

NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

July 19-23

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❖ Foreign Affairs

1. **Mamuka Bakhtadze: Today, as never before, we are motivated to do more and move closer to European integration**

Under the new, motivated government, we are going to create new dynamics that will improve Georgia's economic modernization and democratic transformation, - Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze said after meeting with European Council President Donald Tusk (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

2. **Russian President warns politicians trying to engage Georgia and Ukraine in NATO to think of possible consequences**

"Such aggressive steps, which represent a direct threat to Russia, will be followed by a proportional reaction. Our colleagues, who are trying to aggravate the situation, including by engaging Georgia and Ukraine in NATO, should think about the possible consequences of this irresponsible policy," Vladimir Putin said (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

3. **President Margvelashvili responds to President Putin's statement**

"Georgia still strives for a peaceful settlement of disputes. Our proposals to the Russian Federation are aimed at transforming the existing confrontation paradigm into a space for cooperation; however, confidence cannot be restored by violating sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighboring states. The first step towards building a positive agenda should be the fulfillment of the terms of the August 12, 2008 Agreement and granting the right to safe return to refugees and IDPs to their places of residence.

As for NATO, cooperation between Georgia and the Alliance seeks to establish security in the region and promotes stability on the southern borders of the Russian Federation as well," reads President Margvelashvili's statement (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

4. **If Moscow is reluctant to regain relations with Georgia, nobody is against it - Zurab Abashidze**

"We advise the Russian side to analyze the situation instead of blaming others and take the steps waited by the international community and Georgia for a long time. In particular, Russia should fulfill its obligations under the 2008 ceasefire agreement, withdraw troops from the Georgian regions and take steps to de-occupy our territories. By protecting the principles of international law and respecting Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, Russia will show the international community a willingness to fully settle the relations with Georgia," said Zurab Abashidze (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

5. **Foreign Minister: We will continue to strengthen Georgia**

"Our Euro-Atlantic course is backed by the reforms implemented by the Georgian authorities in the field of defense and security by taking steps in bilateral formats with NATO partners. We will continue to move towards strengthening Georgia. We also strengthen our defense capabilities, reinforce the state

and democratic institutions, as the country with consistent course of strong foreign policy is a serious guarantee of stability in the region,” Davit Zalkaliani said (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

❖ Internal Affairs

6. Dimitri Kumsishvili: The questioning was not related to procurement or tenders

"I'm not a lawyer, I'm an economist, so I needed a lawyer. I would like to say directly that the Prosecutor's Office proposed me not to hire a lawyer as it was a simple case. They said I just had to answer some questions. It was an ordinary questioning and I expressed my opinion in relation to certain issues. It had no connection with tenders.

I'm not related to any purchases or tenders. One of the issues that I cannot name now was the case sent by me to the Prosecutor's Office," Dimitri Kumsishvili said (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

7. Prosecutor's Office releases additional information regarding questioning of former ministers

"Former Minister Dimitri Kumsishvili has already been questioned about an alleged misappropriation of large amounts of state funds and a potential abuse of power in respect of Public Projects during the period when he was Minister.

Zurab Alavidze was also questioned by the Prosecutor's Office about past procurement exercises carried out by the Ministry.

Intensive investigations are still ongoing. No further details are being released so as not to interfere with the investigation. No alleged offenders have yet been identified (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

8. Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development to send full documentation to Prosecutor's Office

“The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and its subordinate agencies are ready to cooperate with the Prosecutor's Office and provide all necessary information they have requested,” reads the information released by the Ministry (*IPN.GE, July 21, 2018*).

9. Mikheil Batiashvili: It is incorrect to say that the number of deputies of minister is increasing

According to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, the number of deputies of Minister of Education Mikheil Batiashvili decreased immediately after the reorganization, and in the near future the Ministry will start working with new structure.

