves not only global trade interests but also local and regional (South Caucasus) aspects. For Azerbaijan, this is a direct connection to its Nakhchivan enclave for the transportation of goods and people, as the route is expected to provide Azerbaijan with unimpeded access. For Armenia, this is a start toward de-blocking communications and connectivity routes, bringing an important transit element with economic benefits and providing additional security layers. In the meantime,

TRIPP may bring challenges for Georgia, which has been instrumental as a transit country over the past three decades.

New connectivity infrastructure, such as railroads and highways bypassing Georgia, will ultimately change Georgia's significance as a regional transit hub at least from the perspective of east-west transportation routes. In the meantime, if there is further progress in the Armenia-Türkiye normalization process, including a possible border opening and the final de-blocking of communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Armenia's current access to Russian and other Eurasian Economic Union markets will no longer depend on Georgia's transit monopoly. Thus, TRIPP is a project that will bring clear benefits to Armenia and Azerbaijan, but pose economic challenges for Georgia and diminish Tbilisi's political weight in the South Caucasus.

On January 13, 2026, Armenia's foreign minister, Ararat Mirzoyan, [was hosted](#) by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington, D.C. The meeting resulted in a [joint statement](#) about the modalities of the TRIPP project. While the document provides an overview of the framework for this future transit route, it lacks clarity on the timing and sequencing of the project's implementation. In the meantime, U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance plans to [visit](#) Armenia and Azerbaijan in early February, during which TRIPP will be at the center of his agenda, possibly with news about further details regarding the implementation of the project.

Armenian-Azerbaijani Delimitation and Demarcation Commission

In 2021, a special commission between Armenia and Azerbaijan was established to discuss the delimitation and demarcation of their border. This intergovernmental commission became the first

bilateral institutional format to adopt a [document](#) describing the functions and procedures of work for this body. This 7-page text became the first official document signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan since their independence in 1991.

The demarcation and delimitation commission is headed by the Deputy Prime Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Since its inception, the commission heads and their teams have met over a dozen times along the Armenian-Azerbaijani 1000-km-long border. The most significant outcome of this commission's work is the 13 km border delimitation and demarcation in northeastern Armenia and western Azerbaijan.

While this is the only part of the border that is officially demarcated and delimited, with border guards on the frontline rather than military personnel, the opposition viewed the process as a one-sided concession, as Armenia had to return territories to Azerbaijan without reciprocity. However, the Armenian government's argument that this process was a political and diplomatic success for Yerevan is that it secured recognition of the two countries' territorial integrity and sovereignty under the [Almaty Declaration](#) of December 21, 1991.

While the bases for the delimitation and demarcation process are clear and the commissions meet regularly, there has been no significant progress since 2023. In the aftermath of the 44-day war of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan has made several military attacks on Armenia proper, resulting in the occupation of over 200 km² of Armenia. While official Yerevan has mostly raised this topic in domestic political debates, it is clear that Azerbaijan is not in a hurry to finalize the delimitation and demarcation process. Territories occupied by Azerbaijan in the aftermath of the 44-day war are used to build military-defense capacities by official Baku, thus one can argue that Azerbaijan does not plan to return lands in the foreseeable future.

Another unclear issue relates to the enclaves and exclaves between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This Soviet-era heritage, in which territories belonged to one republic but were surrounded by another, will also be an issue to address. Both sides have such territories within their boundaries, yet there is no clear understanding of how to address this problem. The solution regarding enclaves and exclaves is not reflected in the Peace Agreement or in the context of delimitation and demarcation commissions; hence, this problem may become a point of contention between the parties in the future.

Way Ahead

The U.S. mediated Armenian-Azerbaijani peace process has been bringing changes, which would be unimaginable prior to the war of 2020 in Nagorno-Karabakh. As argued at the beginning of this article, the region's security architecture has changed drastically, with a reduced Russian military and political presence. In the meantime, the U.S.-led TRIPP project will bring new realities from economic and connectivity perspectives. Before the normalization process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia played the most important transit role in the South Caucasus; new connectivity routes from Azerbaijan through Armenia will also change Georgia's economic realities.

This change does not and will not mean that the routes which exist through Georgia (i.e., Ba-

ku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars) will lose their significance; however, the main goal of de-blocking Armenian-Azerbaijani transit routes is aimed at bringing greater volumes for transit from Central Asia and the wider Caspian Sea region, thus, worries about Georgia's isolation by TRIPP are exaggerated.

Moreover, there may be new opportunities for Georgia to get involved in the de-blocking process in the South Caucasus. One visible opportunity for Georgia may be the Georgian Railway's involvement in the rehabilitation and management of Armenian railways, which are currently [managed](#) by Russia's CJSC "South Caucasus Railway," a 100% subsidiary of JSC "Russian Railways." The company has a concession [agreement](#) with Armenia's government under which the Russian state-owned company has obligations to make investments.

Armenia's Prime Minister has [called](#) on Russia to begin investing in the restoration of Armenia's railway system. If Moscow's response is negative, Armenia's government may consider revoking the existing concession agreement and seeking potential partners in this area. While Armenia lacks capacity in railway management and restoration, Georgian Railways may be the most viable option for Armenia, both politically and practically. In the meantime, this may be an important avenue for Georgia's involvement in the new design of the regional connectivity and integration process ■