

GEORGIA UPDATE

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TOP STORIES

- **Human Rights Watch Says S. Ossetian militias "Running Wild," Attacking Georgians**
- **Georgia Marks 5th Anniversary of Rose Revolution with Calls for Unity**
- **Russian Forces Fire on Motorcade Carrying Polish, Georgian Presidents**
- **Georgia Calls for International Peacekeeping Force at "Constructive" Geneva Talks**
- **In Unprecedented Move, President Set to Testify to War Commission**
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Ossetian military troops ride aboard an armored vehicle in the city of Akhgori

"South Ossetian militias are running wild, attacking ethnic Georgians in Akhgori. It is high time for Russia to step up to its responsibilities as an occupying power in South Ossetia and rein them in."

—Human Rights Watch (Nov. 26)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We know the Russian side gave arms to the Ossetians and that they used them to fire towards Georgia from Russian peacekeeping positions well before August 7."

—Oleg Orlov, head of the well-respected Russian human rights group Memorial (Nov. 19)

UPCOMING MILESTONES

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

Nov. 28: President of Georgia testifies before war commission

Dec. 1-3: Bureau of PA of the Council of Europe to discuss consequences of the Georgian-Russian conflict

Dec. 1-5: State Minister Yakobashvili in Paris

Dec. 2-3: NATO foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels

Dec. 4-5: Annual meeting of OSCE foreign ministers in Helsinki

Dec. 5-9: Meeting of EU-Georgia Cooperation Council in Brussels

Dec. 18-19: Third round of Geneva peace talks

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

THE GUARDIAN: Human Rights Group documents Russian shelling of S. Ossetia before Aug. 7

PROJECT SYNDICATE: The right way to rebuild Georgia

RADIO FREE EUROPE: Georgia says Olympics in Sochi too dangerous for athletes

WALL STREET JOURNAL: Obama should look into Putin's record, not his eyes

BERLINER ZEITUNG: Georgia's media, while free, still has long way to go

TIME: The Russia problem

TOP STORIES

Human Rights Watch Says S. Ossetian Militias "Running Wild," Attacking Georgians

"South Ossetian militias are running wild, attacking ethnic Georgians in Akhagori," Human Rights Watch said on Wednesday, calling on Russia to take immediate steps to stop the ethnic cleansing in Georgian-populated villages inside and outside the conflict zone. The group said it had documented attacks and harassment by militias against ethnic Georgians in Akhagori and surrounding villages more than three months after Russia invaded and occupied the Georgian region.

<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/11/25/russia-protect-civilians-occupied-georgia>

Georgia Marks 5th Anniversary of Rose Revolution with Calls for Unity

On the eve of the Rose Revolution's 5th anniversary, President Saakashvili called for unity rather than celebrations. "We have never faced such a dangerous threat," he said in a nationally televised address on Nov. 22. "We must believe in the future and have courage. Instead of celebrating tomorrow, we must show unity as we did on November 23, 2003." The President added that the country's democratic, Western path had provoked Moscow. "We were attacked because of the success of the last five years; it was the last challenge of the empire against us."

AP (Nov. 23): Georgia marks 5th anniversary of Rose Revolution

<http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2008/11/23/europe/EU-Georgia-Rose-Revolution.php>

AFP (Nov. 23): Georgia marks Rose Revolution anniversary under shadow of war

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20081123/wl_afp/georgiarevolutionanniversary_081123013904

Machine-gun Fire on Motorcade Carrying Polish, Georgian Presidents

Russian allied forces fired in direction of Polish President Kaczynski and President Mikhail Saakashvili's as the two tried to visit IDPs in the Akhagori district; shooting came from an illegal checkpoint controlled by S. Ossetian militias. Saakashvili called the attack "the most extreme violation" yet of the 6-point ceasefire agreement. Said NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: "It is wrong and certainly not in the spirit of the (ceasefire) agreement." The EU also expressed concern over the unprovoked and unlawful shootings.

AFP (Nov. 24): EU/NATO deplore shooting in Georgia
<http://www.lloyds.com/CmsPhoenix/DowJonesArticle.aspx?id=412327>

NEW YORK TIMES (Nov. 24): Two Presidents say they encountered gunfire

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/24/world/europe/24georgia.html>

Georgia Calls for International Peacekeeping Force During "Constructive" Geneva Talks

Georgia called to establish an international peacekeeping force in Georgia's separatist enclaves during the second round of the OSCE/UN/EU mediated Geneva talks. Deputy Foreign Minister Bokeria said a "new security regime" should be granted access into the conflict regions; Russian forces currently prohibit EU monitors from entering Abkhazia and S. Ossetia. Georgia also expressed the urgent need for Russia to fulfill its commitment to the six-point ceasefire agreement and allow Georgian IDPs to return home. The next round of talks is scheduled for Dec. 18-19.

GEORGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS: Statement regarding Geneva talks held Nov. 18-19 2008

http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=36&info_id=8405

CIVIL GEORGIA (Nov. 20): Parties hail 'constructive' talks

<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19991>

In Unprecedented Move, President Set to Testify to War Commission

A parliamentary commission studying the origins of Russia's five-day war with Georgia will question President Saakashvili on Nov. 28 in a publicly broadcast hearing—the first time a leader in the region has appeared before such a legislative inquiry. Many ministers, military leaders, and others already have testified. Meanwhile, three months after Georgia first called for an international investigation, the EU leaders chose Swiss diplomat Heidi Tagliavini to lead its inquiry into Russia's invasion. The EU report will be issued next November, though details of the mandate are not yet final.

