

# GEORGIA UPDATE

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

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- Russian Police Murder Georgian Citizen in Xenophobic Attack
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President Saakashvili marked the sixth anniversary of the Rose Revolution on November 23rd by addressing students at the National Library; he was accompanied there by former Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar (center, seated). "The Rose Revolution marked the beginning of one of the most important parts of our history—it was the triumph of Georgians' European values," the President Saakashvili said, adding: "Yet, the real revolution in our country did not end on November 23, 2003; it started six years ago and it continues today with more momentum than ever before."

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Saakashvili-Revolution Continues](#)

## INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

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**CSM:** Would Russia really use nuclear weapons against neighbors?

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## QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"The real revolution in our country did not end on November 23, 2003; it started six years ago and it continues today with more momentum than ever before. Georgia has demonstrated to the entire region that freedom does not mean chaos; that journalists do not need to be killed in order to increase the efficiency of government."

—President Saakashvili, celebrating the sixth anniversary of the Rose Revolution

"It is impossible to live in a country where the authorities lie to you, where media lies to you, and people are afraid of them."

—Renowned Russian journalist Oleg Panfilov after moving last week to Georgia from Russia

"The objective of the Georgian side is to demonstrate that it's not about choosing between Georgia and Russia, it's about choosing between justice and injustice, between international law and unlawfulness, between peace and violence."

—Parliament Chairman David Bakradze, speaking to MPs from Belarus about the moral imperative not to recognize Georgia's occupied territories as independent states

## UPCOMING MILESTONES

**Nov. 25-28:** FM Vashadze on official visit to Paris

**Nov. 26:** Parliament Chair Bakradze visits Lithuania

**Nov. 26:** PM Gilauri travels to London to promote investments in Georgia

**Nov. 27:** Georgian diaspora communities in 15 European countries to rally against Russian occupation of Georgia

**Dec. 1:** PM Gilauri travels to New York to promote investments in Georgia

**Dec. 1-2:** OSCE Ministerial in Athens

**Dec. 3-4:** NATO Ministerial in Brussels

## TOP STORIES

**Transparency International Ranking for Georgia Improves, As Corruption Declines; Best Ranking in Region**

Transparency International last week released its 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index, ranking Georgia as the most transparent country in the Caucasus. Based on perception levels of public-sector corruption, Georgia's ranking improves last year while corruption slid. According to the report, "war with Russia and ongoing political turmoil have not been enough to stop Georgia from making progress on corruption. There is a general consensus that petty corruption in particular has diminished." Georgia's progress and relatively high ranking distinguishes at a time when publics around the world see rising corruption elsewhere. "More than half of those interviewed in the 2009 Barometer rated their governments' anti-corruption efforts as ineffective," said Transparency International.

[REUTERS: T.I. Europe corruption perceptions—Georgia Rises](#)

**S. Ossetia Prolongs Detention of Georgian Children, as International Outcry Continues**

Four Georgian teenagers, kidnapped nearly three weeks ago by authorities in the Russian-occupied territory of S. Ossetia, continue to be held in Tskhinvali. Unconfirmed reports said that the four minors will remain in pre-trial custody for nearly two months. The four, who range in age from 14 to 17, were arrested when they tried to visit the father of one of the teenagers in the village of Kheiti. At least one of the boys is said to have been suffering from pneumonia, and the other three are also in poor health; however, they have not been allowed to contact their parents or be seen by Georgian authorities. Meanwhile, the international outcry against the action of the Russian-backed authorities continued, as the Council of Europe, the EU, and the US strongly denounced the detention of the boys and demanded their immediate release. US Assistant Secretary of State Michael Posner said in Tbilisi last week that there was "no basis" for the detentions.

[AFP: South Ossetia prolongs detention of Georgian teens](#)

**Georgia Celebrates 6th Anniversary of Rose Revolution**

Georgia celebrated the sixth anniversary of the Rose Revolution this week, the seminal event that marked the country's peaceful transition into a free and democratic nation. "The Rose Revolution marked the beginning of one of the most important parts of our history—it was the triumph of Georgians' European values," said President Saakashvili in a speech to Georgian students, adding: "Yet, the real revolution in our country did not end on November 23, 2003; it started six years ago and it continues today with more momentum than ever before.

Georgia has demonstrated to the entire region that freedom does not mean chaos; that journalists do not need to be killed in order to increase the efficiency of government, as happens often in many countries in our neighborhood."

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Saakashvili—Revolution Continues](#)

**Acclaimed Russian Journalist Oleg Panfilov Abandons Russia, Moves to Georgia**

Oleg Panfilov, a well-known Russian journalist and press freedom champion, has moved to Tbilisi, saying he found it "impossible" to live in Russia. He will anchor a program on the new Georgian Russian-language TV station which is to broadcast throughout the Caucasus, and teach journalism at Tbilisi State University. He said he had decided to move to Tbilisi because of the political situation in Russia. "It is impossible to live in a country where the authorities lie to you, where media lies to you, and people are afraid of them," Panfilov said after his arrival. As is clear from this 2004 interview with him, he is an expert in his field with a very clear vision of the complexities of how the media work—or doesn't work—in Russia, so that country's loss should be Georgia's gain. Panfilov should know just how difficult the situation is in Russia; he has been monitoring press freedom there since the 1990s and in October this year he was nominated him for the post of OSCE representative on freedom of the media.

