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“JIHAD” video case solved – but who is Samar Chokutaev?

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has announced that following intensive investigative and technical operations the so called “JIHAD” video case, in which a videotape was released which threatened acts of terrorism against Georgians, has been solved.



What does the six billion dollar co-investment fund offer investors and the Georgian economy?



“The new Co-investment Fund will play a special role in the development of the Georgian economy,” its Executive Director Giorgi Bachiashvili stated at the Sheraton Metechi Palace hotel last week. Established on the initiative of Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili, more than six billion dollars has been invested in the fund – two and a half times more than Georgia’s national budget.

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“JIHAD” video case solved – but who is Samar Chokutaev?

By LELA TSINTSADZE, GT

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has announced that following intensive investigative and technical operations the so called “JIHAD” video case, in which a videotape was released which threatened acts of terrorism against Georgians, has been solved.

The MIA has decided to make public several details of the investigation, as there has been great public interest in this case. However, due to the character

President of Georgia”, Nino Giorgobiani, head of the MIA’s social department, told journalists.

The MIA stated that the footage included in the video was obtained from the internet and then edited to make the tape. The author of the video thus had no need to retrieve files from the video archives of Georgian TV companies. In order to conceal the traces of crime the accused used USB internet-modems from Georgian GSM operators (Magticom, Geocell and Mobitel), despite being in occupied

that a high level qualification was not necessary to upload this video. “You can buy a server like this. It costs 10 USD and is sold in any country. You can buy such servers and connect, and it will appear that you are in a particular country when you are not. To do this only a small qualification is necessary. But if he had bought it beforehand, he would be a specialist of a higher level,” Liubatits stated. But despite this, the head of parliament’s Defense and Security Committee, Irakli Sesiashvili, reckons that this investigation was difficult and in-

have become subject psychological terrorism,” said Sesiashvili.

Nino Giorgobiani stated that the investigation was completed a month ago but details have not been released until now to avoid compromising the evidence gained. But Andro Barnovi, head of the President’s Administration, disputes this. “If they really investigated this case a month ago, what were they waiting for? The version given by the MIA is not true. How can we believe they closed the case a month ago and then forgot about it? The truth is that there is internal



heard one Minister say that they were concerned that this case was not being investigated, then we heard that this case had been investigated a month ago. At least that is the impression which was given to the public then, that a person had been arrested and sentenced to jail. It turns out that he has not been arrested, he is not a citizen of Georgia and Georgia did not commit the crime,” said Ugulava.

However Archil Kbilashvili, the Chief Prosecutor, considers that the information about the case was disseminated within a reasonable time. “If a case contains some element dangerous to the political structure the distribution of information about it

may be delayed for some time, before the facts are finalised and some counter-options have been identified. So I think this information was spread within a reasonable time period,” said the Chief Prosecutor.

Samar Chokutaev has been sentenced to pre-trial detention in absentia by the Tbilisi City Court.

Further investigation is being conducted both in Georgia and abroad and the public will be informed of its outcomes gradually. The Ministry of Internal Affairs said that it would like to express its gratitude to the special services of partner countries for their assistance in investigating this case.



of this investigation, the information released will be limited.

The MIA states that a citizen of Kyrgyzstan, Samar Chokutaev, born March 6, 1989 was the perpetrator of the crime. Chokutaev is employed by a mobile communications company in Sukhumi.

Chokutaev is now being prosecuted under article 330 of the Criminal Code of Georgia. His specific charge is “Publicly disseminating information encouraging the commitment of a terrorist act and creating a threat of the commission of such a crime”.

“After collecting conclusive evidence it was established that the accused person, Samar Chokutaev, is a highly qualified IT specialist and committed this crime on one of the occupied territories of Georgia. On June 4, 2013, Samar Chokutaev published the video –”TALIBAN JIHAD AGAINST GEORGIAN TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN” under the username of Hammad Zaman, which contained threats against Georgian troops deployed in Afghanistan and the

Abkhazia at the time. On part of Abkhazian territory Georgian GSM operators’ signals are still available. The communication towers used by the accused are within territory controlled by the central government of Georgia.

