

NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

July 12-15

Compiled by: **Aleksandre Davitashvili**

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❖ Occupied Regions

- 1. Archil Talakvadze: Sport brings people together and I'm convinced that we will be able to restore territorial integrity by restoring bridges with our Abkhazian and Ossetian brothers peacefully**

Sport brings people together and I'm convinced that we will be able to restore the territorial integrity of Georgia by restoring bridges with our Abkhazian and Ossetian brothers peacefully, through development of our country, " – said Parliament Speaker Archil Talakvadze.

Within the framework of the Campaign "Healthy Lifestyle", the match between Georgian Parliament and Samachablo football teams was held at Tengiz Burjanadze Stadium in Gori, which ended in a draw 3:3 (*ITV, July 14, 2019*).

- 2. Main opposition candidate in Abkhazia stands down due to ill health, replacement vows to stay on same course**

One of the opposition parties in Abkhazia has officially nominated its chairman Alhaz Kvitsinia as a candidate for president of the breakaway republic.

A local party official said this in a speech at a party congress of the Amtsakhar party, one of the largest opposition parties in the disputed region.

Aslan Bzhania, the joint candidate of the Abkhaz opposition, who has opposed the incumbent de facto president of breakaway Abkhazia, will not run in the presidential elections due to ill health.

Addressing supporters from Germany, where he is undergoing medical treatment, Bzhania said he would support the opposition cause but can't currently run for president (*DFWatch.net, July 15, 2019*).

❖ Foreign Affairs

- 3. Cyber-attack from IP address registered with Russian provider carried out on 1tv.ge**

A cyber-attack from IP address registered with a Russian provider was carried out on the webpage 1tv.ge of Georgian First Channel.

The specialists detected scanning of the web site. The suspicious IP address has been blocked for the time being (*ITV, July 12, 2019*).

- 4. Alliance of Patriots sends three MPs to Moscow to 'enhance relations' between Georgia and Russia**

The three Georgian MPs represent the Alliance of Patriots and plan to meet Duma member Sergey Gavrilov, who sparked outrage last month when he sat in the speaker's chair in the old parliament building in Tbilisi during a conference for parliamentarians from Orthodox countries.

A party spokesperson said the visit, which also includes meetings with other Russian politicians, aims to enhance relations between the two countries. Alliance of Patriots (AP) is a political party that is generally perceived as having pro-Russian sympathies.

Its MPs Ada Marshania, Giorgi Lomia and Gocha Tevdoradze will also meet Konstantin Kosachev, who chairs the Foreign Affairs Committee in the Russian parliament's upper chamber and is notorious for his staunch pro-Putin stance (*DFWatch.net, July 13, 2019*).

5. MIA: Situation in Davit Gareji remains calm

"There is a calm situation in the territory of Davit Gareji, at the Georgia-Azerbaijan border area," – it was stated in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

The video was spread on the social network, which tells about an incident between border guards and locals that took place at the border area in Davit Gareji. According to the guide, who works at the site, the cause of the conflict was the fact that Azerbaijani border guards took icons from the church without permission. This caused a protest of the locals. However, as he says, the issue was soon resolved (*1TV, July 15, 2019*).

6. Meeting between Georgian and Azeri sides in Davit Gareji

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, meeting between Georgian and Azeri sides is underway in Davit Gareji, near the Udabno Monastery. It is unknown yet, who specifically participates in the meeting.

In addition, MIA reported that a minor incident took place between the local and Azerbaijani border guards on the Davit Gareji section of the Georgia-Azerbaijan border. However, the tension has been defused on time and the situation on the ground remains calm. In addition, according to the MIA, the study into the incident is currently underway.

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7. Georgian Ambassador summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan

Georgian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Zurab Pataradze was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan in connection with the incident, which took place in Davit Gareji monastery complex. Georgian Ambassador was asked to make explanations with regard to the incident, – Azerbaijani media reports in that regard.

