

Putin to Host Armenia, Azerbaijan Leaders as Fighting Renews

By [AFP](#)

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Russian President Vladimir Putin will host the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan this week, days after some of the worst fighting between the Caucasus foes since last year's war over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Kremlin said Tuesday.

Putin will hold talks with Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijan's Ilham Aliyev in Russia's Black Sea resort of Sochi on Friday.

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The trio will meet on Putin's initiative, the Kremlin said in a statement.

The Kremlin said the talks are "timed to coincide" with the anniversary of a Russian-mediated ceasefire, signed in November last year, that ended six weeks of fighting over the

long-disputed Nagorno-Karabakh.

The deal saw Armenia cede swathes of territory it had controlled for decades.

The Kremlin said the leaders will discuss "outlining further steps to strengthen stability and establish peace in the region."

Earlier this month, clashes broke out on the shared border between Armenia and Azerbaijan with both sides reporting casualties and blaming each other for the fighting.

Russia stepped in to mediate, with Moscow's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu negotiating a ceasefire.

Pashinyan and Aliyev last met in January in the Russian capital.

Last year's war claimed the lives of more than 6,500 people.

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