

NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

September 26-29

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Date: **September 30, 2019**

❖ Occupied Regions

❖ Abkhazia Region

1. 26 years passed since fall of Sokhumi

The Georgian government and parliament members, leaders of various political parties gathered at Memorial of Heroes in Tbilisi to commemorate those, who died in the struggle for Georgia's territorial integrity. Wreaths are laid at the memorial.

Military confrontation in Abkhazia began on August 14, 1992. Military activities lasted for 13 months and 13 days and ended with the fall of Sokhumi on September 27, 1993.

Russian, North Caucasian and Cossack units stormed the building of the Council of Ministers of Abkhazia early on September 27 and captured Zhiuli Shartava, head of the Council of Ministers of Abkhazia, the Mayor of Sokhumi and 27 employees of the Council of Ministers. The captured people who did not leave Sukhumi were shot dead (*1TV, September 27, 2019*).

2. Giorgi Gakharia: September 27 is most difficult and painful day for every citizen of Georgia

"For all citizens of today's Georgia, regardless of their age, this day, September 27, marks the day when Sokhumi fell 26 years ago. Of course, both we and Abkhazians have learned a lot and have grown since. We share many bonds, and what binds us is the understanding and acknowledgment that the war was the most devastating tragedy. And that is the foundation allowing us to say that peace is critically important to both Georgians and Abkhazians. Consequently, it is important for every citizen to understand that war is not a solution, and that tireless efforts 24/7 building the country and democratic institutions, and a strong and unified Georgia is what we must serve together.", – Giorgi Gakharia said (*1TV, September 27, 2019*).

❖ Foreign Affairs

3. Sergey Lavrov: It will be right to restore flights to Georgia

"It seems to me that it will be right to restore flights from Russia to Georgia after the majority of the Georgian population realized the counterproductive and provocative nature of the trick that took place in the Georgian parliament during the session of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy," – Lavrov said.

As he noted Russia had made a decision to abolish the visa regime with Georgia in the summer of 2019, but, according to him, tensions between the countries "pushed back" the process (*1TV, September 26, 2019*).

4. Giorgi Gakharia met with Japanese Ambassador

Development of Japan-Georgia bilateral relations builds on such shared fundamental values as democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule of law, – it was underlined during today's meeting between Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia and Japan's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Tadaharu Uehara.

According to Prime Minister's Press Office, talks focused on the enhanced cooperation between the two countries, as evidenced by high-level visits.

Special emphasis was placed on the potential for developing economic cooperation. The meeting singled out Japan as one of Georgia's most promising economic partners and export markets. The exhibition Georgia-the Cradle of Wine in Tokyo was praised as an especially important step toward promoting Georgia and Georgian culture in Japan, all of which is designed to foster deeper bilateral economic cooperation.

The Prime Minister and the Ambassador also discussed the positive dynamic in Japanese Foreign direct investment and in the tourism industry. Giorgi Gakharia commended the active engagement of Japan's private sector in Georgia's economy, namely at SME levels, and expressed readiness personally to meet with and maximally support Japanese investors if need be (*1TV, September 26, 2019*).

5. David Zalkaliani met with Sergey Lavrov

"On the sidelines of the 74th UN General Assembly, at the initiative of Switzerland, the meeting has been held between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia David Zalkaliani and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov. At the meeting, the Georgian side focused on the de-occupation of Georgian territories, developments in the occupied regions and Georgia-Russia relations", – reads the statement released by Georgian MFA. Russian Foreign Ministry also reported about the meeting held between the two ministers.

In addition, David Zalkaliani said today that Switzerland had come up with an interesting proposal, particularly, Swiss side would have communication with the Russian Federation to find a way to discuss the situation in the occupied territories, even within the frame of UN General Assembly (*1TV, September 26, 2019*).

6. Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs on Zalkaliani-Lavrov meeting

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs has released information about the meeting held between David Zalkaliani and Sergey Lavrov in New York.

"As part of its Good Offices, Switzerland has initiated and facilitated a meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Georgia, H.E. David Zalkaliani, and the Russian Federation, H.E. Sergey Lavrov.

