

NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

September 24-25

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❖ Occupied Regions

❖ Abkhazia Region

1. Georgian Foreign Minister holding talks about territorial conflicts at UNGA

Additional measures and mechanisms to be used to discharge the tense situation with respect to security in Georgia's occupied regions are actively discussed in the United Nations with partner states and organizations – Davit Zalkaliani, Georgian Foreign Minister said when commenting about the meetings held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session.

"The current situation across occupied regions and the so-called borderization process were the main topics for discussions. Everybody is concerned. We discussed all the available formats which are relevant. It was underlined that additional measures and mechanisms have to be activated to make resolution of the issue more efficient," Zalkaliani said (*ITV, September 24, 2019*).

2. President of Latvia – Russia harshly violates territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine

Russia harshly violates the territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine – Egils Levits said when addressing participants of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

According to President of Latvia, violation of the international law and UN principles on part of Russia must not turn into a 'norm.'

The 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is being held in New York. The general debate is to take place from September 24 to September 30, with dozens of world leaders scheduled to address the General Assembly (*ITV, September 25, 2019*).

3. Foreign Minister – Georgia has full support of partners regarding situation in occupied regions

"We are working with everybody to find the effective means for regulation of the situation. We listen to and take into consideration the recommendations of our partners," Zalkaliani said.

Additional measures and mechanisms to be used to discharge the tense situation with respect to security in Georgia's occupied regions are actively discussed in the United Nations with partner states and organizations – Davit Zalkaliani, Georgian Foreign Minister said on September 24 when commenting about the meetings held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session (*ITV, September 25, 2019*).

4. Andrzej Duda – Poland will continue protecting independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine

"All countries have an equal right to self-determination. Poland has been and will continue protecting independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine. State borders must not be altered with the use of force. Poland, which was badly hit last century, has full moral obligation to talk about the issue clearly. We act so on behalf of peace and freedom that are so valuable for Poland," President of Poland Andrzej Duda said (*1TV, September 25, 2019*).

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

5. Georgian PM thanks US Government for financing new enterprises in adjacent villages of occupied territories

Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia thanked the US Government for financing new enterprises in the adjacent villages of Georgia's occupied territories and allocation of USD 500 000 with that purpose.

During the meeting with Acting US Ambassador to Georgia Elizabeth Rood, PM underlined that the initiative serves as yet another clear confirmation of US support to Georgia.

Discussions were held about the latest developments across the occupied territories, difficult humanitarian situation, worsened security environment and destructive moves of the occupational forces at Chorchana village of Khashuri Municipality.

New enterprises located in the adjacent villages of the so-called Administrative Border Line will be financed by the U.S. government through the joint project of Partnership Foundation and USAID Zrda. Startup Georgia will carry out the project (*1TV, September 24, 2019*).

6. Gazprom to begin gasification of occupied Tskhinvali region's villages

Gazprom, Russian Public Joint Stock Company and energy giant will begin gasification of occupied Tskhinvali region's villages.

A working meeting was held between de-facto South Ossetian President Anatoly Bibilov and Chairman of the Gazprom Management Committee Alexei Miller, in St. Petersburg on September 23, as Russian media reports.

Anatoly Bibilov and Alexey Miller examined the course and prospects of cooperation. "In particular, it was a question of exporting gas to South Ossetia, the timing of the gasification project for settlements," Res, state news agency reported (*1TV, September 24, 2019*).

7. Russian Foreign Ministry about situation at Tsnelisi village

Discharge of tension at Tsnelisi village in the shortest term is crucial – reads the statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry published after the meeting of Russian Deputy Foreign Minister with co-chairs of Geneva International Discussions in Moscow.

The current situation at the so-called border of occupied South Ossetia with Georgia was the main topic of consultations.

"The tension should be discharged through the means of compromise and dialog. Unilateral acts must be rejected," reads the statement (*1TV, September 24, 2019*).

8. Illegally carried out flight detected in direction of occupied Tskhinvali region

An illegally carried out flight by a jet of the Russian occupational forces was detected today (September 24) in direction of the occupied Tskhinvali region – State Security Service reports.

