

# BULLETIN

HIGHLIGHT OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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## **I. President Ilham Aliyev Signs Board of Peace Charter and Promotes Azerbaijan's Vision for a Stable and Connected Eurasia in Davos**

On January 19-22, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has paid a working visit to the Swiss Confederation to participate in the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, holding a series of high-level meetings and delivering key messages on Azerbaijan's role in promoting peace, stability, connectivity, and sustainable development in a rapidly changing international environment.

A central highlight of the Davos agenda was Azerbaijan's active engagement with the newly established Board of Peace initiative. Following the decision announced on January 16 by President of the United States Donald J. Trump to establish an international organization called the Board of Peace and to invite the Republic of Azerbaijan to become a Founding Member State, Azerbaijan accepted the invitation and conveyed its intention to join as a founding member. During a signing ceremony held in Davos on January 22, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev attended the event and, together with other participating heads of state and government, signed the Board of Peace Charter. Azerbaijan reaffirmed that it "is ready to actively contribute to international cooperation, peace, and stability," viewing this initiative as a practical platform aligned with the country's consistent policy of supporting peace and constructive international partnership.

Within this framework, President Ilham Aliyev also held a meeting in Davos on January 22 with President of the United States Donald Trump. During the meeting, the two leaders welcomed the dynamic development of bilateral relations across various fields following President Trump's return to office and underscored the significance of continuing close political dialogue. The sides highlighted President Donald Trump's historic role in facilitating agreements aimed at advancing the peace agenda between Azerbaijan and Armenia, reached in Washington on August 8 last year.

President Ilham Aliyev spoke about the steps taken toward the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia and stressed that peace has already been established in the region, with tangible reflections in trade and transit. President Ilham Aliyev noted the export of Azerbaijani oil products to Armenia and the transit of imported grain to Armenia through Azerbaijani territory, emphasizing that these developments demonstrate the practical benefits of peace for the entire South Caucasus. The head of state also underscored the importance of the Zangezur Corridor, including the TRIPP project, in strengthening regional connectivity and linking broader Eurasian routes with Europe through a safe and reliable corridor. During the discussion, the significance of the Board of Peace established under the chairmanship of the U.S. President was also noted, and Azerbaijan's invitation to join as a founding member was described as a clear reflection of Azerbaijan-U.S. strategic partnership and Azerbaijan's contribution to promoting peace on a global scale.

The Davos program also included President Ilham Aliyev's meeting on January 21 with President of the World Economic Forum Borge Brende. The sides held a solemn exchange of a cooperation agreement laying the foundation for cooperation between the Government of Azerbaijan and the Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution of the World Economic Forum. Borge Brende expressed satisfaction at meeting President Ilham Aliyev again in Davos and noted that under the President's leadership Azerbaijan has taken resolute steps toward the goals of the fourth industrial revolution. Emphasizing the importance of the agreement, President Ilham Aliyev stated that it demonstrates "our partnership spirit and our willingness to continue our mutual efforts," adding that Azerbaijan will take an active part in implementing the fourth industrial revolution goals. President Ilham Aliyev also drew attention to the expansion of the non-oil sector, noting that industrial production in the non-oil sector increased by 9.1 percent last year, and expressed confidence that Azerbaijan would be "good

partners in this important project.” In the same context, President Ilham Aliyev highlighted Azerbaijan’s development strategy built with attention to renewed international and regional trends and emphasized the importance of large transport and infrastructure projects, including East-West and North-South transport corridors and energy projects, as well as reforms aimed at improving the business environment.

On January 21, President Ilham Aliyev met with Marta Kos, European Commissioner for Enlargement. The conversation included an exchange of views on the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia and the advancement of the peace agenda, alongside cooperation in energy, regional transport connectivity, humanitarian demining, and other fields, with particular attention given to Azerbaijan’s contribution to Europe’s energy security. Commissioner Marta Kos stated that the European Union stands ready to support Azerbaijan’s efforts in humanitarian demining and projects related to the restoration of the Nakhchivan railway line, and both sides emphasized the significant prospects for expanding cooperation between Azerbaijan and the European Union across numerous areas.

Speaking about the shifting international landscape with Euronews TV on January 20, President Ilham Aliyev emphasized Azerbaijan’s principled and interest-based approach to global affairs. “International relations are entering a new era, where it is not the rule of law, but the rule of strength that is ruling the situation,” President Ilham Aliyev said, underscoring that Azerbaijan’s strategic goal has been to achieve results based on national interests while acting in line with international law and common values. President Ilham Aliyev noted that Azerbaijan’s political development and the restoration of sovereignty and territorial integrity were consistent with international law and that the country has built its strategy on its own potential and on establishing good relations both regionally and globally.

The Euronews interview also addressed the peace and cooperation trajectory in the South Caucasus. President Ilham Aliyev described recognition of Azerbaijan’s efforts as an honor, linking it to the broader peace agenda: he characterized the current period as a new stage after decades of conflict and stressed the practical steps already taken to normalize relations and deepen cooperation. “We have lived in peace only for five or six months; we are learning to do it,” President Ilham Aliyev said, adding that the relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan is evolving into cooperation. He emphasized that Azerbaijan lifted restrictions on cargo transportation to Armenia and began supplying critical commodities, primarily oil products, describing these steps as beneficial and forward-looking. “So, I think that through the joint efforts of Armenia and Azerbaijan, including civil society, we will achieve not long-lasting peace, but peace forever in the Caucasus. This is our goal,” President Ilham Aliyev stated.

President Ilham Aliyev also emphasized regional stability as a priority, noting that Azerbaijan’s focus is on preventing risks emanating from outside its borders and ensuring predictability in the region. On energy, President Ilham Aliyev stressed Azerbaijan’s expanding partnership with Europe and the scale of its energy geography. President Ilham Aliyev stated that Azerbaijan supplies natural gas to 16 countries, including 10 members of the European Union, and underscored that this cooperation strengthens European energy security while providing Azerbaijan access to premium markets.

Overall, President Ilham Aliyev’s Davos agenda reflected Azerbaijan’s active international role grounded in sovereignty, pragmatic partnerships, and a clear regional vision. The signing of the Board of Peace Charter, the meetings with the World Economic Forum leadership and European and Gulf partners underscored Azerbaijan’s ambition to advance innovation, connectivity, and investment, while consolidating peace and promoting stability in the South Caucasus.

## II. Azerbaijan Welcomes TRIPP Implementation Framework as Step Toward Practical Connectivity

On January 14, 2026, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan commented on the publication of the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP) Implementation Framework, following its release during the visit of Armenia's foreign minister to the United States. Responding to an inquiry from local media, Aykhan Hajizada, Head of the Press Service Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that the adoption of the document "once again demonstrates the U.S. side's commitment to the agreements reached within the framework of the Washington Summit on 8 August" and described it as "an important step towards starting the practical work in this area." He further emphasized that the framework is significant in terms of fulfilling the obligations undertaken by Armenia and underlined that ensuring unimpeded connectivity between the main part of Azerbaijan and its Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic remains one of Azerbaijan's key national priorities. Hajizada also noted that the TRIPP route is important for diversifying trade and connections across the wider region.

This official reaction places the TRIPP Implementation Framework squarely within the context of Azerbaijan's long-standing foreign policy approach, which prioritizes sovereignty, territorial integrity, and regional connectivity as mutually reinforcing objectives. From Baku's perspective, TRIPP is not an isolated initiative but the operational continuation of the Washington Summit held on August 8, 2025, where President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan, and President of the United States Donald Trump signed a Joint Declaration, alongside the initialing of the Armenia–Azerbaijan peace treaty by the two countries' foreign ministers.

The Washington Summit addressed one of the most sensitive unresolved issues of the post-war period by committing Armenia to guarantee

unimpeded connectivity between mainland Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through Armenian territory. The TRIPP Implementation Framework gives concrete institutional form to that commitment. According to the document, Armenia grants a U.S.-managed TRIPP Development Company exclusive rights to plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain multimodal transit infrastructure along the designated route for an initial period of 49 years, with a possible 50-year extension. The framework covers railways, roads, energy infrastructure, and digital networks, while explicitly affirming that Armenia's sovereignty, jurisdiction, and authority over border and customs controls are absolute and nonnegotiable.

For Azerbaijan, this arrangement aligns with a broader strategy of anchoring peace in economic interdependence and infrastructure rather than relying solely on political declarations. Since the Washington Summit, Baku has taken several steps consistent with this approach. In October 2025, Azerbaijan lifted all restrictions on the transit of goods to Armenia that had been in place since the early 1990s. Announcing the decision, President Ilham Aliyev emphasized that the first shipment—a consignment of Kazakh grain—symbolized peace "not only on paper, but also in practice." The move was welcomed by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who described it as an important step toward regional connectivity and stability.

The reopening of transit routes quickly translated into practical outcomes. By December 2025, shipments of Russian wheat to Armenia resumed via Azerbaijani territory, reviving a rail corridor that had been inactive for decades. Energy cooperation followed a similar trajectory. In December 2025, Azerbaijan began direct deliveries of petroleum products to Armenia, starting with 1,220 tons of AI-95 motor fuel, followed in January 2026 by larger rail shipments of gasoline and diesel. From Baku's perspective, these steps demonstrate how economic pragmatism can contribute to confidence-building in post-conflict relations.

Institutional cooperation has also progressed. In November 2025, Azerbaijan hosted the Armenian delegation in Gabala for the 12th meeting of the joint state commissions on border delimitation, marking the first such official bilateral meeting on Azerbaijani territory in the post-Soviet period. The sides discussed technical and organizational issues related to comprehensive border delimitation and agreed to continue the process, including holding the next meeting in Armenia.

At the societal level, civil society engagement has complemented official diplomacy. Under the “Bridge of Peace” initiative, Azerbaijani and Armenian civil society representatives held reciprocal meetings in Baku and Yerevan in late 2025, addressing humanitarian cooperation, media interaction, and expert exchanges. While such initiatives cannot replace state-level agreements, they broaden the social base for normalization and reduce the risk that the peace process remains detached from public realities.

Within this broader context, the TRIPP Implementation Framework represents a significant step in translating political commitments into durable economic and infrastructural arrangements. As emphasized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the framework is important not only for ensuring Armenia’s fulfillment of its obligations, but also for advancing Azerbaijan’s strategic goal of secure and unimpeded connectivity to Nakhchivan and for diversifying regional trade routes. Azerbaijan’s foreign policy is focused on embedding peace in concrete mechanisms that reshape incentives, normalize interaction, and support long-term regional stability.

### **III. Azerbaijan and the United States Advance Strategic Partnership**

On January 24, 2026, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance will visit Azerbaijan and Armenia in February. In a statement published on Truth Social, President Trump said the visit would build on recent peace

efforts and advance the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity, underscoring Washington’s intention to sustain high-level engagement in the South Caucasus at a moment when regional connectivity and post-conflict stabilization have acquired broader strategic relevance.

On January 14, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan signed the Implementation Framework for the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity. The framework translated commitments reached at the Washington Summit of August 8, 2025 into a detailed roadmap for ensuring unimpeded multimodal connectivity between Azerbaijan and its Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through Armenian territory. Taken together, the signing of the TRIPP Implementation Framework and the announcement of Vice President Vance’s upcoming visit reflect a coherent and sustained U.S. strategy towards the region. The Washington Summit hosted by President Trump in August 2025, which brought together President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, marked a decisive moment in this approach. That meeting produced a trilateral Joint Declaration and brought the peace treaty process close to legal finality through the initialing of the treaty text by the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia. The TRIPP framework builds directly on that breakthrough by anchoring political commitments in infrastructure, trade, and long-term economic integration, thereby increasing the costs of renewed confrontation and narrowing the scope for destabilizing behavior.

From Washington’s perspective, this evolution signals a shift in how the South Caucasus is viewed within U.S. foreign policy. The region has moved from the margins of American strategic thinking to a more central position, linked to energy security, trade diversification, and broader Eurasian connectivity. President Trump has publicly identified the Armenia–Azerbaijan process as one of several conflicts in which his administration has

played a decisive role, presenting it as a practical example of his broader peace agenda. This engagement in the South Caucasus complements an expanded U.S. focus on Central Asia, illustrated by the November 2025 summit between the United States and Central Asian leaders in Washington. Azerbaijan's geographic position at the intersection of the South Caucasus and Central Asia gives it particular importance as a gateway linking multiple regions. In this context, Washington's emphasis on connectivity projects such as TRIPP reflects not only regional considerations but also wider concerns about the resilience and diversification of global trade routes.

For Azerbaijan, these broader shifts coincide with a qualitative transformation in relations with the United States. Since the conclusion of the Armenia–Azerbaijan conflict in 2020 and amid intensifying global competition, Azerbaijan has emerged as an increasingly important partner for Washington in areas such as energy security, transportation corridors, and counterterrorism. The re-election of President Trump in 2024 injected new momentum into bilateral relations, reversing the relative cooling observed in the preceding years and reinforcing a pragmatic, interest-driven approach.

Several decisions taken under the Trump administration have underscored this new phase. The effective suspension of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act removed a long-standing obstacle to bilateral cooperation and was described by President Ilham Aliyev as the restoration of justice after decades. The August 2025 Washington Summit further elevated relations by establishing a Strategic Working Group tasked with preparing a Strategic Partnership Charter between Azerbaijan and the United States. This framework identified regional connectivity, economic and technological investment, and security cooperation as the core pillars of a deepening partnership.

Within this structure, the TRIPP-Zangezur route occupies a central place. For Azerbaijan, it secures unimpeded access to Nakhchivan and integrates

national transit initiatives into broader Eurasian logistics chains. For the United States, it supports the diversification of global trade flows and reinforces the role of reliable, rules-based partners in a period of systemic uncertainty. Azerbaijan's balanced foreign policy, its role as a key gas supplier to Europe, and its position at the crossroads of major transport corridors have all contributed to its growing geostrategic value in Washington's calculations.

The announcement of Vice President Vance's forthcoming visit thus fits into a larger pattern. It signals continuity in U.S. engagement, reinforces the practical implementation of TRIPP, and highlights the centrality of Azerbaijan in Washington's evolving South Caucasus strategy. The sequence of developments since August 2025 suggests that U.S.-Azerbaijan relations have moved beyond ad hoc cooperation toward an institutionalized strategic partnership grounded in mutual interests and concrete projects.

As these processes unfold, the emphasis on connectivity, sovereignty, and economic integration reflects a shared understanding that durable peace in the South Caucasus must be built on practical foundations. The sustained involvement of the United States, combined with Azerbaijan's proactive foreign policy, has reshaped regional dynamics and opened a pathway toward a more stable and interconnected regional order.

#### **IV. President Ilham Aliyev Launches the Largest Wind Power Facility in the South Caucasus**

In January, Azerbaijan reached another important stage in its long-term energy transformation with the launch of the Khizi–Absheron Wind Power Plant, the largest wind energy facility in the South Caucasus. The project represents not only a major infrastructure achievement but also a clear policy signal that renewable energy has become an integral part of Azerbaijan's national development strategy, shaped by economic pragmatism and long-term strategic planning.

The 240-megawatt Khizi–Absheron Wind Power Plant was officially inaugurated on January 8 in Baku with the participation of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, alongside senior representatives of Saudi Arabia’s ACWA Power and China’s PowerChina. Implemented under an independent power producer model, the project reflects Azerbaijan’s growing experience in structuring large-scale energy investments that combine state priorities with international capital and expertise.

The wind power plant comprises 37 turbines installed across the Absheron and Khizi districts and represents approximately 340 million US dollars in foreign investment. Once fully operational, it is expected to generate around one billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, supplying power to more than 300,000 households. According to official estimates, the facility will save about 220 million cubic meters of natural gas per year and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 400,000 tons, reinforcing Azerbaijan’s contribution to environmental sustainability while strengthening energy efficiency.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, President Ilham Aliyev emphasized that renewable energy has become a central pillar of state policy and a key tool for modernizing the country’s energy system. He noted that Azerbaijan’s power generation capacity has nearly tripled over the past two decades, reaching around 10 gigawatts, and stressed that the next phase of development will be defined by diversification and sustainability rather than simple capacity expansion.

The commissioning of the Khizi–Absheron wind facility comes against the backdrop of a broader reassessment of Azerbaijan’s historic reliance on oil and gas revenues. Hydrocarbons remain essential to the country’s fiscal stability and international standing, but Baku has increasingly framed renewables as a strategic complement that addresses both structural limits in the oil sector and evolving global energy trends. This approach reflects continuity rather than rupture, aiming to

reduce long-term dependence on fossil fuels while preserving energy security and export reliability.

For more than a century, Azerbaijan’s economic and political development has been closely linked to oil. From the late nineteenth-century oil boom to the post-Soviet recovery driven by the Azeri–Chirag–Gunashli fields and the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan pipeline, hydrocarbons financed infrastructure development, macroeconomic stabilization, and regional influence. Oil revenues underwrote large-scale public investment in the 2000s and supported post-conflict reconstruction after the 2020 war.

At the same time, this model has faced natural constraints. By the mid-2020s, declining production levels made the limits of oil-led growth increasingly apparent. According to the Ministry of Energy, Azerbaijan produced 27.7 million tons of oil and condensate in 2025, marking a 4.8 percent decline from the previous year. These trends have reinforced the need for diversification within the energy sector itself.

Natural gas has offered greater flexibility and strategic leverage. Azerbaijan remains a key supplier to European markets through the Southern Gas Corridor, exporting roughly 25 billion cubic meters of gas annually and generating significant export revenues. In January 2026, SOCAR began supplying natural gas to Austria and Germany via the Trans Adriatic Pipeline, expanding Azerbaijani gas exports to 16 countries and increasing the number of European states importing Azerbaijani gas to twelve.

Within this context, renewable energy serves a clear strategic function. Expanding clean electricity generation allows Azerbaijan to free additional volumes of natural gas for export, stabilize the domestic power supply, and adapt to changing climate and investment expectations without undermining its role as a reliable energy partner.

By the end of 2025, Azerbaijan’s installed renewable energy capacity reached approximately 1,829 megawatts, accounting for nearly one-fifth of total electricity capacity. Projects such as the

230-megawatt Garadagh Solar Power Plant, developed in partnership with the UAE's Masdar, have already demonstrated concrete results by producing more than one billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually and saving over 110 million cubic meters of gas.

The Khizi–Absheron wind project builds directly on this progress and highlights Azerbaijan's ability to attract large-scale foreign investment within a predictable regulatory framework. Representatives of ACWA Power have repeatedly described Azerbaijan as an emerging green energy hub connecting the Caspian region with European markets, noting the country's emphasis on economic feasibility and system balance rather than politically driven targets.

Looking ahead, Azerbaijan aims for renewable sources to account for at least 30 percent of installed power capacity by 2030, with plans to commission six gigawatts of wind and solar power and expand further in the early 2030s. The country's technical potential is substantial, with onshore renewable capacity estimated at 135 gigawatts and offshore wind resources in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea assessed at 157 gigawatts.

Azerbaijan is also positioning itself as a regional exporter and transit hub for green electricity. Central to this ambition is the Black Sea Submarine Cable project, developed jointly with Georgia, Romania, and Hungary. The 1,155-kilometer cable will transmit up to 1,300 megawatts of renewable electricity to Southeastern Europe and received EU Project of Mutual Interest status in December 2025, with completion targeted for 2032.

In parallel, Azerbaijan is advancing a Central Asia–Azerbaijan green energy corridor with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, supported by the Asian Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Agreements signed in April 2025 launched feasibility studies and grid integration efforts, reinforcing Azerbaijan's role as a system-shaping transit state in Eurasian energy networks.

Taken together, these developments illustrate a strategic recalibration rather than a narrow sectoral shift. Azerbaijan is using its hydrocarbon legacy, infrastructure base, and geographic position to integrate into future-oriented energy systems. As President Ilham Aliyev stated at the Khizi–Absheron inauguration, the country's next stage of energy development will be defined by diversification and sustainability. Oil and gas laid the foundations of sovereignty and regional influence. Renewable energy now offers a pathway to preserve and extend that influence under new global conditions, ensuring that Azerbaijan remains a key energy actor across Eurasia in the decades ahead.

