

# NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

August 27-29

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## ❖ Occupied Regions

### ❖ Tskhinvali Region

#### 1. Five Georgian hikers, shepherd detained in Tskhinvali

Five Georgian hikers and one shepherd have been detained for 'violating the state border' with Georgia's occupied region of Tskhinvali (South Ossetia), officials from Tskhinvali confirmed today. The families of the hikers say they lost connection with their relatives on Sunday. The young hikers from Tbilisi started their journey on Friday to reach Kelis Lake in the pictorial Truso Gorge in northeastern Georgia in Kazbegi Municipality (*Agenda.ge, August 29, 2018*).

#### 2. De-facto Tskhinvali publishes information about five Georgians detained in Truso gorge

"Five citizens of Georgia : Beka Maghradze (DoB 1988), Ketevan Maghradze (DoB 1989), Mzia Gomouri (DoB 1992), Vakhtang Gubeladze (DoB 1997) and Gia Baghdoshvili (DoB 1996) have been detained in the vicinity of the Keli lake. All of them live in Tbilisi", the "Security Committee" said (*IPN.GE, August 29, 2018*).

#### 3. Security Service says five Georgian citizens detained in Truso gorge will be released today

"According to the information received from the EU Monitoring Mission's hot line, so-called trial of five citizens of Georgia, who were detained by the occupation regime, was held in Tskhinvali in the second part of the day. According to the information provided by the hot line, the detainees will be released today.

This fact is an illegal restriction of the freedom of movement, threatening the security environment in the region," the Security Service said (*IPN.GE, August 30, 2018*).

### ❖ Abkhazia Region

#### 4. Shamba says Abkhazia is in deep crisis

We are in a deep crisis and if we do not get out of it, we will have to kneel and ask Georgia or Russia to allow us to join them. Former so-called prime minister of the occupied Abkhazia Sergey Shamba said. "We see full inactivity from the government. They are incapable to do anything. We want someone to get up and improve what is happening with us. Four years have passed and we see that this president can not improve the situation. We need a strong man who starts to act. Everyone recognizes that we are deeply in crisis, both economically and politically," Sergey Shamba said (*IPN.GE, August 29, 2018*).

## ❖ Foreign Affairs

#### 5. Agile Spirit: defence drills in Georgia to involve more partner nations

Fresh from the conclusion of the Noble Partner multinational drills, Georgia will be hosting this year's Agile Spirit — a command- and staff-level defence exercise in the country's west.

Over 10 days starting on September 1, forces from 10 partner countries will come together to train in a variety of actions with a particular focus on NATO Response Force (*Agenda.ge, August 29, 2018*).

#### **6. Citizens of Georgia and Ukraine will be able to travel to both countries with ID cards**

“It is important to us to pursue new potential for the development of tourism and find the best use of Georgia's geographical advantages. Accordingly, we made a decision and based on our bilateral relations with our Ukrainian partners, citizens in possession of ID cards will be able to travel between the two countries freely. This is a very important step for strengthening our bilateral cooperation,” Bakhtadze said (*Agenda.ge, August 29, 2018*).

#### **7. Tbilisi Park to be opened in Buenos Aires**

A park named after the Georgian capital of Tbilisi will be opened in Buenos Aires, the autonomous city's parliament has decided.

The Georgian Foreign Ministry shared this news after a meeting between Georgia's Ambassador to Argentina Irakli Kurashvili and the First Vice- President of the Parliament of the city, Francisco Quintana, and other members of the legislative body (*Agenda.ge, August 29, 2018*).

#### **8. Georgia first in region for implementation of aviation standards**

Georgia takes the first place in the region, 10th in Europe and 30th in the world in terms of implementation and supervision of international aviation standards, says the official audit report of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).

Georgia's Deputy Economy Minister Giorgi Cherkezishvili released this information today.

There are about 50 airline companies operating on the Georgian aviation market. In order to facilitate the growing trends on the aviation market, a number of activities have been implemented by both the state and the aviation industry - infrastructural projects, adding new flights, increasing flight area, introduction of new standards and legislative amendments”, said Cherkezishvili (*Agenda.ge, August 29, 2018*).

