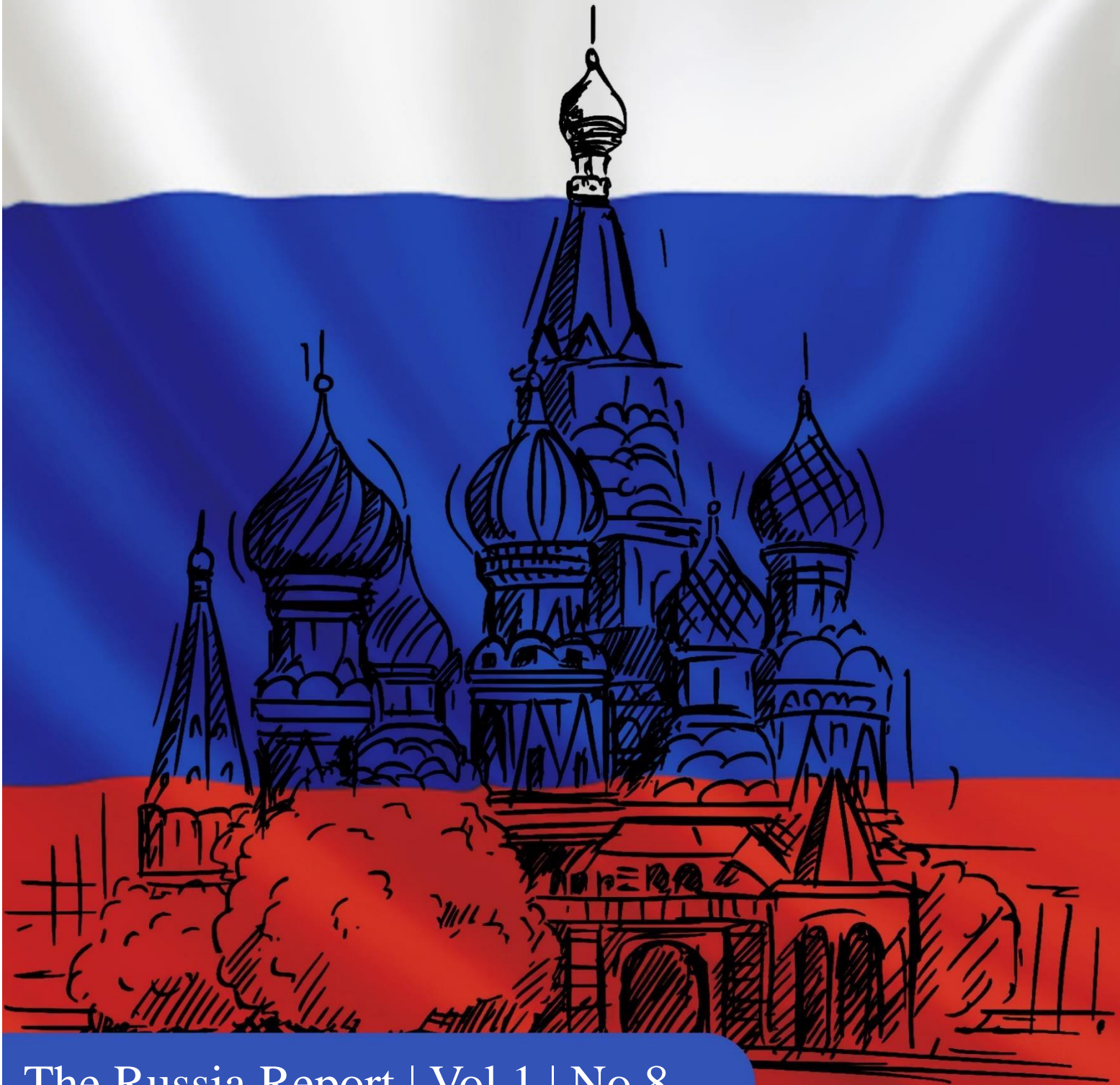


# CLAWS Newsletter



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by Anusua Ganguly

- **Russia – Azerbaijan Tensions**

## **Tensions Rise Between Baku and Moscow Over Journalist Detentions and Police Operations**

[TASS](#), 1 July 2025

Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Russia, Rahman Mustafayev, arrived at the Russian Foreign Ministry in central Moscow, following a summons from the Russian authorities. According to a TASS correspondent, the ambassador declined to speak to the press upon entering the building.

The summons comes in response to what the Russian Foreign Ministry described as "unfriendly actions" by Baku, particularly surrounding the recent detention of Russian journalists in Azerbaijan.

Earlier, Azerbaijan's Ministry of Internal Affairs confirmed that law enforcement carried out operations at the Baku office of Sputnik Azerbaijan, a Russian state-run news agency. Following this, RT's Editor-in-Chief Margarita Simonyan reported that Sputnik's local staff had become unreachable.

Sputnik clarified that it had not received any formal order banning its operations in Azerbaijan. The agency added that discussions were ongoing between relevant parties in an effort to resolve any disagreements.

Meanwhile, Russian authorities reported the detention of six individuals in Yekaterinburg in connection with a criminal group allegedly involved in multiple murders and attempted murders dating back to 2001, 2010, and 2011. The Sverdlovsk Region branch of the Russian Investigative Committee revealed that the group was allegedly operating a murder-for-hire scheme.

According to Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, Russia's chargé d'affaires, Pyotr Volkovkh, met with Azerbaijani officials to clarify the reasons behind the detentions of Azerbaijani nationals in Yekaterinburg. Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov highlighted the need to continue diplomatic engagement to explain Moscow's actions.

