

**Committee:** Special Political and Decolonization (GA4)

**Issue:** The Question of State Independence in the Balkan and Caucasus Region

**Student Officer:** Lydia Douvleti

**Position:** Co-chair

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## **PERSONAL INTRODUCTION**

Dear Delegates,

My name is Lydia Douvleti, and I am an upcoming 11th grader at Anatolia College in Thessaloniki. It is my utmost honor and joy to serve as one of the co-Chairs of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee in the 5th DSTMUN session. I would like to welcome you to our committee and congratulate you for participating in one of the most challenging GAs.

I have been a part of the MUN world for three years now, participating in six MUN conferences as a member of the press team and numerous times as a delegate. This will be my first time participating as a student officer and I am beyond excited for this new experience.

Through my participation in MUN I was able to acquire knowledge regarding topics of great importance, become involved with politics, improve my debate and public speaking skills, unravel new aspects of myself as well as meet new people and establish friendships. I can proudly express that MUN has been an immense chapter of my life, has helped me grow as a person and become who I am today. I hope I can pass on what I have gained to each and every one of you.

As far as your participation is concerned this study guide strives to provide you with the rudimental information regarding the state independence of several nations in the Balkan and Caucasus region. I hope it deems to be helpful. However, since this topic is of high complexity, it requires additional research on your nation's policies in order to have fruitful and constructive debate throughout the duration of the conference. I encourage you to look over the bibliography section for numerous useful sources.

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions on the topic or in general via email: [20181033@student.anatolia.edu.gr](mailto:20181033@student.anatolia.edu.gr). I am sure you will all perform great! I can't wait to meet you in November!

Bests regards,

Lydia Douvleti

## TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Caucasus is a mountainous geographical area, located on the edge of Europe, intersecting between the Black and Caspian Sea, crossing through 4 countries: Russia, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The Balkan Peninsula is Europe's third largest southeastern peninsula. Additionally, the Balkans neighbor the northwest of Italy, northern Hungary, the northeastern parts of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as the south of Greece, and Turkey.

The Balkan Wars were two military engagements that cost the Ottoman Empire all of its remaining European territory. The Balkan League beat the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkan War, which forfeited the Greek region of Macedonia and Albania under the terms of the according peace treaty, the Treaty of London (1913). After Serbia, Greece, and Romania clashed with Bulgaria over the sharing of their joint gains in Macedonia, the Second Balkan War erupted. Bulgaria lost, and Greece and Serbia split the rest of Macedonia among themselves. The battles escalated tensions in the Balkan region and contributed to the outbreak of World War I.

The conflicts also impacted the nations involved individually. More specifically, Kosovo, formerly an independent territory within Yugoslavia, was put under Serbia's governance in 1989. This raised objections from the region's Albanian populace. The Kosovo crisis erupted from an Albanian separatist revolt, culminating NATO air attacks and the evacuation of Yugoslav and Serbian forces. In the beginning of January 1999, the region was under the control of the United Nations. In 2008, Kosovo proclaimed independence from Serbia, but it is widely recognized as a breakaway state.

The Georgian-Russian conflict in the Caucasus region revolves around the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which, once autonomous states within Georgia, are now seeking for recognized independence following wars, protests, disputes, claims of ethnic and cultural cleansing of the locals in these two regions, and massive casualties (including innocent civilians and Russian peacekeepers). However, most nations do not recognize them as sovereign independent states, with the exception of the Russian Federation, which has vigorously promoted them.

Nagorno-Karabakh has also been an impending conflict for the past few years. The Cold War impacted the possession of this region when official power over it was passed on to Azerbaijan. Armenia and Azerbaijan both make claims to Nagorno-Karabakh, mainly with historical ties to the land. Regardless of their respective policies, the region has expressed a pro-Armenian sentiment. In spite of the former, due to multiple conflicts between the two states, including the recent outbreak of fighting in 2020, Armenia has been treated disproportionately, by losing sovereignty over parts of its own territory.

The Balkan and Caucasus conflicts have been closely correlated by historians and researchers. Both conflicts have caused severe damage in these regions regarding political stability, economic crises, and massive casualties. They have also brought up the question of some states' independence and sovereignty, which are involved in the conflicts. Those breakaway states are, as mentioned above, mainly Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno Karabakh and Kosovo, which will be further analyzed below. It is important to note, prior to reading the study guide, that these areas' independence and sovereignty are more dependent on the interests and politics of other nations, than on themselves and their internal growth.



Figure 1: The Balkan and Caucasus Region

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### Independence

“A condition of a person, nation, country, or state in which residents and population, or some portion thereof, exercise self-government, and usually sovereignty, over its territory. The opposite of independence is the status of a dependent territory”.<sup>1</sup>

### Autonomous Region

“An area of a country that has a degree of autonomy or has freedom from an external authority. It is typical for it to be geographically distant from the country, or to be populated by a national minority”.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Google Editors. “Independence - Google Arts & Culture.” Google, Google, 2014, <https://artsandculture.google.com/entity/independence/m0gwb1?hl=en>.

<sup>2</sup> DBpedia Editors. “Autonomous Areas.” *DBpedia*, [https://dbpedia.org/page/List\\_of\\_autonomous\\_areas\\_by\\_country#:~:text=An%20autonomous%20area%20is%20defined,autonomous%20areas%20are%20often%20federacies](https://dbpedia.org/page/List_of_autonomous_areas_by_country#:~:text=An%20autonomous%20area%20is%20defined,autonomous%20areas%20are%20often%20federacies).

### Breakaway Region

“A group/region, etc that has separated itself from a larger group or region because of a disagreement”.<sup>3</sup>

### Sovereignty

“A political concept that refers to dominant power or supreme authority. In a monarchy, supreme power resides in the "sovereign", or king. In modern democracies, sovereign power rests with the people and is exercised through representative bodies such as Congress or Parliament”.<sup>4</sup>

### Balkan Region

“Are usually characterized as comprising Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia—with all or part of each of those countries located within the peninsula”.<sup>5</sup>

### Ceasefire

“An agreement, usually between two armies, to stop fighting in order to allow discussions about peace”.<sup>6</sup>

### Elements of State

“A state must, therefore, possess the essential elements of state which are population, territory, government, sovereignty”.<sup>7</sup>

### Proxy Warfare

“A proxy war occurs when a major power instigates or plays a major role in supporting and directing a party to a conflict but does only a small portion of the actual fighting itself”.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cambridge Editors. “Breakaway.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english/breakaway>.

