



Azerbaijan-Israel Strategic Relationship Proves Its Importance

By

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With the opening of the [Azerbaijani trade office](#) in Israel in 2021 and [the embassy in 2023](#), Azerbaijan-Israel strategic relations reached a new level. The partnership covers a wide range of vital areas, including energy, defence and security, transport, agriculture and the environment, water resources, culture, and advanced technology.

Science and education are part of strategic ties in recent years. The “[Program of educational cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the State of Israel for the years 2023-2026](#)” forms the basis for developing this vital field in mutual cooperation. As Azerbaijan strives to reform its education system in order to make schools future-ready and sci-tech focused, it benefits greatly from [the exchange of teachers and education experts](#) to train and learn from the Israeli experience.

Cooperation on climate change, high tech agriculture, green energy, and water are also part of the educational and scientific ties. Israel’s high-tech economy and agriculture and its experience in green energy and water desalination provide Azerbaijan a unique opportunity to diversify and develop the non-oil sector of its economy.

[Cybersecurity is also part of the educational ties](#) between the countries with staff at the Technion, a public research university based in Haifa, contributing to the training of Azerbaijani students on a cybersecurity program.

Food security with a focus on grain is another new angle in Azerbaijan-Israel ties. Israel’s food security, and specifically its requirement for grain, [will be met by Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan](#), following the disruption to supplies as a result of the Russia-Ukraine war. This will be a huge boost to both Israel’s and Azerbaijan’s food security, as Azerbaijan will receive advanced technology from Israel as part of the deal.

The high level of religious tolerance and historical lack of anti-Semitism in Azerbaijan form a strong basis for people-to-people relations between Azerbaijan and Israel. The [village of Qırmızı Qəsəbə](#) (Red Village) in the Quba region of Azerbaijan, home to an old community of Mountain Jews, is believed to be the world’s only all-Jewish village outside Israel and the United States. The [opening of the Mountain Jews Museum](#) in the village is also a testament to the positive role of Azerbaijan in Jewish-Muslim coexistence and the promotion of harmony and tolerance. Azerbaijani Jews form a strong bond between the people of the two countries and their significant presence in Israel also promotes bilateral ties.

An important development in the energy sector, a key part of the strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Israel, took place in October 2023, when Azerbaijan’s state oil company [SOCAR was granted a gas exploration license](#) alongside British Petroleum and Israel’s NewMed to explore an area north of Israel’s Leviathan gas field in the Mediterranean. This is a significant boost to SOCAR, increasing its role in the world energy market and [introducing a new aspect to Azerbaijan-Israel energy cooperation](#). Around 40 percent of Israel’s oil imports come from Azerbaijan.

Diversification of supply and non-reliance on Arab oil has been a key



component of Israeli energy security over the years. Azerbaijani oil pumped to Turkey's Mediterranean port of Ceyhan and transported onwards to world markets forms a major source of revenue for the Azerbaijani budget and, as such, has been crucial in the modernisation of the country's infrastructure, armed forces, and the large-scale reconstruction in Azerbaijan's liberated lands.

Azerbaijan's energy policy forms the backbone of the country's independent foreign policy. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline bypasses both Russia and Iran and has proved a key asset following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, when [Kazakh oil shipments](#), for example, most of which pass through Russia, have been disrupted.

Since the Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel on October 7, 2023, and the subsequent war in Gaza, [Iran has singled out the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline as well as Azerbaijan](#), putting them under pressure to cut off the key crude oil supply to Israel and thereby to damage the basis for Azerbaijan's independent foreign policy.

Iran launched media propaganda against Azerbaijan. Leftist so-called nongovernmental organizations, financed by Western-donor political figures such as Greta Thunberg and Qatar-financed outlets such as the Middle East Eye, also criticized Azerbaijan.

The attacks reveal the range of political sides that are keen to damage and destroy the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline and Azerbaijan's independent foreign policy. [Attacks against SOCAR's HQ in Istanbul](#), organized by pro-Hamas Islamists and leftists, with the tacit approval of circles within the Turkish government, were also part of the campaign.

Azerbaijan-Israel strategic cooperation, particularly in the energy sector, stood firm in the face of attacks from various circles, geopolitical turbulence, and pressure. The incoming Trump administration should value Baku's role in the energy security of Israel, the European Union, and Turkey, which are key US allies.

Azerbaijan and Israel developed the defense component of their strategic partnership over the years. Israel is one of the main sources of Azerbaijan's defense imports and modernization of the armed forces. Azerbaijan made skilful use of Israeli defence products in liberating its lands; most notably, [Israeli's Barak 8 anti-ballistic missile defense system intercepted an Iskander missile](#) fired from Armenia over the capital Baku.

[Israel, too, stood firm in the face of pressure during the war in 2020](#) and did not allow third parties to influence their defense cooperation with Baku. The defense cooperation also came under extensive media attack by pro-Armenia and pro-Iran elements who consider the Azerbaijani-Israeli defense partnership a threat to their interests. Iran feared Azerbaijan's growing role since Baku's victory in the Karabakh war and the high-level conduct of its armed forces.

A strong Azerbaijan on its northern border is a nightmare for Iran. Tehran invested heavily for decades to keep Azerbaijan weak, but this failed badly with the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Azerbaijan-Israel defense cooperation is vital for regional security and the containment of rogue actors such as Iran, which pose an existential security threat to both countries.

With the fall of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria, Israel and Turkey appear to have inflicted a strategic defeat on Iran. Considering the strained nature of Turkish-Israel relations, due to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan backing Palestinian extremist groups, it is in the interests of both Israel and Turkey not to collide in Syria and to manage the risks.

In this regard, Azerbaijan can play a key role in coordinating and reconciling both Israeli and Turkish interests to avoid confrontation in Syria. Azerbaijani



President Ilham Aliyev's foreign policy aide [Hikmet Hajiyev visited Israel](#) in December, where he had meetings with high-level Israeli officials including Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar and [President Isaac Herzog](#). The trip was [a positive development in reducing confrontational elements in Turkish-Israeli ties](#) and keeping backchannel communications open.

It is in Azerbaijan's interests to reconcile or at least reduce the negative atmosphere between its two key strategic partners Israel and Turkey, with [Azerbaijan playing a significant role in the recent normalization process between the two countries](#). [Baku also proposed setting up a trilateral regional format](#) for strategic cooperation between Azerbaijan, Israel, and Turkey before the Hamas terrorist attack derailed the fragile Israeli-Turkish ties with Erdoğan siding with Hamas.

Overall, it is worth noting that both Azerbaijan and Israel benefit strategically from their partnership in various fields. The contribution of their relationship to the security environment of the South Caucasus and the Middle East is important as it also opens new opportunities.

The role of Azerbaijan in easing the tension in Turkish-Israeli ties becomes more significant with the fall of the Assad regime in Syria. Azerbaijan and Israel have both stood firm during geopolitical crises, protecting their strategic ties and blocking third-party attempts to influence them, thereby proving that their partnership is reliable and mutually beneficial.

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