“During the investigation it was ascertained that Samar Chokutaev accessed the Georgian internet network from Abkhazia by using an encrypted line from a remote server, previously set up in Malaysia. Thus he managed to publish the threatening video through the routers of two private Georgian companies, in order to mislead the investigation and create the impression that this crime had been committed in places located near those companies. We would also like to remind you that at a preliminary phase of this investigation Georgian law enforcers located these IP addresses, owned by the mentioned companies,” the MIA stated.

Georgian IT specialists have evaluated the capabilities of Samar Chokutaev. Web developer of “Transparency International Georgia” Giorgi Liubatits stated

international experts have been involved.

“The USA, Israel and other countries helped us investigate this case. We have prevented such attacks occurring again. If we had not investigated it, we would

competition in the government, and we are losing out because of it,” said Barnov.

Gigi Ugulava, the Mayor of Tbilisi, also expressed doubts about the disseminated information about the investigation. “We

NEWS

John McCain – Wherever you look there is Russian pressure

John McCain – Wherever you look there is Russian pressure. Wherever you look, there is Russian pressure, American senator John McCain said in interview with the Voice of America.

He said that it’s alarming that Russian troops continue concentration of military force and deliver so called citizenships for Abkhazian and “South Ossetian” population.

“Russia exerts pressure on all former republics of the Soviet Union, be it the Baltic republics - by increasing prices on energy or Moldova, where they have just imposed embargo on wine. They relocate administrative border in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, there is big pressure on Ukraine too. Wherever you look there is Russian pressure”, John McCain said.

The senator assesses that EU membership will benefit these countries more than joining a customs union.

John McCain – Transfer of power doesn’t imply former President’s detention

John McCain – Transfer of power doesn’t imply former President’s detention. The transfer of power doesn’t imply former president’s arrest, the American senator John McCain said in interview with the Voice of America. He said that there is concern that after President Saakashvili resigns arrests will follow, including his.

The republican senator assessed that the situation is still fragile in the country. “We have to do everything to help Georgia, but not to dictate. Road to democracy and freedom is very difficult”, the senator stated.

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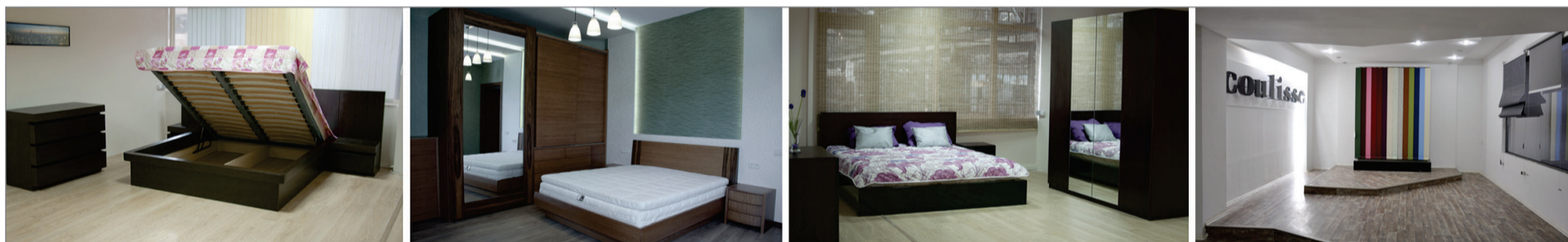


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What does the six billion dollar co-investment fund offer investors and the Georgian economy?

By EKA GAZDELIANI, GT

“The new Co-investment Fund will play a special role in the development of the Georgian economy,” its Executive Director Giorgi Bachiashvili stated at the Sheraton Metechi Palace hotel last week. Established on the initiative of Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili, more than six billion dollars has been invested in the fund – two and a half times more than Georgia’s national budget.

The investors include the Abu Dhabi Group and Ras Al Khaimah Investment Authority from the UAE, Milestone International Holdings from the People’s Republic of China, Batumi Industrial Holding, the daughter company of KazTransoil, Chalik Holding from Turkey, the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan, Mr. Alexander Moshkevich, the Estate of Badri Patarkatsishvili and Mr. Bidzina Ivanishvili himself, who has contributed approximately one billion.

Giorgi Bachiashvili explained that the mentioned investors are limited partners, meaning that they do not actively participate in the fund’s management. Its goal is to implement various development projects, worth about 10 billion USD, with co-investors.

Bidzina Ivanishvili promised the establishment of such a fund in December last year, seeing it as a means of improving Georgia’s economy and business environment. The PM has now fulfilled his promise, and his initiative has generally been received positively, but some scepticism has also been expressed.