In retaliation, the Azerbaijani government has protested by cancelling upcoming cultural and bilateral events with Russia. The Kremlin expressed regret over Baku's response but maintained the importance of cooperation and communication moving forward.

## **Kremlin Condemns Detention of Russian Journalists in Baku as Breach of Norms**

[TASS](#), 1 July 2025

The Kremlin has criticised the detention of Russian journalists in Baku, calling the move a clear violation of international standards and a setback for Russian-Azerbaijani relations.

Speaking at a press briefing on Tuesday, Russian Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated, “We are dealing with members of the press. Actions of this nature against journalists are entirely at odds with generally accepted norms and the established spirit of cooperation between Russia and Azerbaijan.”

The criticism follows a police raid conducted on 30th June by Azerbaijani authorities at the Baku office of Russia’s state-affiliated Sputnik Azerbaijan news agency. The Interior Ministry later confirmed the arrest of several individuals, including the agency’s head, Igor Kartavykh, and editor-in-chief Yevgeny Belousov.

Sputnik has since clarified that it received no formal order banning its operations in Azerbaijan and that discussions are ongoing between relevant working groups to address and resolve the situation.

### **Baku Previously Had No Issues with Sputnik Azerbaijan, Says Russian Diplomat**

[TASS](#), 2 July 2025

Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has stated that Azerbaijan had never expressed any concerns about the operations of Russia’s Sputnik Azerbaijan news agency until recent events, suggesting that the current crackdown is motivated by external factors.

Speaking to *Sputnik Radio*, Zakharova said, “Throughout the years that Sputnik Azerbaijan has been active, it has employed primarily Azerbaijani citizens alongside Russians. There have been no complaints from the Azerbaijani authorities — neither regarding the agency’s content nor its conduct.”

She added, “It is evident that the recent measures taken by Baku are driven by other considerations.” Zakharova noted that this point had been made clear to Azerbaijani Ambassador Rahman Mustafayev during his summons to the Russian Foreign Ministry earlier this week.

According to Zakharova, Russian officials delivered a formal protest to the ambassador in response to what they view as unjustified actions against the media outlet. “Such actions do not help our bilateral relationship — in fact, they only serve to damage it. This was communicated clearly to the ambassador, and discussions are ongoing,” she concluded.

The statement comes amid an escalating diplomatic row, following the Azerbaijani police raid on Sputnik’s Baku office and the detention of several staff members, including senior editors.



## **Russian Diplomat Underscores Importance of Maintaining Ties with Azerbaijan**

[TASS](#), 2 July 2025

Russia considers its longstanding relationship with Azerbaijan to be of strategic importance and warns against attempts to destabilise these ties, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Wednesday.

Speaking to *Sputnik Radio*, Zakharova stressed that those seeking to exploit current tensions for their own gain risk causing long-term harm. “There are quite a few individuals trying to benefit from the situation — they would do well to consider the consequences. Our friendship with Azerbaijan is vital. Those working to undermine it should think twice,” she said.

Zakharova highlighted the decades of diplomatic and economic cooperation between the two countries, built on “mutual interests and respect.” She noted the numerous agreements binding the two nations and emphasised the significance of preserving this partnership.

Her comments followed a formal diplomatic protest issued on 1st July, when Azerbaijani Ambassador to Russia, Rahman Mustafayev, was summoned to the Russian Foreign Ministry. During a meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin, Moscow expressed its dissatisfaction with what it called Baku’s “deliberate actions to erode bilateral relations.”

The Russian Foreign Ministry cited several grievances: the cancellation of high-level bilateral engagements, an intensifying anti-Russian media narrative in Azerbaijan, the police crackdown on Sputnik Azerbaijan and its journalists, and the cancellation of cultural events involving Russian artists.

Moscow also addressed the detention of ethnic Azerbaijanis in Yekaterinburg during a recent Russian police operation. The ministry maintained that the investigation was being conducted strictly in accordance with Russian law, and involved serious crimes committed in previous years — some of which included Azerbaijani victims.

Zakharova concluded by reiterating Russia’s commitment to constructive dialogue but warned that the current trajectory risks damaging years of diplomatic progress.

## **Azerbaijan Risks \$1.2 Billion Export Loss Amid Tensions with Russia**

[Sputnik](#), 3 July 2025

Azerbaijan may face a loss of nearly \$1.2 billion in export revenues if trade with Russia is disrupted, according to a Sputnik analysis of UN Comtrade Database figures. This amount represents approximately 4.4% of Azerbaijan’s total exports for the previous year.

In 2024, Azerbaijan's overall exports stood at \$26.6 billion, with goods worth nearly \$1.2 billion sent to Russia. This marked a 1.5% decline in exports to Russia compared to 2023, while total export volumes fell by around 20%.

By contrast, Russia exported \$433.1 billion in goods last year, with exports to Azerbaijan accounting for just 0.8% of that total — equivalent to \$3.6 billion. This figure was up 15% from the year before. Despite the small proportion, Russia's exports to Azerbaijan reached a record high, while Azerbaijan's share of exports to Russia climbed to its highest level since 2020.

The deteriorating diplomatic situation appears to be affecting joint economic ventures. Azerbaijani MP Rasim Musabekov told *Minval Politika* earlier this week that negotiations on several major Russian-Azerbaijani economic projects had been suspended.

The downturn in relations follows the 30th June raid on the Sputnik Azerbaijan office by Azerbaijani law enforcement, during which seven staff members were detained. Those arrested include the editorial director, Igor Kartavykh, and editor-in-chief, Yevgeny Belousov.

