

# NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

June 6-10

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## ❖ Occupied Regions

### ❖ Abkhazia Region

#### 1. UK Foreign Office: Russia continues violation of human rights in Georgia's occupied regions

An annual report of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office focuses on Russian influence in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions and the severe infringement of ethnic Georgians' human rights.

The report says Russia is responsible for the restriction of free movement of ethnic Georgians at a number of locations, as well as closing the so-called crossing points and limitation of education, healthcare and property rights (*Agenda.ge, June 7, 2019*).

### ❖ Tskhinvali Region (so called South Ossetia)

#### 2. USAID provides \$ 1mln for Georgian farmers affected by hail, living near occupation line

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will assist Georgian farmers living across the occupation lines near Shida Kartli and who have been affected by hail with \$1 million in aid.

Mission Director of USAID in Georgia Peter Wiebler said that it will also be possible to purchase the equipment for farmers that will "ease their work in the future".

Georgian Agriculture Minister Levan Davitashvili said support for the people living across the occupation lines is the priority for the government (*Agenda.ge, June 6, 2019*).

#### 3. Tbilisi says 'elections' in occupied Tskhinvali illegal

The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs denounced today's "parliamentary elections" in occupied Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia), which "blatantly violates the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders".

Any so-called elections held in the occupied territories are illegal and cannot have any legal effect, as they are in contradiction with the fundamental norms and principles of international law", the Ministry stated.

It further underscored that the above "elections" represent yet another futile attempt by Russia and its occupation regime in Tskhinvali to legitimise the ethnic cleansing of Georgians in the region, Georgia's illegal occupation and forceful change of its sovereign borders (*Agenda.ge, June 9, 2019*).

#### 4. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia denounce 'elections' in occupied Tskhinvali

Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia do not recognise "parliamentary elections" in one of Georgia's Russian occupied regions of Tskhinvali (South Ossetia).

The foreign ministries of the three Baltic states also reaffirmed their support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity (*Agenda.ge, June 9, 2019*).

#### **5. Ukraine, Czech Republic do not recognise 'elections' in Tskhinvali**

The Foreign Ministry of Ukraine "strongly condemns the holding and does not recognise the results" of so-called parliamentary elections in Georgia's Russian occupied region of Tskhinvali.

"Ukraine considers this step as another attempt by Russia and its occupation regime to legitimise the situation in this occupied territory of Georgia, including as a result of "ethnic cleansing" and numerous other systematic gross violations of human rights", the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry stated.

"It also reaffirmed Ukraine's "consistent support" for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and welcomed the peaceful steps taken by the Government of Georgia "aimed at the reconciliation between Georgians and Ossetians".

The Czech Foreign Ministry also expressed concern about the developments in both of Georgia's Russian occupied regions - Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. It also reiterated its "full support" for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity (*Agenda.ge, June 9, 2019*).

#### **6. US condemns so-called parliamentary elections in Georgia's occupied Tskhinvali**

The US does not recognise the legitimacy of the so-called parliamentary elections held in Georgia's Russian-occupied Tskhinvali (South Ossetia) region, conducted on June 9.

"Our position on Abkhazia [Georgia's another Russian-occupied region] and South Ossetia remains clear: these regions are integral parts of Georgia. Accordingly, we reiterate our strong support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders," reads the statement released by the US embassy to Georgia earlier today.

### **❖ Foreign Affairs**

#### **7. Challenge accepted: President shows how she minimises waste**

President of Georgia Salome Zurbashvili has accepted the challenge of the European Union Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzell and showed how she is helping to minimise waste in the country. President Zurbashvili released a [video on her official Twitter page](#) on the World Environment Day, June 5.

#### **8. PM Bakhtadze in US: I'll make you remember Georgia with three figures - 1, 28, 8,000**

He said that 1 defines the historic moment for Georgia when the country elected the first female President Salome Zurbashvili last year.

"28 years ago we have chosen the own way of development. The own way of democratic development." Bakhtadze said, adding that during the time the country has been transformed into the regional leader for democracy and the easiest country for starting up business." Bakhtadze said that Georgians started winemaking 8,000 years ago (*ITV, June 7, 2019*).

#### **9. CoE Committee of Ministers to address Russia's refusal to pay €10mln for deportation of Georgians**

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe will discuss the deportation case of Georgians from Russia in 2006 in its upcoming meeting, after Russia declined to pay 10 million EUR to Georgian citizens, a fine set by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in January 2019.

Russia had three months' time to pay the fine. The term expired on April 30, 2019. The Georgian Justice Ministry appealed to the Committee of Ministers on May 2, 2019 to help make Russia pay the fine.

"The committee will discuss the case under enhanced supervision and will also hold debates. The committee will request explanations from Russia on why it declined to pay the fine [as Russia did not even officially named reasons behind the refusal]," the Georgian Justice Ministry says (*ITV, June 7, 2019*).

#### **10. CoE releases its conclusion on execution of European Court's verdict on Georgia's Ex-official Merabishvili**

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has released its conclusion on the execution of the 2017 judgement of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on ex-Interior Minister of Georgia Ivane Merabishvili, which ruled that the imprisonment of the latter was fair but Merabishvili's rights were violated in a certain situation.

However, the court concluded that the predominant purpose of that restriction had changed over time.

