
MOSCOW NEVER WANTED DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS WITH TBILISI - FOREIGN MINISTER

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Russia never wanted the relations between Moscow and Tbilisi to get worse and Russians do not have a negative attitude to the Georgian people, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Tuesday.

"We never wanted to degrade our relations with Georgia. It was the government of the former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili that severed ties and was trying to limit our economic cooperation ... We do not have a negative attitude to the Georgian people or prejudices about them. Just on the contrary, we lived together for centuries and respect each other's culture and traditions," Lavrov said in an interview with Latin American media and the RT broadcaster.

Russia-Georgia ties hit a new low in late June this year following mass protests in Tbilisi that erupted after Russian lawmaker Sergei Gavrilo took the speaker's seat to address an international parliamentary forum on Orthodoxy in Georgia's parliament.

The unrest subsequently grew into an opposition rally, with activists demanding that the Russian delegation leave the parliament and calling for resignation of several Georgian officials. The Kremlin called the developments in Georgia a Russophobic provocation.

Earlier this month, Rustavi 2 tv host Giorgi Gabunia opened his show "Post Scriptum" with a monologue targeting Russian President Vladimir Putin in extremely obscene language. The Georgian Foreign Ministry denounced it as an attempt to put a further strain on relations between the two nations.

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