

THE POSITIONS OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS COUNTRIES ON THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

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Abstract

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the long-standing conflicts in the Middle East, whose impact and repercussions extend beyond the borders of the region. This article examines the positions of the South Caucasus states (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan) on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and aims to show how foreign policy priorities and alliances, as well as existing ties with the conflicting parties, influence these positions. The importance of the topic is also due to the war that began in 2023 between Israel and the Hamas group. The situation in the conflict zone also affects the South Caucasus, considering the security and energy ties between the two regions. The study was conducted based on the analysis of official positions, voting results on United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions, and other documents. The study shows that the three South Caucasus states support the “two-state solution” principle, but the approaches expressing this differ, taking into account each country's alliances and foreign policy interests.

Keywords: *South Caucasus, Middle East, Israel, Palestine, UN resolutions, conflict, strategic ties, energy.*

Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the proclamation of independent republics coincided chronologically with a period of Arab-Israeli negotiations, when there was considerable optimism about resolving the long-standing conflict. These diplomatic efforts, however, did not lead to a resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Following a large-scale Hamas attack on the morning of October 7, 2023, the Gaza–Israel war began, which lasted for two years (as of January 2026, a ceasefire has been established).

The purpose of this research is to examine the positions of the South Caucasus states on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, in particular, the Israel–Hamas war

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that began in 2023. The importance and timeliness of this issue are also due to the fact that the war has not been limited to Gaza and Israel, but has also drawn in other states. Parallel to this, military operations have been ongoing between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah, Israel has launched numerous airstrikes on southern Lebanon and the capital, Beirut, and in June 2025, a 12-day war broke out between Israel and Iran, which also involved the United States. At this stage, the Houthis from Yemen have also had limited participation in the war. The above testifies to the broad regional nature of the conflict and its potential for expansion.

Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan have officially supported the “two-state solution” principle. The “two-state solution” principle dates back to 1947. UNGA Resolution 181, which proposed dividing the British Mandate of Palestine into two states - Jewish and Arab, and placing Jerusalem under international administration¹. Resolution 242, adopted by the UN Security Council after the 1967 Arab-Israeli Six-Day War, also expressed this idea, emphasizing the principle of “respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of every State in the region,” as well as their right “to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.”² The principle of the “creation of two states,” Israel and Palestine, is enshrined in UN Security Council Resolution N 1397 (2002), which affirms a vision for the region where “two states, Israel and Palestine, will live side by side within secure and recognized borders.”³

Georgia and Azerbaijan recognized the statehood of Palestine as early as 1992 and established diplomatic relations with it⁴. Armenia recognized the State of Palestine in June 2024 during the ongoing military operations in Gaza, after which it established diplomatic relations.⁵

The study of the South Caucasus countries' positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was conducted based on official positions, the results of UNGA vote tallies, the study and analysis of other documents. In addition, the history and current state of the South Caucasus countries' relations with Israel, as well as the influence of relations with the region's most influential states, were analyzed.

¹ The Question of Palestine, Resolution 181 (II). Future government of Palestine, UN, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-185393/>.

² Resolution 242 (1967) / [adopted by the Security Council at its 1382nd meeting], of 22 November 1967, UN Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/90717?ln=en&v=pdf>.

³ Resolution 1397 (2002) Adopted by the Security Council at its 4489th meeting, on 12 March 2002, <https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SRES1397.pdf>.

⁴ Countries, recognized the State of Palestine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, <https://www.mofa.pna.ps/en-us/mediaoffice/countries-recognized-the-state-of-palestine>.

⁵ ՀՀ ԱԳՆ հայտարարությունը Պաղեստինի Պետության ճանաչման վերաբերյալ, 21 հունիսի, 2024, [Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RA on the Recognition of the State of Palestine, June 21, 2024], https://www.mfa.am/hy/interviews-articles-and-comments/2024/06/21/mfa_statement/12706.

Armenia's Position

The Middle East is an important focus in Armenia's foreign policy agenda, both because of its neighboring location and the impact of regional developments on international politics.

The National Security Strategy of Armenia states that developments in the Middle East affect Armenia's security. The strategy also states that “the continuous expansion of cooperation with Middle Eastern countries is one of the priorities of the Republic of Armenia.”⁶

After declaring independence, Armenia, among other countries, also established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992⁷; however, the two countries did not open embassies. The Armenian embassy in Tel Aviv was only opened in 2020⁸, which had drawn the ire of Iran. The latter, among other objections, had characterized it as a move contrary to the interests of the Palestinian people.⁹ It should be noted that in the fall of 2020, during the war in Artsakh, Armenia recalled its ambassador from Israel in protest of the continued supply of Israeli weapons to Azerbaijan.¹⁰ Subsequently, the two sides mutually restored diplomatic presence: Armenia appointed a new ambassador to Israel in 2021, and Israel appointed a (non-resident) ambassador to Armenia in 2022.¹¹

One of the most contentious aspects of Armenia–Israel relations is Israel's military cooperation with Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan and Israel are strategic partners. Israel is one of Azerbaijan's major suppliers of military munitions. The Azerbaijani side emphasizes the significance of Israeli munitions in its victory in the Karabakh

⁶ ՀՀ ազգային անվտանգության ռազմավարություն, 2020, էջեր 6, 12, [National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia, 2020, pp. 6, 12], <https://www.mfa.am/filemanager/security%20and%20defense/AA-Razmavarutyun-Final.pdf>.

⁷ Israel, Bilateral Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, <https://www.mfa.am/en/bilateral-relations/il#:~:text=General%20information,Consul%20of%20Israel%20in%20Armenia>.

⁸ Իսրայելում պաշտոնապես բացվել է Հայաստանի դեսպանատունը, ԱՐՄԵՆՊՐԵՍՍ, 18.09.2020, [The Embassy of Armenia has been officially opened in Israel, ARMENPRESS, 09.18.2020], <https://armenpress.am/hy/article/1028117>.

⁹ Opening Armenia's embassy in Tel Aviv contradicts with interests of Palestinian nation, MEHR News Agency, 15.03.2020, <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/156763/Opening-Armenia-s-embassy-in-Tel-Aviv-contradicts-with-interests>.

¹⁰ PM Pashinyan: “Israel should ask itself the question – is it not fighting de facto alongside mercenaries against Nagorno-Karabakh?”, The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, 03.11.2020, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/interviews-and-press-conferences/item/2020/11/03/Nikol-Pashinyan-Interview-Jerusalem-Post/>.

¹¹ Իսրայել, Երկկողմ հարաբերություններ, ՀՀ արտաքին գործերի նախարարություն, [Israel, Bilateral Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RA], <https://www.mfa.am/hy/bilateral-relations/il>.

war.¹² Israel mainly supplied Azerbaijan with combat and reconnaissance drones, which gave the Azerbaijani side a significant advantage in the war.¹³

Despite prospects for relations with Azerbaijan and its position on preserving Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, Israel abstained during the vote on UNGA Resolution N A/RES/62/243 (2008) regarding “the preservation of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and the withdrawal of Armenian forces.”¹⁴

One of the most complex issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the status of the Old City of Jerusalem, which also directly concerns Armenia, given the presence of the Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem. During the Camp David II negotiations held in the United States in July 2000, it was proposed to divide the Old City into two parts, establishing Israeli control over the Jewish and Armenian quarters, while the Christian and Muslim quarters would be under Palestinian control. This option was opposed by Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Fatah movement.¹⁵ The Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem opposes the idea of separating the Armenian Quarter from the Christian Quarter, which would also divide the Armenian community. For the Patriarchate, free and uninterrupted access to the holy sites is important, and in the event of a division of the city, that normal process would be disrupted.¹⁶

Furthermore, since the 1990s, the Jerusalem municipality has been making attempts to appropriate the property of the Armenian Patriarchate, as was the case in recent years regarding the “Cows’ Garden” adjacent to the patriarchate. The “Cows’ Garden”, which occupies 25% of the Armenian Quarter, was to be transferred to the Israeli side for 99 years under a contract, which had been signed with the Armenian Patriarchate, after which the Armenian side unilaterally canceled it and went to court.¹⁷ Another issue concerned an attempt to appropriate

¹² As Azerbaijan claims final victory in Nagorno Karabakh, arms trade with Israel comes under scrutiny, CNN, 04.10.2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/04/middleeast/azerbaijan-israel-weapons-mime-intl>.

