

GEORGIA UPDATE

WEEKLY EDITION • 20 November

A Publication of the Government of Georgia

www.georgiaupdate.gov.ge

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In his address to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Valencia on Tuesday, President Saakashvili focused on the question of who started the war. "Who attacked who? Who invaded who?" he asked. "Not one single Georgian soldier ever entered Russian territory, while dozens of thousands of Russian soldiers entered Georgian territory and 200 Russian planes bombed the territory." The President is scheduled to testify before the Georgian Parliament's War Commission on Nov. 28.

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: Putin "wanted to hang Georgian President Saakashvili by the balls"

WASHINGTON POST: U.S. studies another path for Georgia to join NATO

DEUTSCHE PRESSE AGENTUR: Sarkozy defends Georgian diplomacy

EURASIA INSIGHT: Post-war, Georgia's displaced villagers start a new life

EU OBSERVER: Europe's Arctic adventure

THE ECONOMIST: Ancient bling—A traveling show of Georgian treasures

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"The emergence of independent states within the former Soviet space is a reality. The ability of these states to determine their own future is a litmus test for the new Europe."

— NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

"A new twilight zone has been created along the de facto border between South Ossetia and the rest of Georgia, into which people stray at their peril."

—Nicola Duckworth, Amnesty International

UPCOMING MILESTONES

Nov. 19-20: South Caucasus Conference on enhancing the Independence and Efficiency of the Judiciary

Nov. 19-21: Parliament Speaker David Bakradze visits Latvia

Nov. 21: IOC meets in Istanbul; will review plans for Sochi Olympics

Nov. 23: Rose Revolution 5th Anniversary

Nov. 24: Parliament Speaker Bakradze testifies before War Commission

Nov. 28: President Saakashvili testifies before War Commission

Nov. 27-28: Conference on the Process of the Establishment of European Higher Education Area "Bologna Process"

TOP STORIES

New Evidence Confirms Russian Attacks in South Ossetia Before August 7

Powerful new evidence has emerged of Russian attacks in South Ossetia prior to Aug. 7, offering support to Georgia's insistence that its military actions were in self-defense. Memorial, the respected Russian human rights group, said on Tuesday that artillery exchanges across the border with South Ossetia began on Aug. 1, and then "got worse." South Ossetian troops had fired on civilians, including an enclave of ethnic Georgians living inside separatist controlled South Ossetia, north of Tskhinvali. South Ossetian troops also fired from the Tskhinvali headquarters of Russia's peacekeeping force, according to Memorial. Meanwhile, new eyewitness accounts given to Radio Free Europe revealed that extensive shelling on ethnic-Georgian villages began as early as Aug. 2. And the Georgian government offered a forceful rebuttal to claims made by former OSCE officials

THE GUARDIAN (Nov. 19): Georgia calls on EU for independent inquiry
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/nov/19/georgia-russia-eu-media-inquiry>
GEORGIA UPDATE (Nov. 18): Factual Evidence Contradicts War Claims in Recent Media Stories

RADIO FREE EUROPE (Nov. 14): Eyewitness accounts confirm shelling
http://www.rferl.org/content/Eyewitness_Accounts_Confirm_Shelling_Of_Georgian_Villages/1349256.html

Sarkozy Proposes Stronger EU-Georgian Links

In a meeting with President Saakashvili, French President Sarkozy assured Georgia on Thursday that he would press for closer links between it and the EU despite steps by the bloc to also resume talks on a partnership with Russia. Said one official close to Sarkozy: "After the Georgian crisis this summer, the Europeans realised that they needed to develop cooperation between the EU and European countries that are not members like Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia." Officials from Sarkozy's office said the proposed EU-Georgia partnership would be similar to the agreement being negotiated between the bloc and Ukraine.

REUTERS (Nov. 13): France proposes EU partnership with Georgia
<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/LD549286.htm>

EU Monitors Fired on While Investigating Killing of Georgian near Abkhazia

The EU observer mission said Sunday that shots were fired as they investigated the shooting death of a Georgian policeman near the administrative border between the regions of Abkhazia and Samegrelo. They called the incident "unacceptable" and asked the proxy authorities to investigate. Another fatal incident took place Monday, when two Georgian police officers were killed when an unmanned Russian spy plane exploded after crashing on Georgian territory.

AP (Nov. 16): EU monitors say they were fired on in Georgia
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20081116/ap_on_re_eu/eu_georgia_observers

AFP (Nov. 17): Georgia says two police killed after Russian drone explodes
http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20081117/wl_afp/georgiarussiaconflict_0811172_04052

At Geneva Talks, Georgia Seeks International Peacekeeping Force for Territories

The second round of Geneva peace talks ended Wednesday with all parties agreeing that issues related to security and the return of IDPs were the highest priority. The co-moderators—the UN, EU, and OSCE—will develop proposals on these issues for the third round of talks, set for Dec. 17-18. The Georgian delegation—including representatives of the communities of Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia—underscored Russia's non-compliance with the six-point ceasefire agreement and stressed immediate access of monitors to the occupied regions as a first step towards de-occupation of those regions and the creation of new international security arrangements.

