

# GEORGIA UPDATE

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[www.georgiaupdate.gov.ge](http://www.georgiaupdate.gov.ge)

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- Georgia Joins EU's Eastern Partnership, Heralds New Era of Closer Ties
- NATO Launches Training Exercises in Georgia
- Russia Signs Security Pacts With Abkhazia, S. Ossetia; Takes Up Permanent Border Posts
- EU, NATO, US Say Russia Continues Gross Violations of Sarkozy Ceasefire Agreement



President Saakashvili met Wednesday with the General Staff and senior defense ministry officials to thank them for their calm, orderly response to a brief, failed mutiny at the Mukhrovani base outside Tbilisi. The incident was led by former military officers who took control of a tank battalion, but found themselves without any support for what appears to have been a far-fetched plan to overthrow the government. The President also praised the military's professional preparations for the NATO exercises that began Wednesday in Georgia.

## INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH:** What next for Georgia's opposition?

**NEW YORK TIMES:** Russia Digs in Alongside Breakaway Territories

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## QUOTES OF THE WEEK

**“Yesterday's attack on a police station was a criminal act, absolutely intolerable in a democratic society.”**

— Ivan Jestrab, ambassador of the Czech Republic (which holds the EU Presidency), following an assault by opposition protesters

**“The mutineers have been apprehended and the situation is now calm. Georgia is an independent, democratic republic and any attempt to change the government of that country through non-democratic means is unacceptable. The Georgian people are committed to live in a sovereign, democratic nation and their will must be respected.”**

—US Senator John Kerry on the failed military mutiny

## UPCOMING MILESTONES

**May 7-8:** President Saakashvili, State Minister Baramidze attend Eastern Partnership Summit

**May 11-13:** Parliament Speaker Bakradze visits Sweden

**May 13-17:** Prime Minister Gilauri visits the UK

**May 15:** UN Secretary General to submit report on UN mission in Georgia

**May 18-19:** Fifth round of Georgian-Russian peace talks in Geneva.

**Jun. 2-5:** State Minister Baramidze visits the UK

**Jun. 30:** OSCE's monitoring mandate in Georgia expires

## TOP STORIES

**Dialogue Gains Momentum Despite Opposition Attack on Tbilisi Police Headquarters**

Opposition protesters attacked Tbilisi Police Headquarters, causing 29 police and civilians to be injured. The ambassador of the Czech Republic, which holds the EU Presidency, condemned the action: "Yesterday's attack on a police station was a criminal act, absolutely intolerable in a democratic society." The Government sought to defuse tensions by releasing three opposition activists who had been detained for beating a journalist. It also pushed forward with plans for reform and calls for a dialogue, which were taken up by at least one of the radical opposition parties behind the protests.

[NYT: Georgia Releases 3 Activists](#)

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Alasania to lay out proposals for talks](#)

**Georgia Joins EU's Eastern Partnership, Heralds New Era of Closer Ties**

Georgian President Saakashvili and delegates from the 27-nation bloc launched the EU's Eastern Partnership in Prague today, heralding a new era of closer ties between Europe and the East. "Today more than ever, we begin a collective journey, informed by the profound belief that enhanced integration will bring real and concrete benefits to the entire community of European nations," said President Saakashvili. "Indeed, today is a day that old barriers fall, and new ties and bonds begin." The new program will enhance visa and trade agreements and foster greater strategic partnerships with six former Soviet countries, helping to advance stability, security, and prosperity in the region.

[RUSTAVI: President hails the EU partnership program](#)

**NATO Launches Training Exercises in Georgia**

NATO began long-planned exercises in Georgia on Wednesday in the face of objections from Moscow—despite Russia's having been invited repeatedly to monitor the exercises. The exercises, run by NATO's Partnership for Peace program, are routine and small-scale. Around 1,000 soldiers will take part in a training scenario approved by the United Nations at the Vaziani military base; they include troops from non-members of the Alliance.

[RUSTAVI: NATO-led military training begins tomorrow](#)

**Russia Signs Security Pacts With Abkhazia, S. Ossetia; Takes Up Permanent Border Posts**

In another brazen violation of international law, Russia signed a formal security pact with Georgia's breakaway republics, establishing a permanent military presence along the borders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. "You cannot legalize something that is fundamentally illegal," said President Saakashvili. Both EU and US officials have expressed "deep concern" about Russia's military build-up, calling on Moscow to honor the Sarkozy ceasefire and return to pre-war positions.

[AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE: Russia Violating Georgian Ceasefire Deal](#)

**EU, NATO, US Say Russia Continues Gross Violations of Sarkozy Ceasefire Agreement**

Russia is in "clear contravention" of a EU-brokered ceasefire agreement made with Georgia last August, said NATO after Moscow vowed to defend the de-facto borders of Georgia's rebel regions. "It is becoming increasingly difficult to match Russian rhetoric with reality on the ground," when it comes to Moscow's criticism of planned NATO exercises in Georgia. Both EU and US officials have condemned Russia's military build-up resulting from last week's security pact between Moscow and de facto authorities in Georgia's separatist republics.

[AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE: Russia takes formal control of Georgia borders](#)



**Acclaimed French conductor Laurent Petitgerard will lead pianist Eliso Volkvadze (above) and the Georgian National Symphony Orchestra in a benefit performance on May 25 at Rustaveli Theater in Tbilisi. The Association for the Promotion of Classical Music, chaired by Georgia's first lady, will sponsor the show and advance proceeds to the International Charity Foundation of Georgia's Patriarch Ilia II.**

**INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA****THE DAILY TELEGRAPH: What next for Georgia's opposition?**

So far the protests have not fizzled out. But although they have taken on a novel new form they still don't seem to me to have swelled or gained much momentum. So far, the authorities have stuck to their pledge to let the protests carry on for as long as it takes. So why are more of these people not out there protesting? Fear of unrest? Jobs to go to? Besides these, perhaps another important reason is that the argument that anybody would be better than Saakashvili does not seem to appeal to a majority of Georgians.

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk>

**NEW YORK TIMES: Russia digs in alongside breakaway territories**

Russian border guards positioned themselves along the boundaries of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, an alarming and illegal arrangement that is likely sustain tension in the region. Russian troops have been stationed at the territories' border since August, but last week's security pact makes their role formal and permanent. Shota Utiashvili, a senior interior ministry official, expressed concern that F.S.B. units "might be more willing to stage operations" along the Georgian border.

[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

**GLOBAL POST: Still protesting in Georgia—and that says a lot about the state of its democracy**

The sight of tens of thousands of former Soviets gathered to voice their demands in a reasonably organized manner, and with the expectation that their actions can bring about change says a lot about the vibrancy of Georgia's democracy. Although Georgia's opposition says that the country is turning into a dictatorship and police state, this is a gross exaggeration. Their presence on the streets belies their own argument.

[www.globalpost.com](http://www.globalpost.com)

**DEUTSCHE PRESSE AGENTUR: NATO accuses Russia of destabilizing Southern Caucasus**

NATO accused Russia of destabilizing the Southern Caucasus region by reinforcing its military stronghold in Georgia's breakaway republics. "Russia continues to claim that it has been surprised by the exercise in Georgia, even though it has been informed fully and from the beginning of the planning stages, and even if it continues to refuse the repeated invitations to this exercise," said a NATO spokesman. NATO's comments follow Moscow's recent security arrangement with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, agreeing to permanently position Russian border guards within the borders of Georgia's sovereign territory.

[www.earthtimes.org](http://www.earthtimes.org)

**TCS DAILY: Doubting Der Spiegel—What is Order No. 2?**

The authenticity of Order No. 2—Georgia's allegedly secret war preparatory document—and a public, yet unconfirmed release of the EU's war inquiry findings, is in question. The commission purportedly leaked the report exclusively to *Der Spiegel*, a curious choice given the notoriously strong relationship between Russia and Germany, whose government led the opposition within NATO to Georgia and Ukraine's accession bids. Although the article might legitimately raise concerns about the final report's fair-mindedness, there is no compelling reason to assume that the *Spiegel* line is necessarily an echo of the EU commission, which has largely kept mum on the matter.

[www.tcsdaily.com](http://www.tcsdaily.com)

**REUTERS: Five things to watch in Russia-Georgia relations**

Reuter's correspondents in the South Caucasus have identified five key "tipping points" that would indicate a greater risk of renewed conflict in the region. Last year's war compounded the effects of the global economic crisis on Georgia and helped prompt capital flight from Russia. Critical tipping points include: prolonged shootings along the administrative borders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia; enhanced tensions in Georgia's volatile, Russian-occupied regions; significant incursions into either province; intensified political unrest; and the worsening of NATO-Russian relations.

[www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)

**LE MONDE: New diplomatic deal in the South Caucasus**

A new diplomatic deal has emerged in the South Caucasus, largely influenced by the foreign policies of Turkey and Russia. Although relations have warmed between Turkey and Armenia, conflict between Georgia and Russia remain due to Moscow's frequent ceasefire violations. According to Russian military expert, Pavel Felguengauer, the Kremlin secretly desires "to see Georgia transformed into a Confederation, dismantled in several pieces."

[www.lemonde.fr](http://www.lemonde.fr)

**WEBSITES @ GEORGIA**

**Civil Georgia:** Leading independent English-language news website: [www.civil.ge](http://www.civil.ge)

**Georgia Update:** Official government information service: [www.georgiaupdate.gov.ge](http://www.georgiaupdate.gov.ge)

**Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies:** Leading NGO focusing on domestic, foreign policy: [www.gfsis.org](http://www.gfsis.org)

**Georgian Mission to NATO:** [embassy.mfa.gov.ge](http://embassy.mfa.gov.ge)

**Georgian Parliament:** [www.parliament.ge](http://www.parliament.ge)

**Government of Georgia:** [www.government.gov.ge/eng](http://www.government.gov.ge/eng)

**Tbilisi:** Official website of Georgia's capital: [www.tbilisi.gov.ge](http://www.tbilisi.gov.ge)

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** [www.mfa.gov.ge](http://www.mfa.gov.ge)

**National Investment Agency:** [www.investgeorgia.org](http://www.investgeorgia.org)

**President Saakashvili's official website:** [www.president.gov.ge](http://www.president.gov.ge)