

RELATIONS

BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND RUSSIA AT THE UNITED NATIONS

RELACIONES ENTRE AZERBAIYÁN Y RUSIA EN LAS NACIONES UNIDAS

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ABSTRACT

The South Caucasus constitutes a strategically vital region where the articulation of Russia's national interests remains unstable, hindering the optimization of bilateral and multilateral collaboration. Despite its active participation in global governance, the Russian Federation lacks a fully coherent foreign policy strategy towards this region, which presents a nexus that must be explored to foster the dynamics of cooperation. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the interaction between Azerbaijan and Russia within the United Nations system. Through historical analysis, formal legal interpretation, and comparative methodology, it traces the evolution, institutional frameworks, and diplomatic instruments that underpin their multilateral collaboration. It was demonstrated that Azerbaijan and Russia systematically rely on UN bodies—from the General Assembly and the Security Council to specialized agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNHCR—to promote complementary geopolitical, security, and socioeconomic objectives. These cooperative dynamics have significantly contributed to relative regional stability, facilitated humanitarian assistance, and shaped UN-led responses to new global challenges. It is further argued that a more structured and strategic deployment of UN mechanisms could promote lasting peace and sustainable development in the South Caucasus, while offering a model for reforming multilateral institutions to address evolving security and governance imperatives.

Keywords: Russia–Azerbaijan relations, Foreign policy, Geopolitical strategy, Multilateral cooperation, Peacebuilding.

RESUMEN

El Cáucaso Sur constituye una región estratégicamente vital donde la articulación de los intereses nacionales de Rusia sigue siendo inestable, lo que dificulta la optimización de la colaboración bilateral y multilateral. A pesar de su activa participación en la gobernanza global, la Federación Rusa carece de una estrategia de política exterior plenamente coherente hacia esta región, lo que presenta un nexo que debe explorarse para fomentar la dinámica de cooperación. Por lo tanto, este estudio busca analizar la interacción entre Azerbaiyán y Rusia dentro del sistema de las Naciones Unidas. Mediante análisis histórico, interpretación jurídica formal y metodología comparativa, se rastrea la evolución, los marcos institucionales y los instrumentos diplomáticos que sustentan su colaboración multilateral. Se demostró que Azerbaiyán y Rusia recurren sistemáticamente a los órganos de la ONU —desde la Asamblea General y el Consejo de Seguridad hasta agencias especializadas como el PNUD, UNICEF, UNESCO y ACNUR— para promover objetivos geopolíticos, de seguridad y socioeconómicos complementarios. Estas dinámicas de cooperación han contribuido significativamente a la relativa estabilidad regional, han facilitado la asistencia humanitaria y han dado forma a las respuestas lideradas por la ONU a los nuevos desafíos globales. Se argumenta además que un despliegue más estructurado y estratégico de los mecanismos de la ONU puede promover una paz duradera y un desarrollo sostenible en el Cáucaso Sur, a la vez que ofrece un modelo para reformar las instituciones multilaterales y abordar los imperativos cambiantes de seguridad y gobernanza.

Palabras clave: Relaciones Rusia-Azerbaiyán, Política exterior, Estrategia geopolítica, Cooperación multilateral, Consolidación de la paz.

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) was founded in October 1945, following the Second World War, with the signing of the San Francisco Charter by 51 countries committed to preventing further global conflicts. Its historical and founding elements include the creation of six principal organs—the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, the Secretariat, and the Trusteeship Council (now largely inactive)—whose joint purpose is to maintain international peace and security, promote respect for human rights, foster the social and economic progress of all peoples, and consolidate international law. Its objectives include preventing wars through mediation mechanisms and the deployment of peacekeeping missions, promoting cooperation in humanitarian matters, and establishing regulatory frameworks for sustainable development. It also aims to foster cooperation among states and nations (Chatterjee, 2025; United Nations, 2025).

The two main means of establishing and developing cooperation in the system of international relations are international law and organization. An international organization like UN is not a national government, and international law is not like domestic law. International organizations do not act as an emerging world government for two reasons. First, the sovereignty of member states is protected in the charters of most international organizations. The other reason why an international organization is not an emerging world government is its weakness (Nye & Welch, 2016). However, today international organizations are one of the most important forms of multilateral cooperation between states. Despite frequent criticism in international relations since the second half of the 20th century, the UN—the United Nations—has played a special role. As said before, it is a universal international organization that unites sovereign, independent states with the goal of maintaining peace and security on earth (Damirli, 2008).

