
NATO, GEORGIA AGREE TO CONTINUE PREPARING TBILISI FOR MEMBERSHIP IN BLOC - STOLTENBERG

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23rd January, 2019) NATO and Georgia agreed to proceed with Tbilisi's preparations for joining the bloc, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said at a press conference on Wednesday, stressing that no one should interfere with that process.

Earlier on Wednesday, Stoltenberg received Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

"At our meeting today, we agreed to continue working together to prepare Georgia for NATO membership. The Substantial NATO-Georgia Package is already strengthening your country's defences. Including with our Joint Training Centre," Stoltenberg said at a joint press conference with Zourabichvili as quoted in a press release on NATO's website.

He added that NATO did not tolerate any attempts to deter Tbilisi from pursuing its goal of joining the bloc and stressed that it was only for Georgia to decide on NATO membership.

Stoltenberg revealed plans to visit Georgia in March. According to the NATO secretary general the visit will provide an opportunity to discuss once again with the Georgian leadership the ways to further step up bilateral cooperation.

The cooperation between Georgia and NATO began soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the country joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1992 and NATO's Partnership for Peace program two years later. In 2008, NATO leaders allowed for Georgia's membership in the organization provided the country met all the necessary requirements. On its way to the NATO membership Georgia has been assisted by the NATO-Georgia Commission, established in 2008, which supported the country in its reform efforts.

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