

NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

October 11-15

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❖ Occupied Regions

1. 45th round of Geneva Discussions: Russia continues destructive actions in Georgia

The 45th round of the Geneva International Discussions has touched upon the grave human rights situation in the occupied Georgian regions, as well as on cases of the murder and abduction of Georgian citizens and complications related to local incident prevention mechanisms.

Representatives of the central Georgian government have demanded the enforcement of justice concerning the murder cases of Georgian citizens Giga Otkhozoria and David Basharuli and urged Russia and the de facto governments of breakaway Tskhinvali and Abkhazia not to create threats to the Ergneti and Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (*Agenda.ge, October 11, 2018*).

2. PACE adopts resolution on access of int'l monitoring bodies to breakaway areas

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has adopted a resolution which calls upon member states to allow for unlimited access of the Council of Europe and United Nations monitoring bodies on their territories.

The resolution also urged states to cooperate with de facto leaderships to ensure such access to occupied territories, and mentioned the Georgian occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali (South Ossetia) (*Agenda.ge, October 11, 2018*).

3. US Dep. Assistant Secretary of State condemns detentions, mistreatment and deaths of Georgian citizens near the occupation line

“I have come here today to remind the people of Georgia that the United States is with them, and to remind them that the world has not forgotten what happened here. The international community does not recognise this boundary line as an international border, and we will never accept any attempt to redraw the borders of Georgia’s territory in violation of its sovereignty”, Kent said, adding that Georgian citizens continue to live and work in the shadow of occupation (*Agenda.ge, October 13, 2018*).

❖ Foreign Affairs

4. US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State: America wants Georgia to hold successful elections

The US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs George Kent has stated in Tbilisi that the US wants Georgia to hold successful presidential elections on 28 October. He said that each election in every country is accompanied by certain problems and challenges.

However, we hope that there will a dialogue in Georgia and there will be no attacks on people who wish to express their views,” Kent told Georgian journalists (*Agenda.ge, October 12, 2018*).

5. Tbilisi to host the Council of Europe Ministerial Conference

The 15th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for sport will be hosted this year in Tbilisi by the Ministry of Culture and Sport of Georgia on October 16. The event will be preceded by a meeting of the senior officials on October 15 (*Agenda.ge, October 14, 2018*).

6. Georgian FM on Eastern Partnership ministerial: Georgia has shown genuine progress to EU

Georgian Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani, who is in Luxemburg to participate in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) ministerial, has stated today that Georgia has been recognised as an EaP leader country which has shown genuine progress on its EU path.

The Eastern Partnership ministerial, which will be held later today, has brought together the foreign ministers of six EaP countries-Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

We mark the 10th anniversary of EaP next year. Today's ministerial will summarise the achievements the six nations have shown since the creation of the initiative," Zalkaliani said (*Agenda.ge, October 15, 2018*).

❖ Internal Affairs

7. Georgia has 3,558,437 potential voters, preliminary data show

"This data will be processed by the CEC for the presidential election. The final figure [of voters] will be known once all requirements of the legislation have been met to form the list", CEC Chairwoman Tamar Zhvania said (*Agenda.ge, October 13, 2018*).

8. 2019 declared year of cyber security in Georgian Armed Forces

Georgian Defence Minister Levan Izoria has declared 2019 as the year of cyber security in the Georgian Armed Forces.

Izoria made the statement today at the Cyber Security Bureau of the Ministry of Defence of Georgia in Tbilisi, when he hosted the Commander of the US Georgia National Guard, Major General Joe Jarrard (*Agenda.ge, October 14, 2018*).

9. Audio recording of ex-prosecutor details government corruption, sparks call for snap election

The secret recording aired by Rustavi 2 appears to be of former prosecutor Mirza Subeliani who speaks about crimes he allegedly was involved in or committed himself with a member of parliament. Mirza Subeliani is behind bars charged with covering up information related to the murder of two teenagers last year, while he was acting prosecutor. Two schoolboys, both 16 years old, were killed during a gang fight in downtown Tbilisi in December. Subeliani, whose son was allegedly also implicated in the crime, but not charged, has been repeatedly accused of tampering the witnesses by Zaza Saralidze, the father of one of the victims. He resigned soon after the crime and later was arrested and charged by his former colleagues.

In the recording, the authenticity of which hasn't been challenged by officials, Subeliani speaks with two persons in Gldani prison on the outskirts of Tbilisi. One of them is MP Viktor Japaridze, who represent Georgian Dream in the parliament, while the second is Davit Tsukhishvili, a former official in the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons and Subeliani's friend.

During the lengthy conversation, Subeliani touches on numerous topics but the context is that he thinks he's been betrayed by authorities which had struck a deal with him but then reneged.

Subeliani, who pretends to be a 'fixer' in the most delicate issues in several high profile cases, says he has 'terabytes' of information which are so important and dangerous for authorities that if he decides to flee to 'Stockholm' and give it to journalists, the streets of Tbilisi would be filled with angry people who would overthrow the current government (*DFWatch.net, October 15, 2018*).

10. Eka Beselia: Chief Prosecutor expresses readiness for unbiased investigation of the case

"First of all, the authenticity of the recording should be established. All persons mentioned in the recording should be interrogated and all circumstances should be checked. The cases of blackmail and threatening should also be investigated. Nobody will be covered up. The Prosecutor's Office is ready for objective investigation', Beselia said (*IPN.GE, October 15, 2018*).

11. MP Viktor Japaridze confirms his meeting with Mirza Subeliani

MP Viktor Japaridze has been questioned in the Prosecutor's Office. The only comment he made for journalists is that he had really met Mirza Subeliani.

