

DAILY NEWS REPORT ON GEORGIA

Date: March 5-11, 2018

❖ Occupied Regions

❖ Abkhazia Region

❖ Delegation of Kingdom of Jordan is in occupied Abkhazia

The so-called President of occupied Abkhazia met the delegation of the Kingdom of Jordan. Members of the Jordanian House of Representatives are in occupied Abkhazia for the second time. The information released on the so-called presidential website says that Raul Khajimba talked about prospects for future economic, humanitarian and cultural relations between Aman and Sokhumi. In addition, the head of the Jordanian delegation congratulated Khajimba on the 25th anniversary of the victory in Georgia-Abkhazia war (*March 9*).

❖ Tskhinvali Region (so called South Ossetia)

1. "Arbitrary Punishment of Detained Person" - Amnesty INTERNATIONAL Requests timely investigation of Tatumashvili`s case

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL calls upon the de facto authorities of Russia and occupied Tskhinvali to conduct an immediate and impartial investigation of the death of Archil Tatumashvili (*March 5*).

2. Russian Patriarchate specifies date of transfer of Tatumashvili`s body in private conversation - Father Kakhaber explains the statement of the Patriarchate

Archpriest Kakhaber Gogotishvili responds to the letter of the Russian Patriarchate and explains that Archil Tatumashvili`s body is expected to be transferred in two days (*March 6*).

3. Occupation regime is not going to transfer Archil Tutunashvili`s body to his family for the next month

Anatoly Bibilov says that the transfer of the body is not planned until the end of medical examination and indicates that at least one month is needed for the examination. According to Bibilov, if they hand over the body without an expertise conclusion, they will be criticized by the European diplomats. According to him, expertise takes a month in every country, including Georgia (*March 7*).

4. We are engaged in communication every moment - Prime Minister speaks about a transfer of Tatumashvili`s body

"We all are involved in communicating. We want it to happen as soon as possible. I cannot tell you more about it," said Giorgi Kvirikashvili (*March 8*).

5. PM Kvirikashvili urges Russia to take joint steps to resolve "complicated situation" over Tatumashvili`s death in occupied Tskhinvali

"I urge the leadership of the Russian Federation to take joint steps and resolve this complicated situation", Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili has said. Fifteen days after the death of Georgian citizen Archil Tatumashvili in Georgia`s Russian occupied region of Tskhinvali (South Ossetia) in unclear circumstances, his body has still not been handed over to his family for burial,

while Levan Kutashvili and Ioseb Pavliashvili still remain in occupied Tskhinvali and unable to travel (*March 9*).

❖ Foreign Affairs

6. Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Japan - Georgia is a distinct leader in the region in terms of reforms and stability

Georgia is a distinguished leader in terms of reforms and stability, Tomohiko Taniguchi, Special Advisor to Prime Minister of Japan, said at the meeting with Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Kvirikashvili (*March 6*).

7. Gov't announces tough measures to prevent violations of Georgia-EU visa free deal

“The PM stated that some Georgian citizens have changed their surnames several times in order to illegally reside in the EU. Entering the Schengen Zone through the changing of one’s surname is a crime and we will make the procedure more complicated. The decision has been agreed upon with EU partner states and I hope that the citizens of Georgia will understand the importance of the step. We [the government] should take all necessary measures to avoid threats to the Georgia-EU visa waiver,” Kvirikashvili said (*March 6*).

8. Georgian FM visits Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia

During the visit on March 5-7, Janelidze met with the high officials, including Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Igor Crnadak. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the two ministries (*March 7*).

9. Serbia welcomes visa free travel with Georgia

The Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic has welcomed a Georgia-Serbia visa free deal, which will be signed during Georgian Foreign Minister Mikheil Janelidze’s ongoing visit to Serbia. Vucic stated that the Serbian government intends to activate the agreement “in the coming days.” The president believes that the deal will further enhance Georgia-Serbia ties in many directions, trade-economic cooperation among them (*March 7*).

10. Georgia hosts more than 10,000 foreign students

Georgia’s National Statistics Office states that 10,061 foreign students are receiving educations in the country’s institutions of higher learning. The number is based on figures from 2017-2018. The biggest portion of the students is from India. Their number reaches 4,000 (*March 8*).

11. Georgia and Europol to deepen cooperation against crime

Georgian Interior Minister Giorgi Gakharia and Europol's Director Rob Wainwright have signed a Liaison Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding on secure communication line protocol. The Georgian authorities intend to post a Liaison Officer to Europol headquarters in the upcoming months, which also aim at improving cooperation between the agencies on organised crime (*March 10*).

