

# NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

November 8-10

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## ❖ Occupied Regions

### ❖ Abkhazia Region

#### 1. Archil Talakvadze addressed Abkhazians and Ossetians

"I would like to address our Abkhaz brothers and sisters, our fellow citizens living in the occupied territories of South Ossetia, Tskhinvali – at any moment, all week long, day and night, we are always ready for anyone who needs medical or other services, we will help," - The Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, Archil Talakvadze said.

"We have a new peace initiative called – A Step Towards a Better Future, wherewith we offer unconditional opportunities in education, business, travel, social or health care programs.

This is our attitude towards our fellow citizens and this is our political vision of how these conflicts can be resolved in the future and how Georgia can restore its territorial integrity.

As for de facto authorities and the Russian Federation, which is responsible for the occupation, their attitude towards people revealed many times, including illegal arrests, kidnappings, cases of murder.

We remember the tragic case of Tatumashvili, the tragic case of Otkhozoria. We have responded to these cases and these topics will always be on the agenda," - Talakvadze said (*ITV, November 9, 2019*).

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

#### 2. U.S. Congressmen Travel to Occupation Line

Republican Congressmen from the United States, Adam Kinzinger and Alexander Mooney, who are visiting Georgia on November 5-9, traveled to the line of occupation near village Odzisi adjacent to Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia.

Congressman Kinzinger said the U.S. will never recognize "illegal occupation" of Georgia. "We will never recognize that this is Russian territory; this is rightfully Georgia's territory," he told journalists, adding that this is the position of the United States.

The Congressman said, the U.S. is aware of the process of 'borderization', as well as of "the abuse of citizens behind the illegally occupied territory." "It just really brings home in the reality of how illegal this is, how bad player Russia is," Kinzinger said, noting that it "will never be recognized" anywhere (*Civil.ge, November 8, 2019*).

#### 3. Poland concerned by actions of occupation forces in Georgia, closure of crossing points

Poland has expressed concern regarding the closure of crossing points by occupation forces between Georgia and its Russian-occupied Tskhinvali region and the temporary detention of the EU monitors near the occupation line last month.

"These illegal actions further aggravate the already dire humanitarian situation of the local population and constitute further examples of a confrontational policy towards Tbilisi exercised by both the de facto authorities in South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region and by the authorities in Moscow since August 2008 [following the Russia-Georgia war]," the Polish Foreign Ministry reports.

The ministry said that Poland continues to "strongly support" the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within the borders recognised by the international community (*Agenda.ge, November 8, 2019*).

#### **4. EU External Action - Rising tensions along the Administrative Boundary Line of break-away South Ossetia are completely unacceptable**

"Rising tensions along the Administrative Boundary Line of break-away South Ossetia in Georgia are completely unacceptable",- European Union External Action released an official [statement](#) on developments related to South Ossetia, Georgia.

As the spokesperson of European Union External Action stated, the European Union calls on all relevant actors to show maximum restraint and refrain from any steps or statements that could escalate the situation (*1TV, November 10, 2019*).

## **❖ Foreign Affairs**

#### **5. EU Commission Head – Relations with Eastern Partnership countries including Georgia should be strengthened**

The future of the European Union is closely tied with the future of neighbour and partner countries – European Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen said in the letter addressed to Oliver Varhelyi, the candidate for the post of EU's Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Commissioner.

Ursula von der Leyen urged the future Commissioner to strengthen relations with six countries of Eastern Partnership including with Georgia. She explained that new packages of long-term political objectives had to have been elaborated by mid of 2020 (*1TV, November 9, 2019*).

#### **6. The Secretary-General of the Council of Europe (CoE) arrives in Georgia**

The Secretary-General of the Council of Europe(CoE) Marija Pejčinović Burić has already arrived in Georgia.

According to the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the visit is linked to Georgia's forthcoming chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in the CoE.

Marija Pejčinović Burić will hold a meeting with Georgian Foreign Minister Davit Zalkaliani. Talks will be held about bilateral cooperation related issues and future plans.

Presentation of the coin issued in connection with the 70th anniversary of the CoE and the 20th jubilee of Georgia's CoE membership as well as the action plan of Georgia in the Council of Europe for 2020-2023 will be held within the framework of the visit (*1TV, November 10, 2019*).

#### **7. Georgia will take over the chairmanship of CoE Committee of Ministers for a six-month term**

Georgia will take over the chairmanship of Council of Europe's (CoE) Committee of Ministers for a six-month term starting November 27.

The Secretary General of the CoE Marija Pejčinović Burić has arrived in Georgia in connection with Georgia's upcoming chairmanship.

Presentation of the coin issued in connection with the 70th anniversary of the CoE and the 20th jubilee of Georgia's CoE membership as well as the action plan of Georgia in the Council of Europe for 2020-2023 will be held within the framework of the visit (*1TV, November 10, 2019*).

## ❖ Internal Affairs

### **8. Committee Hearings of Supreme Court Candidates Completed**

Georgian Parliament's Legal Issues Committee has completed interviews with 20 candidates of the Supreme Court judges. Interviews with individual candidates were launched on September 23 with the participation of the parliamentary majority, opposition and civil society organizations and lasted for a month and a half.

Committee hearing represents one of the stages of a lengthy process of judicial selection, which started in May 2019. The process aims at increasing number of the Supreme Court judges from eight to 28. To be appointed in the Supreme Court, a candidate needs the support of the majority of lawmakers. If approved, the elected candidates will become the Supreme Court judges for lifetime tenure.

The list of judicial candidates includes Chief Prosecutor Shalva Tadumadze, his First Deputy Mamuka Vasadze, incumbent Chairman of the Constitutional Court Zaza Tavadze, as well as incumbent judges of the Tbilisi City Court and the Court of Appeals (*Civil.ge, November 8, 2019*).

