

# GEORGIA UPDATE

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

## TOP STORIES

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- US Warship in Batumi for Joint Exercises With Georgia
- Nabucco Pipeline Agreement Signed in Turkey, Hailed by EU as “Inevitable”
- World Bank Lauds Potential of Georgian Food, Wine, Drug, Textile & Construction Sectors
- Pro-Opposition Maestro TV Granted 10-Year Satellite License
- UK House of Commons: “Russia provoked Georgia through its actions over many years”



The last remaining United Nations observers in Georgia left their posts on Wednesday, a month after Russia vetoed their mandate—thus killing a 16-year-old mission that was crucial to protecting the human rights of Georgian residents. From now on, there will be no international peace monitors working inside either of the volatile, occupied territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

## INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

**THE TELEGRAPH:** Obama attacks Russian “bullying” of Georgia

**THE GUARDIAN:** Barack Obama urges Russia not to interfere in neighbouring states

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## QUOTES OF THE WEEK

“The training exercises are aimed at improving co-operation between two nations. To improve the maritime security is an ultimate goal.”

—USS Stout Commander Marc Oberley on joint US-Georgia exercises this week

“President Obama mentioned Georgia many, many times—at the official press conference, during his speech, during the meeting with opposition—and I think the message could not be missed by the Kremlin. He says Georgia is a sovereign country; America is fully behind Georgia to protect its territorial integrity, and he doesn't want to see renewed military conflict.”

—Russian opposition leader Garry Kasparov

## UPCOMING MILESTONES

**July 14–19:** US-Georgia joint maritime training exercises in Batumi, Poti

**July 16-17:** EU Troika, led by Swedish FM Bildt, visits Georgia

**July 22-23:** US VP Biden visits Georgia

**July 31:** PACE final report on the origins of war

**Aug. 12:** 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Sarkozy-Medvedev ceasefire agreement

**Sep. 17:** 7<sup>th</sup> round of Geneva talks

## TOP STORIES

**Georgia Prepares for Visit by US Vice President Biden, As EU Troika Meets With President in Batumi**

US Vice President is expected to arrive in Tbilisi next Wednesday for a two-day visit to Georgia that will underscore the deepening relationship between the US and Georgia. During the trip—which comes shortly after President Obama underscored American support for Georgia’s sovereignty during his visit to Moscow—VP Biden will meet with President Saakashvili, Parliament Speaker Bakradze, opposition leaders, and members of civil society. Among other things, he will work with government officials on advancing the US-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership, signed in January. National Security Advisor Tkeshelashvili said the Biden visit will cap a series of crucial signals from Washington since President Obama met with Russian leaders in Moscow earlier this month. "The signal has been given very directly and very firmly in the way it usually needs to be given to Russia," she said. Meanwhile, the EU Troika, led by Swedish FM Bildt, met today with President Saakashvili in Batumi.

**EURASIANET: US Vice President Biden to Visit Tbilisi in Late July**

**EURASIA DAILY MONITOR: US Foreign Policy Tested over Georgia**

**AP: Georgia says US standing up to Russia**

**US Warship in Batumi for Joint Exercises With Georgia**

The guided missile destroyer the USS Stout on Tuesday anchored off Batumi for joint exercises with Georgia. "This visit and the combined training demonstrate the U.S. and Georgian commitment to work together, to cooperate and maintain maritime security," said its captain, Commander Mark J. Oberley. The Stout is the sixth U.S. warship to visit Georgian ports since last August’s war. Two vessels of the Georgian coast guard participated alongside the American warship in drills on Wednesday in Georgian territorial waters between the ports of Batumi and Poti.

**ASSOCIATED PRESS: US sailors train Georgians in show of support**

**Nabucco Pipeline Agreement Signed in Turkey, Hailed as “Inevitable”**

The Nabucco pipeline project—designed to diversify Europe’s energy supply and loosen Russia’s grip on the continent’s natural gas market—took a major step forward on July 13 with the signing of a transit agreement between Turkey and five EU countries involved in the undertaking. President Saakashvili represented Georgia, which would serve as a crucial link in the pipeline. Said European Commission Chief Barroso: "We have started to confound the skeptics, the unbelievers. Now that we have an agreement, I believe that this pipeline is inevitable rather than just probable."

**RFE/RL: ‘Strategic’ Nabucco Deal Inked To Help Curb Dependence On Russian Gas**

**CIVIL GEORGIA: Saakashvili in Ankara for Nabucco Summit**

**World Bank Lauds Potential of Georgia, Food, Wine, Drug, Textile & Construction Sectors**

In a new report, the World Bank has identified Georgia’s food, wine, drug, textile and construction sectors as promising ones for investment. "Georgia is a good place to do business," one World Bank official underscored. "Georgia will be more competitive than producing elsewhere." The Bank detailed six areas for improvement, making recommendations to enhance Georgia’s competitiveness and bolster economic growth in the country.

**GEORGIAN BUSINESS WEEK: World Bank Identifies Promising Sectors to Bolster Georgian Economy**

**Pro-Opposition Maestro TV Granted 10-Year Satellite License**

The Georgian National Communications Commission granted a 10-year satellite-broadcasting license to the pro-opposition television station Maestro. The new license allows Maestro to significantly expand its coverage area. Prior to the agreement, the network could only broadcast via cable to households in Tbilisi, Batumi, and Telavi.

