

- **How the one-sided opinions of celebrities complicate the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict**

Dek: *Kim Kardashian is facing backlash for "supporting terrorism" amidst her overt one-sided support with Armenia in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.*

Kim Kardashian's Armenian heritage has meant the reality TV star has not shied away from [making her feelings known about the Nagorno-Karabakh](#) conflict, even going so far as pledging a \$1 million donation to the [Armenia Fund](#).

Ever since the donations went live, the hashtags '[#KimKardashianFundsTerrorism](#)' and '[#KimKardashianSupportsTerrorism](#)' have flooded Twitter.

Although the organisation claims to deliver humanitarian aid on the ground, there has been speculation among Azerbaijanis that it provides military aid to carry out offensives against civilians in Azerbaijan. Kardashian's stance on the conflict also faced backlash since she fell silent on the Armenian assault that has affected civilian areas in the non-conflict zone.

When an influential celebrity like Kardashian, who has 67 million followers on Twitter, speaks for one side of a conflict, while ignoring the other, one does wonder whether such global influencers pose a threat to objectivity and truth-telling in precarious situations of war or intense border conflicts.

Speaking to *TRT World*, John Street, a professor of politics at the University of East Anglia and a researcher on the politics of media and culture, said that "celebrities can take sides" since they are "not journalists who are expected to be balanced and/or impartial".

But in view of political communication changing with more political opinions being put forward by those in entertainment, Street said celebrities "need to be careful, for the sort of reasons that you imply above".

"Celebrities are not accountable and they are not required to examine the evidence etc. We should always be wary of them and other influencers who are not bound by processes that help to validate information," Street adds.

Kim's campaigns attempt to portray Armenia as the victim of aggression by Azerbaijan, a stance that is more based on emotional bias in light of her Armenian descent.

The fundraiser Armenia Fund that she supports, has been met with suspicion based on the coincidence that shortly after the money was raised, [Armenia attacked residential areas in Ganja](#), Azerbaijan's second largest city. The offensive killed at least 13 people, including three children, and wounded 52 more. The attacks on Ganja city have incited fears of a humanitarian disaster after civilian infrastructures were targeted.

Earlier this month, American rapper Cardi B pushed the same narrative on social media and later [released an apology](#), admitting she had not done her research on the region and was wrong in choosing to side solely with Armenia.

## **The history of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict**

The conflict is historically complex, spanning over three decades, both sides facing the repercussions of historical legacies. Civilians on both sides have since been bound up with the consequences, and an open dialogue with the past seems to be missing among celebrities.

### *The Ottoman Empire*

The dissolution of the Ottoman empire foresaw Armenia and Azerbaijan as newly independent states both claiming rightful ownership of Nagorno-Karabakh. A [brief war in 1920](#) emerged as a result.

### *The Soviet-Union*

Fast forward a few years, the Soviet Union established itself with both Armenia and Azerbaijan under its bloc. In [1923 Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast](#) was created by the Soviet Union within Soviet Azerbaijan.

The fall of the Soviet Union eventually arrived, reawakening past tensions over the disputed region. In the [late 1980s](#), violence arose between Armenia and Azerbaijan though there were no official declarations of war.

### *The 1991 referendum*

On September 2, [1991](#), a referendum backed by Armenia, and created by Karabakh Armenians, declared the 'independence' of the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The make-up of the voters was 99 percent Armenians who voted for full sovereignty. The Nagorno-Karabakh republic is only recognised by Armenia.

In [1992](#), a real war broke out. On the evening of February 1992, Khojaly, a village in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, became occupied by Armenian forces. As a result of the Armenian occupation, 613 of 8,000 Azerbaijani residents in the village faced torture, rape and execution. Many of the victims were women, children, and old men. The events in Khojaly are considered to this day a national tragedy for Azerbaijan.

In the spring of the following year, [Armenian forces also occupied Fizuli and Kelbajar](#), areas sitting in outer Karabakh whereby the majority of inhabitants are Azerbaijani and Azerbaijani-Kurdish.

The fighting had already taken 30,000 lives and displaced 1.1 million people - 800,000 of whom were Azerbaijanis and 7,000 were Armenians. In [1994](#), a ceasefire was signed but failed as clashes continued in the region.

### **What is happening in Nagorno-Karabakh now?**

Earlier this month, another ceasefire was signed in response to the [September fighting](#), but was [breached by Armenia](#).

Multiple United Nations Resolutions (including 822, 853, 874 and 884) have constantly demanded the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Armenian troops from occupied territories but have had no effect.

In the eyes of [international law](#), Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as being a part of Azerbaijan, and the campaign to liberate Nagorno-Karabakh continues to be pursued by Azerbaijan.

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