

GEORGIA UPDATE

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Swedish FM Carl Bildt visited Georgia today as part of a three-day tour to the South Caucasus. Speaking at a joint news conference with his FM Vashadze, Bildt said the recent progress report by the EU on implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy showed that Georgia "is the country in this part of the Eastern Partnership that is doing the best in terms of performance." Together with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine are part of Eastern Partnership, initiated by EU in late 2008 to deepen ties with its eastern neighbors. At the end of his visit, Bildt wrote on his Twitter page: "Georgia making good progress on democratic developments and economic reforms."

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

- REUTERS:** Georgia accuses Russia of bombings, warns on talks
- AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE:** Risk of escalation between Russia-Georgia
- THE ECONOMIST:** From cukes to nukes—Russia and the European Union are running out of things to talk about
- JAMESTOWN:** Georgia thwarts another Russian-sponsored coup attempt
- AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE:** Wanted protest organizer flees Georgia—official
- WALL STREET JOURNAL:** Cyber combat—act of war
- EURASIANET:** Georgia—betting on Boers for an agricultural comeback
- GLOBAL INSIGHT:** Final IMF review seals Georgia's success
- DEUTSCHE PRESSE AGENTUR:** Georgia Parliament passes Freedom Charter
- DIE PRESSE:** Thank God we do not need Russia
- THE TELEGRAPH:** Andy Garcia and Sharon Stone attend Georgia premiere of Five Days of August
- NEW YORK TIMES:** Georgian artists, doing it for themselves

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"I will certainly make my views clear on the issue of Georgia, if I visit, and when I visit, Russia later this year.... I well remember myself going to Tbilisi when the Georgians were under so much pressure from the Russians, and standing up with them, recognizing that Georgia is a country that wants to be a democracy; it wants to be an economic success story; it wants to join NATO; it wants to be able to look west, as well as east; and it wants to have good relations with its neighbors."

♦ British PM David Cameron speaking before the House of Commons on voicing his support for Georgia's territorial integrity to Russian leadership

"My observation is that the crucial factor impacting the outcome of democratic reform is people. If Armenia had a Georgia's President Saakashvili, it might be doing better. If Georgia had Azerbaijan's President Aliyev, it might be doing worse."

♦ Ed Lucas, correspondent for *The Economist* and fellow at the Centre for European Policy Analysis

"Moscow is violating the territorial integrity of Moldova and Georgia and one of the fundamental norms of international behavior."

♦ US Senator John McCain speaking on Russia's illegal occupation of parts of Georgia and the presence of Russian troops in Moldova

UPCOMING MILESTONES

- Jun. 29:** Armenian FM Nalbandian visits Georgia
- Jul. 1:** FM Vashadze attends ministerial of Community of Democracies in Vilnius
- Aug. 12:** 3rd Anniversary of Sarkozy-Medvedev ceasefire agreement
- Aug. 18-20:** FM Vashadze visits Austria
- Aug. 25:** FM Vashadze visits Brazil
- Oct. 4:** Next round of Geneva peace talks

TOP STORIES

EU Reiterates Strong Support for Georgia at Summit With Russia

Top EU officials reiterated their support for Georgia's territorial integrity and national sovereignty at last week's EU-Russia summit in Nizhny Novgorod. "Let me also recall the EU's position of continued support for the security, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and of full implementation of the six-point agreement of August 2008, as well as its implementing measures," said European Council President Herman Van Rompuy at a joint news conference with Russian President Medvedev and European Commission President Barroso. The European Parliament, meanwhile, passed a resolution in advance of last week's summit that called on Russia "to respect the agreements it has signed, to fulfill all of the conditions under the six-point ceasefire agreement, and to immediately withdraw its troops from the occupied Georgian territories of S. Ossetia and Abkhazia to the pre-conflict positions as well as to guarantee the EU Monitoring Mission access to those territories," the resolution read. The European Parliament also called on the EU foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, "to persuade Russia to cease issuing passports to residents of the occupied provinces of S. Ossetia and Abkhazia."

[EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Prerequisites for EU-Russia Agreement](#)
[CIVIL GEORGIA: British PM Says to Raise Georgia During Russia Visit](#)
[CIVIL GEORGIA: EU Reiterates Support to Georgia at Summit](#)

After Xenophobic Attacks, Georgia Warns Citizens Against Travel to Russia

After a violent attack on an ethnic Georgian in Moscow and back-to-back Russian-linked terrorist attempts in the country last week, the Georgian foreign ministry advised its citizens not to travel to Russia. Georgian citizens should "refrain from traveling to the Russian Federation" because of safety concerns, the ministry warned, adding that Russia's hostility toward Georgians "is not safe" for citizens. The statement comes just days after a 48-year-old Georgian citizen, Gela Bliadze, was beaten to death because of his ethnicity. "This crime has been committed on the territory of the country, which carries out policy of state terrorism—plots, finances, and implements terrorist acts on the territory of the sovereign country [Georgia]," the foreign ministry said. Georgian authorities called on Russia to investigate the death of the Georgian citizen and punish the perpetrators.

