

# NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

August 17-20

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## ❖ Occupied Regions

**1. PM- The only political message of the Georgian government to the occupied territories is peace**  
"The only message of our policy is peace. The only alternative offer for our citizens living in the occupied territories is the establishment of a united and European state where every person's interest is protected and everyone has the opportunity to realize their talents and potential. This is the only alternative from our side for our citizens who live in the occupied territories," PM Bakhtadze said (*IPN.Ge, August 17, 2018*).

**2. The current reality is that Russia has maximum control over the occupied territories today and decisions are not made by the Abkhaz and Ossetian people alone - Levan Izoria**

The Defense Minister of Georgia also commented on so-called Abkhazian Prime Minister Sergey Shamba's statement on the start of a dialogue.

"You know that we have a very peaceful and pragmatic policy that is focused on integrating our brothers - Abkhazians and Ossetians into our country. The main driving force of this peaceful policy is our development. The government's plan "A Step for a Better Future" also serves this aim. So, within this policy, we are always ready to start a dialogue and strengthen this peaceful policy.

We have international formats for the dialogue. We strictly adhere to a principle that democratic development of our country, including peaceful resolution of conflicts, depends on these formats. The current reality is that Russia has maximum control over the occupied territories today and decisions are not made by the Abkhaz and Ossetian people alone. Consequently, strengthening of these international formats is a prerequisite for a real dialogue," said Levan Izoria (*IPN.Ge, August 18, 2018*).

**3. Internal Affairs Ministry denies information as if Russia moved border in the direction of Diklo**

The Ministry says that the information, disseminated by media outlets on August 19, as if the Russian Federation moved its border several kilometers further in the direction of Diklo and the Georgian border guards are not allowed to enter the territory, is false (*IPN.Ge, August 19, 2018*).

## ❖ Foreign Affairs

**4. Georgia has overcome the problems relating to visa liberalization - EU ambassador**

According to him, the EU appreciates the Georgian authorities' efforts to solve the issues relating to the high number of asylum seekers and high rate of organized crime (*IPN.Ge, August 17, 2018*).

**5. PM Bakhtadze- The issues related to Georgia are more clearly expressed in the US political agenda**

"Several days ago, Georgia received another unprecedented support from our strategic partner. By signing the US National Defense Authorization Act by US President Donald Trump, Georgia's strong

support has been confirmed once again at the legislative and executive levels. It is noteworthy that the issues related to Georgia in the bilateral and regional context are more clearly demonstrated in the United States political agenda. The US Authorization Act is distinguished by the fact that it contains the most important records in terms of national interests and security of Georgia as well as in terms of regional security support.

Particularly important is that the full support to NATO's open door policy, including the idea of Georgia's NATO membership, is expressed at the legislative level. I would like to once again thank our strategic partner for this support, "Bakhtadze said (*IPN.Ge, August 17, 2018*).

#### **6. Iranian Embassy has sent a protest note to the Georgian Foreign Ministry over mistreatment of Iranian citizen in Tbilisi airport**

Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi announced the above in response to a question on reports that a female passenger of Tbilisi-Isfahan flights had been asked by the Tbilisi airport security to remove her Hijab.

Qasemi said after receiving the news, the Iranian ambassador to Georgia called some of the passengers to make sure of the authenticity of the reports and then sent a strongly-worded protest note to the Georgian foreign ministry and the airport security police.

"Relevant Georgian authorities have also been asked to pursue the matter and prevent Iranian passengers from being subjected to such treatments again," he said.

"Thanks to the measures adopted, we hope security police at Tbilisi will exercise utmost care concerning the necessity of respecting Muslim women's privacy and keep such incidents from happening again," the spokesman added (*IPN.Ge, August 17, 2018*).

#### **7. Foreign Ministry denies allegations about mistreatment of Iranian citizens at Tbilisi airport**

"The Georgian side has been informed by Iranian diplomatic channels that part of Iranian citizens have expressed dissatisfaction over the verification processes at the Tbilisi International Airport.

The relevant services of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia immediately started studying the passengers' verification procedures by aviation security officers at the airport.

According to the preliminary data, the Georgian law enforcers have not revealed any mistreatment, including outraging the religious feelings. The Iranian side has already been informed about it.

A meeting with the Iranian Ambassador has been scheduled at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and we will once again look into the issue," the Foreign Ministry said (*IPN.Ge, August 17, 2018*).

#### **8. Ship sailing under Panamanian flag and with 17 Georgian sailors aboard goes missing off African coast**

"Greek company Lotus Shipping is carrying out the search. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the Sea Transport Agency of the Ministry of Economics and Sustainable Development, is in coordination with the shipowner company to clarify the situation. We are actively working with Panama Flag Organization, too. The maritime forces of the region, as well as the United Kingdom Maritime Center - UKMTO are involved in the case", the Foreign Ministry said (*IPN.Ge, August 17, 2018*).

#### **9. Four citizens of Sierra Leone detained for illegal border crossing**

The employees of Georgian border and patrol police have detained four citizens at Akhaltsikhe and Kartsakhi border crossing points for attempted illegal crossing of the State border of Georgia.

