

NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

October 24-27

Compiled by: **Aleksandre Davitashvili**

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

1. State Security Service assesses statement by so-called Security Committee of occupied Tskhinvali as disinformation

Such provocative statements are the part of a disinformation campaign actively conducted by the occupying forces to justify their provocative actions in the vicinity of the Chorchana village of Khashuri Municipality and in general, along the occupation line, – State Security Service told the Georgian First Channel when commenting on the statement made by Tskhinvali occupation regime (*ITV, October 24, 2019*).

2. Tskhinvali occupation regime detained EUMM Monitors

“On the afternoon of 24 October, a patrol of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) was briefly held by armed South Ossetian security actors, while conducting a patrol in the Chorchana-Tsnelisi area. The hotline was activated from Tskhinvali shortly after these developments.

The Mission is still looking into the details concerning the incident, which happened in an area understood to be on Tbilisi-Administered Territory in accordance with the traditional interpretation of the Administrative Boundary Line in that area.

Following recent security developments, EUMM has significantly increased its patrolling to support stability in the Chorchana-Tsnelisi area.

The EUMM is deeply concerned about cases in which armed security actors prevent EUMM Monitors from conducting their daily activities in accordance with the mandate.

The incident will be discussed during the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) technical meeting in Ergneti tomorrow”, – the statement released by EUMM reads (*ITV, October 24, 2019*).

3. Vladimer Konstantinidi: Illegal detention of EUMM monitors is an act directed against peace and security on the ground

Illegal detention of EUMM monitors is an act directed against peace and security on the ground, – Representative of the Georgian Foreign Ministry Vladimer Konstantinidi said when commenting on the fact of detention of Monitors of the EU Monitoring Mission by so-called South Ossetian security personnel at Chorchana-Tsnelisi area.

As Vladimer Konstantinidi stated, the EU Monitoring Mission that deployed in Georgia after the August 2008 war serves an important task – to observe the implementation of the 2008 ceasefire agreement and promote security and stability on the ground.

"Consequently, it is unacceptable to impede the work of the mission, since it is the only international and effective monitoring mechanism and provides objective information about the situation along the occupation line. The incident will be discussed at a high-level strategic meeting between Georgia and the European Union, scheduled for today. At the meeting, along with other issues, the current situation in the occupied territories and security challenges will be discussed", Konstantinidi said (*1TV, October 25, 2019*).

4. EU Special Representative will hold meeting in Moscow in connection with detention of EUMM Monitors

"The detention of Monitors of the EU Monitoring Mission is a serious incident. The EU Monitoring Mission facilitates to maintain peace, and the fact that the mission has to cope with such challenges is a serious problem," said Deputy Secretary-General of the European External Action Service, Jean-Christophe Belliard (*1TV, October 25, 2019*).

5. Acting US Ambassador to Georgia expresses concern over detention of EUMM observers

Elizabeth Rood, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of the United States of America to Georgia expressed concern over the fact of detention of observers of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM). According to Rood, the U.S. is concerned about the situation at the so-called administrative border line with occupied Tskhinvali region and calls on Russia and de-facto authorities for use of all means to discharge the tension.

"The United States of America calls on the Russian Federation and de-facto South Ossetian authorities to apply to all means, including technical meetings of Incidents Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM) format to discharge and neutralize the tension," Rood said (*1TV, October 26, 2019*).

❖ Foreign Affairs

6. Salome Zurbishvili met with Japanese Prime Minister

As a part of the visit to Japan, President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili met with Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo.

"Honored to meet with Abe Shinzo, Prime Minister of Japan. As we saw during this visit, Georgia and Japan are very friendly nations that partner in trade, tourism, and culture. It's our goal to strengthen these ties", – Salome Zurbishvili wrote on her twitter page (*1TV, October 24, 2019*).

7. Luke Coffey proposes to deploy US troops at military base in Akhalkalaki

Luke Coffey, the researcher of Heritage Foundation proposes to send US troops, leaving Syria, to Georgia. He notes that they could be deployed at a former Russian military base in Akhalkalaki to respond quickly if ISIS reconstitutes. He wrote about it on his twitter page.

"Proposal: US troops leaving Syria could be sent to Georgia & become an "over the horizon" force to respond quickly if ISIS reconstitutes. USA could use an old Russian base at Akhalkalaki which is only 460 miles (740km) from Raqqa. Georgia more dependable than Iraq right now", – Luke Coffey writes (*1TV, October 25, 2019*).

