

The Georgian Times

NO 1 NEWSPAPER IN GEORGIA

THE GEORGIAN TIMES MEDIA HOLDING

Distributed free

No 16 (1559) Monday, August 31, 2015 Weekly Newspaper, International Edition - Published by "The Georgian TIMES" Media Holding Since 1993 www.geotimes.ge



NATO, Georgia Open Joint Training Center



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According to the statistics for July 2015, the number of visitors to Georgia increased 9.5 % compared to the same period of the previous year. 737,696 people visited Georgia that month. Most were from Turkey (+12%), Azerbaijan (+7.9%), Armenia (+11.9%), Russia (+6.6%) and Ukraine (+0.6%).

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Leo Messi feeling amazing in Tbilisi, Georgia

Supercampeones de Europa!
Super-Champions of Europe!
- LIO
Supercampeones de Europa!
Super-Champions of Europe!
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SPECIAL EDITION

Georgia

ry of life

Tbilisi Hosts Prestigious European Super Cup Match

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9 reasons to visit Georgia now

(CNN) Out on the fringes of Europe, the former Soviet Republic of Georgia is a country shrouded in mystery.

Sandwiched between the Caucasus Mountains to the north, the Black Sea to the west and dry deserts to the south, this small country, which borders Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey, is not only a crossroad of cultures, but has a wealth of spectacular landscapes.



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Night Serenades - Tbilisi - Batumi International Festival

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STOLTENBERG: NATO-GEORGIA 'SUBSTANTIAL PACKAGE DELIVERING TANGIBLE RESULTS'

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who is visiting Tbilisi, said on August 27 it's now early to say what the decision of next year's NATO summit will be in respect of Georgia's long-sought for Membership Action Plan (MAP).

But he also said that Georgia already has "the necessary tools to continue to move towards membership," which are delivering "tangible results."

"There is more Georgia in NATO and more NATO in Georgia," he said at a joint news conference with Georgian PM Irakli Garibashvili ahead of inauguration ceremony of the NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center at the Krtsanisi military training facility outside Tbilisi.

This joint training center, he said "will deepen our cooperation even further."

"It [the center] will help make Georgia and Georgian forces even more capable and more modern. And it will also strengthen cooperation between NATO and partner nations," he said, adding that it will "contribute to international peace and security."

He also said that along with other tools and activities, the joint training center contributes to "increasing NATO presence in Georgia."

Setting up of the Joint Training and Evaluation Center is part of the "substantial package" of cooperation agreed by the NATO leaders at the summit in Wales in September, 2014.

Stoltenberg said that the substantial package is already "delivering tangible results"; he noted in this context joint military exercises held at the Vaziani base outside Tbilisi in July and also said that NATO experts were already "working intensively" with the Georgian Defense Ministry to support the country in defence reforms.

"All the commitments we have made together are on track and on time," he said. "All these efforts help Georgia to move closer to your aspiration of NATO membership."

In an apparent response to Russia's concerns, Georgia's PM Garibashvili stressed during the press conference that the NATO-Georgia joint training center would "in no way be directed against any of the neighboring countries."

"It will serve strengthening of the regional security, stability and peace. The center with its content and function will contribute to international security and what is the most important the center will serve to increasing professionalism of our soldiers," PM Garibashvili said.

"I want to stress once against that this center cannot in any way be perceived as directed any of country," the PM said.

"Our government continues its pragmatic policy with Russia. We continue dialogue on trade and economic issues with Russia and we are committed to maintain this pragmatic and constructive policy," he added.

Garibashvili said that "proper preparation of Georgia-related issues in the context of next year's NATO summit in Warsaw" was also discussed at the meeting with the NATO Secretary General. He did not elaborate, but the Georgian officials, specifically Defense Minister Tina Khidasheli, have said for multiple times previously that Georgia will seek for Membership Action Plan (MAP) from NATO at the Warsaw summit.

At the summit in Bucharest in 2008 NATO leaders decided that Georgia will become a member of the alliance, but Membership Action Plan (MAP) should be the next stage on country's path towards eventual membership. Georgia has been denied MAP since then.

"This intermediary step [referring to MAP] should be missing after the Warsaw summit," Defense Minister Khidasheli said last week while visiting Washington.

Asked at the news conference about Georgia's chances for MAP at the Warsaw summit, the NATO Secretary General responded: "I cannot pre-judge decisions that are going to be taken at the summit."

"But what I can say is that Georgia already has the necessary tools to make progress towards the membership. We see that you are making progress when it comes to reform path and I welcome that – the reform of your political system, judiciary system; I see that there is more work to do, but I am very inspired and encouraged by progress we have seen and I think that the government is really committed to taking this reform path forward," Stoltenberg said.

Deputy Foreign Minister Davit Dondua said after a meeting between Georgian Foreign Minister Tamar Beruchashvili and the NATO Secretary General on August 27 that MAP was one of the issues discussed.

"The Secretary General has noted that MAP should not be considered as the only indicator of progress. NATO's more active presence in Georgia is more important than MAP; more joint trainings are more important, which will eventually lead us to more compatibility with NATO," Dondua said.

Praising Georgia for "the remarkable progress" on the reform path, the NATO Secretary General also added: "I look forward to continued progress also when it comes to constitutional and electoral reforms."

He also thanked Georgia for its contribution to NATO mission in Afghanistan, where Georgia is the second largest troop contributor.

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NATO, GEORGIA OPEN JOINT TRAINING CENTER

Visiting NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Georgian leadership have inaugurated NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center (JTEC) at the already existing military facility outside Tbilisi.

Located at the Krtsanisi National Training Center, where U.S. marines have been providing training to the Georgian troops for over a decade already, JTEC is not yet fully operational.

The center, which is part of the "substantial package" of cooperation, offered to Georgia at the NATO summit in Wales in September, is designed for training of Georgian, NATO and its partner nations' troops.

NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg said that at the Wales summit NATO has promised Georgia "substantial support to advance its defence reforms."

"Today marks another concrete step in realizing that promise," he said.



"More work remains to be done before this Centre is fully up and running," Stoltenberg said at the JTEC opening ceremony in Krtsanisi, which was also attended by President Giorgi Margvelashvili, PM Irakli Garibashvili and other senior Georgian officials.

"Of course, the Centre will be more than this building and its offices," he continued. "It will include training sites and ranges all across Georgia."

Chief of the General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces Maj. Gen. Vakhtang Kapanadze has said previously that along with infrastructure at the Krtsanisi training center, facilities available at the Vaziani training area, outside Tbilisi, will also be used for the JTEC.

In its initial phase JTEC is currently led by 6 NATO officers from Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, and Norway, and 8 Georgian military officers.

