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By RFE/RL's Armenian Service

The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group mediating talks between Baku and Yerevan are "urgently" calling on all sides in the conflict over Azerbaijan's breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region to cease military actions.

Ambassador Igor Popov of Russia, French Ambassador Stephane Visconti, and Ambassador Richard Hoagland of the United States issued the call in a July 5 statement following fresh fighting that Azerbaijan says has left two civilians dead.

"Violence only begets further violence and accomplishes nothing," the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs said. "The only responsible and humane way to resolve this long-standing conflict is for the sides to return to the negotiation table in good faith."

Baku and Yerevan have been locked in a conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh for years.

Armenian-backed separatists seized the mainly Armenian-populated region from Azerbaijan during a war in the early 1990s that killed some 30,000 people.

Internationally mediated negotiations with the involvement of the OSCE's so-called Minsk Group have failed to result in a resolution.

Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said a 50-year-old woman and her 2-year-old granddaughter were killed late on July 4 by Armenian shelling of the village of Alkhanli, southeast of Karabakh.

Another local resident, also a woman, was seriously wounded, the ministry said, adding that the Azerbaijani side fired back at Armenian forces stationed across the nearby section of the front line.

However, separatists in Karabakh said that Azerbaijani forces fired five rockets toward one of their command points from a position located within Alkhanli.

They said their forces retaliated by targeting that position and accused the Azerbaijani military of using Alkhanli residents as a "human shield."

Yerevan also blamed the Azerbaijani side for the deadly incident, while Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry accused the Armenian side of deliberately targeting civilians living near the front lines.

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