The meeting took place on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly on 26 September 2019 in New York. Switzerland has a long-standing tradition in fostering dialogue. Starting from March 2009 it has been representing the interests of Russia in Tbilisi and the interests of Georgia in Moscow." – the statement reads (*1TV, September 26, 2019*).

7. Georgian MFA: Georgian side focused on de-occupation issue at Zalkaliani-Lavrov meeting

"Georgian Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani met with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on the sidelines of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The meeting was held at the initiative and through the mediation of the Swiss Confederation.

At the meeting the Georgian side raised the issue of de-occupation of its regions. Conversations also included the security situation and the recent developments in Georgia's occupied territories, as well as problematic issues in the relations between Georgia and Russia", – reads the statement released by Georgian MFA (*1TV, September 26, 2019*).

8. Giorgi Gakharia: I hope meeting held at General Assembly HQ will help to resolve complex problems in Georgia-Russia relations

"International law and, of course, close cooperation with our partners is the only way to solve this problem. And it is in this spirit that this meeting has been conducted in sync with our international partners. And it is from today's perspective, September 27, that we must understand that war is not a solution, we must understand that pragmatic policy is the platform to communicate with everyone in order to set the stage for our country's unity and democratic development," – Giorgi Gakharia said (*1TV, September 27, 2019*).

9. U.S. Embassy welcomes Georgia-Russia meeting facilitated by Swiss side

"We support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and urge Russia to end its illegal occupation and decrease tensions" – the statement released by the Embassy on its social network reads (*1TV, September 27, 2019*).

10. EU Diplomatic Service: Zalkaliani-Lavrov meeting was important opportunity to lower tensions in Georgia-Russia relations

"The meeting between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, David Zalkaliani, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, was an important opportunity to discuss regional security issues, to lower tensions in Georgia-Russia relations, and to address the impact of these tensions on citizens. Dialogue is key for peaceful dispute settlement, which the European Union fully supports.

Moving forward, it is important that all actors engage constructively to alleviate the situation of the conflict-affected population in Georgia. It is in this respect essential that their human rights, including freedom of movement, are fully respected.

The European Union reiterates its firm support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders", – reads the statement released by Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Maja Kocijancic (*1TV, September 27, 2019*).

11. UN Secretary-General hopes that Zalkaliani-Lavrov meeting will contribute to overall peace and security in the region

"The Secretary-General welcomes the 26 September meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Georgia and the Russian Federation, facilitated by Switzerland, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The Secretary-General appreciates Switzerland's good offices role for this initiative. He hopes that it will contribute to overall peace and security in the region" – UN Secretary-General Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric made this statement (1TV, September 27, 2019).

12. Morgan Ortagus: United States welcomes the Georgia and Russia meeting facilitated by Switzerland

The United States welcomes the Georgia and Russia meeting facilitated by Switzerland, – Morgan Ortagus, Spokesperson of the US Department of State wrote about it on her Twitter page.

"The United States welcomes the Georgia and Russia meeting facilitated by Switzerland. We support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and urge Russia to end its illegal occupation and decrease tensions along the Administrative Boundary Line", – stated the representative of the US Department of State (1TV, September 28, 2019).

13. Sergey Lavrov - Meeting with Georgian Foreign Minister in New York took place at the initiative of Georgian side

"The meeting with the Georgian Foreign Minister was requested by him," Lavrov said. He added that some of the comments about the meeting were funning and astonishing. "I mean the comments made by Georgians themselves," he said.

The Georgian Foreign Ministry yesterday denied reports spread by the Russian media that the meeting between the two countries' foreign ministers was held at the request of the Georgian side (1TV, September 28, 2019).

14. President of Georgia – Georgia should not be enclosed in itself and not attempt to lead a dialog with Russia

According to the President, the meeting was welcomed by Georgia's partners. "The country which has territorial conflicts and the problem of occupation has two ways – one is a war, a military way that Georgia rejected; and the second – is a dialog and diplomacy," Zurabishvili said.

"We are not and will not be alone. Georgia has its partners' support. It is incorrect if we stop and remain in isolation," President claimed (1TV, September 29, 2019).

