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Azerbaijan and Russia to Restore Direct Flights Halted After Deadly Plane Crash

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Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov (left) and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (right).
Russian Foreign Ministry

Azerbaijan will soon resume direct flights to Russia after they were suspended earlier over the deadly downing of an Azerbaijani passenger jet in late 2024, the South Caucasus country's foreign minister said Friday.

Azerbaijan Airlines halted flights from Baku to 10 Russian cities after a Russian surface-to-air missile struck an Embraer E190 traveling from Baku to Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, on Dec. 25, 2024. The heavily damaged aircraft attempted to divert but crashed in western Kazakhstan, killing 38 of the 67 people on board.

The diplomatic crisis caused by the tragedy was quietly resolved in April, when Moscow and Baku reached an agreement for Russia to formally acknowledge the role of its air defense system and pay financial damages to the families of the victims.

During talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Friday, Azerbaijan's Foreign

Minister Jeyhun Bayramov said the suspension of direct flights between the two countries would be lifted sometime soon but did not give an exact date.

“Direct flights on a number of routes… are also expected to be restored in the near future,” Bayramov was quoted as saying by Russia’s state-run TASS news agency.

Lavrov said that both governments have now “resolved all issues” connected to the disaster.

A statement from Azerbaijan’s foreign ministry framed the restored transportation links as a boost to broader regional development, noting that they “strengthen the economic resilience not only of the participating states but of the region as a whole.”

Amid the diplomatic reset, both foreign ministers also pointed to robust economic ties, noting that bilateral trade between Russia and Azerbaijan rose to $4.9 billion over the course of 2025.

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