GEORGIA MFA (Nov. 19): Statement on the Geneva Talks
<http://www.mfa.gov.ge>

CoE Criticizes Failure of Tskhinvali Authorities to Allow IDP Return

Thomas Hammarberg, the Council of Europe's human rights commissioner, said he was "not satisfied" with the refusal of the proxy authorities in Tskhinvali/South Ossetia region to allow IDPs to return home. Hammarberg also bemoaned the state of security for IDPs along the administrative borders: "There is definitely a need to ensure security with more energy from all sides—the police, the EU monitors." Over 200 EU observers have been deployed to monitor the return of Georgia's IDPs, but Russia and its proxies have prohibited EU access into the conflict regions.

CIVIL GEORGIA (Nov. 15):CoE Human Rights Chief Speaks of IDPs, Situation in War-Affected Areas
<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19966>

Sochi Olympics Pose "Unprecedented Security Risk"

Citing the city's "unprecedented security risk," Georgia's National Olympic Committee petitioned the IOC to reconsider its selection of Sochi as host for the 2014 Winter Olympics. "Holding the Olympic Games on this territory—adjacent both to the occupied Abkhaz conflict zone, and to the extremely unstable and volatile North Caucasus—will endanger the lives of participating sportsmen and sportswomen and undermine the image of the world's premier sporting event," the Georgian NOC said in a letter to the IOC.

GEORGIAN NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (Nov. 17): Press Release
<http://www.geonoc.org.ge/eng/shownews.php?id=126>

Millennium Challenge Awards \$100 Million in New Funds to Georgia

The US government's Millennium Challenge Corporation has approved \$100 million in new funds for Georgia, adding to the \$295 million of development aid previously pledged. "This funding will further reinforce Georgia's economic growth and improve basic access to services and markets," the MCC said. The Millennium Challenge Georgia Fund has operated since 2006 and made significant strides to reduce poverty and promote economic and infrastructure development.

MCC (Nov. 11): Additional MCC Poverty Reduction
<http://www.mcc.gov/press/releases/documents/release-111108-georgia.php>

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR: Putin "wanted to hang Georgian President Saakashvili by the balls"

Vladimir Putin planned to topple the President of Georgia and "hang him by the balls," according to the chief adviser to President Sarkozy of France. Putin outlined his aims to Sarkozy when the French leader flew to Moscow on August 12 to broker a ceasefire after the Russian invasion of Georgia, Jean-David Levitte told *le Nouvel Observateur* news magazine. Sarkozy was aware from intelligence reports that the Russian army was aiming to overthrow Mr Saakashvili and install a puppet government. He told Putin the world would not accept this.

<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/index.html>

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article5147422.ece>

WASHINGTON POST: U.S. studies another path for Georgia to join NATO

The US is investigating an alternative path for Georgia to gain NATO membership amidst rising European opposition to granting NATO's MAP to Georgia. "There are various pathways to membership. Some have not gone through MAP at all," said Defense Secretary Gates. NATO foreign ministers convene in December to address Georgia and Ukraine's future membership in the Alliance.

http://ca.news.yahoo.com/s/reuters/081114/world/international_us_nato_usa_georgia

DEUTSCHE PRESS AGENTUR: Sarkozy defends Georgian diplomacy

French President Sarkozy defended his diplomatic efforts in brokering the EU-Russian ceasefire agreement that ended Russia's invasion of Georgia. Sarkozy insisted that Russia has upheld its ceasefire obligations "very largely," but noted that "some conditions have not been implemented." Russia has violated the six-point agreement, which demands its forces withdraw to their pre-conflict positions, on many counts.

<http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/241683.sarkozy-defends-georgia-diplomacy--summary.html>

EURASIA INSIGHT: Post-war, Georgia's displaced villagers start a new life

Displaced Georgians are acclimating to a new life in government-sponsored housing after retreating from homes near conflict zones now occupied by South Ossetian militias. Georgian Minister of Refugees and Settlement Subeliani says the mass housing is a temporary solution to provide immediate shelter for Georgia's IDPs: "When the moment comes, they can sell these houses and go back with dignity." The Government has allocated \$134 million to build 7,000 houses for over 24,000 refugees.

<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav111308d.shtml>

EU OBSERVER: Europe's Arctic adventure

Norway has become increasingly anxious about Russia's hostile ambitions in the resource-rich north. The country's deputy defense minister, Espen Barth Elde, warns of future geopolitical competition in the region. "Norway wasn't surprised by Georgia. We predicted war would happen. The problem in NATO member states was that competence about Russia was shut down after the Cold War." Concerned by the security risks resulting from Russia's recent remilitarization in the region, Norway is fortifying its own military presence.

<http://euobserver.com/9/27035>

THE ECONOMIST: Ancient bling—A traveling show of Georgian treasures

A traveling exhibition showcases ancient artifacts from Georgia, a land where the fabled Jason and the Argonauts once traversed. "From the Land of the Golden Fleece: Tomb Treasures of Ancient Georgia" features 140 rare ornaments and jewels dating back to second-century-BC. The exhibition will travel to Cambridge, England; Athens, Greece; and Los Angeles, California.

http://www.economist.com/books/displaystory.cfm?story_id=12591022

WEBSITES @ GEORGIA

Civil Georgia: Leading independent English-language news website on Georgia: <http://www.civil.ge>

Georgia Update: Official government information service: <http://www.georgiaupdate.gov.ge>

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

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

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

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

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

Georgian Mission to NATO: http://embassy.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=135

Discover Georgia: Official tourism site. <http://www.tourism.gov.ge/>