The State Security Service says that the hotline is activated, and co-chairs of Geneva International Discussions and EUMM to Georgia are notified about the fact.

The latest developments at Chorchana village of Khashuri Municipality will be discussed at the next round of Geneva International Discussions planned to take place in October (*ITV, September 24, 2019*).

9. President of Georgia – I am talking about hardship of locals residing across the line, which separates relatives, divides villages and where fatal incidents and provocations are part of the everyday life

"I am speaking on behalf of the citizens who are residing across the territories of occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions where human rights are regularly violated, free movement is limited and the right to accessibility to healthcare and education is infringed," Zurabishvili claimed.

President of Georgia said that she wanted to warn the international community that Abkhazian language recognized by Constitution of Georgia and Abkhazian identity were on the verge of devastation; the demographic situation of Abkhazian nation was catastrophic and the whole world had to stand together to save and protect the rich cultural diversity of Abkhazia (*ITV, September 25, 2019*).

❖ Foreign Affairs

10. Measuring works to be carried out at Georgia-Azerbaijan state border

The second stage of the meeting of experts for Delimitation and Demarcation Commissions of Georgia-Azerbaijan state border has been launched since September 23 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports.

The experts of the Commission of the two countries will visit the remaining arguable sections of the Georgian and Azerbaijani state border and carry out geodesic and measuring works. The works are planned for September 27.

The first meeting of experts was held on August 19-23. The results of the works will be presented at the next meeting to be held in Tbilisi. The date of the meeting will be determined through diplomatic channels of the two sides (*ITV, September 24, 2019*).

11. Russian Hacker extradited by Georgia to the U.S. Pleads Guilty to Huge Data Thefts

A Russian hacker extradited by Georgia to the U.S. admitted Monday that he executed the largest known cyber-attack against a U.S. bank, pleading guilty to charges that he stole data on more than 80 million clients of JPMorgan Chase & Co. and other institutions that netted hundreds of millions of dollars in ill-gotten gains, as reported by Bloomberg.

The hacker, Andrei Tyurin, 36, was accused of stealing customer information from 12 financial news companies, banks and other financial firms, including Fidelity Investments, E-Trade Financial and Dow Jones & Co. His co-conspirators used the information to ply customers with spam emails promoting stocks, hoping to cash out at higher prices, the U.S. government said.

Tyurin, who was apprehended last year in the Republic of Georgia and extradited to the U.S., pleaded guilty to charges of conspiracy, wire fraud, illegal online gambling and computer hacking. As part of the deal with prosecutors, the government will recommend that he serve 15 to 20 years behind bars, though the final decision on his sentence will be up to the judge (*1TV, September 24, 2019*).

12. Donald Tusk, Jean-Claude Juncker congratulate Giorgi Gakharia on becoming Prime Minister

Donald Tusk, President of the European Council and Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission congratulated Giorgi Gakharia on becoming the Prime Minister of Georgia.

In a congratulatory letter, it is underlined that the European Council and European Commission remain strong supporters of Georgia's territorial integrity and continue supporting the Georgian government's efforts targeted at the involvement of locals residing in the conflict regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. According to the letter, the European Council and European Commission are looking forward to working with Georgian PM within the framework of strong bilateral relations and Association Agreement for the implementation of long-term political and economic plans (*1TV, September 24, 2019*).

13. President of Georgia meets with President of European Council

President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili met with President of the European Council Donald Tusk within the framework of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

"Georgia continues moving forward to the European Union and any high-ranking meeting is a chance to see more Georgia in Europe and more Europe in Georgia," President Zurbishvili wrote in Twitter social network (*1TV, September 25, 2019*).

14. Moscow hopes to maintain recent "channel of dialogue" with Tbilisi after Karasin's retirement

Russia hopes to maintain a dialogue with Georgian Prime Minister's Special Representative for Relations with Russia Zurab Abashidze after Grigory Karasin's dismissal as Russian deputy foreign minister, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko told RIA Novosti on Wednesday.

"This matter is currently being resolved. I hope that this channel of dialogue will be preserved in this or that form," Rudenko said.