Paata Sheshelidze is one of the sceptics. He says there are many unanswered questions about the Co-investment Fund. Sheshelidze maintains that Ivanishvili should only invest his own finances in projects after he resigns as PM, and his participation in such mechanisms whilst Prime Minister is not legal. Furthermore, the fund’s four partner companies are state controlled entities.

“These companies are controlled by the governments of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, China and the United Arab Emirates. These countries are not distinguished by the respect for democracy and transparency, and consequently we should not expect to be able to better the offers made by their financial institutions. But although they have the resources, heaven knows how effectively they



will be used and how commercially oriented they are. Moreover, these companies have already been active here for a long time. So why are they interested in participating in this fund? Were they forced to become partners?” asks Paata Sheshelidze.

Another question is what financial conditions the fund will operate under. For example, will it receive tax allowances? “They say it will be a LTD type fund, but I wonder whether all the laws on LTDs will apply to it, particularly those concerning tax. Will any special allowances be given to the fund or its investors? I do not object to such allowances but they should be the same for all. If this organisation is privileged the PM will have created beneficial conditions for his fund and will receive tax allowances he has given himself after his resignation,” says Sheshelidze, who also suggests that presenting the fund in this way might have simply been an election stunt.

Bidzina Ivanishvili insists that although the fund is private it will be transparent and increase the amount of capital available to the country. The Executive Director of the fund asserts that its primary tasks are to ensure the implementation of important and commercially profitable projects, ensure high rates of return, attract big international companies onto the Georgian market, provide Georgia with long-term capital, successfully complete projects after 7-9 years (imply-

ing alienation of part of these projects by one of the partners) and make initial public offers on the local and international stock markets.

The fund has defined its basic areas of interest: energy, industry, agriculture, logistics, tourism and real estate. Giorgi Bachiashvili explained why these sectors have been selected as priorities: “First of all the sector should be attractive for investors. It should be of strategic importance for the country and be growing globally. It should also allow us to be competitive – Georgia should have advantages in this sector compared with other countries in the region. Finally, there should be a great demand on capital in that sector. Our strategy does not involve controlling full segments of markets,” he said.

“At present we are discussing six projects. They include a hydroenergy project, a new coal mine, a milk enterprise in west Georgia and several hotels, two in Tbilisi and the rest in the regions,” said Giorgi Bachiashvili, adding that the fund will not participate in speculative ventures such as trading in raw materials, currency or real estate, though it is ready to discuss potential projects. The minimal cost of an investment project entered into will be 5 Million USD and the fund will contribute 25-75% of this cost.

Time will show if the fund achieves its goals, but economists agree that if it does it will greatly influence the economy and become a reliable and strong partner for investors.



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The Government of Georgia, according to the new Constitution

Guided by the resolutions of the State Commission created to discuss “the revision of the Constitution with reference to the branches of government, with the aim of creating an effective, balanced system”, the authors of the 2009-2010 reforms sought to create a rational and intelligible system of state bodies which would ensure that the state functioned, recognising that the state authorities always aspire to expand their powers and strengthen their presence everywhere and that this leads to arbitrary rule.

According to the new Constitution, which will enter into force from the moment the new President elected later this month takes the oath of office, the functions, structure, rules of operation and specific rights and powers of the various branches of government have been reconfigured. Unlike the situation under the “old” edition of the current Constitution, in which the Government of Georgia implemented the external and internal policy of the Executive power, the Government of Georgia will now conduct the external and internal policy of the country. Furthermore, according to the old wording the Prime Minister was Chairman of the Government, but according to the new the leader of the Government. These seemingly minor lexical differences carry a lot of meaning. In particular, they abolish the so-called bicefal system of government, in which the Government has two managers, the President and the Chairman.

The President will no longer “convene and lead the government” and nor will a decision adopted at a meeting be issued as an act of the President. (old version of the Constitution of Georgia, article 78, paragraph 4). According to the new wording, the organisation of the work of the Government, including the convening of Government meetings, is the prerogative of the Prime Minister. The President may request to participate in a government meeting, and to raise an issue in such a meeting, but any decisions taken are issued as an act of Government.

