

DAILY NEWS REPORT ON GEORGIA

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Date: **February 12, 2019**

❖ Occupied Regions

❖ Abkhazia Region

1. Valery Bganba met with Abkhaz compatriots in Istanbul

Valeriy Bganba, Prime Minister of the Republic of Abkhazia, visited the Abkhaz Cultural Center in Istanbul. According to the report, over two hundred Abkhaz compatriots, including representatives of the Istanbul Abkhaz Council of Elders, the Federation of Abkhaz Cultural Centers in Turkey, Abkhaz students of Turkish educational institutions gathered for a meeting. According to the Ministry of Repatriation of the Republic of Abkhazia, over four thousand compatriots from Turkey have returned to Abkhazia (Apsnypress, February 4, 2019).

❖ Tskhinvali Region

2. OSCE Chairperson-in-Office visits occupation line

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Miroslav Lajčák visited the occupation line. "As my first stop during my visit to Georgia, I went to the administrative boundary line to see for myself the situation on the ground," Miroslav Lajčák tweeted (Tweeter, February 11, 2019).

3. Russian occupants appear in Khurvaleti - military watchdog to install surveillance tower

Russian occupants have begun to install surveillance towers in Khurvaleti. The representatives of the occupation regime are on the other side of the barbed wire fences. Heavy techniques were brought on the ground. The police are watching the process from the Georgian-controlled territory (Rustavi2, February 6, 2019).

4. Tatunashvili-Basharuli's Murders and Situation in Khurvaleti - meeting in Ergneti lasted for 6 hours

The processes in Khurvaleti and the border demarcation - the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism meeting held in Ergneti. The occupation line was the main theme of the discussion of the meeting which lasted for 6 hours. The sides discussed the murders of Tatunashvili-Basharuli and the kidnapping of people. 21 facts of kidnapping of Georgian citizens by the occupants have been fixed in 2 months since the previous meeting (Rustavi2, February 8, 2019).

5. "There is nothing but fear" - the inhabitants of the occupation line are asking the government for help

"There is nothing but fear," the residents of the occupation line responded to arranging of a checkpoint by Russian border guards. This time the Russian border guards put up the surveillance towers. The locals address the government and the representatives of the peacekeeping missions. "Yesterday it was finished. It observes me straight and then I will have problems ... The government do not come and do not ask us anything",- stated the local (Rustavi2, February 9, 2019).

6. Ketevan Tsikhelashvili: Construction of artificial barricades is a daily battle launched by the occupational regime against people

The occupation regime is using the so-called checkpoints in order increase pressure and better monitor how many Ossetian people tries to cross the occupational line and enter the controlled territory, - Ketevan Tsikhelashvili, State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality stated.

According to Tsikhelashvili, the actions of the occupation regime are directed against the interests of citizens. According to her, Sputnik says more than 40 people have been arrested this year and naturally, 90% of them are trying to reach the controlled territory for their vital needs. "It is impossible to imagine more cynicism than this,"

she added. As for the response, according to Tsikhelashvili, the relevant structures of Georgia had a meeting with the EU Monitoring Mission yesterday, which, unfortunately, can only patrol on the territory controlled by Georgia (IPN.ge, February 7, 2019).

❖ Foreign Affairs

7. Salome Zourabichvili visited Georgian peacekeepers in Afghanistan

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili visited Georgian peacekeepers participating in the international mission in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The President has visited the bases where military servicemen of the Georgian Defense Forces are deployed and are fulfilling NATO-led firm support mission (Rustavi2, February 9, 2019).

8. Georgian Foreign Minister met with Congressman Frances Rooney

Within the visit to the United States, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia held meetings in Congress.

Davit Zalkaliani met with Sponsor of the support of Georgia, Congressman Frances Rooney. According to Mr. Zalkaliani the initiation of the resolution means Washington's unconditional and strong support for Georgia.

- "We are very actively working with the United States" executive and legislative government to support Georgia's new resolution, initiated by Congressman Rooney. I believe that our partnership is expressed not only in resolutions and supporting statements, but in particular actions, in the field of defense and in terms of enhancing cooperation in economic direction, we will have significant tangible results, "Zalkaliani stated (Rustavi2, February 8, 2019).

9. OSCE chair: we support Georgia's efforts to deal with domestic, foreign challenges

The Chair of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak has stated in Tbilisi that Slovakia, which took over the chairmanship of the OSCE this year, is firm in its support of Georgia's efforts to deal with domestic and foreign challenges. Lajcak stated that the meeting with Georgian Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani was "very fruitful", where all important issues have been discussed. Zalkaliani thanked Lajcak that he visited the occupation line in Georgia yesterday before he came to Tbilisi (Agenda.ge, February 11, 2019).