[THE TELEGRAPH: Russian journalist in defection-style move to Georgia](#)

**EU Praises Georgia's Release of Russian Detainees**

Georgia detained three Russian citizens on Monday who illegally crossed into its territory from occupied S. Ossetia, but said it would hand them over to Russian border guards. Interior Ministry spokesman Shota Utiashvili said the three men, who claimed they were construction workers, were detained near the administrative border with after crossing into Georgian-controlled territory. "We want to demonstrate our goodwill and will hand them over to the Russians today," he said. Frequent detentions of Georgian citizens near S. Ossetia in recent weeks have raised concerns over increasing tensions around the region. The Deputy Head of the EU Monitoring Mission, General Gilles Janvier, welcomed the swift release of the Russian civilians. "EUMM welcomes the practical way this case was handled by all sides through the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism hotline. We very much hope the IPRM process will continue to act as the forum for future such activities."

[AFP: Georgia to hand over detained Russians](#)

**Russian Police Murder Georgian Citizen in Xenophobic Attack**

A Russian policeman in Moscow killed Eduard Ghurtskaia, a Georgian who had fled the now-occupied region of Abkhazia in the 1990s. The officer was apparently drunk and in uniform at the time of the attack, said the Russian Prosecutor General's Office. Georgia's Minister for Refugees and Accommodation, Koba Subeliani, said the deceased man and his family had fled Abkhazia during the war of the early 1990s; the man's family lives near Tbilisi, he added. "We expect his body to be brought to Georgia as early as tomorrow and we will cover the transportation and funeral expenses," Subeliani said. "It's an enormous tragedy for his family, who have lived in Georgia as IDPs since fleeing Abkhazia." The Georgian MFA said Ghurtskaia's murder was "a vivid confirmation" of xenophobia: "Russia first deprived him of him of his homeland and then deprived of him of his life."

[REUTERS: Drunk Russia police kill Abkhaz citizen in Moscow](#)

**Foreign Investors Continue Wave of Investments in Georgia as German Baby Food Maker HiPP Opens Plant**

German organic baby food maker HiPP GmbH & Co. Vertrieb KG began production of fruit concentrate at a plant in Georgia near the administrative borders of Georgia's Russian-occupied territory of S. Ossetia, the focus of a war with Russia last year. "We're buying apples from local farmers and making fruit concentrate to send to Germany," a HiPP director said. "We estimate production of about 400 metric tons of concentrate a day in the future." HiPP, based in Pfaffenhofen, Germany, has invested \$8 million in the facility, which employs 150 people.

[BLOOMBERG: German baby-food maker HiPP opens plant in Georgia](#)



The four teenagers kidnapped by Russian-backed forces in S. Ossetia earlier this month apparently have been ordered held for two months in pre-trial detention. Their plight has sparked international outrage. The children are Giorgi Romelashvili and Aleko Tshabadze, both 14, Victor Buchukuri, 16 and Levan Khmiadashvili, 17.



## INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

### **LE FIGARO: The sale of a French warship to Russia raises concerns**

A little more than a year after the war in Georgia, the country that negotiated the August 2008 cease-fire agreement, which Moscow regularly violates, is about to sell warships to Russia. Some, surely, will see this as a political embarrassment. "Russia wants to restore its great power status by re-establishing its influence on the post-USSR republics. The Mistral is an wonderful assault ship for attacking Georgia or Baltic countries. It is as if we were giving a pioneer weapon to a bandit. That is the reason why we are afraid", explains Alex Rondeli, president of the Georgian Foundation Security and International Studies.

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

### **WINDOW ON EURASIA: Putin says decision on "reunification" of Georgia "already decided"**

Russian PM Putin, who has often described the collapse of the Soviet Union as "the greatest tragedy" of the 20th century, said last week that the "reunification" of Georgia has "already been decided," a suggestion some of his listeners believe was a call for restoring Moscow's control over Georgia and even the former USSR as a whole. Putin's remark at the 80th birthday of former Soviet and Russian official Yevgeny Primakov certainly was enigmatic enough to permit various interpretations, which might have been his intention. But his participation in a session with so many Russians who have Georgian roots and ties will certainly be read in Tbilisi as yet another indication that the Russian PM has no plans to reduce pressure on Georgia.