In the context of systematic relations the extent of the responsibility of the government is a very serious issue. According to the new edition of the Constitution, the government is not “owned by two masters,” the President and Prime Minister. It is an independent branch of government (even if with so-called “secondary le-

gitimation”) and accountable only to Parliament.

The formation of the government

In the old edition of the Constitution the President possessed effective discretionary powers during the formation and absence of a government, but in the new version the formation of the government, though formally in the hands of Parliament, really depends on the voters. The new law is so different from the old that it is advisable to dissect it for readers. On the basis of Article 80 of the new edition of the Constitution, we can delineate how the Government of Georgia should be formed following the presidential elections of October 2013.

1. From the moment the newly elected President takes the oath of office the powers of the government are considered to be null and void.

2. The newly elected President will appoint the same government (that of Bidzina Ivanishvili) to temporarily perform the duties of the government until the new one is formed.

3. The political bloc achieving the best result in the last parliamentary election (October 1, 2012), that is the Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia coalition, will submit to the President a candidate for Prime Minister, who will presumably be the leader of this bloc.

4. The President is obliged to accept the nominated candidate.

5. The person thus elected prospective Prime Minister will choose their prospective ministers.

6. The Prime Minister will submit to Parliament the composition of the prospective Government and its programme.

7. The confidence of Parliament is considered to be received if the prospective Prime Minister is supported by more than half of the total number of MPs in parliament (i.e. 76), not merely those present and voting.

8. After the candidate receives the confidence of Parliament the President appoints them Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister then appoints the other members of the Government.

The maximum length of time this procedure can take, if the prospective Prime Minister and ministers receive confidence, is 25 days.

If the political configuration makes the procedure a little more complicated, the following will happen, according to Article 80 of the



Constitution.

9. If the prospective Government presented does not receive the confidence of Parliament, within 30 days Parliament will vote once more on the same or different composition of the Government.

10. If the majority of MPs express their confidence in the prospective Government this time, the President will appoint the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister will appoint the ministers in whom Parliament has expressed confidence.

So ends the procedure of forming a government from the majority or largest bloc in parliament. If this cannot be achieved, the parliamentary minority will try to form a government. In this case, the following procedure is followed.

11. If the political bloc with the greatest presence in Parliament cannot or does not present to the President a candidate for the post of Prime Minister, or Parliament fails to grant the prospective Government its confidence for a second time, a bloc of no less than 2/5 (i.e. a minority) of the MPs is expected to present to the President a new candidate for the post of Prime Minister.

12. The President will accept the candidate thus presented to him.

13. The new prospective Prime Minister will select the prospective ministers and determine the programme of the prospective Government and appear before Parliament to request a vote of confidence.

14. If the majority of all MPs, as before, declare their confidence in the prospective Government presented, the prospective Prime Minister is appointed by the President and the Prime Minister then appoints the other Government members.

If Parliament still does not bestow its confidence on the Government presented to it, meaning that in Parliament there is no majority which could form a government, the President will dissolve Parliament and call pre-term parliamentary elections.

Under these circumstances, the formation of the government will take a maximum of 75-76 days.

The Prime Minister

Reducing the powers of the President has left some people feeling that a President with excessive authority will be replaced by a Super-Premier. Despite the fact that in countries such as Germany, which is often called a Chancellor Republic and where head of government Chancellor Angela Merkel is likely to win a third term of office, the holder of the really serious powers of the Chancellor does not abuse them, we in the Supreme Constitutional Commission tried to vest supreme executive authority not in the Prime Minister but in the Government.

We draw readers' attention to the following elements of the new edition of the Constitution. Parliament declares its confidence not in the Prime Minister, but both the Government as a whole and its programme (Constitution of Georgia, Article 80) and withdraws its confidence not from the Prime Minister but from the Government (Article 81 - new edition). The President's actions require the countersignature of the Prime Minister (which the President can only avoid when he demands to present issues at a Government meeting), and must also act with the government's consent and on the government's advice, etc. (Article 73 - new edition).

It should also be noted that the Government of Georgia, like any other collective body, is significantly impacted by the person of its leader, and the role the leader actually plays is not defined merely by constitutional provisions but many other factors (political configuration, personal characteristics, personal political resources, the occurrence of crisis situations, etc.) However, in more or less democratic countries (and Georgia is such) the basis for everything is the constitution.