The Rossiya Segodnya media group, which operates Sputnik, denounced the arrests as baseless and politically motivated. The group reported that access to the detainees has been denied to both consular representatives and family members. Kartavykh's medical condition is said to be serious, with concerns raised over a lack of access to essential medication, including insulin.

Dmitry Kiselev, CEO of Rossiya Segodnya, called the detentions unjust and suggested that the situation was being used to deliberately strain ties between Moscow and Baku. The media group has called for Azerbaijani authorities to act within legal bounds and to immediately release the detained journalists, who were engaged in professional activities at the time of their arrest.

- **Russia's Recognition of Taliban Government**

### **Moscow Formally Recognises Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan — Russian MFA**

[TASS](#), 3 July 2025

Moscow has officially recognised the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed on 3rd July.

Russian President Vladimir Putin made the decision following a recommendation from Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, aiming to signal Russia's commitment to developing closer ties with Afghanistan, said Dmitry Zhirnov, Russia's ambassador to Afghanistan.

Speaking on Rossiya-1 television, Ambassador Zhirnov described the recognition as “a decision taken in principle by the President of the Russian Federation at the suggestion of the Foreign Minister,” reflecting Russia’s sincere intention to establish a comprehensive partnership with Kabul.

Earlier on the same day, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko received the credentials of Gul Hassan, Afghanistan’s new ambassador to Russia, who arrived in Moscow on 1st July.

This step follows the Russian Supreme Court’s ruling on 17th April to lift the ban on the Taliban’s activities in Russia. The Foreign Ministry highlighted that removing the Taliban’s terrorist designation has paved the way for enhanced bilateral cooperation, benefiting both the Russian and Afghan peoples.

### **Russia First to Recognise Taliban Government in Afghanistan**

[Al Jazeera](#), 3 July 2025

Russia has officially recognised the Taliban government in Afghanistan, becoming the first country worldwide to do so since the group seized power in 2021 following the withdrawal of US troops.

The Russian Foreign Ministry stated that accepting the credentials of Afghanistan’s new ambassador will strengthen bilateral cooperation across various sectors. “We believe that official recognition of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will give impetus to productive cooperation between our countries,” the ministry said on Thursday.

Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi welcomed the decision, describing it as a “brave move” and asserting that Russia “was ahead of everyone” in initiating formal recognition.

This development is likely to draw attention in Washington, which continues to freeze billions of dollars in Afghan central bank assets and maintain sanctions against senior Taliban officials. These measures have left Afghanistan’s banking system largely isolated internationally.

Since the Taliban’s takeover in August 2021, Russia has sought to normalise relations with the group, viewing them as potential partners in economic development and counter-terrorism efforts. The Taliban have attended Russia’s economic forum in Saint Petersburg in recent years, and their top diplomat met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov last October.

In April 2025, Russia’s Supreme Court lifted the Taliban’s “terrorist” designation, with Lavrov urging a pragmatic approach towards the new authorities in Kabul.

Russia's relationship with the Taliban has evolved significantly, from placing the group on its terrorist blacklist in 2003 to now viewing them as allies in combating threats such as Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP).

Moscow also plans to leverage Afghanistan as a transit hub for gas shipments to Southeast Asia, reflecting its strategic ambitions in the region.

Despite Russia's recognition, the Taliban government remains unrecognised by the United Nations and most of the international community, with the UN referring to it as the "Taliban de facto authorities."

### **Press Release: Presentation of Credentials by Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to Russia**

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), 3 July 2025

On 3rd July 2025, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko received copies of credentials from Gul Hassan Hassan, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to the Russian Federation.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed confidence that the official recognition of the Government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will provide fresh impetus to the development of productive bilateral cooperation between the two nations across a variety of fields.

Significant prospects for collaboration exist in trade and economic sectors, with particular emphasis on joint projects in energy, transport, agriculture, and infrastructure. Moscow remains committed to supporting Kabul in enhancing regional security and combating terrorist threats as well as drug trafficking.

Furthermore, fostering cooperation in education, sports, culture, and humanitarian endeavours is recognised as a vital element in strengthening the friendship and mutual understanding between the peoples of Russia and Afghanistan.

### **Recognition of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Reflects Moscow's Commitment to Strengthening Ties — Ambassador**

[TASS](#), 3 July 2025

Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to recognise the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, made on the advice of Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, underscores Moscow's clear intention to deepen bilateral relations, Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan Dmitry Zhirnov stated on 3rd July.

Speaking on Rossiya-1 television, Ambassador Zhirnov remarked, “This decision was taken in principle by the President of the Russian Federation at the suggestion of the Foreign Minister. It reflects Russia’s sincere wish to build a comprehensive partnership with Afghanistan.”

He further noted that Russia’s friendly relations with Afghanistan have deep historical roots: “Over a century ago, our country was the first in the world to recognise Afghanistan’s independence. This all speaks to our traditionally warm attitude towards the Afghan people.”

The Russian Foreign Ministry formally confirmed Moscow’s recognition of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan earlier that day. Additionally, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko received the credentials of Gul Hassan, Afghanistan’s newly appointed ambassador to Russia, who arrived in Moscow on 1st July.

This diplomatic advancement follows the Russian Supreme Court’s ruling on 17th April to lift the ban on Taliban activities in Russia. The Foreign Ministry highlighted that removing the Taliban’s designation as a terrorist organisation paves the way for comprehensive cooperation that serves the interests of both Russian and Afghan peoples.