The UN Charter states that the organization is designed to protect universal human rights, regardless of ethnic and religious affiliation, prevent conflicts, and promote their peaceful resolution, unite countries worldwide, and guide them toward cooperation and sustainable development. The United Nations remains the only place on Earth where all nations of the world can come together, discuss common problems, and find common solutions that benefit all humanity. The opportunities within the UN for addressing pressing global issues are considered a key means of consistently advancing the foreign policy interests of both Russia and Azerbaijan through the broadest possible international cooperation. Azerbaijan and Russia equally advocate for all member states to fulfill the

goals and principles of the UN Charter, for strengthening the role of the UN as a mechanism for international stability, security, and cooperation among states. Like other post-Soviet countries, they advocate for the full realization of the potential embedded in the Charter (Pivovar, 2012, p. 83).

Undoubtedly, due to their shared historical legacy, the relationship between Azerbaijan and Russia holds significant importance for both states—Russia as a global power and Azerbaijan as a key regional actor in the South Caucasus with growing international influence. In light of these dynamics, the objective of this study is to examine the nature, evolution, and institutional mechanisms of Azerbaijani–Russian cooperation within the framework of the United Nations. To achieve this, the study employs a multi-method approach: the historical method is applied to trace the development of bilateral relations in the context of the UN; systems analysis is used to identify the interconnections between various political processes shaping these interactions; and the formal-legal method enables interpretation of international treaties, agreements, and normative acts. Additionally, the study incorporates analytical and synthetic reasoning, comparative analysis of foreign policy strategies, and adheres to the principle of objectivity to elucidate the primary directions of Azerbaijani–Russian engagement within multilateral institutions.

DEVELOPMENT

Russia's position in the UN on the path to resolving the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

Along with the fact that Russia, as the legal successor of the USSR, is one of the co-founders of the UN, modern Russian diplomacy began its activities in the multilateral system of international relations in the 90s. On December 21, 1991, the CIS member states made a special decision to support Russia's right to continue the USSR's membership in the international organization and stated that Belarus, the RSFSR, and Ukraine would assist other Commonwealth states in joining the UN and other international organizations.

On December 24th, 1991, the President of the Russian Federation sent a message to the UN Secretary-General affirming the Russian Federation's continuation of the USSR's membership in the UN, as well as maintaining responsibility for all the USSR's rights and obligations under the UN Charter. In a note from the Russian Foreign Ministry on January 13th, 1992, it was stated that the Russian Federation “as the successor of the USSR will exercise the rights and fulfill the obligations under

international treaties" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 1992). On December 24th, 1991, the Russian Federation became a member of the UN Security Council. International recognition of these provisions was of great practical importance for Russia at that time. In particular, it allowed Russia to retain its seat as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and resolve a number of complex issues of succession in relations with the former Soviet republics. The significance of Russia's active policy within the central global organization, in terms of its national interests, is determined by two fundamental circumstances: the status of the Russian Federation as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, which entails special responsibility for maintaining peace, and the indispensable role of the UN as an organizational basis for forming a democratic multipolar system of international relations.

In their aspiration to be a full-fledged, actively participating member of the world community in international processes, each state sets the task of joining the UN. Azerbaijan, having restored its state independence on October 18th, 1991, and striving to consolidate it and establish comprehensive mutual cooperation with the world's states, also took the necessary steps to join the UN. On March 2nd, 1992, at the 82nd plenary meeting of the 46th session of the UN General Assembly, member states adopted Resolution A/RES/46/227 on the admission of former Union states, including Azerbaijan, to the UN. Russia, already a permanent member of the Security Council and a state with voting rights in the General Assembly, voted "in favor." The flag of the Republic of Azerbaijan was raised in front of the UN headquarters in New York. In the same year, on May 6th, Azerbaijan's permanent mission began its activities. Simultaneously, Azerbaijan started cooperating with UN specialized agencies.

The trend towards a significant increase in the demand for UN multilateral mechanisms in the face of old and new challenges and threats in recent years fully aligns with the fundamental orientations of the foreign policies of Russia and Azerbaijan. Within the UN framework, Azerbaijan has joined a number of international treaties, allowing the country to participate in addressing global issues.

The Republic of Azerbaijan signed treaties such as:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - December 19, 1966;
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights - December 19, 1966;
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child - November 20, 1989, and others.

Subsequently, the Republic of Azerbaijan also joined other international documents on the status and protection of women, refugees, victims of war, prevention of genocide, and punishment for it.