If we add to the above constitutional amendments the prime responsibility of the Government to submit impor-

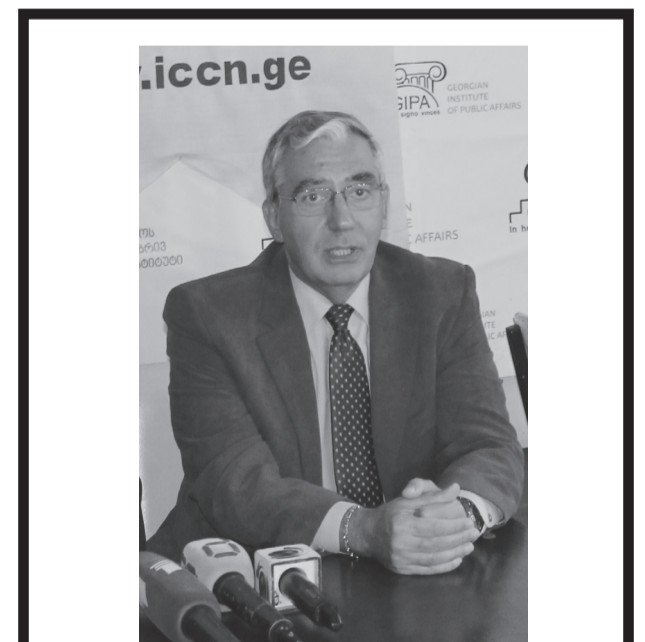
tant changes in its composition to Parliament for a vote of confidence, we can conclude that the new edition of the Constitution does not provide the basis for the establishment of an authoritarian Prime Ministership.

Chairman of the Regional Centre for the Research and Promotion of Constitutionalism

Avtandil Demetrashvili

Executive Director of the Regional Centre for the Research and Promotion of Constitutionalism

Vakhtang Zhvania



IN PRIAT MEMORIAM PROFESSOR GEORGE KHUTSISHVILI

The International Centre for Conflict Negotiation expresses its deep sorrow over the unexpected death of its founder and unchallenged director, Professor George Khutsishvili, and expresses its condolences to his beloved wife Nino Tsikhistavi-Khutsishvili and daughter Viktoriya-Sophia Khutsishvili and all his friends and relatives. We cherish all our happy memories of this outstanding professional and noble person.

PM's Instructions for Journalists

By LISA TONAKANYAN, GT

The Georgian Prime Minister reads lectures to journalists, teaches them how to conduct their TV shows and tells them not to upset "hardworking" ministers. He then tells the media to praise his team rather than make "incorrect remarks", and at the same time assures us that the press is no longer under pressure.

After a year at the helm of the government Georgian tycoon Bidzina Ivanishvili feels he is equipped to edify journalists. At a meeting held on October 2, 2013 the PM chose to attack media professionals, accusing them of "dilettantism" and "lack of knowledge".

"Very often the statements made by journalists leave the impression that they are amateurs and do not know the issue they are talking about," he said, citing certain TV anchors, among them Alexander Elisashvili, the Kavkasia TV presenter, as being guilty of this. According to the Prime Minister, Elisashvili once said that the

ing President Mikheil Saakashvili awkward questions, saying that "this is not correct journalism". "Should a journalist agree his questions with the government prior to asking them?" Inga Grigolia, a popular TV journalist, asked. Ivanishvili responded by saying that she hadn't got his point, as all he meant was that they should ask reasonable questions based on arguments.

The PM also complained about the "irresponsibility" of the Georgian press and stated that it's not only officers of state who should feel a sense of accountability but journalists as well. In his opinion, an increase in responsibility would "hopefully" increase journalists' professionalism.

Ivanishvili said that media professionals were demanding from the new government things which can't be done in the short period of one year and never talk about the achievements of his team.

"I have come here to tell you how effective our government was last year... we scarcely made any mistakes. As for the promises we made, we have kept them to overflowing. Even



"correct" evaluations when something good is done, though this "of course" doesn't mean that journalists can't criticise the government.

The media representatives, in their turn, then attacked the PM. They asked him why neither he nor his ministers had visited the conflict region to see the ongoing "demarcation" process along the breakaway South Ossetian administrative boundary line. Ivanishvili admitted that this was a justified criticism, but said that a visit by

him would change nothing and he had "too much other work to do".

