

Azerbaijani and Russian Investigators in 'Constant Contact' Amid Diplomatic Crisis

July 02, 2025



Vladimir Putin and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. kremlin.ru

The Kremlin [said](#) Wednesday that Russia's top investigative official is in regular contact with Azerbaijan's prosecutor general as tensions rise over the arrests of each country's citizens in recent weeks.

"Chairman of the Investigative Committee [Alexander] Bastrykin is in constant contact with the Prosecutor General of Azerbaijan," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "They're dealing with problematic issues during these contacts," he added, without elaborating.

The remarks came amid a growing diplomatic standoff following the deaths of two Azerbaijani men during a Russian police raid in Yekaterinburg last week, and then later with the arrests of Russian citizens in Azerbaijan.

On Tuesday, Azerbaijan launched a criminal investigation into what it described as the “cruel and deliberate murder” of the two Azerbaijani men, accusing Russian police of subjecting them to “torture and serious bodily injuries” during their arrest and time in custody.

Authorities in Russia’s Sverdlovsk region arrested six ethnic Azerbaijani men in connection with the cold-case murders of Azerbaijani businessmen in Yekaterinburg in the early 2000s.

Related article: [Yekaterinburg Court Places 6 Azerbaijanis in Pre-Trial Detention Amid Cold-Case Probe](#)

In apparent retaliation, Azerbaijani authorities [arrested](#) seven people linked to the Kremlin-backed media outlet Sputnik and eight other Russian citizens on [charges](#) including drug trafficking and cybercrimes. Images from court proceedings showed some of the Russian detainees with visible injuries.

Peskov said Moscow had “noticed all the details” in videos showing the arrests and vowed to protect Russian citizens.

“We’ll protect the legitimate interests of our citizens through diplomatic channels and we’ll use all the means available to us,” he said.

Russia’s Foreign Ministry on Tuesday [summoned](#) Azerbaijan’s ambassador to protest the arrests, accusing Baku of “deliberate actions aimed at dismantling bilateral relations” and “interference in the internal affairs of Russia.”

Peskov also [criticized](#) Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s call with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on Tuesday, during which Zelensky expressed support for Baku.

“Ukraine will, of course, do its utmost to provoke Azerbaijan into continuing emotional actions,” Peskov said. “Russia has never threatened Azerbaijan.”

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