

# NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

November 12-14

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## ❖ Occupied Regions

### ❖ Tskhinvali Region

#### 1. Finland condemns erection of new barbed wires on Georgian territory

Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini has condemned Russia's illegal activities in Georgia and the erection of new barbed wire fences by occupants in the Georgian village of Atotsi.

Soini told his Georgian counterpart David Zalkaliani in Helsinki today that on the 10th anniversary of the Russia-Georgia 2008 war, Finland remains committed to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

#### 2. Tskhinvali de-facto regime updates old so-called border barriers

Representatives of the Tskhinvali de-facto regime have updated the so-called border barriers on the perimeter of the occupied territories, between the villages of Dukukantskari and Khurvaleti.

"They have not erected new barbed wires. Representatives of the de facto regime installed the so-called border barriers in 2010 and they are repairing them now due to the damages inflicted over the years.

This sad reality is going on for 10 years now. The reports saying that new barbed wires are being installed are not true," said Roin Adikashvili, a representative of the Gori mayor (*IPN.GE, November 14, 2018*).

### ❖ Abkhazia Region

3.

## ❖ Foreign Affairs

#### 4. Saudi Arabia is opening Embassy in Georgia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is opening an embassy in Georgia's capital of Tbilisi in December 2018 in order to promote the relationship between the two countries, Georgia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports.

The decision to open the embassy in Tbilisi came after a meeting between Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze and representatives of the Saudi Arabian Foreign Ministry (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

#### 5. European Parliament adopts resolution on Georgia

The European Parliament has adopted the resolution on Georgia in the wake of the discussion regarding the implementation process of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement on Tuesday. The resolution was approved today by 528 votes to 97, with 34 abstentions.

In the resolution MEPs “warmly welcome” Georgia’s sustained reform track and progress made in implementing the EU association agreement (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

#### **6. Georgia-US discuss possibility of building a military aerodrome in Vaziani, near Tbilisi**

US General Steve Lyons, a commander of the United States Transportation Command and Georgian Defence Minister Levan Izoria have discussed the possibility of joint development of Vaziani military aerodrome infrastructure.

The Ministry of Defence told *Agenda.ge* that funds for the new aerodrome will be allocated both from the US and Georgia budgets. No further details have been announced yet (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

#### **7. Georgia condemns so-called elections in Ukraine’s occupied regions**

“The conduction of such illegal ‘elections’ in the regions, where due to Russia’s effective control, the Ukrainian authorities are unable to exercise their legitimate jurisdiction, grossly violates the fundamental norms and principles of international law and is interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine,” the Georgian Foreign Ministry says.

This completely contradicts the commitments under the Minsk Agreements and prevents the peaceful resolution of the conflict,” the ministry says (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

#### **8. MEP calls Georgia a star of the region for commitment to European values**

Member of the European Parliament Clare Moody has stated that Georgia is a star of the region for its commitment to European values.

Moody made the statement yesterday at the European Parliament’s plenary session, during the discussion and debates of the report drafted by MEP Andrejs Mamikins regarding the implementation process of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

“It is really a very important report which shows what has been done by Georgia since signing the Association Agreement with the EU. We welcome the achieved success and the reforms Georgia has carried out. The report speaks about the Georgian territorial issue. We should continue to firmly support Georgia’s territorial integrity,” Moody said (*Agenda.ge, November 13, 2018*).

#### **9. European Parliament adopts resolution on implementation of Association Agreement by Georgia**

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution on the implementation of the Association Agreement by Georgia at the plenary session. 528 MEPs supported the document, 97 voted against and 34 abstained.

The draft report welcomes the effective implementation of the visa-free regime for Georgian citizens since 27 March 2017; takes note of Georgia’s compliance with visa liberalisation benchmarks and encourages regular monitoring thereof in order to ensure continued compliance (*Agenda.ge, November 14, 2018*).

#### **10. PM Bakhtadze thanks European Parliament for highlighting Georgia’s progress on its EU path**

“I am proud that though the right and effective work of the Georgian government, we have received high assessments of the European Parliament concerning the country’s Euro-integration process. I want to underline that Georgia has been assessed as the most successful country for its Euro-integration efforts,” Bakhtadze said.

“The European Parliament has underlined that over the past several years Georgia has become exemplary in all directions of its cooperation with the EU,” Bakhtadze added (*Agenda.ge, November 14, 2018*).

