

GEORGIA UPDATE

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- Archaeologists in Georgia Discover Earliest Fibers Used by Human Beings



Alexander Lomaia, Georgia's permanent representative to the UN, delivers a speech to the General Assembly last Wednesday in support of a resolution defending the rights of those who have been displaced from Georgia's occupied territories. The resolution was adopted with triple the support of a similar resolution passed in May 2008, before Russia's invasion of Georgia. The General Assembly reaffirmed the absolute right of return for the displaced, and called for immediate "unimpeded access for humanitarian activities" to Abkhazia and S. Ossetia.

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QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"Despite the global recession, we do not deviate from our commitment to continuous reforms to transform Georgia into the most liberal, open, and free economy in the region and one of the best places to invest in the world. Moving a few notches up in the Doing Business rankings is recognition of our work in this respect and clearly manifests our commitment to reforms."

—PM Nika Gilauri on Georgia's #11 best places to do business World Bank ranking.

"We continue to believe, as do the vast majority of countries around the world, that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are part of Georgia, and that the solution is not recognizing their independence, but first to stabilize the situation and then facilitate their reintegration into recognized Georgia."

—US State Department Spokesman Philip Crowley on Venezuela's recognition of S. Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states.

UPCOMING MILESTONES

Sep. 17: 7th round of Geneva talks

Sep. 17-19: FM of Turkey visits Georgia

Sep. 23: Georgian delegation, EU officials to discuss free trade agreement

Sep. 24: President Saakashvili addresses UN General Assembly

Oct. 1-3: FM of Lithuania visits Georgia

Oct. 27: FM Vashadze visits Brussels

Oct. 5-7: Danish FM Møller visits Georgia

Oct. 16-18: State Minister Yakobashvili visits Sweden

Oct.: Vice Premier Baramidze visits UK

Oct.: Next meeting of US-Georgia Commission

TOP STORIES

Georgia Develops Strategy for Engaging Occupied Territories, Focusing on People-to-People Contacts

In consultation with allies and international organizations, the Government is developing a strategy on the occupied territories of Abkhazia and S. Ossetia that will focus on fostering people-to-people contacts. State Minister Yakobashvili said Tbilisi's approach will address a broad range of political, economic, and legal issues. The strategic plan, which will be released by winter, emphasizes people-to-people contacts as an important part of the reconciliation process, while giving civil society organizations a lead role in implementing the strategy.

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Tbilisi plans Abkhaz, S. Ossetia strategy](#)

MPs Endorse Partial Relocation of Parliament to Kutaisi; also Approve Bill to Allow Opposition MPs to Take Seats

MPs approved the partial relocation of Parliament to Kutaisi, the country's second-largest city and a budding industrial zone. MP Petre Tsiskarishvili, leader of parliamentary majority, said the move would promote political stability and "revitalize political life" in Georgia's Imereti region, helping to increase economic dynamism in western Georgia. MPs also endorsed a bill permitting 10 opposition MPs to retake seats they had previously relinquished.

[CIVIL GEORGIA: MP's endorse partial relocation of Parliament to Kutaisi](#)

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Two Constitutional amendments offered](#)

President Hails Adoption of UN Resolution in Support of Georgia's Displaced, Thanks Allies

President Saakashvili hailed the adoption by the UN General Assembly of a resolution supporting the right of all displaced people to return to their homes in Georgia's Russian-occupied territories of Abkhazia and S. Ossetia. "This diplomatic defeat is both strange and shameful for Russia's current government, because in accordance with this resolution, people who were expelled and deprived of their property should be returned back," said President Saakashvili. Expressing gratitude for the support of Georgia's allies, Saakashvili said that "despite Russia's huge pressure, this time all EU-member states supported the right of unconditional return of internally displaced persons." Forty-eight countries in the UNGA voted in favor of the resolution, 19 voted against, and 78 countries abstained.

