

# NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

August 29 – September 2

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

### **1. Deputy Head of Analytical Service – De-facto South Ossetian representatives disrupted IPRM meeting in Ergneti**

De-facto South Ossetian representatives disrupted the 95th meeting of Group on Incidents Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM) in Ergneti – Irakli Antadze, Deputy Head of the Analytical Service of State Security Service told journalists.

Antadze said that destructive activities of the occupational forces that resulted in troubling incidents had to be discussed at IPRM meeting in Ergneti village, adjacent to the occupied line, today.

The latest illegal 'borderization' works in Gugutiantkari village, installation of artificial barrier in courtyards of locals and continuation of creeping occupational policy by Russia as well as the movement of Russian military vehicles detected in proximity to Chorchana village of Khashuri Municipality, that serves as provocation and damages security environment at the site, were on the agenda for discussions.

Antadze said that de-facto South Ossetian representatives voiced ultimatum and threatened the functioning of IPRM format. Antadze also said that Russia would be held responsible for its provocative activities near Chorchana village if the situation turned to the tense (*ITV, August 29, 2019*).

### **2. Lasha Darsalia – Representatives of Diplomatic Corps were asked to inform their governments about situation near Chorchana village**

We asked representatives of Diplomatic Corps to inform their governments about the situation near Chorchana village of Khashuri Municipality – Lasha Darsalia, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs said after the meeting with diplomats.

According to Darsalia, the diplomats were also provided with the information about the meeting of Group on Incidents Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM) held in Ergneti today.

"The format of IPRM meetings is one of the most important mechanisms for de-escalation of the situation but representatives of the occupational regime disrupted the meeting today," Darsalia said.

Darsalia said that diplomats were informed about the movement of Russian military vehicles detected by State Security Service in proximity to Chorchana village of Khashuri Municipality and were asked to report to their governments (*ITV, August 29, 2019*).

### **3. Foreign Ministry applies to international community to react upon illegal developments at occupational line**

The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement about the latest developments in proximity to Chorchana village of Khashuri Municipality, near the occupational line.



Foreign Ministry expresses concern about the mobilization of military equipment and personnel by the occupational regime.

Foreign Ministry says that similar destructive moves represent yet another provocation that worsens security environment and aims at destabilization of the situation.

Georgian Foreign Ministry calls on Russia to stop illegal activities, fulfill the internationally taken commitments as per August 12, 2008 ceasefire agreement, and respect Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Foreign Ministry of Georgia also calls on the international community to react adequately upon the developments at the occupational line and take measures to stop the illegal activities (*1TV, August 30, 2019*).

#### **4. Deputy FM: Abolishment of Georgian police checkpoint at Chorchana is not even the subject of discussion**

Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia Lasha Darsalia says that the abolishment of the Georgian police checkpoint at Chorchana village of Khashuri Municipality is not even the subject of discussion.

"This is, and has always been, a territory controlled by the central government of Georgia, as it is recorded, including by the European Union Monitoring Mission," Darsalia told reporters near Chorchana village.

Darsalia said the main task to bring journalists at the site was the society to see the recent situation here with their own eyes.

"The most important thing now is to have complete information for both us and the international community. Yesterday we immediately called for a meeting of diplomatic corps and gave relevant instructions to the respective embassies, who are currently working with our partners. It can be said that we are in constant contact with our partners to provide them with comprehensive information and to jointly plan appropriate steps to prevent further escalation," Darsalia said (*1TV, August 30, 2019*).

#### **5. Kakha Kemoklidze – Situation at Chorchana checkpoint is stable**

The situation at the Georgian checkpoint near Chorchana village is stable at present. The information about shooting released on August 29 may have had to do with the active hunting season – Kakha Kemoklidze, Chief of Staff of Georgia's National Security Council (NSC) told reporters near the village of Chorchana.

Kemoklidze said that representatives of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and mobile groups of Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) were patrolling across the segment.

He expressed hope that the situation would be regulated through negotiations and claimed that the Georgian police checkpoint would not be abolished.

Representatives of de-facto regime gave ultimatums to the Georgian side to abolish the Georgian checkpoint near Tsneli until 6:00 AM today (*1TV, August 30, 2019*).

#### **6. Tskhinvali occupational regime claims that statements of co-chairs of Geneva discussions are unacceptable**

The de-facto Foreign Ministry of Tskhinvali occupational regime evaluates the activities of Georgian authorities as 'yet another attempt to check the firmness of South Ossetian state border.'



