

# Massis Weekly

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## Russia Hosts Fresh Armenian-Azeri Summit



Aliyev, Medvedev and Sarkisian heading to a meeting in Sochi

SOCHI -- Russian President Dmitry Medvedev hosted on Monday yet another meeting of his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts which appeared to have failed to resolve their remaining differences over a framework agreement on Nagorno-Karabakh proposed by international mediators.

None of the three presidents made public statements after more than two hours of negotiations held in a ski resort near the Russian Black Sea city of Sochi. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov implied that Armenia's Serzh Sargsyan and Azerbaijan's Ilham Aliyev only agreed on a preamble of the basic principles of resolving the Karabakh conflict that have been proposed by the American, French and Russian co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.

"The conversation was useful," Lavrov told journalists. "The participants discussed the concrete proposals that were presented by the co-chairs. There is a common understanding — and everybody confirmed that — on the document's preamble."

"Today the main result was that although some parts of the document

are not agreed on by the parties, the parties will prepare their own concrete ideas and formulations that would be added to the text. We are confident that this will help the co-chairs in their further work," he said.

Lavrov refused to elaborate on the understandings and remaining sticking points. "This is a subject of negotiations between the parties," he explained.

Later a source close to the negotiators stated that the preamble sets the priority of peoples' right to self-determination, as well as the imperative of Nagorno-Karabakh's participation in further negotiations.

Aliyev and Sargsyan were due to hold more talks in the presence of the Minsk Group co-chairs later on Friday.

The mediators revealed last Friday that they have modified the basic principles in an effort to make them more acceptable to the conflicting parties. In a joint statement, they declined to specify those changes. The mediators already worked out what they called an "updated version" of the proposed framework agreement when they met in Krakow, Poland in July.

## Armenia, Karabakh 'Ready' for Another War

YEREVAN -- Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian warned Azerbaijan on Monday against attempting to win back Nagorno-Karabakh by force, saying that Armenian troops have significantly beefed up defense fortifications around the territory and are prepared for another war.

"As defense minister, I'm always getting ready for that," Ohanian said when asked about chances of renewed fighting for Karabakh at a meeting with students and the faculty of Yerevan State University.

"Both the entire army personnel and all of our veteran guys, mobilization resources know that the army com-

mand, including the defense minister, would be personally engaged in all hot and tough spots that might, God forbid, emerge on our the borders of our republic and Artsakh (Karabakh) in order to defend our people," he told them.

Ohanian says the Karabakh Armenian army backed by Armenia proper has in recent years further fortified its positions east and north of the territory in a way that precludes the success of any Azerbaijani offensive. "The Defense Army of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic has created such a system of fortifications which the enemy can not attack and overcome in a classical style," he said.

## U.S. Praises Armenian Court Ruling On Protocols Washington to Keep Pressing for Turkish-Armenian Normalization

WASHINGTON, DC -- The United States welcomed the ruling by Armenia's Constitutional Court on Turkish-Armenian Protocols effectively dismissing Turkey's claims that it runs counter to the two countries agreements.

"We view the court decision as a positive step forward in the ratification process of the normalization protocols between Turkey and Armenia," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon said in written comments sent to RFE/RL. "The court decision permits the protocols, as they were negotiated and signed, to move forward towards parliamentary ratification, and does not appear to limit or qualify them in any way."

"We are confident that both Turkey and Armenia take their commitment to the protocols seriously, and we urge timely ratification of the protocols by both countries," added Gordon.

"Our position remains the same," said Gordon. "We support the normalization process, which we believe contributes to peace and stability in the Caucasus. What is critical is to keep the parties focused on the vital importance of moving ahead."

The State Department also stated that it will continue to press for a speedy and unconditional implementation of the Turkish-Armenian normalization agreements despite mounting tensions between Ankara and Yerevan.

"Our position in private remains



our position in public, that stemming from the agreement between Turkey and Armenia late last year, it is important that both sides take steps to fulfill the commitments that they have made," department spokesman Philip Crowley told a news briefing in Washington.

"Obviously, we understand that this involves actions where the executive branch of each country working with their respective legislatures, and we will continue our conversations with both Turkey and Armenia to encourage them to ratify the agreement that was reached late last year," he said.

Crowley confirmed that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu discussed the latest snags in the ratification process in a phone call late last week. Davutoglu reportedly phoned Clinton to complain about the Armenian Constitutional Court ruling which Ankara claims runs counter to the two Turkish-Armenian "Protocols."

## Armenian-American Officers Sue Glendale Police Department Alleging Discrimination

GLENDALE -- Four Armenian-American officers and one former officer have filed a joint lawsuit against the Glendale Police Department, alleging years of discrimination, derogatory comments and harassment because of their race.

The suit was filed in federal court last week by officers John Balian and Robert Parseghian, sergeants Vahak Mardikian and Tigran Topadzhikyan, and former officer Benny Simonzad, who was once the department's spokesman.

The cops allege that they were subjected to ethnic epithets, harsher reprimands and closer scrutiny as a result of their heritage.

Simonzad was demoted from his position as spokesman and then fired in 2008. He's also suing to get his job back.

Balian testified on behalf of Simonzad, and was later demoted from his position as a Police Department spokesman to a patrol officer, according to the lawsuit.

Other officers in the lawsuit claim

they were denied requests for transfers and promotions, and were disciplined for issues that non-Armenian officers were not reprimanded for. Due to the constant discrimination and harassment, the officers allege in the lawsuit that they suffered "humiliation, emotional distress, and mental and physical pain and anguish."

City Attorney Scott Howard calls allegations of discrimination in the Glendale department "utterly false."

The cops' attorney, Carney Shegerian, noted that officers of Armenian heritage are underrepresented on the force in relation to Armenian-Americans' population numbers in Glendale.

In a statement from the attorney the city was called out for having a police department that "has allowed itself to systemically discriminate against an ethnic group that, in large part, fled their homelands to avoid ethnic persecution."

In a city with a population that's nearly half Armenian-American, the lawsuit threatened to draw out some of the political tensions of years past.