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Saakashvili: UN Vote Russia's Shame and Diplomatic Failure](#)

Georgia, US Dismiss Renegade Venezuela's Recognition of Occupied Territories

The Georgian Foreign Ministry condemned the decision by Venezuelan dictator Hugo Chavez to recognize Abkhazia and S. Ossetia as "an extremely unfriendly" move. "We are sure that after this decision by the Venezuelan dictator, the states respecting international law will further consolidate around support of the principle of Georgia's territorial integrity," the MFA said. Meanwhile, the US State Department said Venezuela's recognition "underscores how isolated that view is."

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Tbilisi condemns Venezuela's Abkhazia, S. Ossetia recognition](#)

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Abkhazia, S. Ossetia recognition remains 'isolated' -U.S. says](#)

Georgia Named Top Performer for Ease of Doing Business from 2005-2009, Rises to 11th out of 183 for 2010

The World Bank has ranked Georgia as the 11th best place to do business, a noteworthy achievement out of the 183 countries assessed. According to the Bank's newly released report, "Doing Business 2010," Georgia jumped five positions from last year, largely due to governmental reforms on attaining permits, approval processes, and trade costs. Georgia was also awarded as top performer from 2005-2009 with regard to the country's regulatory environment and the ease of doing business. "Despite the global recession, we do not deviate from our commitment to continuous reforms to transform Georgia into the most liberal, open, and free economy in the region and one of the best places to invest in the world. Moving a few notches up in the Doing Business rankings is recognition of our work in this respect and clearly manifests our commitment to reforms," PM Gilauri said.

[GEORGIAN BUSINESS WEEK: Georgia up on Doing Business 2010](#)

World Bank Approves New Partnership Strategy, \$900 Million for Georgia

The World Bank launched a new Country Partnership Strategy with Georgia for 2009-2012, agreeing to lend Georgia \$900 million for economic development and reconstruction measures. "The joint World Bank/International Finance Corporation strategy focuses on pressing post-conflict and vulnerability issues, and strengthening the foundations for competitiveness and growth in the future," said Asad Alam, World Bank regional director. The new strategy aims to invest in Georgia's transportation infrastructure, deepen reforms in social assistance and health coverage for the poor, improve the business environment, and strengthen expenditure efficiency. The WB also approved \$147m loan for the east-west highway project, envisaging upgrading the country's key highway in western Georgia and a "major element" of the strategy.

[CIVIL GEORGIA: World Bank approves new partnership for Georgia](#)

[REUTERS: World Bank sees up to \\$900 mln in loans for Georgia](#)

Archaeologists in Georgia Discover Earliest Fibers Used by Human Beings

Archeologists have discovered fibers used by prehistoric man a record 34,000 years ago to make clothes and rope, according to new research published last week by a team of international scholars. The flax fibers, found during the excavation of a cave in Georgia, are the earliest known to have been used by humans, who probably turned them into linen and thread. The earliest similar discovery hitherto had been imprints of fibers in small clay objects from 28,000 years ago found in the Czech Republic at the well-known archeological site of Dolni Vestonice.

[AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE: Earliest fibers found in Georgia, dating back 34,000 years](#)

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

BUSINESS WEEK: Cyber-attack strategy part of Russian offensive on Georgian pipelines

John Bumgarner, a former cyber-security expert for the CIA and other US intelligence agencies, is attracting much attention for his report concluding that Russia's military offensive in Georgia last year was coordinated with a pre-arranged civilian cyber-attack on the country. What appears to have gone unreported is Bumgarner's conclusion that the region's oil apparatus was a strategic target of the overall conventional-and-cyber offensive.

www.businessweek.com

POLICY REVIEW: A realistic reset with Russia

Russia's weakness, the lack of global reach, is in fact the main reason that a new Cold War was never going to reemerge after 1991. The Cold War was a worldwide military, economic, diplomatic, and ideological competition. That is no longer possible. The more traditional Russian spheres-of-influence approach is far more troubling to American policymakers than any "Cold War" mentality, and it is particularly dangerous in Moscow's continued efforts to intimidate Georgia.

www.hoover.org

EURASIA DAILY MONITOR: UN General Assembly adopts Georgia resolution on refugees' return