#### **11. Romanian MEP says candidate of National Movement is not suitable for becoming President of Georgia**

Former Russian ambassador, the candidate of the United National Movement, is not suitable for becoming the President of Georgia, Romanian member of the European Parliament Victor Boștinaru stated at the European Parliament plenary session.

"We believe that Georgia and Moldova are important countries for the EU. These two countries, especially Georgia, made incredible progress. We saw the level of stability and democracy achieved by Georgia during the presidential elections. Former Russian Ambassador, the candidate of the United National Movement, is not suitable for becoming the President of Georgia," he said (*IPN.GE, November 14, 2018*).

### **❖ Internal Affairs**

#### **12. Early flood warning system installed for Svaneti river**

In order to prevent severe consequences of flooding in the village of Tchuberi, Svaneti, the National Environmental Agency of Georgia has installed hydrometeorological measuring devices on the Nenskra River.

Following the flooding of the Nenskra River in July 2018, agency specialists have been researching the river and nearby territories in order to find ways of avoiding severe consequences of flooding. This summer's flood left 21 houses and local infrastructure heavily damaged in Tchuberi (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

#### **13. Ruling party supported candidate says she and her family have been threatened**

Georgian Dream ruling party supported presidential candidate Salome Zurabishvili says that she and her family are being threatened by former servicemen affiliated with the United National Movement party.

Zurabishvili has already addressed the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia and the civil sector to react to open threats on her life, her son and daughter.

Zurabishvili stated today that her son Teimuraz Gorjestani and daughter Ketevan Gorjestani received messages and audio calls on 9,10 and 11 November.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has stated that they have launched the investigation regarding the issue.

She also called upon the civil sector to react to the violations against her and stated that her previous appeal to the civil sector had been ignored (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

#### **14. Georgian PM says ex-President Saakashvili met Russian interests when his party named Vashadze for president**

Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze has stated at a briefing today that former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili met Russian interests when his party, the United National Movement, nominated Grigol Vashadze for president.

“Each citizen of Georgia will have to make a principle choice between the totalitarian past and the European future,” Bakhtadze said.

The victory of revanchists [referring to Vashadze and the UNM] means placing of all our democratic achievements under the question mark,” Bakhtadze said (*Agenda.ge, November 14, 2018*).

#### **15. Tamar Zhvania denies meeting with Bidzina Ivanishvili, calling it “absolute lie”**

"I would like to respond to the absolute lie and false information spread by certain media outlets, which, unfortunately, is an attempt to discredit the electoral process. I would like to note that I have been present in the Central Election Commission since I arrived early in the morning. I have not left the building at all, because I had working meetings. At the time when media outlets spread this false information, I was meeting with the representative of the National Movement to the Central Election Commission (*IPN.GE, November 14, 2018*).

#### **16. Presidential elections runoff scheduled for November 28**

The second round of Georgia’s presidential elections will be held on November 28 by the decision of the Central Election Commission announced today. Wednesday, November 28 has been declared a public holiday in Georgia.

Voters will have to decide between the independent candidate supported by the Georgian Dream ruling party Salome Zourabichvili and Grigol Vashadze, the candidate of ten opposition parties who came second in the first round of the presidential elections (*Agenda.ge, November 14, 2018*).

## **❖ Economy and Social Affairs**

#### **17. Patients of 4th stage breast cancer will get 80% discounts on medicines in Georgia**

Patients with fourth stage breast cancer will receive Perjeta and Herceptin, a targeted therapy for breast cancer, with an 80% discount starting from 2019, announces the Minister of Health Davit Sergeenko.

Currently, these medicines were available with an 80% discount for patients of first, second and third stage diagnoses, while from 2019 fourth stage of breast cancer patients will also receive discount.

Sergeenko also said that while this programme was only available in large cities of Georgia, from next year it will cover all regions of the country (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

#### **18. Orange harvest 2018: Georgia exports 240 tonnes of mandarins abroad**

The orange harvest season has just started in Georgia and 240 tonnes of mandarin have already been exported from the country, announces the government of the autonomous republic of Adjara. This year Georgia exported three times more mandarins than in the same period of 2017.

Mostly, mandarins are exported to Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Hungary and Poland. The typical citrus season runs from November to January in Adjara and in these months about 55,000-60,000 tonnes of citrus fruit are expected to be picked and exported (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

#### **19. Over 75,000 with acute disabilities will receive increased social security payments**

Over 75,000 individuals with acute disabilities (also referred as Group II disability) will receive increased social security payments from January 1, 2019, the government of Georgia has reported.