10. Mikheil Saakashvili together with his supporters held a forum in Belgium

The former president of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili together with his supporters held a forum under the slogan "Together at Home" in the city of Liege in Belgium. According to the organizers, Georgian emigrants from various countries gathered in Liege and hold a meeting. As it is reported participants discussed the formation of an alternative government. Organizers of the event was Giorgi Sigua and Movement "Together at Home" (1 TV.ge, February 10, 2019).

11. "It will be a great meeting" - Mikheil Saakashvili's family arrived in Liege to meet with immigrants

Sandra Roelofs and Giuli Alasania arrived in Liege, where Georgian emigrants will meet with Mikheil Saakashvili in several hours. "There will be a big meeting, we have great expectations. Concrete plans will also be expressed. This is Misha's issue, I am not involved in these plans. I just arrived as a family member"-Sandra Roelofs stated. I am waiting for Georgians to stand together. Everyone's role is too big. Immigrants among them, of course, because these immigrants already have their place and have the only wish to return home, "stated Giuli Alasania (Rustavi2, February 11, 2019).

12. Mobilization of wrestlers in Liege - emigrants talk about possible provocation at meeting with Saakashvili

Provocations were planned in Liege, where Georgian immigrants were preparing to meet with Georgia's third president. Participants of the meeting were reporting about this. According to them, mobilization of certain groups from the various cities was taking place in order to not to allow the meeting with Mikheil Saakashvili. According to emigrants the government is afraid of it and has provided a big financial resource for mobilizing a large group for provocations on the ground (Rustavi2, February 10, 2019).

13. Incident takes place in Liège before meeting between Mikheil Saakashvili and emigrants

An incident took place near the Congress Palace in the city of Liège, Belgium, prior to the meeting between former president of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili and emigrants. The confrontation was planned by “agent-provocateurs”, who were trying to disrupt the meeting. Several people have been injured in the incident (IPN.ge, February 10, 2019).

14. Belgian Police took an interest in the fact of using pepper spray in Liege

The journalist of the First Channel Lika Alelishvili has been summoned for questioning in the status of the victim. She was fulfilling her duty at the time of the incident. Part of emigrants was not allowed to attend the event. According to them, they wanted to express their own different position. Before the session, the physical and verbal confrontation took place in a hall, during which supporters of the “National Movement” used pepper spray (1 TV.ge, February 11, 2019).

15. Meeting of the Third President with Emigrants - Mikheil Saakashvili introduced a 5-point plan to public in the Congress building in Liege

"Every person who is outside of Georgia, is from Georgia, must be a citizen of Georgia and this does not cause any doubt," the third president of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili stated at the meeting with immigrants.

He introduced a five-point plan to the Georgian emigrants gathered at the Liege Congress building.

According to Mikheil Saakashvili, immigrants should have a passport of a Georgian citizen, and they should be able to vote in elections by means of electronic card. According to him, it is important to create an electronic voting system in order to give citizens the opportunity to vote without any interruption.

The third president of Georgia says that the implementation of the plan will be possible only in case of ending the oligarchic rule in Georgia.

Georgians arrived from different countries around the world to meet with Mikheil Saakashvili. After the first large meeting with immigrants, the third president of Georgia will hold the next meeting in Rome (Rustavi2, February 11, 2019).

16. Saakashvili's interview with "Deutsche Welle"

The so-called Tituschiks, which the government has sent to Liege to break the event - assesses Mikheil Saakashvili's events in Belgium with Deutsche Welle.

The meeting with immigrants was one of the main topics of which the third president of Georgia gave the interview to the German TV Company. According to him, immigrants who economically support their country should have the right to vote in politics. Mikheil Saakashvili talked about the presidential elections in Georgia and the necessity to change the power in the country (Rustavi2, February 12, 2019).

17. Citizen of Georgia killed in Poland

A citizen of Georgia, 40 years-old G.B was killed in Poland. G.B arrived in Poland about 10 days ago. The Embassy of Georgia in Poland is informed about the incident. Polish law enforcers are investigating the murder of a Georgian citizen (Rustavi2, February 6, 2019).

18. Georgian Farmer Nino Zambakhidze attending Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative

The United States promotes women's global development and prosperity with the signing of a National Security Presidential Memorandum by President Trump which took place on the 7th of February. The memorandum was attended by leader women from all over the world including the head of the Georgian Farmers' Association Nino Zambakhidze. “I started with two cows and became the biggest farmer of Georgian reality and now supporting my community in terms of access to finance education and their prosperity” – stated Nino Zambakhidze. She thanked Mr. President for his leadership in deepening the relationship between Georgia and the US (Georgian Journal, February 8, 2019).