The USSR signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on March 18th, 1968 (ratified by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on September 18th, 1973). The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights was signed in 1966 (ratified by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on September 18th, 1973). The Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed on behalf of the USSR on January 26, 1990 (ratified by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on June 13th, 1990). The Russian Federation, as the successor of the USSR, confirmed its commitment to the provisions of these treaties.

Joining the UN provided Azerbaijan with the opportunity to bring to the attention of the international community the fact of Armenian aggression, develop relations with many states worldwide, and integrate into the global economy (Gasarov, 2018, pp. 141–142). The participation of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the sessions and meetings of the UN General Assembly further strengthened relations with the UN. The national leader Heydar Aliyev first participated in the 42nd session of the UN General Assembly in September 1994. In his speech, he voiced Azerbaijan's position on a number of global problems.

At the same session, the first President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, also spoke. One of the main topics of his speech was security and human rights issues in the former USSR. The head of the Russian state declared that relations with CIS countries are an economic and foreign policy priority for Russia.

The visit of the UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to Azerbaijan in October 1994 played a significant role in strengthening multilateral cooperation. After getting acquainted in detail with the socio-political and economic life of Azerbaijan, Boutros-Ghali promised to facilitate the UN's efforts to provide Azerbaijan with support in solving essential problems.

In his speech, Boutros-Ghali noted that the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh based on the principles of territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, and non-use of force. Based on these international principles, the immediate withdrawal of Armenian armed formations from the occupied territories was required. Regarding peacekeeping forces, Boutros-Ghali noted that "there are three options: 1. A peacekeeping

mission under UN command; 2. Deployment of UN forces in the region; 3. Joint actions of CIS forces and UN observers" (Aliyev, 1997). President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev, at a meeting with Boutros-Ghali, stated: "With the help of certain states, Armenia has occupied 20% of Azerbaijani territories. We highly appreciate Russia's mediation efforts and its role as co-chair of the Minsk Group of the OSCE" (Aliyev, 2014). The issue of the inadmissibility of Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan was raised before the main UN structures. The occupation of not only Nagorno-Karabakh but also the surrounding territories led to the adoption of four UN Security Council resolutions (Karaeva, 2017).

Unfortunately, the UN resolutions were not implemented. I would like to mention the history of the adoption of these documents by the Security Council. On April 30th, 1993, in connection with the invasion of Armenian occupying forces into the Kelbajar region, Resolution No. 822 was adopted. The Security Council demanded the cessation of military actions to establish security in the region and the immediate withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the Kelbajar region.

The Agdam region was occupied on July 23th, 1993. Already on July 29th, the Security Council adopted another resolution, No. 853. However, despite this, in August 1993, the Fizuli, Jabrayil, and Gubadli districts were lost. Resolution No. 874 of October 14th, 1993, confirmed the fact of occupation and expressed concern about the displacement of Azerbaijani civilian population. The final Resolution No. 884 reaffirmed the provisions of previous resolutions. It noted the escalation of military actions, the violation of the ceasefire regime, and the occupation of the Zangilan region and the city of Goradiz.

During this period, the UN Secretary-General made several statements supporting Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereign rights. What was Russia's attitude towards these resolutions? This question can be answered only by examining the statement of Vladimir Kazimirov (from 1992-1996, head of Russia's mediation mission, authorized representative of the Russian President on Nagorno-Karabakh, and co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group from Russia) entitled "Karabakh and UN Security Council resolutions," distributed by the "REGNUM" news agency on November 14th, 2004. Here, it is stated that "the demands of the UN resolutions are considered by the Azerbaijani side as liberation of territories. The Republic of Azerbaijan seeks to draw attention to the issues of occupation and the status of forced migrants, thereby pushing the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh into the background".

Then, in the same statement, the question is asked: Which side violated the fundamental requirement of all resolutions? And here, Kazimirov himself answers the question: There are no innocent parties here, but Azerbaijan was the first to start. The governments of A. Elchibey and H. Aliyev tried to resolve the issue by force of arms. Then began the political and diplomatic confrontation following the adoption of the first resolution. Yerevan and Stepanakert responded positively to the proposals of the OSCE Minsk Group members. Azerbaijan remained silent (Kazimirov, 2004).

As can be seen from the statement, Russia's position favored Armenia. Closing its eyes to the occupation of Azerbaijani territories, Kazimirov accuses Azerbaijan of not fulfilling UN resolutions. Although the aforementioned UN Security Council resolutions did not find practical implementation, the Republic of Azerbaijan considered the adoption of each of them to have international significance and implied taking measures for Armenian-Azerbaijani settlement. By spring 1994, Armenian forces managed to occupy seven districts around Nagorno-Karabakh. The conclusion of the Bishkek Agreement did not lead to a peaceful settlement of the conflict (Allahverdiyev, 2012). B. Ghali expressed his dissatisfaction on this occasion: "There will be no end to the division of the world and it will not be possible to achieve peace and security if each ethnic and religious group demands self-determination" (Dadashova, 2010).

