

GEORGIA UPDATE

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- IMF Says Georgian Economy “Well Placed” to Recover
- Parliament Approves New PM & Pledges War on Poverty
- IRI Survey Shows Majority of Georgians Support Government, Parliament



“We reiterate that under the continued occupation of Georgian territories it would be too early to resume talks on a new partnership agreement with Russia,” the presidents of Poland and Lithuania said in a joint declaration following meetings with their Georgian counterpart in Riga. “We underline that negotiations on the EU and Russia agreement should be renewed only when Russia withdraws its troops from Georgia to the positions held prior to August 7th.”

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“The EU monitors have not been able to enter South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We keep knocking on their doors, we are carrying out patrols near their checkpoints. We want to make it clear for everyone that our mandate should cover the entire territory of Georgia.”

—Hans Jorg Haber, head of the EU Monitoring Mission

UPCOMING MILESTONES

Nov 9: Speaker of Danish Parliament visits Georgia

Nov 10: EU foreign ministers meet to discuss resumption of partnership talks with Russia

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

Nov. 23: 5th Anniversary of the Rose Revolution

SUDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG: Russia judged too mildly in the West

DAILY TELEGRAPH: Russia, Georgia & the EU—victory for the Kremlin?

WALL STREET JOURNAL: A fork in the Silk Road

NEW YORK TIMES: Georgia’s battered face in a separatist republic

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE: The paradox of an unattractive Russia

AFP: Kouchner says Russia issuing passports in Crimea

LE TEMPS: Plea for healthy relations between Russia and the EU

TOP STORIES

President Acknowledges Mistakes, Lessons of November 7 Demonstrations

In a speech to the nation, President Saakashvili acknowledged the mistakes made by his government during anti-government rallies one year ago. "Our duty is to remember November 7," he said. "We have all learnt big lesson, we have seen mistakes made by the Georgian authorities—those events demonstrate how important it is for the government and the president to listen to the people and to maintain dialogue even with minor groups." Saakashvili highlighted his commitment to Georgia's democratic development through advancing the country's "new waves" of democratic and legal reform.

CIVIL GEORGIA (Oct. 27): President Saakashvili Underscores Lessons of November 7 Demonstrations

<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19840>

EU Says "Unacceptable" for Russia to Deny Access to Abkhazia, S.Ossetia

The head of the EU Monitoring Mission's said Wednesday it was "unacceptable" for Russia and its proxies to deny the EU access to the breakaway regions. "EUMM has a Georgia-wide mandate, thus including Abkhazia and South Ossetia," Hansjörg Haber, the head of the EU monitoring mission said in a written statement released on November 5. "However, EUMM is a civilian and unarmed mission. We cannot and we do not want to force our way. We can only go where there is cooperation." Meanwhile, on the border of separatist Abkhazia, sporadic bombings by Russian proxies have intensified fears of a resurgent war among Georgian residents.

CIVIL GEORGIA (Nov. 5): <http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19890>

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Oct. 29): Fears of new war rise around separatist Abkhazia

Council of Europe Hails "orderly polling day" and elections "conducted in a positive atmosphere" in Adjara

Elections for the local parliament in Adjara were held on Monday. According to observers from the Council of Europe they were "conducted in a positive way". "In comparison with previous years, the election system was really improved," said Gunter Krug, Head of the CoE delegation. The ruling National Movement prevailed in Adjara, while two opposition parties won Parliamentary by-elections in Tbilisi.

CIVIL GEORGIA (Nov. 3): Two Parties to Fill Seats in Adjara Parliament

<http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19880>

IMF Says Georgian Economy "Well Placed" to Recover

"Because of its fundamental strengths, the Georgian economy is well placed to recover from the August armed conflict," the IMF declared on Nov.5. "The authorities' actions to address the immediate consequences of the conflict were appropriate and the banking sector proved resilient." The IMF cautioned that foreign capital inflows, already affected by the conflict, may be further delayed—thus making the \$4.5 billion in international aid pledged last month even more important to the country's economic revival.

CIVIL GEORGIA (Nov. 5): <http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19893>

Parliament Approves New PM, Pledges War on Poverty

Parliament approved the appointment of PM Grigol Mgalobishvili and four new ministers in the reshuffled cabinet. "Reconstruction and taking care of people and employment" would be his top priorities, the new PM said. The PM and cabinet were urged by President Saakashvili to work closely with NGOs and opposition members. Meanwhile, Parliamentary leaders said they would implement 18- and 50-month plans to address the critical challenges facing post-war Georgia.