According to NATO, training of Georgian military units at the JTEC is expected to start in 2016, with the first group receiving certification by the middle of next year. In 2016 the JTEC will also help facilitate joint exercises between troops from Georgia, NATO and partner nations.

"With the inauguration of the Joint Training and Evaluation Centre, our cooperation will grow deeper," the NATO Secretary General said.



Stoltenberg added that with this center "NATO will be more present, in Georgia, and we will be more visible in Georgia."

The Georgian infantry company, which is part of the NATO's Response Force (NRF), was present at the ceremony.

Addressing Georgian soldiers, President Giorgi Margvelashvili said at the ceremony: "This training center will help to further improve your skills, which you will use only for one purpose – to defend freedom and those values that make us united."

In his speech at the ceremony PM Irakli Garibashvili reiterated once against remarks made after the meeting with the NATO Secretary General earlier on August 27 that the center is not directed against any country. Russia has expressed concerns over the plans to set up this training center in Georgia.

The PM noted that Georgia already has an "experience of operating training centers established with NATO support"; he was referring to the Sachkhere Mountain-Straining School.

Georgian Defense Minister Tina Khidasheli said in her speech at the ceremony: "Georgia's choice is more than clear – we aspire towards membership in the family of democratic, developed, stable and peaceful countries... Expansion of NATO expands freedom... NATO brings peace."

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RUSSIA SAYS NATO-GEORGIA TRAINING CENTER 'DESTABILIZING FACTOR'

The Russian Foreign Ministry said on August 27 that opening of NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center outside Tbilisi represents continuation of the Alliance's "provocative policy," which will become a "serious destabilizing factor" in the region.

Speaking at a regular news briefing, Russian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson Maria Zakharova said that "those who actively continue dragging Tbilisi into NATO should realize their share of responsibility taking into account regrettable experience from 2008."

"Just ahead of this briefing, information came, which could not have been left beyond our attention, that the NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center was opened during the visit of NATO Secretary General Mr Stoltenberg to Georgia," Zakharova said by the end of her opening remarks at the news conference.

"We consider this step as a continuation of the Alliance's provocative policy, which aims at expanding its geopolitical influence; moreover, [NATO] is doing this with the use of resources of partners of the Alliance," she said.

"Deployment of such a military facility of the North Atlantic Alliance in Georgia will become a serious destabilizing factor for the security in the region."

"Such a conclusion is based on an existing tragic experience; you all remember events of August, 2008 – Georgia's aggression against South Ossetia; no one has a doubt that declaration on Georgia's NATO membership perspective at the Alliance's summit in Bucharest in April, 2008, inspired kind of illusion of all-permissiveness among then leadership in Tbilisi and largely encouraged criminal attempt to solve the conflict through use of military force and to invade South Ossetia," Zakharova said.

"Judging from some Georgian politicians' actions and statements, Georgia has not reconciled with irreversible consequences of its adventure in 2008 and still claims territories of its neighboring republics [referring to Abkhazia and South Ossetia], and persistently declines to sign documents on non-use of force," she said.

"Those who actively continue dragging Tbilisi into NATO should realize their share of responsibility taking into account regrettable experience from 2008," Zakharova said.



"Russia will continue to remain committed to its international commitments on providing reliable security to its allies – republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. At the same time we will take into consideration all the new elements in development of NATO-Georgia cooperation," she added.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in Tbilisi that the opening of the joint training center at the Krtsanisi military facility outside Tbilisi "is not directed against anybody."

"On the contrary, it will improve regional and international stability," he said.

Reiterating NATO's support to Georgia's territorial integrity, Stoltenberg also said: "Russia's latest actions to move the administrative boundary line of the South Ossetia region of Georgia are yet another breach of Russia's international commitments."

Georgia's PM Irakli Garibashvili said after the meeting with the NATO Secretary General in Tbilisi on August 27, that the NATO-Georgia joint training center would "in no way be directed against any of the neighboring country."

"It will serve strengthening of the regional security, stability and peace. The center with its content and function will contribute to international security and what is the most important the center will serve to increasing professionalism of our soldiers," PM Garibashvili said.

"I want to stress once against that this center cannot in any way be perceived as directed any of country," the PM said.

"Our government continues its pragmatic policy with Russia. We continue dialogue on trade and economic issues with Russia and we are committed to maintain this pragmatic and constructive policy," he added.

Garibashvili also said that he "informed the Secretary General in details about the situation in Georgia's occupied territories and about Georgia's unilateral pragmatic and constructive steps."

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The Georgian TIMES

1 English-Language Newspaper in Georgia

First published in 1993.

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Palm Apartments

Palma Laguna

For the first time in the region: swimming pool with sea water

Located in Batumi, the 5-star hotel and entertainment complex **Grand Hotel Batumi Black Sea** represents a large investment project implemented by "GIMG", the subsidiary company of the Austrian "GAB Resorts Holding and Development GmbH". Up to now 60 million USD have been invested in the project.

The modern, 5-star hotel and entertainment center is divided into several parts:

a) Hotel Complex includes: 232 diverse apartments, open atriums and panoramic elevators, business center and conference halls for holding different events and meetings, VIP and business lounges with open terrace, SPA and fitness center with a swimming pool, boutique gallery, restaurants, pubs, cafes and etc. The complex occupies 60000 m².

b) Entertainment center includes casino, VIP casino, cabaret theatre and variety show, night bar, strip and karaoke bars, totalizator, bowling center, children and family entertainment centers. The total area of the entertainment complex is 8000 m².

c) Multicomplex/cinema center includes 10 diverse ultramodern cinema halls that in return introduce as public, as private sessions (feature, entertaining and informative films). The center occupies 1200 m².

d) The Residential Complex "Palm Apartments" includes 33 "lux" category apartments and 51 business category residences. The residential complex "Palm Apartments" is equipped with fully automated unified and centralized communication and monitoring system, as well as with unique service system. There are also office areas to let (1,852 m²) at the complex. The entire area of the complex is 20 000 m².

e) Outdoor swimming pool with pavilion, recreational "green" zone with "World's Baths" center. The entire area is 8.500 m²; water surface: 1.300 m². Supplied with the sea water and equipped with modern entertainment systems, the complex is considered to be the first unique center in the Black Sea basin. The infrastructure of the complex provides an amazing opportunity not only for active rest and recreational activities any time of the year, as well as the holding of open air mass cultural events like concerts, parties and meetings. 100-year-old eucalyptus located near the outdoor pool create an amazing "green zone" for relaxation, while the pavilion located around the pool introduces the following functional zones: reception and registration service, fitting and shower rooms, indoor sunbed gallery, massage and fitness cabinets, fast food restaurant, the restaurant "A la carte" with open terrace, a bar and etc.