<sup>4</sup> “Sovereignty.” *Legal Information Institute*, Legal Information Institute, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/sovereignty#:~:text=Sovereignty%20is%20a%20political%20concept,such%20as%20Congress%20or%20Parliament>.

<sup>5</sup> “Balkans.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., <https://www.britannica.com/place/Balkans>.

<sup>6</sup> “Ceasefire.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ceasefire>.

<sup>7</sup> Burakowski, Beau. “Essential Elements of State.” *Political Science*, 19 Aug. 2021, <https://www.politicalscienceview.com/essential-elements-of-state/>.

<sup>8</sup> Byman, Daniel L. “Why Engage in Proxy War? A State's Perspective.” *Brookings*, Brookings, 9 Mar. 2022, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/05/21/why-engage-in-proxy-war-a-states-perspective/>.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Unlike other nations in Central and Eastern Europe, the current Balkan and Caucasus states that will be referred to were not sovereign throughout the Cold War, but were instead part of federal frameworks, the remnants of which are still alive. In most cases, independence was gained through violent breakouts. Following border disputes and civil wars, as well as times of socio-economic distress, the two areas are marked by diverse migratory tendencies.

### The Balkan Wars

The Balkan Wars were two subsequent military wars that lasted from 1912 to 1913 and kicked off an era of violence in southeastern Europe until 1918. Nevertheless, their impact has stood the test of time, having lasted until the twentieth century in various ways, such as Kosovo's independence which will be analyzed below.

These Balkan wars arose from the ambitions of southeastern European nationalist states. These states had gained independence from the Ottoman Empire at the time, and they strived to incorporate members of their nationalities still subject to Ottoman rule. Hence, to gain back "lost territory" the Balkan League members: Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia, attempted to mimic the 19th century nationalist victories of Germany and Italy in this manner. Those conflicts resulted in the Ottoman Empire losing all of its existing European territory, apart from Greece.

The Balkan League members fought the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkan War. The start of the first Balkan War was on the 8th of October. Montenegro was the one who declared it by initiating hostilities in Turkey and its allies followed. Then, on October 17, prior to the involvement of the other league members, the Ottomans declared war on the Balkan League. The Balkan allies were indeed successful.

Moving on, the disagreement between Bulgaria and the rest of its partners from the First Balkan War over the sharing of their joint gains in Macedonia, led to the start of the Second Balkan War. Serbia and Greece joined forces against Bulgaria on June 1, 1913, and the war broke out on June 29–30, 1913, when Bulgarian soldiers were ordered to assault Serbian and Greek forces in Macedonia.

The outcome of the Balkan Wars was as follows. To begin with, Greece was now in full control of southern Macedonia as well as the island of Crete. Serbia was now in charge of Kosovo and expanded throughout northern and central Macedonia. Albania gained independence under the leadership of a German monarch. However, there were many casualties and it led to the detachment of Bulgaria from Russia,

with which it had closely cooperated in the previous years. Lastly, it led to the creation of autonomous regions which were or are still in conflict to this day.

### The Cold War and the Balkans

Following World War II (WWII), the United States and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR), as well as their allies, engaged in proxy warfare. The Cold War was fought mostly on governmental, financial, and media fronts, with the limited use of military force. In a 1945 article, the English writer George Orwell coined the word to depict a nuclear standoff between "two or three massive super-states, each armed with a weapon capable of wiping out millions of civilians in a few seconds".<sup>9</sup>

The Balkans played a crucial role in defining the Cold War, ten years after WWII. The eruption of civil war in Greece in December 1944 marked the Cold War's first major confrontation. Prior to the German surrendering in May 1945, an ideologically generated war over Trieste threatened to bring the Communist Yugoslav People's Army, as well as British and American troops, into an armed battle. As WWII came to a conclusion, a schism between ideologically opposing coalitions began to emerge in the Balkans.

Three years later, the region experienced the primary strategic realignment between the two alliances as a consequence of the war between Moscow and Belgrade, and Yugoslavia's ejection from the Soviet 'camp.' The subsequent five-year conflict among Yugoslavia and the USSR and its partners shattered any notion of the communist movement having a united front. Moreover, the break spurred Yugoslavia's leader, Josip Broz Tito, together with India's Jawaharlal Nehru and Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, to seek a multilateral alternative to the two-tier Cold War front, and gradually, to assist in the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement.<sup>10</sup>

Ultimately, as newly released Eastern European archives have proved, the tentative Soviet–Yugoslav normalisation that preceded Joseph Stalin's death in 1953 had a considerable influence on the de-Stalinization process in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

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<sup>9</sup> Britannica Editors. "Cold War." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cold-War>.

<sup>10</sup> Rajak, Svetozar. "The Cold War in the Balkans, 1945–1956 (Chapter 10) - the Cambridge History of the Cold War." *Cambridge Core*, Cambridge University Press, 28 Sept. 2010, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/cambridge-history-of-the-cold-war/cold-war-in-the-balkans-19451956/F98B74B17EA426A0C1AACE35C1FB432D>.

### The case in Kosovo

Kosovo became an independent territory of Serbia in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFR Yugoslavia) following WWII. Kosovo alongside Vojvodina were designated as Socialist Autonomous Provinces inside Serbia in the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution. Simply put, it essentially had identical rights to the SFR Yugoslavia's six component Socialist Republics: Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia, and what is known today as Northern Macedonia.

Riots erupted and were severely suppressed in 1981 after Kosovo Albanians campaigned for full Republic status for Kosovo. Slobodan Milosevic rose to power in Belgrade in the late 1980s by leveraging the concerns of Kosovo's Serbian minority. He abolished Kosovo's sovereignty and enforced direct authority from Belgrade in 1989. Most ethnic Albanian state personnel were fired, and their jobs were taken over by Serbs. In reaction, Kosovo Albanian politicians, led by Ibrahim Rugova, launched a nonviolent resistance campaign in the early 1990s. They formed a parallel administration that was mostly sponsored by the Albanian diaspora. When this movement failed to produce results, an armed opposition in the form of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) arose in 1997. The fundamental purpose of the KLA was to ensure Kosovo's independence.

