

Hi Dear Fuad,

I'm Lusine from Yerevan. I'm a student like you. Being interested in conflicts and their resolution since University years (in particular the Nagorno–Karabakh conflict and its negotiation process), I've come to understand that in the case of Nagorno–Karabakh, the conflict is between the governments and not the nations. For me, this conflict is one of those that are created artificially by a superpower in their own interest. The problem, perhaps, is that governments continue to be suppressed by superpowers, and peoples by governments. This is the reason why governments continue to preach hatred inside their countries, while outside of their countries – for the international community – they speak about peace, and a peaceful resolution, from time to time.

The problem, however, is that one side sees the end result of a peaceful settlement within the nation's self-determination, and the other side in the context of restoring territorial integrity. But for me, peace is beyond these limits. By saying peace, first of all, I imagine harmony in relations. Projecting this on the field of conflict, then the peaceful settlement of the conflict for me is a mutually acceptable compromise which results not only in the settlement of the conflict, but also the diplomatic relations between the parties. In other words, the stress is put on the cooperation between the two parties, because achieving peace requires bilateral efforts. Perhaps the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno–Karabakh conflict will foster both economic and political development of the South Caucasus.

I've read your letter and mostly share your perceptions of peace, and the negative influence of the conflict on the relations of our countries. I'm glad I'm replying to a letter of a conscientious person like you, because consciousness is an important tool for achieving peace.

Unfortunately, not everyone in our societies has it, and as a result, there is not only an armed conflict but also an informational one. This may be due to the fact that the farther people live from a conflict zone, the more tolerant they are towards other nations as opposed to those living in the conflict zone.

Another sad fact is that trying to preserve the nationality, and actually engaging in nationalism, creates hatred and intolerance towards other nations. But there are cultural similarities between our nations, aren't there? I had a chance this year to communicate with young Azerbaijani people during a workshop in Georgia, and I can state from my own experience that nationality does not have to be a barrier to communication or friendship, and examples in history can also prove that. Armenians and Azeris lived side by side, both during the Soviet Union, and now in the villages Mirzoevka, Tso, and Khozhorni in the Kvemo Kartli region in Georgia.

Your and my letters may serve as tangible proof that there are peaceful people who strive to achieve harmony between the two nations.

P.S. I'm sending you my Facebook page link in case you'd like to continue our conversation beyond these letters.

For the sake of breaking stereotypes and eliminating hatred,

With peaceful greetings,

Lusine