

News Digest on Georgia

July 24-26

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❖ Occupied Regions

❖ Tskhinvali Region (*so called South Ossetia*)

1. Tskhinvali Leader Visits Syria, Meets Bashar Al-Assad

Anatoly Bibilov, the Moscow-backed leader of Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, is on a three-day visit to Damascus, where he met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on July 23 and signed an agreement on friendship and cooperation.

According to Tskhinvali authorities, at the meeting, Bibilov thanked Assad for recognizing the independence of “the Republic of South Ossetia,” and stressed that strengthening of ties would be “in interests of current and future generations.”

“Your recognition was very important for our people; having recognized South Ossetia, Syria has demonstrated its democratic values and adherence to international norms, which defines the right of every nation to find its place among the group of other free nations,” Bibilov said. (*Civil.ge, July 24, 2018*).

2. Georgian MFA Condemns Syrian Agreement with Tskhinvali

The Assad regime’s recognition of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, as well as its decision to establish diplomatic relations with the two territories, “has no legal power,” the press office of the Georgian Foreign Ministry (MFA) told Civil.ge on July 23.

The MFA statement follows the visit of Tskhinvali “foreign minister” Dmitry Medoev to Damascus, where he met with the Syrian Foreign Minister, Walid al-Muallem, on July 22 and signed an agreement on “establishing diplomatic relations.” (*Civil.ge, July 24, 2018*).

❖ Foreign Affairs

3. I expressed my personal willingness to see Georgia as full member of the European Union - Andrejs Mamikins

I expressed my personal willingness to see Georgia in the future as a political part of the European Union. Of course I am speaking about full membership, - Andrejs Mamikins, Member of the European Parliament (MEP), said after his meeting with Mamuka Bakhtadze, Prime Minister of Georgia, on Tuesday.

As InterPressNews was informed by the Administration of the Government of Georgia, at the meeting the sides discussed implemented and planned reforms in the country, as well as the significant success achieved in terms of implementation of the Association Agreement (AA) between EU and Georgia (*IPN.GE, July 24, 2018*).

❖ Internal Affairs

4. UNICEF – There is sect-like group in Tbilisi - known as the Morgue children

“These groups may be small or large. Their organization has a territorial aspect, with groups attempting to control parts of towns or neighbourhoods in order to control economic opportunities (petty trading, begging, etc.). There are occasionally clashes between these groups over control over districts. As noted, internal codes of conduct and ties of dependence may contribute to the perpetuation of street lifestyles over time and are potentially a source of recruitment into criminal activity and violence,” the report reads.

According to the report, there does not seem to be a coordinated effort from police or city authorities to address the criminal activities of gangs. Notably, one sect-like group in Tbilisi (known as the Morgue children) is territorially located in an underground area, and former members recounted that children are initiated into the group through rites, both by older youth and adults. Many former members suffer psychological trauma. Former members of this group reported that the territory they occupied was left in peace by state and city authorities (*IPN.GE, July 24, 2018*).

5. Salome Zurabishvili will be able to run for Georgian presidency in case she refuses French citizenship

MP Salome Zurabishvili will have the right to run in presidential election in case she refuses French citizenship.

As Salome Zurabishvili’s press office told InterPressNews, currently, Salome Zurabishvili holds dual Georgian and French citizenship. According to the Constitution of Georgia, a citizen of Georgia, who simultaneously holds a foreign citizenship, has not the right to hold the positions of the President, the Prime Minister and the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia (*IPN.GE, July 24, 2018*).

6. Bidzina Ivanishvili - Kvirikashvili could no longer govern, the methods used by him were not effective

“The reason for Kvirikashvili's resignation was that he could no longer govern and governing methods were not effective. To say more clearly, Kvirikashvili was not able to carry out a team management. The Parliament was actually removed from the decision-making process. The government could not reach agreement on principal issues and some delayed decisions were presented to the society without preparation, the readiness of the tram was not observed, especially, in the Parliament and this problem was reflected in the team. The governing methods of Kvirikashvili was one of the main reasons of creating the signs of collapse in the team,” Bidzina Ivanishvili said (*IPN.GE, July 24, 2018*).

