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## FRANCE SUPPORTS AZERBAIJAN'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

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By Abdul Kerimkhanov

France supports Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty, the newly-appointed French Ambassador in Azerbaijan Zacharie Gross has said at a meeting with Azerbaijani Defence Minister Zakir Hasanov.

During the meeting held on November 7, the sides also discussed the expansion of military relations between Azerbaijan and France. There was an exchange of views on the military-political situation in the region, problems of international and regional security, as well as prospects for the development of cooperation.

Hasanov informed the diplomat about the current situation on the line of contact of troops and stressed that Armenia's destructive position on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict poses a serious threat to the regional security. He emphasized that the solution to this problem is to compel Armenia to fulfill the requirements of the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council on the basis of the norms and principles of international law.

Hasanov highly appreciating the cancellation by the relevant courts of France of a number of illegal "agreements" signed between some cities of France and the "local authorities" created by the illegal regime in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. He expressed hope that France, as the Co-Chair country of the OSCE Minsk Group, would show more efforts in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Noting the importance of bilateral relations in the defence sector, Hasanov praised the current state of cooperation between Azerbaijan and France in the military, military-technical and military-educational fields.

In turn, Gross noted cooperation and friendly relations between the two countries.

Stressing that France is implementing joint defence projects with Azerbaijan, in particular in the military-technical, military-educational and military-medical spheres, Gross pointed to the importance of developing these programs.

During the meeting, the sides discussed projects implemented in Azerbaijan by a number of

French companies manufacturing military products, as well as other issues of mutual interest in the field of defence and security.

Earlier, the administrative Court of Lyon city of France decided to abolish the illegal treaty signed between the commune of Villeurbanne of France and Azerbaijanians occupied Shusha city on October 17, 2019.

The mayor of the French city of Saint-Etienne and the head of the municipality of Arnouville illegally visited the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh without the permission of Azerbaijan on October 2018. French representatives held a number of meetings with the Karabakh separatists.

Afterwards, the French Ambassador to Azerbaijan was summoned to the Ministry to notify of officially protest against a number of steps concerning the interests, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, including illegal visits to the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan by the French high-ranking officials.

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