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## **KAZAKHSTAN PAUSES PROSPECTIVE APPLICATION TO BRICS**

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Sergey Sukhankin

On October 16, Kazakh Presidential Spokesperson Berik Uali announced that Kazakhstan will likely not consider applying for BRICS (a loose political-economic grouping originally consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) in the foreseeable future. Uali noted that this decision was based on the complexity of gaining membership and other aspects pertaining to the prospects of and the future of this bloc. He also highlighted that Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev sees the United Nations as the universal and uncontested organization where the most important international problems should be discussed in a manner befitting a just and fair world order, demonstrating that Tokayev perhaps views BRICS as infringing on that role (Tengrinews.kz, October 16).

Despite announcing that Kazakhstan will not be applying for membership, Tokayev is still attending the 16th BRICS summit on October 22 [ ] in Kazan, Russia. This grouping of countries has traditionally been associated with the growing importance of the non-Western world. According to Russian sources, the summit will be attended by 36 countries with 22 national leaders present. The most notable guests include Chinese President Xi Jinping, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Brazilian President Lula da Silva. The event will also be attended by UN General Secretary António Guterres, Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Zhang Ming, and Dilma Rousseff, the former Brazilian president who currently serves as the Chair of the New Development Bank (Vedomosti, October 22).

This years summit will be the first to include the blocs new members: Egypt, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and Ethiopia (RG.ru, October 15). Saudi Arabia, which has not formalized its membership, is sending its Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan al-Saud, while the de facto ruler, Mohammed bin Salman, chose not to personally participate in the event (The Moscow Times, October 16). Despite the impressive list of guests and BRICSs recent growth, Kazakhstans decision to refrain from applying for BRICS membership has arguably tainted the upcoming event. Kazakhstans decision to opt out of applying for membership appears particularly strange given the past years developments. For instance, in a speech on August 24, 2023, Tokayev praised BRICS, stating that Kazakhstan would like to make its input in the development of BRICS as one of its members. Mentioning that BRICS could become one of the platforms that ensure the promotion of global security and stability, Tokayev also called on the members of BRICS to join regional

economic, trade, transportation, and investment projects such as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (aka the Middle Corridor) (TASS, August 24, 2023).

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