8. NATO vessels entered Batumi port

Two vessels of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group Two (SNMCMG2) arrived at Batumi port. NATO ships are on a routine patrol deployment to enhance interoperability and cooperation with Allies and NATO partners on the Black Sea coast.

The ships ITS Vesuvio (Italy) and TCG Amasra (Turkey) entered Batumi after when U.S. military ship USS Porter left the port. The Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group Two is led by Captain Alessandro Falcone. The joint exercises with the participation of NATO ships and the Georgian coast guard are planned.

SNMCMG2 is one of four standing NATO groups which are multinational, integrated maritime forces made up of vessels from Allied countries (*1TV, October 25, 2019*).

9. Irakli Gharibashvili meets with Jens Stoltenberg

Georgian Defense Minister Irakli Gharibashvili met with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. NATO Press Office reports about this. The photos of the meeting have been published on the website of the North Atlantic Alliance.

The meeting was held in the sideline of the NATO Ministerial. Irakli Gharibashvili is participating at the meeting of defence ministers of the NATO and partner countries' within Resolute Support format in NATO HQ (*1TV, October 25, 2019*).

❖ Internal Affairs

❖ 2-day working meeting of Working Group on Election Legislation over

The Working Group on Election Legislation finished its 2-day meeting in Kachreti, eastern Kakheti region. Today, the group discussed issues related to election disputes and use of administrative resources. Members of the ruling team said that a consensus had already been reached over majority of issues.

"Yesterday was a very productive day. We had constructive discussions on all topics. We discussed state funding, advertising time, etc. We reached a broad consensus on these issues. Two major themes will be discussed today: electoral disputes and the use of administrative resources. We are ready to discuss all issues that will be raised by the participants of the meeting. Of course, we are ready to take into consideration all the initiatives that will improve the electoral environment in Georgia," former parliamentary speaker and a member of Georgian Dream Party Irakli Kobakhidze said (*1TV, October 27, 2019*).

10. Archbishop of Bodbe, Jacob says Government asked him to help with the resignation of the Patriarch

Jacob, Bishop from Bodbe says that Kvirikashvili asked him to help with the resignation of the patriarch and appointment of Archbishop Shio (Mujiri) from Senaki.

"The meeting was in the cabinet of the Prime Minister Kvirikashvili, the meeting was attended by Gomelauri and later Gakharia joined us. They asked me to help with the replacement of the Patriarch. I've told them "none of your business, the church will do everything independently and while the Patriarch is alive how dare you to think about this?" I was the first who attended this meeting, the next was father Theodore,

Grigol and Petre. Father Petre did not meet with Kvirikashvili, only Gakharia and Gomelauri talked to him.”
- said Archbishop Jacob.

Archbishop Shio Mujiri is considered as the Russian candidate. Reportedly he has approval from the Patriarch of Russia, Kiril (*Akhali Taoba, November 28, 2019*).

11. PM - Let everybody do their job instead of being engaged in politics

For the past 40 years, the Patriarch has been a symbol of the past, present and future of our country. I have repeatedly mentioned the church as the connecting force that brings our statehood together, – Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia said in response to the journalist’s question regarding the statements of Archbishop Jacob.

The Prime Minister said that he was hearing Archbishop Jacob’s statements for the first time and that he was shocked. “I remember this Archbishop saying he would overthrow me in case of my appointment to the PM’s post.

If you want serious comments, for the past 40 years, the Patriarch has been a symbol of the past, present and future of our country. I have repeatedly mentioned that the church is the connecting force that brings our statehood together. Ask Archbishop Jacob why he made such statements. This is absurd. Let everybody do their job instead of being engaged in politics,” Giorgi Gakharia said (*1TV, October 26, 2019*).

12. Highest-ranking bishops of Georgian church continue to denounce each other

put responsibility for all shameful situations and crises that occur in the church on Patriarch and his entourage, – Metropolitan Petre Tsaava said when commenting on yesterday’s statements by Bishop Iakob. Metropolitan Petre says that Synod should be convened immediately.

“The Holy Synod should gather immediately, at least after yesterday’s scandal. The Catholicos-Patriarch must take responsibility for all these shameful situations and crises that occur in the church”, – said Metropolitan Petre.

The Archbishop of the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, Bishop Iakob told the TV Pirveli yesterday that government officials tried to negotiate with him on the Patriarch’s dismissal. He named the participants of the meeting – then-Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili, current Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, and former head of the State Security Service and current Minister of Internal Affairs Vakhtang Gomelauri. According to Archbishop Iakob, representatives of the church, for example, Metropolitan Petre, also participated in this “conspiracy”, and various versions were discussed, including the possibility to liquidate the Patriarch. Archbishop says, that if the government continues on this way, it will not receive votes in the elections (*1TV, October 27, 2019*).

