

NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

September 7-9

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Date: **October 10, 2019**

❖ Occupied Regions

❖ Abkhazia Region

1. So-called opposition of occupied Abkhazia says that Raul Khajimba's inauguration has no legal force

The so-called opposition of Georgia's one of two occupied regions of Abkhazia says that the inauguration of Raul Khajimba, de-facto Abkhazian President, has no legal force – reads the statement adopted during the sitting of Amsakhara, the main opposition party in Abkhazia.

The party members decided not to recognize the results of the so-called elections. However, the opposition claims that it is ready for a constructive dialog with the so-called government.

The inauguration of the so-called President of Abkhazia was held today. The second round of so-called presidential elections was held in occupied Abkhazia on September 8. The central election administration declared that Raul Khajimba won in the elections of the non-recognized republic (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

2. Andrei Rudenko – There is no conflict, it was closed for Russia after recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia

There is no conflict for us. It was closed for Russia after recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia — Andrei Rudenko, new Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and head of the Russian delegation at Geneva International Discussions told journalists in Geneva.

Rudenko underlined that all sides represented at Geneva discussions expressed readiness for de-escalation of the situation at the border line of Georgia with South Ossetia. He said that nobody was interested in creation of new flames of tension in the region.

Deputy Russian Foreign Minister said he hoped that with lowering of the level of general tension, checkpoints would be opened and the issue of all entrances would be resolved. "The situation has to be normalized and should return to the condition of June-July. Russia does not owe anything to anybody," Rudenko said (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

❖ Foreign Affairs

3. Washington Times – Giorgi Gakharia possesses experience and skill to walk Georgia toward the European Union and NATO

On October 7, the Washington Times published an [article](#) about Georgia. Wes Martin, author of the article "Georgia is key for latest geopolitical strategies realignment" writes that Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia possesses experience and skill to walk Georgia toward the European Union and NATO.

According to the article, Gakharia came to the post of Georgia's Prime Minister "with impressive credentials." Wes Martin, who is a retired U.S. Army colonel, writes that Gakharia entered Georgian politics as the government's business ombudsman. As secretary of the National Security Council, minister of Economy and most recently as the minister of Interior, he has always pushed for the implementation of reforms to increase accountability, openness and transparency (*Washingtontimes.com, October 7, 2019*).

4. German President: "Steinmeier formula" is an attempt to transform big steps into relatively small ones

"There wasn't any influence from Russia. Three years ago in Paris, this was the Normandy format, negotiations began, but projects that had to be implemented under the Minsk agreement had not yet been implemented. The formula is an attempt to transform the big steps into relatively small steps, to make it easy to implement", – German President said (*1TV, October 7, 2019*).

5. Giorgi Gakharia: Visit of President Steinmeier confirms that Germany regards Georgia as its reliable partner

Support of Germany has tremendous importance in the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia. Your Official Visit confirms that Germany regards Georgia as its reliable partner, – stated Giorgi Gakharia, Prime Minister of Georgia at a meeting with Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany today.

Successful cooperation and the current potential of further intensified economic links in various sectors were underlined at the meeting. In the opinion of the German President, Georgia leads by economic reforms and current partnership momentum in the area is much welcomed (*1TV, October 7, 2019*).

6. Salome Zurbashvili: Russia opposed bringing Baltic States into NATO but decision was still taken

"We know that we are doing everything necessary. This is recognized. Today we are the forerunners of the next group. We carry out our tasks most efficiently, but so far no decision has been taken on a joint consensus, the adoption of which is the sovereign right of all countries. We have great hope and a lot of our partners support it. They may be more cautious in taking new decisions due to certain circumstances existing in NATO and the EU. I want to emphasize once again that this is not linked to Russia. Russia is and probably will always be categorically against the adoption of this decision, as it opposed the Baltic States' NATO membership, but decision was still taken", – Salome Zurbashvili said (*1TV, October 7, 2019*).

7. Chairman of DUMA demands public apology from President of Georgia

Chairman of the Russian State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin demands a public apology from President of Georgia Salome Zurbashvili. Volodin made this statement in the live air of Russia -24 TV Channel.

"The signal has to be clear at least under this current situation. Georgia's President has to apologize for mentioning Russia as being an aggressor country. She has to reject the words, apologize and explain her standpoint," Chairman of Duma said.

On the question of a journalist, if Russia received any signal from the Georgian government about its readiness to make an explanation, Volodin said: "How do you imagine the development of relations when Georgian government behaves so?"

