

Russia to Fund Abkhazian Military Modernization Amid Growing Tensions

By [Reuters](#)

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Artur Lebedev / TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin has approved a government proposal to bankroll the modernization of the armed forces in the breakaway Georgian region of Abkhazia, a government document published online showed on Monday.

Georgia lost control of the Black Sea region of Abkhazia after an inter-ethnic conflict which followed the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Russia is one of only a handful of countries to recognize Abkhazia's independence, something it decided to do in 2008 after it won a short war against Georgia over the fate of another Georgian breakaway region.

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Russia, which has its own troops on the ground, will sign an agreement to finance the modernization of Abkhazia's armed forces after detailed negotiations are over, the government document said.

Georgia condemned the move and called the agreement between Russia and Abkhazia illegal.

"This is another illegal step by the Russian Federation to integrate the Georgian regions into the Russian political and military space, which is a continuation of Russia's annexed policy," said Vladimer Konstantinidi, Georgia's foreign ministry spokesman.

Georgia, which aspires to join the European Union and NATO, has not had diplomatic relations with Russia since 2008.

It wants to get back control of Abkhazia and another breakaway region, South Ossetia, and for Russian troops to leave.

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