¹³ As Azerbaijan claims final victory in Nagorno Karabakh, arms trade with Israel comes under scrutiny, CNN, 04.10.2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/04/middleeast/azerbaijan-israel-weapons-mime-intl#:~:text=Azerbaijan%20%E2%80%9Cused%20Harop%20kamikaze%20strike,-ate%201980s%20and%20early%201990s>.

¹⁴ The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, UN Digital Library, 2008, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/632041?ln=en>.

¹⁵ Yasir Arafat: We Will Never Betray Armenians, ARMENPRESS, 08.10.2002, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/514297>.

¹⁶ Dividing Jerusalem: Armenians on the Line of Confrontation, CIVILNET, 18.12.2017 <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/384235/dividing-jerusalem-armenians-on-the-line-of-confrontation/>.

¹⁷ «Կովերի պարտեզում» կրկին բախումներ են, Ազատություն ռադիոկայան, 04.04.2024, [Clashes again in the “Cows’ Garden,” Radio Liberty, 04.04.2024], <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32891316.html>.

property belonging to the Armenian Patriarchate located outside the Old City—“due to unpaid property taxes since 1994.”¹⁸

These issues have not been definitively resolved. These disputes are primarily handled by the Patriarchate and the local community in Israeli courts. As for the official position of the Armenian side on the above-mentioned issues, it should be noted that the Government of Armenia opposes any action that could change the status quo of the Old City of Jerusalem, as noted in 2024 during political consultations between the foreign ministries of Armenia and Jordan.¹⁹

The recognition of the Armenian Genocide is another thorny issue in Israel-Armenia relations. Israel has not officially recognized the Armenian Genocide. The issue has been periodically the subject of internal discussions in the Knesset, but it has not received sufficient support. In April 1994, on the occasion of the Armenian Genocide Memorial Day, Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister, Yossi Beilin, had announced the recognition of the Genocide by Israel. However, the government did not accept this announcement, considering it Beilin's personal opinion, and continued its policy of denial.²⁰

In his research, Ben Aharon (Ben Aharon, E., 2023) notes regarding Israel's state policy on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, that Israel participated in Ankara's campaign to deny the Armenian Genocide as part of the normalization of relations with Ankara in the late 1980s and early 1990s.²¹ Individual viewpoints and academic discussions recognizing the Armenian Genocide cannot influence Israel's official policy, which aims to maintain strategic relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan, as well as to maintain the uniqueness of the Holocaust in the international discourse.²²

In 2001, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres denied the Armenian Genocide, calling it “Armenian demands.” He also stated that “Israel rejects attempts to draw parallels between the Holocaust and ‘Armenian accusations’.”²³

¹⁸ Jerusalem authorities move to seize Armenian Patriarchate properties over taxes, CIVILNET, 19.02.2025, <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/818275/jerusalem-authorities-move-to-seize-armenian-patriarchate-properties-over-taxes/>.

¹⁹ Քաղաքական խորհրդակցությունների Հայաստանի և Հորդանանի արտաքին քաղաքական գերատեսչությունների միջև, ՀՀ արտաքին գործերի նախարարություն, 16.05.2024, [Political consultations between the foreign ministries of Armenia and Jordan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia], 16.05.2024, https://www.mfa.am/hy/press-releases/2024/05/16/Kostanyan_Jordan/12649.

²⁰ Charny, W. I. (2021). Israel's failed response to the Armenian genocide. Denial, State Deception, Truth versus politicization of history. Boston. p. 120.

²¹ Ben Aharon, E. (2023). Between Geopolitics and Identity Struggle: Why Israel Took Sides with Azerbaijan in the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict, Frankfurt am Main: PRIF Report, 1, Frankfurt, ISBN: 978-3-946459-84-2, p. 16, DOI : 10.48809/prifrep2301 , <https://shorturl.at/Jz6xq>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Quote by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Assembly of Turkish American Associations, <https://www.ataa.org/reference-center/armenian-issue-revisited/quote-by-israeli-foreign-minister-shimon-peres/>.

Israel's deep economic and military ties with Azerbaijan, as well as its commercial relations with Turkey, also greatly influence its failure to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Israel, on the other hand, has used the issue of recognizing the Armenian Genocide as a diplomatic tool in its relations with Turkey. When Turkish-Israeli relations are strained, discussions on recognizing the Armenian Genocide become active in the Knesset. However, a bill recognizing the Armenian Genocide has not yet been passed by the Knesset. In 2018, there was a bill on the matter that was withdrawn due to a lack of government support.²⁴

After 2021 After US President Joe Biden recognized the Armenian Genocide, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that it recognizes the “horrific suffering and tragedy of the Armenian people,” but again did not recognize the Genocide.²⁵

In September 2025, Israeli Prime Minister B. Netanyahu said in an interview that he recognizes the Armenian Genocide.²⁶ In response, the Turkish Foreign Minister condemned Netanyahu's statement, calling it “an attempt to exploit past tragedies for political purposes.”²⁷

On the issue of Palestine, Armenia maintained neutrality after its independence, essentially staying clear of the repercussions that could arise from its policy regarding the Republic of Artsakh. While not recognizing the state of Palestine on one hand, on the other, since its first decade of independence, Armenia has supported the Palestinian people's self-determination²⁸, sovereignty²⁹, and In the

²⁴ Retzach ha-am ha-Armeni / HaKnesset dachatah et hatsa'at ha-chok shel Ch"K Lapid le-tsiyun Yom Retzach ha-am ha-Armeni, Atar ha-hadashot Davar, 15.02.2018. [Armenian Genocide / The Knesset rejected MK Lapid's bill to designate a day for commemorating the Armenian Genocide, Davar News Agency], <https://www.davar1.co.il/110409/>.

²⁵ Foreign Ministry: Israel recognizes 'terrible suffering' of Armenians, The Times of Israel, 24.04.2021, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/foreign-ministry-israel-recognizes-terrible-suffering-of-armenians/.

²⁶ Israeli PM Netanyahu acknowledged the Armenian genocide during a podcast, marking a first for Israel, although no official Knesset resolution supports this recognition, Euronews, 27.08.2025, <https://www.euronews.com/2025/08/27/israels-prime-minister-benjamin-netanyahu-recognises-armenian-genocide-for-first-time>.

²⁷ Turkey rejects Netanyahu's recognition of Armenian genocide as politically motivated, The Times of Israel, 27.08.2025, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/turkey-rejects-netanyahus-recognition-of-armenian-genocide-as-politically-motivated/>.

²⁸ The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2011, UN Digital Library, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/724161?utm_source=.com&v=pdf.

²⁹ Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2011, UN Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/724283>.

UN, it has supported the Palestinian side in granting Palestine observer status³⁰, not establishing diplomatic missions in Jerusalem³¹, and on other issues.

As for the Palestinian side's position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it was expressed in Mahmoud Abbas's statement in 2011 during his visit to Azerbaijan that "Azerbaijan and Palestine have the same problem: both of their lands are occupied, and both have refugees."³² In addition, during Abbas's tenure, the Palestinian embassy opened in Baku in 2011³³, a significant step in bilateral relations that demonstrated a willingness to establish closer ties with Azerbaijan.

Palestine's support for the Azerbaijani side in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict is also evidenced by a statement made by the Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Azerbaijan, Nasser Abdul Karim Abdul Rahim, in one of his interviews, in which he noted that the Palestinian side supports the UN resolutions on the Nagorno Karabakh issue, and that "the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan must be preserved within its internationally recognized borders."³⁴

Notably, the Palestinian Hamas group congratulated Azerbaijan after the 2020 war for "liberating Nagorno Karabakh from the Armenian occupation." The organization's spokesperson also praised "Turkey's support for Azerbaijan, a Muslim nation, and their goals."³⁵ Naturally, the Palestinian group, being a close ally of Turkey, is promoting the Turkish agenda on this issue.