12. Resolution against Russia - ruling team will present final version of document

The final version of the resolution related to Archil Tatunashvili should be presented by the "Georgian Dream" at the end of the day. Before that, the parliamentary majority continues to hold consultations with the opposition (*March 12*).

13. IMF names Georgia among world's 5 countries with best tax reform

Georgia has been named as a striking example of successful tax revenue reforms, the International Monetary Fund's new report, *Balancing Act: Managing the Public Purse*, says. The report looks at successful reforms between 2004 and 2015 in five low-income and emerging market economies, which have achieved some of the largest revenue gains after tax reform, including Cambodia, Georgia, Guyana, Liberia and Ukraine (*March 11*).

❖ Internal Affairs

14. Zviad Ratiani's case - 2 000 GEL fine was imposed on MIA

Personal Data Protection Inspector found guilty MIA of filming communicating with the poet Zviad Ratiani with a personal cell phone and handing the footage over to the public broadcaster. The inspector mentioned in the decision that Zviad Ratiani was detained during special police control. Thus, the video recording process of the Ministry of Internal Affairs should be conducted in accordance with the rules established by the law on "Police" and not with a personal cell phone. 2,000 GEL fine was imposed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The agency is going to appeal against this decision (*March 5*).

15. 32% of inspected vehicles fail inspection in Georgia

Out of about 12,000 inspected vehicles in Georgia, 32 percent were unable to pass the roadworthiness test, announces Georgia's Ministry of Economy. Drivers whose vehicles failed the inspection have been given a month to fix the problem and make their vehicles meet the standards to be allowed to drive on the roads (*March 5*).

16. Georgian PM announces new wave of local self-government reforms

The eight-year strategy will ensure that the local self-governments have:

- increased authority;
- more financial resources for effectiveness;
- transparency and accountability and public engagement (*March 5*).

17. 500 construction violations revealed in Georgia's capital of Tbilisi

Tbilisi City Hall has revealed 500 construction violations in Georgia's capital city, 272 of which resulted in fines and 120 construction projects were suspended. Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze said today that it is necessary to strengthen the supervision and monitoring of construction violations that damage the capital (*March 7*).

18. Q4 2017: Georgia's businesses enjoy 21.1b GEL turnover

The turnover enjoyed by Georgia's business sector is increasing, reaching 21.1 billion GEL in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2017. This was 21.5 percent more year-on-year (y/y) (*March 7*).

❖ Economy and Social Affairs

19. February 2018: Georgia hosts 440,806 international travellers

A total of 440,806 international travellers visited Georgia in February 2018 of which 177,845 were tourists, says the Georgian National Tourism Administration. In the first two months of 2018,

Georgia hosted 885,047 international visitors (17.2% increase) and 367,321 tourists (24.9% increase) (*March 5*).

20. Jan-Feb 2018: Georgia earns \$24.3m by exporting 10.8m bottles of wine

Export growth was notable in the following countries:

- Japan – 213 percent increase (44,292 bottles)
- Great Britain – 137 percent increase (36,108 bottles)
- Estonia – 75 percent increase (88,326 bottles)

The top three countries that imported the most bottles of Georgia wine in January-February 2018 were:

- Russia – 7,425,286 bottles
- Ukraine – 972,976 bottles
- China – 559,168 bottles (*March 5*).

❖ Culture and Sport

21. A group from International Olympic Committee visits Georgia

A special group of experts and advisers from the International Olympic Committee has arrived in Georgia today to learn about development in the country's mountain resorts and future prospects in the industry. Based on the estimations of the group, the Georgian Government will create an action plan for developing Georgia's ski resorts to host the winter Olympic Games in 2030 (*March 6*).

22. Seven Georgian wines win highest award in Japan

Double Gold

- "Kisi 2016", Kindzmarauli Corporation

Gold

- "Mtsvane 2016", "Vaziani Company" line "Makashvili Wine Cellar"
- "Mtsvane 2015", Shalauri Wine Cellar

Silver

- "Saperavi Rose 2015", Kindzmarauli Corporation
- "Saperavi 2016", "Vaziani Company" line "Makashvili Wine Cellar"
- "Rkatsiteli Mtsvane", Shalauri Wine Cellar
- "Kisi 2016", "Vaziani Company" (*March 6*).