He refrained from answering specific questions about the topics of the questioning or whether Subeliani really has evidence or not (*IPN.GE, October 15, 2018*).

12. Prosecutor's Office says special penitentiary service employee was threatened with disclosure of footage showing his personal life and requested to release the recording of Subeliani's statements

Prosecutor's Office says employee of special penitentiary service was threatened with disclosure of footage showing his personal life and requested to release the recording of Mirza Subeliani's scandalous statements According to the Prosecutor's Office, an employee of the special penitentiary service, who was threatened with disclosure of footage showing his personal life, was requested to release the recording of scandalous statements of former senior official Mirza Subeliani (*IPN.GE, October 15, 2018*).

13. Political scientist - "Georgian Dream" lost the battle against the system. It is a hostage

According to Khukhashvili, the operation "Boomerang" is underway and "Georgian Dream" is being boomeranged all the accusations that existed in the period of the National Movement's ruling. Khukhashvili said that the ruling party lost the fight against the system.

"In fact, the operation" Boomerang "is actually going on now. All the accusations against the "National Movement" are returned as a boomerang against the "Georgian Dream" and unfortunately, there is a reason for this. In fact, the "Georgian Dream" lost the battle against the system. The system has already won, the "Georgian Dream" is a hostage, the system is already working on itself and Bidzina Ivanishvili is no longer a leader. Bidzina Ivanishvili is one of the bolts, one of the ordinary participants. The "Georgian Dream" reacts to a particular case. They do not understand a simple thing- the problem is systemic and it needs systemic response and not the creation of nonsense in the response mode," Khukhashvili said (*IPN.GE, October 15, 2018*).

❖ Economy and Social Affairs

14. World Bank selects 20 countries, including Georgia in which to implement Human Capital Project

Georgia is among 20 selected countries in which the World Bank will implement its new initiative 'Human Capital Project' – a global effort to accelerate more and better investments in people for greater equity and economic growth.

This year's Human Capital Summit, held today in Indonesia, featured world leaders, including Georgian Finance Minister Ivane Machavariani, who delivered his speech at the summit and thanked the World Bank for initiating the project.

At the summit Matchavariani announced that the Georgian government plans to implement "important reforms" for developing human capital and first of all these reforms are linked to the education sector. The reforms aim to provide high quality education and make it accessible for all (*Agenda.ge, October 11, 2018*).

15. Jan-Sept 2018: Passenger traffic up by 22% at Georgian airports

Georgia's three international airports served 3,920,771 passengers in the last nine months, which is a 22 per cent increase in comparison to last year, says the Georgian Civil Aviation Agency.

More specifically:

Tbilisi International Airport served 2,951,218 passengers - a 20.94% increase y/y

Kutaisi International Airport served 450,417 passengers – 38.73% increase

Batumi International Airport served 513,732 passengers – 19.94% increase (*Agenda.ge, October 12, 2018*).

16. London Stock Exchange hosts 'Georgia Investor Day'

London Stock Exchange is hosting a 'Georgia Investor Day' together with Galt & Taggart, members of Bank of Georgia Group PLC and the leading brokerage firms in Georgia today.

Prime Minister of Georgia Mamuka Bakhtadze officially opened the trading day at the London Stock Exchange.

This is a good opportunity for us to give information about the implemented reforms of Georgia and its ambitious plans that aim to turn Georgia into a regional centre to the investors. There is an interest towards investing in Georgia that will enable us to see more Georgian companies at the London Stock Exchange. Our goal is to more effectively integrate Georgia into the global economy", said Bakhtadze (*Agenda.ge, October 12, 2018*).

17. Georgia's external trade up 20.8% in January-September

Georgia's external trade grew by 20.8 per cent this year and reached \$9.12 billion in January-September 2018, says the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat).

This year the value of Georgia's exports increased by 25.7 percent to \$2.44 billion, while the value of imports also increased 19.1 per cent to \$6.67 billion with respect to January-September 2017, said Geostat.

Georgia's trade deficit equalled \$4.22 billion this year, which was a 46.3 per cent share of the country's total trade turnover (*Agenda.ge, October 14, 2018*).

18. Shanghai and Hong Kong host Georgian Wine Festival

A Georgian wine festival was held in Shanghai and Hong Kong on October 11-14. During the events master of wine Debra Meiburg offered guests Georgian wine while introducing them to its history and culture, as well as the modern Georgian wine industry.

"Georgian wine has been growing in popularity and gaining interest in recent years in China and on the Asian market", says Meiburg (*Agenda.ge, October 15, 2018*).

19. Georgia receives \$131m in remittances in September 2018

Georgia received \$131.3 million from abroad in September 2018, while remittances leaving Georgia totalled \$ 18.9 million, says the National Bank of Georgia. Last month Georgia received 5.3 per cent more in remittances than in September of 2017.

Russia (\$37.70 million), Italy (\$16.42 million) and the United States (\$14.20 million) were the largest remittance senders in September 2018 (*Agenda.ge, October 15, 2018*).

Additional Information

October 16, 2018
OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

1 USD - 2.6664 GEL	1 GBP - 3.5076 GEL	100 RUB - 4.0628 GEL
1 EUR - 3.0925 GEL	1 TRY - 0.4584 GEL	100 JPY - 2.3860 GEL

Tuesday 16 October	Wednesday 17 October	Thursday 18 October	Friday 19 October	Saturday 20 October
				
12° 17°	9° 19°	10° 21°	11° 20°	12° 21°

- **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](#)**