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# BP shuts down Georgian pipeline

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BP said the 90,000-barrel-a-day pipeline to Supsa on Georgia's Black Sea coast from Baku in Azerbaijan will remain closed indefinitely.

BP PLC said it shut down an oil pipeline that runs through Georgia on Tuesday as a precautionary measure, but added that it is unaware of any Russian bombings on pipelines in the region.

BP said the 90,000-barrel-a-day pipeline to Supsa on Georgia's Black Sea coast from Baku in Azerbaijan will remain closed indefinitely.

Another pipeline operated by the London-based oil company in the former Soviet Republic, the larger Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, is already out of action after a fire last week on its Turkish stretch. The BTC pipeline usually provides around 1 million barrels of Caspian crude to international markets.

BP spokesman Robert Wine said the Baku-Supsa line was closed because it runs through the center of Georgia, where there was greater risk of conflict.

However, he added that BP had no reports of damage to pipelines in Georgia, despite claims from some officials there that Russian forces had attacked the lines.

"I think those reports out there are inaccurate," he said.

Turkish President Abdullah Gul also said Tuesday that fighting in Georgia had not damaged the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline.

Georgian ports on the Black Sea are a main shipping point of Caspian Sea crude from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. More than 500,000 barrels leave these ports daily, and plans are afoot to expand capacity by an additional 200,000 barrels a day.

The Baku-Supsa pipeline was only reopened a few weeks ago after 18 months of inaction. It has the capacity to pump up to 150,000 barrels a day, but has recently been pumping around 90,000 barrels a day.

BP said it still has no timeframe on the potential reopening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline after it was damaged by a fire late last Tuesday.

Kurdish rebels took responsibility for sabotaging the pipeline.

Workers for Botas International Ltd., which operates the BTC line, put out the fire on Monday and are expected to carry out a closer inspection of the damage over the coming days.

A third pipeline that runs to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, which BP uses to export oil, but does not operate, remains open.

Wine said there was still some production in oil fields in the Caspian Sea, but it had been reduced because of the pipeline closures. (AP)

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