

**Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
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ENGLISH only

Principles applicable to the peaceful settlement of the conflict in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is committed to solving the conflict by political means and in a constructive manner. But Azerbaijan will never compromise its territorial integrity and thus accept a *fait-accompli* based solution, which the Armenian side is trying to impose.

The conflict can only be solved on the basis of respect for the territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally-recognized borders of Azerbaijan, and peaceful coexistence of Armenian and Azerbaijani communities in the Nagorno-Karabakh region within Azerbaijan, fully and equally enjoying the benefits of democracy and prosperity.

The ultimate objective of the settlement process is to elaborate and define the model and legal frameworks of the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region within Azerbaijan. The process of definition of any status shall take place in normal peaceful conditions with direct, full and equal participation of the entire population of the region, namely, the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities, and in their constructive interaction with the Government of Azerbaijan exclusively in the framework of a lawful and democratic process.

Attempts to define the status of the Nagorno-Karabakh region in a situation of continued occupation of the region and surrounding territories, and forced displacement of Azerbaijani population are incompatible with universal and European values and contradict the principles and ideas of peace, democracy, stability and regional cooperation. Such attempts seek to legitimize the results of ethnic cleansing and impose a *fait accompli* situation on Azerbaijan.

A number of important steps have to be taken to reach a stage where the parties concerned can start negotiating a self-rule status for the Nagorno-Karabakh region within Azerbaijan:

- The factor of military occupation must be removed from the conflict settlement context. Armenia has to withdraw completely from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Delay of return of the territories can complicate the already difficult settlement process.
- IDPs should return in safety and dignity to their places of origin in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and adjacent territories.
- Special programs on reconciliation and tolerance should be initiated with a view to foster cooperation between the two communities in the Nagorno-Karabakh region.
- All communications in the region shall be opened for mutual use.
- Upon release of the territories of Azerbaijan from the occupation the rehabilitation and economic development of the region shall take place.