"While in the beginning that purpose had been the investigation of offences based on a reasonable suspicion, later on the predominant purpose became to obtain information about [former Georgian Prime Minister Zurab] Zhvania's death and [former Georgian President Mikheil] Saakashvili's bank accounts", the verdict read. The court held unanimously that there had been no violation of the right to liberty and security (*Agenda.ge, June 8, 2019*).

#### **11. Cyprus grants 'safe country' status to Georgia**

Cyprus is now the 13th country in the EU/Schengen zone to put Georgia on the safe country list. The other countries that listed Georgia as a safe country are Bulgaria, France, Lichtenstein, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Iceland, Luxembourg, Ireland, Estonia, Denmark and the Czech Republic.

Putting Georgia on the safe country list is a demonstration of the country's political stability, economic development and positive environment for human rights protection and safety (*Agenda.ge, June 8, 2019*).

### **❖ Internal Affairs**

#### **12. All votes counted: ruling party candidate wins by-elections**

The results are as follows:

- ❖ Lado Kakhadze – the Georgian Dream party – 61.83 per cent.
- ❖ Shalva Shavgulidze – Free Democrats and the European Georgia – 38.17 per cent (*cesko.ge, June 10, 2019*).

#### **13. Meeting of ruling party held at central office of Georgian Dream Party**

The meeting of the parliamentary majority has been held at the central office of the ruling "Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia" Party.

Chairman of the party Bidzina Ivanishvili headed the sitting. Current issues and plans for the nearest future were discussed (*ITV, June 10, 2019*).

#### **14. Archil Talakvadze: Georgian Dream will have renewed team and program by 2020**

The leader of the parliamentary majority, Archil Talakvadze, told journalists that at today's session of parliamentary majority the results of the elections were summarized.

According to him, "Georgian Dream" will be presented before the society with the renewed political program and team by 2020. According to him, consultations have already begun.

"We have already started working on a new political programme. Consultations have already been launched, which will naturally result in a renewed political programme and team by the 2020 elections," – Talakvadze said (*1tv, June 10, 2019*).

## **❖ Economy and Social Affairs**

#### **15. PM Bakhtadze in US: Georgia is becoming economic hub in region**

"Our strategy is to make Georgia a regional hub for tourism, for international business, logistics, education and innovations", Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze told the audience at the World Affairs Council in Seattle on June 7.

He said during the 28 years since Georgia gained independence from the Soviet Union, the country tried to tread its own democratic course as an independent nation (*Agenda.ge, June 8, 2019*).

#### **16. Georgia attracts \$281 mln in FDI in Q1 of 2019**

Foreign investors have been demonstrating growing interest in various fields of Georgia's economy and especially in social and personal service activities, financial and transport sectors, show the latest preliminary data of the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat).

These are the top three sectors that enjoyed 75.1 per cent of all foreign direct investments (FDIs) that Georgia attracted in the first quarter (Q1) of 2019.

In particular, FDI by major economic sectors was the following:

- ❖ Social and personal service activities: \$139.8 million
- ❖ Financial sector: \$42.7 million
- ❖ Transport: \$28.6 million (*Agenda.ge, June 10, 2019*).

#### **17. Global Finance names Georgia among countries with most dynamic investment attractiveness**

The Global Finance magazine named Georgia among the countries with the most dynamic investment attractiveness on the basis of economic stability, indicators of management quality and business regulations, announces Georgian Ministry of Economy.

The Ministry of Economy said that Global Finance ranked Georgia among countries which are of particular importance due to sharp growth and interest from investors. Georgia is among the advanced European countries in this group.

“In addition, according to economic components, Georgia is named among the top 10 best countries for ease of doing business and perception of corruption”, said the ministry (*Agenda.ge, June 10, 2019*).

### **18. Governor of central bank at parliament: ‘our policy aims at long-term stability of lari’**

Governor of the National Bank of Georgia (NBG) Koba Gvenetadze presented the annual report for 2018 at the Parliament of Georgia today and also answered questions of MPs regarding the recent fluctuation of the Georgian national currency lari.

Gvenetadze said that the year 2018 was important in terms of foreign sector activity and in particular in terms of export revenue, tourism revenue and increase in remittances.

Opposition MP’s raised the issue of the lari at the meeting and asked Gvenetadze why the NBG filled the reserves during the lari fluctuation. To note, last week the NBG filled currency reserves with \$30 million (*Agenda.ge, June 10, 2019*).

### **19. Georgian PM participates in International Economic Forum of the Americas**

Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze has joined over 200 top officials in Montreal, Canada to participate in the International Economic Forum of the Americas (IEFA), and addressed the opening session and delivered a speech at the discussions dedicated to “Global Economy in Transition.”

The IEFA aims to promote an exchange of views and perspectives on pressing economic issues of our times among world leaders, renowned experts and business executives.

Bakhtadze was one of the speakers of the discussion which accented the concern of economists and investors that global economic growth has hit its peak and that it is now entering a slow-down phase (*Agenda.ge, June 10, 2019*).

## **Additional Information**

**June 11, 2019**

**OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES**

1 USD - 2.7348 GEL	1 GBP - 3.4705 GEL	100 RUB -4.2244 GEL
1 EUR - 3.0920 GEL	1 TRY - 0.4722 GEL	100 JPY - 2.5175 GEL

Tuesday 11 June	Wednesday 12 June	Thursday 13 June	Friday 14 June	Saturday 15 June
				
18° 30°	18° 32°	18° 32°	17° 31°	17° 32°

-  **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](#)**