- **Lavrov’s Holds Talks with Saudi Counterpart**

#### **Meeting with Saudi Arabia’s Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud**

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), 4 July 2025

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov welcomed Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud to Moscow, expressing gratitude for the visit despite regional complexities. They discussed deepening bilateral ties and highlighted Saudi Arabia’s active role in the recent St Petersburg Economic Forum. Preparations were made for upcoming key events: the Russia-GCC Ministerial Meeting in September and the first Russian-Arab Summit in October, with hopes for Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s participation. Lavrov emphasised the strong personal relationship between the leaders as key to ongoing cooperation. The meeting also included congratulations to Saudi football club Al Hilal on their recent victory.

#### **Russian-Saudi Relations: Strong Partnership and Regional Cooperation**

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), 4 July 2025

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud in Moscow to discuss further strengthening the longstanding friendly ties between Russia and Saudi Arabia. They highlighted positive political dialogue at multiple levels and the active development of interparliamentary contacts.



Both sides agreed to intensify delegation exchanges to implement agreements from President Putin's December 2023 visit to Saudi Arabia. Trade and economic cooperation continue to grow, with the Joint Russian-Saudi Commission playing a key role in identifying new opportunities. Cooperation within OPEC+ remains a priority to stabilize global energy markets.

Tourism between the two countries has surged, boosted by planned direct flights and a visa waiver agreement. Russia expressed gratitude for Saudi support in organizing the hajj for Russian Muslims.

Cultural cooperation will expand with Saudi participation in Russia's InterVision music contest this September.

On regional and international issues, both ministers welcomed the ceasefire between Israel and Iran and emphasized the importance of resolving conflicts diplomatically and respecting UN principles. They reiterated support for Middle East peace efforts, including the Palestinian issue, Yemen, and Syria.

Looking ahead, they discussed preparations for the Russia-GCC Strategic Dialogue in September and the Russia-Arab League Summit in Moscow this October, hoping for strong Saudi participation.

Lavrov thanked Saudi Arabia for its balanced stance on the Ukraine conflict and willingness to facilitate dialogue.

The talks were marked by mutual trust, with Russia open to hosting future Russia-US talks in Riyadh to promote peaceful resolutions.

- **Lavrov in BRICS Summit**

### **Putin to Participate in Brazil BRICS Summit via Video Link**

[TASS](#), 4 July 2025

Russian President Vladimir Putin will join the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro on July 6 through a video link, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov announced. The summit, chaired by Brazil, will address key global issues including healthcare, trade, investment, finance, climate change, AI governance, and peace and security.

An additional event involving President Putin is planned, with details to be announced later by the Kremlin.

BRICS, established in 2006 and expanded recently to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the UAE, and Indonesia, continues to grow as a major international cooperation platform.

### **Lavrov Arrives in Rio for BRICS Summit; Putin to Participate Remotely**

[TASS](#), 6 July 2025

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has arrived in Rio de Janeiro to lead Russia's delegation at the BRICS Summit on July 6-7. President Vladimir Putin will join the summit's main plenary session via video link.

Lavrov will engage in multilateral discussions on politics, security, economy, finance, and cultural cooperation, alongside a series of bilateral meetings.

The summit, hosted by Brazil, will focus on healthcare, trade, investment, climate change, AI governance, and peace and security.

BRICS has expanded recently, welcoming Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE in 2024, and Indonesia in 2025.

### **Vladimir Putin's Remarks at the 17th BRICS Summit Plenary Session**

[President of Russia](#), July 6, 2025

Speaking at the 17<sup>th</sup> BRICS session President Vladimir Putin opened by expressing gratitude to Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Brazil's Chairmanship for their active role in advancing BRICS' strategic partnership. He emphasized the importance of continuing to deepen cooperation across key sectors, including politics, security, the economy, finance, as well as cultural and humanitarian fields.

Putin highlighted that BRICS has significantly expanded beyond its original membership of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, now including leading states from Eurasia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. This broad membership grants the group immense political, economic, scientific, technological, and human potential. Collectively, BRICS countries cover about one-third of the Earth's landmass, account for nearly half the global population, and contribute approximately 40% of the world economy — with a combined GDP based on purchasing power parity reaching \$77 trillion in 2025, according to the IMF. This figure surpasses that of the G7 group, which totals \$57 trillion.

This growing economic and demographic weight underpins BRICS' role as a major global governance center, where the collective voice represents the vital interests of the global majority, particularly countries of the Global South and East.

Putin stressed that BRICS is not a monolithic bloc but a coalition of countries with diverse development models, religions, civilizations, and cultures. Despite these differences,

members uphold values of equality, neighborliness, and mutual respect. Traditional values and the ideals of friendship and accord are prioritized as essential foundations for contributing to global stability, security, and prosperity.

The Russian president underscored that the global geopolitical landscape is undergoing tectonic changes. The unipolar system of international relations, which historically served the interests of the so-called “golden billion” (developed Western states), is increasingly irrelevant. It is being replaced by a more just multipolar world order, reflecting the rise of new centers of influence.

Economic patterns are shifting rapidly, with developing markets, including BRICS countries, becoming engines of growth. Putin emphasized the need to harness these emerging opportunities by intensifying cooperation in technology, resource development, logistics, insurance, trade, and finance.

Putin highlighted the importance of expanding the use of national currencies in mutual trade and payments to reduce dependence on the US dollar and enhance financial security. In 2024, transactions between Russia and BRICS countries showed a significant rise in the use of national currencies, with the Russian ruble and partner currencies accounting for 90% of mutual settlements.

He stressed the vision of establishing an independent payment and monetary system within BRICS to facilitate faster, more secure currency transactions, further deepening economic integration among members.

A key proposal from Russia is the creation of a new BRICS investment platform aimed at coordinating and mobilizing capital investments not only from BRICS economies but also from countries in the Global South and Global East. This platform would support economic growth and development aligned with the priorities of member states.