After the conclusion of the Bishkek Agreement in May 1994 on the ceasefire regime, which was achieved thanks to Russia's mediation, the Azerbaijani leadership understood that the UN would yield participation in the resolution of the conflict to the OSCE Minsk Group (Aliyev, 2021a). At the UN GA session devoted to the 50th anniversary of the UN's formation in 1995, Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev once again announced Azerbaijan's position in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and called on the world's leading states to take measures against Armenian aggression. There, Aliyev also appealed to the world's states with a statement of Azerbaijan's principled position on a number of international issues. The new resolution of the UN GA on cooperation with the OSCE adopted in 1996 supported the territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan. And in 1997, during a visit to the USA, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan met with the new UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In their conversation, Kofi Annan stated that "he advocates the settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict on the basis of international legal norms and principles, including the principles of the Lisbon Summit" (Efendiev, 2022).

Heydar Aliyev, speaking in July 1997 at a meeting attended by permanent representatives of the UN Security Council, including Russia, thoroughly informed them about the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. In his speech at the UN Millennium Summit held in September 2000, Heydar Aliyev emphasized the role of the UN in ensuring peace and security on Earth. He spoke about the occupation of 20% of Azerbaijan's territory and emphasized the need to prevent conflicts and reform the UN (Kosov & Toropygin, 2009). The first speech of the President of the Russian Federation, V. Putin, was voiced at the same Summit. In his speech, Putin devoted attention to the problems of disarmament; he proposed to abandon the use of enriched uranium in world industry and clean plutonium, as well as to hold an international conference in Moscow and develop agreements on the demilitarization of space (TASS, 2015). Thus, the heads of both states expressed their intentions to solve the most important problems of mankind in the way of strengthening international peace and security within the framework of the UN.

Russia and Azerbaijan, in cooperation with other countries, put forward specific legal proposals aimed at consolidating the leading role of the UN and the supremacy of international law while improving mechanisms and procedures for responding to threats to peace and security. These goals were also promoted by the further promotion of the initiative of Russia at the 57th session of the UN General Assembly in 2002 to form a global system to counter new threats and challenges, which was reflected in the resolution adopted by consensus of the General Assembly 57/145. Azerbaijan, like other UN members, supported this idea.

On November 23rd, 2004, at the 59th session of the UN GA, a document entitled "The Situation in the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan No. 163" was put on the agenda. The resolution was adopted at the 62nd session of the UN GA. 39 states voted for, 7 against, and 100 abstained. The document noted that "the occupation of the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan cannot be recognized by any state and Armenian troops must be immediately withdrawn from the territory of Azerbaijan" (Nafikov & Akhmedova, 2010). The resolution confirmed the rights to return to the places of former residence of the population expelled from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan and the restoration of the territories destroyed during the conflict. It is noteworthy that all three co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group voted against the resolution. This indicates that all three co-chairs ignore the fact of the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia.

Speaking at the 65th session of the UN General Assembly in 2010, the head of the Azerbaijani state Ilham Aliyev

noted: "The Republic of Azerbaijan highly appreciates the role of the UN in ensuring international peace and security" (Aliyev, 2014). As can be seen already against the background of these events, Azerbaijan, unlike Russia, which preferred its place in the UN Security Council, began to change the priorities of its cooperation with the UN, made a bet on cooperation with its specialized structures to solve socio-economic problems caused both by abandoning the Soviet model of economic development and the consequences of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

In the early years of independence, the UN provided financial and humanitarian assistance to the Republic of Azerbaijan, which faced a number of problems, including the refugee problem (186,000 Azerbaijanis, 4,000 Russians, 18,000 Kurds, 70,000 Meskhetian Turks) (Yunusov, 2007). The State Committee for Refugees and Forced Migrants confirmed the presence of 1 million refugees in Azerbaijan. In this context, cooperation with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was of paramount importance. At the 85th meeting, the UN General Assembly also adopted a resolution on the provision of emergency international assistance to refugees and forced migrants in Azerbaijan (A/RES/48/114).

