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Putin Urges ‘Restraint’ After Armenia, Azerbaijan Fighting

By AFP

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Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday said Moscow was worried about fresh fighting between ex-Soviet countries Armenia and Azerbaijan, calling on the historic foes to negotiate solutions to their territorial disputes.

"I want to underscore that any conflict scenarios between countries close to us cause us serious concern," the Russian leader said in televised remarks.

Fighting flared last week between the Caucasus countries, leaving more than 200 dead in the worst flare-up since a war in 2020.

That six-week war ended with more than 6,500 deaths and a Russian peace deal, with Moscow dispatching thousands of peacekeeping forces.

"We call on everyone to exercise restraint, strictly observe the ceasefire and firmly follow the

tripartite statements of the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia," Putin said.

Putin's call comes after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday urged peace between the arch foes as he brought together their top diplomats for the first time since the deadly border clashes.

During a visit to Yerevan last weekend, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi blamed Baku for "illegal" attacks on Armenia, condemning an "assault on the sovereignty" of the country.

The growing U.S. diplomatic engagement challenges Russia's role as the region's powerbroker, with frustration brewing in Yerevan over the lack of support from traditional ally Moscow, which is distracted by its war in Ukraine.

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