

---

## **GEORGIA CUTS TIES WITH SYRIA FOLLOWING SUPPORT FOR BREAKAWAY REGIONS**

-

30.05.2018

---

The News Arab (30 May 2018)

Georgia said on Tuesday it will cut ties with Syria, angered after Damascus formally recognised two breakaway regions as independent countries.

Tbilisi's announcement came hours after Syrian state media said it was establishing diplomatic relations with two disputed territories in Georgia - Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

This was "in appreciation of the supportive positions [of the two breakaway regions] toward the terrorist aggression against Syria", SANA said, referring to Syria's opposition as "terrorists".

South Ossetia and Abkhazia are strongly backed by Russia, one of the few countries to recognise the two self-declared independent nations.

Moscow backed insurgencies in the two regions during Russia's war against Georgia in 2008, declaring its diplomatic recognition for the two breakaway republics days after a ceasefire was established.

Russia has also been one of the key backers of the Syrian regime during Damascus' war against an opposition uprising that erupted in 2011.

Georgia said the decision by Damascus to recognise Abkazia and South Ossetia was influenced by Russia.

"Recognition of independence of historic regions of Georgia, Abkhazia and Tskhinvali (South Ossetia), by Russian manipulated Assad regime in Syria, is another blatant violation of Int Law by Assad and should be condemned by the int community," Georgian Foreign Minister Mikheil Janelidze said on Tuesday.

Georgia's foreign ministry said in a statement it had started procedures to end diplomatic relations with Syria, according to Radio Free Europe.

Earlier in the day, Abkhazia's self-declared president Raul Khajimba said his de-facto administration had agreed with Syria "on the mutual recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries through embassies, which reflects their common [desire] to develop relations in all areas".

He said that "diplomats" had "exchanged relevant notes" and made "reciprocal visits".

South Ossetia's "foreign ministry" also said the two sides had "established diplomatic relations".

The EU - which backs Georgia's government - said the move by Damascus "violates international law".

"The European Union fully supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders," Maja Kocijancic, an EU spokesperson said.

Ukraine - which has also seen some of its territories seized by Russian-backed separatists - condemned Bashar al-Assad's regime.

"The ministry of foreign affairs of Ukraine strongly condemns the decision of the Syrian Arab Republic to recognize and establish diplomatic relations with the occupied territories of Georgia - Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia," the ministry said.

"Such a decision is yet another breach of the norms and principles of international law by the Assad regime and clearly demonstrates the eagerness of the current Syrian authorities to please the Kremlin."

Romania's government also issued a statement condemning the move.

Syria's war erupted in 2011, when the regime brutally put down peaceful anti-government protests, sparking an armed uprising.

Half a million people have been killed in the war, mostly civilians, victims of regime airstrikes that intensified when Russia entered the war in September 2015.

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/5/30/georgia-cuts-ties-with-syria-over-abkhazia-recognition>

---

Kaynak/Source: