

Kobakhidze Says He Raised Strategic Partnership With Trump and Rubio

BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgian Dream Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze says he spoke briefly with U.S. President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio during a reception in New York and raised Georgia's desire to restore the countries' strategic partnership.

Kobakhidze said the conversations took place during his visit to New York for the UN General Assembly and that Georgia had already taken a step toward improving relations with Washington.

"I had the opportunity to speak with both the U.S. President and the U.S. Secretary of State, where I noted our desire to restore the strategic partnership," Kobakhidze told journalists at the memorial for those who died for Georgia's unity.

He said the exchanges were brief but described the atmosphere as positive.

"We have taken a step and are awaiting reciprocal steps," Kobakhidze said, adding that he conveyed the same message to both Trump and Rubio.

First Deputy Parliament Speaker Gia Volski said the exchanges were significant despite their short duration.

"A meeting, even a brief conversation



or a short exchange of views, at such a representative international forum is quite important," Volski told journalists.

He said brief conversations between heads of delegations could help create a positive atmosphere even when there is not enough time to discuss issues in depth.

Opposition politician Teona Akubardia questioned Kobakhidze's account and the significance of the exchanges, saying that a substantive meeting would have been accompanied by a photograph or other public evidence.

"If there had been an opportunity for such a conversation with President Trump and Rubio that would have produced a photo, we would have already seen that photo," Akubardia said.

She argued that the reported brief conversation does not indicate a realistic reset in Georgia-U.S. relations and accused the government of trying to give the public the impression that it is working to restore ties with Washington.

Akubardia also pointed to closer U.S. ties with Armenia and Azerbaijan, saying Georgia risks being left behind as the two countries pursue strategic partnerships and investment linked to the regional peace process.

Turkey Calls for Faster Customs Procedures Between Georgia, Azerbaijan and Türkiye

BY MESSENGER STAFF

Turkey is calling for simplified customs procedures, shorter waiting times at border crossings and improved infrastructure to increase trade and transit between Georgia, Azerbaijan and Türkiye, Deputy Trade Minister Sezai Uçarmak said.

Speaking to journalists at the fifth meeting of the Trilateral Committee on Customs Affairs in Azerbaijan, Uçarmak said the three countries play an important role in trade along the East-West route and should work to make transit more efficient.

"One of our main goals is to simplify transit procedures, reduce waiting times at border crossing points, and create infrastructure that facilitates trade and transit processes by introducing international standards in these countries," he said, according to Azerbaijani media.

Uçarmak said significant investments are being made in roads, railways and maritime

infrastructure in Georgia, Azerbaijan and Türkiye. He said the development of Georgia's road infrastructure was particularly evident during his visits to the country.

At the same time, he said transit capacity along the Middle Corridor remains limited and argued that harmonizing procedures and developing a more unified system could increase the movement of goods between Asia and Europe.

Uçarmak said stronger transit links could also attract new investment and create opportunities for countries along the route to process goods and generate additional economic value, rather than relying only on transportation.

"A significant economic value cannot be created simply by moving goods from one point to another," he said. "If you process these goods and turn them into another product, you can gener-

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