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SWITZERLAND'S BIASED STANCE AND ITS HARMFUL EFFECTS ON PEACE EFFORTS - 2

Selenay Erva YALÇIN

Analyst

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The Swiss Peace Initiative for Nagorno-Karabakh, established in collaboration with the Swiss Parliament and the CSI (Christian Solidarity International) with the claim of aiming to establish lasting peace in the South Caucasus, held its first meeting in Bern on 26 May. [1] Serving as an important indicator of the futile attempts to disrupt the Azerbaijan-Armenia peace treaty process through the misuse the Karabakh region, the meeting became the scene of provocative speeches. The provocation stems from the fact that Azerbaijan's sovereignty over Karabakh is recognized by the international community based on international law and the region is no longer a subject of negotiation for Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Co-chair Müller-Altermatt spoke of the importance of Switzerland's role in the so-called Karabakh issue in its capacity as a defender of human rights. His speech also included baseless and, as we have previously assessed,[2] unfounded allegations that Karabakh Armenians were threatened, starved, and expelled during the process.[3]

Another participant, Tadevosyan, was introduced as the so-called health minister of the Karabakh region under Azerbaijani sovereignty. He mentioned that those who migrated from the region were facing housing difficulties in Armenia.[4] As is known, the Armenian government initially provided housing assistance to Armenians who migrated from Karabakh, but it was announced couple of weeks ago that this assistance would be withdrawn.[5] Tadevosyan, who made no comment on the withdrawal of assistance, reminded to the public that the Armenian Diaspora's and Switzerland's approach to the process favors their own interests.

Oskanyan, Armenia's former minister of foreign affairs, was also among those attending the meeting. Emphasizing that the return of Armenians to Karabakh is a humanitarian rather than a political desire, Oskanyan stated that international law supports Armenians return.[6] Interestingly, international law, which is violated by not recognizing Azerbaijan's

sovereignty over Karabakh, becomes the main basis for arguments when it comes to the return of Armenians. This situation, which is another manifestation of the hypocritical stance of the Diaspora and Switzerland, is an important reason for the lack of trust in the initiative, which is claimed to have been established for the purpose of establishing peace.

Another topic discussed at the meeting was the possibility that Switzerland's presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2026 could provide an opportunity to raise awareness of the so-called Karabakh issue in the international community.[7] Since there is no issue to be resolved, it remains unclear what the parliament members and former officials opposed to the peace are attempting to address by coming together. Given that the parties are not negotiating, have concluded and set aside the issue, and that international law supports the current situation, it does not seem reasonable or logical to want to spread the so-called issue beyond the CSI and the Swiss Parliament to the rest of the world.

Veldkamp, who participated in the meeting on behalf of the CSI, stated that great powers such as the US, the EU, and Russia are trying to prevent tensions in the South Caucasus and that these powers could come together to establish a lasting peace based on justice through this initiative.[8] This statement should be interpreted as the words of someone who has not been monitoring the region and its conditions for a long time and should therefore be disregarded. The parties have repeatedly stated that they do not want third countries to get involved in the peace process. The so-called great powers are third countries whose opposition to the peace process has been made clear in the past.

It should also be noted that at the meeting, the region now under Azerbaijani control and referred to as Karabakh was presented as Nagorno Karabakh in violation of international law, and the discussions were conducted around this concept. The true intention of the initiative, which was claimed to have been convened on the basis of international law, was thus revealed throughout the meeting with the extralegal actions taken or supported by the organizers and participants.

In conclusion, the statements that have been made (evidently without considering that Azerbaijan is among the parties to the peace process) address issues that the parties do not feel the need to discuss. As emphasized, 19 members of parliament from different political views came together for this initiative. The group, which was willing to come together for a pro-Diaspora and anti-Turkish (and anti-peace) agenda, has once again revealed Switzerland's stance against the peace and normalization processes. It is a well-known fact that such initiatives will not make a concrete difference in the region. However, concerns around the Armenian sides intentions will persist so long as Armenia avoids issuing an official statement indicating that the initiative contradicts its current policies, and thus makes no attempt to prevent harm to the already sensitive peace process.

**Image: Asbarez*

[1] Swiss Lawmakers Promote Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Initiative, *Swissinfo*, 27 May 2025, https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/foreign-affairs/swiss-lawmakers-promote-nagorno-karabakh-peace-initiative/89416848.

[2] Mehmet Oğuzhan Tulun, The Battle To Control The Narratİve Over Karabakh: Armenian Civilian Safety Vs. Azerbaijani State Sovereıgnty, *AVİM*, 6 October 2023, https://avimbulten.org/en/Analiz/THE-BATTLE-TO-CONTROL-THE-NARRATIVE-OVER-KARABAKH-ARMENIAN-CIVILIAN-SAFETY-VS-AZERBAIJANI-STATE-SOVEREIGNTY.

[3] Swiss Peace Initiative for Nagorno Karabakh Launched in Bern, *Asbarez*, 27 May 2025, https://asbarez.com/swiss-peace-initiative-for-nagorno-karabakh-launched-in-bern/.

[4] Swiss Peace Initiative for Nagorno Karabakh Launched in Bern, *Asbarez*, 27 May 2025, https://asbarez.com/swiss-peace-initiative-for-nagorno-karabakh-launched-in-bern/.

[5] Anush Mkrtchian, Armenian Government Defends Sharp Cut In Housing Aid To Karabakh Refugees, *Azatutyun*, 8 April 2025, https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33377404.html.

[6] Swiss Peace Initiative for Nagorno Karabakh Launched in Bern, *Asbarez*, 27 May 2025, https://asbarez.com/swiss-peace-initiative-for-nagorno-karabakh-launched-in-bern/.

[7] Swiss Peace Initiative for Nagorno Karabakh Launched in Bern, *Asbarez*, 27 May 2025, https://asbarez.com/swiss-peace-initiative-for-nagorno-karabakh-launched-in-bern/.

[8] Swiss Peace Initiative for Nagorno Karabakh Launched in Bern, *Asbarez*, 27 May 2025, https://asbarez.com/swiss-peace-initiative-for-nagorno-karabakh-launched-in-bern/.

About the Author :

Selenay Erva Yalçın completed her undergraduate education at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University Faculty of Law. She completed the traineeship program of the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) at the end of 2023. In March 2025, she started working as an analyst at AVİM. She is currently pursuing her masters degree at Hacettepe University, Common Law and carries out research in genocide law and the legal evaluation of Turkish-Armenian relations.

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Süleyman Nazif Sok. No: 12/B Daire 3-4 06550 Çankaya-ANKARA / TÜRKİYE
Tel: +90 (312) 438 50 23-24 • **Fax**: +90 (312) 438 50 26
@avimorgtr
https://www.facebook.com/avrasyaincelemelerimerkezi
E-Mail: info@avim.org.tr
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