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## **US NAVY SHIP TO VISIT GEORGIA'S BLACK SEA CITY BATUMI**

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19.03.2018

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Georgia Today (16 March 2018)

The United States navy ship - 6th Fleet USS Oak Hill (LSD 51) will arrive in Georgias Black Sea coastal city Batumi port on March 17 as part of a regularly scheduled deployment.

This will be the ships first visit to Georgia.

The Oak Hill representatives will conduct port visits and bilateral exercises with US allies and partner navies.

According to the US Embassy in Tbilisi, the ships operations are meant to enhance maritime security and stability, readiness, and naval capabilities among NATO allies and partners.

Strengthening alliances during the port visit to Batumi demonstrates the shared commitment between the United States and Georgia to promote safety and stability within the region, while seeking unique opportunities to enhance our interoperability with NATO allies and partners in the Black Sea, the embassy stated.

In addition to a reception for local officials, tours of the ship, and a friendly soccer and basketball match between U.S. sailors and the Georgian Coast Guard, several joint training exercises will take place.

Moreover, USS Oak Hills port visit also provides American sailors an opportunity to explore local historical sites and build lasting partnerships with their Georgian naval counterparts.

Oak Hill entered the Black Sea to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to the collective defense of our NATO allies and partners. This naval operation is in support of our NATO allies in Eastern Europe and falls under Operation Atlantic Resolve, the statement of the embassy reads.

It also added the U.S. Navy routinely operates in the Black Sea consistent with the Montreux Convention and international law.

The USS OAK HILL is commanded by Commander Phillip Knight, United States Navy, and has a complement of 22 officers and 400 enlisted personnel.

<http://georgiatoday.ge/news/9519/US-Navy-Ship-to-Visit-Georgias-Black-Sea-City-Batumi>

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