Following the strategic plan for development of the project, all parts of the complex are to be exploited step by step. At the end of 2014 "Palm Apartments" 33 "lux" category apartments began to be exploited. In August 2015 on the occasion of the opening of "Palm Business Residences" 51 residential apartments and „PALMA LAGUNA" outdoor swimming pool, there was held "Adjara Fashion Week" that presented designer works from different countries, as well as the exhibition and diverse cultural events.

The hotel complex and the entertainment center project is to be ended in 2016. The entire investment required to accomplish the project is more than 120 million USD.



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GD RECRUITING 'INDEPENDENT EXPERTS' FOR CAMPAIGN PLATFORM

Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia, a leading party in the GD ruling coalition, has announced about intention to recruit 60 "independent experts" to draft its campaign platform for next year's parliamentary elections.

Announcement posted by the party on a Georgian job-search website on August 26 requires from applicants, among others, "comprehensive knowledge and objective analysis of political processes in Georgia of last 10 years" and to share values of fundamental human rights, "rule of law, democracy, social solidarity, and irreversibility of Georgia's western course."

Applicants, according to the announcement, should not be affiliated to any political party.

Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia party said that recruited experts would draft the part of the campaign platform that would provide "comprehensive and objective analysis" of situation before the 2012 October parliamentary elections and "changes carried out in 2012-2015".

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GEL RECOVERS SLIGHTLY

After losing over 3.5% against U.S. dollar in two previous days, the Georgian currency lari (GEL) was up 1.6% on Wednesday.

Central bank's official exchange rate was set at GEL 2.3771 per dollar late on Wednesday afternoon, from GEL 2.4161 a day earlier, which is 1.3% weaker than week earlier and 36.5% weaker compared to last year's August. Since the start of this year, GEL has weakened by 26.3% against the dollar.

Exchange kiosks in Tbilisi were selling dollar for about GEL 2.37-2.38 as of late Wednesday afternoon, compared to 2.43-2.44 a day earlier.

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PM SAYS 'NO FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS', BLAMES 'STIR' FOR GEL DEPRECIATION

The recent further weakening of the Georgian currency, lari (GEL), is a result of a "stir" caused by statements by "irresponsible experts and politicians", who predict even more depreciation of the GEL, PM Irakli Garibashvili said at a government meeting on Tuesday morning.

Georgian currency lari (GEL) lost 1.3% of its value, falling to 2.364 per U.S. dollar on Monday, the biggest single-day drop since early March, 2015, according to central bank's official exchange rate set for Tuesday. Exchange kiosks in Tbilisi were selling dollar for about GEL 2.4 as of Monday evening, up from 2.34-2.35. GEL further weakened as of Tuesday afternoon and U.S. dollar was sold for about GEL 2.43-2.44 at exchange kiosks in Tbilisi.



Economy Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili said at the government session on Tuesday morning that country's macroeconomic parameters showed "external shocks" that had downward pressure on GEL, involving falling external earnings from exports and remittances, have already been "completely offset", including by declining imports. Therefore, Kvirikashvili continued, this recent depreciation was a result of "speculative transactions" and "stir" among market participants.

"There are all the reasons to believe that those market participants, who will get involved in these speculative transactions they will eventually lose [money]," he said.

PM Garibashvili said after remarks from the Economy Minister: "We can conclude that we are facing an obvious speculative [trading] and stir; that's emotional-psychological factor. I want to tell the population not to yield this emotional-psychological stir."

"What is important now is to keep calm; nothing special is going on from the macroeconomic point of view... We have no fundamental problems at this stage. That's clearly a stir, which should be removed and it will be removed sooner or later. We expect - and the central bank also has the same expectation - that it will be removed soon," the PM said.

"We are ready to be in close coordination with the central bank... So I want to call on the population for calm; population and businesspeople should not give in to this stir and chaos caused by media, irresponsible experts and politicians. Official information is coming from the government and the central bank and please rely on that," he said. "I've heard experts, who were

saying previously that they were specializing on security issues, today saying that lari will depreciate - it's not serious, these are completely irresponsible statements. Of course this is damaging our country."

In July 2015, exports declined 24% year-on-year to USD 186.9 million and imports fell 15.8% y/y to USD 662 million with trade deficit decreasing 12.1% y/y to USD 475.1 million.

In the first seven months of 2015 exports were down by 23.8% y/y to US 1.26 billion, imports decreased 10.6% y/y to USD 4.3 billion, and trade deficit was down by 3.6% y/y to USD 3.04 billion. If excluding one-off import of donated C hepatitis medicines, totaling USD 232.6 million, imports in the first seven months of 2015 declined 15.4% y/y.

Remittances in July declined by 31.8% year-on-year to USD 93.39 million. Total of USD 632 million was transferred to Georgia from abroad in the first seven months of 2015, which is 24.2% less compared to the same period of last year.

Economy Minister Kvirikashvili said at the government session that over GEL 110 million has been raised from privatization of state assets; the figure is far short of government's initially expected USD 300-350 million. In February government announced about intention to step up privatization to raise at least USD 300 million in two-three months to help stabilize falling GEL, which at the time was 29% weaker against U.S. dollar compared to early November, when it started depreciation.

In March, amid continued depreciation of GEL, Economy Minister Kvirikashvili announced about the plans to scrap corporate income tax on reinvested profits in an attempt to boost economic growth in the long term. The plan, however, has not yet been materialized and no relevant bill has been proposed.

MP Mikheil Machavariani of the opposition UNM party said on August 25, that instead of laying out concrete plan on how to tackle GEL depreciation and economic troubles, PM Garibashvili blamed "emotional-psychological stir" for weakening currency.

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ADB APPROVES USD 20M LOAN FOR BATUMI COASTLINE PROTECTION

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved USD 20 million loan for Georgia for coastal protection works in Black Sea resort and port city of Batumi.

The loan, which is the fourth tranche under ADB's USD 300 million Sustainable Urban Transport Investment Program for Georgia, will be used to protect the 5 kilometer coastline from erosion in Batumi, which is one of the country's most popular summer seaside resort areas.

According to the project's initial environmental examination, the coastline southwest of Batumi is affected by erosion over a length of about 5 km and along this section a number of houses and cultivated land has already been lost in the past. It says that without protection measures coastal erosion will continue at the Batumi airport area, affecting beaches of Batumi and as a result the investment climate for tourism development could be negatively influenced.

"This investment, financed from ADB's commercial resources, complements ADB's substantial support to Georgia for water supply and sanitation, road and energy infrastructure," Kathie Julian, ADB's Georgia country director, said.

