

## **Explanation of the Karabakh Crisis based on Brecher's Crisis Management Model**

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### **1-Introduction**

Regional crises, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, have become one of the most important sources of insecurity in the Eurasian region, including in the South Caucasus region. Territorial conflicts between the two republics of Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Karabakh region in the Caucasus have led to a long-term crisis in the region. The main question of the article is that what factors contributed to the rise of the Karabakh crisis? (question). The Nagorno-Karabakh crisis has historical, geopolitical, ethnic and religious roots. Azeris consider this region as their historical territory and claim that this region has always been under the rule of Azerbaijan; While Armenians consider this region as their ethnic rights and claim that Armenians are the main inhabitants of Karabakh. In fact, both sides have a zero-sum solution to the crisis. Therefore, there is less possibility to create a long-term peace.

### **2-Method and Theoretical Framework**

In this research, Process-Tracing method (method) and Michael's crisis management theory (theoretical framework) have been used. According to Brecher's crisis management model, if an international crisis is ended by force, it will bring less stability and we can witness the formation of crisis between the involved countries in the future.

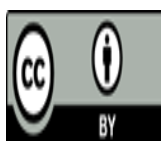
### **3-Discussion**

In this article, the formation and continuation of the Karabakh crisis, the peak and downturns of the crisis, as well as the bilateral and regional

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**Explanation of the Karabakh Crisis based on Brecher's Crisis Management Model**

consequences have been investigated using the process tracing method and Michael Brecher's crisis management theory.

Regarding the origin of the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis, contrary to Western media reports that often emphasize the role of religion (Islam and Christianity) in the continuation of this crisis, it must be said that the religious aspects of the war are not the only factors affecting the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis. Ethnic and geopolitical components are more prominent in the Karabakh crisis. It should also be mentioned the role of the two governments' mental perceptions of each other. In terms of friendship and enmity, Armenians, considering their bitter experience with Turks, consider Azeris to be Turks and their enemies, and on the other hand, Azeris consider Armenians as their enemies. The memories of Sumgait and Khojaly incidents between Armenians and Azeris have not disappeared yet, and one of the most important issues that delayed the success of the peace negotiations was the same negative mental ideas that were formed in the minds of these two nations during this time.

In the First Nagorno-Karabakh War (1994-1991), about 16% of the lands of the Republic of Azerbaijan were captured by Armenia. However, in 1994, the United Nations tried to resolve the crisis between the two parties through four resolutions 822-853-874 and 884; But those resolutions did not have enough executive guarantees as a means of resolving the dispute between the two parties. Thus, despite many political and diplomatic efforts by various mediators, finally in 1994, a ceasefire between the two parties was established through the mediation of the Minsk Group. Although the active phase of the conflict ended with this ceasefire; But the ceasefire was usually violated by the armed forces of Armenia and Azerbaijan. In April 2016, In the conflict known as the "four-day war", more than a hundred soldiers from both sides were killed (Vatankhah & Navazeni, 2020: 21). The 2016 dispute was a kind of message that war is inevitable if the conflicts between the two sides are not resolved soon (Ibrahimova & Oztarsu, 2:2022).

In September 2020, conditions were ready for the start of another war in Karabakh. The process of the US presidential election and the unfavorable economic conditions in the world due to the spread of the corona virus diverted attention from the conflict zone and created favorable conditions for Azerbaijan to reclaim its occupied territories. As a result, in the Second Karabakh War, with the help of regional and extra-regional actors, including Turkey and Israel, the Republic of Azerbaijan, in addition to recapturing a part of Karabakh, managed to take back the areas it had lost in the First Karabakh War (1994-1991). Finally, with the efforts of Moscow the "Ceasefire Agreement" ended the 44-day war in Karabakh on November 10, 2020. Accordingly, the Republic of Artsakh was surrounded and its only breathing

Crisis Studies of the Islamic World

channel was the Lachin Corridor (under Russian control) connecting Stepanakert to Armenia.

On September 19, 2023, after several months of encirclement, Azerbaijan launched a new large-scale military attacks in Karabakh. The Artsakh forces collapsed quickly, which resulted in the victory of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the dissolution of the Republic of Artsakh, the departure of almost the entire Armenian population from the region, and the entry of Azerbaijani security forces into Stepanakert, the former capital of Artsakh. The Nagorno-Karabakh crisis took a long historical course. Finally, with the dissolution of the Republic of Artsakh, Nagorno-Karabakh was annexed to the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Findings of the research indicate that in the emergence and escalation of the crisis between the two countries, the territorial proximity, ethnic-religious conflicts, geopolitical competitions of regional and extra-regional actors played a significant role. This crisis ended not with a diplomatic solution but with the use of force

#### 4- Conclusion

The research concludes that regional and extra-regional actors such as Russia, Turkey, Israel, the United Nations, the Minsk Group and the Islamic Republic of Iran played a significant role in the emergence and peak of the crisis. The territorial unity of the two countries, the existence of governments with a low level of democracy, ethnic-religious conflicts, and geopolitical rivalries are the most important variables influencing the emergence and escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis . Although the Karabakh crisis has ended with the victory of Baku; But it seems that this crisis will flare up again with the change of power in favor of Armenia. Regardless of whether the Nagorno-Karabakh crisis will flare up again or not, the aftermath of the crisis is important. In this article, it was shown that in the post-crisis period, tensions can be seen in Armenia as a result of the influx of refugees from Karabakh to this country and people's dissatisfaction with Nikol Pashinyan. At the regional level, the balance of power has changed in favor of Baku, which can lead to more adventures of this country in the region, especially in relation to Iran and Armenia. The extensive presence of Turkey and Israel in the South Caucasus region is one of the other effects of this crisis, which, while intensifying regional competition, shows that Russia is not the only actor in the South Caucasus.

Explanation of the Karabakh Crisis based on Brecher's Crisis Management Model

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