



# WEEKLY NEWS DIGEST ON GEORGIA

## August 27-September 1, 2021

Compiled from various media by:  
Teona Macharashvili

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### GOVERNANCE & POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

#### 1. Covid Updates: 9.1% Infection Rate in the Past 7 Days

##### **Covid infections August 27-September 1:**

**Positivity Rates:** Last 7 days – 9.13% (highest in Racha Lechckhumi Kvemo Svaneti – 14.2%, Shida Kartli – 13.8% and Kakheti – 13.7%. Last 14 days – 9.85%.

**Total Conducted Tests:** Total – 8’297’809, Positive – 556’909, Negative – 7’740’900.

**Total Infected:** 556’909, Currently active cases – 46’812, Recovered – 502’534, Died – 7563.

**Fake Covid passports:** Georgian law enforcers have detained seven individuals for making and selling fake Covid-19 vaccine documents today, reports the State Security Service of Georgia (SSS). Police found that four out of the seven detainees made and sold fake Pfizer immunisation documents for 350 EUR, while three others sold fake Sinopharm vaccination documents for 400 GEL (about 128 USD). The crime is punishable by three to six years in prison. Source in English, [Agenda.ge](http://Agenda.ge).

**Dighomi Field Hospital Closure:** Director General of Infection Hospital, Tengiz Tsertsvadze said that closure of Dighomi Field Hospital demonstrates “insignificant decrease of pressure on hospital sector.”

**New Variant “Miu” resistant to vaccine:** WHO is observing the new “Miu” variant of Covid-19, which is resistant towards Covid-19 vaccine – for now it is only spread in Europe and Africa. Source in Georgian, [Interpressnews](http://Interpressnews).

**Incentives for vaccination – free services in Justice House and cash lottery:** Fully vaccinated persons to receive certain services of the Ministry of Justice either free of charge or for half price. Fully vaccinated people will use the following services of the Ministry of Justice free of charge: registration of an individual entrepreneur, change and termination of registered data; update real estate statement. There will be a 50% discount for fully vaccinated individuals for the following services: Notice of Obstacles to Marriage; Update the certificate on the ID card. Benefits introduced by the Ministry of Justice will be available to double-vaccinated persons without prior reservation at the Houses of Justice and Community Centers. Source in English, [Interpressnews](http://Interpressnews). The Georgian government will also offer cash incentives to the public to encourage them to get vaccinated against Covid-19, said Head of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) Amiran Gamkrelidze. Gamkrelidze said that cash prizes may encourage people to get vaccinated against Covid-19. Amiran Gamkrelidze also said that the Finance Ministry is actively working with the Georgian Lottery Company on the issue and the public will be notified about the exact dates of lottery raffles in the coming days.

**Covid-pregnancy complications:** in 2021 13 pregnant women are known to have died of Covid, Deputy Minister of Health – Ms. Tamar Gabunia initiated research to determine exactly how many pregnant women died of Covid. Health Ministry initiated online medical services for pregnant Covid-19 patients due to gravity of the situation.



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**Vaccination buses introduced:** according to Health Minister, Eka Tikaradze, total 10 vaccination buses will be driving around Tbilisi (starting first in Varketili, Gldani and Station Square districts) that will each vaccinate 100-150 people daily. If successful, buses will be introduced in other regions too.

**Punishment for Covid violations:** Labor Inspection shut down 5 and fined 6 public service objects (including famous Gardenia café) for violation of Covid regulations (organizing public entertainment activities). According to the Labor Inspection, majority of violations are organizing mass entertainment activities. In the past two weeks, total 20 places were shut down, 46 business operators were fined due to violation of labor safety laws. Along with Labor Inspection, other supervisory bodies are: Revenue Services, Food Safety Agency, Municipal Supervisory Services, Municipal Inspection, MIA Criminal and Patrol Police.

**13% of the government reserve fund has been spent on the Covid-19 pandemic in Georgia in 2020** and in the six months of 2021, says the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI). The government reserve fund enables the state to cover the costs of unexpected expenses, such as natural disasters, epidemics, ecological and other types of disasters. The IDFI says that in the reporting period 67 million GEL was allocated from the government reserve fund, of which 61.8 million GEL was spent 'on various purposes', including on the fight against the pandemic.

