

# GEORGIA UPDATE

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

## TOP STORIES

- “Historic Day for Georgia,” as US-Georgia Commission Convenes in Washington
- EU Condemns Deadly Attack on Its Patrol Near Administrative Border with Abkhazia
- As UNOMIG Departs, International Community Frets About Security in Abkhazia
- Georgia to Send Battalion-Size Force to Afghanistan in Support of NATO Mission
- New US Ambassador to Georgia Named; Former Georgian PM Heads to NATO



Georgian Foreign Minister Vashadze (left) wrapped up a successful visit to Washington, the highlight of which was the inaugural meeting of the US-Georgian Commission. Said US Deputy Secretary of State Steinberg (right): “These meetings underscore the commitment that we have to implementing our charter with Georgia as we deepen this strategic partnership.” Also this week, US Vice President Biden announced he would visit Georgia in July.

## INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

**THE DAILY TELEGRAPH:** Russia shuts out the international community

**THE ECONOMIST:** Summertime Blues

**WALL STREET JOURNAL:** Extend a Hand to Eastern Europe

**BLOOMBERG:** Reject Russia’s Energy “Blackmail,” Havel Urges Europe

**EURASIA INSIGHT:** Kremlin’s Collective Security Vision Hits Brick Wall

**NEW YORK TIMES:** For Obama Abroad, Moscow Is a Special Case

**DAILY TELEGRAPH:** Russia wheels out the evil weapon of history

**THE GUARDIAN:** A final toast in wine country

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“We’re working together on helping to develop economic prosperity in Georgia, helping to deepen democracy and political reforms, and helping to assure that Georgia can sustain its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We strongly support Georgia’s economic and political reforms, and are pleased to note that we’ve now completed our commitment to provide \$1 billion in assistance to Georgia,”

— US Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg

## UPCOMING MILESTONES

**Jun. 24-27:** Interior Minister Merabashvili visits Washington

**Jun. 29-Jul. 6:** Russian military exercises in the North Caucasus

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

**Jul. 1:** Sweden takes over EU Presidency

**Jul. 1:** Next round of Geneva peace talks

**Jul. 6-8:** President Obama visits Russia

**July 20-24:** US Vice President Biden visits Georgia, Ukraine

**TOP STORIES****“Historic Day for Georgia,” as US-Georgia Commission Convenes in Washington**

The US-Georgia Commission held its inaugural meeting in Washington this week to outline an operational framework for the US-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, signed last January. “These meetings underscore the commitment that we have to implementing the important agreement—our charter with Georgia—as we deepen this strategic partnership,” said Deputy Secretary of State Steinberg. Said Georgian FM Vashadze: “We discussed very specific proposals which are going to be translated into international bilateral legal instruments. It’s a historic day for Georgia.”

[US STATE DEPARTMENT: Remarks with Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze](#)

[RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY: U.S., Georgia Report Progress in First Talks of Strategic Partnership](#)

**EU Condemns Deadly Attack on Its Patrol Near Administrative Border with Abkhazia**

The European Union on Monday condemned a “deliberate attack” on its ceasefire monitors that killed a Georgian driver accompanying one of its patrols near Georgia’s rebel region of Abkhazia. “Our preliminary findings of this incident indicate this was a deliberate attack on our patrol, going about its daily duties. This is a worrying development and completely unacceptable,” the head of the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia, Hansjorg Haber, said in a statement. In a separate incident, a police checkpoint near Abkhazia also came under mortar fire from Russian-occupied territory and another explosion near the de facto border damaged a high-voltage power line.

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Blast kills one, EU vehicle ‘slightly damaged’](#)

[AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE: One dead in Georgia blast near EU monitor patrol](#)

**As UNOMIG Departs, International Community Frets About Security in Abkhazia**

The international community has become increasingly alarmed about security in Georgia’s occupied territory of Abkhazia, following Russia’s veto of the UN’s monitoring mission. “Violent incidents and the lack of an effective security regime in and around the conflict zones of South Ossetia and Abkhazia create a dangerous atmosphere in which extensive fighting could erupt again,” the International Crisis Group said in a policy briefing. Meanwhile, the Council of Europe voiced similar fears that the separatist republic will “slip into a human rights black hole” in the absence of international monitors and peacekeepers.

[REUTERS: Georgia conflict “could erupt again” - thinktank](#)

[COUNCIL OF EUROPE: ‘Abkhazia is in danger of slipping into a human rights black hole’](#)

**Georgia to Send Battalion-Size Force to Afghanistan in Support of NATO Mission**

Georgia plans to send about 500 soldiers to Afghanistan next year to bolster the force led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Defense Ministry announced Tuesday. “Georgian soldiers will participate without national caveats attached,” the Ministry said, which means that Tbilisi will not impose restrictions on where its troops can go and what missions they can conduct in Afghanistan. Georgia’s 31st battalion of the 3rd infantry brigade will be under the US command. Meanwhile, this autumn Georgia also plans to send a company-size force to Afghanistan. One company from the 2nd infantry brigade will be deployed under the French command, according to the Defense Ministry. About 2,000 Georgian troops were deployed in Iraq from August 2003 till 2008.

[AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE: Georgia Plans to Send 500 Troops to Afghanistan-US Official](#)

**New US Ambassador to Georgia Named; Former Georgian PM Heads to NATO**

President Obama nominated John R. Bass as ambassador to Georgia to replace John Tefft, who has served in Georgia since 2005. Bass has led the Provincial Reconstruction Team-Baghdad, a joint team of civilians and military personnel supporting the government and citizens of Baghdad province, since July 2008. Prior to serving in Iraq, Bass, a career diplomat, served as Director of the State Department Operations Center for three years, coordinating the State Department’s response to crises threatening American embassies, personnel, and citizens. Bass also has served in Italy, Belgium and Chad. Meanwhile, President Saakashvili nominated former PM Grigol Mgaloblishvili as Georgia’s new ambassador to NATO. The seasoned diplomat was Georgia’s ambassador to Turkey prior to becoming PM.

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Former PM Nominated as Georgia’s NATO Envoy](#)



John R. Bass, nominated US ambassador to Georgia

## INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

### THE DAILY TELEGRAPH: Russia shuts out the international community

Nothing underscores the illegitimacy of Moscow's actions more than its efforts to push international organizations out of Georgia's conflict zones. By vetoing the extension of the UN's mission, Russia effectively killed the last remaining international organization with a presence in Georgia's occupied regions. If President Obama's reset diplomacy is to have any chance of success, it is imperative that his administration and America's allies avoid committing the mistake that the West collectively made last year—ignoring Russia's belligerence towards Georgia. The US must make clear that Russia's behavior toward Georgia will have an impact on US-Russian relations, and that Georgia's territorial integrity must be respected.

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

### THE ECONOMIST: Summertime blues

When the people who run the Western world go on holiday, bad things happen in Eastern Europe. Last August Russia invaded Georgia. Over Christmas its gas spat with Ukraine left millions of European consumers shivering and Easter brought violent protests against ballot-rigging in Moldova. What upsets this summer may bring in Eastern Europe can only be guessed at; a new war in Georgia is always possible.

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

### WALL STREET JOURNAL: Extend a hand to E. Europe

The EU's new neighbors to the east do not only belong in Europe in a geographic sense. Their citizens also consider themselves European by virtue of common experience and culture -- not least because of their mainly Christian roots. If we see Russia's future as being in partnership with the European Union, we cannot deny the same prospect to our common neighbors. The faster we integrate the states of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus with the EU, the more likely it will be that Russia itself adopts a pro-European orientation.

[online.wsj.com](http://online.wsj.com)

### BLOOMBERG: Reject Russia's energy "blackmail," Vaclav Havel urges Europe

The nations that threw off Soviet rule in 1989 mustn't yield to the Kremlin's efforts to extend Moscow's influence in E. Europe by turning off the gas. "We will not be manipulated or blackmailed, and if you threaten that you will not deliver gas to us, well then, keep it," said former Czech President Vaclav Havel. Rather than buy gas from Russia, Europe should pursue projects like the Nabucco pipeline, to import gas from the Caspian Sea region through Georgia and Turkey.

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

### EURASIA INSIGHT: The Kremlin's collective security vision hits brick wall

Russia's desire to forge a new security infrastructure in Eurasia is running into serious problems. Last week's Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSOT) summit in Moscow devolved into a very awkward affair for the Kremlin as Belarus boycotted the gathering, and Belarus and Uzbekistan opted not to sign a key rapid-reaction force agreement. While Medvedev tried to put the best spin on the undesired turn of events, analysts questioned the wisdom of the Kremlin's policies.

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

### NEW YORK TIMES: For Obama abroad, Moscow is a special case

President Obama will need to modify his diplomatic strategy at his first Russian summit meeting next month. Updates of Mr. Obama's talk in Prague of a nuclear weapon-free world, or echoes of his can't-we-all-just-get-along appeal in Cairo to Islam and the West, would screech off-key in the Moscow halls of power where the invasion of Georgia was planned last year, or laws were endorsed last month that could mean jail terms for those who challenge official, standardized versions of Soviet and Russian history. "There is unfortunately very little to talk about if you consider the lack of common interests and values," said one analyst.

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

### DAILY TELEGRAPH: Russia wheels out the evil weapon of history

Russia has fallen into the grip of a collective delusion and with it the determination to abuse and manipulate history. A recent Russian defense ministry publication asserts that Poland effectively started the Second World War by refusing to accede to Germany's "modest" demands. That is such idiotic nonsense that only a regime founded on lies, as Putin's and Medvedev's is, could seriously attempt to peddle it.

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

### THE GUARDIAN: A final toast in wine country

Georgian wine has yet to make many inroads into the European market, though there are signs that this may be changing. "They've made 50 years' worth of progress in 20 years," says one French wine expert. "Their unique grapes and modern production systems will make their wines world-beaters." I can't help wondering about the Georgian authorities' plans to market the country as a quality destination; this is undoubtedly a world-class tourist destination.

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

### THINK TANKS/NGOs

#### COUNCIL OF EUROPE: "Abkhazia is in danger of slipping into a human rights black hole"

Abkhazia will "slip into a human rights black hole" without a UN monitoring presence. "Without UNOMIG in Abkhazia there will be no independent human rights protection and monitoring, and an almost complete lack of any international presence," says a new Council of Europe report. It calls specifically on Russia to show flexibility in order to find a solution for an international human rights and monitoring presence in Abkhazia.

<http://assembly.coe.int>

### WEBSITES @ GEORGIA

**Civil Georgia:** Independent English-language news site: [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)