Milosevic launched a harsh police and military campaign against the KLA towards the end of 1998, which included extensive humanitarian crimes against civilians. Milosevic's refusal to sign the Rambouillet Accords prompted a NATO military effort to end the conflict in Kosovo. This campaign, which lasted from March to June in 1999, principally consisted of aerial bombing of a union between Serbia and Montenegro, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FR Yugoslavia), particularly Belgrade. Milosevic surrendered after 78 days of bombardment. Shortly after, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1244 (1999), which suspended Belgrade's rule over Kosovo and put it under the administration of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), as well as authorizing a NATO peacekeeping force. In addition, Resolution 1244 envisioned a political process to determine Kosovo's future position.

After decades of being a part of Serbia, Kosovo officially proclaimed independence on February 17, 2008. Serbia, supported by Russia, declared the proclamation unconstitutional. Serbs in Kosovo were also generally opposed to Kosovo's independence. Thus, they quickly formed their own parliament as a direct challenge to Kosovo's new constitution, which went into force in June. Following a request by Serbia, the UN General Assembly referred the validity of Kosovo's sovereignty to the ICJ in October.

Meanwhile, Russian opposition delayed the exit of the UN mission, which was scheduled to eventually shift supervisory powers to the European Union (EU). In December, the EU's European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) mission was ultimately dispatched. EULEX, made up of roughly 2,000 officials from various European nations, would be in charge of police, judicial procedures, and other services.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) found in 2010 that Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia had not broken international law. Based on that judgment, the UN tasked the EU with repairing relations between the two countries. This was meant to happen through a procedure known as the Brussels Dialogue. After seven years of discussions (2011-2018), 33 agreements were made, however none were completely executed. Kosovo and Serbia are still technically at war; there is no conflict settlement, peace treaty, reconciliation process, mutual recognition, complete diplomatic ties, or boundary demarcation.

To this day, multiple nations recognize Kosovo as an independent state, however, there are some, depicted in the map below, that still greatly oppose it. Greece and Serbia have been some of the most persistent states following Russia's continuous work.

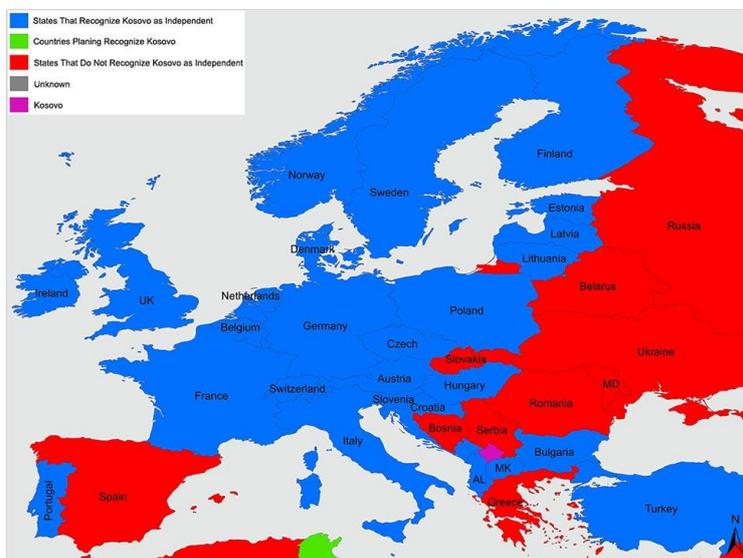


Figure 2: Map of countries in Europe that do or do not recognize Kosovo

### The Caucasus Situation

The continuous conflicts and controversies spiked mainly concern Nagorno-Karabakh (between Armenia and Azerbaijan), Abkhazia and South Ossetia (between Georgia and Russia) and lastly Russia's instability in the Northern Caucasus.

#### Nagorno-Karabakh

The issue in the south of Caucasus all commenced with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which led to the formation of many new states or reformulated pre-existing ones. The territory of Nagorno-Karabakh was incorporated with the Azerbaijan Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR) during the rule of the USSR, a decision made by Joseph Stalin after the fall of the Russian empire, at a time when tensions between the two newly independent countries were rising in order to claim the region. The USSR disintegrated in 1991, when Armenia and Azerbaijan, along with many other governments, declared their independence. As a result, tensions in the disputed territory reached a boiling point, resulting in conflict. It concluded in 1994 with a cease-fire after both parties signed the Bishkek Protocol, which stipulated that Nagorno-Karabakh would stay part of Azerbaijan. Since this ceasefire the nations have failed to find common ground.

Despite the fact that the worst part of the conflict ended in 1993, the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh remains unresolved. Both Azeris and Armenians claim historic possession of the territory, which is located inside Azerbaijan but is mostly populated by Armenians. The most recent flare-up of this long-running dispute came at the end of the Soviet era when the autonomous area of Nagorno-Karabakh requested to join Armenia. Severe conflict broke out in 1991, and in the two years that followed, Armenian forces not only took control of Nagorno-Karabakh, but also controlled over 20% of Azerbaijani land. The authorities of the Nagorno-Karabakh area declared independence, although no state has acknowledged this position. More than 15,000 people were killed in the battle between Azeris and Armenians.

In September 2020, a large conflict broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Apart from the great amount of damage both parties suffered, this eruption of conflict magnified political instability, deteriorated their economies respectively, and caused vast casualties. Eventually in November 2020 an important peace agreement was signed between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia over Nagorno-Karabakh that actually served as a ceasefire aiming to end all hostilities. Despite its optimistic expectation, it did not manage to assure peace even temporarily, with conflicts still spiking. Nagorno-Karabakh has also tried to negotiate the enduring issues in Caucasus and proposed numerous resolutions to the UN Security Council, however the two parties could not find common ground. Unfortunately, they were unable to conclude in a resolution, mostly due to the lack of trust on both sides.