AFP (Nov. 1) : Georgia approves in PM in post-war shake up

<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5gjq6CrlroFTVb2a0eL-IAGL3Lg>

CIVIL GEORGIA (Nov. 1): Cabinet wins confidence vote

<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19872>

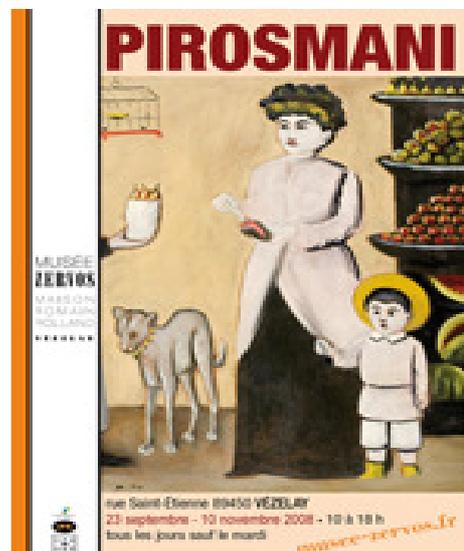
IRI Survey Shows Majority of Georgians Support Government, Parliament

Over 60 percent of Georgians give "favorable" ratings to the government, Parliament, and president, according to a new survey by the International Republic Institute. Meanwhile, 62 percent said their economic situation substantially "worsened" in the two months following Russia's August invasion of Georgia. Georgians also ranked preservation of the country's "territorial integrity" as the supreme national issue.

INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE: Georgian National Voter Survey

<http://www.iri.org/eurasia/georgia/pdfs/2007-11-08-Georgia.pdf>

The works of one of Georgia's most famous artists, Pirosmiani, are on view until Nov. 10 at the Zervos Museum in Vézelay, France. The exhibition is organized by the General Council of the Department of Yonne, France, and the Georgian National Museum. A reciprocal Picasso exhibit will take place next year in Georgia.



INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

SUDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG: Russia judged too mildly in the West—leading German MP

Europe must form a united front to more confidently address the challenges and opportunities posed by Russia, says leading German MP and Merkel confidant Eckart von Klaeden. In an interview, he highlights the importance of a collective European energy policy and the need to admit Georgia and Ukraine into NATO. "I would like the two countries to join NATO as soon as possible."

<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/993/315881/text/>

DAILY TELEGRAPH: Russia, Georgia & the EU—victory for the Kremlin?

Britain's decision to allow France to lead the European Union back into normal relations with Vladimir Putin's ex-KGB regime in Russia is one of the most startling volte-faces in UK country's recent diplomatic history, writes Ed Lucas. "The message to the Kremlin is clear: you can invade a neighboring country, threaten Europe's energy supplies, and the EU will do nothing serious about it." Bulking up regional membership of NATO is the best way to address Russia's aggression and defiance of international law.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/3369008/Russia-Georgia-and-the-EU-Victory-for-the-Kremlin.html>

WALL STREET JOURNAL: A fork in the Silk Road

Azerbaijanis were disappointed by the West's reaction to Russia's invasion of Georgia, and the growing inclination in many European capitals to capitulate to Russia in the broader Black Sea region. As a result, Baku is seriously considering a major foreign-policy reversal that would tie it more closely to Russia and seriously damage Europe's interests. Western leaders must realize the geopolitical importance of Azerbaijan and take action to strengthen ties.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122522752774177399.html>

NEW YORK TIMES: Georgia's battered face in a separatist republic

"I think we lost, because our goal was to avoid war," says Dmitry Sanakoev—an Ossete, former separatist firebrand, and now the leader of S. Ossetia's legitimate government. "These people have been in a totalitarian state for 17 years. Already, they're not learning Georgian. It was very hard to communicate with a society like that." Sanakoev argues that S. Ossetia's separatist leaders deliberately placed the region on a path to war.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/01/world/europe/01sanakoev.html?partner=rsnyt&emc=rss>

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE: The paradox of an unattractive Russia

Russia's aggressive strategy to regain influence in former Soviet republics is an underlying paradox in the country's foreign policy ambitions. NATO and the EU's model of "exporting liberty" is the defining strategy that attracts Eastern neighbors and is fundamentally lacking in Russia's developmental model. Western democracies should not be timid in fashioning a collective policy to address Russian aggression.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/10/30/opinion/eddebski.php>

AGENCE FRENCH PRESS: Kouchner says Russia issuing passports in Crimea

Russia is distributing passports to Ukrainians in the Crimea, according to French FM Bernard Kouchner. Kouchner compared Russia's controversial actions in Crimea to similar tactics employed by Moscow in Georgia's separatist enclaves and warned of the inherent "danger." Kiev has refused to renew an expiring lease that allows Russia's Black Sea fleet to remain stationed at the base until 2017.

http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=7962&Itemid=65

LE TEMPS: Plea for healthy relations between Russia and the EU

The EU must demand that Russia completely fulfill the requirements of the French-brokered ceasefire agreement before cooperation talks can progress. Europe's eagerness to resume business as usual with the Russian aggressor is "dangerous for the future." To maintain Europe's credibility, Russia must allow for the return of 30,000 Georgian IDPs, demilitarize the conflict zones, and rescind recognition of Abkhazia and S. Ossetia as independent states.

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5747&l=1>

WEBSITES @ GEORGIA

Georgia Update: Official government information service: www.georgiaupdate.gov.ge

Civil Georgia: Leading independent English-language news website on Georgia: www.civil.ge

Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mfa.gov.ge/>

Georgian Parliament: <http://www.parliament.ge/>

Government of Georgia: <http://www.government.gov.ge/eng/>

Georgian Foundation for Strategic & International Studies: Leading non-governmental organization that focuses on Georgian domestic and foreign policy: www.gfsis.org

National Investment Agency: <http://www.investgeorgia.org>