Chairman of DUMA also spoke about the anti-Russian agenda of the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (PACE) and claimed that the satellite countries of the U.S. – Baltic States, Poland, Ukraine and Georgia were the initiators of the agenda.

8. Salome Zurabishvili: We spoke about conflicts and occupied territories

"We have talked about the conflict situation, the occupied territories. The tense situation in our occupied territories can turn into a more serious situation at any time and it is necessary to de-escalate it on one hand and to find a solution on the other hand. One direction is to strengthen the existing negotiation formats, as well as other formats where other conflicts can be addressed. The second direction is the expansion of the area of the EU Monitoring Mission", – Salome Zurabishvili said (*ITV, October 7, 2019*).

9. Ilia II to Steinmeier: With such a great experience in diplomacy it won't be difficult for you to move process forward

"I extend my warmest welcome to you, your spouse and accompanying persons on behalf of the Church of Georgia. Your visit is very important and Georgian people have great expectations. As you know, there are many problems around the world, including in Georgia. The violated territorial integrity remains Georgia's most painful problem. Twenty percent of our territory has been seized by a foreign country, but I would say that this problem is heavy burden for Russia as well. Everything must be done to solve it. We believe that Germany has so much power and authority to take an active part in this process. In my opinion, military bases should be withdrawn from occupied territories. You have such a great experience in diplomatic affairs, that it will not be difficult for you to move the process forward" – Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Ilia II said during the meeting (*ITV, October 7, 2019*).

10. Defender Europe training to be held in Georgia in 2020

Defender Europe, a large-scale training of NATO will be also held in Georgia in 2020. The U.S. military says that a massive exercise will begin early next year in Europe and will involve 20,000 soldiers from the U.S., the largest deployment across the Atlantic for training in more than 25 years.

The U.S. European Command said on October 7 that the "Defender Europe 20" exercise from April to May 2020 will support NATO objectives "to build readiness within the alliance and deter potential adversaries."

Eighteen countries are expected to take part in exercises across 10 countries, including Germany, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Georgia. It will also involve 9,000 more Americans already stationed in Europe and 8,000 European troops (*ITV, October 8, 2019*).

11. Georgian Prime Minister meets with President of Azerbaijan

My first official visit to Azerbaijan is not accidental since we are sure that with this visit we will prove to our friends and enemies that there are no problems between Georgia and Azerbaijan that cannot be resolved friendly – Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia said during the meeting with President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliiev. During the face-to-face meeting, the sides talked about the main directions of strategic partnership and joint regional projects. Gakharia underlined that partnership of Georgia and Azerbaijan had gone beyond the regional importance and has turned into an international-level issue especially in economic, transport, trade and energy spheres.

Georgian Prime Minister thanked President of Azerbaijan for support to Georgia's territorial integrity and the country's unwavering backing in international formats (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

12. Prime Minister's Advisor – Georgia-Azerbaijan state border delimitation commission will complete its work

Azerbaijan is not Georgia's strategic partner and friend only at present. During centuries there has not been any case of tension between the two countries – Sozar Subari, Georgian Prime Minister's Advisor in Regional Affairs said.

According to Subari, the disputable issue regarding Davit Gareji Monastery Complex will be decided through negotiations with a friendly state and Georgia-Azerbaijan state border delimitation commission is working with that purpose.

Subari said that Davit Gareji was a vulnerable issue for every Georgian person. "The commission, which is working will complete its task in the way as historic justice and international agreements require. We do not expect another approach from our friend country," Subari said (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

13. Giorgi Gakharia: Churches of David Gareji complex will be opened for Georgian clergy from tomorrow

"We could not get around such an important issue as the David Gareji monastery complex. We all remember that, unfortunately, there are certain sections of the border between Georgia and Azerbaijan that have not yet been determined, this is our post-Soviet legacy, and this problem has not been resolved in 25 years. The President of Azerbaijan said that we have a history and geography that connects us, and, of course, I can completely agree that geography and history do not divide friends and partners, rather connect", – Prime Minister said (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

14. Georgia on 10th place with number of asylum seekers in Germany

According to the Federal Bureau of Migration, 2953 citizens applied to Germany for granting asylum in January-September. The majority of applications were not satisfied. The number of applications in the same period of 2018 was 3257.

