

Georgia Sets Out Terms for Restoring Diplomatic Ties With Russia

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian army personnel in Georgia during the 2008 war. **Bohan Shen**

Georgia says it will only restore diplomatic ties with Russia if the latter drops its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence and withdraws its troops from the two breakaway regions.

Georgian Foreign Minister Maiya Pandzhikidze said Wednesday that Tbilisi would restore bilateral relations with Moscow "with great pleasure" if the conditions were fulfilled, RIA Novosti reported. Georgia lost control of the two regions, which have largely Russian-speaking populations, in a brief conflict with Russia in August 2008.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov earlier said he hoped that bilateral ties between the two countries would be restored. "I hope that the issue of restoring diplomatic relations that were severed on Georgia's initiative will return to the agenda," Lavrov said on the sidelines of the Russia-NATO Council meeting in Brussels.

However, the chances of any agreement being reached appear slim considering Russia's stance on the two regions. The independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are "a new reality in the South Caucasus that must be recognized," Lavrov said in an interview Wednesday.

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