
GEORGIAN OFFICIALS MET AZERBAIJANI FOREIGN MINISTER JEYHUN BAYRAMOV

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Newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov paid his first official visit to Tbilisi on September 24, where he met with Georgian officials: President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili, his Georgian colleague David Zalkaliani, Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia and Vice Speaker Kakhaber Kutchava. Relations between the two nations and prospects of cooperation were discussed at the meeting with Gakharia and Bayramov. Significance of strategic partnership existing between the two countries has been underlined.

Salome Zurbishvili stated that Georgia and Azerbaijan are historical and strategic partners. President Zurbishvili made comment after her meeting with Minister Jeyhun Bayramov. Welcoming the meeting with the Azerbaijani minister, Zurbishvili said the finalization of the border delimitation process between the two neighbouring countries is in their mutual strategic interest. In her remarks, Zurbishvili said that Georgia is ready to serve as a platform to contribute for regional peace and stability.

The intensified cooperation of Azerbaijan and Georgia were discussed within various formats. Focus was made on cooperation in trade, economic, transport and energy sectors. It was noted that Azerbaijan is one of the important trade partners of Georgia. The Prime Minister of Georgia expressed his gratitude to the Foreign Affairs Minister of Azerbaijan for the support demonstrated towards sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia. The interest of both countries towards a peaceful resolution of conflicts experienced in the region was noted at the meeting.

Vice Speaker Kakhaber Kutchava also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov as part of his working visit to Georgia. The parties reviewed the relations between the two countries and dwelt on the ways to strengthen the cooperation at the parliamentary level. The meeting with the First Diplomat of Azerbaijan was attended by the newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Azerbaijan to Georgia, Faig Guliyev, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Irakli Beraia and members of the Friendship Group with the Parliament of Azerbaijan.

According to the Georgian Foreign Ministry, Zalkaniani and Bayramov discussed key issues of bilateral cooperation, including political and economic ties, trade, energy and transportation projects, culture and education, as well as security challenges, peace and stability in the region. The Georgian Foreign Ministry stated that the parties stressed the importance of peaceful resolution of existing conflicts in the region and of the IDPs need to return to their homes in a

secure and dignified manner. During a joint press conference after the meeting, FM Zalkaliani stated Tbilisi relayed Baku with the new cartographic materials, documents and expert opinions regarding the non-delimited Davit Gareji Monastery section of the Georgian-Azerbaijani border, which has been one of the major stumbling blocks in border demarcation talks between the two countries, cvil.ge reported

Zalkaniani noted that these new developments may take this process in a new direction and that he doesn't rule out either, that the 2006-2007 agreement may need to be revised. Bayramov tweeted: Had an excellent exchange with my Georgian colleague David Zalkaniani at the meeting at MFA. We discussed wide range of issues of bilateral strategic relations, highlighted our common vision on addressing threats to security based on strict respect to norms & principals of intl law.

It is also important that President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has claimed Georgia has prevented transit for arms shipments to Armenia and said he "highly appreciates actions of the Georgian government" in the events, in an interview for a ceremony of offshore operations of the Absheron field at the Heydar Aliyev Baku Deep Water Jackets Plant. Held on Saturday, the event was followed by an interview of Aliyev for local TV channels, in which he made comments on wide-ranging issues from the gas energy projects of his government to oil sector policy to regional tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In his remarks on the latter subject the head of the state made the claim about Georgia's denial of access for unspecified shipments of "weapons to Armenia through its territory", according to agenda.ge

It is interesting to note that this week, a telephone conversation took place between Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia and National Security Advisor to the President of the United States Robert O'Brien. During the conversation the parties discussed the main issues pertaining to strategic partnership, cooperation, and security challenges in Georgia and the region.

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