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PARLIAMENT SPEAKER SAYS NATO HAS TO BRING CLARITY OVER MAP

Membership Action Plan (MAP) should not be an obstacle on Georgia's path to NATO accession and the Alliance should bring clarity to this issue by the time of its summit in Warsaw next year, Georgian Parliament Speaker Davit Usupashvili said on August 27.

He told journalists after meeting NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who visited Tbilisi on August 26-27, that MAP should not be an issue of "political speculation".

"I told Mr Secretary General that we do not want MAP to become a political issue, because MAP is a technical tool. From the political point of view it was said at 2008 Bucharest summit that Georgia will become a NATO member and in this political part of the issue there has been and remains complete clarity, but technical part of the issue [MAP] should not become a matter of political speculation. Therefore we should work a lot with NATO and its individual members in order not to make this issue kind of an obstacle, and no one wants to make it an obstacle and if it's not an obstacle let's solve it easily in coming months ahead of the Warsaw summit. What we need is NATO membership, not MAP; what we do not need is an obstacle, whatever it is called - MAP or something else; so the obstacles should be removed," Usupashvili said.

"As far as we need to bring clarity to this issue, we ask our colleagues in NATO member states to do it in order not to make it an issue of political speculation. Tools that Georgia now has are unique - substantial package, which also includes the joint training center, are those instruments, which make the process of [NATO integration] actually irreversible and because that's the case let's call it by its right name. [Membership] through MAP or without MAP - these are the issues on which we will agree. What is the most important is that everyone should understand that Georgia's NATO membership and our steps in this direction aim at stability and peace in the region and not contrary. Everyone should understand this both within and outside the country," he said.

NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg said in Tbilisi on August 27 that it's now early to say what the decision of next year's NATO summit will be in respect of MAP.

At the summit in Bucharest in 2008 NATO leaders decided that Georgia will become a member of the alliance, but MAP should be the next stage on country's path towards eventual membership. Georgia has been denied MAP since then.

When addressing the NATO Parliamentary Assembly session in Budapest in May 2015, Georgian Parliament Speaker Usupashvili said that the Alliance should either give Georgia MAP at the next year's summit in Warsaw or declare that MAP is no longer a precursor to eventual membership.

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TBILISI CONDEMNS RUSSIAN RAILWAY TROOPS' ACTIVITIES IN ABKHAZIA

The Georgian Foreign Ministry has condemned deployment of the Russian railway troops in breakaway Abkhazia as "yet another aggressive and provocative action" and "strongly" demanded to "immediately stop illegal activities on Georgia's occupied territory."

Russian Deputy Defense Minister General Dmitry Bulgakov said on August 22 that 500 railway troops were deployed in Abkhazia in the end of July for "restoration of railway connection within" Abkhazia.

Works are underway on a 33 km long railway section between Ochamchire, seaside town southeast of Sokhumi, and Enguri river on the administrative boundary line with rest of Georgia, which has been defunct since 1992-1993 armed conflict in Abkhazia.

According to Gen. Bulgakov, troops have already cleared up to 9 km long section from various vegetation and removed 1.5 km long dilapidated railway track.

"All the works are underway solely for the interests of the civilian population," Gen. Bulgakov said.

He said that the railway troops will return back to their bases upon completion of works, expected for December.

A 54 km long section of railway between Sokhumi and Ochamchire was repaired by the Russian railway troops in May-July, 2008.

In its statement on August 24, the Georgian Foreign Ministry recalled Russian railway troops' deployment in Abkhazia ahead of the August, 2008 war, which, it said, "was effectively used for transportation of army units and equipment during the military" hostilities.

The Georgian Foreign Ministry called on Russia to fulfill its obligations undertaken under the August, 2008 ceasefire agreement and to "de-occupy Georgian territories."

It has also called on the international community to "assess appropriately Russia's illegal policies against Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and not to allow Russia's one more aggression against Georgia."

Works on Ochamchire-Enguri railway section has triggered speculation in Tbilisi that Russia might be paving the way for restoration of the Georgian-Russian railway link via Abkhazia. Restoration of the Ochamchire-Enguri rail link without reconnecting it with rest of the Georgian railway network would be economically unviable. But the Georgian officials have strongly denied discussing reopening of the railway link between the two countries via Abkhazia with the Russian side.

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UNM JOINS BOYCOTT OF MP BY-ELECTIONS

United National Movement (UNM) opposition party said on Friday it will boycott MP by-elections in two single-mandate constituencies, Martvili and Sagarejo, scheduled for October.

With the announcement UNM, which has the largest opposition group in the Parliament, joined 11 non-parliamentary opposition parties in boycotting the upcoming MP by-elections, which will be held to fill two vacant seats in the legislative body a year before the parliamentary elections.

Free Democrats, another parliamentary opposition party, has also said it would not be contesting for two seats in upcoming MP by-elections.

MP Sergo Ratiani, executive secretary of UNM, said on August 21 that Georgia, "ruled informally" by ex-PM Bidzina Ivanishvili, is in the "crisis" and two seats, which are up for grabs in the by-elections, will not help to change the situation.

"MP-by elections in Martvili and Sagarejo majoritarian constituencies will waste budgetary funds and mislead voters. It is obvious that election of two new parliament members will not change the situation and will not help to overcome the crisis in the country," MP Ratiani said.

"We will use all the available constitutional means in order to achieve early parliamentary elections and to put an end to the rule by Bidzina Ivanishvili and Georgian Dream," he added.






Independent candidates, who are not nominated by any of the political party, can also run for majoritarian MP seats in single-mandate constituencies.

MP by-election will be held in Martvili constituency in western Georgia to fill a vacant seat in the Parliament following the death of UNM MP Nauli Janashia in March. Majoritarian MP seat for Sagarejo single-mandate constituency in eastern Georgia became vacant after Tina Khidasheli was appointed as Defense Minister in May.

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Customers' idea about ideal lottery

-  There must be a wide variety of prizes;
-  It would be good to win several times;
-  Receive the prize the moment you win;
-  The rules must be easy;
-  In case of cash prizes, decide myself what to buy.

Having taken into consideration your wishes
“Aversi” **grand lottery** has begun!

The prizes are



The lottery will be held on the 20th of November 2015 in the broadcast of “Rustavi-2”,
after “Kurier” 18:00.

Giorgi Chogovadze: The number of international visitors to Georgia has risen for the past four months

According to the statistics for July 2015, the number of visitors to Georgia increased 9.5% compared to the same period of the previous year. 737,696 people visited Georgia that month. Most were from Turkey (+12%), Azerbaijan (+7.9%), Armenia (+11.9%), Russia (+6.6%) and Ukraine (+0.6%).