The minister made comments on structural changes in the ministry. According to Batiashvili, reorganization in the office has been announced and it is incorrect to say that the number of deputies of minister is increasing (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

10. Spokesperson for the Ministry of Economy denies reports that the new minister has secretly left for Moscow

"This information was not secret. Nobody has asked me about it until now. After being appointed as the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Giorgi Kobulia took a leave and left for Moscow, where he had previously occupied a prominent high position in one of the largest companies of the world. Naturally, he has to hand over transfer some ongoing matters projects to other peoplersons. In addition, he has a family there and he wants to make arrangements to should bring them to Tbilisi," Giorgi Kalandadze said (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

11. Gedevan Popkhadze criticizes expulsion of Davit Chichinadze without consideration of the issue in the team

"Making critical assessments, including by me, would be wrong. It is necessary to take a logical, fair decision based on the interests of the team. Consultations should be held in the team. It is important to create the most effective format inside the team. The team has a resource for this. It is wrong to expel a member from the team without consideration of the issue. We will try to talk about this issue and find a common language. I think that the unity of the Georgian Dream is more important than personal emotions,"- Gedevan Popkhadze said (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

12. Davit Chichinadze's expulsion to be put on the agenda of the majority

"Davit Chichinadze remains a Member of Parliament. I do not know whether he will work as an independent candidate or work with the opposition party, it's up to him. We have specific procedures and this issue will be put on the agenda. The decision on the expulsion of a party member shall be made by the secretariat. He can appeal against the decision at the political board meeting. He may ask Bidzina Ivanishvili whether he was aware of this decision or not. This was not a small decision, it was an important decision,"- Tamar Chugoshvili said (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

13. None of the MPs has done what Davit Chichinadze did - Irakli Kobakhidze

"None of the MPs has done what Davit Chichinadze did. He crossed the red line, by making insulting statement about his teammates for months. It is not clear for me why he did it. As for further changes in the team, it is not expected. We will have consultations on all issues in the team. I hear some experts saying that we have no party discipline, which is funny," Irakli Kobakhidze said (*IPN.GE, July 21, 2018*).

14. Davit Usupashvili: We have agreed with the President that we will agree on all issues next week

"As it was announced in my public address ten days ago, I believe that the political field needs a new political force with firm European choice, which will introduce the principles of 2012 into life. We need to unite many people in order to accomplish this task and I look forward to the forthcoming presidential elections. This was the topic of conversation with the President. So far no decision has been made. Giorgi Margvelashvili will consider the issue. The term of the presidential term is expiring and he has to make decisions. We agreed that we will agree on all issues next week. That's why I left the meeting with a moderate optimism. Nothing has been resolved yet, but there are prospects," Davit Usupashvili, leader of the Movement of Construction, told InterPressNews about the meeting held with President Giorgi Margvelashvili (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

15. PM dismisses Head of Emergency Service

Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze has dismissed Giorgi Mgebrishvili, the Head of the Emergency Service.

According to the Governmental Administration, Mgebrishvili filed an application on resignation yesterday. Mamuka Bakhtadze satisfied his request (*IPN.GE, July 21, 2018*).

16. Giorgi Mgebrishvili says he resigned on his will

"I have heard many interpretations, many funny interpretations. I am telling you with full responsibility that I addressed the Prime Minister with a request to dismiss me. It was my personal decision.

I made this decision because I had been working in public service for about 22 years and I think I should spend more time with my children," said Giorgi Mgebrishvili (*IPN.GE, July 21, 2018*).

17. Giorgi Margvelashvili: As citizens, we deserve to get an answer to a question of what was so unacceptable in Kvirikashvili's policy

"When Mr. Kvirikashvili left, he said his opinions differed from the views of the leader of the party, Bidzina Ivanishvili. So we are interested what were the issues of difference. We wonder why the PM resigned. If Kvirikashvili and Ivanishvili failed to agree on the independence of media, economic policy, Georgian-Russian relations or NATO, this is interesting for us, as this is part of the politics. As citizens, we deserve to get an answer to a question of what was so unacceptable in Kvirikashvili's policy", Margvelashvili said (*IPN.GE, July 21, 2018*).