A practical change in Armenia's policy on the conflict occurred recently against the backdrop of the ongoing military operations in Gaza: Armenia, a proponent of the "two-state" solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, recognized the independence of Palestine on June 21, 2024, amid the military operations in Gaza.³⁶

³⁰ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 67/19. Status of Palestine in the United Nations, The Question of Palestine, UN, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-187149/>.

³¹ General Assembly Overwhelmingly Adopts Resolution Asking Nations Not to Locate Diplomatic Missions in Jerusalem, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, UN, 21.12.2017, <https://press.un.org/en/2017/ga11995.doc.htm>.

³² Presidents of Azerbaijan and Palestine made statements for the press, President of The Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, 28.06.2011, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/2550#:~:text=Azerbaijan%20and%20Palestine%20have%20similar,Thank%20you%20for%20your%20attention>.

³³ Palestine's embassy opens in Baku, Azerbaijan State News Agency: AZERTAC, 29.06.2011, https://azertag.az/en/xeber/palestines_embassy_opens_in_baku-608379.

³⁴ Colloquy with Ambassador Nassir Abdul Karim Abdul Rahim - Relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State of Palestine, Caucasus International, <http://cij.az/post/colloquy-with-ambassador-nassir-abdul-karim-abdul-rahim---relations-between-the-republic-of-azerbaijan-and-the-state-of-palestine-292>.

³⁵ Hamas congratulates Azerbaijan over Karabakh victory Abu Zuhri hails Turkish support to Azerbaijan and Muslim causes, Anadolu Agency, 10.11.2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/azerbaijan-front-line/hamas-congratulates-azerbaijan-over-karabakh-victory/2038618>.

³⁶ ՀՀ ԱԳՆ հայտարարությունը Պաղեստինի Պետության ճանաչման վերաբերյալ, ՀՀ արտաքին գործերի նախարարություն, 21.06.2024, [Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RA on the Recognition of the State of Palestine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RA,

This move has been met with a harsh reaction from Israel and has taken on political resonance³⁷, as the recognition occurred at a rather heightened phase of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—with casualties, violence, and an internationally tense situation, thus giving it a more explicit political subtext. Diplomatic relations between Armenia and Palestine were established on September 27, 2024.³⁸

Although Armenia's recognition of Palestinian independence was a significant political step, it does not, in essence, represent a change in Armenia's policy, but rather expresses Armenia's support for the “two-state solution” principle in the conflict. This decision may have been influenced by the extensive Israeli-Azerbaijani cooperation in recent years, which is directly aimed at undermining Armenia's security. Turkey was the first to welcome Armenia's recognition of Palestinian independence.³⁹ Iran also welcomed Armenia for the decision, calling it a “positive and bold step.”⁴⁰ Essentially, one of the goals of recognizing Palestine could also have been to form a positive perception in the Islamic world. In 2024, in addition to Armenia, a number of other countries also recognized the independence of Palestine.⁴¹

Georgia's Position

The National Security Concept of Georgia states that developments in Central Asia and the Middle East play an important role for Georgia, and that maintaining stability and security in these regions is in Georgia's interest. At the same time, the concept emphasizes that Georgia will continue its economic cooperation with Middle Eastern countries.⁴²

Georgia maintains balanced relations with the region's power centers. Considering the country's positioning as a regional transit state, as well as its policy of diversifying economic relations— Georgia prioritizes the development of trade

June 21, 2024], https://www.mfa.am/hy/interviews-articles-and-comments/2024/06/21/mfa_statement/12706 :

³⁷ Armenia, Israel, Middle East, News, Palestine Israel summons Armenia ambassador hours after his country recognises Palestine state, Middle East Monitor, 22.06.2024, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240622-israel-summons-armenia-ambassador-hours-after-his-country-recognises-palestine-state/> .

³⁸ ՀՀ ԱԳ նախարարի հանդիպումը Պաղեստինի վարչապետի հետ, ՀՀ արտաքին գործերի նախարարություն, 28.10.2024, [Meeting between the Armenian Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister of Palestine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RA, 28.10.2024], https://www.mfa.am/hy/press-releases/2024/09/28/Armenia_Palestine/12869 :

³⁹ Türkiye welcomes Armenia's recognition of Palestine as state, Anadolu Agency, 22.06.2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkiye-welcomes-armenia-s-recognition-of-palestine-as-state/3255017>

⁴⁰ Iran considers Armenia's recognition of State of Palestine as courageous and positive, ARMENPRESS, 28.06.2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1194673> .

⁴¹ Which countries recognise Palestine in 2024?, ALJAZEERA, 29.11.2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/29/which-countries-recognise-palestine-in-2024> .

⁴² National Security Concept of Georgia, “9. Economic security policy”, p. 23, <https://mod.gov.ge/uploads/2018/pdf/NSC-ENG.pdf> .

partnerships with neighboring countries, an example of which is the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement signed with the United Arab Emirates in 2023.⁴³

Georgia seeks to use its geographical position to connect the energy resources of the Caspian Sea and the Middle East with European markets through strategic projects such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline and “The Middle Corridor”.⁴⁴ Since 2007, oil has also been supplied to Israel via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline⁴⁵, making Georgia a participant in the supply of energy resources to the Middle East. Given the above, Georgia is strategically important to Israel from the perspective of controlling the Caspian Sea oil and gas pipelines.

Georgia officially adheres to the “two-state solution” principle in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Georgia recognized the statehood of Palestine as early as 1992 and established diplomatic relations with it.⁴⁶ On April 24, 1992, a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization visited Tbilisi and was received by Eduard Shevardnadze, Chairman of the State Council of Georgia.⁴⁷

On November 29, 2012, Georgia, along with 138 other countries, voted in favor of a UNGA resolution that granted Palestine observer status at the UN.⁴⁸ With this, Palestine gained international status: This move has caused the displeasure of Israel, as noted by Yuval Fuchs, the Israeli ambassador to Georgia.⁴⁹

In the context of Georgian-Palestinian relations, it should be noted that the Palestinian HAMAS movement welcomed Russia’s recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.⁵⁰

⁴³ Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement Between Georgia and United Arab Emirates, https://www.economy.ge/uploads/files/sagareo_vachroba/2024/geo_uae_cepa_eng.pdf.

⁴⁴ Starr, S. F., Cornell, E. S. (2005). The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline: Oil Window to the West, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program –A Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center, p. 85, https://www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/Monographs/2005_01_MONO_-Starr-Cornell_BTC-Pipeline.pdf.

⁴⁵ Investigating the countries and companies behind Israeli crude oil and fuel supply chains, Data Analysis, Oil Change International, March 2024, <https://www.oilchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Israel-Gaza-Fuel-Data-v2.pdf?utm>.

⁴⁶ Countries, recognized the State of Palestine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine, <https://www.mofa.pna.ps/en-us/mediaoffice/countries-recognized-the-state-of-palestine>.

⁴⁷ Sakartvelo – Palestina: (utsnauri) urtiertobebis istoria, Radio Tavisupleba. 27.10.2023, [Georgia – Palestine: (strange) history of relations, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 27.10.2023], <https://shorturl.at/WsjLi>.

⁴⁸ General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine ‘Non-Member Observer State’ Status in United Nations, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, UN, 29.11.2012, <https://press.un.org/en/2012/ga11317.doc.htm>.

⁴⁹ UN vote on Palestine causes controversy in Georgia, Democracy and Freedom Watch, 03.12.2012, <https://dfwatch.net/un-vote-on-palestine-causes-controversy-in-georgia-53599-15123/>.

⁵⁰ ХАМАС приветствует признание независимости Абхазии и Южной Осетии, Газета.Ru, 26.08.2008, [Hamas welcomes recognition of independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Gazeta.Ru, 26.08.2008], https://www.gazeta.ru/news/lenta/2008/08/26/n_1262987.shtml.