Money spent on the coronavirus fight totalled 7.9 million GEL, said the IDFI, of which:

- 22.7 million GEL (37% of total expenditures) was spent on international arbitration disputes and ongoing proceedings in foreign courts
- 14.4 million GEL (23%) - on financing the Ministry of Defence
- 6.5 million GEL (10%) - for the second round of elections
- 5.6 million GEL (9%) - on the procurement of lobbying and consulting services

The remaining 4.2 million GEL was spent on 'various purposes', says the IDFI.

In addition, the IDFI says that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has received about half a million GEL which was allocated as a state secret. [Agenda.ge](http://Agenda.ge), [here](#).

**Sources in English:** [Datacov.moh.gov.ge](http://Datacov.moh.gov.ge) (other links in texts), August 31-September 1/2021.

## 2. Public Exchange between EU and Georgian Dream

**Economic growth, EU support:** "In response to the journalist's question – "if EU refuses to provide 75 million EUR (second tranche) financial assistance to Georgia, how would Georgia compensate for this shortage?", Chairman of Georgian Dream, Irakli Kobakhidze answered that given a high rate of economic growth," and as 1 billion GEL is accumulated in the budget additionally, there is no longer any financial implication on whether Georgia will receive macro-financial assistance from the European Union. As for the political part – he said everything is up to the EU, but as for the "Georgian Dream", it acts, first - in the interests of the country and second - in the objective interests of our strategic partners: "Let's see what decision is made". "Financially, this loan has lost its relevance, however, as for the political burden, we are aware of this political implication, but talking about sanctions is just speculation", - said Kobakhidze.

**Later, Prime Minister – Irakli Gharibashvili said "we decided to refrain from taking second**



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**tranche of EU funding to decrease the foreign dept**", and Defense Minister Juansher Burchuladze said "It is up to us to decide whether we want any particular funding or not."

**Ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili remark:** "If you have 1 billion GEL saved up, you laggards, why do not you distribute it to the impoverished people?! I really want to call on the European Union to stop providing financial assistance to this regime, because it does not reach the Georgian people because of elite corruption."

**Kobakhidze about Upcoming elections:** Even if the Georgian Dream gets 1%, no parliamentary elections will be held on the basis of self-government elections - we will not discuss such a scenario because we can not discuss abstractions, - Georgian Dream Chairman Irakli Kobakhidze told Palitraneews TV.

**EU – Georgia was not eligible anyway:** The EU delegation to Georgia has responded to the Georgian government's recent refusal to take the second tranche of the EU's 150 million euro loan, stating that they 'respect' the decision, but noting that the country has been unable to completely fulfil preconditions that would have been needed to receive the second instalment. At a briefing late yesterday, the EU embassy said that the Georgian government has not yet taken genuine steps to improve issues in the country's judiciary, increase its accountability and quality. Source in English, [Agenda.ge](https://agenda.ge).

**NGOs: "Rejection of EU funding is open declaration against Euro-Atlantic direction"** – statement was made by all major NGOs throughout Georgia, including: GDI, Transparency International, IDSD, Human Rights Center, GRASS, Demokrat Meskh Union, Liberal Academy, OSGF, ISFED, Civic Integration Fund, Media Development Fund, UN Agency (UNAG), PHR. Source in Georgian, official [website](https://agenda.ge) of NGO GDI.

**Opposition: "Government refused because EU was going to refuse anyway":** The United National Movement (UNM) and the European Georgia opposition party leaders say that the Georgian government has refused to take the second part of the EU's 75 million EUR loan because the EU was likely to impose sanctions against Georgia for the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party's withdrawal from the April 2021 EU-mediated agreement. Source in English, [Agenda.ge](https://agenda.ge).

**EU Expert: "Government hastily rejected EU funding, to justify EU's expected rejection of the next tranche"** – says Ivane Chkhikvadze, Georgian expert on EU issues who works at OSGF (Open Society Georgia Foundation, otherwise known as "Soros" foundation). Source in Georgian, [Netgazeti](https://netgazeti.ge).

**Common citizens: "We Really Really Need EU"** – citizens protest against government rejection of EU funding, by placing stensils in Georgian streets saying "we need EU". Photos on public facebook [profile](https://www.facebook.com/) of an activist.