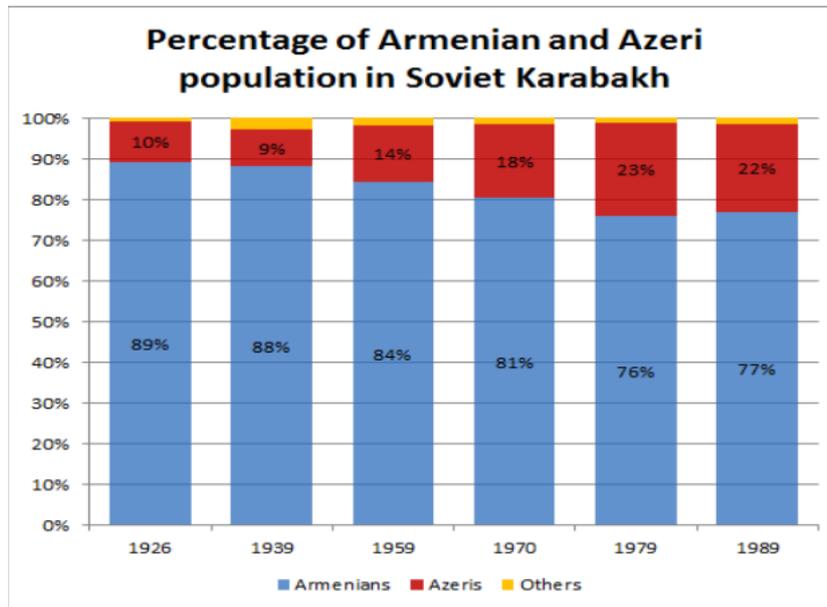


Figure 3: Percentage of Armenian and Azeri population in Nagorno-Karabakh during their past disputes

### Abkhazia - South Ossetia

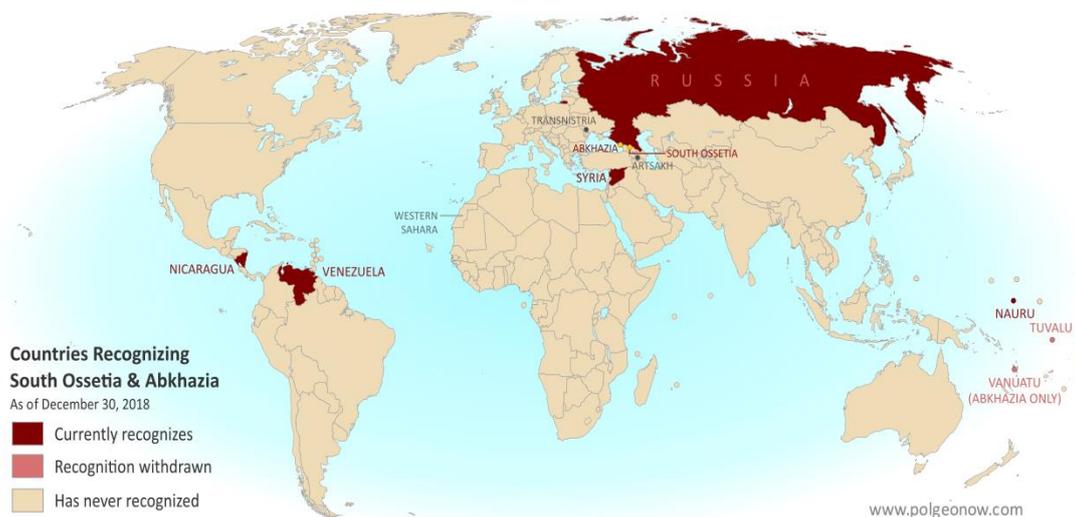
South Ossetia is found in the northern part of Georgia and has a border with Russia's Autonomous Republic of North Ossetia. Originally, Ossetians were settled in North Ossetia until 1922. They were then divided into North and South Ossetia. In the late 1980s, 66.2% of South Ossetia's 100,000-person population was Ossetian, while 29% was Georgia.<sup>11</sup> During the Cold War, South Ossetia was an Autonomous Oblast, which was less than being an Autonomous Republic of the Soviet Union. South Ossetia and Georgia both claim history to justify their claims to self-determination. South Ossetians advocate that their long-lasting existence somewhat gives them a form of autonomy.

Abkhazia is a region in Northwest Georgia on the Black Sea coast that shares a border with Russia. In the Soviet era, Abkhazians made up just 17.8 % of the 525,000-person population, while Georgians made up 45.7% of the population.<sup>12</sup> Despite the fact that Abkhazians have the same religion as Georgians, they do not share the same ethnic heritage and speak a language unrelated to Georgian. The Soviet Union's federal framework of ethnic regions included four tiers. The Soviet Union awarded Abkhazia the title of Autonomous Republic, which means that despite being a minority, Abkhazia was in a beneficial position.

<sup>11</sup> Buzaladze, Giorgi. "The Spectrum of Georgia's Policy Options towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia." *e-Ir*, 3 Mar. 2020, <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/03/02/the-spectrum-of-georgias-policy-options-towards-abkhazia-and-south-ossetia/>.

<sup>12</sup> Buzaladze, Giorgi. "The Spectrum of Georgia's Policy Options towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia." *e-Ir*, 3 Mar. 2020, <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/03/02/the-spectrum-of-georgias-policy-options-towards-abkhazia-and-south-ossetia/>.

At the end of the 1980s, as the Soviet Union collapsed and Georgian nationalism rose, hostilities between Georgia and Abkhazia grew. The relationship between the two was strained throughout the Cold War as well, since Abkhazia's fear of Georgian supremacy heightened tensions. Georgia's increasing nationalism resulted in its proclamation of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Then, the Georgian government revoked Abkhazia's Autonomous Republic designation. In response to Georgia's moves toward independence, Abkhazia demanded more regional autonomy and published the Lykhny Declaration, advocating separation from the Georgian SSR in return for belonging to a union with Russia. Georgia's fear of Abkhazia's independence sparked widespread anti-Abkhazian rallies across the country.



