

DAILY NEWS REPORT ON GEORGIA

Compiled by: **Mary Bugadze**

Date: **April 30, 2019**

❖ Occupied Regions

1. President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe visited the occupation line

Liliane Maury Pasquier, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, together with members of the delegation visited the occupation line in the village of Odzisi.

Before that she visited Tserovani IDP settlement and listened to information about the situation of internally displaced persons. Liliane Maury Pasquier left Shida Kartli without any comment (Rustavi2, April 29, 2019).

2. Minister of Internal Affairs congratulated the residents of village Rukhi on Easter holiday

The Vice-PM of the country and the Minister of Interior congratulated the residents of the village of Rukhi on Easter. Giorgi Gakharia was accompanied by the State Representative in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Giorgi Shengelia, the mayor of Zugdidi, on the Enguri Bridge. He got acquainted with the village Rukhi and the occupation line together with local and Abkhazian IDPs (Rustavi2, April 29, 2019).

3. CoE Issues Report on Conflict in Georgia

During the 1344th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies on April 24, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland presented his 19th consolidated report on the conflict in Georgia, which covers the period from October 2018 – March 2019 and takes stock of the security and human rights situation in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia welcomed the Secretary General's 19th consolidated report, as well as the statements of the European Union, GUAM and other partners concerning the report, and expressed its hope that the issue would remain on the CoE agenda in the future as well (Civil.ge, April 26, 2019).

❖ Foreign Affairs

4. Putin calls on Zelensky to restore Saakashvili's Ukrainian citizenship More:

<http://tass.com/world/1056357>

Ukraine's President-Elect Vladimir Zelensky should start protecting human rights with Georgians, namely Mikhail Saakashvili, Russian President Vladimir Putin told reporters.

"As for freedoms, it would be reasonable to start, say, with Georgians, or former Georgians, rather than with Russians. For instance, it would be fair to restore the Ukrainian citizenship of a person who used to be a Georgian but now calls himself a Ukrainian, I mean Mikhail Saakashvili," Putin said (Rustavi2, April 29, 2019).

5. Ivanishvili's Informal Governance, State Seizure, Pressure on Media and NGOs - Discussion at "Marshall Fund"

The American analysts state that Bidzina Ivanishvili's informal ruling is the main problem of democracy in Georgia. Elite corruption, politicized law enforcement agencies, persecution of independent media and pressure on the civil sector have been named as main challenges in the "Marshall Fund" discussion. It was mentioned at the meeting that there are signs of seizure of the state in Georgia. The US specialists have heard from the Georgian NGO representatives about the situation in the country.

Eka Gigauri, the Executive Director of Transparency International Georgia said that there are a lot of challenges in the country that weaken the state. Gigauri named occupation and informal governance as main problems (Rustav2i, April 26, 2019).

6. 10th Session on Georgia-Kazakhstan Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation

Within the frames of the visit of the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia to Kazakhstan, the protocol of the 10th Session of the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation between Georgia and Kazakhstan has been signed. Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Natia Turnava and the Minister of Industry and Infrastructure of the Republic of Kazakhstan Roman Sklyar signed the document.

- According to Natia Turnava, both Georgia and Kazakhstan play an important role in attracting cargo flows from China to Europe via the Black and Caspian seas. "We have also discussed the intensification of ferry traffic on the Black and Caspian seas, as it is a part of the "middle corridor", – the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development noted. The 10th Session of the Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation also focused on such important issues as agriculture, bilateral trade, tourism, etc. (Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, April 23, 2019)

7. BRI facilitates int'l connectivity, economic development: Georgian vice PM

Georgian Vice Prime Minister, minister of regional development and infrastructure Maya Tskitishvili, will attend the second Belt and Road Forum for International (BRI) Cooperation to be held on April 25-27 in Beijing. The BRI "will not only promote connectivity between different countries, but also provide new opportunities for economic development of various countries and international cooperation," Tskitishvili stated. On bilateral relations, Tskitishvili spoke highly of the fruitful cooperation between China and Georgia in different areas. Noting that infrastructure and logistics are priority areas for future cooperation between China and Georgia, Tskitishvili said Georgia welcomes more Chinese engineering enterprises to enter the country.

She also noted that more and more Georgian enterprises will enter the Chinese market due to China's further opening up (Ministry of regional Development and Infrastructure, April 24, 2019).

❖ Internal Affairs

8. Scandal of the President of Georgia - Zourabichvili share Trump`s post where he called Joe Biden "Sleepy"

Error or sharing of Trump`s position - Salome Zourabichvili got involved in a noisy scandal. The President of Georgia has shared on her Twitter page Donald Trump`s post, where he calls US Vice President Joe Biden "Sleepy". Georgian administration claims that Salome Zourabichvili has not shared the post. The technical mistake was made by the Social Media Manager, which was soon corrected.