19. Ben Hodges – You don't have to prove anything. It's upon the alliance to take step and invite Georgia as NATO member

Ben Hodges, a retired United States Army officer who served as commanding general believes that NATO has to invite Georgia in the alliance during the next summit.

Hodges underlined in an interview with Georgian bureau of Voice of America that not many were excited about the idea of Georgia's NATO membership.

- "There is concern that Russia continues the occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. But there is such a precedent. East Germany was under the occupation of the Soviet Union," Hodges said.

Former General said that Georgia could improve the situation with respect to security. "Georgian soldiers sacrificed a lot in Afghanistan. Everybody wants to fight with Georgians because they are so good. You don't have to prove anything. It's upon the alliance to take a step and invite Georgia as NATO member," Hodges told Voice of America (1 TV.ge, February 12, 2019).

❖ Internal Affairs

20. President of Georgia visits Imereti region

The President of Georgia visited Imereti region. According to the president's administration, Zourabichvili will get acquainted with the tourism potential in the region and visit the children's inclusive center (Rustavi2, February 9, 2019).

21. President initiates arrangement of international conference center in Kutaisi Parliament building

It will be great if an international conference center is organized in the building of Kutaisi Parliament, - Georgia's President Salome Zurbishvili stated. According to President GEL 340 million was spent for construction of the Parliament's building and this amount would have been enough for development of Tskaltubo resort (IPN.ge, February 10, 2019).

22. Salome Zurbishvili hold a meeting with Miroslav Lajčák

President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili hosted the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Miroslav Lajčák, who is paying a visit to Georgia.

According to the president's administration, the sides discussed the issues of cooperation between Georgia and the OSCE and the directions of deepening Georgia-Slovak relations (1 TV.ge, February 11, 2019).

23. Giorgi Gakharia arrived in Adjara and visited Kobuleti and Batumi police departments

Minister of Internal Affairs met with staff of Ajara police department. Giorgi Gakharia visited the Kobuleti and Batumi police departments and talked with the staff about the reforms. Special attention was paid to the importance of investigative, operational and precinct directions in the criminal police (Rustavi2, February 9, 2019).

24. "Georgian Dream" on brink of political divorce - Eka Beselia may leave ruling party

"Georgian Dream" is on the brink of political divorce, which is a matter of time. The meeting of the majority in the Rostom King's Palace was the most difficult and emotional for one of the founders of Georgian Dream.

After a three-hour meeting Beselia practically said that she is leaving the party, created by her. However not even one official announcement about leaving the party was made. Representatives of the parliamentary majority have confirmed that that Ivanishvili openly supported Kobakhidze-Zardiashvili-Mdinardze's group at the parliamentary majority meeting (Rustavi2, February 6, 2019).

25. I rule out that I will stop fighting - Eka Beselia

Eka Beselia's new ultimatum to "Georgian Dream" - the MP appeals to the ruling party and requests to postpone the appointment of lifelong judges till 2025. According to the MP, if the Parliament does not suspend the appointment of judges until 2025, it will be a new challenge and the reason for several members of the ruling team to leave the Parliamentary majority (Rustavi2, February 8, 2019).

26. "The most important thing is to find out who was the initiator and who uploaded recordings" - Ombudsman speaks about Beselia's private life footage

The Public Defender comments on the investigation on the case of the personal life of Eka Beselia. According to Nino Lomjaria it is important to investigate who is the source of the footage and whose initiated to upload the material on social network (Rustavi2, February 7, 2019).

27. "Georgian Dream" has become a sect, these types of vicious systems are not viable "- Gia Khukhashvili
"Georgian Dream" has become a sect. Naturally, they will use compromising materials as they do not see other resources for retaining power, as well as the policy of carrot and stick, they will buy somebody to scare somebody, but these types of vicious systems are not viable, "says the expert Gia Khukhashvili. Part of experts say that because of the Russian management style, Bidzina Ivanishvili has lost respect not only of the society, but the part of his team (Rustavi2, February 7, 2019).

28. Irakli Kobakhidze: Unity of our team is not in danger
Our team is not in danger of being collapsed, Our team is united, – Speaker of Parliament Irakli Kobakhidze made this statement. As Kobakhidze noted the team will be united in case if everyone puts aside their subjective interests (1 Tv.ge, February 12, 2019).

