



## Georgian Deputy Minister Says No Military Cargo to Nagorno Karabakh via Georgia

**OE Watch Commentary:** According to the excerpted article in *Georgia Today*, the Deputy Foreign Minister categorically rejected any reports that military equipment bound for the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh was passing through Georgia on civil aviation or cargo flights. At the same time the article points out that the Deputy Minister “stated that it is the responsibility of a particular carrier and cargo holder to comply with the norms of international law and not to abuse the humanitarian corridors. This is a big deal because Georgia borders both Azerbaijan and Armenia and has significant Azeri and Armenian minority populations.

The Deputy Minister seemed to clarify that military material may have crossed through Georgia prior to the conflict but, “As soon as the situation escalated in Karabakh, the transit of military cargo through Georgia was suspended both by land and by air, both in the direction of Azerbaijan and Armenia.”

The accompanying source from a well-known Georgian military blogger featured in the daily *Kviris Palitra* was a bit more retaliatory of those suggesting Georgia might be complicit in moving combatants or arms to either neighboring country, suggesting that Georgia being involved in the transfer of either combatants and/or arms via commercial or cargo flights is nonsense. The author goes on to remind readers that there is really only “one road” across Georgia into Azerbaijan and that border crossings have been heavily restricted since COVID-19. He also suggests that Russian flights into Armenia and Turkish flights into Azerbaijan need to be checked prior to departure. Georgia cannot be responsible for accessing and policing civilian planes passing through or over Georgia.

The idea of military manpower and material from the outside is a sensitive topic in Georgia. In both Georgia’s own wars with the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, combatants from outside Georgian territory were considered a significant factor in the loss of both of those separatist regions. Perhaps that is why both the Deputy Minister and weekly defense columnist are adamant in their denial of foreign combatants and equipment using Georgia as a transit corridor. Both articles seem to want to make it clear that Georgia would do anything to protect Georgia from not being dragged into the neighboring conflict or spark unrest in within its own borders.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Billingsley)**

***“As soon as the situation escalated in Karabakh, the transit of military cargo through Georgia was suspended both by land and by air, both in the direction of Azerbaijan and Armenia.”***



Map of South Caucasus featuring conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nagorno-Karabakh\\_Map2.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nagorno-Karabakh_Map2.png)  
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## Continued: Georgian Deputy Minister Says No Military Cargo to Nagorno Karabakh via Georgia

**Source:** “MFA: Military Shipments to Azerbaijan, Armenia Not Carried Out via Georgia,” *Georgia Today*, 13 October 2020. <http://georgiatoday.ge/news/22667/MFA%3A-Military-Shipments-to-Azerbaijan,-Armenia-Not-Carried-Out-via-Georgia>

*Deputy Foreign Minister Lasha Darsalia stated that it is the responsibility of a particular carrier and cargo holder to fully comply with the norms of international law and not to abuse the humanitarian corridors.*

*Darsalia pointed out that military transit is not carried out through the territory of Georgia.*

*“As soon as the situation escalated in Karabakh, the transit of military cargo through Georgia was suspended both by land and by air, both in the direction of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Therefore, we would like to state once again that military transit is not carried out through the territory of Georgia. Based on the documents available to Georgia, the flights operated in Georgian airspace are only of a humanitarian and civil nature, and fully comply with ICAO standards.*

*“Georgia continues to fulfill its obligations related to humanitarian and civil, including commercial, cargo”, said the Deputy Minister.*

**Source:** “რატომ “აბრალებენ” საქართველოს ყარაბაღის ომში დაქირავებული მეზღოლების გატარებას და კონტროლის რა მექანიზმებია ოფიციალური თბილისის ხელში (Why Georgia is “blamed” for the conduct of mercenaries in the Karabakh war and what control mechanisms are in the hands of Tbilisi officials),” *Kvilis Palitra*, 16 October 2020. <https://www.kvirispalitra.ge/qarsenaliq-irakli-aladashvilis-blogi-anitacia/69986-ratom-qabralebenq-saqarthvelos-yarabaghis-omshi-daqiravebuli-mebrdzolebis-gatarebash-da-kontrolis-ra-meqanizmebia-oficialuri-tbilisis-khelshi.html>

*According to the Armenian side, Turkey is sending Turkish-speaking fighters to Azerbaijan to fight against the Assad regime in Syria, while Baku accuses Yerevan of calling on Kurdish fighters to help Armenians in Karabakh. How real are these mutual accusations?*

*... But how could Syrian fighters get to Baku from Turkey, or how could Kurds and Armenians living abroad get to Yerevan? Only one road passes through Georgia, or rather there are two routes - land and air. The mass crossing of the land border was already halted due to the coronavirus pandemic, with air travel the only remaining corridor.*

*The Georgian government has temporarily closed the transit of military cargo to both Azerbaijan and Armenia, ie., banned the shipment of military cargo to these countries by land and air.*

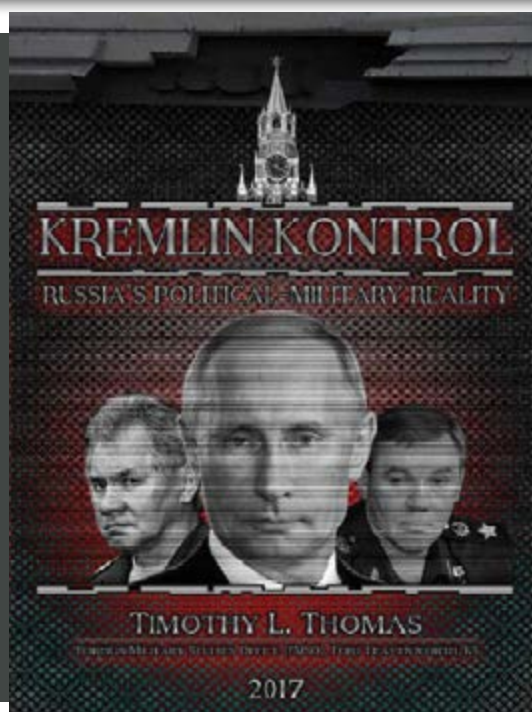
*But this restriction does not apply, for example, to Turkish Air Force military transport planes flying over Azerbaijan through the Georgian skies, because Turkey [can] ... Overfly our airspace at any time without any problems or no longer need to give permission for a particular flight.*

*Cargo planes of one of the well-known Azerbaijani companies also regularly fly to Azerbaijan through Georgian airspace, but Georgia cannot check these flights either unless the air crew indicates that it is carrying military cargo.*

*The same situation occurs with planes flying to Armenia ... from Russia.*

*... If the international community really wants to avoid mercenaries in the Karabakh war, then they should thoroughly check the passenger list at the airport [of origin] and identify potential fighters, but this also seems unrealistic.*

*So instead of blaming the opposing sides in the Karabakh war for the transit of mercenaries over or through Georgia, it is better to demand an answer from the countries from which these passenger planes originate.*



**In 2016, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov instituted sweeping changes that have reorganized the country's security forces and reestablished the nation's military prowess. This study, *Kremlin Kontrol*, aims to describe how control over the security services and the military have hastened those changes.**

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