#### **9. Georgian PM Bakhtadze starts visit to Azerbaijan today**

“We will discuss important opportunities in terms of deepening regional cooperation as well as new initiatives that will help us to increase our trade. All these steps are going to positively reflect on our economic growth and achievement of our major goal - transforming Georgia into a regional hub,” PM Bakhtadze said (*Agenda.ge, August 29, 2018*).

#### **10. Former chairman of government of Adjara Autonomic Republic appointed as Georgia's Ambassador to Azerbaijan**

“On the basis of Article 6, paragraph 5 of the Law of Georgia on Diplomatic Service”, Zurab Pataradze will be appointed as an Ambassador of Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Republic of Azerbaijan,” the decree reads (*IPN.GE, August 29, 2018*).

#### **11. Parliament's speaker says National Movement played its role in 2008 processes**

„We remember a number of remarks, made by representatives of then government, the National Movement. They were trying to hide their share in the events that took place in 2008. Perhaps, this statement was one of these remarks. They have their share of crime in the processes that we remember in 2008”, - Irakli Kobakhidze said (*IPN.GE, August 29, 2018*).

## ❖ Internal Affairs

### **12. Five Iranians, two Georgians arrested for drug crimes at Anaklia electronic music festival**

Five citizens of Iran and two citizens of Georgia have been detained for drug crimes at the electronic music festival in Georgia's Black Sea town of Anaklia today.

Georgia's Ministry of Internal Affairs announced that police seized various narcotic drugs during a search of the mentioned individuals (*Agenda.ge, August 27, 2018*).

### **13. 27 people hospitalized, 253 rendered medical aid at Anaklia electronic music festival**

A total of 27 people have been hospitalized since the start of the Anaklia electronic music festival, - reads the information provided by the Ministry of Health (*IPN.ge, August 27, 2018*).

### **14. Head of Narcological Examination Department : Opium production has started in Georgia**

"According to my information, opium production has started in Georgia and a Georgian heroine has already appeared on the market. It is homemade and can not be clean. The health problems caused by consumption are further aggravated by psychotropic substances, which they use to add it," Menabdishvili said in his interview with "Kviris Palitra" newspaper.

Later he had been summoned by law enforcement agencies in order to find out the information disseminated by Menabdishvili (*IPN.GE, August 27, 2018*).

### **15. "European Georgia" party submits 45 thousand signatures supporting Davit Bakradze's candidacy**

"We have submitted the signatures in support of the presidential candidate of "European Georgia" party -Davit Bakradze. We had the obligation to submit 25,000 supporting signatures. We are the first and we believe to be the first in the elections, too and Davit Bakradze will win," said Levan Tarkhnishvili of the party (*IPN.GE, August 27, 2018*).

### **16. Georgian dream to make decision on presidential elections after September 8**

"We could nominate an independent candidate, but it would be an artificial interference in the process and thus it would be wrong. So, we are waiting for the development of processes, and for the 8th of September . After this we will make a decision according to the candidates nominated," Kobakhidze said (*IPN.GE, August 28, 2018*).

### **17. Election campaign to officially begins**

An election campaign officially began on October 29. Consequently, the rules, standards and restrictions will take effect for political parties, candidates, public officials, local self-governments, political officials and media. Political parties and candidates shall have equal rights and liabilities in the pre-election campaign (*IPN.GE, August 29, 2018*).

### **18. 32 would-be candidates applied to CEC for registration as presidential candidates**

"According to the legislation, the applicants, parties and initiative groups can submit an application to the CEC chairperson no later than 50 days before the Election Day to seek permission for launch of collection of signatures of supporters, required for being registered as a presidential candidate. Would-be presidential candidates have to submit to CEC signatures no later than 40 days before the Election Day, while the deadline for the CEC to register presidential candidates is 30 days before the Election Day," said Ana Mikeladze (*IPN.GE, August 29, 2018*).

### **19. Deputy health minister appointed as head of Revenue Service**

Mikheil Dudnua has been appointed as the Head of the Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance. InterPressNews was informed by the Revenue Service that Dundua has replaced Giorgi Tabuashvili on the mentioned post from today. Tabuashvili, who held the post of deputy finance minister simultaneously, will stay on as a deputy minister (*IPN.GE, August 29, 2018*).