"Unfortunately, such actions run contrary to the spirit of the strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Georgia, and we regard this incident as a provocation aimed at the confrontation between the two countries," – the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Monday (*1TV, July 15, 2019*).

8. Teimuraz Kupatadze: Situation in Davit Gareji remains calm, pilgrims and tourists can move freely in the coming days

A meeting between Georgian and Azeri sides has been held in connection with the incident that took place at Davit Gareji monastery complex.

After the meeting, Teimuraz Kupatadze, deputy head of the Border Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia told journalists that all restrictions will be lifted on that section of the border within the next week and pilgrims and citizens will be able to move again on this section of the territory freely.

“The situation in Davit Gareji remains calm, in the coming days, pilgrims and tourists can move freely there” – He said.

Teimuraz Kupatadze also spoke about yesterday’s incident. According to him, local residents verbally insulted Azerbaijani border guards, the incident led to the confrontation. The situation was defused after the timely intervention of the Georgian border guards.

In addition, according to Kupatadze, Azerbaijani border guards said at the meeting that they took the icons from the monastery due to bad weather conditions, as they might have been damaged (*ITV, July 15, 2019*).

❖ Internal Affairs

9. Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs says German ambassador was in the Parliament, while other ambassadors were in touch with MIA on June 20

Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Nino Javakhadze made comments on the statement made by Minister Giorgi Gakhraia on July 11.

Javakhadze talked about the communication between diplomats and the Minister of Internal Affairs during the events of June 20-21.

“If you remember that night, the German ambassador made a statement in the Parliament. As for the rest of the ambassadors, they were in touch with us and were watching the developments all night long. The German ambassador was in the Parliament. He arrived in the Parliament after the situation escalated,” said Nino Javakhadze.

The above comment of the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs was released by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*ITV, July 12, 2019*).

10. Tbilisi Mayor – Democracy does not mean chaos

Democracy does not mean chaos or freedom of expression – exchanging insulting words – Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze said when talking to journalists.

When speaking about June 20-21 developments outside the parliament building in Tbilisi, Kaladze said that statements of some political leaders calling for intrusion into the parliament building were unacceptable.

“Everyone in the country has the right to freedom of expression in a peaceful way. . . Seeing so many injured people was very painful also beating of police officers. This was an irresponsible act on part of political leaders,” Kaladze said.

The protest was dispersed by the riot police with the use of tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannon. About 240 people both civilians and law-enforcers were injured during the night of June 20-21 (*ITV, July 13, 2019*).

11. General Prosecutor's Office released video material into case of Nika Melia

The General Prosecutor's Office released [full video](#) material into case of Nika Melia, one of the leaders of National Movement Party in connection with June 20-21 developments outside the parliament building in Tbilisi in opposed to the video material, which the defense side of Nika Melia created to mislead the public and allegedly shows different interpretation of the events.

A special briefing was held at General Prosecutor's Office regarding pieces of evidence gathered into the case of Nika Melia. The Prosecutor's Office determined that Melia was the leader of group violence (*ITV, July 13, 2019*).

12. One law enforcer detained in connection with June 20-21 developments

One employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was detained in connection with June 20-21 developments, – the Prosecutor Koka Katsitadze said at the briefing held today.

“Based on evidence obtained within investigation on the fact of alleged excess of power by the law enforcers against individual participants of the demonstration near the Parliament building on June 20-21, one employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was detained”, – Katsitadze said.

According to the Prosecutor, based on evidence obtained from the investigation it was revealed that the employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs exceeded his official power and physically abused the person detained for committing an administrative offense (*ITV, July 15, 2019*).

13. MIA detained four persons for participating in group violence on June 20-21

Deputy Interior Minister Vladimer Bortsvadze made this statement at the briefing held today.

“The Ministry of Internal Affairs is intensively investigating the developments which took place in front of Parliament on 20-21 June. Investigation is carried out under the Articles 225 and 315 of the Criminal Code of Georgia.