According to the de-facto South Ossetian Foreign Ministry, the Georgian government does not want to establish conditions for non-resumption of Georgian-Ossetian armed conflict.

The de-facto Foreign Ministry also said that the statements of co-chairs of Geneva International Discussions, EU and OSCE regarding the current situation were unacceptable.

"We urge the international organizations to make efforts to stop Georgia from plotting provocations. We also call on the Georgian side for taking the moves to give a constructive way out of the escalating crisis," reads the statement of the de-facto Ministry (*1TV, August 30, 2019*).

#### **7. EUMM releases statement regarding situation in Chorchana village**

The European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia released a statement regarding the situation in Chorchana village of Khashuri Municipality.

"The EUMM monitors are maintaining a constant, 24-hour presence at the administrative borderline in the Chorchana/Tsnelisi area, with a view to monitoring the situation and reduce tensions," the European Union Monitoring Mission said in the statement.

"Today, the Head of Mission, Mr. Erik Høeg, has also visited the area to assess the situation. The Mission-managed Hotline is being actively used to exchange information between all actors and to reduce the potential for inadvertent escalation," the statement reads (*1TV, August 30, 2019*).

#### **8. Kakha Kemoklidze – Police checkpoint at Chorchana village will remain at its current place**

The Georgian police checkpoint at Chorchana village will remain at its current place – Kakha Kemoklidze, Chief of Staff of Georgia's National Security Council (NSC) told reporters after the meeting held at Chorchana village.

According to Kemoklidze, representatives of the central Georgian government and de-facto authorities had different opinions regarding the location of the checkpoint although the issue of dismantling the block post was not on the agenda for discussions during the meeting.

Kemoklidze reported that de-facto authorities expressed concern that locals have about the checkpoint, while the Georgian side explained that the block post functioned to ensure security environment at the site.

According to Kemoklidze, all participants of the meeting agreed that steps must be taken for de-escalation of the situation. "Despite differences of opinions, the common pathos and purpose served the aim to discharge the tension," he said (*1TV, August 30, 2019*).

#### **9. De facto regime of occupied Tskhinvali to open block post in Tsnelisi village**

Anatoly Bibilov, the de-facto leader of the occupied Tskhinvali region said that so-called South Ossetia will open a block post in Tsnelisi village to protect locals.

According to the de-facto leader, Georgia must remove the police checkpoint located at Chorchana village. Bibilov said that representatives of the central Georgian government and de-facto authorities hold to different opinions regarding the location of the checkpoint but negotiations will continue.



A meeting was held at the village of Chorchana within the framework of Incidents Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM) format between the Georgian side, representatives of the de facto Tskhinvali and Russian occupation forces.

Representatives of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and OSCE also took part in the meeting, which lasted for more than 3 hours (*ITV, August 30, 2019*).

#### **10. US Department of State releases statement regarding situation in Chorchana**

The US Department of State has released a statement about the situation in Chorchana village of Khashuri Municipality.

"The United States of America is closely observing the military fortification at the administrative borderline of Georgia's Tskhinvali region occupied by Russia.

We call on all sides to abstain from escalation and work through the hotline of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and co-chairs of Geneva International Discussions for resolution of the current situation.

Besides, we call on the Russian Federation to apply to all the available channels to avoid escalation of the situation across the administrative borderline," reads the statement (*ITV, August 30, 2019*).

#### **11. State Security Service: Statement by Tskhinvali regime, as if Georgian police officers shot down the UAV, is untrue**

Statement by the representatives of the de facto Tskhinvali, as if Georgian police officers shot down the unmanned aerial vehicle by firearms near the village of Abano, Kareli municipality, is not true, – State Security Service of Georgia reports in that regard.

According to the state service, the unmanned aerial vehicle so-called Quadcopter belonging to the occupation forces has collided with the unmanned aerial vehicle so-called Quadcopter belonging to a civilian, as a result of which both of them have been damaged and crashed (*ITV, September 1, 2019*).

### **❖ Foreign Affairs**

#### **12. Chairman of Swedish Parliament – We saw how Russian occupation affects everyday life of people**

Sweden strongly supports Georgia's territorial integrity and state sovereignty – Andreas Norlén, Chairman of Parliament of Sweden said after the meeting with Archil Talakvadze, Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, during a joint news briefing.

"We saw how the Russian occupation affects the everyday life of people," Norlén said. The Swedish delegation visited the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) to Georgia on August 28 (*ITV, August 29, 2019*).

