Karabakh Eyes Making Russian an Official Language

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The disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh has long been a point of geopolitical and ethnic conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. **Alexander Ryumin / TASS**

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The unrecognized republic of Nagorno-Karabakh has introduced a bill to add Russian as an official language alongside Armenian, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency [reported](#) Wednesday.

The bill follows a recent Russia-brokered peace deal that saw Azerbaijan regain most of its former territories in the region, including the strategic city of Shusha, from Armenian control. Nearly 2,000 Russian peacekeepers were [deployed](#) to Nagorno-Karabakh for a renewable five-year mandate under the deal.

In an explanatory note on the reasons for introducing the draft bill, its authors cited "cultural, military and economic relations" between Nagorno-Karabakh and Russia, historical memory

and the fact that many residents already speak Russian as their second language.

"The long-term presence of Russian peacekeepers in Artsakh; the awareness of the need to jointly solve numerous social and communication problems; and cooperation in the areas of construction, healthcare, education, and science require a reassessment of the role of the Russian language," RIA Novosti quoted the document submitted to the National Assembly as saying.

The disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh has long been a point of geopolitical and ethnic conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, with a deadly six-week war breaking out in the region in September 2020.

The latest conflict came amid a decades-long dispute over Karabakh, an ethnic Armenian region that broke away from Azerbaijan during a war in the 1990s when borders were redrawn following the Soviet collapse.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has [called](#) for stronger ties with Russia while Azerbaijan aligned itself with Turkey during the latest fighting.

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