Russia, the USA, and France voted against the adoption of the resolution. As can be seen, the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group decided not to support Azerbaijan. But this position of Russia contradicts the activity that it performs in the CIS space, helping a large number of refugees and displaced persons, cooperating with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In its relations with the UNHCR, Russia proceeds from the fact that this organization is the leading humanitarian agency in the UN system dealing with refugee issues. Other agencies in shaping their humanitarian policies must be based on the positions of the UNHCR. In 1995, Russia was elected as a member of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Program.

UNHCR held a conference on refugees and other migrants in the CIS countries in Geneva in May 1996. The Action Program (extended until 2005) was adopted, which gave a new impetus to the mobilization of financial resources from donor countries. UNHCR also issues annual appeals to donors for financial support for the implementation of the Action Program in Russia and other CIS countries (Damirli, 2008).

A notable fact is that, according to a statement by Russia's deputy representative to the UN, Gennady Kuzmin, during a UN Security Council meeting in December 2021, Russia urged the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to intensify

efforts for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to Nagorno-Karabakh. “UNHCR is addressing the issue of returning refugees and internally displaced persons to Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent districts based on the trilateral statement of November 9th, 2020,” Kuzmin said (Pivovar, 2012). He expressed Russia’s view that UNHCR should continue its humanitarian activities in the region on a depoliticized basis, emphasizing purely humanitarian aspects. Given its intermediary and peace-keeping role, Russia seeks to facilitate a compromise between Azerbaijan and Armenia through UNHCR.

The issue of food provision for refugees contributed to Azerbaijan’s relationship with UNHCR. Based on an appeal by G. Aliyev in 1996, the organization’s activities in Azerbaijan were extended until 2005. In 2008, assistance was provided to 135,000 people. Currently, sanctions imposed on Russia as a result of the war with Ukraine, which led to disruptions in global logistics chains, could result in a global food crisis. As Russian expert O. Kuznetsov noted that under the 2022 Agreement on Allied Interaction, Russia will supply agricultural products to Azerbaijan, primarily grains and legumes (Agadadashev, 2022). Thus, even under extremely negative conditions, cooperation between Azerbaijan and Russia can continue.

In April 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution suspending Russia’s membership in the UN Human Rights Council following civilian casualties in the Ukrainian town of Bucha. Ninety-three states voted in favor of suspending Russia, 24 voted against, and 58 abstained (Elias, 2022). The Council comprises 47 member states, each elected for a three-year term. Azerbaijan did not participate in the vote, indicating a cautious stance toward Russia within the UN. Former supporters of Russia voted for its exclusion from the Human Rights Council.

By the mid-2000s, Azerbaijan actively used the UN as a platform to influence Armenia, notably through a resolution project on “Observance of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Standards in the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan,” which was introduced to the agenda of the 67th session of the UN General Assembly in 2012 (Jafarov, 2011). Azerbaijan’s position began gaining acceptance even among certain segments of Armenian society from the UN podium, despite opposition from permanent members of the Security Council.

Relations between Azerbaijan and Russia in UN specialized agencies and programs.

In the implementation of the foreign policy strategies of Russia and Azerbaijan—aimed at strengthening their international positions and ensuring favorable external conditions for development—culture, science, and education

naturally play a special role, as these fall under the direct competence of UNESCO. In terms of cultural, scientific, and educational cooperation under UNESCO, Azerbaijan has played a significant role, particularly through the establishment of its National Commission at UNESCO in 1994. Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva has made substantial contributions to strengthening Azerbaijan’s relations with UNESCO, earning recognition for her efforts in music, literature, poetry, and intercultural cooperation. However, in November 2022, Mehriban Khanum stepped down from her role as a goodwill ambassador. The reason given was the need to focus on the restoration of the Karabakh territories liberated during the 44-day Patriotic War of 2020.

The most recent confirmation of this cooperation came from Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova, who stated during a weekly briefing in February 2022 that “The Russian Federation supports the idea of sending a UNESCO mission to both Azerbaijan and Armenia,” indicating that Russia remains engaged with Azerbaijan even in the context of multilateral diplomacy (Zakharova, 2022).

Moscow and Baku play an important role in the implementation of the Education for All (EFA) program, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the resolution of other global challenges. The National Commissions of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan for UNESCO serve as government coordination bodies that facilitate cooperation between their respective governments, executive authorities, other institutions and organizations, as well as scientists and experts, with UNESCO. Organizational and technical support for these commissions is provided by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

As part of efforts to strengthen their economies, Russia and Azerbaijan have begun cooperating with various UN bodies, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), among others (Damirli, 2008, p. 96). Numerous UN programs are aimed at improving living conditions and regulating economic systems in accordance with international standards. UN assistance offers several key advantages: it is apolitical and unconditional, aligned with national development priorities, and accountable to the recipient government. With its capacity to mobilize donor resources and respond swiftly to national requests, UN assistance remains highly relevant despite financial limitations. The Concept of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of International Development Assistance, approved in 2014, represents a logical continuation of the earlier 2007 Concept (World Bank Group, 2025).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), adopted in New York in 2015 within the UNDP framework, laid out a strategic action plan focused on people, the planet, and prosperity. The program targets the world's most urgent development challenges, including poverty, inequality, hunger, disease, violence, conflict, climate change, and disaster risk reduction. The signing of the Framework Partnership Agreement between the Russian Federation and the UNDP in 2015 reaffirmed Russia's role as a donor in supporting sustainable development goals. That same year, the Russia-UNDP Trust Fund was established with the objective of providing financial aid from Russia to CIS countries—including Azerbaijan—as well as to other regions with low or lower-middle income levels. The Trust Fund's budget for 2015–2019 amounted to USD 25 million (Pritchins, 2012, p. 61).

As early as February 2017, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in a message to the Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan and Chairman of the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development, Ali Ahmadov, stated that “The UN Sustainable Development Program will assist the activities of the Azerbaijan-2020: Vision for the Future program.” Guterres noted that he “is aware of all of Azerbaijan's achievements in sustainable development, especially in poverty eradication and the promotion of economic development” (Akhmedov, 2017). The Secretary-General also expressed hope for a further deepening of cooperation between the UN and Azerbaijan, aimed at taking joint measures to effectively respond to contemporary challenges at the international level.

The January 2020 conference in Baku, focused on forming new cooperation frameworks between the United Nations (UN) and Azerbaijan, was of significant importance. The event was attended by over 150 high-ranking government officials, representatives of UN agencies (including permanent members of the UN Security Council, such as Russia), civil society, the private sector, youth organizations, academic circles, and the media.

Organized by the UN office in Azerbaijan and supported by the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development (NCCSD), the seminar aimed to define strategic priorities for the UN-Azerbaijan cooperation framework on sustainable development (UNSDCF) for the period 2021–2025.

Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Ali Ahmadov, UN Resident Coordinator in Azerbaijan Ghulam M. Isacalai, Minister of Economy Mikayil Jabbarov, Minister of Labor and Social Protection of the Population Sahil Babayev, and other high-ranking officials spoke at the conference. Participants also discussed Azerbaijan's long-term

prospects for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, as well as the UN's contribution to this process. Speaking about the measures taken in Azerbaijan to improve living standards, Azerbaijani Minister of Economy Mikayil Jabbarov noted that the poverty rate in Azerbaijan had decreased to 4.9%. For its efforts in the fight against poverty and hunger, the country was awarded a special prize by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 2013.

In April 1992, Russia and Azerbaijan became members of the International Monetary Fund. The Russian Federation adopted a Cooperation Program with the World Bank for the period 2002–2004, which defined priorities, goals, volumes, and borrowing instruments. In 2001, the International Monetary Fund provided Azerbaijan with a concessional loan (0.5–1%) in the amount of 150 million dollars. According to the IMF, over the past five years, investments from Azerbaijan and Russia have increased fourfold. By 2017, they amounted to 800 million dollars. Thus, Russia ranked ninth (2.7%) among the countries that invested in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan and Russia support the UN in the fight against terrorism. Both countries participate in structures functioning in this area.

Russia is consistently increasing its contribution to peacekeeping activities under the auspices of the United Nations. This was particularly evident in April 2002, when the country joined the UN Standby Arrangements System for peacekeeping operations, designed to significantly enhance the speed of their deployment. As noted in the first chapter, Russia also deployed its peacekeeping contingent in Karabakh, on the territory of Azerbaijan, following the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in 2020.

The Republic of Azerbaijan engaged in productive work to address significant international issues and actively sought to bring global attention to the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. During its time on the Security Council, Azerbaijan consistently raised matters related to the observance of international legal norms, including the inviolability of borders and the principle of territorial integrity (Orujev, 2014). A notable example was the discussion held under the Arria formula on May 30, 2012, titled Peaceful Settlement of Disputes, Conflict Prevention, and Mediation, which drew considerable interest from participants and included Russia among the attending permanent members.

Over the two-year term, Azerbaijan chaired the Security Council twice—first in May 2012 and again in October 2013—convening high-level meetings on pressing global concerns. One such meeting took place on May 4, 2012, on the topic Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts, with participation from President

Ilham Aliyev and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The session concluded with the adoption of a statement by the Security Council president.