**Gharibashvili response:** "Our judiciary is much more advanced than EU members' systems, if UNM had signed the April 19 Agreement, we would have stayed." Source in Georgian, [Interpressnews](https://interpressnews.ge). "It was Saakashvili and UNM's attempt to impose sanctions on us – it is our achievement that



Euro-Atlantic direction became irreversible”, source in Georgian, [Interpressnews](#).

**Note\*\*\*** EU support was cancelled due to non-performance of Georgian Government in judiciary reforms and other governance issues. Source in Georgian, [On.ge](#).

***Estonian President says 20 years might be necessary for Georgia’s EU membership*** - Interview of Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid with Yevropeiska online portal, released on August 25, says that Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova should get either EU membership or special type of partnership. She said, “I prefer simply enlargement, but this will take very long time, because it’s hugely conditional, and frankly speaking, none of these three countries is ready to fulfill the European Union criteria.” “So it will be 20 years maybe, to work before you get there.” “All these countries have problems with independent justice system, for example, therefore you are not fit yet for the European Union membership. We are ready to help, but the work needs to be done by these countries themselves,” the Estonian President added. Noteworthy, the Georgian Dream government says it will submit a formal application for EU membership in 2024.

***Source in English: Interpressnews, EU support, Defense Minister remark, Gharibashvili remark, Kobakhidze about elections, Saakashvili remark. August 30/2021. Sources indicated in text dated August 31-Septemebr 1/2021.***

### **3. Georgian Dream Advertisement Expenditures in August – about 2 Million GEL, Donations to Party – about 4 Million GEL**

Georgian Dream spent almost 3 million GEL (2’794’718) from August 2 to August 22/2021 – most of it, on electoral advertisement (2’274’308 GEL), such as street banners. Internet advertisement specifically cost the party 311’245 GEL. Audit has not detected any costs for TV advertisement. In the same period, Georgian Dream received over 4 million GEL in donations (4’009’900), among others, 3’836’700 GEL from natural persons and 173’200 GEL from companies. The party had 428’335 GEL government budgetary funding in 2021.

***Source in Georgian, Interpressnews, September 1/2021.***

### **4. Election Violation Revealed by ISFED – Observer NGO**

Georgian observer organization – NGO ISFED (International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy) published preliminary monitoring report, describing cases of allegedly politically motivated dismissals – 15 cases. There have been alleged cases of pressure/intimidation/interference – 11 cases, abuse of administrative resources – 13, campaigning on social media by government employees – 6, vote bribery – 4, campaigning by government employees – 8.

***Source in Georgian, Interpressnews. September 1/2021.***

### **5. Constitutional Amendments May be Discussed from the Next Week,**



### **Affecting Electoral Regulations**

According to chairman of Georgian Dream, Irakli Kobakhidze, Constitutional amendments may be initiated next week, and may be changed right before the Parliament Hearing. For now, the planned Constitutional amendment package involves following points:

- 2% threshold during two of the next consecutive Parliamentary elections;
- Number of mandates to be received by parties will be determined by multiplying received votes by 150 and divided by sum of all votes received by all parties that passed the threshold: the rounded up number will be the number of mandates received by a party;
- If total sum of mandates received by parties is less than 150, remaining mandates will be allocated to best performing parties;
- Current and next two Parliaments' factions must have each no less than 4 members;
- During next two Parliaments, Prosecutor General will be elected by 3/5 of all members (90 votes). If consecutively twice parliament can't elect, then threshold will be lowered to 76 votes, but Prosecutor General elected with 76 votes will be in tenure for only a year.

Constitutional amendments require 113 votes.

*Source in Georgian: [On.ge](#), August 31/2021*

### **6. Giorgi Vashadze, Leader of "Strategy Aghmashenebeli", Presented New Political Platform titled "Third Force", to break the "Vicious Cycle of Bipolarity"**

Giorgi Vashadze, leader of "Strategy Aghmashenebeli" (or "Builder") presented the new political platform "Third Force" to break the "vicious cycle of bipolarity" between UNM and Georgian Dream. He presented the persons, who will take part in creating "Third Force" together with "Strategy Aghmashenebeli":

- Former Chairman of the United National Movement, MP Grigol Vashadze;
- One of the leaders of the "Republican Party", MP Khatuna Samnidze;
- Tamar Kekenadze, chairwoman of the Free Democrats;
- Rezo Kemularia, Member of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Georgia;
- Vakhtang Iashvili, Representative of the Human Rights Center;
- Doctor of Socio-Political Sciences, Professor of Public Administration Otar Baghaturia;
- Paata Chikovani, Doctor of History.