The decision was announced by Georgian PM Mamuka Bakhtadze after his meeting with people suffering from acute disabilities today. From January 1 of next year, they will receive 120 GEL monthly instead of 100 GEL (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

#### **20. Georgia's external trade up 20.5% in January-October**

Georgia's external trade grew by 20.5% this year and reached \$10.30 billion in January-October 2018, says the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat).

This year the value of Georgia's exports increased by 24.5% to \$2.75 billion, while the value of imports also increased 19.2% to \$7.55 billion with respect to January-October 2017, said Geostat (*Agenda.ge, November 13, 2018*).

#### **21. Air France to launch Paris-Tbilisi flights in 2019**

The French flag carrier Air France will launch direct regular flights on the route Paris-Tbilisi from April 2019, announces TAV Georgia, the sole operator of Tbilisi and Batumi International Airports.

"Negotiations between Air France and the operator company of Tbilisi and Batumi International Airports - TAV Georgia, are already in the final phase. All the operation details were discussed between the parties during the business meeting held in Tbilisi International Airport last week", read the press release published by TAV Georgia (*Agenda.ge, November 13, 2018*).

#### **22. Indian airline Indigo to enter Georgian aviation market in 2019**

Daily flights on the route Delhi-Tbilisi will be performed by Airbus 321 type aircraft.

"[A second meeting was held at] Tbilisi International Airport with TAV Georgia today. Operational details regarding the flights [were discussed]. The largest airline of India [first] showed its interest in the Georgian aviation market back in the summer of 2018. The meetings with the Georgian side in August were organised by TAV Holding", read the press release published by TAV Georgia.

As of today Indigo operates flights to 59 destinations – 48 domestic and 11 international (*Agenda.ge, November 13, 2018*).

#### **23. ProWine Shanghai: China samples Georgian wine at leading wines fair**

About 100,000 visitors in China are able to taste and enjoy Georgian wine at leading international trade fair for wines and spirits ProWine Shanghai in China's biggest city.

30 Georgian wine companies have been participating in the trade fair, which is taking place between November 13-15 in Shanghai.

With the support of the Georgian National Wine Agency, Georgian companies are participating for the third year in a row at ProWine China (*Agenda.ge, November 14, 2018*).

#### **24. State budget 2019 submitted to parliament**

The revised version of the 2019 State Budget which was presented to the Parliament yesterday is organised into four main categories:

- ❖ Human capital – increased state investments to human capital development, namely: healthcare, education, ecology, as well as agriculture that will facilitate the human capital development concept.
- ❖ Physical capital – both municipal and other types of infrastructure, irrigation systems etc.
- ❖ Financial capital – it outlines the state's role in development of petty and average enterprises.
- ❖ Security – includes high protection standard and rule of law (*Agenda.ge, November 14, 2018*).

## ❖ Sports and Culture

### 25. Digital library of Georgian tourism materials launched

The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia with the support of the National Tourism Administration has implemented a new digital library platform – [www.gnta.ge/ge/publications/](http://www.gnta.ge/ge/publications/)

The presentation was held in Rooms hotel Tbilisi, hosted by the Head of National Tourism Department Giorgi Chigovadze earlier today (*Agenda.ge, November 12, 2018*).

### 26. Digital library of Georgian historical, cultural materials launched

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, supported by the National Library, is implementing new digital library platform – [www.el.ge](http://www.el.ge).

The Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Mikheil Batiashvili and Director of the National Library Giorgi Kekelidze signed the agreement today (*Agenda.ge, November 13, 2018*).

### 27. US allocates grant for restoration of Uplistsikhe cave town

Cultural Heritage Centre of Ilia State University has received the grant the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) for restoration of ancient cave town Uplistsikhe.

The project allocated approximately \$200,000 to monitor the territory of the ancient stone town. Taking into consideration erosion processes, earthquakes and natural disasters, the specialists may find that the rocks are collapsing, and the project aims to conserve Uplistsikhe (*Agenda.ge, November 13, 2018*).

## Additional Information

**November 15, 2018**  
**OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES**

1 USD - 2.7045 GEL	1 GBP - 3.4931 GEL	100 RUB - 3.9893 GEL
1 EUR - 3.0474 GEL	1 TRY - 0.4945 GEL	100 JPY - 2.7045 GEL

  

Thursday 15 November	Friday 16 November	Saturday 17 November	Sunday 18 November	Monday 19 November
				
4° 6°	5° 9°	2° 11°	2° 11°	3° 11°

  

- [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](#)