#### **13. President of Georgia – Russia tries to tame Georgia with everyday provocations. It plays on our nerves**



Russia tries to tame Georgia with everyday provocations. It plays on our nerves – Georgia's President Salome Zurbashvili said within the framework of her visit to France during the speech delivered at the Forum of MEDEF International.

President said that nothing had changed Georgia's goal to return to Europe and explained that Russian economic sanctions and August 2008 Russia-Georgia war served as the attempt to force Georgia to change its pro-western course.

"Russia tries to put us in boundaries through which Georgia will lose its three achievements: stability, democracy and European choice. However, it will not succeed. Our aspiration is strong and can be explained with our roots. Being European is in our blood," Zurbashvili said.

President of Georgia said that Georgia was the country of 5 million Europeans and it had to return to the big European family (*1TV, August 29, 2019*).

#### **14. House Foreign Affairs Committee - Russia must immediately cease its destructive behavior and respect Georgian sovereignty**

The House Foreign Affairs Committee of the US Congress commented about the latest developments in Chorchana village of Georgia's Khashuri Municipality with a statement posted on Twitter.

"Russia's further militarization of South Ossetia is outrageous and unacceptable. Putin and his government continue to recklessly disregard the sovereignty of other nations. Russia must immediately cease its destructive behavior and respect Georgian sovereignty," reads the statement (*1TV, August 31, 2019*).

#### **15. Latvian Foreign Minister - Unwanted Russian military presence continues in Georgia**

Unwanted Russian military presence continues in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, we should not forget that – Edgars Rinkēvičs, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia wrote on his Twitter page.

"25 years ago Russian troops left Latvia, we are grateful to all Latvian diplomats, our friends and allies, international organisations who worked hard to make this happen. Still, unwanted Russian military presence continues in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, we should not forget that," Rinkēvičs Twitted (*1TV, August 31, 2019*).

#### **16. Salome Zurbashvili met Vladimir Zelensky in Warsaw**

President of Georgia Salome Zurbashvili is paying a working visit to the Republic of Poland. President will take part in events dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II in Warsaw, along with world leaders.

Within the framework of the visit, Salome Zurbashvili has held a meeting with Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky in Warsaw today. In addition, the Georgian President will hold several important meetings during her visit. Salome Zurbashvili will also meet with Speaker of the Swedish Parliament Andreas Norlén; President of the Republic of Bulgaria Rumen Radev; President of the Republic of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid; Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel; President of the Slovak Republic Zuzana Caputova.

At the end of the day, Salome Zurbashvili will attend an official dinner hosted by the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, as well as a concert commemorating the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II (*1TV, August 31, 2019*).

#### **17. Vladimir Zelensky invites Salome Zurbashvili to Ukraine**



President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili held a meeting with President of Ukraine Vladimir Zelensky in Warsaw, Poland.

During the meeting, two Presidents discussed issues related to enhancing the relations between the two countries and common goals. Vladimir Zelensky invited the President of Georgia to Ukraine.

According to the President's press office, as it was noted Georgia and Ukraine have similar challenges and goals and the two countries should seek ways to resolve them together. The talks also focused on rapprochement with the EU and global threats.

President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili is paying a working visit to the Republic of Poland. Salome Zurbishvili will take part in events dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II in Warsaw, along with world leaders (*ITV, August 31, 2019*).

#### **18. Salome Zurbishvili met Bulgarian President in Warsaw**

President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili held a meeting with President of Bulgaria Rumen Radev in Warsaw, Poland, – the Press Office of President of Georgia reports.

During the meeting, the Bulgarian President reaffirmed his unwavering support for Georgia's territorial integrity, noting that Bulgaria is Georgia's reliable partner country.

The meeting focused on the recent developments in Georgia and the existing threats. The sides discussed the further deepening of economic ties between the two countries and the security of the Black Sea region. According to the President's Press Office, Georgia is actively cooperating with Bulgaria in terms of deepening relations with NATO and the European Union. Bulgaria supports Georgia on its path to EU integration.

President of Georgia held a meeting with President of Ukraine Vladimir Zelensky in Warsaw, Poland this morning. During the meeting Vladimir Zelensky invited Salome Zurbishvili to Ukraine.

President of Georgia is paying a working visit to the Republic of Poland. Salome Zurbishvili will take part in events dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II in Warsaw (*ITV, September 1, 2019*).

#### **19. Salome Zurbishvili met President of Estonia**

President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili has held a meeting with President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid in Warsaw, Poland.

During the meeting, the Presidents discussed the current situation in Georgia and the situation on the occupation line.