Putin also acknowledged progress made on several initiatives launched under Russia’s 2024 BRICS chairmanship, including:

- A special mechanism for consultations on World Trade Organization (WTO) issues, helping BRICS coordinate trade policies.
- Plans for a grain exchange to stabilize food security and supply.
- A climate research center focused on sustainable development challenges.
- A permanent logistics platform to improve trade infrastructure.
- A sports cooperation program fostering cultural exchange and unity.

Additional Russian Proposals:

Putin outlined further ideas that Russia has put forward for BRICS consideration:

- Formation of a carbon market partnership to address climate change.

- Establishment of an arbitration investment center to support fair dispute resolution.
- Creation of a fair competition platform to ensure transparency and equity in trade and investment.
- Development of a permanent tax secretariat within BRICS to harmonize tax policies.

He expressed hope that BRICS members would support these initiatives to enhance the group's institutional capacity.

#### Cultural Cooperation and Soft Power:

Highlighting the importance of humanitarian and cultural ties, Putin announced the upcoming “Intervision” international television song contest to be hosted in Moscow in September. This event, attracting performers from BRICS and partner countries, aims to promote shared universal, cultural, family, and spiritual values.

### **BRICS Summit 2025: Lavrov Highlights Multipolarity, Expansion, and Global South Solidarity**

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 7 July 2025](#)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov delivered a comprehensive summary of the outcomes of the 17th BRICS Summit, commending Brazil's Chairmanship and the smooth expansion of BRICS as a platform for the Global South and East. The summit was notable for its broadened participation — including ten newly designated BRICS partner countries and key global institutions like the UN, WHO, and WTO, alongside regional development banks.

#### Key Themes and Outcomes:

- **BRICS as a Voice of the Global Majority:** Lavrov emphasized BRICS' growing role as a coordinating platform for countries outside the Western bloc, positioning it as a pillar of multipolarity amid the decline of the old, Western-centric globalization model.
- **Multipolar World and UN Reform:** A central theme was the push for a more equitable world order, with BRICS reaffirming commitment to the UN Charter's full and non-selective application. Participants called for Security Council and Secretariat reforms to address the overrepresentation of Western countries in leadership roles.
- **Condemnation of Violence and Support for Peace:**
  - BRICS unanimously condemned Israeli and U.S. strikes on Iran, and expressed deep concern over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the West Bank.
  - The Ukrainian conflict was addressed with balanced language. BRICS recognized the security concerns that led to the crisis and called for recognition of human rights violations, including suppression of the Russian language and Orthodox Church in Ukraine.



- Economic and Financial Sovereignty:
  - Lavrov reiterated no BRICS “common currency” is planned, but emphasized increasing use of national currencies in intra-BRICS trade — now accounting for over 90% of transactions with Russia.
  - Proposals are under discussion for an alternative cross-border payment system and a new BRICS investment platform, driven by a shared desire to reduce dollar dependence.
- Global Governance Reform:
  - BRICS called for accelerated reform of the IMF and World Bank, criticizing disproportionate Western influence and biased lending practices, particularly to proxy regimes like Ukraine.
  - Lavrov condemned misuse of global institutions for geopolitical agendas and warned against Western pressure undermining trust in the dollar.
- WHO Reform and Public Health:
  - BRICS backed depoliticizing the WHO, stressing its core mission of disease prevention and public health. The group also announced a new partnership to combat socially significant diseases, a Brazilian initiative welcomed by all.
- Climate Policy and Sovereignty:
  - BRICS leaders agreed to resist unilateral “green policy” dictates, ahead of COP30 in Brazil. Developing countries should maintain control over their development paths without pressure from wealthier nations.
- Artificial Intelligence and Digital Governance:
  - A joint statement emphasized that AI governance should occur only under UN auspices, rejecting exclusive or opaque Western-led frameworks.

#### On BRICS Expansion and Cohesion:

Lavrov defended the inclusion of new partner states, describing it as a natural evolution of BRICS, not dilution. He dismissed Western claims of disunity, affirming the group’s unity is based on consensus, mutual respect, and shared strategic interests, in contrast to NATO’s ideological imposition.

#### On U.S. Tariff Threats and “BRICS Currency” Rumors:

Lavrov responded to U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump’s threats of tariffs against BRICS, calling them a sign of Washington’s fear of losing control over global financial systems. He clarified that BRICS is not planning a common currency, and discussions are focused on alternative settlement mechanisms, not a monetary union.

#### On Civilian Infrastructure Attacks:

Lavrov welcomed the unprecedented inclusion in the final BRICS Declaration of condemnation of attacks on Russian civilian infrastructure, including casualties among

children. He said this reflects BRICS' shared commitment to international humanitarian law and human rights.

On the Brazil-China Peace Initiative (Ukraine):

Lavrov dismissed concerns that BRICS' strong language would undermine peace efforts. He emphasized that defending civilian lives and infrastructure is compatible with diplomacy. He also questioned the neutrality of recent entrants like France to the Brazil-China peace group, urging BRICS peace frameworks to remain independent of Western influence.

On Iran and the IAEA:

Lavrov criticized the politicization of the IAEA's reporting, which he said preceded Israeli attacks on safeguarded Iranian facilities. Russia is prepared to assist in peaceful nuclear cooperation with Iran, including uranium processing, if both sides agree.

- **Russia-Ukraine Talks**

**Turkey Awaits Ukraine's Response on Next Istanbul Talks, Ready to Host Leaders' Meeting**

[TASS](#), 8 July 2025

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan has announced that Turkey is waiting for Ukraine's reply on the timing of a third round of talks in Istanbul aimed at resolving the conflict in Ukraine. Russia has already expressed its readiness to continue negotiations.