Donald Trump`s post on the president`s page stayed for about an hour and now it is deleted. "A technical error had place, and the social media manager made a mistake. The social media manager has found the mistake himself and has eliminated it. Unfortunately, I do not know about the mistake, "- said the president`s spokesperson (Rustavi2, April 30, 2019).

9. Business interests that are behind the confrontation in Pankisi - the opposition publishes documents

The business interests that stand behind the confrontation in Pankisi - the opposition publishes documents, according to which Lasha Iordanishvili, the builder of "Khadori 3" on the river Alazani is the business partner of high ranking officials. Gigi Ugulava, a member of "European Georgia", publishes the Public Registry reports, according to which it is clear that Lasha Iordanishvili, besides the construction of the disputed Hydro Power Plant in Pankisi Gorge, has other influential business partners. Political opponents of the government are waiting for explanations from the Ministers of Economy and Infrastructure (Rustavi2, April 26, 2019).

10. "I do not comment on it," - Vano Chkhartishvili does not answer the question regarding recommending Natia Turnava

"I do not make comments" - Vano Chkhartishvili responds to the question of journalists, whether Natia Turvanava was appointed as the Economist Minister`s at his recommendation. After the appointment of Turanova as the Economy Minister, the opposition claims that her main lobbyist with Bidzina Ivanishvili was Vano Chkhartishvili. According to them, Natia Turnava received the post of the minister to promote Chkhartishvili`s business interests (Rustavi2, April 26, 2019).

11. Owners of "Wine Factory N1" accused Archil Kbilashvili and Vano Chkhartishvili of attempting to seize their business

Archil Kbilashvili and Vano Chkhartishvili are accused of attempting to seize business. Owners of Tbilisi's oldest wine factory claim that Bidzina Ivanishvili's personal lawyer and businessman are putting pressure on the court. The investor who bought the "Wine Factory N1" from the bank for seven million, may now be left without property. The noisy story started in 2015. Acting owners of "Wine Factory N1" say that Chkhartishvili is an ally of the former owner Mgaloblishvili, whose interests were protected years ago by Archil Kbilashvili. Chkhartishvili denies his ties with Mgaloblishvili who is away from the country and lives in London (Rustavi2, April 26, 2019).

12. Ambassador Ross Wilson will depart Georgia in mid-May

According to the US Embassy to Georgia Ambassador Ross Wilson, who has served as American Chargé d'Affaires in Tbilisi since early November, will be departing Georgia and returning to private life upon completion of his temporary assignment in mid-May. After his departure, Elizabeth Rood will resume her role as Chargé d'Affaires with the full confidence of Washington" (1 TV.ge, April 25, 2019).

13. David Zalkaliani has met with the Deputy Director General of the Department for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) of the European Commission

Georgian Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani met with Deputy Director General of the Department for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) Simon Mordue. Discussions focused on various aspects of migration co-operation between Georgia and EU countries.

Special accent was put on the political and practical importance of visa-free travel. The sides discussed future joint measures to ensure the smooth functioning of the visa-free regime. Deputy Director General of the Department for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) Simon Mordue visited Georgia from 23 to 25 April (MoFA, April 24, 2019).

14. Davit Zalkaliani: Situation over Davit Gareji Monastery is settled, Azerbaijani authorities decided to open the points that were closed

The situation over the Davit Gareji Monastery complex is settled, Azerbaijani authorities decided to open the points that were closed," – Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Davit Zalkaliani stated.

"As soon as we were informed, we communicated with our Azeri colleagues. I had a conversation with my counterpart. The situation is settled, the Azerbaijani authorities decided to open the points that were closed. We will work in the future to resolve the problem that is related to delimitation of Georgia-Azerbaijan border, more intensively," said FM Zalkaliani (1 TV.ge, February 25, 2019).

15. Georgian government should demand the appointment of the UN Security Council meeting - Natelashvili arrived in Davit Gareji

Shalva Natelashvili, the leader of Labor Party arrived in Davit Gareji and called on the Georgian authorities for timely reaction on the fact of shutting the closing the road to the monastery by border guards of Azerbaijan.

The Leader of the Labor Party says that the Georgian government should demand an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council (Rustavi2, April 26, 2019).

16. Would be better if executive government makes a statement in regard to that - Chugoshvili does not answer the question about the situation in Davit Gareji

Representatives of Georgian parliamentary majority do not want to speak about the situation in Davit Gareji Monastery. Tamar Chugoshvili, the Vice Speaker of the parliament states that would be better if the representatives of the executive government make comments about the issue. In particular, one of the leaders of the ruling party said that those people, who are involved in the solution of the problem should talk about the decision of the Azerbaijani side (Rustavi2, April 29, 2019).