15. Zurab Abashidze – We are trying to use all the opportunities to find the way out of a deadlock that is the issue of conflicts

"We should continue holding a dialog with Russia through the currently available formats such as Geneva, Prague. We should not disregard these opportunities. We did not have an illusion that one meeting could make a change. . . . This was the first meeting after 11 years and we did not expect changing of anything radically," Abashidze said (1TV, September 29, 2019).

16. Georgian and Paraguayan Foreign Ministers signed Agreement on Visa-Free Travel

On the sidelines of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, Georgian Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani met with Paraguayan Foreign Minister Antonio Rivas Palacios. The Ministers signed Agreement on Visa-Free Travel for Holders of Ordinary Passports of Georgia and Paraguay.

According to the Ministers, the Agreement will promote the development of people-to-people contacts, tourism and business between the two countries. The sides also expressed close interest in further developing trade-economic contacts and agricultural cooperation (*ITV, September 27, 2019*).

❖ Internal Affairs

17. Eka Beselia physically assaulted Vano Zardiashvili at Committee sitting

A physical confrontation took place at the sitting of the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Issues. During the sitting, a verbal clash occurred between independent MP Eka Beselia and majority member Vano Zardiashvili, after which Eka Beselia physically assaulted majority MP, hit him in his face. Due to the incident, the meeting has been suspended temporarily.

At the sitting of the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Issues MPs listened to Miranda Eremadze, the judicial candidates to be appointed at Supreme Court of Georgia (*ITV, September 26, 2019*).

18. Bidzina Ivanishvili met with representatives of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regional organizations

Bidzina Ivanishvili, Chairman of Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia Party continues holding meetings with the representatives of the regional organizations of the party.

Today, the Chairman of the party met with the leaders and representatives of local organizations of the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region. During the meeting, the problems facing the region and future plans were discussed (*ITV, September 29, 2019*).

❖ Economy and Social Affairs

19. Giorgi Gakharia: All investors and employers must bear in mind that they have to fulfil salary obligations

All investors and employers must bear in mind that it is their duty to fulfil their financial and remuneration-related responsibilities, – Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia stated at the government meeting today.

The Prime Minister responded to Tkhibuli developments. As Gakharia noted, ongoing events are totally unacceptable.

“What has been happening in Tkibuli yesterday and today is totally unacceptable, though we must also point out that these problems have been welling up for years. All investors and employers must bear in mind that it is their duty to fulfil their financial and remuneration-related responsibilities, and to put in place adequate working conditions for each employee. And that, of course, includes observing every aspect of workplace and technical safety. Even though these problems have been welling up for years, incidents like this should not be happening in our country,” the Prime Minister said.

The miners went on strike in Tkibuli several days ago. They demand payment of salary arrears. Some miners went on a hunger strike (*ITV, September 26, 2019*).

20. Giorgi Gakharia met with SOCAR President

Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia has met with the SOCAR (State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic) President Rovgan Abdulaev. The main topic of discussion was the investment projects implemented by SOCAR in Georgia.

The meeting was attended by the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia Natia Turnava, Director of the Representation of SOCAR in Georgia Mahir Mammadov, Head of SOCAR Investment Department Vagif Aliyev and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Azerbaijan to Georgias Dursun Hasanov (*1TV, September 27, 2019*).

❖ Sports and Culture

21. Lasha Talakhadze set three records and became four-time world champion

Lasha Talakhadze, Georgian weightlifter and Olympic champion, competing in the +109 kg category, won Gold at 2019 International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) World Championships in Pattaya, Thailand.

Georgian weightlifter set a world record by lifting 220 kilograms. He also successfully raised 264 kg in Clean & Jerk and improved the world record. After 2015, 2017 and 2018, Talakhadze became world champion for the fourth time.

It is noteworthy that the Georgian team, which earned five gold and two bronze medals, went to second place at World Championships (*1TV, September 27, 2019*).

Additional Information

September 30, 2019
OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

1 USD - 2.9552 GEL	1 GBP - 3.6319 GEL	100 RUB -4.5891 GEL
1 EUR - 3.2286 GEL	1 TRY - 0.5218 GEL	100 JPY - 2.7330 GEL

Monday
30 September

12° 23°

Tuesday
1 October

14° 24°

Wednesday
2 October

14° 27°

Thursday
3 October

14° 25°

Friday
4 October

15° 27°

 **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](#)**