As the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia informs, the crime envisages imprisonment from 4 to 5 years (*IPN.Ge, August 19, 2018*).

## ❖ Internal Affairs

### **10. Irakli Kobakhidze - Davit Usupashvili made a gross mistake, but we should forgive him**

He said a gross mistake was made in terms of many issues. "He has made a human error and let's forgive him. Evaluations have been made and accordingly, this issue has been solved," said the Chairman of the Parliament.

Ex-chairman of Parliament Davit Usupashvili said that if the size of the [Presidential] Palace had to correspond with powers of a specific official, the Chairman of the Parliament should be housed on the minus third floor of any building's basement (*IPN.GE, August 17, 2018*).

### **11. MP Nadirashvili - Salome Zurabishvili should fail to win the election**

"We have heard an absurd reasoning that the president's authority should be determined not by the Constitution but the square meter of the building where he is sitting. We have an absurd situation when the Georgian Dream elects the president according to the cabinet and not according to his program or competence.

It shows how the "Georgian Dream" is not interested in the people's problems, deep economic crisis, the GEL rate. The main thing is Salome Zurabishvili to fail to win the election and the Georgian people have to elect the president, who will be focused on problems and not on the discussion where the President will be housed," MP Nadirashvili said (*IPN.GE, August 17, 2018*).

### **12. Mikheil Saakashvili pledges to arrive in Georgia**

"As soon as the Georgian Dream loses and it will happen, they will try to rig elections, but we will not allow them to do so. That's why I'm preparing for arriving in Georgia. I must save my country," said the former president of Georgia.

In addition, Mikheil Saakashvili spoke about returning to Ukraine.

"Of course I will return to Ukraine. As soon as Poroshenko is gone and I will reclaim my citizenship through the court, I will return to Ukraine. They violated everything in relation to me and I am sure that they will be brought to justice," said the former president of Georgia (*IPN.GE, August 18, 2018*).

### **13. Guria Governor steps down**

"I made a decision to leave my position, but I remain in the service of my people and my country", Chanukvadze posted on the social network (*IPN.GE, August 20, 2018*).

### **14. Prime Minister to present new governors in 6 regions today**

5 governors were dismissed last month. In particular, governors of Shida Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti were dismissed. Imereti region has also been left without a governor, after Givi Tchitchinadze was elected as an MP in the by-elections (*IPN.GE, August 20, 2018*).

### **15. President to hold summarizing meeting with civil sector**

"During the past two weeks, the President's Administrative Office conducted active consultations and meetings with various groups of lawyers. We will now hold a summarizing meeting with the participation of the President and will summarize all of these meetings, after which, we will name

candidates for the position of the Chairperson of the Supreme Court.," President's Advisor Kakha Kozhoridze said (*IPN.GE, August 20, 2018*).

## ❖ Economy and Social Affairs

### **16. The construction of the gas storage will enable us to protect ourselves from the risks – Economy Minister**

"This project will enable us to protect ourselves from the risks. After the gas storage is constructed the country will have gas reserves for one month and a half. This project is commercially profitable, because we can purchase the gas when it is cheaper, "said Kobulia.

PM Bakhtadze said that a 150 million euros loan agreement would be signed between Germany's Reconstruction and Development Bank and the Georgian Oil and Gas Corporation (*IPN.GE, August 17, 2018*).

### **17. Davit Bakradze - The bread price is expected to rise due to depreciation of GEL's rate**

"We have not heard from the government what does it plan and how it will help the population who suffer from depreciation of the GEL. At the Cabinet meeting today we heard the first comment of the Minister of Economy, trying to explain that the variable GEL rate is good and depreciation of GEL's rate is a protective pad for the Georgian economy. Depreciation of GEL's rate is a painful topic for the population, whose utility fees, bank fees, food products and medicines were increased, and in the near future the price of bread can be increase. Instability is the issue that is causing the greatest damage to business because there is no forecast and the business is difficult finds it difficult to plan tomorrow's day. It is a huge problem for the population, for our country and for the economy, so this problem needs a government that will solve it, "Bakradze said (*IPN.GE, August 17, 2018*).

### **18. Hailstorm hits Telavi town and Akhmeta municipality**

Heavy rain and hail created problems in Telavi and nearby vuillages. The mudflows flooded several streets of the city and hampered the traffic movement. The first floors of the houses were also flooded. According to Emergency Management Service, they have received 51 notices from Telavi and Akhmeta districts. No one was injured as a result of the disaster *IPN.GE, August 19, 2018*).

## Additional Information

August 20, 2018

### OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

1 USD - 2.5779 GEL      1 GBP - 3.2752 GEL      100 RUB - 3.8267 GEL  
1 EUR - 2.9344 GEL      1 TRY - 0.4176 GEL      100 JPY - 2.3321 GEL

Monday 20 August	Tuesday 21 August	Wednesday 22 August	Thursday 23 August	Friday 24 August
				
17° 24°	17° 26°	18° 29°	18° 30°	17° 30°

- 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](#)