Head of the Georgian National Tourism Administration Giorgi Chogovadze confirms that the number of visitors to Georgia has been steadily rising for the past four months. There were rises of 0.4% in April, 14.7% in May, 9.3% in June and now 9.5% in July. The data he presented at a recent press conference also demonstrates that the number of visitors who spend a minimum 24 hours in Georgia has increased 2.2% compared with the previous year.

"This has been achieved thanks to the international activities undertaken by the Georgian National Tourism Administration. Certain political events which took place in the region in the second half of 2014 and beginning of 2015 influenced the country's economy and had a certain impact on the number of tourists visiting us. In order to change this, we undertook a special marketing campaign in 9 countries; we advertised on in-

ternational mass media outlets like CNN and Euronews and invited more than 300 journalists to the country to promote Georgia's tourism potential. This correct marketing policy has brought the corresponding results," Chogovadze said.

Despite the problems earlier in the year the number of international travellers has increased during the year to date. According to the statistics presented by the Georgian National Tourism Administration, the total number of visitors was 3,069,999, a 4.9% increase on the same period of the previous year.

There is a positive tendency with regard to visitor numbers from EU countries. There have been particularly increases in visitors from such countries as Lithuania (+23%), the Czech Republic (+23%), the United Kingdom (+15%), Germany (+15%), Latvia (+15%) and the Netherlands (+15%). The number of visitors from such countries as Kazakhstan (32%), the UAE (+768%) and Saudi Arabia (+137%) has also increased significantly.

"The frequency of international card usage has also increased. The volume of payments made with international bank cards increased by 47% in April, 43% in May and 24% in June. The above-mentioned volume is expected to



have a positive impact on international income," explained Giorgi Chogovadze.

The Georgian National Tourism Administration says that the international marketing cam-

paign has turned things round and the forecast for the rest of the year is positive. More tour-

ists are expected to visit Georgia this year than last.

Nini Taktakishvili

Night Serenades - Tbilisi - Batumi International Festival



The 7th Night Serenades International Festival opened on 25 August and will continue until 4 September. Compared to previous editions, this year's festival is much more grandiose.

Since it was refounded in 2009 the festival had been held only in Batumi; however, this year it is being held in Tbilisi as well. As Director of the festival, Tea Mukeria, told us the idea of expanding the festival was supported by Tbilisi City Council.

"We have held two individual concerts in Tbilisi over the

last couple of years and these aroused a great deal of public interest. This is why we decided to expand Night Serenades. Both the programme and the competitive element of the festival have been expanded. This year we will have three concerts in Tbilisi and four in Batumi," Tea Mukeria said.

The Artistic Director of Night Serenades is Liana Isakadze. In 2011 she founded the Virtuosos World Chamber Orchestra, consisting entirely of prominent and internationally recognised solo-

ists. This has held numerous successful concerts in a number of countries, including the charitable concert held on 6 June 2015 at Carnegie Hall in New York under the patronage of Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili. This was a great success, and raised a considerable sum for St. Nino's Georgian Orthodox Church in New York.

Night Serenades was first held in the 1980s in the resort of Bichvinta in Abkhazia. It ceased to exist in 1991, during the political turmoil of that era, but was

restored in 2009, on the initiative of Liana Isakadze, with the support of Batumi City Hall.

A number of prominent performers and conductors are taking part in this year's festival. "This year we have participants from different countries: the conductor Cesar Alvarez from Spain, the conductor and violinist Lavard Skou-Larsen from Austria, the conductor Muhai Tang from the Czech Republic, the conductor Maxime Tortelier from France and the violinists Denis Shapovalov, Ian-Eric Gustafson and Anna-Liza Bezrodnaya. The final gala concert will raise money for the Georgian Solidarity Fund and be used to support children with oncological diseases. The 2016 event will be even larger, as it will honour Liana Isakadze's 70th birthday," Tea Mukeria told us.

The Batumi concerts are on August 25, 26, 28 and 30 and those in Tbilisi on September 2, 3 and 4. The 2 and 3 September concerts will be held at the Great Hall of the Tbilisi Conservatory, while the 4 September concert, again a charitable one, will be held at the Radisson Blu Iveria hotel.

The main partners of the festival are the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia, Batumi City Hall, Tbilisi City Council and Tbilisi City Hall. It is also supported by the Georgian National Tourism Administration of the Ministry of Economics and Sustainable Development of Georgia.

Nini Taktakishvili

More Convenience for Tourists - a new project from the Georgian National Tourism Administration

The Georgian National Tourism Administration continues to create new products for tourists and implement infrastructure projects. In order to make it easier for tourists to move around the city the administration has installed double-sided so-called light boxes at the Central Square and in important streets of Tbilisi. The light boxes display a map of the city and general information tourists need to know.

This project has also been implemented in the regions. 44 double-sided light boxes have been installed in 17 cities and boroughs often visited by tourists. New signposts to the most popular tourist attractions have also been erected.

Head of the Georgian National Tourism Administration Giorgi Chogovadze has visited the new facilities in Gori. He points out that this small infrastructure improvement is very necessary for tourists trying to find their way round foreign cities and will significantly contribute to their ease of movement.

Akhaltshikhe has received new information boards. Seventeen of these have been placed at strategic points in the city. They direct tourists to the administrative buildings and popular sights the city has to offer. Bolnisi, Surami, Tskaltubo, Borjomi, Bakuriani, Abastumani, Mestia, Zugdidi, Oni, Ambrolauri and Stepantsminda have erected similar boards.

"The implementation of this project will significantly contribute to ease of movement for tourists and help them to find the places they are looking for much more easily. The information board project is another important infrastructure project in the sphere of tourism," said Head of Sports, Monuments Protection, Youth Affairs and Tourism for the municipality Levan Mikaberidze.

A memorandum has also been signed between the Georgian National Tourism Administration, represented by Giorgi Chogovadze, and the Gori Municipality Tourism Development Agency, represented by its Director Zaza Koshadze. The parties have agreed concrete steps to develop tourism in the Inner Kartli region, implement mutual projects and ensure deep cooperation between the two bodies. Both have agreed to take joint responsibility popularizing the local tourist destinations in both the domestic and international markets.

Nini Taktakishvili



GINO PARADISE TBILISI

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The new autumn season starts at GINO PARADISE TBILISI. If you suffer from summer nostalgia, you must necessarily visit GINO PARADISE TBILISI. Here, any time of the year, during four seasons you may enjoy all opportunities for your entertainment, health care and rest.

GINO PARADISE takes into account the needs and requirements of any visitor. You must only choose the desired service package that is affordable for you. With GINO's unique opportunities you may not only relax and rest as physically, as mentally, but at the same time take care after your appearance and health as well. In this case, you may visit GINO PARADISE TBILISI WELLNESS & SPA center that is particularly popular for its EXCELLENT Corner.

