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Georgia Says Breakaway Regions 'Non-Negotiable' in Any Restoration of Ties With Russia

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Georgia's Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze. **Inna Kukudzhanova / TASS**

Georgia will not restore diplomatic relations with Russia unless Moscow reverses its recognition of the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze said Wednesday.

Tbilisi severed ties with Moscow after the 2008 war, when Russia recognized the two regions as independent states, a status acknowledged by only a handful of countries.

"We have a principled stance and red lines related to de-occupation. This issue is non-negotiable," Kobakhidze told reporters, according to the Interfax news agency.

Earlier Wednesday, Russia's Foreign Ministry told the pro-Kremlin newspaper Izvestia that Moscow was open to normalizing relations "to the extent that Georgia is ready," but insisted its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was "irreversible."

“There are no conditions for resuming political dialogue with Georgia because Tbilisi continues to link the restoration of diplomatic relations to Russia’s renunciation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia,” the ministry said, calling that position “harmful and unrealistic.”

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Since 2008, Russia has maintained military, political and economic support for the separatist regions, which together account for around 20% of Georgia’s internationally recognized territory.

Despite the diplomatic freeze, the two countries continue to cooperate in trade and cultural exchanges, said Petre Mamradze, a former head of Georgia’s presidential administration. He told Izvestia that economic ties, especially in tourism and agriculture, are likely to remain areas for expanding cooperation.

Georgia exports wine, mineral water, fruit and nuts to Russia, while Russia supplies natural gas to Georgia. Bilateral trade reached nearly $1.3 billion in the first half of 2025, a 7% increase from a year earlier, according to Georgia’s national statistics service.

Georgia’s ruling Georgian Dream party has been accused of moving the country closer to Russia in recent years while cooling ties with NATO and the European Union.

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