Fidan emphasized that Turkey is also prepared to host a high-level leaders' summit on Ukraine, should both sides agree. Reflecting on the two previous rounds held in Istanbul on May 16 and June 2, he described them as successful—highlighting a record prisoner exchange and cooperation on humanitarian issues.

Discussions continue around securing a temporary or permanent ceasefire, with options on whether to settle this at a leaders' summit or during further negotiations. Both sides have presented differing ideas, and talks remain ongoing.

**Russia Awaits Ukraine's Proposal for Next Round of Direct Talks**

[TASS](#), 8 July 2025

Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed that Russia is still waiting for Ukraine to propose dates for the next round of direct negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict

between the two countries. "As soon as dates are agreed, we will make an announcement," he stated.

This follows two rounds of talks held in Istanbul on May 16 and June 2, which led to a landmark prisoner exchange agreement involving at least 1,000 individuals from each side, including sick and young servicemen.

Meanwhile, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan reiterated Turkey's readiness to host a third round of talks and even a possible leaders' summit, emphasizing the success of previous negotiations in advancing humanitarian efforts and exploring ceasefire options.

### **Kremlin: West Continues to Fuel Hostilities by Sending Weapons to Ukraine**

[TASS](#), 8 July 2025

Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated on July 8 that ongoing deliveries of weapons from the United States and European countries to Ukraine demonstrate their commitment to prolonging the conflict. Despite some conflicting reports about halts in arms shipments, Peskov confirmed that weapon supplies are still continuing.

He emphasized that such actions undermine efforts toward a peaceful resolution, underscoring that European policies are geared toward sustaining hostilities. Precise details on the types and quantities of weapons being sent from the US remain unclear and will require further time to verify.

### **Moscow to Announce Next Round of Talks with Kiev Once Dates Are Set**

[TASS](#), 9 July 2025

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova confirmed on July 9 that Russia will announce the date for the third round of direct talks with Ukraine as soon as both sides agree on a schedule.

The second round of negotiations took place in Istanbul on June 2, with discussions lasting just over an hour. Both delegations presented documents outlining their positions on conflict resolution. Russia submitted a two-part memorandum, with the second part proposing several ceasefire implementation methods.

Key humanitarian agreements reached include a prisoner exchange based on an "all for all" formula involving seriously ill prisoners and soldiers under 25, totaling at least 1,000 individuals per side. Russia also plans to unilaterally return the bodies of 6,000 deceased Ukrainian servicemen. Additionally, Ukraine provided a list of 339 children separated from their parents during the conflict.

- **Lavrov in Russia-ASEAN ministerial meeting**

### **Sergey Lavrov to Join ASEAN Foreign Ministerial Meetings in Kuala Lumpur**

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), 9 July 2025

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will take part in the upcoming ASEAN foreign ministerial events in Kuala Lumpur on July 10–11, 2025. His participation includes the Russia-ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and the 32nd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) on regional security. These meetings come at a critical moment, as regional cooperation becomes increasingly important amid shifting global dynamics.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the first Russia-ASEAN Summit, also held in Kuala Lumpur. The ministerial meetings will reflect on two decades of growing partnership and assess the progress of the 2021–2025 Comprehensive Plan of Action. Discussions will also focus on shaping a new strategic roadmap for 2026–2030, emphasizing trade, political dialogue, education, and humanitarian cooperation.

Russia remains committed to strengthening ASEAN's role in regional security. Lavrov will advocate for building a more robust, inclusive, and ASEAN-led security architecture, aligned with President Vladimir Putin's proposal for a broader Eurasian security framework. Topics on the agenda include joint counterterrorism efforts, cybersecurity, non-proliferation, maritime cooperation, and law enforcement training.

Economic ties between Russia and ASEAN continue to grow steadily. In 2024, bilateral trade reached \$23.2 billion—an increase of 5.8%. Investment flows have also risen, with ASEAN investing \$2.3 billion in the Russian economy, and Russia investing \$12.4 billion across Southeast Asia. Joint projects in agriculture, digital economy, and environmental protection are also progressing, supported by Russia's new status as ASEAN's digital partner, formalized in 2024.

Youth diplomacy and education are gaining momentum, too. Russia and ASEAN are working to establish a permanent youth cooperation mechanism. The Russia-ASEAN Young Diplomats Summit, launched in Sochi in 2024, is expected to become a recurring event. Meanwhile, the MGIMO-led Master's programme on Russia-ASEAN relations welcomed students from seven ASEAN countries, with the first graduates receiving diplomas in July 2025.

Lavrov will also take part in the East Asia Summit preparations for its 20th session, scheduled for October in Kuala Lumpur. Russia has proposed a joint EAS statement on enhancing cultural and social connectivity, as well as initiatives on epidemic prevention and regional tourism development.



At the ARF, discussions will focus on countering transnational crime and terrorism, cybersecurity threats, WMD non-proliferation, and maritime security. Russia will present several practical proposals, including steps to prevent criminal misuse of information technologies—one of Moscow’s core priorities in regional security cooperation.

### **Sergey Lavrov Highlights Strategic Depth of Russia-ASEAN Partnership at Kuala Lumpur Ministerial**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 10 July 2025

On July 10, 2025, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov addressed the Russia-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, reaffirming Russia’s commitment to its long-standing partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Lavrov began by expressing appreciation to Malaysia for hosting the event and to Myanmar, the current ASEAN-Russia dialogue coordinator, for its role in deepening the strategic relationship.