## Conclusion

Taking all the above into consideration, the Balkan Wars, the Cold War, and the Caucasus conflicts influenced the independence of the countries involved greatly. The unities formed in the conflicts resulted in the formation of new alliances that advocate for or against the recognition of Kosovo and South Ossetia-Abkhazia. It requires great effort and consideration in regard to the historical facts and parameters analysed in the above sections (citizens' nationality, years of existence, self-proclamation, UN involvement, etc.) to reach a unanimous conclusion on the status of these nations. However, as mentioned in the introduction, most of the time a nation's own opinion is overlooked in the name of "grand" interests, which continues to heighten tensions and instability in such regions.

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

## **Serbia**

Serbia is the main country involved in the Kosovo Situation. As described in the Kosovo section above, it does not recognize Kosovo as an independent sovereign state. These two nations are technically “in war” since they do not seem to find common ground in any of the discussions. In fact, as of recently, Serbian Foreign Minister Nikola Selakovic announced that Serbia was informed that four additional countries have revoked recognition of Kosovo as an independent state, and that Serbia will continue its de-recognition campaign after its former province applied for affiliation from the Council of Europe.

## **Georgia**

Russia now occupies around 20% of Georgia's land. The inaction of Georgia exacerbates the situation at the borders. The term "creeping occupation", which refers to one side pushing the boundary further into the territory of another, has become an unavoidable reality. The Russian military has been known to place barbed-wire barriers in locals' backyards, preventing them from harvesting. More serious cases include violence against Georgian nationals for "illegally crossing the border", which frequently result in brutal beatings or killings of the kidnapped. Pushing the borders endangers the US-backed Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which is controlled by British Petroleum. If South Ossetia were to confiscate the pipeline, Georgia would face serious economic and political consequences, including lost earnings and another roadblock to the EU and NATO.

### **South Ossetia and Abkhazia**

Abkhazia and South Ossetia's status to this day remains uncertain. Russia acknowledged Abkhazia and South Ossetia as separate entities following South Ossetian victory in the 2008 conflict. The international scene, notably the United States, the EU, and the Group of Seven, criticized the recognition, claiming it violated Georgia's territorial integrity. Apart from Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia are only formally recognized by five other countries (Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, and Syria). Abkhazia and South Ossetia have constantly rejected the Government of Georgia's offer to merge with Georgian territory. However, Georgia insists on preserving its historical lands. Negotiations regarding conflict settlement are taking place at the Geneva International Discussions involving all parties to the conflict, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the EU, and the UN, but with little to no success.

## **Armenia**

Armenia is one of the most prominent parties participating in the region, with its role as one of the four Caucasus states and one of the two nations primarily involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict taking center stage. Due to decades of historical and cultural links, the nation has asserted territorial claims over Nagorno-Karabakh. It may also be said that it is the one closest to Nagorno-Karabakh because the large majority of the region's residents are ethnic Armenians, and hence it has also served as its representation on many occasions, most notably in talks. Furthermore, they feel that this is not merely a struggle for the territory because of territorial claims, but also a fight to avoid genocide, which they fear is likely if the region does not achieve stability. Seeing as Armenia has already suffered greatly due to the genocide it faced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, its fear is only valid and fair to its citizens and its security.

### **Azerbaijan**

Azerbaijan is one of the two primary parties participating in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict being one of the nations of the South Caucasus. The republic has also acknowledged historical links with the region. At the time, it was the country which Nagorno-Karabakh fell under. Simultaneously, there were speculations that Azerbaijan purposely raised tensions in order for the situation to grow into war, which, as has been mentioned, had the upper hand in 2020 due to their considerably greater military defense budget in comparison to Armenia. It has also greatly profited from the newly concluded peace accord. President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan stated: "The negotiations have brought no results, but we are still prepared for the negotiating process".<sup>13</sup>

### **Russia**

The Russian Federation is the most powerful state in the Caucasus region and has been involved in these issues from the beginning. Overall, Russia sees eye to eye with Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, it has maintained cordial ties with both countries and has supplied both with weaponry. This can be a result of strained relations between Russia and Turkey, who have taken opposing stances in this conflict. Russia has participated in discussions and mediated many ceasefires and resolutions, the most notable of which ended the conflict in 1994 and another in November 2020. It has also committed peacekeeping forces to help preserve security, as it has done in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It is intimately implicated in the Georgian crisis since the inhabitants of Abkhazia and South Ossetia desired to be united with Russia rather than Georgia.

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<sup>13</sup> Rfe/rl. "Karabakh Cease-Fire Announced." *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, Karabakh Cease-Fire Announced, 5 Apr. 2016, <https://www.rferl.org/a/azerbaijan-armenia-nagorno-karabakh-fighting-continues/27655354.html>.

As far as the Kosovo case is concerned, Russia does not recognize Kosovo as an independent country despite its opinions on the Caucasus conflict. It is greatly and long-lastingly opposed to its independence and has expressed in the past that its declaration was invalid. It is characterized as one of the most significant differences in policy between two closely related conflicts (Caucasus and Balkan) by researchers.

### **United States of America (US)**

The US has been striving for a peace treaty between Serbia and Kosovo. The two parties were scheduled to meet for negotiations at the White House on June 27, 2020. Following the announcement of the meeting, the EU stated that the Brussels Dialogue would resume on June 25, 2020. On July 17<sup>th</sup> of the same year, President Macron called for meetings in Paris. The White House meeting was canceled after prosecutors in the Kosovo Specialist Chambers in The Hague accused Kosovan President Hashim Thaci on war crime charges. The US sought to resume the process through "economic cooperation", which would culminate in a definitive bilateral agreement on mutual state recognition. However, that possible conclusion to the dispute is improbable as long as Serbia refuses to recognize the Republic of Kosovo.

Concerning the issue in Georgia, the USA, alongside the EU, has sent diplomats to Georgia in order to resolve escalating tensions (2008). Like most nations, the USA did not recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states and condemned Russia for doing so on the basis that it violates the territorial integrity of Georgia.