### **9. Archil Talakvadze - Parliament of Georgia held high level hearings of Supreme Court candidates**

Parliament of Georgia has held high level hearings of Supreme Court candidates in accordance with democratic principles, – the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia Archil Talakvadze stated.

"The whole community saw what questions were asked and what answers were given. Many candidates have demonstrated their competence and professionalism. However, there are candidates who supposedly will not be supported by Parliament.

In addition, the results of the polls, which will be transparent, reveal which candidates will have our support.

"When we give a vow to the public, we fulfill that vow,"- Archil Talakvadze noted (*1TV, November 9, 2019*).

### **10. 'And Then We Danced' Opens amid Protests**

The premiere of "And Then We Danced," a Georgian-Swedish film with gay protagonists, is underway in all six cinemas in Tbilisi and Batumi on the evening of November 8, while the hate groups, which pledged to disrupt the showing clash with the riot police.

Chosen as Sweden's official Oscar entry for Best International Feature Film, "And Then We Danced" was filmed in Tbilisi by Levan Akin, Swedish director with Georgian roots.

Billed as the "Georgian gay dance romance," it premiered in Directors' Fortnight in Cannes in May 2019 and went on to win number of top awards at the Sarajevo Film Festival, Gent Film Festival, Odessa Film Festival and Carl Film Festival.

The screenings of the film in Georgian movie theaters – five in Tbilisi and one in Batumi – are taking place between 8 and 10 of November. Reportedly, all tickets have been immediately sold out.

Radical violent groups and their supporters started to mobilize in central Tbilisi close to Amirani Cinema since morning, vowing to disrupt the screenings (*1TV, November 8, 2019*).

### **11. 28 Persons Detained, as Hate Groups Clash with Filmgoers, Police**

The Interior Ministry said on November 9 that the police detained 27 persons, including 24 – in Tbilisi and 3 – in Batumi during the protest rallies against the Georgian premiere of “And Then We Danced”, a Georgian-Swedish film with gay protagonists. All of them have been charged with disobeying police orders and hooliganism.

One more person was arrested and charged under article 126 (violence) of the criminal code of Georgia for the attack against civic activist Ana Subeliani who was hospitalized with a trauma to her head.

The Interior Ministry also stated that the investigation has been launched into three more criminal cases, involving the facts of violence against Davit Berdzenishvili, leader of the Republican Party, attack on police officers as well as damage of a police car (*1TV, November 8, 2019*).

### **12. Mamuka Khazaradze introduces 12 new members of Lelo public movement**

Mamuka Khazaradze, the founder of the Lelo public movement, introduced 12 more new members of the movement in Samtredia.

New members of the Lelo public movement are:

Fridon Gaprindashvili – Electrical engineer.

Mitrophane Sturua – Lawyer.

Manana Bandzeladze – Doctor of Philosophy. Associate Professor of Akaki Tsereteli University. He is the author of 7 monographs and textbooks. He has published several dozen scientific papers.\

Davit Chkheidze – Philologist.

Tamar Tsamalaide – Psychologist.

Gia Pataridze – Specialist of international economic relations, chemist.

Giorgi Makharadze – Lawyer.

Natia Khelaia – Banking and finance specialist.

Giorgi Bakashvili – Master of international relations and world politics.

Paata Darakhvelidze – Lawyer.

Lile Maghlaperidze – Master of Economics.

Dimitri Abashidze – Engineer, economist (*1TV, November 9, 2019*).

### **13. Bidzina Ivanishvili - A university city is being built in Kutaisi, which will also have an entertainment and scientific center**

A university city is being built in Kutaisi, which will also have an entertainment and scientific centre – it will be a state university – said Bidzina Ivanishvili, chairman of Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia Party, in an interview released by the Kutaisi International University.

Ivanishvili said it was his long-time desire to build a university city. “You know, historically, traditionally, Kutaisi has had the function of an educational centre and I think Kutaisi was the best choice,” Bidzina Ivanishvili said.

According to him, the Kutaisi International University will add an extra charm to the western region and students will study from both western and eastern Georgia (*1TV, November 9, 2019*).

## ❖ Economy and Social Affairs

### 14. PM Gakharia: trade agreement logical continuation of US-Georgia partnership

Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia said a possible free trade agreement between the United States and Georgia would be a “logical continuation” of the partnership.

“A trade agreement is a logical continuation of our partnership with the #US. We are ready to welcome more US companies to #Georgia, which serves as a natural hub for the region. A trade deal will advance both nations' security interests, while bringing tangible economic benefits.” – twitted Gakharia (*twitter, November 10, 2019*).

## ❖ Sports and Culture

### 15. Keselo medieval castle rehabilitated in Tusheti

The renovation of medieval Keselo Castle has been completed in the village of Omalo in Tusheti, a historic geographic area in eastern Georgia, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation reports.

Keselo is a small medieval fortress above the village of Omalo. It originally had 13 towers. The inhabitants of old Omalo used the towers to protect themselves from invaders. Georgian architect Ioseb Bandzeladze is the author of the restoration project.

During the project, the access paths to the power have been widened and straightened; stairs have been cut into the rock; metal railings have been installed to comply with safety standards and a ruined fence has been restored (*Agenda.ge, November 8, 2019*).

## Additional Information

**November 11, 2019**  
**OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATES**

1 USD - 2.9613 GEL	1 GBP - 3.7943 GEL	100 RUB - 4.6386 GEL
1 EUR - 3.2687 GEL	1 TRY - 0.5143 GEL	100 JPY - 2.7078 GEL

Monday 11 November	Tuesday 12 November	Wednesday 13 November	Thursday 14 November	Friday 15 November
				
4° 18°	4° 19°	4° 17°	4° 16°	4° 12°

-  **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](#)**