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Georgia Tells its Citizens not to Travel to Russia](#)

Armenian Church Leader Concludes Historic Visit to Georgia

His Holiness Karekin II, leader of Armenia's Holy Apostolic Church, concluded a historic, week-long visit to Georgia today, in a trip aimed at strengthening bilateral relations. Hundreds of Georgians and ethnic Armenians living in Georgia greeted the supreme heads of the Georgian and Armenian churches at the Armenian-Georgian border, where Karekin crossed into Georgia on foot. The Patriarch of the Georgian Orthodox Church, Ilia II, welcomed the Catholic leader at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi: "I am sure your visit will further strengthen our friendly relations and I think that we will spare no efforts to strengthen our ties," Ilia II said. Echoing Ilia's warm words, Karekin underscored the strong, ancient bond between the two countries: "We have come here with a robust spirit and a belief that our meeting will strengthen the centuries-old brotherhood and friendship of our peoples," he said. President Saakashvili also met with Karekin to discuss ownership issues related to Armenian Apostolic Churches and religious heritage in Georgia during his visit. Karekin also traveled to Samtskhe-Javakheti, a region with a predominately ethnic-Armenian population, and several renowned religious landmarks while in Georgia. During the visit, Ilia pressed Georgian claims to several medieval and mostly abandoned churches located in Armenia's northern Lori Province. "When talking about churches, one must not forget that both sides have demands," Ilia said. "Both sides have facts and documents regarding Armenian churches in Georgia and Georgian churches in Armenia."

[RADIO FREE EUROPE: Armenian Church Leader on Landmark Visit](#)

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Armenian Church Leader Visits Georgia](#)

**US Warship Visits Batumi for Joint Exercises**

The USS Anzio visited the port of Batumi last week to participate in a series of joint military exercises with Georgian maritime forces. The warship and its crew engaged in routine damage control drills and engine and electrical maintenance work with Georgia's Coast Guard during the port call. The last US warship to visit the Georgian seaport was the USS Gonzalez in November.

[CIVIL GEORGIA: US Warship to Visit Batumi](#)

New Fossil Finds Point to Georgia as Origin of Modern Man

Stone artifacts unearthed at Georgia's Dmanisi archaeological site—just 50 kilometers from Tbilisi—suggest that early man might have gotten his start in Eurasia and then migrated to Africa, an international team of scientists says. Their findings have rocked the archaeological world, since they would upend a central tenet of human evolution—that modern man has his origins in Africa. "Eurasia was probably occupied [by early humans] before Homo erectus [the species from which a straight line of evolution to modern humans begins] appears in the East African fossil record," said the team in last week's edition of the National Academy of Sciences journal. Crude stone tools were found in sediment almost 70,000 years older than the 1.85 million-year-old early human fossils—Eurasia's earliest homo erectus—which were also found at Dmanisi, said Reid Ferring, a member of the team. The evidence has prompted the Dmanisi researchers to consider the strong possibility that some more primitive form of human evolved in Africa, came to Eurasia, and there evolved into homo erectus. Yet it's also possible that Eurasia's homo erectus may have evolved in parallel with homo erectus in Africa. "Once again the answers may come from the Caucasus," Ferring said. "We may even say maybe from Georgia."

[AP: Were ancient human migrations two-way streets?](#)

[WIRED: New Fossils Push Homo Erectus Origins Back to Asia](#)

Norway's "Clean Energy Invest" to Undertake \$314 Million Hydropower Project in Georgia

Norway's premier alternative energy company, Clean Energy Invest AS, pledged last week to invest \$314 million toward developing a hydropower plant project in Georgia's Adjara region. According to the newly signed contract with Georgia's Energy Ministry, the Oslo-based firm plans to construct a four-stage cascade hydropower plant with a total capacity of over 128 MW. Clean Energy Invest expects to export most of the electricity to Turkey. Construction on the project is slated to launch next year after initial feasibility studies are completed, and will be finished in 2015. The project's announcement complements the Georgian government's strategy to double foreign direct investment this year. Georgia might receive more than \$1 billion in FDI, mainly in hydropower projects, said Georgia's Economy Minister Kobalia. Georgia has signed 42 agreements to develop hydropower projects as the country seeks to attract \$5 billion to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and become a major exporter of energy.