7. Bidzina Ivanishvili - The balance between the state and business interests were violated by Kvirikashvili

“During the meeting [the meeting of the members of the parliamentary majority with ex-prime minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili] hard questions were raised regarding Kvirikashvili : that there were cases when the balance between the interests of the state and the interests of the business was violated and it was violated by Kvirikashvili and his actions. Of course, business lobbying by officials is essential and I would like to call on everyone to provide maximum support to our business within the country, and especially outside it during the export, but neither the Prime Minister nor the Minister should

forget the obligations that are prescribed by the law - to protect the interests of the state. This balance should not be violated.

In short, the questions were too heavy. The conversation lasted for three hours. Kvirikashvili was trying to express the opposite opinion, but it seemed well that he had no the resource for governing, he did not have confidence in the parliament and the government and that was the reason for his resignation and not Ivanishvili' insistence," said Bidzina Ivanishvili (*IPN.GE, July 24, 2018*).

8. Bidzina Ivanishvili accuses Kvirikashvili and Kumsishvili of hiding the survey of the monetary fund

As Ivanishvili stated, the abovementioned was one of the main and hardest questions raised against Kvirikashvili and Kumsishvili at the meeting with the team. "I learned that they were hiding some things. It turned out that Kvirikashvili and Kumsishvili were hiding the survey of the monetary fund. After that, I told them it would be impossible to communicate with them. Kumsishvili said he did not publish the survey in agreement with Kvirikashvili. It was one of the main and hardest questions raised at the meeting with the team. That was the worst thing for me. Most importantly, Kvirikashvili's resignation will not enrich these people. We will not spare efforts to help this part of the society by the end of the year. Bakhtadze's government is also involved in this and I think we be able to do this," Ivanishvili said (*IPN.GE, July 24, 2018*).

9. I had been frequently reminding Kvirikashvili that two banks had eaten up the whole country - Bidzina Ivanishvili

According to him, the problem of large amount of debts was the main and hardest question with Giorgi Kvirikashvili. "It was not a mistake. It was misconduct and he himself admitted that regulations should have introduced earlier. We saw the results of UNICEF, which was tragic for me. I had been feeling very bad for a few days when I realized that the poverty of some part of the society deteriorated after Georgian Dream came to power. Large amount of debts played the main role in this. People cannot pay off bank credits and this is not normal. Bank of Georgia and TBC Bank are the leading rentable banks in the world", Ivanishvili said, but added that he is not against banks (*IPN.GE, July 24, 2018*).

10. Bidzina Ivanishvili: What I am accused of and what they call informal ruling, is actually public control

According to him, before returning to the party, he had been carrying out public control and not informal governance. "I had not been informally ruling the government and, more importantly, the authorities. The good example of this is Kvirikashvili, he is not my friend and the opposition may ask him if I had been interfering in his functions. I did not even try to do so.

What I am accused of and what they call informal ruling, is actually public control. I have often said that I have some trust of the society and I can use this trust at any moment to criticize any government. My team members knew very well that I had been watching them and they would have to pay for their misconduct. How? I do not have troops or police, but I could tell the public about the misconduct. That's what I told Kvirikashvili", Ivanishvili said (*IPN.GE, July 24, 2018*).

11. Bidzina Ivanishvili: My position is to not nominate a presidential candidate from the team, but to support an independent candidate

"We have not made a decision yet. There are several candidates. Zurab Abashidze, Sozar Subari, Sergeenko, Tea Tsulukiani and a lot of other worthy candidates can really win in the first round of elections. I am also considered as such a candidate. But my position is different. I think that if we truly

want Georgia to develop in a democratic direction, we should not nominate a candidate from the team. My position is not to nominate a presidential candidate from the team, but to support an independent candidate and if nobody is a worthy candidate, let the opposition take away this institution”, Ivanishvili said (*IPN.GE, July 24, 2018*).

12. Irakli Abesadze calls Ivanishvili’s statement cynical

"It is cynical to blame Giorgi Kvirikashvili for all this. We heard in Bidzina Ivanishvili’s interview that he is in charge .. It was therefore an attempt to avoid public responsibility and lay the blame for this increase in poverty on two other people - Kvirikashvili and Kumsishvili. Ivanishvili should not lie to us” = said Abesadze (*IPN.GE, July 25, 2018*).

