Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 15271
20 April 2021

The deployment of mercenaries in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Birgir THÓRARINSSON and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The long-running conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan dates back to the waning days of the Soviet Union. On 27 September 2020, there was again an open war in Nagorno-Karabakh, the most intense fighting since the early 1990s, which has inevitably led to humanitarian tragedies.

There is a strong indication that mercenaries, from terrorist groups in the Middle East, took part in the war alongside Azerbaijan. The mercenaries themselves have reported being hired and transported to the region by Turkey. The deployment of mercenaries is prohibited by numerous international mechanisms, which are binding, including on Azerbaijan and Turkey. Moreover, by realising the importance of collective fight against the activities of foreign fighters and mercenaries, the international community has obliged States to prevent and suppress such practices. Relevant international mechanisms include the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries of 1989, and the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, where the term mercenary is also defined. Furthermore, both Azerbaijan and Turkey are parties to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. The UN Human Rights Council Resolution 42/9, adopted on 26 September 2019, strongly condemns the use of mercenaries in warfare. This resolution considers the activities of mercenaries a threat to peace, security and human rights.

The Parliamentary Assembly should investigate claims that mercenaries have been deployed in the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, and upon confirming such claims, should strongly condemn the use of mercenaries by Council of Europe member States.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC/DA: European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left