[CIVIL GEORGIA: Oslo-Based Firm to Develop HPP Project in Adjara](#)

[BLOOMBERG: Georgia Expects \\$1 Billion of FDI in 2011](#)

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON GEORGIA

REUTERS: Georgia accuses Russia of bombings, warns on talks
 Georgia said Russia is sponsoring terrorist acts in Georgia and the country's occupied regions and warned that their internationally mediated talks on security issues could collapse unless the bombing campaign stopped. "In the last few days and weeks, we've had explosions on the Georgian side, and arrests connected with potential other explosions," said Pierre Morel, the EU's special representative referring to the attempted bombing of the NATO liaison office and a local market. "In April we had officers and different personnel killed on the Abkhaz side," he added.

www.reuters.com

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE: Risk of dangerous escalation between Russia-Georgia—EU

Participants at the Russian-Georgian talks in Geneva determined that the security situation on the ground was unpredictable and could lead to a dangerous escalation. "The participants reviewed the security situation on the ground, which was assessed as stable, but unpredictable, with a potential for dangerous escalation due to highly worrying developments and incidents," said Pierre Morel, the EU's special representative. "Such a level of casualty after 2.5 years of intensive work is a kind of warning signal," he added.

news.yahoo.com

THE ECONOMIST: From cukes to nukes—Russia and the European Union are running out of things to talk about

European integration could be the best way to offer long-term security to former Soviet countries. Yet, few in the EU any longer see membership for Ukraine and Georgia as a strategic goal. Russia exploits this. Ukraine seems to be emulating it. Georgia is subject to harassment by Russian security services; the Georgians say they now have clear evidence of Russian involvement in a recent spate of bombings.

www.economist.com

JAMESTOWN: Georgia thwarts another Russian-sponsored coup

The latest events, including, the scandalous record of Nino Burjanadze's conversation with her son and last month's aggressive protest rallies, show both the ability of Georgia's pro-Western government to defend the nation's sovereignty and the incessant attempts by the Kremlin to destabilize Georgia and bring it back under its suzerainty. But it is also true that until Georgia becomes a formal ally of the West, its long-term stability and security will remain under a big question mark. Greece and Turkey of the 1940s could serve as a good reminder.

jamestownfoundation.blogspot.com

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE: Protest organizer flees Georgia

A Georgian opposition figure charged with organizing attacks on security forces after protests last month ended in violence has fled the country. "Badri Bitsadze has left the territory of Georgia. His whereabouts are not known and at this point we cannot comment on how he left Georgia," said Interior Ministry spokesman Shota Utiashvili. The authorities say Bitsadze, the husband of opposition leader and Moscow-ally Nino Burjanadze, organized attacks on police and plotted to create a small paramilitary force to sweep Saakashvili from power.

www.hurriyetdailynews.com

WALL STREET JOURNAL: Cyber combat—act of war

The Pentagon has concluded that computer sabotage coming from another country can constitute an act of war, a finding that for the first time opens the door for the US to respond using traditional military force. Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 included a cyber attack that disrupted the websites of Georgian government agencies and financial institutions. The damage wasn't permanent but did disrupt communication early in the war.

online.wsj.com



EURASIANET: Georgia betting on Boers for an agricultural comeback

Widespread sustenance farming means Georgian farmers grow various crops on small plots of land and do not produce enough in a single location to meet commercial demand, leaving retailers to import fruits and vegetables. To reverse that trend, the government is looking to S. Africa. "The S. Africans have a long experience in large-scale farming and animal husbandry," Agriculture Minister Baku Kvezereli says. "They can set up such larger agriculture businesses in Georgia."

www.eurasianet.org

GLOBAL INSIGHT: Final IMF review seals Georgia's success

The IMF executive board's final review of Georgia's performance under the current Stand-By Arrangement commended Georgian authorities on successful implementation of program measures, saying program objectives were largely met. While Georgia's transition has advanced well, it still needs to enhance competitiveness and economic capacity, reduce external vulnerability, and strengthen its fiscal framework.

www.ihs.com

DEUTSCHE PRESSE AGENTUR: Parliament passes Freedom Charter

Parliament passed the "Freedom Charter," which includes measures to restrict public display of Soviet and Nazi symbols and prohibit former Soviet officials from holding public office. The new law aims to advance public safety and security measures to "fight terrorism." Measures include increased control over Georgian borders and strategic assets, and oversight over cargo transfers and potential money laundering operations.

pik.tv/en

DIE PRESSE: Thank God we do not need Russia

Georgia's political and economic future depends on its functioning democracy, says Georgia's FM Vashadze. Asked about recent protests in Tbilisi, Vashadze said opposition leader Nino Burjanadze gained only 1% of the votes in the last elections and wanted to provoke instability by organizing the violent rallies. He also highlighted that Georgia earlier this month prevented two new terrorist attacks, adding that authorities had proof that those attacks were orchestrated from Moscow.

diepresse.com

THE TELEGRAPH: Andy Garcia and Sharon Stone attend premiere

In a move likely to reopen a dispute between the two countries about who started the war, the film, called "Five Days of August," casts Russia as the aggressor and its troops as ruthless war criminals. But the film's makers insist it is a fair portrayal of what really happened. "It is an anti-war movie," said actor Andy Garcia, who played President Saakashvili.

www.telegraph.co.uk

NEW YORK TIMES: Georgian artists, doing it for themselves

The Georgian contemporary art scene will remain dependent for now on private initiatives. "In the last few years there is a lot happening, maybe too much," said Ms. Palavandishvili of GeoAir. "Yesterday I went to three art openings and today I have three more. Sure, there is the question as to whether what they are showing is good quality but at least there is something going on and this is a good starting point."

www.nytimes.com