Marking a year of historical reflection, Lavrov noted that 2025 commemorates the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II—an event that shaped the foundations of post-war security and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. He underscored Russia’s decisive role in that victory and linked it to the subsequent decolonisation and formation of modern regional frameworks, with ASEAN now playing a central role.

Recalling that the first Russia-ASEAN Summit took place in Kuala Lumpur 20 years ago, Lavrov emphasized how the relationship has grown in scope and substance since then. The strategic partnership, formally established in 2018, continues to evolve on the basis of mutual respect and commitment to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. He reiterated Russia’s support for ASEAN centrality in regional affairs and highlighted the bloc as a “reliable friend and like-minded partner.”

Looking ahead to the 35th anniversary of Russia-ASEAN relations in 2026, Lavrov described the partnership as a key factor in maintaining stability and multipolarity in the Asia-Pacific region. He praised the growing cooperation across political, economic, energy, and humanitarian sectors, as well as in security and the joint fight against transnational threats.

Importantly, Lavrov pointed to the development of a new Russia-ASEAN policy paper for 2026–2030 as a roadmap for the next phase of collaboration. This forthcoming document will outline common goals and expand cooperation into high-tech and science-intensive fields, reflecting the evolving nature of global challenges and opportunities.

### **Lavrov and Wang Yi Reaffirm Strategic Unity at ASEAN Ministerial in Kuala Lumpur**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 10 July 2025

On July 10, 2025, on the margins of the ASEAN ministerial events in Kuala Lumpur, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov held a bilateral meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister

Wang Yi. The talks reinforced the enduring strategic partnership between Moscow and Beijing amid the continued volatility in international affairs.

The ministers praised the growing strength of political dialogue and practical cooperation between their countries, which has gained particular importance against the backdrop of shifting global dynamics. Lavrov and Wang Yi stressed the significance of their nations' coordination within ASEAN, especially in response to increasing attempts by external powers to promote narrow military and political groupings in the Asia-Pacific.

Both sides voiced firm opposition to efforts aimed at militarising the region, including the deployment of NATO-aligned military infrastructure in the area. They reiterated their shared support for maintaining the ASEAN-centric model of regional security and dialogue, emphasizing its inclusive and stabilizing role.

In addition to regional security matters, the discussion covered a wide range of international and multilateral topics. Lavrov and Wang Yi exchanged views on ongoing global issues and reaffirmed their countries' commitment to close coordination within key international platforms such as the United Nations, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the G20, and APEC.

The meeting highlighted the depth of mutual understanding and alignment on key foreign policy priorities. It was conducted in a traditionally constructive and trust-based atmosphere, reflecting the mature and resilient nature of the Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership.

Concluding his remarks, the Russian Foreign Minister expressed hope that the Kuala Lumpur meeting would yield practical and forward-looking results, and further strengthen the foundations of this strategic partnership.

- **Lavrov in North Korea**

### **Lavrov to Visit North Korea for Strategic Talks, July 11–13**

[TASS](#), 9 July 2025

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will visit North Korea from July 11 to 13 for the second round of strategic dialogue with his DPRK counterpart, the Foreign Ministry announced.

The talks build on the first round held in Moscow in November 2024 during North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui's visit. This visit follows commitments made at the June 2024 Russia–North Korea summit in Pyongyang and aims to advance bilateral cooperation on political, economic, and regional security issues.

The dialogue underscores growing coordination between Moscow and Pyongyang amid shifting geopolitical dynamics in Northeast Asia.

### **Lavrov Holds Strategic Talks with DPRK Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui**

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), 12 July 2025

On July 12, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with North Korean Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui in Pyongyang for the second round of Russia–DPRK strategic dialogue.

The ministers discussed deepening bilateral ties and reviewed upcoming political engagements, with particular focus on expanding cooperation in practical areas. They also exchanged views on regional security, reaffirming their commitment to resolving issues on the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy and rejecting external interference that heightens tensions in Northeast Asia.

The meeting concluded with the signing of a **2026–2027** Plan of Inter-Ministerial Exchanges, underscoring both countries’ intention to strengthen strategic coordination.

### **Lavrov Meets Chairman Kim Jong-un in Wonsan**

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), 12 July 2025

On July 12, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with DPRK Chairman Kim Jong-un in Wonsan, marking a symbolic moment as Lavrov became the first foreign guest at the coastal resort.

Chairman Kim welcomed the minister warmly, highlighting the relaxed setting for strategic dialogue. Lavrov expressed gratitude for the meeting, underlining its importance in advancing bilateral ties in line with the Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreed upon by President Vladimir Putin and Chairman Kim.

Lavrov conveyed President Putin’s personal greetings and reaffirmed Russia’s commitment to implementing all previously reached agreements. He also praised the DPRK’s participation in Russia’s May 9 Victory Day events and noted the historic contribution of Korean People’s Army troops during World War II.

Lavrov reported that his earlier talks with Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui were “substantive and productive,” covering a full range of bilateral issues—including preparations for the upcoming session of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation, and plans for expanding cultural and humanitarian exchange.

### **North Korea Reaffirms Full Support for Russia’s Special Military Operation — Lavrov**

[TASS](#), 12 July 2025

During talks in Wonsan, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov announced that North Korea has reaffirmed its unequivocal support for all the goals of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine.

Lavrov stated that Pyongyang expressed firm backing for Moscow's leadership and armed forces amid the ongoing conflict. In return, Russia conveyed its deep gratitude for the Korean People's Army's historic role in helping liberate the Kursk Region from Ukrainian Nazis and foreign mercenaries during World War II.