From October 3rd to 9th, 2012, members of the UN Security Council, including Russia as a permanent member and Azerbaijan as a non-permanent member, undertook an official visit to Africa. The mission aimed to assess the political and humanitarian security situation in the Great Lakes region. As part of its active engagement, Azerbaijan organized an informal meeting of the Security Council with the foreign ministers and senior officials of Ethiopia, Burundi, Mauritania, Uganda, Senegal, Namibia, and Kenya (Kunina, 2014). Notably, during Azerbaijan's first chairmanship of the Security Council, a formal statement was issued in response to a terrorist attack on the Russian embassy in Tripoli, highlighting Azerbaijan's commitment to addressing international security challenges. On October 28th, 2013, during its second chairmanship, Azerbaijan convened another high-level meeting focused on Strengthening Partnerships between the UN and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which helped to define key directions in conflict resolution and inter-institutional collaboration (Orujev, 2014).

Throughout its term, Azerbaijan and Russia were actively involved in deliberations on a wide range of pressing global issues, directly contributing to the Council's decision-making processes. During this period, 59 open and closed meetings were held, leading to the adoption of seven resolutions and 13 press statements, with both Azerbaijan and Russia playing key roles. Furthermore, Azerbaijan expanded its diplomatic network, establishing new partnerships across Africa and Latin America.

Environmental cooperation also emerged as a shared priority, especially through engagement in multilateral institutions. The complex interdependence of environmental challenges necessitated broader and deeper international collaboration (Gasarov, 2018, p. 76). Since gaining independence following the dissolution of the USSR, both Azerbaijan and Russia have prioritized environmental protection. The ecological systems of Russia and the Caucasus region, including Azerbaijan, hold particular significance in the global environmental context.

In 2020, the global community confronted one of the most severe public health crises in modern history. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in over 687 million recorded infections and more than 6 million deaths worldwide. Beyond the immediate health impacts, the pandemic inflicted profound social, economic, and financial disruptions, devastating global trade, tourism, and livelihoods. The first reports of a previously unknown virus causing

several cases of pneumonia in Wuhan, Hubei Province—a city in eastern China with a population exceeding 11 million—surfaced on December 31, 2019. This virus, later identified as COVID-19, primarily affected the respiratory system, leading to illnesses such as pneumonia and other severe pulmonary conditions (Reynolds & Weiss, 2020). In response to the growing threat, the Republic of Azerbaijan implemented urgent preventive measures on February 27th, 2020, including the establishment of an Operational Headquarters under the Cabinet of Ministers, headed by Prime Minister A. Asadov. The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the country—a Russian citizen arriving from Iran—was reported on February 28th.

Azerbaijan's leadership, alongside the Operational Headquarters, maintained close cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO). Due to this coordinated response, the country managed to achieve a downward trend in infections and commenced a phased exit from quarantine. This demonstrated Azerbaijan's commitment to a responsible policy centered on public welfare and international collaboration. On March 23rd, 2021, during the 46th session of the UN Human Rights Council, Azerbaijan—acting as chair of the Non-Aligned Movement—initiated a resolution titled “Ensuring Equal, Affordable, Timely, and Universal Access to COVID-19 Vaccines.” Russia supported this initiative, reflecting the alignment of both countries on global health equity. Russia further contributed by supplying Azerbaijan with 12,000 COVID-19 test kits and dispatching medical experts to assist Azerbaijani colleagues. Additionally, the Sputnik-V vaccine was administered to the Azerbaijani population.

The resolution underscored the necessity of global solidarity and multilateral cooperation in addressing the pandemic. Notably, it followed the special session of the UN General Assembly on COVID-19 held on December 3rd–4th, 2020, which had been convened at the initiative of Azerbaijan's President in his capacity as chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (Nasirov, 2021). The resolution received the support of 133 co-sponsors—an unusually high number for a UN Human Rights Council resolution. Furthermore, on March 5th, 2021, the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement in New York adopted a communiqué on the same topic, also initiated by President Ilham Aliyev.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres acknowledged Russia's contributions in fighting the pandemic, including its offer to share vaccines with United Nations partners and other international organizations. During a meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin in May 2021, Guterres stated: “We express gratitude for your assistance, for providing test systems. Vaccine production

is of great importance. The Russian government is taking necessary measures to combat the coronavirus”.