The guests will be impressed by sauna massage and the diversity of other procedures. WELLNESS & SPA center presents various relaxing and healing saunas with herbal fragrances, shower with snow and thunderstorm effects; vertical and horizontal massagers, as well as 24-carat gold milk and wine baths of Cleopatra. There is also a 2000 liter heated and oxygen enriched beer barrel, where you may also order cold beer.

Sauna is known for its effective healing since ancient centuries and nowadays it is also very popular with the visitors of GINO PARADISE. At GINO you may enjoy as dry, as well as steam sauna. Each procedure has particular healing features.

For instance, **Herbal Sauna** is a type of dry sauna that considers the temperature of 45-60 degrees; however, aromatherapy amazing fragrance is not only very pleasant, but also contributes to cellulite removal and weight correction. Aroma oils applied during the procedures assist the visitor to over-

come bad mood, stress and skin diseases.

Finnish Sauna is also a type of dry sauna. In this case, the temperature is high, while the pressure is low. This type of sauna encloses body warming and, as a result of excess sweating, the organism gets rid of toxins; blood circulation and metabolism are improved that in return contributes to organism regeneration capability.

Infrared Sauna was invented by Japanese. Infrared wave radiation is completely safe for health and is particularly effective for weight loss, especially if it is combined with healthy food and fitness. A patient usually spends 120-150 calories there. It should be mentioned that sauna cabin is made out of natural tree material that in return, as a result of warming process, excretes biologically active substances- phyton-



cides that have the capacity to destroy bacteria and prevent fungal development.

Salt Steam Sauna that is rich with iodized salt is particularly useful for thyroid functioning. Besides, it significantly contributes to metabolism regulation, weight loss; has very good cosmetic effect; helps to overcome stress and tiredness; cellulite removal and weight

correction.

Roman Sauna is known by the highest pressure applied. It is a combined sauna where, besides aromatherapy, steam effect improves and rejuvenates skin; removes muscle stiffness and assists the organism to get rid of toxins. It also contributes to cellulite removal and excess weight correction.

So-called combined sauna "Foxhole" with a very original interior unites steam and herbal sauna types with aromatherapy. Here is also Jacuzzi where feet hydro massage procedure including the application of oxygen enriched air activates blood circulation and is particularly effective in case of vascular diseases.

Besides, the tepidariumlo-

cated in EXCELLENT Corner is an amazing opportunity for care and rest after sauna, cold shower and massage. There is pleasant music and comfortable atmosphere, in order for the visitor to relax completely.

There is also a 24-carat gold throne of Alexander the Great that is known for its unique healing features, mainly warmed gold assists fast wound healing and in general is very useful for health.

The whole GINO PARADISE territory gives the opportunity of holding diverse events. At GINO PARADISE you may organize any type of corporate evening, birthday party or other type of event for your friends and beloved ones. Upon your desire, the whole VIP and EXCELLENT zone may be closed and only you with your beloved people may have a good time there.

This is not the complete list of opportunities that GINO may offer. You should therefore visit GINO PARADISE TBILISI yourself and brighten cold autumn days.

ShorenaTsvikarashvili



9 reasons to visit Georgia now

(CNN) Out on the fringes of Europe, the former Soviet Republic of Georgia is a country shrouded in mystery.

Sandwiched between the Caucasus Mountains to the north, the Black Sea to the west and dry deserts to the south, this small country, which borders Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey, is not only a crossroad of cultures, but has a wealth of spectacular landscapes.

Until recently, many would have struggled to place the country of Georgia on the map (or at least mistake it for the U.S. state of the same name), but it's quickly becoming one of Europe's hottest new destinations.

Here are nine reasons to visit Georgia now.

1. Tbilisi: An eclectic melting pot

From the hanging balconies in the crumbling Old Tbilisi district and the Persian-style sulfur baths clad in turquoise mosaics, to unique art nouveau buildings falling into disrepair sitting side by side with futuristic glass structures, Tbilisi is a city that inspires.

The Georgian capital lies on the banks of the Mtkvari River and is surrounded by mountains on all three sides.

Archaeologists trace the first settlement in today's Tbilisi to the 4th millennium B.C.

Its position on the old Silk Road turned it into a multicultural hub, reflected today in the city's ethnic diversity and eclectic architecture.

The baths in Abanotubani follow the Persian tradition, only the thermal water bubbles up naturally from the ground below.

Tbilisi gets its name from the Old Georgian word "t'bili," meaning warm, due to its hot, sulfurous water.

Moving away from Abanotubani, a walk into the Old Town reveals old Georgian and Armenian churches, mosques and synagogues and even the ruins of the most northern Zoroastrian fire temple.



Tbilisi's multicultural atmosphere is on full display this fall at the Tbilisi International Festival of Theatre, which runs from September 25 to October 8.

2. Ushguli: Europe's highest village

Way up in the Caucasus Mountains around 2,200 meters above sea level, this small village is Europe's highest continuously inhabited settlement.

Sitting at the foot of Mount Shkhara, Georgia's highest point, Ushguli is famous for the medieval defensive towers connected to each house.

It's deep in the Svaneti region, known for its unique culture that was once cut off from the rest of the country.

The main town of Mestia is on its way to becoming the Georgian equivalent of a Swiss resort but Ushguli has been saved by its poor transport routes, which have helped preserve the village's timeless feel.

Young men gallop through the dirt tracks on horseback between the crumbling towers, dodging the livestock in the street.

Ushguli and the region of Upper Svaneti are classified as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

3. The birthplace of wine

When we think of the origin

of wine we tend to think of France, Italy, Greece or Persia, but Georgia is in fact one of the world's oldest wine regions.

In 2003 archaeologists found evidence that Stone Age people were producing wine here up to 8,000 years ago.

Since then, wine has played a core part in Georgia's national identity.

The country's ancient tradition of fermenting grape juice in clay vessels, known as kvevris, has made it onto UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

There are hundreds of indigenous grape varieties and Georgian wine is slowly gaining recognition globally.

While some of the homemade varieties aren't particularly palatable, there are some excellent vineyards in Georgia producing premium wines.

A good place to start is with a red wine aged in oak barrels made from the Saperavi grape from Mukuzani in the wine region of Kakheti, such as those from Teliani Valley, or a white Tsindali, made from a blend of Rkatsiteli and Mtvani grapes.

Soviet dictator and Georgian native Joseph Stalin was a fan of Khvanchkara, a sweet red wine from the Racha mountain region in the Caucasus.

4. Mysterious cave cities

Georgia is home to some of the most unusual cave cities in Europe.

By themselves, they're reason alone to visit the country.