#### **V. Russia-Azerbaijan Relations are Facing Unresolved Tensions**

On January 6, 2026, Azerbaijani media published a letter from the Russian Investigative Committee addressed to the Prosecutor General of Azerbaijan concerning the December 2024 crash of an Azerbaijan Airlines aircraft near Grozny. Signed by the Committee's chairman, Alexander Bastrykin, the document attributed the tragedy to adverse weather conditions and unsuccessful landing attempts, concluding that the aircraft collided with the ground during its approach to Aktau. The letter made no reference to external interference, air defense activity, or missile debris.

The publication of this document drew attention in Baku because its contents differed from the explanation previously offered at the highest political level. During the meeting held in Dushanbe on October 9, 2025, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin had apologized to President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev for the incident and stated that the investigation, which he described as nearing completion, had identified a different chain of events. According to President Putin, the crash occurred amid Ukrainian drone activity in Russian airspace and a technical malfunction of Russia's air defense system, with missiles detonating near the

aircraft and debris damaging its fuselage. He assured that Russia would provide full assistance to the investigation, conduct a legal assessment of the actions of all responsible officials, and ensure compensation for the families of the victims.

These assurances were received in Azerbaijan as an important political acknowledgment and were widely seen as a step toward addressing the consequences of the tragedy in a manner consistent with international obligations and bilateral relations. The Dushanbe meeting, held on the sidelines of the CIS summit, was viewed in Baku as a turning point following months of strain after the crash.

Against this background, the position outlined in the Investigative Committee's letter prompted questions about consistency between political statements and institutional conclusions. Azerbaijani officials noted that the version presented in the letter diverged from the explanation given by President Putin and omitted elements he had explicitly mentioned. This divergence became a central issue in Azerbaijan's subsequent diplomatic engagement with Russia.

Earlier signs of concern had already emerged in late December 2025. On December 22, the administration of President Ilham Aliyev announced that the head of state would not attend the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council or the informal summit of CIS heads of state due to Azerbaijan's non-membership in the Eurasian Economic Union and President Ilham Aliyev's intensive schedule. The announcement followed comments by Russian Presidential Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, who had indicated a day earlier that President Ilham Aliyev was expected to attend and that a bilateral meeting with President Putin was possible.

At a year-end press conference in late December, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov confirmed that Baku had received an official letter from Moscow regarding the investigation. Minister Bayramov stated that the contents of the letter had caused

serious surprise, particularly the information that the criminal case had been terminated by the Russian Investigative Committee. Minister Bayramov emphasized that such a step raised serious questions and did not correspond to the assurances given during the Dushanbe meeting. Minister Bayramov noted that Azerbaijan had formally responded to the Russian side, reiterating its expectation that the process would be completed in line with the commitments expressed by President Putin.

Azerbaijan also conveyed its position through diplomatic channels. In late December, Azerbaijan's Ambassador to the Russian Federation Rahman Mustafayev met with Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin and underscored that the October 2025 meeting between Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Vladimir Putin had been perceived in Baku as a genuine move toward normalization. Ambassador Mustafayev stressed the importance of implementing the understandings reached at that meeting, including the provision of compensation and a fair legal assessment of responsibility. He made clear that procedural decisions could not substitute for the fulfillment of political commitments made at the highest level.

Following the publication of the Bastrykin letter, public discussion in Azerbaijan intensified. Representatives of civil society organizations, including the National Forum of Non-Governmental Organizations, addressed the issue in open statements, emphasizing the importance of accountability and referencing Azerbaijan's rights under the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation. Media commentary focused on the discrepancy between the political explanation offered in Dushanbe and the conclusions presented in the investigative letter, framing the issue as one of coherence and credibility rather than confrontation.

From Azerbaijan's perspective, the matter goes beyond a technical disagreement over investigative findings. The AZAL crash represents a human tragedy that carries legal, moral, and

political dimensions. Azerbaijani officials have consistently emphasized that acknowledgment at the political level must be accompanied by corresponding legal processes and outcomes. Without such alignment, confidence in the normalization of bilateral relations remains limited.

These developments have therefore highlighted the need for greater clarity and consistency. While dialogue between Baku and Moscow continues, the resolution of the AZAL case remains an important test of whether political commitments can be translated into institutional action. Until this occurs, the process of restoring full trust between Azerbaijan and Russia is likely to proceed cautiously, shaped by the expectation that responsibility and accountability are essential components of stable and predictable relations.