

In the news this past week (29 October – 5 November 2020):

RUSSIA TO 'ASSIST' ARMENIA IF CONFLICT WITH AZERBAIJAN SPREADS BEYOND NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Russia is prepared to provide “all necessary assistance” to its treaty partner Armenia if violence moves into Armenian territory, as fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh enters its sixth week. If Russia were to enter the conflict, there is a possibility that it could prolong the current clash. On Saturday 31 October, both Armenia and Azerbaijan accused each other of continuing to shell civilian areas, just one day after the fourth round of ceasefire talks took place in Geneva. In the 30 October meetings, both sides agreed to not target civilians and to



provide names of detained soldiers in preparation for a potential exchange. The recent increase in violence led Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to ask Russian President Vladimir Putin for security assistance citing a need for urgent help as Azerbaijan continues to receive aid from Turkey. Fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh broke out on 27 September and has since claimed approximately 1,200 lives. International powers are trying to avoid a full-scale war that would see Turkey support Azerbaijan and Russia, Armenia. Relations between Armenia and Turkey have been strained since World War I when over 1.5 million ethnic Armenians were killed in the Turkish Ottoman Empire, an act of genocide that Turkey denies.

From a Christian perspective, the deep-seated animosity between Armenia and Turkey, stemming from the early 1900s, has been compounded by Turkey’s support of Azerbaijan in the current Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, there are Armenian Christians who are trying to unite the greater Armenian Church to forgive past offences and move forward in the ministry of reconciliation. An *INcontext* contact describes the need of the Armenian Church to forgive Turkey for the atrocities committed during WWI to move forward with the peace process in Nagorno-Karabakh. Forgiveness is one of the most supernatural expressions in Christianity, releasing both the offended and the offender from the hurt. If the Armenian Church can express true forgiveness towards Turkey, it would act as a witness to the Turkish of the power of the Gospel, as well as allow the Armenian Church to take advantage of the missionary opportunities in Turkey and Azerbaijan without the burden of past offences.

Pray with us for the following:

- For the Lord to work in the hearts of those involved in the negotiations, that progress can be made
- For a spiritual breakthrough in the region
- For Armenian believers to find the courage, through His Spirit, to truly forgive and be ambassadors of peace and reconciliation

Image: REUTERS/Gleb Garanich