13. Mikheil Saakashvili: After winning the presidential elections, our first step will be the seizure of the Kartu Bank and Ivanishvili's property

"We will certainly win in the autumn and will put an end to Ivanishvili ruling Georgia. We will put an end to the destruction of Georgian nature, and the robbery from each Georgian family. Ivanishvili is now trying to save himself by changing the government. He has already done this twice, but he will not be able to do it a third time ," Mikheil Saakashvili said.

"Now Ivanishvili says that banks are guilty of what is happening in Georgia. Does he really think we are stupid? Georgia's main robber is Bidzina Ivanishvili and his Kartu Bank. Kartu Bank ‘s profit has increased several times at the expense of state organizations. He should not blame other banks, as he is the main robber. After winning the presidential elections, our first step will be the seizure of the Kartu Bank and Ivanishvili's property, which will be given to the public. I promise I will do it. He will not be able to fool us," the former President says in the video (*IPN.GE, July 25, 2018*).

14. European Georgia calls on President to appoint date of presidential elections as soon as possible

Davit Bakradze, presidential candidate of the European Georgia, calls on President Giorgi Margvelashvili to appoint the date of presidential elections as soon as possible.

As Bakradze told journalists, the above-mentioned will allow the opposition to conduct a pre-election campaign in equal conditions (*IPN.GE, July 25, 2018*).

15. Convicted archpriest Giorgi Mamaladze visited by clergy in prison

Poti and Khobi Metropolitan Grigoli (Berbiichashvili) and Mestia and Zemo Svaneti Metropolitan Ilarioni (Kitiashvili) met with father Giorgi Mamaladze. They talked to the convict for four hours. Archbishop Mamaladze expressed a desire to meet with the clergy himself (*IPN.GE, July 25, 2018*).

16. Archbishop Grigol learned something from defendant Mamaladze, which will expose only at the Holy Synod meeting – Lawyer

As lawyer Mikheil Ramishvili told InterPressNews, he did not attend the meeting, but was informed of it later.

"As far as I know Archbishop Grigol told journalists that he had learned something that he would expose only at the Holy Synod meeting," lawyer Mikheil Ramishvili said (*IPN.GE, July 25, 2018*).

17. Pre-trial detention ordered for the police officer accused of shooting dead a robber

Defense demanded release of the police officer on bail, though the judge did not grant the motion. Prosecutor of the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region Davit Papava explains that several witnesses in the case and the evidence proved to be the basis for resorting to the court for the trial (*IPN.GE, July 25, 2018*).

18. I had a very tense relationship with Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili related to banks - Davit Chichinadze

"For a long time I had a very tense relationship with Giorgi Kvirikashvili related to banks. There was threat that if I was a majority member why I was protesting. Tamar Chugoshvili [First Deputy Chairperson of Parliament] was the only one, who shared my position regarding the banks and promoted the process to impose some restrictions on them. The process was so complicated that the parliamentary majority did not agree with any of my speeches. Everything was on the contrary. When representatives of the Bank of Georgia were appointed in the National Bank, everyone knew that Giorgi Kvirikashvili their lobbyist. I said that it could not be done and I called everybody not to support it. Then everyone thought that this was my whim, "Davit Chichinadze said (*IPN.GE, July 26, 2018*).

19. Guria region governor resigns

"I do not have information on the reasons for his resignation. As for the fulfillment of the duties, according to the legislation, the first deputy is obliged to perform the duties of the governor until a new one is appointed," Ketevan Moistsrapishvili, First Deputy Governor said

Merab Chanukvadze was appointed as governor of Guria region on August 23. Previously, he was the governor of Ozurgeti Municipality.

According to the current information, the Prime Minister plans to replace governors of all regions throughout the country (*IPN.GE, July 26, 2018*).

Additional Information

July 26, 2018
OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

1 USD - 2.4492 GEL	1 GBP - 3.2212 GEL	100 RUB - 3.8919 GEL
1 EUR - 2.8641 GEL	1 TRY - 0.5037 GEL	100 JPY - 2.2043 GEL

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
26 July	27 July	28 July	29 July	30 July
				
23° 34°	21° 35°	21° 35°	21° 36°	21° 36°

- [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](#)