### **Turkey**

Turkey, a major country bordering the Caucasus, is Azerbaijan's most important ally. In 1991, Turkey was the first country to recognize Azerbaijan as a sovereign state. Throughout the crisis, Turkey has supplied weaponry to the Azeri military and has been accused of recruiting Syrian soldiers to fight in Azerbaijan, an accusation that both Turkey and Syria have categorically refuted. To top it all off, the Turkish-Azerbaijani partnership is so tight-knit that Azerbaijan has actually insisted on inviting Turkish peacekeepers in addition to Russian peacekeepers who are already present, raising the prospect of the two nations' military operating in close proximity on a volatile front line. Turkey has considerable economic and security interests in the region, making it actively engaged in the Caucasus region.

When it comes to Kosovo, Turkey has harboured strong relations, based on its shared history and friendship with the breakaway state. Turkey recognized Kosovo on February 18, 2008, the day after its proclamation of independence. The Cooperation Bureau of the Republic of Turkey in Prishtina, originally established in 1999, was elevated to the position of an embassy in 2008. The Turkish Consulate

General in Prizren, where the majority of Kosovo's Turkish minority resides, began operations on September 1, 2015, making it the country's first diplomatic post.

### **European Union**

The EU's stance on the Nagorno-Karabakh topic is represented through France, who alongside the Russian Federation and the US, constitute the three co-chairs of the Minsk Group. It has proposed some resolutions concerning the Nagorno-Karabakh topic but has not been directly involved. On the other hand, it seems to be more involved in the issue surrounding Georgia, by providing a relatively neutral forum to the parties involved, facilitating the overall conflict management. Additionally, it has created the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia), a peacekeeping mission tasked with overlooking/monitoring the situation, rather useful for identifying signs of an escalation of the conflict in either of the two regions: South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Since 1999, the EU has taken the lead in the international endeavor to forge a new future for Kosovo. As part of the Western Balkans area, Kosovo has a distinct European worldview.

The European Union Office in Kosovo is critical in executing the EU agenda in the region, particularly in promoting European values. The Office facilitates continuous political and technical engagement between Kosovo and EU institutions. The EU is also involved in Kosovo through its Special Representative (EUSR), who advises and supports the Kosovo government, supervises the EU mission, and promotes human rights and basic freedoms. Furthermore, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo is part of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). However, there are still a great number of countries in Europe that do not recognize Kosovo, following Serbia's example.

### **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**

The Allies applaud Georgia's efforts to resolve the conflicts with South Ossetia and Abkhazia through peaceful means. They also applaud Georgia's independent actions toward Russia in recent years. Additionally, since June 1999, NATO has led a peacekeeping mission in Kosovo known as the Kosovo Force (KFOR). As of recently, Mr. Javier Colomina, the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, visited Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in May. He met with Armenia's President and Prime Minister, Georgia's Prime Minister, and Azerbaijan's President, as well as other top government officials, for political meetings.

### Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

With 57 member nations spanning Europe, Asia, and North America, the OSCE, created in 1975, is the world's biggest regional security organization. It addresses topics such as conflict avoidance, arms control, economic growth, natural resource management, and the promotion of human rights and basic freedoms. The OSCE established the Minsk Group in 1994 to mediate and oversee discussions and negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It has three co-chairs, France, Russia, and the United States, as well as a number of permanent members, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey.

### BLOCS EXPECTED

This specific topic is of great complexity and requires thorough analysis and debate. The division of the blocs can be done in several ways. The blocs mentioned below are by no means the only blocs that can be formed. However, it is a suggestion that would be highly beneficial to follow to create concrete resolutions and to remain complacent to each delegation's policy.

#### Bloc A

Bloc A is more intent on diplomatic dialogue, less conflict, and more collected views when it comes to states breaking away from the country as a whole. This bloc might propose making these breakaway states, autonomous states. This Bloc could include states such as Turkey, the US, and France.

#### Bloc B

Can be a bloc which recognizes or condemns the breakaway based on its own political gain and loss. It is true to its opinion and is set on debating on its views and promoting those as its policy to other states as fair and correct. This Bloc could include states such as Serbia, Russia, and Bulgaria.

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1912-1913	Balkan Wars: Serbia retakes possession of Kosovo from the Turks, which is recognized by the Treaty of London of 1913.

1918	Dissolution of the Russian Empire after the Russian Revolution a year prior.
1919	Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia declare independence, Nagorno-Karabakh is mutually claimed, and Abkhazia and South Ossetia refuse to become a part of Georgia.
November 1920	Nagorno-Karabakh is integrated with the Azerbaijan SSR.
April 20, 1922	South Ossetia becomes an autonomous oblast within Georgia.
December 30, 1922	Establishment of the USSR. Nagorno-Karabakh is integrated with the Azerbaijan SSR.
1947-1991	Cold War
1974	The Yugoslav constitution recognizes Kosovo's autonomous status, granting the province de facto self-government.
1978	The Abkhaz Autonomous Socialist Republic attempted but failed to separate from Georgia and join the Russian Republic.
September 20, 1990	South Ossetia proclaimed independence, seeking union with Russia's North Ossetia.
January 1992	Nagorno-Karabakh declared its independence, forming the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.
March 24, 1992	Formation of the Minsk Group.
May 29, 1992	Abkhazia declares independence which leads to an armed conflict.
May 1994	Ceasefire signed between Georgia and Abkhaz separatists and Russian peacekeepers are deployed to the

	border.
May 12, 1994	Ceasefire regime for Nagorno-Karabakh is implemented, with the help of Russia and the Minsk Group.
February 17, 2008	Kosovo proclaims independence. Serbia claims the declaration is unlawful.
October 8, 2008	International Court of Justice publishes the verdict on Kosovo's independence.
April 2-5, 2016	4-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan
September 2020	War between Armenia and Azerbaijan started with Azeris aiming to reclaim the areas lost in the original conflict. The casualties were severe, numbering in the low thousands lost.
November 2020	Ceasefire agreement signed by Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia over Nagorno-Karabakh.

## RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

### Amnesty International on the Kosovo case<sup>14</sup>

Amnesty International has brought attention to the conflict between Serbia and Kosovo since 1999, especially when it came to individuals guilty of severe human rights abuses, such as war crimes and crimes against humanity. Such incident occurred during Kosovo's internal armed war from 1998 to March of 1999, as well as later military conflicts. Amnesty International has diligently raised awareness in light of this conflict by highlighting instances of violation of human rights. It cooperated with the UNHRC and the UNMIK (mostly supervising UNMIK), two organizations closely connected to the situation. The successful measures implemented mainly concerned domestic and gender-based violence, women's rights, impunity for war crimes, ethnicity motivated killings, right of life and more. However, since Amnesty

<sup>14</sup> Amnesty International Editors. "Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro): United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK): Conclusions of the Human Rights Committee: 86th Session, July 2006. *Amnesty International*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/eur700112006en.pdf>.

International mainly highlights issues, but does not take action against such occurrences, its efforts can only help to a limited extent.

### **The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo**<sup>15</sup>

The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) was established in 2008 as the greatest humanitarian operation within the European Union's Common Security and Defence Policy. EULEX's overarching aim is to assist pertinent rule of law organizations in Kosovo on their journey to enhanced efficiency, sustainable development, multi-ethnicity, and accountability, free of political meddling. It also aims to ensure compliance with international human rights standards and agreed European practices.

### **Security Council on Georgia**<sup>16</sup>

In 2008-2009, the Security Council had 13 sessions, including 4 private meetings, and approved three resolutions related to the situation in Georgia. It also discussed various reports from the Secretary General that offered updates on the work of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). Furthermore, the Council focused on violence in South Ossetia, the six-point Ceasefire Agreement of August 12, 2008, and matters concerning the Russian Federation's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence. The results were promising, however not encouraging enough, since it concluded in the rejection of the extension of the mandate for UNOMIG. This may also have to do with increasing aggression in Russian policy regarding former Soviet territories.

### **Ceasefire Agreement and Resolutions on Nagorno Karabakh**<sup>17</sup>

Subsequent to the 2020 conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan the nations concluded on the adoption of a ceasefire accompanied by resolutions that would end all hostilities on Nagorno Karabakh. According to this deal, Azerbaijan would retain control of the sections of Nagorno-Karabakh that it took during the conflict, as well as seven districts around Nagorno-Karabakh that were previously under Armenian sovereignty. The Armenian military was obliged to withdraw from Nagorno-Karabakh and nearby regions. Ethnic Armenian citizens also fled Azerbaijani-controlled territory. The issue with this ceasefire, and previous ceasefires that were brokered, is that Armenia loses more and more of its territorial integrity as time goes on. These ceasefires have not proven to be effective, since conflict seems

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<sup>15</sup> EULEX Team. "Home." *EULEX European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo*, <https://www.eulex-kosovo.eu/>.

<sup>16</sup> "Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, 2008-2009 26. The situation in Georgia". *UN*, [https://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/2008-2009/Part%20I/Europe/08-09\\_Georgia.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/2008-2009/Part%20I/Europe/08-09_Georgia.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> BBC Editors. "Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia Sign Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Deal." *BBC News*, BBC, 10 Nov. 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54882564>.

to break out, with the end result favoring Azerbaijan. A treaty or an accord would prove more successful if both sides had equal opportunity to Nagorno-Karabakh.

## PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

### The Kosovo Case presided by the International Court of Justice (ICJ)

The General Assembly agreed on October 8, 2008 (resolution 63/3), to request an advisory opinion from the Court on the following question: “Is the unilateral declaration of independence by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo in accordance with international law ?”.<sup>18</sup> As a result, the Court determined that the ratification of the declaration of independence did not violate any applicable international law rule. On September 9, 2010, the General Assembly passed Resolution 64/298, in which it recognised the content of the Court's decision. Thus, the Court was successful since it contributed to the efforts of recognizing the independence of Kosovo.

### Security Council on Kosovo<sup>19</sup>

At the Security council of April 2022, both Serbia and Kosovo tried to portray the other as a representative of destabilisation at the recent UN Security Council meeting to discuss the UN Mission in Kosovo, due to the fact that peace and stability in the Balkan region could worsen while the war in Ukraine continues. The Council was not successful since disagreements arose and Kosovo was accused of being the source of instability in the region.

### United Nations Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)<sup>20</sup>

UNOMIG was created in August 1993 to monitor compliance with the ceasefire agreement reached between the Georgian government and Abkhaz authorities in Georgia. The mission of UNOMIG was expanded subsequent to the signing of the 1994 Agreement on Ceasefire and Separation of Forces by the parties. UNOMIG was terminated in June 2009 owing to a lack of agreement among Security Council members on extending the mandate.

### United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

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<sup>18</sup> ICJ Editors. “Latest Developments: Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo: International Court of Justice.” *Latest Developments | Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo | International Court of Justice*, 2008, <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/141>.

<sup>19</sup> Stojanovic, Milica. “Serbia, Kosovo Exchange Destabilisation Claims at UN Security Council.” *Balkan Insight*, 21 Apr. 2022, <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/04/21/serbia-kosovo-exchange-destabilisation-claims-at-un-security-council/>.

<sup>20</sup> Atlantic Council. “Georgia after UNOMIG and Eumm.” *Atlantic Council*, 16 Aug. 2019, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/georgia-after-unomig-and-eumm/>.

Following the declaration of independence by the Kosovo government and the entrance into effect of a new constitution on June 15, 2008, the mission's duties have been drastically adjusted to focus largely on the development of security, stability, and respect for human rights in Kosovo. Amnesty International stated that UNMIK has consistently failed to comply with or enforce international human rights legislation, particularly the ICCPR, which has been integrated into applicable law in Kosovo by UNMIK Regulations. Thus, with the assistance of HCR they supervised UNMIK's efforts leading to a somewhat positive outcome. It did manage to defuse a combustible situation, with notable accomplishments in the judicial and security departments. However, they failed to achieve their main goal, which was to reach an agreement with Serbia.

### **The Geneva Talks - Georgia's Breakaway States<sup>21</sup>**

The Geneva Talks have been long lasting efforts to tackle the Georgia-South Ossetia-Abkhazia issue. In 2008, the parties decided to form two working groups, one focused on security and stability and the other on IDPs and refugees. The first meeting was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October under controversy over the attendance of representatives from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and it finally broke down over procedural difficulties. The second discussion was more fruitful, and while there was no substantive progress, it was notable since it was the first time Georgian and Russian officials met and addressed the issue since the previous conflict. Further meetings took place, in the time period of 2008 to mid 2009, addressing different aspects of the conflicts however with no apparent result.