The oldest is Uplistsikhe, an ancient settlement that resembles a lunar landscape.

Others include Davit Gareja, a vast monastic complex carved into the rock of Mount Gareja, and Vardzia, a spectacular underground city that once housed 2,000 monks.

5. Supra: A traditional Georgian feast

One of the best ways to get to know the country is through its food.

In fact, if you haven't tried a Georgian "supra," or feast, you haven't experienced Georgia.

The local cheese bread is called "khachapuri," the most famous being the Adjara variety.

It's a baked bread boat filled with gooey, melted, tangy "sulguni" cheese, a whole egg yolk and some slivers of butter. Yes, it's heart stopping, but so delicious.

"Khinkhali" dumplings come with a spiced meat filling that releases its juices when cooked, so you have to suck out the stock before eating.

Then there are delectable walnut dressing salads, bean stews cooked with fragrant cilantro and "shashlik," tender marinated meat cooked on a kebab skewer.

They're best enjoyed, of course, with some excellent Georgian wine.

6. Remote mountain villages

The remote regions of Khevsureti and Tusheti in the Caucasus Mountains are home to spectacular medieval villages with small communities that still retain their ancient pagan traditions.

The roads going up here are an adrenaline rush in themselves.

The ruined fortress of Mutso and the settlement of Shatili in Khevsureti look like something described by J.R.R. Tolkien.

Set dramatically against the mountains, they're so close to Chechnya you can see the border guards walking up and down the ridge.

Tusheti is a cluster of communities, kind of like a Georgian Shangri La, full of old towers, churches, villages and spectacular mountain scenery with wild flowers and trees with leaves that almost look golden.

Tusheti has numerous hiking trails and the locals are known for their generous mountain hospitality.

7. Europe's most surreal museum

To learn about the life of Old Joe, visit Stalin's hometown, Gori, and the bizarre Joseph Stalin Museum.

You might know Stalin as a dictator responsible for millions of deaths, but in this hometown attraction there is a sense of pride about the "local boy made good."

There aren't any references to his purges beyond a small backroom that doesn't feature on the tour, but there are pictures aplenty of Stalin, including one of the leader voting for himself.

There are also various statues, his death mask, carpets and frescoes featuring the dear leader's face, his personal green rail-

way carriage and — the star attraction — his one-bedroom childhood home preserved in perfect condition.

The museum has been criticized for being a "falsification of history" and an example of "Soviet propaganda."

There were plans to transform the museum into a museum of Russian aggression, but so far this is limited to a little room hidden beside the entrance.

The museum is worth visiting as it captures the essence of Stalin, including his own self-glorification and propaganda, even if that was not its intended purpose.

8. Beautiful and ancient churches

Georgia adopted Christianity back in 324 AD and the country is full of spectacular churches and cathedrals in incredible locations.

Whether it's the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Mtskheta's Svetitskhoveli Cathedral or Kutaisi's Bagrati Cathedral, or the dramatic hill top position of the church in Kazbegi, Georgia's churches never fail to paint a pretty picture.

Kazbegi is also home to one of the world's most spectacular marathon routes.

You can cheer on runners in this year's Kazbegi Trail Marathon on September 5, 2015.

9. The people and Georgian hospitality

Some Georgians might appear a serious bunch at first, but most of them are kind and welcoming.

For Georgians, a guest is a sacred thing and they will often go out of their way to help you.

Their generosity and hospitality will often take the form of lots of food and even more drink.

As they say in Georgia, "Gaumarjos!" (Cheers!).

Jennifer Walker is an Anglo-Hungarian former nuclear physicist turned writer based in Budapest, Hungary. She's a compulsive traveler and has lived in the UK, Hungary, Spain, Germany and Georgia.

CNN

Tbilisi Hosts Prestigious European Super Cup Match

In 2013 the UEFA committee decided that the Super Cup, the contest between the winners of the two major UEFA competitions the previous year, would be rotated between stadiums in different countries. Georgia was one of the first three countries selected to host the match, and on 11 August Champions League winners Barcelona and Europa League winners Sevilla met each other at Dinamo Arena.

The Tbilisi tie attracted a large number of new tourists to Georgia. It became particularly popular in social networks, as people from different countries sought out users from Georgia in the hope of getting tickets. Some even joked that they wanted to attend the match so much they had started learning Georgian.

Around 52,000 fans, (12,000 were from outside Georgia), gathered at Dinamo alongside thousands of law enforcement officers and internationally recognised Georgian football stars. They saw a very exciting game, which ended level at 4-4 after normal time. With five minutes of extra time left Pedro scored the winner for Barcelona and avenged their 2006 Super Cup defeat at the hands of Sevilla. The victory made Barcelona the most successful club in the history of the compe-

tion, as they have now won it five times, like AC Milan, but been runner-up a further four times, most famously to the outstanding Aston Villa side of 1982.

Barcelona's Argentinian superstar Lionel Messi was very satisfied with the support of the club's many Georgian fans. He expressed his gratitude to Tbilisi and told us:

"I'd like to thank our fans for such significant support. It was like I was playing at home. I am very pleased to have scored two goals and especially because our team won the match. We are very satisfied with the result and therefore start the new season with positive emotions. Each victory we gain is beautiful and marvellous."

The whole world was watching the match. More than two hundred journalists were there to report it and over 60 European TV channels and 40 TV stations from other countries provided live broadcasts. The leading sports TV channels from Spain, the UK, France, Germany, the US, Italy, Australia, Brazil, Turkey and Ukraine were amongst those who came to Tbilisi.

The fact that Georgia was hosting such an important match was widely discussed in the international press. Russian Information Agency (RIA) journalist Anatoly Romanov said that the match was a great

gift to Georgia, and Spanish journal AS also praised the match itself. "Barcelona and Sevilla mixed the ideal cocktail in the Georgian stadium. If there had been a scriptwriter for this match, the script would definitely win an Oscar," it said.

Russian newspaper Novaya Izvestiya praised the Georgian authorities on the way they hosted the match. "This is the first time Georgia has hosted a sport events of such international importance. All organisational aspects were monitored by the Prime Minister, Irakli Gharibashvili. Several hours before the match Gharibashvili met UEFA president Michel Platini who complimented him on the arrangements. He then gained Georgia's support, which will probably be of some importance to him, at the next UEFA presidential elections. Irakli Gharibashvili's son was one of those Georgian fans who came away with the autographs of all the Barcelona players," the newspaper said.

A photo of Lionel Messi holding the Super Cup was uploaded to social media sites by the player himself several minutes after the match ended. The photo will remain in the memory of all football fans for a long time.