The Prime Minister's comments to the press didn't meet with the approval of the NGO representatives, experts and journalists present. Merab Metreveli, the Media Palitra presenter, said that he had gained an impression that the PM wanted to stir up the public against them. "Everyone has the right to criticise journalists, but it is not appropriate for the Prime Minister to do so," he

emphasized whilst talking to colleagues.

Transparency International – Georgia and the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy released a joint statement after the meeting saying that "the PM's tone, and his instructions on how reporters should formulate questions, can be considered undue interference in the work of the media."

Analyst Ramaz Sakvarelidze assured The Georgian Times that Bidzina Ivanishvili

as an individual was entitled to rebuke journalists for their "bad work" and this would be normal, "but from the head of the Cabinet it sounded weird". Fellow analyst Soso Tsiskarishvili said that the PM should not be telling off people who express their opinions, especially during an election period. He also called into question the idea of holding a four hour meeting with journalists aired on only a few TV channels, saying that this is not the best example of democratic government.



Georgian economy is stagnating but did not have a deep understanding of the subject. Ivanishvili also said that he had felt insulted by Elisashvili's remark that his impending withdrawal from politics might be tantamount to "fleeing".

"When have you seen the fleeing of the winner? The loser flees the field, as a rule. We won," he stated.

Elisashvili explained to the PM that this comment was only a question and not an assertion, adding: "You can't teach me how to ask questions." However, after scolding the journalists Ivanishvili started lecturing them, explaining to them what journalism is, how it should respond to the public's needs and interests and that reporters should not be mere "postmen" delivering "unchecked information" to the public.

"You are not postmen. You are journalists, and you must check the information you receive, assessing its truthfulness. Even if you find it correct you must not present it word for word, because doing this means you are a postman," he told heads of newsrooms and political talk show hosts.

The Prime Minister then criticised journalists for not ask-

I didn't expect us to be so effective and achieve so much in such a short time span", Ivanishvili declared.

Amongst the achievements of his team he listed press freedom and easy access to information. "Today nobody can say that the authorities put the media under pressure", the Prime Minister asserted, taking umbrage at journalists and experts for not appreciating him and the Cabinet or praising them for their hard work.

Ivanishvili stated that another revolution would have taken place if the public had trusted the wrong assessments made by the media, NGOs and experts. He also accused journalists of portraying everything happening in the country in a negative light.

"Poor Sozar Subari [Minister of Corrections and Legal Assistance] spends nights working; he needs support and needs to be thanked. You should know that it will upset them [ministers] if we fail to express our gratitude for their good work... they take unjustified criticism to heart, and many of them may not be able to withstand such pressure and thus they will refuse to continue working," Ivanishvili warned, calling on journalists to make

NEWS

GREENBERG, QUINLAN, ROSNER RESEARCH: 43% OF THE POLLED SUPPORTING TO GIORGI MARGVELASHVILI

Based on the research conducted by American company „Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner Research“, Giorgi Margvelashvili is the leader among the candidates of presidency.

On the question „if there is presidential elections today which candidate would you vote“, 43% says Giorgi Margvelashvili; 22% - Davit Bakradze.; 5% - Shalva Natelashvili; 8% - Nino Burjanadze, 1-1% - Giorgi Targamadze and Koba Davitashvili.

17% of the polled did not take decision.

The American company „Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner Research“, conducted the survey by order of the President Administration.

The survey was conducted throughout the whole country during 15-21 September.

GEOSTAT REPORTS 1.3% ANNUAL DEFLATION IN SEPTEMBER

Annual inflation remained below zero at -1.3% in September after 0.4% deflation in August, according to the state statistics office, Geostat.

Prices dipped 0.1% on a monthly basis in September, Geostat said on October 3.

Annual inflation was in negative territory for most of the last twenty months (there were only couple of exemptions when annual inflation went slightly above zero – in July, 2012 and June, 2013).

Prices for healthcare services and in transport group declined 5.9% and 4.9%, respectively, y/y in September. Prices on food and non-alcoholic beverages were down by 1.6% y/y.

Prices on alcoholic drinks and cigarettes increased 6.6% y/y in September.

In late September monetary policy committee of the National Bank of Georgia kept its key rate unchanged at 3.75%.