Diplomatic relations between Georgia and Israel were established in June 1992.⁵¹ Israel appointed its ambassador to Georgia in 1993, and Georgia appointed its ambassador in 1998, after accrediting ambassadors in its neighboring countries and in Iran.⁵² Bilateral relations have had a positive development dynamic since 1991. In particular, President Eduard Shevardnadze visited Israel in 1998 and 2000. Military cooperation deepened especially during the tenure of Mikheil Saakashvili. Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili has made efforts to strengthen military and defense cooperation with Israel.⁵³ A delegation led by Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili signed a visa-free agreement in Israel in 2014.⁵⁴ In this way, official visits and the signing of agreements continued under subsequent leaders as well.

Israel is one of Georgia's key partners in the fields of security and technology. As early as the 2000s, Israeli military support played a major role in the modernization of the Georgian army.⁵⁵ In 2008, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered rhetorical support to Georgia, declaring that it “recognizes the territorial integrity of Georgia.”⁵⁶ During the Russo-Georgian conflict, Israel made arms deliveries to Georgia⁵⁷, but, despite the aforementioned statement, was forced to periodically suspend arms sales to Georgia—to appease Russia's grievances.⁵⁸

The importance of Israel for Georgia is also emphasized in Georgia's National Security Concept, where, among China, Japan, South Korea and other countries, with which Tbilisi “aims to develop political dialogue and economic cooperation,” Israel is also mentioned.⁵⁹ Georgia's strategic importance for Israel is primarily due to its geographical location, through which Israel seeks to strengthen its position

⁵¹ Israel-Georgia Bilateral relations since 1991, Bilateral Relations, Embassy of Israel in Tbilisi, <https://url-shortener.me/IGJ> .

⁵² Bishku, B. M. (2009). The South Caucasus Republics and Israel, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 45:2, 295-314, DOI: [10.1080/00263200802697415](https://doi.org/10.1080/00263200802697415) , p. 307.

⁵³ Ivanishvili Goes To Israel Hoping To Mend Ties, *eurasianet*, 28.06.2013, <https://eurasianet.org/ivanishvili-goes-to-israel-hoping-to-mend-ties> .

⁵⁴ Israel-Georgia Bilateral relations since 1991, Bilateral Relations, Embassy of Israel in Tbilisi, <https://url-shortener.me/IGJ> .

⁵⁵ How Israel Trained and Equipped Georgia's Army, *WIRED*, 19.08.2008, <https://www.wired.com/2008/08/did-israel-trai/> .

⁵⁶ Ambassador's Welcome Speech, Embassy of Georgia to the State of Israel, <https://israel.mfa.gov.ge/en/welcome> .

⁵⁷ According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute database, During 1991-2024, the period of arms deliveries from Israel to Georgia was from 2007 to 2009, with the quantity accounting for 0.3 percent of the total arms exported from Israel. The supplied military equipment included mainly missiles, air defense systems, as well as aircraft, artillery, and armored vehicles. SIPRI, Arms Transfer Database,

<https://armstransfers.sipri.org/ArmsTransfer/CSVResult> .

⁵⁸ Georgia, The Database of Israeli Military and Security Export, <https://dimse.info/georgia/> .

⁵⁹ National Security Concept of Georgia, “7.4. Cooperation with the nations of the various regions of the world:”, <https://mod.gov.ge/uploads/2018/pdf/NSC-ENG.pdf> p. 21.

around Iran's northern borders, as well as secure the routes of energy pipelines coming from the Caspian Sea, which are important for Israel's energy security.⁶⁰

Regarding Israel-Georgia economic relations, in 2024, the volume of imports from Israel to Georgia amounted to \$22.4 million, which is about 38% more than in 2023 (while the import volume from Palestine in 2024 was only \$16.3 thousand).⁶¹ The export volume from Georgia to Israel in 2024 was \$37 million, which is 0.56 percent of Georgia's total exports. The volume of exports from Georgia to Palestine in 2024 was \$67,000.⁶² In 2024, Georgia and Israel expressed their readiness to begin negotiations on a free trade agreement between the two countries.⁶³ At the beginning of 2025, bilateral trade increased by 61%.⁶⁴ According to the data from the National Statistics Office of Georgia, in 2024 Israel made \$37 million in direct investments in Georgia, ranking 8th among the largest direct investors.⁶⁵

Although thousands of Jews emigrated from Georgia to Israel after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Georgia's independence, the Jewish community of Georgia serves as a link in strengthening relations between the two countries.⁶⁶ The Jewish community in Georgia is the second largest in the South Caucasus. In 2023, 1,500 Jews lived in Georgia⁶⁷ (7,200 in Azerbaijan⁶⁸ and around 500 in Armenia, which has the smallest Jewish population in the region⁶⁹).

In UNGA votes, Georgia mostly abstains from voting for resolutions against Israel or does not participate in the vote at all. This is explained both by the desire to avoid a deterioration in relations with Israel and by a cautious approach to getting involved in complex regional conflicts that do not directly affect Georgian interests. In 2023, against the backdrop of the military escalation in Gaza, Georgia's position was also expressed at the level of official statements: Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili condemned the terrorist attacks on Israel and its

⁶⁰ Rousseau, R. Georgia-Israel: Close Allies to Economic and Political Standoff, Georgia, Eurasia Daily Monitor, Volume 8 Issue 105, 06.01.2011, <https://jamestown.org/georgia-israel-close-allies-to-economic-and-political-standoff/>.

⁶¹ Georgia Imports By Country, Trading Economics, <https://tradingeconomics.com/georgia/imports-by-country>.

⁶² Georgia Exports By Country, Trading Economics, <https://tradingeconomics.com/georgia/exports-by-country>.

⁶³ Georgia and Israel to Commence Free Trade Talks in 2024: Strengthening Bilateral Ties and Economic Collaboration, FCHAIN Corporation, 05.09.2023, <https://f-chain.com/georgia-and-israel-to-commence-free-trade-talks-in-2024-strengthening-bilateral-ties-and-economic-collaboration/>.

⁶⁴ New Trade Trajectory: How Economic Ties with Israel Strengthened and What It Means for Georgia, BTUAI, 20.05.2025, <https://btuai.ge/en/new-trade-trajectory-how-economic-ties-with-israel-strengthened-and-what-it-means-for-georgia/>.

⁶⁵ Foreign Direct Investments, Q1 2025 (PRELIMINARY), National Statistics Office of Georgia, p. 5, <https://www.geostat.ge/media/71124/Foreign-Direct-Investments---Q1-2025.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Georgia, World Jewish Congress, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/ge>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Azerbaijan, World Jewish Congress, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/AZ>.

⁶⁹ Armenia, World Jewish Congress, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/about/communities/AM>.

citizens, and expressed his condolences to the Israeli government and people.⁷⁰ President Salome Zourabichvili stated in her message: “Georgia expresses its full solidarity with the State of Israel in these difficult times.”⁷¹ The Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, wrote on the social network X that “unfounded, cruel, and inhumane aggression against the State of Israel is unacceptable.” He stressed that Georgians support “brotherly Israel.”⁷²

Georgia's position on the conflict is influenced by external factors: Georgia, which shares a northern border with Russia, is located not far from Iran and has strategic geographical importance for both Israel and the US, which partly explains the support these countries show for Georgia.⁷³ The US and the EU are important partners for Georgia in terms of security and its aspirations to join the EU, therefore in its foreign policy, including its position on the conflict, Georgia's policy does not contradict the positions of these partners.