There is no decision to form into a one united party yet, but they plan to "work together to unite for development of your country" because "as long as Georgia has two political poles, there is no future."

*Source in English: [Interpressnews](#), August 30/2021*

### **7. Pre-Election Campaign Heating Up: Droa Office Damaged, Opposition Trying to Create "Third Power", Lelo Presented Candidates for Tbilisi**





### **Majoritarian Districts “Educated Professionals With Clean Past”**

Office of party “Droa” damaged in Zugdidi – inscriptions “murderer” made on the door on August 29. Droa is a party created by former European Georgia member, Elene Khoshtaria, who is also candidate for the City Council Chairmanship on behalf of the part of the oppositional parties.

According to one of the leaders of “Strategy Aghmashenebeli”, Sergo Chikhladze, “third power” will include former UNM party chairman, Grigol Vashadze, saying that this is an open platform uniting various parties and successful public figures.

Lelo presented candidates for Tbilisi majoritarian districts, saying they are “educated professionals with clean past”, by districts:

- Mtatsminda – Saba Buadze;
- Vake – Medea Metreveli;
- Krtsanisi – Tazo Datunashvili;
- Saburtalo – Vato Surguladze;
- Isani – Lana Galdava;
- Nadzaladevi – Nikoloz Cherkezishvili;
- Didube – Dimitry Abashidze;
- Chughureti – Kakha Zhghenti;
- Gldani – Tamar Adamia.

*Source in English: Agenda.ge, [here](#). In Georgian: IPN [here](#), On.ge [here](#) and [here](#) August 26/2021*

## **SOCIAL & ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

### **8. Georgia Facing Demographic Decline as a Result of Covid-19**

For the first time since 2007, the number of dead exceeded the number of births. While in 2019 the natural growth of population was 1637, in 2020 it is minus 4017. Covid increased the death rate in Georgia by 5.1%. Number of marriages have also decreased since 2019 by 7000, counting at 16’359.

According to Demographics Expert, Gia Meladze: *“before 90-ies, 90’000 children were born annually, after the 90-ies this number has decreased by half. Covid made the situation far worse – in the coming 8-10 years further decrease is expected.”*

*Source in Georgian, [Radio Freedom](#), August 31/2021.*

### **9. Government Support to Vulnerable Population: IDP Housing, Compensation for Destroyed Vineyards in Kakheti and Subsidies on Mortgage for Families with Newborns**



**Housing for IDPs:** About 300 Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) families living in state-owned buildings will register apartments they inhabit at a symbolic price (becoming owners) – according to Prime Minister Gharibashvili. The internal armed conflicts in Georgia of the 1990's caused the forced relocation of the Georgian population from Russian-occupied Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Tskhinvali region) after which about 251,000 people became IDPs in the country. The number of IDPs increased by about 26,000 people following the Russian-Georgia war in 2008. A total of 266 IDP families registered houses on August 18 earlier this year. More than 1,900 IDP families legalised their real estate last year. The Georgian government announced in early August that it plans to provide 13,000 IDP families with new homes across the country as part of the four-year plan. A total of 8,000 apartments will be built in various Georgian cities such as Tbilisi, Zugdidi, Kutaisi and Rustavi. 23,000 IDP families have been provided with new housing from 2013 till today.

**Government compensation for destroyed vineyards:** The grape harvest has started early in the Georgian wine region of Kakheti after heavy hail and wind destroyed 4,600 ha of vineyards in about 30 villages this week. Farmers are picking hail-damaged grapes in the towns of Kvareli, Gurjaani, Lagodekhi and Telavi in Kakheti. Harvest began yesterday while as of today, about 1,200 tonnes of grape has already been processed. The government of Georgia will pay 3,000 GEL per hectare of vineyard to a farmer whose grapes have been completely destroyed. In addition, the state is paying 80 tetri for 1 kg of the Rkatsiteli grape variety and 1 GEL for Saperavi.

**Apartment mortgage subsidies for families with newborns or 3 kids:** From September 1, government loan subsidy will be enacted, offering subsidy for mortgage loans for families with newborns or 3 or more kids.