A total of 127 917 people asked for asylum from Germany in 2019 out of them 31 436 – from Syria. Iraq, Turkey, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia and Eritrea are in the top-10 countries (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

15. Georgian MFA on 49th round of Geneva Discussions

"One of the main topics of discussion was ethnic discrimination and ethnic persecution of residents of the Gali and Akhalkalaki regions. The issue of coercion to change the ethnic identity of Georgians living there as well as the grave consequences of the ban on receiving education in their native language was sharply raised" – the statement of Georgian MFA reads (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

16. Russian MFA on 49th round of the Geneva Discussions

"The focus was on tensions near the village of Tsnelisi in the Georgian-South Ossetian border region, provoked by Tbilisi's decision to relocate the police post directly along the village at the end of August. This prompted Tskhinvali to take retaliatory measures, including by opening its own checkpoint and temporarily blocking the border with Georgia. We have informed the parties about our approach to regulate the situation. We called on the parties to show restraint as well as to take steps to de-escalate the

situation by using a direct dialogue format within the framework of existing negotiation mechanisms. Such a position was supported by the participants of the Geneva talks,” reads the statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

❖ Internal Affairs

17. Constitutional Court to discuss admission of alternative document to ID Cards

The Constitutional Court of Georgia on October 9 will discuss the admission of an alternative document to ID Cards.

The court sitting will be held into the case “Nana Sepiashvili and Ia Rekhviashvili vs. Parliament of Georgia and Justice Ministry of Georgia.”

The plaintiff side argues that disputable norms set an un-alternative rule for obtaining electronic ID Cards and biometric passports and leave no possibility to take other documents.

Based on the complaint, an ID card and a biometric passport serve as the tool for total control of individuals and are linked to Biblical Prediction about Apocalypses.

“The plaintiffs refuse to take electronic ID documents and are left without ID cards and passports. The aforesaid leaves them in full isolation from social life. The arguable regulations force persons to act against their faith by which constitutional rights are violated,” the court says (*1TV, October 8, 2019*).

18. General Prosecutor’s Office files charges against Member of City Assembly

The General Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia filed charges against Ilia Jishkariani, a member of Tbilisi Sakrebulo (City Assembly).

Jishkariani, as Majoritarian (single mandate) deputy from Isani district, has been charged for sexual and physical assault of Tamta Todadze, a specialist of Isani Representative Office on September 30, 2019.

The case has been opened under Point B, Part II of Article 138 of Criminal Code of Georgia. Ilia Jishkariani was introduced charges at New Hospitals where he was transferred and placed several days ago (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

19. Catholicos Patriarch addresses Georgian governmental officials

Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, His Holiness and Beatitude Ilia II addressed Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, Foreign Minister Davit Zalkaliani and Minister of Internal Affairs Vakhtang Gomelauri regarding Chichkhituri and Udabno Monasteries.

The letter reads that based on the agreement concluded between Georgia and Azerbaijan, the state border at this section passes the line as drawn in 1936-1938, and according to the map made in these years, Chichkhituri and Udabno Monasteries are located on the territory of Georgia unlike Bertubani Monastery, which is an inseparable part of Davit Gareji Monastery Complex, that is on the territory of Azerbaijan.

“Based on the order of the Georgian Republic’s government of April 21, 1991, the polygon around the territory of Davit Gareji Monastery Complex, and other land plots were handed over to the Georgian Patriarchate. The property ownership was inked by the constitutional agreement reached between the government and Georgian Church on October 14, 2002 (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

20. 60 Isuzu mark municipal buses to move in Tbilisi

The 60 Isuzu-mark, 8-meter-long municipal buses working on Diesel fuel and Euro 6 emission standard have been imported to Georgia. The buses, presented by Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze at Europe Square, will move in Tbilisi.

Representatives of Tbilisi Transport Company GT Group, Isuzu and Anadolu Group Turkish Company attended the presentation. A total of 220 Isuzu-mark buses will be imported till the end of the year. The project costs 64 790 000 GEL (*ITV, October 9, 2019*).

21. Shalva Tadumadze : A group of people are trying to create a legend of an uncertificated General Prosecutor

Shalva Tadumadze was asked about the diploma by Mamuka Mdinardze, Chairman of the "Georgian Dream" fraction. He asked why the University, he was graduated from, does not have the legal name, before or after 2003, which is mentioned in his diploma.

"I don't know what kind of reorganization this university has undergone since 2003, but Tbilisi Humanitarian University operated under the name, which is written in the diploma. For a year and a half, a group of people has been trying to create a legend that the country has an uncertificated General Prosecutor. Now, there are attempts to create the legend that this country will have an uncertificated judge of the Supreme Court. But except of some suspensions, there are no any document, confirming that I do not have the legal education. For 18 years there has never been a single document that would have cast doubt on my diploma, since I has always been an active lawyer," Shalva Tadumadze said (*IPN.GE, October 9, 2019*).