29. Split in "Dream" - Opposing parties to discuss suspension of judge "s lifetime appointment at majority sitting
The confrontation in the "Georgian Dream" is getting worse. Another culmination will be the sitting of the parliamentary majority, which has been scheduled for several days.
At the party's central office, the opposed MPs in the presence of Bidzina Ivanishvili will gather once again and introduce their own arguments to the chairman of the party. Presumably, this meeting will decide whether the parliamentary majority will support Eka Beselia's initiative, suspension of the appointment of judges.
The legislative package is already in the parliament. So called rebel MPs say they will prove their truth. They are answered by their teammates who say that everyone who wants to be in the team will have to maintain team rules (Rustavi2, February 12, 2019).

30. "You are an ordinary culprit,"- Nika Melia advises Mikheil Batiashvili to resign
A Minister of Education Mikheil Batiashvili is a subject of criticism for the second day already. The Minister's arguments are unacceptable for the opposition. One of the leaders of " United National Movement" Nika Melia considers that Batiashvili is guilty of Ia Kerdzaia's death and demands him to resign.
"Resign, Mr Minister of Education. You'll have to carry this burden until you sit in this armchair, "Melia stated (Rustavi2, February 8, 2019).

31. Mr. Mikhail do you have a mother? - Ia Kerdzaia's son address to Education Minister
Mr. Mikhail do you have a mother? The question was asked by the son of the late Ia Kerdzaia to the Minister of Education. Bachana Shengelia started his speech at the committee sitting with this phrase. Earlier, Shengelia said that the Education Ministry conducted a moral trial to his mother, who was the director of public school No. 6. During 20 minutes Bachana Shengelia has repeatedly called on law enforcement agencies to launch investigation on the fact. According to him, there is a lot of evidence in the case which points to the responsibility of the individual. Shengelia says that among those persons who should be held responsible is the head of the Zugdidi Resource Center Kakha Partsvania (Rustavi2, February 8, 2019).

32. "We demand resignation of Chairperson of Human rights committee" - Human Rights Defenders against Sopho Kiladze
Human Rights Defenders Against Sopho Kiladze - Representatives of NGOs demand the resignation of the Chairwoman of Human Rights Committee of the Parliament.
Human rights defenders regard Kiladze as incompetent and unprofessional and will hold a protest rally outside the legislative body. According to them, Sopho Kiladze does not cooperate with human rights organizations, does not react to sent statements and, moreover, the chairwoman of the Human Rights Committee selects by personal sympathies those who protect and those who do not (Rustavi2, February 8, 2019).

33. Kutaisi Vice-Mayor and Vice-Governor of Imereti resigned

Kutaisi Vice-Mayor and Vice-Governor of Imereti have resigned. It is unknown what the resignation of high ranking officials from Imereti is connected with. However, it is known that Giorgi Iobashvili, vice-mayor of Kutaisi has already written a statement about resignation. It is also unknown who will replace him. Grigol Dalakishvili, Vice-Governor of Imereti does not speak about the reasons for resignation (Rustavi2, February 8, 2019).

34. So-called cable case and Kobakhidze's scandalous statement - Main lawmaker is accused of violating the law

So-called Case of Cables and Irakli Kobakhidze's Statement - The Chairperson of Parliament gets involved in the scandal. As it turns out the case material, which was not open even for lawyers, was accessible for Irakli Kobakhidze. The scandalous statement was made by Irakli Kobakhidze on the TV station "Pirveli". He stated that he had got acquainted with the material of the case before chairmanship of the parliament and found that millions of GEL were lost. Why was the secret material accessible for Irakli Kobakhidze, about which millions does he speak and why the Prosecutor's Office gave him the opportunity to get information about the case with this resonant and high public interest - it is difficult for his teammates to explain. A part of the ruling party's deputies says Kobakhidze got acquainted with the secret documentation and another part explains that nobody has the right to have access to such material. About which millions was Irakli Kobakhidze speaking and if money was really embezzled, why the criminals were not punished - the opposition say that in this case not only Irakli Kobakhidze, but all those persons should be held accountable who hid such a crime (Rustavi2, February 6, 2019).

35. Director of the Central Criminal Police Department was appointed as Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs

The Minister of Internal Affairs has a new deputy. Director of the Central Criminal Police Department, Vladimer Bortsvadze, the Vice-Colonel of the Criminal Police was appointed on this position (Rustavi2, February 6, 2019).

36. Police detain Georgian, Turkish citizens for drug crime

Employees of Adjara Police Department of the Internal Affairs Ministry detained two citizens for illegal purchase, keeping and selling of narcotic drugs. An investigation is in progress (IPN.ge, February 10, 2019).