**Sources in English:** *Agenda.ge:* [Housing for IDPs](#), [Reimbursement for damaged vineyards](#), [Subsidies for mortgages](#). **Sources in Georgian:** *Interpressnews:* [Capital market program](#). **Other sources:** *Government facebook page (live briefing).* August 27-30/2021.

### **10. Government Plans to Develop Fish Industry: 51 Million GEL Investment Buys 14 New Fishing Ships, Creates 250 Jobs, Opens New Branch of Maritime Academy in Poti**

According to Economy Minister Natia Turnava, the Ministry (full name: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development) together with Maritime Transport Agency and “Enterprise Georgia” has been working together to invest 51 million GEL in purchasing 14 new fishing ships, so fishermen will be able to maximize the fishing quota. 250 new jobs will be created as a result. Additionally, new branch of Maritime Academy has been opened in Poti, which will teach fisherment about new technologies.

**Source in Georgian:** *Official facebook [page](#) of the Economy Ministry of Georgia, August 28/2021.*



### **11. UNDP and Social Service Agency (under Health Ministry) Sign Memorandum on Comprehensive Study of Vulnerable Families for Institutional Capacity Building of the Agency**

Aiming to eradicate extreme poverty and extend assistance for the most vulnerable population in Georgia, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with financial support from the Government of Sweden, is expanding cooperation with the Social Service Agency (SSA) of Georgia's Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs. According to UNDP, Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 30 August, UNDP will help the SSA design new evidence-based solutions to empower vulnerable populations and increase access to employment. The process will be informed by a comprehensive study to be conducted in 2021 to examine the social status of the families registered in a social vulnerability database and reveal the causes of unemployment. The emphasis will be made on the rural communities across Georgia. UNDP will also continue assisting the SSA to assess its institutional capacities, reveal the gaps and implement a staff training programme. The UNDP and SSA cooperation draws on the resources provided by the Government of Sweden under three ongoing initiatives – the UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality, the Increased Access to Digital Services, and the Governance Reform Fund.

*Source in English: [Interpressnews](#), August 30/2021.*

## **OCCUPIED TERRITORIES**

### **12. Abkhazia Hosts 300 Legalized Migrants**

Abkhazia currently hosts 3000 legalized migrants – some of them said to be from Uzbekistan. According to de facto authorities, majority come through invitation of the employers.

*Source in Russian, media from occupied Abkhazia - [Apsnypublic.ru](#). August 31/2021.*

### **13. Abkhaz and Chechen Relations Warming Amid Pandemic**

De facto President of occupied Abkhazia region – Aslan Bzhania, met the delegation from Chechen Republic, headed by its Health Minister – Elkan Suleymanov, and Minister of National Policy, External Connections and Information – Akhmed Dudaev. The sides expressed their “brotherly” relations and expressed hope for deepening ties. According to Health Ministry of Chechnya, two emergency medical cars will be gifted to Abkhazia, through coordination by Member of Russian Duma – Adam Delimkhanov. In his turn, Aslan Bzhania invited Chechen children for a summer break to Abkhazia, to promote friendly relations between Abkhaz and Chechen youth.

*Source in Russian: Official facebook [page](#) of de facto Health Ministry of occupied Abkhazia, August 31/2021*





#### **14. 13 Years Since Russia Recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Contrary to International Law and Georgian Sovereignty**

Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali regions of Georgia, are celebrating 13 years since recognition of independence by Russian Federation on August 26 – since then, Russian-backed activities and funding resulted in recognition by additionally: Nikaragua, Venesuela, Nauru, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and finally – Syria. De facto authorities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are working intensively to increase number of countries recognizing them. Georgian MFA says this poses risk to other countries, to international order – creating precedent of violation of sovereignty of a country. Russian recognition of the occupied territories is considered a political tool against Georgia’s western aspirations.