Nevertheless, some criticism accompanied these efforts. On June 30th, 2020, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet expressed concern that the pandemic had been used as a pretext in certain countries—including Russia and China—to restrict civil liberties. She cited instances of threats and intimidation targeting journalists and civil activists in these countries, noting that such actions often followed criticism of governmental responses to the pandemic. As the global response intensified, the United Nations stressed that overcoming the pandemic required collective efforts within the framework of international organizations and individual contributions from each nation.

Russia's stance in the UN Security Council also gained attention during the 44-day Patriotic War. A closed session of the Security Council saw the United Kingdom obstructing the adoption of a resolution on Karabakh, undermining the co-chair nations of the OSCE Minsk Group—Russia, the United States, and France—all permanent members of the Security Council. These states had advocated for an approach aimed at preventing external intervention and the involvement of terrorist groups, yet the resolution was, in effect, directed against Azerbaijan (Mustafaev, 2020). Speaking on Armed Forces Day to senior officials and military personnel, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev noted: “During the Patriotic War of 2020, anti-Azerbaijani statements were made in the Security Council, but they failed, not gaining broad support. The Non-Aligned Movement countries provided diplomatic assistance to Azerbaijan” (Aliyev, 2021b).

Finally, one of the most important contemporary events considered by the UN was the Russia-Ukraine war. On March 2nd, 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution ES-11/1 “Aggression against Ukraine.” Azerbaijan, along with Iran, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela, did not participate in the vote. The same position of non-participation was evident in the adoption of the October 2022 resolution of the UN General Assembly. The resolution condemned the attempted illegal annexation of four Ukrainian regions and demanded that Russia immediately withdraw its troops from Ukraine (Elias, 2022). Azerbaijan, as the chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, whose members adhere to impartiality on such issues and advocate for resolving conflicts while respecting the principles of international law, including maintaining the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states, abstained.

Russia supports a cautious approach to the reform of the UN Security Council as a key component of the broader

process of adapting the organization to modern realities. Russia asserts that the UN Security Council has demonstrated its ability to work effectively during various historical periods, including the current stage of combating global challenges and threats. For example, its anti-terrorist resolutions adopted in response to immediate threats have formed the basis for collective counter-terrorism efforts. Any expansion of the Security Council's membership should result from the broadest possible consensus, ideally with the support of its five permanent members. Russia, like its partners in the “P5,” considers any restriction on the status of current permanent members of the Security Council, particularly regarding the right of veto, to be unacceptable. Despite differences in positions on UN reforms, Azerbaijan and Russia have substantial experience in cooperation within the UN, which can serve as a foundation for continuing and achieving significant results.

CONCLUSIONS

For three decades, Azerbaijan and Russia have been mastering the complex science of aligning their strategic interests, overcoming arising contradictions, and building a solid foundation for long-term cooperation in various fields. The relationship between Moscow and Baku has had its ups and downs, but both sides have consistently aimed to preserve and expand the positive achievements accumulated in various dimensions of bilateral relations in previous eras. The year 2022 was marked by the signing of an important intergovernmental document on allied relations at the highest level. Article 43 of the Declaration on Allied Interaction between Azerbaijan and Russia speaks of respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity, the central role of the UN in dispute resolution, security in the Caucasus and Caspian regions, and promoting the normalization of relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan actively participates in existing frameworks of regional cooperation and sometimes proposes creating new multilateral institutions and platforms. It has fostered active interaction and cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies. In 2011, Azerbaijan was elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, an important opportunity to gain international support in addressing its foreign policy objectives. However, recent years have been marked by unprecedented geopolitical challenges of various kinds, including the sharp escalation of the Russia-West confrontation, increased global economic volatility, the painful process of the “energy transition,” and many other events, processes, and trends in international life that compel a new look at the near future of the world order, global and regional governance. Thus, continuing mutually beneficial cooperation between the two

states, especially within international organizations, requires consideration of the changing realities of world politics and economics, new challenges, and new opportunities that need careful analysis and understanding.

In addition, the dialogue agenda cannot be limited to bilateral relations alone. There is a range of issues, such as the Caspian Sea, the South Caucasus, interregional transport projects, and more, on which Azerbaijan and Russia closely cooperate. There are also pressing issues such as international terrorism and political extremism, the future of global energy and the global financial system, multi-lateral integration projects in Eurasia, and development challenges in the Middle East. In today's global and inter-connected world, no country can avoid discussing issues of global and regional security and development, as these issues directly affect the state of the economy, politics, and social sphere of each individual country. However, in general, the participation and cooperation within the UN have allowed Azerbaijan and Russia to align their positions on addressing global security, health, environmental issues, and more.

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