

Azerbaijan's Aliyev Apologizes for Russian Peacekeeper Deaths in Karabakh

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Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev has apologized for the deaths of Russian peacekeepers killed during Baku's military campaign this week to regain control of the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, the Kremlin [said](#) Thursday.

"[Aliyev] emphasized that the most thorough investigation into the incident will be carried out and all those responsible will be duly punished," the Kremlin said in a statement.

Russia's Defense Ministry [said](#) one of its vehicles came under small-arms fire while returning from an observation post on Wednesday, near a Karabakh village that bears the Azeri name of Janyatag and the Armenian name of Chankatagh.

"As a result of the shelling, the Russian servicemen in the vehicle were killed," the ministry said without specifying the number of peacekeepers who perished.

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Rybar, a pro-war channel on the Telegram messaging app with reported [links](#) in Russia's military, [said](#) two Russian soldiers were inside the vehicle when it was hit, though this information could not be independently confirmed.

One of the soldiers was identified as Ivan Kovgan, deputy chief of the Northern Fleet's submarine forces, a Russian Navy veterans' club [reported](#) Thursday.

Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry [identified](#) the vehicle as a Russian-made UAV Patriot SUV.

"In order to investigate all the causes of the incident, the investigative authorities of Azerbaijan and Russia are working on the spot," the Azeri ministry said in a statement.

It called for "patience" during the probe and expressed condolences to the Russian military and the soldiers' relatives.

Russia's Defense Ministry, meanwhile, said its peacekeepers helped 5,000 of the 10,000 residents who fled Karabakh during Azerbaijan's two-day military operation.

Russia sent the peacekeepers to mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 as part of a deal to end a six-week war in which Azerbaijan recaptured parts of the region.

On the same day as the 2020 ceasefire agreement, an Azerbaijani anti-air missile [shot down](#) a Russian Mi-24 helicopter gunship as it was escorting a Russian military convoy, killing two crewmen.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenian separatists seized Nagorno-Karabakh — internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan — which sparked a war that left 30,000 people dead and displaced hundreds of thousands.

AFP contributed reporting.

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