13. Preliminary Results of October 27 Sakrebulo (local council) By-elections

Preliminary results of Sakrebulo By-elections stands as follows:

Majoritarian election district №15.03 (Lagodekhi – four election precincts)

№2 Malkhazi Melashvili - “European Georgia - Movement for Liberty” - 14.71% (347 votes)

№40 Daviti Beglarashvili - “Movement for Free Georgia” - 0,89 % (21 votes)

№41 Omari Shvelidze - “Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia” - 84,4 % (1991 votes)

Majoritarian election district №38.03 (Adigeni – one election precinct):

№41 Zurab Peikrishvili - "Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" - 100 % (875 votes)

Majoritarian election district №65.11 (Martvili – two election precincts)

№41 Robert Kakulia - "Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" - 100 % (549 votes) (*Cesko.ge, October 27, 2019*).

❖ **Economy and Social Affairs**

14. Georgia on 7th Place in World Bank Doing Business 2020 Ranking

Georgia ranked the 7th place in the Ease of Doing Business 2020 among the 190 countries covered by the World Bank Group annual report. Compared to the previous year, Georgia's ranking has been worsened by one position, as the country ranked sixth in the 2019 report. In 2020 report Georgia has 83.7 scores, improved by 0.2 points compared to the previous year.

The countries are measured by 10 indicators. Georgia's scores in five of them have been improved this year and five remained unchanged (*ITV, October 24, 2019*).

15. Georgia to sign agreements on air traffic with Republic of Seychelles, Tunisia and Tajikistan

Georgia will sign agreements on air traffic with the Republic of Seychelles, Tunisia and Tajikistan. The Government has already issued the corresponding decrees.

Negotiations are underway with Tunisia and Tajikistan on the exchange of diplomatic notes, and negotiations with the Republic of Seychelles will be conducted by the head of the logistics development department of the Ministry of Economy. Consultations on air transport services are being held with several other countries (*ITV, October 25, 2019*).

16. Conti International Changes Decision to Quit Anaklia Development Consortium

On October 25 the U.S.-based Conti International, one of the main partners of Anaklia deep sea port project, announced that it has changed its decision about quitting the Anaklia Development Consortium and that it will stay in the project.

News about Conti International's decision to quit the Anaklia Development Consortium emerged on August 15. Commenting on the issue, Levan Akhvlediani, director general of the Consortium, then said that "this is not a pleasant fact, but nothing has happened that may critically harm the project." (*Civil.ge, October 25, 2019*).

17. Conti International Denies Reports on Staying in Anaklia Development Consortium

The U.S.-based Conti International, one of the main partners of Anaklia deep sea port project, denied reports about changing its decision to quit the Anaklia Development Consortium, saying that its position remains unchanged.

The Anaklia Development Consortium announced on October 25 that Conti International decided to stay in the project. However, in a statement released later the same day, Conti International noted that it "will continue to pursue a sale of its position in the Anaklia Port Project and exit the Consortium in a manner that is constructive and supportive of the Project achieving completion." (*Civil.ge, October 26, 2019*).

18. Acting US Ambassador to Georgia – U.S. continues supporting Anaklia Development Consortium

The United States of America continues supporting Anaklia Development Consortium so that it manages to mobilize the necessary resources to carry out Anaklia Deep Water Port Project – said Elizabeth Rood, Chargé d’Affaires at the Embassy of the United States of America to Georgia.

According to Rood, Anaklia Project is very important for Georgia. “The project will make a big contribution to Georgia’s trade and transport development. We hope that the project will be carried out with American investment,” Rood said (*ITV, October 26, 2019*).

19. PM – We see Anaklia as the project that confirms strategic partnership between Georgia and U.S.






“We see Anaklia as the project that confirms strategic partnership between Georgia and the U.S. and of course, we welcome all strong and large American companies, which express interest to participate in the project,” Gakharia said (*ITV, October 26, 2019*).







Additional Information

October 28, 2019

OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES

1 USD - 2.9453 GEL	1 GBP - 3.7815 GEL	100 RUB -4.6054 GEL
1 EUR - 3.2737 GEL	1 TRY - 0.5111 GEL	100 JPY - 2.7116 GEL

Monday 28 October	Tuesday 29 October	Wednesday 30 October	Thursday 31 October	Friday 1 November
				
7° 19°	10° 22°	9° 21°	7° 18°	5° 14°

-  **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](#)**