Georgian and Russia cut diplomatic relations after the 2008 August war. Since that time, the two countries maintain a dialogue within Geneva International Discussions and Abashidze-Karasin talks (*1TV, September 25, 2019*).

❖ Internal Affairs

15. President's Parliamentary Secretary says he trusts General Prosecutor's Office

Dimitri Gabunia, Parliamentary Secretary of President of Georgia was questioned earlier today at General Prosecutor's Office regarding the pardoning of prisoners by President Salome Zurbishvili on August 28.

Gabunia told journalists that he trusted the General Prosecutor's Office 'with 200%' but refrained from going into details about the questioning.

President's Parliamentary Secretary said that the investigation would determine who were responsible for the list of the pardoned persons but claimed that he did not have the information about the names on the list.

"I am sure that the investigation will make a conclusion and reveal those who committed the crime. They should be severely punished by the law," Gabunia said (*ITV, September 25, 2019*).

16. Co-rapporteurs of PACE - Parliament must rectify the selection process for Supreme Court judges

The co-rapporteurs of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) for the monitoring of Georgia have welcomed steps to make the process of selecting Supreme Court judges more transparent, but have expressed serious concern at the manner in which the High Council of Justice prepared the list of candidates recently sent to parliament.

Ending a visit to Tbilisi, Titus Corlatean (Romania, SOC) and Claude Kern (France, ALDE) said shortcomings in the process – already succinctly outlined by Georgia's Public Defender, the OSCE/ODIHR and civil society organisations – included a lack of clear and uniform selection criteria, excessive discretion by High Council of Justice members in who is selected, and a failure to provide reasoned decisions for both the establishment of the shortlist and the final selection of candidates. The rapporteurs noted that questions have been raised about the qualifications of some candidates selected by the High Council of Justice, as well as concerns relating to allegations of clear conflicts of interest (*ITV, September 25, 2019*).

❖ Economy and Social Affairs

17. Prime Minister meets with heads of U.S. leading investment funds

Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia met with heads of the U.S. leading investment funds. The delegation of investors is headed by co-founder and partner of MizMaa Ventures Yitz Applbaum.

According to Press Service of Georgian PM, talks were held about potential investment projects, rating of Georgia as per international organizations with respect to simplicity of doing business as well as Georgia's aspiration to make the country a transit and logistics hub of the region (*ITV, September 24, 2019*).

18. PM meets with Director of ADB Representation in Georgia

Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia met with Director of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Representation in Georgia Yesim Elhan-Kayalar.

Talks were held about the new strategy of ADB's cooperation with Georgia for 2019-2023. The strategy of cooperation was approved on August 23 and aims at the reduction of poverty through economic integration with neighbor states and the rest of the world.

The ADB has cooperated with Georgia since 2007 and has allocated more than USD 2.8 billion for the country's development (*ITV, September 24, 2019*).

19. First Vice President of EBRD invites Georgian PM to London Summit

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is not only an important partner of Georgia but is an organization which plays a significant role in Georgia's development. The bank has financed more than

200 projects – Giorgi Gakharia, Georgian Prime Minister said during the meeting with Jürgen Rigterink, First Vice-President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

Head of the Georgian government thanked First Vice President of EBRD for a new strategy elaborated for development of the country and underlined that the document was in full compliance with the Georgian government's priorities (1TV, September 25, 2019).

20. Signing of agreement on employment of Georgian citizens planned in Slovenia

The signing of an agreement on employment of Georgian citizens is planned in Slovenia. Negotiations are being held between the two countries at the order of the Georgian government.

After activation of the visa liberalization process, similar negotiations are also ongoing with other countries of the European Union (1TV, September 25, 2019).

Additional Information

September 26, 2019

OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 USD - 2.9737 GEL | 1 GBP - 3.6963 GEL | 100 RUB -4.6231 GEL |
| 1 EUR - 3.2684 GEL | 1 TRY - 0.5227 GEL | 100 JPY - 2.7706 GEL |

| Thursday 26 September | Friday 27 September | Saturday 28 September | Sunday 29 September | Monday 30 September |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 14° 26° | 15° 26° | 14° 23° | 13° 24° | 13° 24° |

-  **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](#)**