[windowoneurasia.blogspot.com](http://windowoneurasia.blogspot.com)

### **FINANCIAL TIMES: Tbilisi, a year after the war with Russia**

Georgia's minister of reintegration, Temur Yakobashvili, discussed his efforts to enhance Georgian-Russian relations through diplomatic means. "And I would ask them: what should we learn from Russia? And the one thing they would come up with was: we can train your army. I said to them—do you like your army? They could not say they did. So I said—why do you want ours to become like yours?" Russia has no soft power, no model for others to follow. It can do hard power, and fear, but that is all.

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

### **CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR: Would Russia really use nuclear weapons against neighbors?**

The Kremlin is drafting a new military doctrine, due by year's end, that might authorize the armed forces to use nuclear weapons not only to counter a massive conventional attack, but even to launch a preemptive strike against a small regional adversary such as neighboring Georgia or Ukraine that might be deemed a threat to Russia. "It seems that even in the case of small conflicts, such as the war Russia had with Georgia last year, where there is a fear that the US or NATO might intervene, we are now going to invoke nuclear deterrence," says Russian military expert Pavel Felgenhauer.

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

### **RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY: Georgia asks Belarus not to recognize South Ossetia, Abkhazia**

Georgia urged fellow former Soviet republic Belarus last week not to follow Moscow in recognizing the Russian-occupied regions of S. Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states. "The objective of the Georgian side is to demonstrate that it's not about choosing between Georgia and Russia, it's about choosing between justice and injustice, between international law and unlawfulness, between peace and violence," said the chairman of Georgia's Parliament, David Bakradze, said after meeting counterparts from Minsk visiting Tbilisi. Belarus President Lukashenko said he will not be strong-armed by Moscow into a decision.

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

### **EURASIA DAILY MONITOR: Georgia considers opening its border with Russia**

Last week President Saakashvili and the National Security Council convened a special session to consider whether and how the country might open its border with Russia. NSC Secretary Tkeshelashvili said the opening of a customs checkpoint at Larsi "will not pose threats," adding that "this will serve both Georgian and Armenian interests." The session was boycotted by radical politicians, but it was greatly appreciated by moderates in the opposition as a means to conduct dialogue with the government and participate in decision-making. Instituted earlier this year, these expanded sessions of the NSC already have become a tradition in a country facing internal and external challenges of enormous magnitude.

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

### **NEWSWEEK: The new Red Army**

Medvedev embarked on his military reform campaign last year, shortly after Russia's dismal performance in its invasion of Georgia. At least 11 Russian aircraft and several drones were shot down, and undisciplined troops burned and looted abandoned Georgian villages. Medvedev's defense reform campaign certainly shows that the Kremlin is serious about establishing its military as a credible deterrent to further NATO expansion—as well as a powerful incentive for neighbors to accept Russia's leadership in the region.

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

### **EU OBSERVER: The Molotov-Ribbentrop pipeline**

The Nord Stream project is part of an exclusionary agreement between Moscow and Berlin—nicknamed in circumvented Warsaw the "Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact," after the 1939 Soviet-Nazi deal to carve up Poland. In order to reassure fellow EU members and the institution as a whole, Berlin would do well to support the so-called Southern Corridor, which includes Nabucco and several smaller pipelines. As a European heavyweight, Germany's mere rhetorical and diplomatic support would go a long way in encouraging EU energy unity. Most importantly, it would send the message to Moscow that its "divide and conquer" policy has its limits.

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

### **RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY: European intellectuals warn of democracy crisis 20 years after Berlin Wall's fall**

A group of respected European intellectuals warn that public cynicism and corruption in politics are threatening democracy in Europe. Russian political analyst Andrei Piontkovsky said Russia has unleashed "especially vicious attacks" against neighbors that have chosen a "European way of development, the road to freedom: Georgia and Ukraine." Russia is "run and owned by dedicated enemies of freedom." He warned of a "tremendous and widespread" misunderstanding of Russia in the West.

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

### **USA TODAY: Would we hit the "reset" button with Stalin?**

Some US hard-liners say the glorification and whitewashing of Russia's Stalinist past is a dangerous portent for US-Russia relations, especially as Washington tries to "reset" relations with Moscow. A case in point was Russia's invasion of Georgia. It will inevitably fuel a bellicose foreign policy, Soviet-style imperialism, and a lurch toward authoritarian rule, they say.

[usatoday.com](http://usatoday.com)

### **EURASIANET: Hollywood takes over Tbilisi for film about war**

Hollywood occupied downtown Tbilisi last month to shoot scenes for a movie about Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia, featuring Oscar-nominee Andy Garcia as President Saakashvili. In one scene, scores of Georgians waved flags and posters declaring "Stop Russia," while Garcia, as Saakashvili, delivered a fiery speech to supporters at a nighttime rally in front of parliament. "Today the forces of occupation are gathered at our gates!" The movie, as yet untitled, tells the story of an American journalist who arrives in Georgia to pursue a scoop that there may be an armed conflict in the Caucasus. The country's film industry is piquing the interest of foreign producers by offering Georgia as a low-cost location for big-budget movies. "Filming in Georgia is going to be at least 10 times cheaper," said the film's co-producer Imedashvili.

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