

# NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

August 5-7

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## ❖ Occupied Regions

### **1. Foreign Ministry releases statement in connection with 11th anniversary of 2008 Russia-Georgia war**

The statement reads that 11 years passed after Russia carried out a large-scale military intervention against Georgia and illegally occupied Georgia's two inseparable Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. With a fundamental violation of international law norms, Russia attempted to alter Georgia's state borders with violence that seriously threatened the security of the region and whole of Europe (*1TV, August 7, 2019*).

### **2. PM – With consolidation of our nation, together with international community and consistent policy, we will achieve full de-occupation of Georgia**

Eleven years passed after the August war. It was the war, which was followed by the occupation of Georgia's two inseparable regions on part of Russia, destruction of hundreds of Georgian villages and tens of thousands of IDPs – Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze wrote in the social network in connection with the 11th anniversary of August 2008 Russia-Georgia war.

According to PM, it is the objective of any government to protect the lives of its citizens, ensure peace and evade misfortune facing the country. "With the consolidation of our nation, together with the international community and consistent policy, we will achieve full de-occupation of Georgia," Bakhtadze wrote (*1TV, August 7, 2019*).

### **3. Elizabeth Rood - United States proudly continues to stand with Georgia in caring for those communities displaced by the war**

"In the 11 years since the Russian invasion of Georgia, each of these houses has come to tell a story of loss – the loss of families, friends, homes, and loved ones. But they also tell stories of courage, friendship, and the resilience of people and the country they love. The United States proudly continues to stand with Georgia in caring for those communities displaced by the war and helping to ensure they have a dignified life here until they may safely return to their homes." Elizabeth Rood, Acting US Ambassador to Georgia said.

### **4. EU Statement on the 11 years anniversary of conflict between Russia and Georgia**

"Eleven years have passed since the August 2008 conflict between the Russian Federation and Georgia. During this time the Russian Federation has not only maintained but increased its military presence in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in violation of international law and its commitments under the 12 August 2008 agreement.

Fundamental human rights of the conflict-affected population continue to be violated, including through restrictions on freedom of movement by so-called 'borderisation', temporary closures of

crossing points and illegal detentions and through the violation of the right to safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

The conflicts in Georgia have caused displacement and trauma to the lives of thousands of people and that legacy now affects generations. The EU welcomes and supports sincere and apolitical efforts on all sides to address humanitarian and security issues.” – reads the statement (*1TV, August 7, 2019*).

#### **5. Foreign Ministry of Norway - Conflict over Georgia's occupied regions must not be forgotten**

“The conflict over Georgia's occupied regions must not be forgotten. Eleven years on, Russian troops remain on Georgian soil and the conflict is still unresolved. Once again we call on Russia to comply with the August 2008 ceasefire agreement and pull its forces out of Georgia,” Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway Ine Eriksen Søreide wrote on Twitter in connection with the 11th anniversary of the August war (*1TV, August 7, 2019*).

#### **6. Foreign Minister of Georgia – De-occupation is one of the main priorities of Ministry**

“Eleven years passed after the Russia-Georgia war. But unfortunately, the situation has not changed since. Occupation and actual annexation continue as well as discrimination of those ethnic Georgians who spontaneously returned to their homes, especially in Gali region” – Davit Zalkaliani, Minister of Foreign Affairs said.

As Foreign Minister claimed, brutal murders indicate that the situation in the occupied regions remains difficult. “De-occupation remains one of the main priorities of our diplomatic institution,” Zalkaliani said (*1TV, August 7, 2019*).

#### **7. Anatoly Bibilov: The crimes committed against the South Ossetian people by Mikheil Saakashvili have no limitation period**

“The South Ossetian side declared 76 people, led by Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, internationally wanted. The crimes committed during the tragic events of the August aggression may not have a limitation period. There will always be persecution of these people. The actions of the Georgian leadership have a direct connection with the genocide of the Ossetian people,” Bibilov said. He is convinced that “sooner or later Saakashvili and those responsible for launching a war against South Ossetia will be punished.”

“Saakashvili today has some protection from the West and the United States. However, I think that common sense will one day prevail, and both Americans and Europeans will realize that Saakashvili is a culprit and should be judged not on the basis of the Criminal Code of Georgia but the principles of international law – for crimes against humanity. Sooner or later he will be held accountable,” the de facto president said (*IPN.GE, August 7, 2019*).

