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## **BAKU INSISTS ON SUBSTANTIVE TALKS TO RESOLVE KARABAKH CONFLICT**

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By Elmira Tariverdiyeva – Trend.Az

A number of key issues in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement still remain unresolved, said Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. He was addressing a press conference, held after the talks with his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov in Moscow March 6.

Most issues can be quickly agreed on but the key points still remain unresolved and the sides are currently not yet close to resolving them, according to Lavrov.

Azerbaijani FM Elmar Mammadyarov, in turn, said the main issue in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is the presence of political will to resolve it.

For Azerbaijan, returning the occupied lands is of national interest, he explained.

Easing tension is very important for us. It should be understood that when there are negotiations, guns are silent, Mammadyarov said, adding that today, the negotiation process needs progress.

He also noted that Baku insists on substantive negotiations on the matter.

The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. As a result of the ensuing war, in 1992 Armenian armed forces occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts.

The 1994 ceasefire agreement was followed by peace negotiations. Armenia has not yet implemented four UN Security Council resolutions on withdrawal of its armed forces from the Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding districts.

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