Nini Taktakishvili



Leo Messi 🇪🇸 feeling amazing in Tbilisi, Georgia
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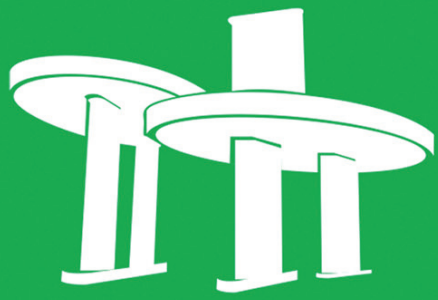
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ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK FOUNDING MEMBERS TO MEET IN TBILISI

Founding members of the China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will hold a two-day meeting in the Georgian capital Tbilisi next week to discuss establishment and operation of the bank.

Officials from 57 countries are also expected to elect AIIB's president during the gathering, called the 6th chief negotiators meeting, in Tbilisi on August 24-25.

Georgia signed AIIB's articles of agreement in Beijing in late June along with 49 other countries; Malaysia signed the agreement on August 21. The agreement is open for signing by six remaining founding members until the end of this year.

China is the largest shareholder in AIIB with up to 30%, followed by India and Russia; Georgia will hold 0.05%. The bank, which will be headquartered in Beijing, will initially have an authorized capital stock of USD 100 billion.

The Georgian Finance Ministry said on Saturday that the gathering in Tbilisi will also be an opportunity for holding bilateral meetings between Georgian leadership and China's deputy finance minister Shi Yaobin, who is now also a permanent chair of the chief negotiators' meeting. PM Irakli Garibashvili and other Georgian government officials will also hold bilateral meetings with Jin Liqun, who now leads AIIB's interim secretariat and who has been nominated by China as its candidate for the president of AIIB.

Civil.ge

GEORGIAN DEFENSE MINISTER URGES NATO ENLARGEMENT

If NATO fails to deliver tangible results on Georgia's membership path at its summit in Warsaw next year, "it will be a very clear message that all those promises" made by the Alliance "are staying just on the paper," Georgia's Defense Minister said in Washington on August 19.

Such an outcome, she said, will also fuel already growing skepticism among Georgians, which in turn will affect parliamentary elections in autumn, 2016.

Khidasheli, who is paying her first visit to Washington in the capacity of the Defense Minister, met U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter at the Pentagon on August 18.

Speaking at the U.S. Institute of Peace, a Washington-based think-tank, the Georgian Defense Minister said that she came to the U.S. with two main issues on the agenda – to "strengthen partnership" with the U.S. and to have "more tangible results out of this partnership", and at the same time to "search for answers, advice and support" on Georgia's NATO path.

"The Warsaw summit is coming and Georgia has made it clear to all the nations and all the partners that we will be raising issue of membership and enlargement stronger than ever," she told an audience the U.S. Institute of Peace.

"We believe that Georgia deserves it first of all, but at the same time we believe that NATO needs it even more than Georgia does for its own credibility and for keeping the promises that this organization has been making already for years. We hear arguments that further enlargement of NATO in Russia's neighborhood might be a triggering factor for Russia to act; we tell to our friends that it is a perception, maybe a valid one, but it's not a fact. The fact is different and the facts say that when NATO refused to enlarge in 2008 this is exactly when the war happened [in Georgia]. This refusal, no courage from the side of NATO to accept the challenge was understood by Russia as a green light to act in Georgia. Then in 2009 the world said 'OK, let's forget what happened'... and we had a 'reset' policy... Russia was considered as a partner again, but then Ukraine happened... After the war in Ukraine it has become absolutely clear that there is no partnership to be expected from Russia," Khidasheli said.

At the summit in Bucharest in 2008 NATO leaders decided that Georgia will become a member of the alliance, but Membership Action Plan (MAP) should be the next stage on country's path towards eventual membership. Georgia has been denied MAP since then.

"This intermediary step [referring to MAP] should be missing after the Warsaw summit," Khidasheli said.

She said that in practical terms MAP cannot give Georgia anything new in respect of instruments for cooperation with NATO as the country actually has all the mechanisms that come with MAP for years already.

All that Georgia is now asking for, she said, is to formally give the country "something we already have and to make a political statement that Georgia has passed one step and now it's on the membership track."

"If we are told no on that, I think, it will be a very clear message that all those promises made [by NATO] are staying just on the paper," Khidasheli added.

She also said that the EU Eastern Partnership summit in Riga this May has failed to deliver tangible results and it also prompted Russia to act in Georgia, which was manifested in further borderisation process along the breakaway South Ossetia's administrative boundary line.

"The Georgian government will be patient; we will not allow the war to happen again... we won't be provoked," the Defense Minister said.

She also stressed that recent demarcation activity by the Russian troops in breakaway South Ossetia involves an area, which is just about 500 meters from Georgia's main east-west highway. Khidasheli said that an "obvious question" here is whether Russia's target is to block that highway and to cut the country into two or the target is to make Tbilisi preoccupied by thinking constantly about this threat and distracting the country from its development goals, also including Euro-Atlantic integration. No matter what the target might be, she said, how things will develop – "either backwards or forward" – will largely depend on the decisions of the NATO Warsaw summit in early July, 2016.

Khidasheli also pointed out that the Warsaw summit will be held just few months before the parliamentary elections in Georgia, planned for autumn, 2016. She said the failure of the Warsaw summit to deliver on enlargement perspective will fuel skepticism of voters in Georgia.

"The Warsaw summit [results] will [play] a big part in decision the Georgian voters will be making in October, 2016 [parliamentary elections]," said Khidasheli, who is from the Republican Party, a member of the ruling Georgian Dream coalition.

"Skepticism is growing... people start to get disillusioned over Georgia's prospect for integration to NATO and the EU. Our colleagues and leaders, especially in Europe, very often remind to the rest of the world that there will be no enlargement either of NATO or the EU for next five or ten years," she said.

Khidasheli said that she expects pro-Russian parties to gain seats, although not in "substantial numbers", in the Parliament in next year's elections. She named among those parties Nino Burjanadze's Democratic Movement-United Georgia.

She argued that by saying no to enlargement at the Warsaw summit, NATO will send a signal that it does "not care" about countries beyond its borders in Russia's neighborhood. Pro-enlargement decision, she said, will send a message to Russia that for NATO its "partners matter the same way as its members."

"If there is anything that the history proved to us is that NATO brings power of peace," Khidasheli said, adding that "the only reason" why the Baltic States are "safe for now" is that they are NATO members, but she also said that if there is no decision at the Warsaw summit in favor of enlargement, it would encourage Russia to act not only against Ukraine and Georgia, but also against those former Soviet states, which are now NATO members.

"I do not see any[thing]... that will deter Russia from doing it if things continue as they are right now," she said.

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