#### **8. Anatoly Bibilov says "South Ossetian Republic must become part of Russia"**

According to Anatoly Bibilov, the de facto president of South Ossetia, “the republic must be part of Russia and the Ossetian people must get united.”

“It will be historically correct if the republic of South Ossetia becomes part of the Russian Federation. People cannot live separately. In one part, in the smaller one there is a republic, while the other part belongs to Russia. It would be right for the Ossetian people to be part of Russia and after that we

should try to make Ossetia united again, without being divided in the north and the south. This is very important and vital for the Ossetian people,” Bibilov told reporters (*IPN.GE, August 7, 2019*).

#### **9. Putin, Khajimba to discuss restoration of Sokhumi Airport**

Raul Khajimba, the de facto president of occupied Abkhazia, intends to discuss the issue of rebuilding the Sokhumi airport during a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Sochi.

“We are going to discuss the important issues of the country's economic and financial situation, the issue of the airport. We are now preparing relevant documentations to rebuild the airport and are looking for a sponsor,” Khajimba told reporters (*IPN.GE, August 7, 2019*).

### **❖ Internal Affairs**

#### **10. Archil Talakvadze introduced amendments drafted by ruling team on electoral legislation reform**

“We Introduce the following amendments: based on the Constitutional Bill, the proportional system with zero thresholds will be launched from the 2020 parliamentary elections in Georgia; the second, the party financing system will be replaced with a fairer and objective model where the party obtaining even a single mandate in the Parliament will enjoy financing pro-rata the votes obtained in the elections and the smaller parties will enjoy comparatively higher financing.

The third, the party entering the parliament and having one different gender in every three candidates, will receive a 30 percent supplement”, – said Archil Talakvadze (*1TV, August 5, 2019*).

#### **11. Based on changes proposed into Election Code, anti-advertisement of political party should not exceed 25% of election clip**

An anti-advertisement prepared by a political party during the election period should not exceed 25% of an election clip – The ruling party presented changes proposed to be made into Election Code to oppositional parties and civil sector.

Also based on the initiative, an election clip of the political party should not contain elements of advertisement of another party, its number or symbolic signs.

A broadcaster is prohibited to allocate a political advertisement in TV or radio air that contradicts to the requirements as set by the Georgian legislation (*1TV, August 6, 2019*).

#### **12. TV Pirveli owner likely to be questioned on August 8**

Vakhtang Tsereteli, owner of “TV Pirveli” TV station, is likely to be questioned on August 8, - InterPressNews was informed by the General Prosecutor’s Office. According to him, Tseretelu requests the presence of a judge magister at the questioning.

Vakhtang Tsereteli, owner of “TV Pirveli” TV station, has been summoned for questioning. Reportedly, Vakhtang Tsereteli will be questioned within the investigation that is underway into Japaridze-Khazaradze case. No other details have been reported yet (*IPN.GE, August 7, 2019*).

### **❖ Economy and Social Affairs**

#### **13. 1,099,474 travelers visited Georgia in July 2019**

1,099,474 international travelers visited Georgia in July 2019. The increase compared with the same period of the last year is + 5.8 %.

Head of Tourism National Administration of Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development Mariam Kvrivishvili presented the corresponding statistics provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. According to the data, the number of tourist visits reached 570 482, which is 5 505 more more than in July 2018 (growth + 1%) (*ITV, August 5, 2019*).

14. Mariam Kvrivishvili: Despite the propaganda, Russian citizens still desire to arrive in Georgia  
Despite the propaganda, Russian citizens still desire to arrive in Georgia, – Head of Tourism National Administration of Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development Mariam Kvrivishvili made this statement.

According to the data, in July the number of travelers from Russia decreased only by 6.4%, however, the growth in the January-July period is 22%.

“In July, the rate of land-based travel from Russia, including through the Kazbegi checkpoints, has been increased. Also, Citizens of Russia continue to use transit routes,” – Kvrivishvili said.

The Head of Tourism National Administration of Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development Mariam Kvrivishvili has presented the international travelers’ statistics provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*ITV, August 5, 2019*).

#### **15. Workers employed in railway tunnel construction went on strike, Trade Union reports**

Workers employed in the railway tunnel construction connecting East-West Georgia in Khashuri municipality went on strike, – Ilia Lezhava, Deputy Chairman of the New Trade Union of Railway Workers told the First Channel.