Georgia, on the other hand, maintains close economic and political ties with Turkey, which is one of its largest investment and trading partners.⁷⁴ Although Turkey is one of the harshest critics of Israel's policy, this has not affected oil supplies from Azerbaijan to Israel, which pass through Georgia and Turkey.⁷⁵

Azerbaijan's Position

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Azerbaijan seeks to maintain strategic ties with Israel, while simultaneously providing political support to the Palestinian side in international forums, in line with the position of the Islamic world. The National Security Concept of Azerbaijan (2007) states: “The Republic of Azerbaijan's relations with Middle Eastern countries have great potential, and efforts will

⁷⁰ Irakli Garibashvili (@GharibashviliGe), “I strongly condemn terrible terrorists attack on the state of Israel and Israeli citizens, the loss of lives, and serious injuries to many. Heartfelt condolences to the Government and People of the State of Israel, wishing speedy recovery to all those injured.”, X, 07.10.2023, <https://x.com/GharibashviliGe/status/1710626397796872674>.

⁷¹ Parliament Speaker: Georgian people support brotherly Israel, Georgian Public Broadcaster, 07.10.2023, <https://1tv.ge/lang/en/news/parliament-speaker-georgian-people-support-brotherly-israel/>.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Yellinek, R. Georgia's Relations with Israel and the US, Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA) Perspectives Paper No. 1,588, 29.05.2020, <https://besacenter.org/georgia-relations-israel-us/>.

⁷⁴ Foreign Direct Investments, National Statistics Office of Georgia, <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/191/foreign-direct-investments>. Mariam Kvrivishvili: Turkey is Georgia's top trading partner, which is a confirmation of the strong economic ties and growing dynamic of cooperation between the two countries, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, 31.07.2025, <https://url-shortener.me/IW>.

⁷⁵ Investigating the countries and companies behind Israeli crude oil and fuel supply chains, Data Analysis, Oil Change International, March 2024, <https://www.oilchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Israel-Gaza-Fuel-Data-v2.pdf?utm>.

continue to be directed toward the development of bilateral relations with these countries.”⁷⁶

Azerbaijan is developing strategic ties with the region’s power centers, primarily with Israel and Turkey, with which it also has close cooperation in the fields of intelligence and security.⁷⁷ Turkey is Azerbaijan’s strategic partner⁷⁸, with which Azerbaijan’s political and military alliance is based on the “one nation, two states” principle.⁷⁹ Turkey is also important for Azerbaijan in the energy sector, particularly in terms of exporting energy resources through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas (TANAP) pipelines.⁸⁰ Turkey also participates in the modernization of the Azerbaijani army and in joint military exercises.⁸¹

Israel is Azerbaijan’s next important partner in the Middle East, with which it has relations of strategic importance, as described by Israel’s Foreign Minister Eli Cohen.⁸² Diplomatic relations were established in 1992.⁸³ Israel opened its embassy in Baku in 1993, however, Azerbaijan did not reciprocally open its embassy in Israel at the time, essentially not wanting to worsen relations with Islamic countries and preserve their support on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.⁸⁴ Azerbaijan opened its embassy in Israel in 2023, 30 years after diplomatic relations were established, which Israeli Foreign Minister E. Cohen considered “proof of the

⁷⁶ National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, “4.1.5.2. Cooperation with non-regional countries”, Approved by Instruction No. 2198 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 23.05.2007, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/154917/Azerbaijan2007.pdf>, p. 14.

⁷⁷ Good Relations between Azerbaijan and Israel: A Model for Other Muslim States in Eurasia?, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 30.03.2005, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/good-relations-between-azerbaijan-and-israel-model-other-muslim-states-eurasia>.

⁷⁸ National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, “4.1.5.1. Cooperation with regional countries”, Approved by Instruction No. 2198 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 23.05.2007, p. 13, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/154917/Azerbaijan2007.pdf>.

⁷⁹ Press statements by President Ilham Aliyev and Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Official web-site of President of Azerbaijan Republic, 15.09.2010, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/736/print>.

⁸⁰ Joint energy projects with Azerbaijan aimed at stability in region – Erdogan, Caspian Oil & Gas, 31.10.2019, <https://caspianoilgas.az/zh/news/joint-energy-projects-with-azerbaijan-aimed-at-stability-in-region---erdogan-2217>.

⁸¹ Shusha Declaration on Allied Relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey, Official web-site of President of Azerbaijan Republic, 16.06.2021, <https://url-shortener.me/J6X>.

⁸² Eli Cohen: We see Azerbaijan as a strategic partner, AzeMedia, 19.04.2023, <https://aze.media/eli-cohen-we-see-azerbaijan-as-a-strategic-partner/#:~:text=Eli%20Cohen:%20We%20see%20Azerbaijan,Media>.

⁸³ The State of Israel, Bilateral diplomatic relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the State of Israel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, <https://www.mfa.gov.az/en/category/asia-and-oceania/israel>.

⁸⁴ In Unprecedented Move, Baku Opens Embassy in Tel Aviv, Jamestown, 30.11.2022, <https://jamestown.org/program/in-unprecedented-move-baku-opens-embassy-in-tel-aviv/>.

strengthening of bilateral relations.”⁸⁵ After Turkey and Egypt, Azerbaijan was the third Muslim-majority country to establish bilateral political and economic relations with Israel.⁸⁶

In 1997, Israeli Prime Minister B. Netanyahu visited Baku and met with the President of Azerbaijan.⁸⁷ During the meeting, the parties discussed the Iranian threat, as well as issues of intelligence cooperation between Israel and Azerbaijan. This meeting is considered the starting point of the alliance between the two countries.⁸⁸

Two Israeli presidents (Shimon Peres in 2009⁸⁹, and Isaac Herzog in 2023⁹⁰) have visited Baku to discuss bilateral cooperation. Israeli Prime Minister B. Netanyahu also paid an official visit to Baku in 2016.⁹¹ However, no president of Azerbaijan has yet made an official visit to Israel. A number of meetings have taken place at international forums (meetings in Davos in various years⁹², the last was in 2025 with I. Herzog⁹³, and in 2024 at the Munich Security Conference⁹⁴).

In 2012, the parties signed an agreement whereby Azerbaijan agreed to purchase military technology, including drones, from Israel for \$1.6 billion.⁹⁵ After the publication of the agreement, the Azerbaijani ambassador to Iran was summoned to the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs— to provide explanations regarding the deal.⁹⁶ After this agreement, to ease relations with Iran, Azerbaijan's

⁸⁵ Azerbaijan to open embassy in Israel today, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Israel, 29.03.2023, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/azerbaijan-to-open-embassy-in-israel-today-29-mar-2023>.

⁸⁶ Ismayilov, E. (2013). Israel and Azerbaijan: The Evolution of a Strategic Partnership, *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 7:1, 69-76, p. 69, DOI: [10.1080/23739770.2013.11446535](https://doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2013.11446535).

⁸⁷ Netanyahu Meets with President of Azerbaijan in Baku, Israel Line, Friday, August 29, 1997, Federation of American Scientists (FAS), <https://irp.fas.org/news/1997/970829-il.htm>.

⁸⁸ Khalifa-zadeh, M. (2013). Israeli-Azerbaijani Alliance and Iran, *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 61, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371702100_ISRAELI_AZERBAIJANI_ALLIANCE_AND_IRAN.

⁸⁹ President of Israel meets his Azerbaijani counterpart in Baku, 28.06.2009, <https://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/1495204.html>.

⁹⁰ Azerbaijani and Israeli Presidents held one-on-one meeting, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, 30.05.2023, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/60043>.

⁹¹ PM Netanyahu Meets with Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister's Office, Government of Israel, 13.12.2016, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/eventazerbaijan131216>.

⁹² Israel-Azerbaijan bilateral relations, Embassy of Israel Baku, <https://embassies.gov.il/azerbaijan/en/the-embassy/bilateral-relations>.

⁹³ Ilham Aliyev met with President of Israel in Davos, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 21.01.2025, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/67973>.

⁹⁴ Ilham Aliyev met with President of Israel Isaac Herzog in Munich, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 16.02.2024, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/64156/images/2>.

⁹⁵ Israel Signs \$1.6 Billion Arms Deal With Azerbaijan, Haaretz, 26.02.2012, <https://www.haaretz.com/2012-02-26/ty-article/israel-signs-1-6-billion-arms-deal-with-azerbaijan/-0000017f-e101-d804-ad7f-f1fb56700000>.