The two sides also exchanged views on the broader situation surrounding the Ukrainian crisis, emphasizing mutual trust and solidarity.

- **Lavrov in SCO**

**Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Conclude Asia Tour at SCO Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tianjin**

[TASS](#), 14 July 2025

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers meeting on July 14–15 in Tianjin, China, marking the final stop of his Asia tour.

Lavrov's visit follows his participation in ASEAN ministerial events in Kuala Lumpur and a three-day official visit to North Korea. According to Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova, the SCO meeting is a key preparatory step ahead of the SCO summit scheduled in Tianjin from August 30 to September 1.

The summit is expected to feature full-scale bilateral talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, underlining the close personal and diplomatic ties between the two leaders amid ongoing global uncertainties.

The SCO forum will address pressing Eurasian security challenges, including NATO's expansionist ambitions and recent attacks on Iran, an SCO member state. Russia will highlight these issues during discussions, emphasizing the organization's role as a platform for inclusive dialogue and cooperation in the region.

Founded in 2001, the SCO now includes Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, and Central Asian nations, promoting regional stability and integration aligned with Russia's Greater Eurasian Partnership vision.



## **Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov Participates in SCO Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting in Tianjin**

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), 15 July 2025

On July 15, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov took part in the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) held in Tianjin, China.

The meeting began with a session where Chinese President Xi Jinping addressed the foreign ministers, sharing his insights on the current status and future prospects of the SCO. On behalf of all participants, Sergey Lavrov delivered a response speech.

The ministers focused on preparations for the upcoming SCO Council of Heads of State and the SCO Plus summit, scheduled for August 31 to September 1, also in Tianjin. They reviewed a package of documents and decisions expected to be adopted at the summit, including the SCO Development Strategy until 2035, which will outline the organisation's long-term development guidelines.

Additionally, the Tianjin Declaration will be issued, setting forth unified approaches to strengthening the SCO and addressing key global and regional challenges. The meeting will also adopt thematic statements commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and the founding of the United Nations.

An in-depth exchange of views took place on critical regional and international issues, emphasizing the importance of enhanced coordination among SCO member states in fostering a multipolar world order anchored by the United Nations. The ministers reaffirmed their shared commitment to deepening cooperation within the SCO as a cornerstone of an emerging system of equal and indivisible security across Eurasia.

During the event, Sergey Lavrov also held several bilateral meetings with his counterparts.

## **Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov Meets with President Xi Jinping in Beijing**

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation](#), [TASS](#), 15 July 2025

On July 15, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping in Beijing during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Foreign Ministers Council Meeting.

During the meeting, Lavrov conveyed greetings and best wishes from Russian President Vladimir Putin. The two leaders discussed a range of high-level bilateral political contacts, including preparations for President Putin's upcoming visit to China to participate in the SCO summit and the 80th anniversary celebrations of Victory over militarist Japan.

The conversation also covered key issues on the international and regional agenda.

President Xi Jinping welcomed President Putin's forthcoming visit and emphasized the long-standing friendship between the two countries. He praised the current state of bilateral relations and reaffirmed China's commitment to further expanding its comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation with Russia.

### **SCO Foreign Ministers Conclude Productive Meeting in Tianjin Ahead of Summit**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 15 July 2025

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Foreign Ministers' meeting in Tianjin marked the final stage of preparations for the upcoming SCO Summit scheduled for late August – early September 2025.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov highlighted the focused and business-like nature of the discussions, especially during the meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, who shared his vision for the SCO's continued development under China's 2025 chairmanship.

Ministers affirmed the SCO's growing importance as a key pillar in shaping a more equitable, multipolar world order. While acknowledging some national differences, they emphasized the trend toward further consolidation of the organisation and its expanding role on the international stage. The SCO's broad Eurasian reach and cooperation with multilateral frameworks like the EAEU, CIS, ASEAN, and China's Belt and Road Initiative were noted as foundational to creating a security architecture that is equal and indivisible.

Progress was reviewed on establishing regional security centers in Tashkent, Dushanbe, and Bishkek, as well as expanding SCO+ engagement with external partners. The upcoming SCO+ high-level meetings, preceding the Heads of State summit, are expected to draw representatives from about 30 countries and organisations, demonstrating the SCO's growing global appeal.

Key international and regional issues were thoroughly discussed. Russia shared its detailed assessment of the Ukraine crisis, emphasizing the importance of addressing root causes, recognizing current territorial realities, and protecting the rights of Russians and Russian speakers. Partners showed understanding of these positions.

Ministers unanimously condemned Israel's attacks on Iranian infrastructure and US strikes on Iranian nuclear sites, reaffirming commitment to Iran's peaceful nuclear rights. The Middle East conflict was also addressed, with calls for an immediate halt to actions worsening the humanitarian crisis in Palestine and for a just resolution based on UN decisions.

Regional security in Afghanistan was another priority, with members stressing support for Afghanistan's reconstruction as a neutral, peaceful state free from terrorism and drug trafficking, and the importance of inclusive governance.

Preparations continue for key documents to be adopted at the summit, including the Tianjin Declaration and the SCO Development Strategy through 2035, succeeding the 2015 Ufa strategy. The draft Leaders' Statement marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and the UN's founding is also in development. Economic initiatives in AI, green industry, investment, and digital economy were highlighted.

These resolutions will set the stage for the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting in Moscow in November 2025, under Russia's chairmanship.





## About the Author

Anusua Ganguly is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies, where her study focuses on Russia and Central Asia. She holds a Master's degree in Conflict Analysis and Peace Building, and her research interests include non-traditional security threats, the role of media in conflict, and the intersection of gender with conflict and peacebuilding.



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