

GEORGIA UPDATE

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TOP STORIES:

- EU, US Say Russia Fails to Fully Withdraw from Georgia
- World Court Orders Russia to Halt Ethnic Cleansing
- Russia Walks Out of Geneva Talks, Suspended Until November
- Georgia's Displaced Slowly Return, Remain Locked Out of Conflict Zones
- "Ecocide" of Georgian Forests by Russians Condemned

SPECIAL SECTION: PROGRESS REPORT ON RECONSTRUCTION & DEMOCRATIC REFORM

- Parliament Passes First Wave of New Democratic Reforms
- EU Pledges Aid in Advance of Oct. 22 Donor Conference
- World Bank Gives Aid, UN Ranks Georgia in Top 10 for FDI
- Anti-Crisis Council Unveils Democratic Reform Initiatives



QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"Civilians bore the brunt of this conflict. Tens of thousands had to flee, and now they need safe and secure conditions so they can return to their homes."

—Rachel Denber, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch

"Some in the European Union may see the Kremlin-dictated truce that stopped the fighting (though not the ethnic cleansing, which continues apace) as a triumph. From Russia's point of view, the lesson of the Georgian adventure is simple: we got away with it."

—Edward Lucas in *The Financial Times*

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

CURRENT HISTORY: War in Georgia, Jitters All Around

LE FIGARO: "My Children Will Not Grow Up to Be Russians!"

REUTERS: Georgian Villages Torched, Satellite Study Shows

LIBERALE (Italy): South Ossetian Leader Says Russia to Blame for War

CNN (video): From the Land of the Golden Fleece Exhibition in the UK Opens

FINANCIAL TIMES: Do Not Let Russia "Finlandise" Western Europe

REUTERS: Georgian Villages Torched, Satellite Study Shows

Reports from Think Tanks & NGOs

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH: EU Should Focus on Civilian Protection at Georgia-Russia Talks

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: Satellite Images Show Russian Devastation of Georgian Villages

AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE: Russia's Naked Land-Grab Marks a World-Historical Turning Point

UPCOMING MILESTONES

Oct. 17: Spanish FM Moratinos in Georgia for meetings with Government, EU monitors

Oct. 16-17: Military attachés of 20 OSCE member states in Georgia on fact-finding mission

Oct. 22: Donors conference in Brussels organized by European Commission, French EU Presidency, and World Bank

Oct. 23: William Hague, shadow foreign secretary of UK Conservative Party, and Lord Ashcroft, the party's deputy chairman, visit Tbilisi

Oct. 26-28: US Department of Commerce investor trip to Georgia

Nov. 18: Provisional date for second round of Geneva peace talks

Nov. 23: 5th Anniversary of the Rose Revolution

TOP STORIES

EU, US Say Russia Fails to Fully Withdraw from Georgia

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner has declared Russia's withdrawal from the country is "not complete," a judgment echoed by EU foreign ministers on Oct. 13 and by the US. Russia is still maintaining numerous checkpoints in areas of Georgia that were never part of the pre-August 7 conflict zones, including the Akhgori district just north of Tbilisi and the Kodori Gorge in Upper Abkhazia. Moscow's failure to withdraw inhibits the return of internally displaced persons. Russia also is illegally maintaining 7,600 troops in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

REUTERS (Oct. 10): Kouchner says Russia only partly fulfils ceasefire <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE4973IZ20081010?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

AFP (Oct. 14): US questions whether Russia meets truce obligations <http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5jfrGaTliLuQ86i1OoSRHUpHDQitA>

TIMES OF LONDON (Oct 10): Rebel militia's dig in to defy peace plan. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article4916874.ece>



World Court Orders Russia to Halt Ethnic Cleansing

The International Court of Justice on Oct. 15 agreed to accept Georgia's case charging Russia with ethnic cleansing, dating to the early 1990s and continuing through today. The Court found that "the ethnic Georgian population in the areas affected by the recent conflict remains vulnerable." It also found that "there exists an imminent risk that the rights at issue in the case may suffer irreparable damage." The Court therefore adopted provisional measures that enjoin both parties to respect the rights of all persons, irrespective of ethnicity, in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and adjacent areas of Georgia.