In the course of the mentioned criminal case, another 4 persons were arrested on the basis of a judge's decision for participating in group violence. The process of identification of other participants is intensively underway”, – Vladimer Bortsvadze said (*ITV, July 15, 2019*).

14. Activists of National Movement continue hunger strike in Shekvetili

Activists of National Movement Mindia Adadze and Marad Shavadze left the Poti hospital. After leaving the hospital they still rejoined the rally ongoing on the territory adjacent to Bidzina Ivanishvili's house in Shekvetili and continued hunger strike.

Both participants of the action were taken to the Poti hospital by the ambulance due to their health condition yesterday.

The activists of the National Movement have been holding the hunger strike in Shekvetili for already the 20th day. They demand the resignation of the Minister of Internal Affairs Giorgi Gakharia (*ITV, July 14, 2019*).

15. Mamuka Bakhtadze: Iakob Gogebashvili's Deda Ena schoolbook will return to schools from September

According to the Head of Government, the Georgian language faced serious challenges in the time of Iakob Gogebashvili, the Georgian patriot who succeeded in creating a book handed down from generation to generation.

"The great Georgian who authored Deda Ena, a book we all cherish, was born here. A man who made a tremendous contribution to the historic mission of spreading the Georgian language. I would like to greet all of Georgia from here, Iakob Gogebashvili's House Museum. It was a time when unity of genuine Georgian patriots was of crucial importance. As the Georgian language was on the brink of extinction, posing a devastating threat to Georgia at that time, Georgian patriots accomplished the impossible by creating a book destined to be passed down from generation to generation, one that has preserved for us the Georgian language and Georgian alphabet. And that was Iakob Gogebashvili's goal in writing this book-he wanted this book to be passed down from generation to generation, to preserve something most sacred to us, our language and our script. Subsequently, the entire Georgian system of education stemmed from Iakob Gogebashvili's Deda Ena principles, and this book is revered and respected by every Georgian," Mamuka Bakhtadze said (*ITV, July 15, 2019*).

❖ Economy and Social Affairs

16. Remittances from Russia to Georgia decreased, from EU increased

In June 2019, the volume of money transfers from abroad constituted 143.6 million USD (398.8 million GEL), which is 6.3% more than the amount in June 2018.

According to the National Bank of Georgia, the largest amount, 34.78 million USD was transferred to Georgia from Russia. However, the volume of money, compared with the amount in June of the last year, decreased by 11 percent.

19.3 million USD were transferred to Georgia from Italy (+ 23.99 percent), 17 million USD from Greece (+ 23.06 percent), 15.29 million USD from the USA (+7.53 percent), 13.38 million USD from Israel (+0.67 percent). The volume of remittances from EU countries in June increased by 25% (*ITV, July 15, 2019*).

❖ Sports and Culture

17. Georgia will host Group Phase matches of FIBA EuroBasket 2021

Four countries – Georgia, Czech Republic, Germany and Italy will multi-host FIBA EuroBasket 2021, the 41st edition of the event. The regarding announcement was made in Munich today.

Seven bidding countries awaited the decision on EuroBasket 2021 hosts: Georgia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia.



President of Georgia Salome Zurbashvili, Ambassador of Georgia to Germany Elguja Khokrishvili, President of Georgian Basketball Federation Paata Guraspauli and Basketball players Tornike Shengelia and Vladimir Boisa attended the host announcement ceremony in Munich (*ITV, July 15, 2019*).








Additional Information

May 2, 2019

OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

1 USD - 2.8555 GEL 1 GBP - 3.5344 GEL 100 RUB -4.5596 GEL
1 EUR - 3..2210 GEL 1 TRY - 0.5000 GEL 100 JPY - 2.6464 GEL

Tuesday 16 July	Wednesday 17 July	Thursday 18 July	Friday 19 July	Saturday 20 July
				
17° 30°	20° 32°	20° 33°	21° 31°	23° 33°

-  **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](#)**