

Armenia Might Quit Russia-Led Military Bloc – PM

By [AFP](#)

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Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. **Alexander PatrIn / TASS**

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said Monday that his country could withdraw from Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), in a fresh show of discontent over the lack of support from its ally Russia.

Yerevan has grown increasingly frustrated over what it calls Russia's failure to protect Armenia in the face of military threats from Azerbaijan.

"I am not ruling out that Armenia will take a decision to withdraw from the CSTO," if the bloc fails to respect its treaty obligations, he told a news conference in Yerevan.

Pashinyan's remarks came ahead of the talks with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to be hosted by the Russian leader Vladimir Putin on Thursday in Moscow.

Locked in a decades-long territorial conflict, the Caucasus neighbors have been seeking to

negotiate a peace agreement with the help of the European Union and the United States.

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The West's diplomatic engagement in the Caucasus has irked traditional regional power broker Russia.

"We began discussing security issues with our Western partners because we see that the security system in the region is not working," Pashinyan said on Monday.

Armenia and Azerbaijan fought two wars — in 2020 and in the 1990s — for control of Azerbaijan's Armenian-populated region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Six weeks of hostilities in autumn 2020 ended with a Russian-brokered ceasefire that saw Armenia cede swathes of territory it had controlled for decades.

Armenia, which has relied upon Russia for military and economic support since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, has accused Moscow of failing to fulfill its peacekeeping role in Karabakh.

Yerevan's concerns have grown after Azerbaijani activists blocked in December Karabakh's only land link to Armenia. In April, Azerbaijan set up a checkpoint manned by border guards along the route.

Last year, Yerevan also accused Azerbaijan of occupying a pocket of its land, in what it has said amounted to military aggression and demanded military help from the CSTO, which has never materialized.

With Russia bogged down in Ukraine and unwilling to strain ties with Azerbaijan's key ally Turkey, the United States and European Union have sought to repair ties between the Caucasus rivals.

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