

REACTION OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN TO THE 44-DAY PATRIOTIC WAR OF THE AZERBAIJAN PEOPLE

Received: 27 July 2026 | Accepted: 14 August 2026 | Published: 25 September 2026

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan demonstrated its commitment to the principle of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and emphasized the solution of the current issue only on the basis of the principle of Azerbaijan's sovereignty. The article substantiates Pakistan's position in this regard and notes its solidarity with Azerbaijan in the negotiations held at the international level. During official and business visits by Pakistan to the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Karabakh problem was repeatedly brought to the agenda, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan demanded an immediate end to Armenia's occupation policy in resolving the current issue. Pakistan has always stood by the Azerbaijani state and people during the Second Karabakh War. The article examines the reaction of the Pakistani state to the 44-day patriotic war of the Azerbaijani people in historical facts, analysis, and analytical form. At the same time, the article reflects Pakistan's unchanging and justified position since the formation of the conflict, and its reactions demanding an end to Armenia's aggressive policy. In particular, Pakistan's demonstration of solidarity with Azerbaijan during the Second Karabakh War, and the speeches made by Pakistani official representatives during the 44-day Patriotic War are extensively commented on in the study.

Keywords: Republic of Azerbaijan, Pakistan, UNO, House of Representatives, Khojaly Genocide

1. INTRODUCTION

After Azerbaijan gained its historical independence, one of the friendly countries with which it established a partnership was the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, one of the influential states of the Muslim world. Azerbaijan and Pakistan have been connected by close friendly relations since ancient times. On December 12, 1991, Pakistan became one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Azerbaijan. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on June 9, 1992. On April 30, 1993, Pakistan chaired the meeting held to adopt UN Security Council Resolution No. 822 on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In general, Pakistan has always supported Azerbaijan's fair position in the UN, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other international platforms. Also, Pakistan has not established diplomatic relations with Armenia to this day because it subjected Azerbaijan to military aggression. Azerbaijan, in turn, does not spare its support for a fair solution to the Kashmir problem on all international platforms. The statement of the Commander of the Pakistani Land Forces, Army General Qamar Javed Bajwa, who visited Azerbaijan shortly after the war, "Azerbaijan's victory in the Karabakh war and the restoration of its territorial integrity is a magnificent event for every Muslim, every Pakistani" - in general, fully explains Pakistan's attitude towards Azerbaijan (Guliyev, 2024). Pakistan supports Azerbaijan's position on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue because this is a matter of occupation and aggression against the country. Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman, the Chairman of the Kashmir Committee of the Pakistani Parliament,

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told journalists back in 2012. "There are a number of UN resolutions confirming Azerbaijan's position on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, and Azerbaijan's position is internationally recognized and accepted," he said. He also said that Azerbaijan has always supported Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue. "Azerbaijan has an international position, and it is recognized. We believe that Azerbaijan should provide moral and political support to the principled position on the Kashmir issue," he noted. He added that Azerbaijan is a very important country in Central Asia and the Caucasus and is the crossroads of Asia and Europe. Azerbaijan has become a different country, transformed, changed and developed almost beyond recognition. "I have seen significant progress and development in Azerbaijan. And I do not feel like a stranger here, because culture, history, heritage and religion unite us," he added (Azernews, 2012).

In 2012, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate of Pakistan and in 2017, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly adopted resolutions recognizing the Khojaly genocide and condemning Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan. In addition, Pakistan supported Azerbaijan during the 44-day war with Armenia in 2020. In October 2020, the National Assembly of Pakistan unanimously approved a resolution condemning Armenia's attack on Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan and Pakistan signed a memorandum of understanding on military cooperation during the fifth meeting of the relevant working group held in Islamabad in 2014. Over the past 10 years, more than a hundred Azerbaijani military officers have been trained by Pakistani military specialists. Pakistan and Azerbaijan have negotiated the sale of JF-17 Thunder multi-role fighter aircraft. Plans for joint military exercises were approved by President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister Sharif in October 2016 (Khalilov, 2022).

On 21 February 2017, the spokesperson for the Pakistani Foreign Office denied media reports that the Pakistani government had not sent any observers to the so-called referendum in Nagorno-Karabakh. The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's position on the conflict and expressed support for Azerbaijan's position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. At the same time, the statement noted that Pakistan's position was for the complete return of Azerbaijani territories occupied by Armenia, the withdrawal of the Armenian army from Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas, and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions (Pakistan Foreign Office, 2020).

On 27 September, the day the hostilities began, Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesperson Zahid Hafiz Chaudhry expressed deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh region following the firing on the civilian population of Azerbaijan. The Foreign Office statement said that Pakistan considers the attack by Armenian forces on villages in Tartar, Agdam, Fuzuli and Jabrayil regions as a "regrettable and most regrettable incident." "Pakistan stands with the brotherly people of Azerbaijan and supports their right to self-defense," the Foreign Ministry said (AFP & Web Desk, 2020).