### **Recent Peace Talks on Nagorno Karabakh<sup>22</sup>**

Significant developments towards the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict occurred in April 2022. The EU hosted a summit in Brussels to discuss the frozen conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh, where they proposed a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia. If Armenia signs the peace deal with Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh will be acknowledged as part of Azerbaijan. As a second alternative, Armenia might begin discussions on several tracks (boundary delimitation/demarcation, restoration of communications, and peace treaty) but not rush to sign the treaty. If Armenia picks the second option, Azerbaijan may further contribute to instability in Armenia and Karabakh.

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<sup>21</sup> Buzaladze, Giorgi. "The Spectrum of Georgia's Policy Options towards Abkhazia and South Ossetia." *Er-Info*, 3 Mar. 2020, <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/03/02/the-spectrum-of-georgias-policy-options-towards-abkhazia-and-south-ossetia/>

<sup>22</sup> Poghosyan, Dr. Benyamin. "Armenia Faces a Critical Choice in Nagorno Karabakh." *The Armenian Weekly*, 27 Apr. 2022, <https://armenianweekly.com/2022/04/26/armenia-faces-a-critical-choice-in-nagorno-karabakh/>.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

### Caucasus Situation

#### Self-determination in Nagorno-Karabakh

Nagorno-Karabakh is admittedly under Azerbaijan's government. However, having seen multiple facts about the region above, and how the conflict came to be, it is only evident that the civilians living in this region wish to live under Armenian rule. Having examined the recent proposal of terms by Azerbaijan, mediated alongside the EU, it is imperative that the General Assembly ask for this conflict to be referred to the ICJ. Since the dispute is among two internationally recognized states of the UN, it is only reasonable that this dispute is to be solved in this manner. Self-determination is a right countries can exercise. After all, evidence from Guatemala's case against Belize, which sought for self-determination, can only help prevent genocide, increased displacement of civilians, and mass destruction against the Armenian population situated in the region of conflict. After all, "this was the very outcome multilateral diplomacy sought to avoid—and the reason why Cutler's expectation that 'real peace and reconciliation' can proceed from this point is entirely unrealistic".<sup>23</sup> The proceedings of the court will definitely take a long time, which is something neither parties can afford. Unfortunately, this is the last diplomatic "card" that can be played when it comes to the collision of disparaging interests these two member states have displayed. If either party proves that they fulfill the elements of state, this region will finally find peace and stability.

Armenians have suffered greatly from this conflict. As much as they would benefit from an ICJ case, Azerbaijan is overly persistent over its territorial "integrity" in relation to Nagorno-Karabakh. "The three parties will have to agree that there should be a recognition of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, coupled with actual self-government for Karabakh by local Armenians".<sup>24</sup> This was an opinion expressed in 1998. After the erosion of war in 2020, it is even more probable that Armenia will not stand for any more doubt of its sovereignty. The treaty proposed is damaging to Armenia and seeing as sovereignty is the main question with both states face, proposing a different accord will only allow for some concession from both sides. A proposal similar to what had been agreed upon between the Ottoman Empire and Smyrna would be fitting in this case. With the Treaty of Sevres, Greece was given control over Smyrna for five years, but the city would remain under the

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<sup>23</sup> Galitsky, Alex. "Peace on Azerbaijan's Terms Won't End the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict." *Foreign Policy*, 25 Aug. 2021, [foreignpolicy.com/2021/08/25/peace-on-azerbajians-terms-wont-end-the-nagorno-karabakh-conflict/](https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/08/25/peace-on-azerbajians-terms-wont-end-the-nagorno-karabakh-conflict/).

<sup>24</sup> Carley, Patricia. "Nagorno-Karabakh: Searching for a Solution." United States Institute of Peace, 1 Dec. 1998, [www.usip.org/publications/1998/12/nagorno-karabakh-searching-solution-0](https://www.usip.org/publications/1998/12/nagorno-karabakh-searching-solution-0).

Ottoman Empire. Then, after 5 years passed, the civilians of the region would vote for which party they wanted to “live under”. This treaty did not succeed at the time. However, the nature and the pretense of this treaty would most certainly fit Armenia and Azerbaijan’s interests and would be able to put an end to this dispute. There could certainly be fear of genocide, having seen previous conflicts, but in that case, the party who were to commit genocide would be subject to violations of international law and possible consequent sanctions.

### **Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Autonomy over Independence**

Abkhazia and South Ossetia have expressed their wishes to become a part of Russia, as its provinces. However, having seen the map in the according section, only Russia recognizes them as independent states. However, allowing these two regions to join Russia would be extremely destructive to Georgia’s economy, seeing as there is a petrol pipeline in South Ossetia. A viable, however difficult to achieve solution, would be granting autonomous state status to these two regions. Just as Wales and Scotland are under the United Kingdom, and are not independent countries, Abkhazia and South Ossetia would have the same status in Georgia. There are nuances that come with this, such as their being able to have respective partnerships with Russia, but with Georgia having the final say with their actions.

### **Balkan Situation**

#### **Recognition of Kosovo**

It is extremely difficult to find a solution to the Kosovo crisis that is acceptable to both sides involved in the conflict. The perspectives on the issue between nations vary exceedingly and various aspects need to be taken into consideration in order to reach a unanimous decision. For Kosovo, achieving independence—since Kosovo is only intent on its independence—should be done by a two-part referendum, which would be a referendum on recognizing Kosovo as an independent state in Serbia, where both leaders of both parties respectively would talk to the people via national broadcast. After the referendum would be taken once, it would be held six months after with the same speech process being repeated. The results would have to be considered by the Serbian government when moving forward with its policy on the matter. The loophole here is that it’s a referendum, so Serbia isn’t obliged to accept the judgement of the majority sentiment of its people, if the result is favourable to Kosovo. This surely may not be as productive of a solution; however, it is a proposal that would hold up in the UN, and delegates are highly encouraged to explore its possible outcomes.

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