This is about 60 people employed by the “23rd China Railway Bureau”. According to Lezhava, construction workers say they do not enjoy paid leave. According to him, one of the main problems is the lack of security norms.

As Ilia Lezhava notes, the negotiations are currently underway between the new trade union and the 23rd China Railway Bureau, but an agreement has not been reached yet (*ITV, August 5, 2019*).

#### **16. Anaklia Development Consortium makes announcement - Michael Cowgill to be Chairman of Supervisory board**

Anaklia Development Consortium makes an announcement about major changes to its Supervisory Board.

According to the statement published by Consortium, Mamuka Khazaradze and Badri Japaridze, the current Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Anaklia Development Consortium’s Supervisory Board, announced that they intend to step down from the Anaklia Development Consortium’s Supervisory Board.

As noted in the statement, three new members have now been nominated to the board: R. Michael Cowgill, President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Georgia; Ted Jonas, Senior Counsel with the international law firm Dentons; and Jean-Patrick Voisin, President of Concorde Capital. The nominations are expected to be approved at the consortium’s meeting of shareholders scheduled for later this month (*ITV, August 5, 2019*).

#### **17. PM - We have done everything to make Anaklia project successful**

"We have done everything and moreover, we will take all the steps that are necessary for Georgia to have a deep water port, – Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze said while speaking about the Anaklia project.

He reiterated the government's readiness to successfully implement the Anaklia project. "The Anaklia project is of strategic importance to us. We have repeatedly stated this and we have taken all the possible steps to make this project successful. We welcome any action from the Consortium that will lead to the successful completion of this project," Prime Minister said (*ITV, August 6, 2019*).

#### **18. Turkish FM says that Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is "window to Europe" for Asia**

The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway is a "window to Europe" for Asia, the Foreign Minister of Turkey Mevlut Cavusoglu said, Trend News Agency reports via Turkish media.

Cavusoglu noted that BTK is one of the most important transport projects. "The BTK will facilitate the process of transporting goods from China to Europe," the minister said.

On October 30, 2017, a solemn ceremony on the occasion of the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway was held at the Baku International Sea Trade Port.

The BTK railway is built on the basis of the Azerbaijani-Georgian-Turkish intergovernmental agreement. At the initial stage, the volume of freight traffic will be at the level of 6.5 million tons of cargo, and up to one million passengers will be transported through this railway (*ITV, August 6, 2019*).

#### **19. PM – Pensioners and other groups to be able to buy 35 medicines at 1 GEL**

Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze talked about prices of medicines and access to health services at Tbilisi Sakrebulo. PM said that healthcare remained one of the most painful problems together with unemployment.

According to PM, pensioners, socially vulnerable people and persons with limited physical capabilities will be able to buy 35 medicines prescribed for chronic diseases at 1 GEL. "This is a priority instruction given to the Healthcare Ministry," PM said and added that the medicines at 1 GEL would be available at 118 pharmacies across the country starting today (*ITV, August 6, 2019*).

#### **20. NBG says it will use all the available resources for GEL's long-term stability**

The National Bank, when fulfilling its functions, is independent of political or any other influence and acts within the framework of the mandate as defined by Constitution – reads the statement of National Bank of Georgia (NBG).

According to NBG, under conditions of inflation targetting, central banks aim at the long-term stability of the national currency that also serves as a precondition of stability of prices and financial system.

"Many factors influence the short-term dynamics of the exchange rate of GEL. We will act with purpose of GEL's long-term stability and will use all the available tools and resources including monetary interventions not to admit high inflation," reads the statement (*ITV, August 6, 2019*).

#### **21. Archil Talakvadze – I hope intervention of NBG will do it possible so that the exchange rate is not reflected on inflation**

"We will certainly manage to overcome this difficult situation," – Speaker of the Parliament Archil Talakvadze said when commenting on the current GEL's exchange rate. He said everyone, both the authorities and the political opposition, bears the responsibility for this issue (*ITV, August 6, 2019*).








## **Additional Information**

**August 8, 2019**

### **OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES**

1 USD - 2.9338 GEL	1 GBP - 3.5628 GEL	100 RUB - 4.5118 GEL
1 EUR - 3.2806 GEL	1 TRY - 0.5348 GEL	100 JPY - 2.7607 GEL

Thursday 8 August	Friday 9 August	Saturday 10 August	Sunday 11 August	Monday 12 August
				
16° 27°	19° 30°	20° 33°	20° 32°	19° 30°

-  **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](#)**