⁹⁶ Azerbaijan Rejects Iran Complaints Over Israel Arms Buy, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, 29.02.2012, https://www.rferl.org/a/azerbaijan_rejects_iran_complaints_over_israel_arms_deal/-24500432.html.

Minister of Defense, Safar Abiyev, visited Tehran and gave assurances about the friendly relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, and that “Azerbaijan will not allow its territory to be used against Iran.”⁹⁷

The parties have also developed energy cooperation, which promoted the development of Israel's economy in the 1990s and 2000s.⁹⁸ Azerbaijan has become an important player in stabilizing Israel's energy security. The 2020 Artsakh War elevated Israeli-Azerbaijani cooperation to a new level, particularly in the field of military technology. In an interview with the Israel Hayom newspaper, the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister noted the importance of Israeli munitions in Azerbaijan's victory in the war.⁹⁹ Since the late 2000s, Azerbaijan has become one of the main importers of Israeli military equipment.¹⁰⁰ Between 2017 and 2020, over 60% of Azerbaijan's arms imports came from Israel.¹⁰¹ In 2024, a new agreement was signed between the parties on cooperation in the defense industry.¹⁰²

Azerbaijan also established diplomatic relations with the Palestinian National Authority in 1992¹⁰³, and in 2011 the Palestinian embassy opened in Baku.¹⁰⁴ Interestingly, on the same day as the decree to open an embassy in Israel, the Azerbaijani parliament also approved a bill to establish an Azerbaijani representative office in the State of Palestine, thus maintaining a balance between the sides.¹⁰⁵ The opening of a representative office was also mentioned by Azerbaijan's Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2023. during a visit to Ramallah, and the Palestinian Authority's foreign affairs official, Riyad al-Maliki, expressed hope

⁹⁷ Iran, Azerbaijan try to soothe tensions after Israel weapon ties, Alarabiya English, 13.03.2012, <https://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012%2F03%2F13%2F200339>.

⁹⁸ Khanin, Z., Grinberg, A., Azerbaijan: One of the Pillars of Israel's Regional Security System – A Brief Overview for the Trump Administration, Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA), 15.01.2025, <https://url-shortener.me/OSB>.

⁹⁹ Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov in an exclusive interview with Israel Hayom, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 04.04.2021, <https://url-shortener.me/OVT>.

¹⁰⁰ Khanin, Z., Grinberg, A., Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Wezeman, P., Kuimova, A., Wezeman, S., Trends In International Arms Transfers, 2021, SIPRI Fact Sheet, March 2022, p. 6, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/fs_2203_at_2021.pdf.

¹⁰² Азербайджан и Израиль подписали новый документ о военном сотрудничестве, Sputnik Армения, 26.09.2024, [Azerbaijan and Israel have signed a new document on military cooperation, Sputnik Armenia, 26.09.2024], <https://am.sputniknews.ru/20240926/azerbaydzhani-i-izrail-podpisali-novyy-dokument-o-voennom-sotrudnichestve-81119509.html>.

¹⁰³ The State of Palestine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, <https://www.mfa.gov.az/en/category/asia-and-oceania/palestine>.

¹⁰⁴ Palestine's embassy opens in Baku, The Azerbaijan State News Agency, 29.06.2011, https://azertag.az/en/xeber/palestines_embassy_opens_in_baku-608379.

¹⁰⁵ Azerbaijani Parliament approves opening of embassies of Azerbaijan in Israel, Albania and Kenya, Report News Agency (Report.az), 18.11.2022, <https://report.az/en/milli-majlis/milli-majlis-approves-opening-of-embassies-of-azerbaijan-in-israel-albania-and-kenya>.

that “the level of the representation will be raised to the level of an embassy.”¹⁰⁶ According to information published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Trade turnover with Israel in 2023 amounted to approximately \$1.35 billion,¹⁰⁷ while trade turnover with Palestine in the same period was significantly less—only \$454 thousand.¹⁰⁸

One of the key areas of cooperation between Israel and Azerbaijan, as already noted, is energy. In 2021, Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi noted that Azerbaijan is the largest supplier of energy resources to Israel.¹⁰⁹ As early as 2023, the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR) was granted a license to conduct natural gas exploration off the coast of Israel.¹¹⁰ In 2024, Israel ranked first among the destinations for Azerbaijani oil exports by volume, with supplies totaling 523,500 tons and a value of approximately \$297 million.¹¹¹ In the war that began in Gaza following Hamas's October 7, 2023, attack on Israel, Azerbaijan has adopted a neutral stance, maintaining its relations with Israel, but avoiding calling Hamas a terrorist organization.¹¹² On October 7, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan condemned the violence against civilians in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict zone in a post on X and called for an immediate de-escalation.¹¹³

In June 2024, after a meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev stated that the war in Gaza must end and that Azerbaijan's position on the creation of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital is clear.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁶ Palestine welcomes Azerbaijan's decision to open diplomatic office in Ramallah, Anadolu Agency, 31.03.2023, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/palestine-welcomes-azerbaijans-decision-to-open-diplomatic-office-in-ramallah/2860343>.

¹⁰⁷ The State of Israel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, <https://www.mfa.gov.az/en/category/asia-and-oceania/israel>.

¹⁰⁸ The State of Palestine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, <https://www.mfa.gov.az/en/category/asia-and-oceania/palestine>.

¹⁰⁹ Azerbaijan tiftákh misrád sakhár be-Yisra'el, Yisra'el HaYom, 28.04.2021, [Azerbaijan will open a trade office in Israel, 28.04.2021], <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/article/874439>.

¹¹⁰ Rettig, E., Azerbaijan's Entry into Israeli Waters May Open New Export Routes with Turkey, Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies (BESA), 09.04.2025, <https://besacenter.org/azerbaijans-entry-into-israeli-waters-may-open-new-export-routes-with-turkey/>.

¹¹¹ Chasifa: Yetzo ha-neft le-Yisrael derech Turkiya nimshach lamrot ha-cherem. Elu ha-sibot, Globes, 03.05.2024, [Exposure: Oil exports to Israel via Turkey continue despite the boycott, 03.05.2024], https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001477916#google_vignette.

¹¹² Challenges in Azerbaijani-Israeli Strategic Relationship After October 7, Azerbaijan, Volume 21 Issue 90, 06.12.2024, <https://jamestown.org/challenges-in-azerbaijani-israeli-strategic-relationship-after-october-7/>.

¹¹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, X, 07.10.2023, <https://x.com/AzerbaijanMFA/status/1710709167499939878>.

¹¹⁴ Azerbaijani president calls for ending ‘tragedy’ in Gaza as soon as possible, Anadolu Agency, 08.06.2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/azerbaijani-president-calls-for-ending-tragedy-in-gaza-as-soon-as-possible/3244451>.

Due to the war in Gaza, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Egypt, and some other countries came under some pressure— to halt trade cooperation with Israel.¹¹⁵ But there is information that, despite these pressures, Azerbaijan did not stop oil supplies to Israel during the war. According to Oil Change International, from November 1, 2023, to October 1, 2025, Israel received 17.9 million tons of oil from 12 countries, of which about 70% was received from Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.¹¹⁶

In Turkey (as well as at Azerbaijani embassies in other countries), activist groups were holding protests against the supply of Azerbaijani oil to Israel via the Port of Ceyhan.¹¹⁷ However, the Turkish side insisted that such shipments were not taking place after Turkey's trade embargo against Israel.¹¹⁸ One of Israel's largest news outlets noted that "Azerbaijan is the only Muslim country that supports Israel in the war," and that throughout the war, Azerbaijan has not stopped supplying fuel to Israel, contrary to the campaign initiated by Iran against Muslim countries that supply fuel to Israel.¹¹⁹

Israel's relations with Azerbaijan should be seen as an attempt to mitigate its isolation in the Muslim world and as part of its "Periphery Doctrine."¹²⁰ The doctrine was introduced as early as the 1950s— by Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, and its purpose was to build alliances with non-Arab, non-Muslim states and minorities in the Middle East to counter the surrounding hostile Arab states. The doctrine has undergone changes over the years due to geopolitical and social developments, but it remains part of the State of Israel's strategic thinking. The doctrine's scope has been expanded to include Greece, Cyprus, the South Caucasus, and others.¹²¹ The Israel-Azerbaijan cooperation also serves as an effective tool for strengthening the U.S. strategic presence in the Caspian Sea basin. According to Ben Aharon (Ben Aharon, 2024), Israel's attempts to find new alliances in the South Caucasus and Central Asia had to be consistent with the

¹¹⁵ Challenges in Azerbaijani-Israeli Strategic Relationship After October 7, Azerbaijan, Volume 21 Issue 90, 06.12.2024, <https://jamestown.org/challenges-in-azerbaijani-israeli-strategic-relationship-after-october-7/>.