FINANCIAL TIMES (Oct 16): UN court rules in favor of Georgia http://us.ft.com/ftgateway/superpage.ft?news_id=fto101520081142006453

Russia Walks Out of Geneva Talks, Suspended Till Nov.

Russia walked out of the Oct. 15 peace talks in Geneva, scuttling chances for progress on the key issues the meetings were meant to address: The Geneva talks, part of the Sarkozy ceasefire agreement, are aimed at ensuring the full withdrawal of Russian troops, the return of the displaced, and long-term stability in the region. EU Special Envoy Pierre Morel said he expects a new round of talks on Nov. 19. Russia's insistence that separatist representatives of South Ossetia and Abkhazia be allowed full participation in the talks—an unacceptable condition for other parties—was at the heart of the failure of the Geneva talks to advance.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSTRE49C6D920081015?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews>

REUTERS (Oct 15) Russia-Georgia Talks Suspended Until November http://mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=36&info_id=8250

Georgia's Displaced Slowly Return, Remain Locked Out of Conflict Zones

The Government has helped over 20,000 people return to their villages in the "buffer zone" adjacent to South Ossetia since Russian troops began withdrawing last week, according to UNHCR. However, another 53,000 displaced by the conflict are still unable to go to their homes, as Russia has failed to withdraw from the Akhgori and Upper Kodori—areas outside the original conflict zones. Moscow also is not facilitating the return of the displaced to South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as required by the Sarkozy ceasefire agreement.

REUTERS (Oct. 14): UNHCR says 20,000 Georgians return to buffer zone <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LE373133.htm>

EURASIANET (Oct 10.) With Russians Gone, Georgians start to rebuild <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101008.shtml>

"Ecocide" of Georgian Forests by Russians Condemned

The World Conservation Congress adopted a plan to address the extensive environmental damage caused by Russia's invasion. The WCC urged donors to fund Georgia's environmental restoration efforts and implement international safeguards to enforce environment protection laws during armed conflict.

http://www.iucn.org/news_events/events/congress/live/news/index.cfm?uNewsID=1913

TOP STORIES

PROGRESS REPORT: RECONSTRUCTION & REFORM

Parliament Passes First Wave of New Democratic Reforms

As promised by President Saakashvili, Parliament passed a first round of constitutional amendments to strengthen Georgia's democratic institutions, including making the electoral system more equitable and merging the General Prosecutor's Office with the Justice Ministry. New laws to enhance transparency, strengthen civil rights, and promote judicial reform are expected in coming months. <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19732&search=parliament>

EU Pledges Aid in Advance of Oct. 22 Donor Conference

New pledges to support Georgia's reconstruction continue to be made in advance of the October 22nd donor conference, to be held in Brussels under the aegis of the EU and World Bank. EC President Barroso said on Oct. 14 that he expected the EU to come forward with €500 million; President Saakashvili said he was hoping that EU member states might be able to match that amount, to help meet reconstruction costs expected to reach \$3.25 billion.

World Bank Gives Aid, UN Ranks Georgia in Top 10 for FDI

The World Bank last week approved \$80 million help in Georgia's economic reconstruction efforts, as the Georgian economy also received several additional boosts: The UN released a study ranking Georgia in the world's top 10 for foreign direct investment based on performance, while a bilateral free-trade agreement between Georgia and Turkey is set to launch on Nov. 1. <http://www.unctad.org/Templates/webflyer.asp?docid=10502&intlItemID=2068&1>

Anti-Crisis Council Unveils Democratic Reform Initiatives

The Anti-Crisis Council—the cross-party body established by President Saakashvili to oversee reconstruction and reform efforts—has proposed several new laws to help promote political transparency and democratic reform. Legislation advanced by the Council would broaden the Georgian Public Broadcaster's obligation to air political debates, help small and medium businesses, and enhance civil rights. <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19695&search=ANTI%20CRISIS%20COUNCIL>

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

CURRENT HISTORY: War in Georgia, Jitters All Around

Leading political scientist Svante Cornell writes that Russia's premeditated invasion of Georgia poses critical security challenges for Europe as well as Georgia. Moscow sought to reassert its dominance in the Caucasus, Europe's "energy corridor," and to deliberately undermine Georgia's democratic transformation and Euro-Atlantic integration efforts. The West should oppose Russia's aggression in Georgia more adamantly or face the long-term security repercussions of Moscow's enhanced regional control.

