

Russian Navy to Establish Base in Abkhazia – Separatist Leader

By [AFP](#)

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Aslan Bzhania, the leader of separatist Abkhazia. presidentofabkhazia.org

Russia's navy will establish a base on the coast of Georgia's separatist region of Abkhazia, its leader told state-run media Thursday, amid mounting attacks by Ukraine on the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

"We have signed an agreement, and in the near future there will be a permanent point of deployment for the Russian navy in the Ochamchire district," the leader of separatist Abkhazia, Aslan Bzhania, told the newspaper Izvestia.

Bzhania, who is scheduled to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin this week, said the purpose of the deal was to "increase the defense capability both of Russia and Abkhazia."

"And this kind of cooperation will continue, because this safeguards the fundamental interests of both Abkhazia and Russia. And security is above all," he added.

Tbilisi said Thursday afternoon that it was "concerned" about the reported plans for a Russian naval base in Abkhazia, calling the move a violation of its sovereignty.

"We express concern over the statement of Russia's occupation regime in Sukhumi regarding the establishment of an additional Russian military base on Georgia's occupied territory," Georgia's Foreign Ministry said.

Russia has permanent military bases stationed in the breakaway territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, both of which it recognized as independent states in the wake of its 2008 war with Georgia.

Updated with the Georgian Foreign Ministry's remarks.

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