17. David Gareji is waiting for the blockade - historians speak about the government's responsibility and the necessity of creating the commission

In order to prevent further aggravation of the situation in Davit Gareji specialists speak about the necessity of creating a commission. According to specialists, politicians, experts and international organizations should be

involved in the work of the Commission. According to historians, it is necessary to evaluate the risks and find the solution together. "All segments should be included, both the parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition, a board of scientists. The process that is going on for 28 years must be completed jointly. The state, which is striving towards the North Atlantic Alliance, to the EU and does not have a demarcation line, is absurd. This means that it is passive and indifferent to entire state institutions," says theologian Giorgi Tiginashvili (Rustavi2, April 30, 2019).

18. President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is visiting Tbilisi

The President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe will begin official meetings in the morning. Liliane Maury Pasquier will hold the first meeting in the parliament. The meetings are scheduled with the Chairman of the Parliament, later with the Prime Minister and the President of the country.

- ✓ The ceremonial session dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Georgia's accession to the Council of Europe will be opened on April 30 in the Parliament of Georgia (Rustavi2, April 29, 2019).

19. Georgian PM sends condolences over death of former senator Richard Lugar

Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze has sent his condolences over the death of former Indiana Senator Richard Lugar. Tbilisi is host to the Lugar Lab, officially called the Center for Public Health Research, which is named after former American Senator Richard Lugar.

It became operational in 2013. The centre is run by Georgia's National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), under the Georgian Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (Agenda.ge, April 29, 2019).

20. Convoy of "Russian bikers" was not allowed in Georgia

The Georgian side did not allow the convoy of the bikers coming from Russia to cross the Larsi checkpoint.

According to international media, a group of 30 bikers were trying to cross the Georgian border. Reportedly they were going to Greece to participate in the bikers' gathering.

The information is also confirmed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, the agency does not specify whether the so-called "Night Wolves" were between the detained bikers (Rustavi2, April 29, 2019).

21. Christine Lagarde to meet Salome Zurbishvili and Mamuka Bakhtadze within the visit to Georgia

The Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Christine Lagarde will visit Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Georgia on May 16-21. As Mark Horton, the Assistant Director of Middle East and Central Asia Department of IMF told the Georgian First Channel, meetings with top officials of the country, including President Salome Zurbishvili and Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze, will be held in Tbilisi. This is the first time when the IMF director arrives in Georgia. "Extended Fund Facility" program supported by the International Monetary Fund is being implemented in Georgia (1 TV.ge, April 29, 2019).

22. Salome Zurbishvili: I would like to congratulate the whole Georgia and wish each family happiness

I would like to wish the whole Georgia the happiness, which we see at Holy Trinity Cathedral today, – President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili stated. The president attended the Easter Liturgy at Sameba (Holy Trinity) Cathedral in Tbilisi (1 TV.ge, April 28, 2019).

23. President to pardon prisoners for Easter Holiday

According to Lasha Zhvania, Head of the President's Administration, President pardoned 42 convicts, among them 19 prisoners. There are 3 women among the pardoned prisoners (1 TV.ge, April 25, 2019).

24. President did not pardon Mamaladze this time either - brother of clergyman announces large-scale rallies

The brother of the archpriest Giorgi Mamaladze announces large-scale rallies after the Easter, demanding to free a clergyman. According to Tornike Mamaladze, the Patriarchate had all the possibilities to apply the President's Pardoning Act to the deacon so that he would meet the Easter at home. Tornike Mamaladze will hold tent rally at the government administration besides the Patriarchate (Rustavi2, April 26, 2019).

25. Mamuka Bakhtadze: In Easter epistle, Patriarch focused on mutual forgiveness, patriotism, which are so essential for Georgian nation

In Easter epistle, the Patriarch once again focused on mutual forgiveness, patriotism, which are so essential for the Georgian nation, – said Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze, who attended the Easter Liturgy in the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze wished a Happy Easter to every citizen celebrating this great feast today (1 TV.ge, April 28, 2019).

26. Defense Minister paid tribute to the memory of the deceased in the war

The Defense Minister visited the cemeteries at Mukhatgverdi and Vashlijvari. Levan Izoria recalled the heroes killed in the August war and paid tribute to their memory at Mukhatgverdi Cemetery (Rustavi2, April 29, 2019).

27. Police detain a woman who claimed to be the mother of ten children from Ukraine

A woman, who claimed to be a mother of ten Ukrainian children is detained in Zugdidi. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has launched an investigation last week about a woman accompanying her 10 children. According to the investigation, it was revealed that four out of 10 children were born in 2017 (Rustavi2, April 26, 2019).