The Estonian president said that she called the occupation line an "evil line" and last week she was directly involved in the process to provide world leaders with information about Georgia personally. Talks touched upon Eastern Partnership and deepening cooperation between two countries.

President of Georgia is paying a working visit to the Republic of Poland. Salome Zurbishvili will take part in events dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II in Warsaw (*ITV, September 1, 2019*).



## **20. Polish President: Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, Occupation, military captives, provocations still continue**

"Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. Occupation, military captives, provocations still continue. We are responsible in front of the European and world community not to allow any military aggression. Recently, we have even seen the return of imperialist tendencies in Europe, attempts to change borders by force, attacks on other states, taking land, enslaving citizens. Closed eyes are not a good recipe for keeping the peace; it's a good way to encourage aggressive personalities, to give the green light for new attacks," - Andrzej Duda said (*1TV, September 1, 2019*).

## **❖ Internal Affairs**

### **21. Archil Talakvadze and members of the parliamentary majority met with opposition**

Speaker of Georgian Parliament Archil Talakvadze and members of the parliamentary majority met with representatives of opposition parties today. The meeting focused on holding the 2020 parliamentary elections under the proportional system.

As lawmakers said after the meeting, the meeting was mainly of a technical nature and concerned the schedule of public-discussions over the constitutional amendments and staffing the commissions.

The parties agreed that for both initiatives on the proportional electoral system, the Public Commissions would be staffed by the same members.

One initiative, drafted by the parliamentary majority, envisages holding the parliamentary elections under the proportional system with the zero threshold and without election blocs by 2020. The second initiative prepared by opposition proposes a fully proportional election under a three-percent-threshold, allowing the election blocs (*1TV, September 1, 2019*).

### **22. Constitutional Bill to be initiated at Bureau sitting today**

Constitutional Bill on the enactment of the proportional electoral system with the zero threshold and abolition of the majoritarian system will be initiated at today's sitting of the Bureau.

The draft prepared by the parliamentary majority envisages holding the parliamentary elections through the proportional system by 2020.

In particular, based on amendments, to define the number of the mandates obtained by the parties, the number of votes obtained by the party shall be multiplied with the 150 and divided into the total number of obtained votes by all the parties (*1TV, September 2, 2019*).

### **23. Mamuka Khazaradze and Badri Japaridze released statement**

"We would like to remind the Prosecutor's Office that according to the Georgian constitution and any rule of law, the only legitimate space where the Prosecutor's Office can present evidence and prove guiltiness of a person is the court.

The aforementioned closed-door meeting is a gross disrespect for principles of Constitution of Georgia and principles established by the civilized world. It is unclear, what the provision of information by one side



behind closed doors on a specific criminal case (in which the trial has not yet launched) can serve, except to convict us and announce guilty before the trial.

We demand that the case be handled in a transparent manner, in compliance with all the standards guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia and international human rights law” , – the statement of TBC Bank founders reads (*1TV, September 2, 2019*).

#### **24. PM Bakhtadze resigns**

Bakhtadze had made 21 pages FACEBOOK post during which he tried to explain his resignation. Mainly he concentrated on the success which Government had under his management. On 19<sup>th</sup> page, we can read: “When I was appointed to the post of the PM, the challenge was to create and implement charter of the development of the country. For this moment, the charter is elaborated and is being implemented. Hence I can step down from my duties,” – reads the statement. At 3PM Bakhtadze will meet the journalists and will have Q&A, after he briefs them and society (*TV Pirveli, September 2, 2019*).

#### **25. Who will take over Bakhtadze ?**

This is the main question starting from the beginning of this week. It is reported that the favorite candidate for Ivanishvili is Gakharia, therefore it is almost confirmed that he will replace Bakhtadze. The post of Minister of Interior will be taken by either Irakli Gharibashvili or Vakhtang Gomelauri. Representatives of GD are planning to announce about this tomorrow (*TV Pirveli, September 2, 2019*).










## **Additional Information**

**September 2, 2019**

### **OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES**

1 USD - 2.9457 GEL	1 GBP - 3.5867 GEL	100 RUB - 4.4367 GEL
1 EUR - 3.2523 GEL	1 TRY - 0.5054 GEL	100 JPY - 2.7690 GEL

Monday 2 September	Tuesday 3 September	Wednesday 4 September	Thursday 5 September	Friday 6 September
				
15° 24°	17° 28°	16° 26°	17° 26°	17° 25°

-  **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](#)**