
PAKISTAN SUPPORTS AZERBAIJAN IN RESTORATION OF LIBERATED LANDS

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Pakistan supports Azerbaijan in the restoration of the country's liberated territories, head of Pakistan's Center for Global and Strategic Studies Khalid Taimur Akram said at a presser at ADA University on April 11.

"Pakistan has extended its full support for the reconstruction of Azerbaijan's liberated lands, and hopes that the IDPs will return to their native lands very soon," Akram said.

He stressed that since the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict started, Pakistan was among the first countries supporting Azerbaijan.

"We saw that the Azerbaijani people were united during the Second Karabakh War, and we fully share Azerbaijan's joy over the liberation of its lands," the expert added.

He underlined that the relations between the two countries date back to 1991. Pakistan was among the first three countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence.

Addressing the presser, head of Washington-based Southfive Strategies consultancy Jason Epstein underlined that the international community must be actively involved in the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation process in Azerbaijan's liberated lands. He added that now when the COVID-19 has begun to pull back, there is an opportunity to move forward on these issues.

"Hopefully IDPs, the ones I saw here in Baku even back in 2008 when I first arrived here, would have an opportunity in the coming months to return to their homes," the expert added.

Furthermore, Turkish expert Professor Hasan Unal noted that Turkey provided great political and moral support to Azerbaijan during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He added that today Azerbaijan has become a strong country in the region.

Commenting on the post-conflict situation in the region, he emphasized that the initiatives put forward by Azerbaijani and Turkish presidents in terms of regional cooperation (cooperation platform of six countries) are extremely important and timely. Noting that it is expected that all countries of the region will take part in it, the expert underlined that whether Armenia will join the platform together with other countries of the region will depend on its domestic situation.

"I think all countries will benefit from regional cooperation. In addition, Azerbaijan achieved great success during the war through its foreign policy and diplomacy," he added.

In the meantime, Israeli Tel Aviv University Professor Steven Klein stated that the unblocking of transport corridors in the South Caucasus offers great opportunities for the regional countries. He noted that the new transport corridors will not only connect Nakhchivan with the main part of Azerbaijan but also boost trade in the region and increase the level of trust.

He stated that the best option would be not only to launch cargo transportation in the region but also passenger transportation.

A Moscow-brokered ceasefire deal that Baku and Yerevan signed on November 10 brought an end to six weeks of fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani army declared a victory against the Armenian troops. The signed agreement obliged Armenia to withdraw its troops from the Azerbaijani lands that it has occupied since the early 1990s.

Currently, the work is underway to restore Azerbaijan's liberated territories. Azerbaijan will carry out the restoration and reconstruction work on its recently-liberated territories in four stages. The initial stage includes the solution of the issues of governance and security, infrastructure, while the subsequent stages include the solution of the issues of social services activities, reconstruction and development of the economy.

Azerbaijan has allocated AZN 2.2 billion (\$1.3bn) for reconstruction works on the liberated territories in 2021. In particular, these funds will be used to restore the infrastructure (electricity, gas, water, communications, roads, education, health, etc), as well as cultural and historical monuments.

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