¹¹⁶ Behind the Barrel: An update on the Origins of Israel's Fuel Supply, Oil Change International, November 2025, p. 2, <https://oilchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Behind-the-Barrel-3.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ Azerbaijan's silence over Gaza is not surprising, Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT), 12.12.2024, https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/en/cp_article/azerbaijans-silence-over-gaza-is-not-surprising/.

¹¹⁸ Turkish Energy Ministry denies supplying Israel with Azerbaijani oil amid growing protests, Turkish Minute, 11.11.2024, <https://turkishminute.com/2024/11/11/turkish-energy-ministry-denis-supplying-isral-with-azerbaijani-oil-amd-growing-protests/>.

¹¹⁹ Azerbaijan: Ha-medina ha-muslemit ha-yehida ba-olam she-tomekhet be-Yisrael b'milchama, Azerbaijan: Ynetnews, 05.12.2023, [The only Muslim country in the world that supports Israel in the war, 05.12.2023], <https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/sjtv1p2rp>.

¹²⁰ Lindenstrauss, G. (2015). Israel-Azerbaijan: Despite the Constraints, a Special Relationship, Tel-Aviv University, The Institute for National Security Studies, Strategic Assessment, Volume 17, No. 4, p. 74.

¹²¹ Ben Aharon, E. (2024). Israel's Foreign Policy and the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A Reflection on Regional Security and Diplomacy, Journal of Genocide Research, p 6, DOI: [10.1080/14623528.2024.2406100](https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2024.2406100).

global strategy of its main ally, the United States. In other words, Israel is “implementing” U.S. foreign policy objectives in these regions.¹²²

As has already been noted, a significant part of Israel-Azerbaijan cooperation is in the energy sector, in which cooperation with Turkey in a trilateral format is also important. It should be noted that Turkey is highly dependent on imported oil and gas.¹²³

One of the main directions of Israel-Azerbaijan cooperation is countering Iran. The National Security Concept of Azerbaijan states that the Republic of Azerbaijan attaches importance to its relations with Iran, which is one of the key objectives of its foreign policy.¹²⁴ However, relations between the two sides are strained for several reasons, including Iran - Armenia partnership ties, as well as the presence of a significant Azerbaijani population in Iran.¹²⁵ In this regard, Iran's concern is linked to their potential political aspirations under the idea of “secession and the creation of a Greater Azerbaijan.”¹²⁶ In 2023, Israeli Foreign Minister E. Cohen stated that “Israel and Azerbaijan share the same perception of the Iranian threat.”¹²⁷ Tehran has often expressed concerns about Israeli intelligence activities being conducted through Azerbaijani territory.¹²⁸

According to Bulent Aras, the Israel-Azerbaijan cooperation is aimed at countering Russian pressure and Iran's growing ties with Armenia.¹²⁹ Azerbaijan also values Israeli support in countering the Armenian diaspora, especially in the US and Europe.¹³⁰ For years, Azerbaijan has utilized the services of Jewish organizations in the US, some of which have engaged in lobbying activities to advance Azerbaijani interests in opposition to Armenian lobbying groups.¹³¹ The Israel-Azerbaijan partnership is primarily perceived in terms of security challenges, such as the Iranian threat, but the parties have strong economic ties and can be said to be mutually dependent on the partnership. They complement each other's needs: Azerbaijan provides Israel with oil, while Israel helps develop technology in

¹²² Murinson, A., The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University, Israel, The Ties between Israel and Azerbaijan, p. 15, <https://besacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/MSPS110-web.pdf>.

¹²³ Esen, M. E., Coal, Oil, Gas, and Nuclear: Risks in Turkey's Growing Energy Demands, Fikra Forum, The Washington Institute, 22.10.2025, <https://url-shortener.me/CXVN>.

¹²⁴ National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan, “4.1.5.1. Cooperation with regional countries”, Approved by Instruction No. 2198 of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 23.05.2007, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/154917/Azerbaijan2007.pdf>, p. 14.

¹²⁵ Azeris in Iran, Minority Rights Group, <https://minorityrights.org/communities/azeris-2/>.

¹²⁶ Avdaliani, E. (2020). Defying Geography: The Israel-Azerbaijan Partnership, BESA Center Perspectives Paper No. 1,723, August 31, p. 3, <https://besacenter.org/israel-azerbaijan-partnership/>.

¹²⁷ Azerbaijan to open embassy in Israel today, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Israel, 29.03.2023, <https://www.gov.il/en/pages/azerbaijan-to-open-embassy-in-israel-today-29-mar-2023>.

¹²⁸ Iran expresses concern about Israel's presence in Azerbaijan, Iran Insights, 02.02.2025, <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202502029415>.

¹²⁹ Aras, B. (1998). Post-Cold War Realities: Israel's Strategy In Azerbaijan And Central Asia, Middle East Policy, Vol 5, Issue 4, p. 74, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4967.1998.tb00370.x>.

¹³⁰ Khalifa-zadeh, M.. cited work, p. 61.

¹³¹ Ismayilov, E. cited work, p. 70.

Azerbaijan's military, industrial, and agricultural sectors.¹³² Azerbaijan's strategic relations with Israel are often compared to an iceberg, with only a small part visible while the larger part is hidden, as the two sides cooperate not only in energy and communications but also in the military and intelligence sectors.¹³³

The Positions of the South Caucasus states in UNGA Vote on Resolutions Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Although relations with Palestine are not at a very high level, however, in the UN General Assembly (as well as in other international forums) Azerbaijan consistently votes in favor of resolutions that primarily criticize Israeli actions and support the protection of Palestinian rights.¹³⁴

According to the UN Watch database, of the South Caucasus states, Azerbaijan has voted the most in favor of UNGA resolutions related to the conflict, which are predominantly “anti-Israel” in content. Specifically, Azerbaijan voted in favor of 185 resolutions and did not abstain in any vote¹³⁵, while Armenia voted in favor of 161 resolutions and abstained on 23¹³⁶, and Georgia voted in favor of 118 resolutions and abstained on 63.¹³⁷

An analysis of the votes shows that they are mainly annual updates of the same resolutions with insignificant changes. In other words, in 2015-2025, the 23 resolutions on the conflict for which Armenia has abstained have four main contents:

- “On the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”, which reaffirms the support of the UNGA for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in particular the right to self-determination, independence, sovereignty and return. Since 2015, Armenia and Georgia have abstained from the annual votes on this resolution, while Azerbaijan has voted in favor.¹³⁸

¹³² Göksel, O. (2015). Beyond Countering Iran: A Political Economy of Azerbaijan-Israel Relations, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 42:4, 655-675, p. 657, DOI: [10.1080/13530194.2015.1048973](https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2015.1048973).

¹³³ Яшлавский, А. (2024). Война в секторе Газа, Центральная Азия и Южный Кавказ: Эхо конфликта. Конфликты и проблемы безопасности, с.133, DOI: 10.20542/2073-4786-2024-3-122-137. [Yashlavsky, A. (2024). The War in Gaza, Central Asia, and the South Caucasus: Echoes of Conflict, *Conflicts and Security Issues*, p. 133],

¹³⁴ Azerbaijan, Voting record on Israel resolutions, UN Watch Database, https://unwatch.org/database/country-info/?country_voted=24133.

