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Russia Denies It Held Official Peace Talks With Germany in Azerbaijan

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Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin. **Dmitry Belitsky / Moskva News Agency**

Russia's Foreign Ministry has denied that Russian and German officials held talks in Azerbaijan last month to discuss the ongoing war in Ukraine.

"There have been no official contacts with Germany regarding a settlement in Ukraine, nor are there any now," Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin told the state-run news agency TASS. "And they are hardly possible given the extremely aggressive anti-Russian rhetoric and actions of Germany's leadership."

His comments come after Azerbaijan's president said in July that Russian and German officials held a "secret meeting" in Baku earlier that month.

Media reports suggested that former minister-president of Brandenburg Matthias Platzeck and former chief of staff of the German chancellery Ronald Pofalla took part in the talks on the German side. On the Russian side, former prime minister Viktor Zubkov and current presidential human rights chief Valery Fadeyev allegedly attended the talks.

Galuzin said backchannel discussions have taken place between individuals from Germany and Russia who are not affiliated with either country's government but did not provide further details.

This month, reports emerged that former British, French and German diplomats met secretly with former Russian officials in Vienna as part of an initiative led by the Swiss-based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Galuzin did not mention that Vienna meeting in his comments to TASS.

While European leaders have floated the possibility of direct talks with Russia, the Kremlin has dismissed the idea of the EU as a possible mediator in Ukraine peace negotiations.

Former senior U.S. national security officials and high-ranking Kremlin officials held similar secret diplomatic talks in 2023, sources previously told The Moscow Times.

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