<http://www.gfsis.org/gfac/eng/publications/Svante.pdf>

LE FIGARO: "My Children Will Not Grow Up to Be Russians!"

In those areas from which Russia has withdrawn, displaced Georgians are returning to see their homes destroyed and their property stolen. The cumulative burden of misery is staggering: 20,000 remain displaced from South Ossetia, around 6,000 from Akhgori, 2,500 from Kodori—a total of at least 30,000 newly displaced, added to over 200,000 who fled the 1992-3 conflict. Before winter sets in, at least 5,000 houses will have to be built, each costing 15,000 Euros.

<http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2008/10/11/01003-20081011ARTFIG00195-mes-enfants-ne-vont-pas-grandir-comme-des-russes-.php>

LIBERALE (Italy): S. Ossetian Leader Blames Russia

Dmitri Sanakoev, the elected leader of South Ossetia's provisional administration, offers an insider's account of the causes behind Russia's long-planned invasion of Georgia. Sanakoev, a native South Ossete, says Russia has been using South Ossetia as a "geopolitical tool to destabilize Georgia;" he blames Russia and its puppets for instigating the five-day war in Georgia and subsequent ethnic cleansing campaigns.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/987/story/349293.html>

CNN (video): From the Land of the Golden Fleece-Tomb Treasures of Ancient Georgia in UK Exhibition

Spectacular treasures from ancient Georgia, the land to which the Greek hero Jason led the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece, are presented at Cambridge's Fitzwilliam Museum, in the only UK showing of this remarkable exhibition, and offer a unique insight into a fascinating ancient culture on the eastern shores of the Black Sea (see also: www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2008/10/14/vo.uk.golden.fleece.bsn?iref=videosearch>



FINANCIAL TIMES: Do Not Let Russia "Finlandise" W. Europe

Russia's aim could well be the re-creation of a "light" version of the Soviet empire, based not on military might but on economic dominance and pipeline monopolies, or the "Finlandisation" of Western Europe. To contain Russian aggression, and Moscow monopolistic economic tendencies, Europe's best tools are economic: It should stem the flow of dirty money from Russia, crack down on front companies, and pursue a liberal energy policy. In short, the EU must send the message to Russia's elites, "Provoke us enough and it will be bad for business."

http://us.ft.com/ftgateway/superpage.ft?news_id=fto100820081444045083

REUTERS: Georgian Villages Torched, Satellite Study Shows

A study by Amnesty International includes new satellite images that reveal mass destruction of predominately ethnic Georgian villages in South Ossetia—after the Aug 12 ceasefire. Images taken immediately after Russian troops took-over South Ossetia provide concrete evidence of war crimes committed against civilians. Amnesty calls for the creation of an independent international commission to investigate ethnically motivated crimes; the group faults Russia for its failure to uphold fundamental human rights.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/homepageCrisis/idUSL940769.CH..2400>

REPORTS FROM THINK TANKS & NGOS

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH: EU Should Focus on Civilian Protection at Georgia-Russia Talks

Human Rights Watch urged the European Union on Oct. 14 to extend its mission in Georgia to protect civilians returning home after the August conflict with Russia. "During the discussions the European Union must insist on the right of people to return home to Georgia," HRW said in a statement.

<http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2008/10/14/russia19962.htm>

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: Satellite Images Show Russian Devastation of Georgian Villages

Amnesty International and the American Association for the Advancement of Science analyze new satellite images that show extensive damage to ethnic Georgian villages in South Ossetia during and after Russia's invasion into Georgia. Amnesty says "Russian forces failed to take effective measures to protect civilians" and mirrors Georgia's call for an independent international commission to investigate Russia's ethnic cleansing campaign.

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR04/004/2008/en>

AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE: Russia's Naked Land-Grab Marks a World-Historical Turning Point

A new AEI report evaluates the threat posed to U.S. interests and American allies by Russian actions in and around Georgia and recommends measures the U.S. should take immediately and over the long term to persuade Russia to return to conformance with international law and deter future conflict between Russia and its neighbors. The report ranges beyond Georgia as well, to analyze the situation in Ukraine, the Baltic States, and Poland.

http://www.aei.org/docLib/20081006_EasternEuropeStrategy.pdf