Responding to questions about a media report on October 2, 2020, which claimed that the Pakistani army was fighting alongside Azerbaijani forces against Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh, the Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesperson described it as speculative and baseless. Reiterating Pakistan's position on the issue, the spokesperson expressed deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The spokesperson noted that the intensive firing by Armenian forces on the civilian population of Azerbaijan was condemnable, adding that it could undermine the peace and security of the entire region and that Armenia should immediately cease military operations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). In a statement issued in Islamabad, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zahid Hafiz Chaudhry said, "The Armenian Prime Minister's transcript of an interview with Russian television on October 15 strongly refuted some unfounded reports alleging that Pakistani Special Forces were involved in the ongoing conflict alongside the Azerbaijani army." He also conveyed to the public that Azerbaijani forces were strong enough to defend their homeland and did not need the help of foreign forces. "Pakistan will continue to stand by the brotherly Azerbaijani people and support their right to self-defense against any aggression," the ministry spokesman concluded. At the same time, Pakistani Ambassador to Baku Bilal Haye visited Ganja along with the diplomatic corps on the same occasion (Dispatch News Desk, 2020).

Also on October 20, Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi expressed Pakistan's support for Azerbaijan's position on Nagorno-Karabakh. The Minister, in a telephone conversation with the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister, stated that Pakistan stands with the leadership and people of Azerbaijan during this difficult time. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan congratulated the President and people of Azerbaijan on Azerbaijan's Independence Day and reiterated his support for Azerbaijan. Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted on October 18, 2020, praising the Azerbaijani army for protecting its territorial integrity and sovereignty in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Prime Minister's statement came after the Armenian Prime Minister claimed that Pakistani forces were involved in the fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh (Khan, 2021).

In a resolution unanimously adopted by the House of Representatives of Pakistan on October 28, the Republic of Azerbaijan expressed its deep concern over the deteriorating situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The resolution reaffirmed Pakistan's full political, diplomatic, and moral support to the brave people of Azerbaijan and called on the UN and the international community to play their role in restoring peace and security in the region (Radio Pakistan, 2020).

Pakistan on September 21, 2023, reaffirmed its unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Thus, in response to a journalist's question regarding the anti-terrorist operation launched by Azerbaijani forces in the Karabakh region this week, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch stated that Islamabad considers Karabakh to be a sovereign territory of Azerbaijan. She also added that "Pakistan expresses its deep condolences to the people and government of Azerbaijan for the loss of lives in mine explosions in Azerbaijani territory." She stated that Islamabad's position is firmly in line with numerous UN Security Council and OIC resolutions, as well as international law, citing the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. He added, "We hope that Azerbaijan's legitimate claim to sovereignty and territorial integrity will be accepted by all parties and a path to lasting peace in the region will be paved." At the same time, he stated that Azerbaijan remains committed to counter-terrorism measures and to launching anti-terrorist operations to protect the provisions of the trilateral peace agreement with Russia and Armenia to end the 2020 conflict (Pakistan Foreign Office, 2023).

At an event held on the occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day on August 14, 2025, Pakistani Ambassador to Azerbaijan Qasim Mohiuddin expressed Pakistan's constant appreciation for the support of the Azerbaijani state and people. The Ambassador recalled that in May, the Pakistani Armed Forces resolutely responded to the Indian attack. Mohiuddin stated that "after Pakistan's resolute response to India's provocation, everyone saw our strength, and this success was celebrated by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Turkey in Lachin". He highly appreciated the far-sighted policy of President Ilham Aliyev for the liberation of Karabakh and expressed his hope that Pakistan would one day liberate the territories occupied by India. Mohiuddin stressed that Pakistan does not intend to change its policy towards Armenia without prior consultations with Azerbaijan. He reminded the audience that Pakistan did not recognize Armenia as an independent state due to the illegal occupation of Azerbaijani territories and called this position an expression of love, respect and solidarity with brotherly Azerbaijan. He noted that this policy has been going on for thirty years and that any change will only occur after consultations with Baku. Commenting on the agreement reached between Azerbaijan and Armenia in Washington, the ambassador described it as a very positive development for bilateral relations. He stressed that the Washington meeting was a historic summit between US President Donald Trump, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, adding that Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had called President Ilham Aliyev to congratulate him on this achievement. Mohiuddin also stated that Azerbaijan and Pakistan could hold another round of inter-ministerial political consultations early next year, while the 9th meeting of the intergovernmental commission is scheduled in two years. He explained that although the commission meets annually, the extensive agenda sometimes requires several years of preparation, noting that the 8th meeting was held on January 24 of this year, alongside the political consultations. He stressed the importance of mutual high-level visits, but noted that none were expected in the near future (Caucasus Watch, 2025).

2. CONCLUSION

In the fall of 2020, Azerbaijan liberated several cities, villages, and settlements from Armenian occupation during 44 days of clashes. The war ended with a ceasefire brokered by Russia. As a result, Pakistan, which considers Azerbaijan a brotherly country defending its homeland from the invaders, justified this position with the principles of international law and sovereignty. Pakistan's support for Azerbaijan in the 44-day Patriotic War was conditioned by the strategic partnership between the two countries, mutual political support, a systematic institutionalized attitude against Armenia's occupation policy, and Islamic solidarity. Pakistan has fully supported Azerbaijan in all diplomatic negotiations on the Karabakh issue and has always defended Azerbaijan's rightful position at international conferences and summits of international organizations. This was especially evident during the Second Karabakh War. During the 44-day Patriotic War, the Azerbaijani people displayed the flags of Pakistan along with the flags of Azerbaijan and Turkey.

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