¹³⁵ Azerbaijan, Country Information, UN Watch Database, <https://unwatch.org/database/country/azerbaijan/>.

¹³⁶ Armenia, Voting record on Israel resolutions, UN Watch Database, <https://unwatch.org/database/country/armenia/>.

¹³⁷ Georgia, Voting record on Israel resolutions, UN Watch Database, <https://unwatch.org/database/country/georgia/>.

¹³⁸ Armenia, Voting record on Israel resolutions, UN Watch Database, <https://unwatch.org/database/country/armenia/>.

- Regarding “the Secretariat’s Division of Palestinian Rights”, which affirms that the Division of Palestinian Rights continues to make a more useful and constructive contribution to raising international awareness of the Palestinian question and the need for a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question in accordance with international law, based on UN resolutions and efforts in this regard, as well as in providing international support for the rights of the Palestinian people.¹³⁹ Since 2015, Armenia and Georgia have abstained from the annual votes on this resolution, while Azerbaijan has voted in favor.

- “On the work of the Special Committee to investigate Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs in the occupied territories since 1967”, which reaffirms the General Assembly's support for the Special Committee established in 1968, for monitoring and reporting on Israeli violations of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories and other occupied Arab territories since 1967. The resolution expressed concern about the continuing adverse impact of the illegal actions and measures being taken by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.¹⁴⁰ The voting pattern for the South Caucasus countries is the same as for previous resolutions: Armenia and Georgia abstained, and Azerbaijan voted in favor.

- A resolution “On the situation of public health in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan”, requesting the Director-General to report and make practical proposals for the occupied Palestinian territories, including the health situation and physical and procedural barriers to accessing health care in East Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan.¹⁴¹ For the vote on this resolution, Armenia abstained from 2015-2019, while from 2020-2025, it voted in favor. Georgia abstained from the 2024-2025 votes, while Azerbaijan voted in favor of these resolutions.

Georgia has abstained mainly from the following resolutions:

- “On the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to their natural resources” (1997), which Armenia and Azerbaijan voted in favor of.¹⁴²

- “On the Syrian Golan”, “The Occupied Syrian Golan”, and “Human rights in the Golan”, which considers Israel's presence in the Golan a gross violation of international law and calls on it to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan.¹⁴³ Armenia and Azerbaijan have voted in favor of these annual resolutions.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² A/RES/51/190, Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, UN. General Assembly (51st sess.: 1996-1997), UN Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/232072?ln=en&v=pdf>.

¹⁴³ Georgia, Voting record on Israel resolutions, UN Watch Database, <https://unwatch.org/database/country/georgia/>.

- “On the situation of Palestinian women and the assistance for them”, which blames the “Israeli occupation for the problems facing Palestinian women.”¹⁴⁴ Azerbaijan voted in favor of this resolution in 2017, 2018, and 2019¹⁴⁵, and Armenia in 2019.¹⁴⁶
- “On ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.”¹⁴⁷
- “On the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice”,¹⁴⁸ calling on Israel to respect international law, to cease human rights violations and ensure accountability for abuses in the occupied territories. It also reaffirms the need for justice and the protection of Palestinian civilians under occupation.
- Georgia has abstained from votes on UNGA resolutions adopted after the 2023 escalation of the military situation in Gaza, specifically on the immediate establishment of a humanitarian ceasefire and cessation of hostilities (A/RES/ES-10/21)¹⁴⁹, for the release of hostages without preconditions and the provision of humanitarian access (A/RES/ES-10/22)¹⁵⁰, and for the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, including the right to an independent Palestinian state (A/RES/ES-10/23)¹⁵¹, regarding the demand to end Israel's “illegal presence” in the occupied Palestinian territories.
- On the admission of new members to the UN (May 14, 2024), which raises the status of the State of Palestine in the UN General Assembly, granting it additional rights and privileges, but not full membership.¹⁵² Armenia and Azerbaijan voted in favor of this resolution.
- “On the need to respect and preserve the territorial integrity and unity of the occupied territories of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, as well as the illegality of Israel's settlement-building activities and all other unilateral measures” (December 10, 2024). Armenia and Azerbaijan voted in favor, while Georgia

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ E/RES/2017/10 (2017), E/RES/2018/10 (2018), E/RES/2019/28 (2019), Azerbaijan, Country Information, UN Watch Database, <https://unwatch.org/database/country/azerbaijan/>.

¹⁴⁶ E/RES/2019/28 (2019), Armenia, Voting record on Israel resolutions, UN Watch Database, <https://unwatch.org/database/country/armenia/>.

¹⁴⁷ Georgia, Voting record on Israel resolutions, UN Watch Database, <https://unwatch.org/database/country/georgia/>.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2023, UN Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4025240?ln=en>.

¹⁵⁰ Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2023, UN Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4029732?ln=en>.

¹⁵¹ Admission of new Members to the United Nations : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2024, UN Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4046991?ln=en>.

¹⁵² A/RES/ES-10/23 (2024), Georgia, Voting record on Israel resolutions, UN Watch Database, <https://unwatch.org/database/country/georgia/>.

abstained.¹⁵³ Moreover, Georgia had voted in favor of a similar resolution in 2022 (as had Armenia and Azerbaijan).¹⁵⁴

- “On the Gaza ceasefire” (December 16, 2024), which calls for an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire to be respected by all parties, and reaffirms the demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. This resolution also reaffirms its commitment to the vision of two states.¹⁵⁵ Armenia and Azerbaijan voted in favor of this resolution.

- The 2017 vote on Resolution ES-10/19, which criticized US policy on Jerusalem and invalidated the US decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, (Armenia and Azerbaijan voted in favor), Georgia did not participate.¹⁵⁶

Conclusion

The South Caucasus is connected to the Middle East by historical, security, and cultural ties. In the conflict, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan support the “two-state solution” principle. The South Caucasus states are guided by their foreign policy priorities when forming their positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but other factors also influence them. This research shows that all three countries maintain neutrality regarding the conflict, which, however, is manifested differently in practice: Armenia's position does not contradict that of its partner Iran, with which Armenia's ties are of vital importance from a security, energy, and trade perspective. Positive relations with Arab states are also important for Armenia. A significant step by Armenia was the recognition of Palestinian independence and the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2024. Although this move is consistent with Armenia's support for the “two-state solution” principle, given the timing of the move and the situation in the region, it can also be seen as Armenia's diplomatic response to the deepening military-technical cooperation between Israel and Azerbaijan.

Georgia's position represents a more neutral approach, motivated by a desire to maintain relations with its Western partners. Among the South Caucasus countries, Georgia has the most often abstained from votes on resolutions criticizing Israel, a position that is also close to that of the US and the EU. Its policy is driven by the desire to protect its status as a strategic energy transit hub by facilitating oil flows from the Caspian Sea to Israel, without getting involved in conflicts that do not directly concern it.

¹⁵³ A/RES/79/81, Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, UN Digital Library, 2024, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4068138?ln=en>.

¹⁵⁴ A/RES/77/25, Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2022, UN Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3996093?ln=en>.

¹⁵⁵ A/RES/ES-10/26, Demand for ceasefire in Gaza : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2024, UN Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4069197?ln=en>.

¹⁵⁶ Status of Jerusalem: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly, 2017, UN Digital Library, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1327556?ln=en>.

Azerbaijan has the most developed ties with Israel in the region, especially in the areas of oil supply and military cooperation. Azerbaijan officially supports Palestinian independence, but it never harshly criticizes Israel. Of the South Caucasus states, Azerbaijan is the only one that has not abstained from votes on UNGA resolutions with anti-Israel content related to the conflict, despite having the closest strategic cooperation with Israel. This behavior is aimed at developing military and economic ties with Israel while maintaining legitimacy in the Muslim world.

The position of each South Caucasus country expresses its proclaimed national interests, which takes into account the level and prospects of economic and security ties with Israel and Palestine, and relations with other actors.

Funding: The research was supported by the Higher Education and Science Committee of MESCS RA (Research project N 25YR-6A008)

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.