

Azeris Threaten to Shoot Aircraft

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Azerbaijan may shoot down aircraft that try to fly to the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region when its only civilian airport reopens in May, said Arif Mammadov, head of the Azeri civil aviation agency.

"The airspace over Nagorno-Karabakh is closed," Mammadov said in the capital, Baku, on Thursday in comments reported by APA news service. "Azerbaijan's aviation law allows us to destroy aircraft that fly there."

The government has alerted the International Civil Aviation Organization about the issue, he said. His comments were confirmed by the agency's press service.

The airport in Nagorno-Karabakh has been closed since a war over the region between Armenia and Azerbaijan after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The conflict left Nagorno-Karabakh under Armenian control.

Oil-exporting Azerbaijan is building its military and has threatened to take back Nagorno-

Karabakh by force if peace talks mediated by the United States, Russia and France fail.

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