28. Georgia-Israel business forum to be held in Tbilisi

Georgia-Israel business forum will be held today in Tbilisi with the organization of Israel-Georgia Chamber of Business. About 100 businesspersons and investors from Israel will attend the forum. According to Itsik Moshe, President of the Israel-Georgia Chamber of Business, members of the Israeli business delegation are mainly interested in technologies, construction, agriculture, real estate, tourism, and food industry spheres (1 TV.ge, April 30, 2019).

29. Georgian Armed Forces celebrate 28th anniversary of establishment

April 30 is the Day of Georgian Army. The Georgian Armed Forces celebrate the 28th anniversary of the establishment today. The main activity of the awarding ceremony of the Georgian military servicemen with medals will then take place at Vaziani military base. Representatives of legislative and executive authorities and Diplomatic Corps will attend the ceremony (1 TV.ge, April 30, 2019).

30. EU launches three new environmental projects in Georgia

Delegation of the European Union to Georgia publishes information about these projects:

Protection of Georgian Environment

The first new project is called Support to implementation of the environmental provisions of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. This new project will help Georgia implement environmental commitments included in the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and will help better protect Georgian nature, decrease pollution and improve the quality of the air.

Implementing partner: Consortium led by TRANSTEC.

Climate Change

The second new project is the project EU4Climate which will be implemented by the UNDP. This new project is bringing together Georgia and other partners of the Eastern Partnership to tackle Climate Change. This new project will help Georgia lower its greenhouse gas emissions and fulfil its commitments under the Paris Agreement. It will help mitigate climate change and limit its negative impacts on the environment and the life of people.

Implementing partner: United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Environmental Well-being

The last new project is the project EU4Environment which will be implemented by the OECD. This new project is bringing together Georgia and other partners of the Eastern Partnership and will help preserve natural capital and increase people's environmental well-being by supporting environment-related action, unlocking opportunities for greener growth, and setting mechanisms to better manage environmental risks and impacts.

Implementing partner: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (1 TV.ge, April 25, 2019).

❖ Economy and Social Affairs

31. Rehabilitation of Zugdidi-Anaklia Connecting Road Completing

Rehabilitation works of 11km Zugdidi-Anaklia (km15-km25) secondary road are completing before its due time. Rehabilitation works are funded from the state budget. Contract cost of the project amounts to GEL 10, 188, 800. Activities at the mentioned road started in September 2018 and are at the completing stage right now (georoad.ge, April 25, 2019).

32. Rehabilitation of Akhaltsikhe-Armenian Border Access Road Ongoing

Rehabilitation of 14.6km (km98-km112) Akhaltsikhe-Ninotsminda (border of Armenia) international road is ongoing. Rehabilitating section passes through the villages Gorelovka and Zhdanovi and ends at Georgia-Armenia border. The project, worth GEL 13, 808, 673 is funded from the state budget (Georoads.ge, April 23, 2019).

33. IMF: Lowest rate of problem and nonperforming loans among Caucasus and Central Asian countries is in Georgia

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the lowest rate of the problem and non-performing loans among the Caucasus and Central Asia countries is in Georgia.

According to the report published by the organization, Georgia's problem loans constitute 12 percent of its total loans, while non-performing loans are within 2.5 percent. Both indicators have improved compared to statistics published in May 2018, when the share of problem loans exceeded 15 percent, and non-performing loans were within 5 percent. According to the IMF, in 2015-2018, private sector lending has increased by 15 percent in Georgia, which is the best rate in the region (1 TV.ge, April 29, 2019).

❖ Sports and Culture

34. Wings for Life: charity run set to bring thousands to Kakheti province

Georgia will join Wings for Life, a global charity run held in hundreds of locations across the world, for the sixth time when participants gather at the start line in the sunlit eastern province of Kakheti on Sunday. Promoted as a "life-changing, global movement", this year's run will be held on May 5 (Agenda.ge, April 29, 2019)

35. Soviet Georgian classic to return to Cannes Film Festival 55 years after screening

Soviet Georgian feature The White Caravan will return to the big screen at the Cannes Film Festival next month, 55 years after the film was first screened to audiences of the French cinema event. Directed by Eldar Shengelaia and Tamaz Meliava in 1963, the feature was part of the competition at the following year's Cannes cinema celebration and will return to the French Riviera with Shengelaia in attendance.

It will be screened alongside a dozen other restored classics created by directors including Oliver Stone, Tao Jin and Jean Renoir between the 1930s-1990s (Agenda.ge, April 29, 2019).

Additional Information

April 30, 2019

OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

1 USD - 2.7007 GEL
1 EUR - 3.0067 GEL

1 GBP - 3.4780 GEL
1 TRY - 0.4578 GEL

100 RUB - 4.1654 GEL
100 JPY - 2.4152 GEL

25 day forecast

Tuesday
30 April



11° 24°

Wednesday
1 May



13° 25°

Thursday
2 May



14° 26°

Friday
3 May



13° 25°

Saturday
4 May



11° 20°

- **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](#)**