22. Opposition MP calls Shalva Tadumadze 'unlettered' and 'swindler'

ou are "unlettered" and "swindler", Salome Samadashvili, member of the opposition United National Movement party, said, addressing Shalva Tadumadze, one of the candidates for the Supreme Court judge, who is being interviewed at the sitting of the Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee. Salome Samadashvili accused Shalva Tadumadze of falsifying his diploma.

Mamuka Mdinardze, Chairman of the Georgian Dream fraction, said after Samadashvili's remarks that "she was instructed by Mikheil Saakashvili to use these phrases frequently." (*IPN.GE, October 9, 2019*).

23. Shalva Tadumadze – I consider myself suitable for the post of Supreme Court chairman

As Shalva Tadumadze said, he had always been uncompromising in his activities. "One of my merits was that many people could not dare doing things I used to do in the period when a state machine was violating human rights. I have shown a great courage in performing my job," Tadumadze said.

The judicial candidate emphasized that he never escaped from expressing his views while serving as the parliamentary secretary and the head of the governmental administration. Tadumadze noted that he was uncompromising in the prosecutor's office, too (*IPN.GE, October 9, 2019*).

❖ Economy and Social Affairs

24. About 65, 2 million bottles of wine exported during 9 months

About 65, 2 million bottles of wine have been exported for the 9 months of 2019 from Georgia to 50 countries of the world – National Wine Agency reports. The number is an increase by 10% in comparison to the same period of 2018. The cost of the exported wine is USD 164 million.

The export of Georgian wine increased to the U.S., Great Britain, Poland and China. The dynamics of increase is detected in Lithuania, Germany, Belarus, Israel, Estonia, Russia, Moldova, Netherlands, Sweden, Bulgaria, Australia, Canada and Mongolia.

The top-10 of export countries include Russia, Ukraine, China, Poland, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Latvia, U.S., Lithuania, and Estonia. The 289 Georgian wine-producing companies exported their wine (*1TV, October 8, 2019*).

25. PM – Georgian side not considering subsidizing flights from Russia

The Georgian side is not considering subsidizing of flight from Russia – Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia told journalists. According to PM, subsidizing forms should be commercially interesting for Georgia and profitable for tourism development.

“The Kutaisi airport is mainly involved in direction of subsidizing. Direct flights are carried out to 50 places in Europe. Direct flights serve as the most efficient and fast instrument to increase the number of tourists and we will use this form in the future since it works well,” Gakharia said(*1TV, October 8, 2019*).

26. Georgia’s ranking downgraded in Global Competitiveness Index of 2019

Georgia’s ranking has been downgraded in the Global Competitiveness Index of 2019. Georgia came on the 74th place among 141 countries based on the report published by the World Economic Forum. Georgia ranked 66th place in the Global Competitiveness Index of 2018.

Singapore is in the first place in the rating followed by the U.S., Hong Kong, Netherlands and Switzerland. The last place goes to Chad.

Russia came in 43rd, while Turkey ranked 61st. As for the neighboring countries, Azerbaijan (58th place), Armenia (69th place) (*1TV, October 9, 2019*).

❖ Sports and Culture

27. UNESCO names Tbilisi as 2021 World Book Capital

Director-General of UNESCO Audrey Azoulay named Tbilisi as World Book Capital for the year 2021, based on the recommendation of the World Book Capital Advisory Committee, which met in Switzerland in June 2019.

Around the slogan — “Ok, So your Next Book Is...?,” the program focuses on the use of modern technologies as powerful tools for promoting reading among youth.

The program is comprised of several important, large-scale and sustainable activities. Amongst the events and activities, there will be libraries and a book festival for children, a state-of-the-art digital project for transforming books into games, and the rebuilding of the first Georgian publishing house (*1TV, October 7, 2019*).

Additional Information

October 10, 2019

OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

1 USD - 2.9633 GEL

1 GBP - 3.6194 GEL

100 RUB -4.5624 GEL


1 EUR - 3.2543 GEL

1 TRY - 0.5070 GEL

100 JPY - 2.7594 GEL


Thursday 2 May	Friday 3 May	Saturday 4 May	Sunday 5 May	Monday 6 May
				
12° 25°	13° 24°	11° 17°	11° 22°	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](#)**