18. By answering a question of whether I will be a presidential candidate, I am serving the political elite, both the Georgian Dream and the opposition - Giorgi Margvelashvili

"Why the Georgian Dream is not naming its candidate? They are waiting for me. If I say that I am not running for presidency, they will nominate a weak candidate who will not use veto or object anything. They want such a candidate. But if I say that I am not running for presidency, they will not be able to name such a weak candidate. On the other hand, I am helping the opposition, as they cannot agree on a candidate yet", the President noted (*IPN.GE, July 21, 2018*).

19. Archil Talakvadze: I think Margvelashvili is stressed and thinks much about whether to run for presidency or not

According to Talakvadze, the President needs such a statement in order to promote his candidacy. "As for the presidential elections, I once again declare that there are many people in the team who can win the elections and we will make a decision at the end of July or in early August" – said Talakvadze (*IPN.GE, July 21, 2018*).

20. Lawyer refuses to defend shepherd accused of killing American family

"I feel obliged to make the following statement: I was defending the interests of Malkhaz Kobauri, accused in relation to the tragedy that occurred in the Khada gorge. In made that decision in order to ascertain the truth. I have always struggled and will continue to struggle for justice. But as for the tragedy that took place in the Khada Valley, I, as a representative of a free profession, consider that this case should be continued without my participation. I wish success to my colleague and/or colleagues who will continue to defend this person, as everyone has the right to be defended despite the gravity of the crime. I would like to thank everyone for the warm words as well as for critical opinions," Girgvliani writes (*IPN.GE, July 23, 2018*).

21. Parliamentary fact-finding commission to question former and incumbent senior officials of Tbilisi Prosecutor's Office

Specifically, the commission will ask questions to former Tbilisi prosecutor Mikheil Shakulashvili and his deputy Giorgi Gabodze, as well as incumbent Tbilisi prosecutor Malkhaz Kapanadze and Deputy Tbilisi Prosecutor Mamuka Vasadze (*IPN.GE, July 23, 2018*).

22. Robber shot dead by police officer in Poti

A robber was shot dead when attempting to rob ATM in the city of Poti, Samegrelo region. According to reports, the robber was shot by a police officer in the head following a physical confrontation between them.

The wounded person was hospitalized, but he died upon admission to the clinic. Expert-criminalists are working on the scene (*IPN.GE, July 23, 2018*).

23. Ministry of Internal Affairs releases information on Poti incident

"Initially, the policeman tried to arrest the robber, but the latter resisted and attacked the law enforcer. The policeman wounded the detainee to repel the attack. The wounded person was hospitalized, but he

died upon admission to the clinic”, says the information released by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (*IPN.GE, July 23, 2018*).

❖ Economy and Social Affairs

24. Asian Development Bank to make new investments in water supply sector






The Asian Development Bank plans to make new investments in the water supply sector. As InterPressNews was told by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, financial support will be directed to improving the management and operation of existing and new water supply infrastructure in accordance with international standards.

"As of today, the Bank has already allocated 500 million dollars for the development of water supply and sewerage systems within the Urban Services Improvement Investment Program (USIIP)," reads the information released by the Ministry (*IPN.GE, July 20, 2018*).

Additional Information

July 23, 2018
OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

1 USD - 2.4417 GEL	1 GBP - 3.1813 GEL	100 RUB - 3.8430 GEL
1 EUR - 2.8436 GEL	1 TRY - 0.5080 GEL	100 JPY - 2.1719 GEL

Monday 23 July	Tuesday 24 July	Wednesday 25 July	Thursday 26 July	Friday 27 July
				
17° 26°	22° 31°	24° 34°	23° 35°	22° 35°

- Movie Events - English Sessions - [Tickets](#)
- Friends of Museum (Membership to access Georgian National Museums For free of charge after one payment) - [Membership](#)
- Marjanishvili Theatre – [Events and Tickets](#)
- Rustaveli Theatre - [Events and Tickets](#)
- Opera and Ballet – [Events and Tickets](#)
- Concerts – [Events and Tickets](#)
- Sports – [Events and Tickets](#)