
VATICAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS GEORGIA

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Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See, is on a visit to Georgia on October 21-24. Today, the Archbishop held a meeting with his Georgian counterpart Davit Zalkaliani, hailing excellent bilateral relations.

Georgia, as you know, is one of the first countries to have embraced the Christian faith, and it has a long history of relations with the Roman pontiffs, Gallagher said at a joint press conference, stressing the Holy See was one of the first countries to have recognized the independence of Georgia.

In his remarks, Archbishop Gallagher also expressed regret over the sufferings of the population affected by the 2008 war, which led to a loss of control over the region of Tskhinvali and Abkhazia. Here, the diplomat underscored that the position of the Holy See in regards to Georgias territorial integrity remains unchanged.

On his part, Minister Zalkaliani thanked Gallagher for supporting Georgias sovereignty and territorial integrity, and expressed his hope that the visit would further enhance the bilateral ties.

In Georgia, the Archbishop will also meet with Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze, President Giorgi Margvelashvili, Parliament Speaker Irakli Kobakhidze, Orthodox Patriarch Ilia II, and local Catholic parish. He will also travel to village Khurvaleti at the edge of the Russian-occupied Tskhinvali Region and lay a wreath at the memorial of fallen soldiers in Tbilisi.

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