

Madrid Principles for Armenia Azerbaijan Conflict

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In News

The recent outbreak of violence along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border is extremely worrisome for observers because of fears that it might uncontrollably spiral into another **war between the two South Caucasus states**. These former Soviet republics were embroiled in a **bitter conflict from 1988-1994 over the Azerbaijani region of Nagorno-Karabakh**, which was an **autonomous republic populated mostly by ethnic Armenians at the time of the USSR's dissolution** that **wanted to unite with Armenia instead of remaining part of an independent Azerbaijan**.

More About Madrid Principles

- The Madrid principles were **proposed in 2007 and updated in 2009**.
- The **American, French and Russian co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk Group** offered this pragmatic series of suggestions that both Armenia and Azerbaijan expressed interest in, though they importantly differ on their interpretations of this document.
- It basically calls for **Armenia to withdraw its military from universally recognized Azerbaijani territory in exchange for Baku granting de-facto autonomy to Nagorno-Karabakh**, pending a **referendum** on its final political status following the voluntary return of its displaced population.
- They provided for a **prohibition on the use of force**, respect for territorial integrity, and **recognition of the equal right to self-determination**.

- A **corridor** is also supposed to be created for **linking this disputed region with Armenia** because it's officially separated from it by a small sliver of territory. International peacekeepers are expected to deploy to the region too.
- One of the most significant guidelines was Nagorno-Karabakh's **right to self-governance and the election of officials with legislative and executive powers** during the interim period preceding a plebiscite.
- Nagorno-Karabakh would establish **judicial institutions, conduct external relations** in certain areas, have representation on OSCE forums relevant to bilateral matters and, crucially, be **accorded representation in international organisations** where statehood was not a constraint.
- The above catalogue in effect amounts to the grant of statehood for Nagorno-Karabakh in all but name.
- Armenia and the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh suspect that Azerbaijan won't honor its commitments, and Azerbaijan worries that Armenia will try to insincerely reinterpret parts of the Madrid Principles to indefinitely delay this process.
- This unresolved conflict has the potential to destabilize the entire region because of **Russia's mutual defense obligations to Armenia via the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and Turkey's promises to aid its Azerbaijani ally** in the event of another war.