37. Interior Ministry arrests five involved in meeting of criminal bosses

The Georgian Interior Ministry has detained five who were involved in a so-called 'meeting of criminal bosses' and supporting the 'criminal world' as well. The detainees may face six-10 years in jail for the crimes they have committed (Agenda.ge, February 11, 2019).

38. 7 citizens of Bangladesh, Yemen and India were arrested for illegally crossing the border

MIA officers detained 3 persons from the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 3 of the Republic of India and 1 citizen of the Republic of Yemen, for illegal crossing of the State Border of Georgia. The crime which envisages 4 to 5 years of imprisonment (Rustavi2, February 9, 2019).

39. Temirlan Machalikashvili's case - application and petition will be submitted to the Parliament for the creation of a temporary investigative commission

Application and petition for the creation of a Temporary Investigative Commission on Temurlan Machalikashvili's case will be submitted to the Parliament. Young activists from the Pankisi Gorge will arrive in Tbilisi. They are supported by the "Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center." Civil activists hope that the legislative body will take into consideration their proposal and think that it is necessary to inform the public about details of such a high profile case (Rustavi2, February 7, 2019).

40. How Budget is spent in Ilia State University - Students Appeal to the Audit Service to Study the Issue

How the Budget Is Spent in Ilia State University - Students ask relevant organizations to get interested in finances. They have appealed with statement the State Audit Office and Ministry of Education. The collecting of signatures has also begun in order to restore business school. Students are going to continue their rallies until this requirement

is fulfilled. The students say that the decision to abolish the business school was accepted in the university so that they had no information about it (Rustavi2, February 7, 2019).

41. Incident occurs between recruits of Krtsanisi training center

An incident has occurred between the recruits of the Krtsanisi training center, resulting in the hospitalization of one of the recruits. Ministry of Defense denies physical confrontation between the recruits. It was necessary to hospitalize one of the recruits due to his emotional condition (IPN.ge, February 7, 2019).

42. Alleged physical assault on recruit - Military Police investigates a confrontation in Krtsanisi Training Center

Military Police investigates the conflict in Krtsanisi Training Center. Who and why assaulted 21-year-old Eljajan Efendyev remains unknown. Soldiers, who are dislocated in the military base does not want to speak about the reasons of conflict as well.

- ✓ The Public Defender studies the controversy in Krtsanisi Training Center. According to Nino Lomjaria, there is a special service in the Ombudsman's Office studying violations of military rights and physical abuse. According to the Public Defender, the representatives of her office will meet the victim and study the situation (Rustavi2, February 7, 2019).

43. Rally demanding imprisoned Archbishop's release underway outside Patriarchate

A protest rally demanding the release of imprisoned Archbishop Giorgi Mamaladze, who is charged with plotting the murder of the Patriarch's assistant, is underway outside the building of the Patriarchate. The family hopes that the Strasbourg Court will deliver a fair judgment in the case. Zaza Saralidze, father of teenager Davit Saralidze, joined the rally to express his solidarity towards Giorgi Mamaladze's family (IPN.ge, February 10, 2019).

44. "European Georgia" demands suspension of accumulative pension system

The "European Georgia" requests suspension of the accumulative pension system until the issue of alternative models offered by party representatives will be discussed. According to him, it is not yet clear where the mobilized funds are invested (1 Tv.ge, February 11, 2019).

45. Ethics Council to be set up in parliament

The Ethics Council will be set up in parliament. The draft of the relevant resolution has been submitted at the Bureau sitting today. The author of the draft is the majority MP Irina Pruidze. The draft stipulates that the Ethics Council will be staffed by 16 members (1 TV.ge, February 12, 2019).

❖ Sports and Culture

46. Lasha Talakhadze is world best weightlifter 2018

The voting for revealing the World Best weightlifter of the year 2018 has ended on the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) website. About 30 000 people participated in the voting. Georgian sportsman Lasha Talakhadze has been named as the best among men. The Georgian weightlifter received approximately 17,800 votes (1 TV.ge, February 11, 2019).

Additional Information

February 12, 2019

OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

1 USD - 2.6460 GEL

1 GBP - 3.4139 GEL

100 RUB -4.0253 GEL

1 EUR - 2.9908 GEL

1 TRY - 0.5016GEL

100 JPY - 2.4011 GEL

25 day forecast

Tuesday
12 February



1° 7°

Wednesday
13 February



0° 11°

Thursday
14 February



1° 9°

Friday
15 February



1° 8°

Saturday
16 February



2° 9°

- **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](#)**