CIVIL GEORGIA (Nov. 25): Bakradze testifies before war commission

<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=20023&search=saakshvili%20war%20commission>

Poland Grants Georgia Millions in Postwar Aid

Poland pledged €6 million to help Georgia's postwar economic reconstruction. In announcing the aid, the Polish foreign ministry said it was in Europe's interest for "Georgia to be seen as: developed and attractive for business." The money will go toward Polish-Georgian projects to rebuild schools, water treatment plants, roads, and other infrastructure.

AP (Nov. 21): Poland offers Georgia millions in postwar aid

<http://news.aol.com/story?id=n20081121104609990016>

Georgia won the 2008 Junior Eurovision Song Contest led by three 10-year-olds—the youngest participants in the competition. Their group, Bzikebi, received top marks for their song, "Bzz...".



INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

THE GUARDIAN: Human rights group documents Russian shelling of S. Ossetia Before Aug. 7

The well-respected Russian human rights organization Memorial reports that there is overwhelming evidence that Russians' shelled S. Ossetia in the days leading up to August 7. Memorial director Oleg Orlov said artillery exchanges began on August 1, and then "got worse." Civilians on both sides were injured, he said. South Ossetian troops had fired on civilians, Orlov said, including an enclave of ethnic Georgians living inside separatist controlled South Ossetia, north of Tskhinvali. South Ossetian troops had also fired from the Tskhinvali headquarters of Russia's peacekeeping force, Orlov added. "Russian peacekeepers also didn't do their job properly. We know the Russian side gave arms to the Ossetians and that they used them to fire towards Georgia from Russian peacekeeping positions well before August 7."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/nov/19/georgia-russia-eu-media-inquiry>

PROJECT SYNDICATE: The right way to rebuild Georgia

Georgia, which has implemented successful macroeconomic policies, now faces a fundamentally different landscape following Russia's invasion. The challenge now is to redesign Georgia's aid package to focus primarily on the provision of "reconstruction aid" that promotes investment and employment. While "humanitarian aid" cannot be neglected, it should be recognized that such aid promotes consumption rather than investment, creating price distortions and work disincentives. Georgia must be weaned from humanitarian aid as soon as the situation allows it.

<http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/delcastillo6>

RADIO FREE EUROPE: Georgia says Olympics in Sochi too dangerous for athletes

Officials on Georgia's National Olympic Committee—supported by more than a dozen Georgian Olympic champions—petitioned the IOC to move the 2014 Winter Olympics from the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi. The situation there, they say, is too dangerous; the Games should be moved to a safer place for the sake of the athletes' security.

http://www.rferl.org/Content/Georgia_Askes_For_2014_Sochi_Games_To_Be_Moved/1351179.html

WALL STREET JOURNAL: Obama should look into Putin's record, not his eyes

If the EU has "mostly" ignored bloodshed in Georgia, asks renowned Russian opposition leader Garry Kasparov, would they accept it in Russia as well? In a Nov. 7 meeting of senior officials, President Medvedev instructed the interior minister to crush any demonstrators "exploiting the crisis" as extremists and criminals. Kasparov says each day decreases the likelihood of a quiet transition of power later on, and urges President-elect Obama to correctly assess the nature of the Putin dictatorship correctly from the start.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122714441440543125.html>

BERLINER ZEITUNG: Georgia's media, while free, still has a long way to go

Sophie Kvintradze, head of Georgia's public broadcaster (GPB), says in an interview that Georgian media outlets enjoy significant media freedom, although greater efforts must be made to ensure an independent press. Kvintradze stresses that the government did not exert any pressure on GPB during the 2007 anti-government protests. To help establish a completely independent media, she says, professionalism among Georgian journalists and politicians—as well as institutional support from the West—is necessary.

<http://www.berlinonline.de/berliner-zeitung/>

TIME: The Russia problem

Russia has a European strategy, but Europe does not have one for Russia—unless you want to call "Let's not rile the Bear" a strategy, writes well-known German editor and writer Josef Joffe. The latest example of Europe's lack of direction is Georgia. In the wake of the Russian invasion this summer, the EU froze talks about a new economic partnership; yet even that mild sanction was lifted after just 10 weeks. Joffe argues that the E.U. is stronger than it thinks, and Russia is weaker than it pretends. Europe should use its leverage to recruit Russia into the community of responsible powers.

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1860803,00.html>

NGO'S/THINK TANKS

AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE: The Georgia Watershed

Under the direction of Vladimir Putin, Russia's is pursuing a "policy of resurgence and retribution" to attain its revisionist aspirations, AEI scholar Leon Aron writes. Russia's unjustified invasion of Georgia "epitomized the steady ideological drift of the Putin government away from the liberal internationalist ideals of the Gorbachev-Yeltsin revolution and toward a starkly different set of national priorities" that seeks to transform the security architecture of Europe and the world at large.

http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.28922/pub_detail.asp

US COMMISSION ON SECURITY & COOPERATION IN EUROPE: Georgia Post-war Challenges

Despite Georgia's "tremendous progress" to redevelop critical infrastructure and return Georgia's displaced, many serious political, economic, and social challenges remain after Russia's invasion, according to a ground assessment by the US Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The group's report notes: "The effectiveness of international monitoring as a deterrent to future military conflict in Georgia is uncertain."

http://csce.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=ContentRecords.ViewDetail&ContentRecord_id=152&ContentType=G&ContentRecordType=G

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/>