*Source in Georgian: Netgazeti.ge, [here](#). August 26/2021*

#### **15. Russian Gazprom will Gasify Abkhazia Within a Year**

Russian state energy giant Gazprom intends to gasify Abkhazia within a year, addressing “months of severe energy crisis”. The press service of the Ministry of Economy of Abkhazia reported that in the near future Abkhazia will receive from Gazprom a draft technical assignment, a draft agreement and a draft roadmap. In July 2021, the costs of the project were already confirmed in the form of adjustments to the three-year “Investment program to promote the socio-economic development of the Republic of Abkhazia for 2020-2022”. The energy crisis in Abkhazia has been going on since the fall of 2020. In fact, the only source of electricity for the republic is a 40% share of electricity generation at the Inguri hydroelectric power station. This power plant is located right in the zone of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, the parties operate it jointly, 60% of the electricity generation is consumed by the Georgian side. Electricity turned out to be in an acute shortage in Abkhazia, primarily due to the “fever” of cryptocurrency mining that gripped it. Despite the legal ban to identify mining farms, Abkhazia has not yet been possible to cope with the problem. Abkhazia was not supplied with gas during the Soviet Union and remained without a gas pipeline. Small consignments of liquefied gas are imported to the republic, which are then sold in cylinders. A standard gas cylinder costs 900 rubles (about 12 USD). This is very expensive for the local population, so most prefer to use very cheap electricity: the price of 1 kW / h is 40 kopecks for private individuals and 80 kopecks for legal entities (these are very small fractions of one American cent).

*Source in English: Jam News, [here](#). August 25/2021*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**



### **16. Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Condemns Georgia-Belarus Agreement on Cooperation between State Security Services and KGB**

The document about cooperation between Belarussian KGB and Georgian State Security Services (signed in 2016, ratified and entered force in August 2021) was assessed by Eastern Partnership as “dangerous and inappropriate”, risking “discreditation in the eyes of international partners”:

*“We believe that validating any agreement on cooperation with the criminal regime that is repressing its citizens and does not adhere to the country’s Constitution is both inappropriate and dangerous. We believe that by any potential future cooperation with the toxic political regime of A. Lukashenka and his punitive bodies, or by enforcing existing agreements like the one mentioned above, the Georgian authorities are running the risk of being discredited in the eyes of their own citizens and the international partners. Moreover, they would directly contribute to intensifying the level of repression experienced by the citizens of Belarus. The Georgian authorities should refrain from providing any personal information on the opponents of the Lukashenka regime who found temporary refuge in Georgia.”*

**Note\*\*\*** Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum is the official network of NGOs from the Eastern Partnership countries, aiming to cooperate on European integration, human rights and related issues. Members come from the following countries: Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

**Source in English: official [website](#) of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. August 31/2021.**

### **17. Georgia & Afghanistan: EU Ambassador Thanks Georgia for Kabul Evacuation, Georgia Sends Drinking Water Supplies to Afghanistan, Georgian President and Foreign Minister Condemn Terrorist Attack in Kabul**

**Humanitarian Support by Georgia:** Georgia has sent drinking water supplies for people who are at the airport of Kabul in Afghanistan as humanitarian aid, announces the government of Georgia. Deputy Head of the Administration of the Government of Georgia Revaz Javelidze said that Georgia stands by its international partners and is involved in both humanitarian and evacuation processes. He noted that a regional transit hub had been set up at Tbilisi International Airport and at the Georgian Defence Forces military base with the participation of Georgian, Norwegian and Swedish servicemen, as well as military and civilian personnel from several NATO member states. Tbilisi International Airport is being used as a way station by evacuation flights of the NATO Military Transportation Organisation, which is running daily flights to Kabul and back.

**Georgian Government Condemns Kabul Attacks:** Georgian President Salome Zurbashvili and Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani have 'strongly condemned' the terrorist attack outside Kabul's airport in Afghanistan, where 13 US service members and at least 60 Afghans have been killed.

**EU Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzel thanks Georgia for its support** to the evacuation from



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Kabul, Afghanistan, 'which allowed European Union member states to swiftly and safely transit and transfer via Tbilisi airport'.

**US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degan thanked the Ministry of Defence and the Georgian government** for the 'outstanding logistics support that they have provided for humanitarian flights from Afghanistan that have been transiting Georgia on their way to the final destinations'.

**Russian Disinformation:** Georgian Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani stated earlier today that Russian agencies are distributing disinformation in claiming that Georgia is taking in Afghan refugees, amid the country's involvement in the evacuation process from Afghanistan. Zalkaliani underlined that a few dozen people evacuated from Afghanistan will stay in Georgia 'only for a few hours and after that, they will travel to their destination countries.'

**Sources in English:** *Agenda.ge*: [Kabul attacks](#), [EU gratitude](#), [Disinformation by Russia](#), [Georgia – transit hub for Afghan evacuations](#). As of August 27-30/2021.