#### **20. Lawyers and Malkhaz Machalikashvili sign agreement on non-disclosure of information**

Lawyers and Malkhaz Machalikashvili signed an agreement on non-disclosure of information, -one of the lawyers of Malkhaz Machalikashvili, Ketu Chutlashvili told InterPressNews.

According to her, Malkhaz Machalikashvili was once again questioned by the State Security Service, but the questioning was general and Machalikashvili was not asked any new question.

The lawyer notes that she cannot see the need for questioning Malkhaz Machalikashvili, as he has already answered all questions (*IPN.GE, August 30, 2018*).

### **❖ Economy and Social Affairs**

#### **21. Turning Georgia's Racha region into 4-season destination**

The Government of Georgia is striving to turn the country's iconic Racha region into a four-season destination by improving infrastructure and supporting local businesses in the region.

"Our aim is to turn Racha into a four season destination", stated Georgia's Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze when visiting Ambrolauri in Georgia's Racha region to celebrate the Day of Base yesterday.

Bakhtadze went to the entrepreneurial market organised at the event, which offered various products made within the state programme 'Produce in Georgia'.

"It brings us great joy that these programmes resulted in an excellent outcome in Ambrolauri. I wish to single out Produce in Georgia and Guesthouse Development (*Agenda.ge, August 27, 2018*).

#### **22. IMF staff concludes visit to Georgia, praises economic activities of the country**

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team, led by Mercedes Vera-Martin, has concluded its visit to Georgia, which was held during August 21-27 to discuss recent economic and financial developments and progress with structural reforms.

In the end-of-mission statement Vera-Martin said that economic activity strengthened further in the first half of 2018 in Georgia and growth reached 5.7 percent.

Considering the stronger economic activity, the GDP growth projection for 2018 was revised upwards from 4.8 percent to 5.5 percent (*Agenda.ge, August 29, 2018*).

#### **23. Georgia to restrict wheat export-import by truck starting in mid-September**

The export-import of wheat to and from Georgia will only be possible by rail and ports starting on September 15, 2018, announces Georgia's Ministry of Finance. This means that the export-import of wheat by truck will not be possible any more.

Georgia's Finance Minister Ivane Machavariani explained that the reason behind this decision was long queues at Larsi customs checkpoint which is the main road used for wheat export-import (*Agenda.ge, August 29, 2018*).

#### **24. Finance Minister: Currency fluctuations on the market should not give us any reason for panic**

"The visit of the International Monetary Fund Mission was held in Georgia. The visit was very successful. The GDP growth projection for 2018 was revised upwards from 4.8 percent to 5.5 percent.

This is a big achievement amid the foreign economic situation in our neighboring countries. The IMF gives a very high estimation to the ongoing and planned reforms that we have presented to them and received their support in the strategy of these reforms. The fact that we have a floating exchange rate determines the fact that Georgian economy is quite sustainable and we have overcome challenges. The periodical currency fluctuations on the market should not give us any reason for panic. This is a demonstration that we have a solid and healthy economy. Inflation is quite low, less than it was forecast, accordingly, there is no reason to raise the alarm, " said the Minister (*IPN.ge, August 29, 2018*).

## ❖ Sports and Culture

### 25. FIFA standard stadium to open in Georgia’s Racha region in 2019


The Georgian city of Ambrolauri in the country’s Racha region will soon have a stadium meeting FIFA standards.

Prime Minister of Georgia Mamuka Bakhtadze, who visited the region yesterday, stated that the stadium will be opened in 2019 (*Agenda.ge, August 28, 2018*).

## Additional Information

**August 30, 2018**  
**OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES**

1 USD - 2.5752 GEL	1 GBP - 3.3202 GEL	100 RUB - 3.7863 GEL
1 EUR - 3.0047 GEL	1 TRY - 0.4011 GEL	100 JPY - 2.3160 GEL

Thursday 30 August	Friday 31 August	Saturday 1 September	Sunday 2 September	Monday 3 September
				
19° 31°	18° 32°	17° 29°	16° 28°	16° 28°

- [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](#)