

EU wants probe into alleged war crimes by Azerbaijan

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The EU is demanding a probe into possible war crimes following a video of people dressed in Azerbaijani uniforms executing Armenian prisoners of war.

Peter Stano, a spokesperson for the EU's foreign policy branch, told reporters on Monday (3 October) that the video, if proven authentic, "show acts of war crimes and clear violation of international law."

But he also said it is up to Azerbaijan to carry out the probe, noting that the EU does not have any investigative powers.

"It's in the interest of Azerbaijani authorities to investigate and prove to the world that this is not the policy of the country," he said.

Foreign ministers from both sides had met in Geneva on Monday, as a follow-up to a mediation meeting in Brussels in late August.

Armenia in Geneva demanded war crimes be investigated and perpetrators be brought to justice. Azerbaijan said Armenian armed units needed to withdraw and accused them of placing landmines in Azerbaijan territory.

The latest war crime allegations may exacerbate already tense relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, who have fought two wars [over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region](#).

The most recent, in 2020, saw Armenia withdraw from large tracts of territory, leading to the [deployment of some 2,000 Russian troops](#) to maintain a shaky ceasefire agreement.

The six-weeks of fighting killed an estimated 6,000 people.

Both Baku and Yerevan continue to contest and vie over territory in the region, with the former laying down infrastructure such as roads.

But fighting broke out again earlier last month, with at least 207 Armenian and 80 Azerbaijani soldiers killed in what has been described as the deadliest escalation since 2020.

Yerevan accused Baku of taking an additional 10km² of territory, noting that some 2,700 civilians were evacuated from Armenia's Syunik and Gegharkunik provinces.

The International Crisis Group, an NGO, says the fighting may be Azerbaijan taking advantage of Russia's war in Ukraine.

War crimes on both sides?

On Sunday, the EU's envoy to the South Caucasus, Toviio Klaar, also demanded an investigation into the apparent atrocities committed by Azerbaijanis.

But he then revealed that he had been sent several videos of possible war crimes being committed against Azerbaijanis.

"Also these need to be investigated and if authentic perpetrators need to be held responsible," he said.

"The conflict has left deep wounds on both sides and to heal accountability is needed," he added.

The headline was clarified at 12.30PM on Tuesday 4 October 2022, to prevent potential misunderstanding over the location of the alleged incidents