The UN General Assembly adopted a monumental resolution supporting the return of displaced persons to Georgia's Russian-occupied territories of S. Ossetia and Abkhazia. The resolution passed with 48 (mostly Western) countries in favor, 19 against, and 78 abstentions. Alexander Lomaia, Georgia's Ambassador to the UN, underscored how little progress had been made in helping Georgia's displaced persons return to their homes over the past 15 years. Moreover, he noted, last year's armed conflict and the new wave of displacement gave ample cause for the UN to take a principled stand on the issue.

www.jamestown.org

FINANCIAL TIMES: Minorities in Russia want action, not words

Can a few fine words shed light into the dark corners of Russian justice even when they come from President Dmitry Medvedev? If Medvedev is serious about his pledge to impose the rule of law, he must act, and he must act over Chechnya. A comprehensive peace in the northern Caucasus would require long-term policies to win over the non-Russian peoples through political and social inclusion and economic development, and stabilize the whole region.

www.ft.com

REUTERS: Georgia dismisses Chavez recognition of rebels

Georgia dismissed Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez's recognition of Georgia's occupied territories as an illegitimate statement, made under Russian pressure. "Russia has been trying for a year to provide these puppet regimes with legitimacy," Deputy FM Nalbandov told Reuters. "These attempts have been in vain. It should be clear to the Russian side that such actions won't add legitimacy to these puppet regimes," he added.

www.reuters.com

EU OBSERVER: EU's east-west divide shifts on US and Russia

The traditional European east-west divide towards the US and Russia is shifting, with "Obama-mania" and the willingness to stand up to Moscow more frequent among western than eastern Europeans. A survey of the German Marshall Fund reveals that while western European pro-US sentiments are skyrocketing, central and eastern Europeans appear less impressed by Obama. "If there is a part of Europe where the Obama administration has yet to connect with the public, it is in central and eastern Europe," the survey analysis says.

euobserver.com

RFE/RL: Russia set for a long "continuation war" with Georgia

Russia has worked steadfastly to eject international organizations from Georgia's conflict zones with the apparent aim of decoupling the territories from the international community. This is part of a subtle strategy that will force international observers into the role of de facto border guards whose very presence gradually cements Abkhazia and S. Ossetia's borders in all but name. For now the mood in the EU is one of defiance as Russia's gamesmanship at the UN Security Council has incensed France and Germany (as it did the US and Britain).

www.rferl.org

REUTERS: Georgia takes aim at Russia's 2014 winter Olympics

Georgia says it wants to force a boycott of the 2014 Winter Olympics in the Russian resort of Sochi near the Moscow-backed rebel region of Abkhazia. "The Olympics are a symbol of peace," said Akaki Minashvili, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Georgian Parliament. "It's simply contradictory for a country which in the 21st century changed borders by the use of force and ethnic cleansing to then host the Olympics."

www.reuters.com

GENTLEMEN'S QUARTERLY: Putin—The dark rise to power

A highly controversial piece in the September edition of GQ suggests a possible connection between the former Russian president/current PM Putin and apartment-house bombings that were officially blamed on Chechen terrorists. The investigative article challenges the official line on a series of bombings that killed hundreds of people in 1999 in Russia, sourced from a former KGB agent. GQ's management team and lawyers decided to suppress distribution of the taboo article in Russia, a move criticized as infringing upon media and journalistic rights.

qawker.com

THE INDEPENDENT: A skull that rewrites the history of man

The conventional view of human evolution and how early man colonized the world has been thrown into doubt by a series of stunning palaeontological discoveries suggesting that Africa was not the sole cradle of humankind. Scientists have found a handful of ancient human skulls at an archaeological site two hours from the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, that suggest a Eurasian chapter in the long evolutionary story of man. Experts believe fossilized bones unearthed at the medieval village of Dmanisi in the foothills of the Caucasus, and dated to about 1.8 million years ago, are the oldest indisputable remains of humans discovered outside of Africa.

www.independent.co.uk

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

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

City of Tbilisi: Official website of Georgia's capital, Tbilisi: http://www.tbilisi.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=1

Office of the President of Georgia: <http://www.president.gov.ge/?l=E&m=0&sm=0>