**CIVIL GEORGIA: Maestro TV granted satellite broadcast license**

**UK House of Commons: "Russia provoked Georgia through its actions over many years"**

In a report released last week, a select committee of the UK House of Commons concluded that Russia prompted last summer’s war with Georgia. "Russia provoked Georgia through its actions over many years," the report said. "Russian provocation included fueling regional separatism, building up its military forces in the region, and recognizing the independence of Georgia’s separatist territories in spring 2008." The report recommended that UK should continue to monitor the tense situation in the Caucasus to avert any future crises.

**UK HOUSE OF COMMONS: Russia, a new confrontation?**



The sixth annual summertime festival of folk culture and amateur performance, dubbed “Art-Gene,” is taking place from July 4-26 in Georgia. The festival—founded in 2004 by Georgian rock musician, folklorist and civic activist Zaza Korinteli (“Zumba”)—is hosted by the Open Air Museum of Ethnography in Tbilisi. The festival also tours across Georgia, popularizing Georgian folk culture and gathering obscure folks songs, art, and practices from the countryside.

## INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

**THE TELEGRAPH: Obama attacks Russian “bullying” of Georgia**

Georgia, which Russia invaded last summer, was a recurrent theme on the second day of Obama's visit, amid growing concerns that the Kremlin could be planning a new military campaign to oust President Saakashvili. Obama used his address to tell Medvedev: "State sovereignty must be a cornerstone of international order. States must have the right to borders that are secure, and to their own foreign policies. We must apply this principle to all nations, and that includes nations like Georgia and Ukraine." Obama condemned what he called a "19th century" philosophy of spheres of interests. "A great power does not show strength by dominating or demonising other countries," he said.

[www.independent.ie](http://www.independent.ie)

**THE GUARDIAN: Barack Obama urges Russia not to interfere in neighbouring states**

President Obama indicated that Washington would not tolerate another Russian invasion of Georgia. Russia is winding up full-scale military exercises next to the Georgian border amid ominous predictions that a second conflict in the Caucasus could erupt this summer. Obama also reaffirmed Georgia's sovereignty—severely undermined by last year's war and Moscow's subsequent unilateral recognition of rebel-held Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states.

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

**WASHINGTON POST: Plumage—but at a price**

Vladimir Putin's unapologetic and relentless drive to restore Moscow's hegemony over the sovereign states that used to be Soviet satrapies is the chief cause of the friction between the United States and Russia. The decline in relations came from Putin's desire to undo what he considers "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe" of the 20th century—the collapse of the Soviet empire. Hence his squeezing Ukraine's energy supplies. His overt threats against Poland and the Czech Republic for daring to make sovereign agreements with the US. And finally, less than a year ago, his invading a small neighbor, detaching and then effectively annexing two of Georgia's provinces to Mother Russia.

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

**REUTERS: Do wars break out when world takes summer holiday?**

Major events happen disconcertingly often when everyone heads to the beach, as seen in last summer's war in Georgia. Sometimes, actors may be taking advantage of the fact the world is looking the other way. "In general, there is a military advantage to beginning a campaign in the summer," says one analyst.

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

**BBC: Russia “shot down its own planes”**

A recent Russian defense publication claims that Russia “shot down its own planes” during its summer invasion of Georgia. According to a report by a Moscow-based military think-tank, Russia lost a total of six military aircraft to friendly fire. There was a total absence of co-operation between the Russian army and the Russian air force, which led them to conduct completely separate campaigns.

[news.bbc.co.uk](http://news.bbc.co.uk)

**RIA NOVOSTI: PACE Move to Deny Russian Vote Surprises Moscow**

Moscow is confused over an initiative by members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to prohibit Russia's vote during assembly sessions. Russia's confusion follows a new petition—led by the Georgian delegation—to withhold Russia's voting rights due to its aggression and remilitarization in Georgia's occupied territories.

[en.rian.ru](http://en.rian.ru)

**EURASIANET: EU monitors in Georgia—Case of great expectations?**

Georgia is hoping the EU will remain stationed in Georgia to help keep the peace near the breakaway regions of S. Ossetia and Abkhazia. The EU Monitoring Mission's presence in Georgia was established to ensure Russian and Georgian compliance with the Sarkozy-Medvedev ceasefire agreement, an agreement Moscow has failed to uphold. As the only international monitoring group operating in the region, locals perceive EUMM as a defensive mechanism against potential Russian or S. Ossetian attacks.

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

**DEUTSCHE PRESSE AGENTUR: EU to finance projects on its Eastern border**

The European Commission has allocated €40 million towards a new economic assistance package with Georgia and other countries along the EU's Eastern border. The money will be used for initiatives such as improving air quality, preventing drug abuse and in the field of education. "A joint approach to tackling these challenges could help enhancing confidence among partner countries, thus contributing to increased security, stability, and prosperity in the region," said EU External Affairs Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner.

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

**THINK TANK/NGO's****CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS: The Real Breakthrough at the Russia Summit**

There are certain areas where the US and Russia are going to have to agree to disagree, such as Russia's continuing military presence in Georgia. The two sides openly and candidly acknowledged their differences; that was the real breakthrough at the summit. Last year's disagreements are the same as they are today, but now they are managed to allow for cooperation on areas of mutual interests.

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

**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 Mission to NATO:** <http://embassy.mfa.gov.ge>

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

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

**Local Government:** Official website of Georgia's capital, Tbilisi: [http://www.tbilisi.gov.ge/index.php?lang\\_id=ENG&sec\\_id=1](http://www.tbilisi.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=1)

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

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

**President Saakashvili's official website:**

<http://www.president.gov.ge/?l=E&m=0&sm=0>