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What to Expect from Russia at COP29

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Rafiq Maqbool / AP / TASS

The UN's COP29 climate conference opened Monday in Azerbaijan under the specter of geopolitical conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine.

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin is leading the Russian delegation at the UN conference, expected to include nearly 50 representatives from Russian ministries of economic development, finance, agriculture and business, Interfax reported.

Among Russia's COP29 delegates are presidential climate envoy Ruslan Edelgeriev and Igor Shumakov, head of the Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring (Roshydromet), according to the event's program.

The focus of the COP29 climate talks in Baku from Nov. 11-22 is financing climate goals, especially for the developing world.

A panel on the topic of Russia's contribution to global food security is scheduled for Nov. 20. It is set to feature representatives from the Russian Agriculture Ministry as well as industry and sustainable development NGOs, with named delegates including Andrei Cheshev of the

Vernadsky Foundation and Tatiana Dmitrieva.

Russia has painted itself as a supplier of food to the Global South amid a global food crisis exacerbated by its own invasion of Ukraine.

As the international conference opened, Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg criticized the human rights record of Azerbaijan as well as those of previous hosts the United Arab Emirates and Egypt.

“Cop meetings have proven to be greenwashing conferences that legitimize countries’ failures to ensure a livable world and future,” Thunberg said in an opinion piece published by The Guardian.

Russia had vetoed EU countries from hosting the conference, while Armenia agreed to allow its enemy, oil and gas producer Azerbaijan, to hold the event as part of a deal to release Armenian political prisoners.

“It is gut-wrenching, to say the least, to talk of global peace after the terrible human rights violations committed by Azerbaijan’s Aliyev regime against ethnic Armenians living in the Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh region. Furthermore, Azerbaijan is planning to greenwash its crimes against Armenians by building a 'Green Energy Zone' on territories where the population has been ethnically cleansed,” Thunberg said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is among the representatives from nearly 200 countries planning to attend, according to media reports.

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