TEA TSULUKIANI SEES HERSELF IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Tea Tsulukiani sees herself in the new government The Minister of Justice Tea Tsulukiani sees her place in the new government. As she said on Rustavi 2 yesterday, she is not going to resign if the New Prime Minister doesn't want this.

"I don't intend to go anywhere, especially after Russia restored building barbed wire fences where they should not be. I'm an ordinary citizen, but I'm member of the government and when the country faces such a challenge, I won't go anywhere! I have not had hidden statement and I'm not going to write it!" Tsulukiani said.

She explains that there has not been written or oral desire from her to resign for the past 11 months.

PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA CONDEMNS RUSSIAN ACTIVITIES ALONG OCCUPATION LINE

President of Estonia condemns Russian activities along occupation line The President of Estonia assesses Russian activities along the occupation line as a blatant violation of international law. The President of Estonia Toomas Ilves stated at the opening of wine festival with Georgian Foreign Minister Maia Panjikidze and Moldova's Prime Minister Iurie Leanca.

"It is a blatant violation of international law", Ilves said. Georgian MFA informs that Maia Panjikidze attended opening of the wine international festival in the frameworks of her official visit in the Republic of Moldova.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs held meetings today with the Prime Minister of Moldova Iurie Leanca and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova Natalia Gherman.

One in, One out - the fickle fate of People's Television

By EMMA BAIRAMOVA, GT

The hustle and bustle surrounding Georgian Public Television, the old First Channel, will seemingly have no end. The Georgian public long ago lost count of the number of times it has advertised for a new Director General. The last was appointed after the parliamentary elections in 2012, and now there will be yet another.

The fate of this station, which as a public television station must belong to the people, is still unclear. It is financed from the state budget and every citizen pays for it, whether they like it or not, but the idea of a 'People's Television' remains just an idea for many.

So we ask: what is going on?

The public pays for Georgian Public Television, so it belongs to the public. Guided by this principle, everyone: the government, the opposition, the public etc., has always had a place on this channel and considered it their outlet. Special Forces have never broken into its studios but on many occasions opposition parties have disrupted it. A "corridor of

Now it offers two channels – the First (Pirveli arkhi) and Second (Meore arkhi) channels. However at the very beginning of the transformation of the old station in to the Public Television, Georgian and foreign media experts unanimously declared that: **"It is hard for the Georgian political culture to accustom itself to the existence of independent Public Television. It seems Georgian society still does not know what Public Television is and why it is necessary"**.

In 2005 The Parliament of Georgia elected a board of trustees for Georgian Public Broadcasting, which the station is part of, which consists of nine members. The board determines programming priorities by taking into consideration the results of public opinion polls and the main directions and priorities of the state policy on broadcasting. It must ensure its activities are transparent and must meet civil society organisations periodically and take into account their opinions. It also elects the Director General, as it has an obligation to maintain the organisation's independence and prevent any political party using it for propaganda purposes, despite the fact it is funded by the state.

On March 2013 the board announced that it had lost confidence in the latest Director

allegedly responsible. Chair of the board Emzar Gogvadze says that it will continue to work as usual, however the recent resignations will seriously hinder its work.

The board asked Baratashvili to present this document because after the Parliamentary elections the finance police entered the First Channel. They are still checking its financial documents. Minister of Finance Nodar Khaduri says that GPB has accrued a tax debt of 3.8 million lari, and this gives the competent bodies to right to investigate its affairs. He added that the previous government was intending to write off these debts but did not have enough time to do so. Media expert Zviad Koridze says that GPB has already spent its budget for 2013 and now has a serious financial problem. Emzar Gogvadze says merely that the budget for this year has already been set and they cannot alter it.

The troubles of the Public Broadcaster began when former President Eduard Shevardnadze made this statement at a cabinet meeting on November 19, 2003: "Imedi makes more for us, as does Mze and other channels, but I will never give thanks to the First Channel. You are the governmental, state channel, so you should act in the state's interests. I do not

belongs to the government, but rather that it belongs to the people. His decision was supported by Mikheil Saakashvili, and after the Rose Revolution he was reappointed to his post. However after the board of trustees was elected in 2005, for a period of six years, of the original trustees, Tamar Kintsurashvili from the Liberty Institute, became its Director General. Appointed for nine years, she resigned after three following widespread dissatisfaction within opposition circles, which saw the Liberty Institute as the main ideological driver of the new regime. Her "optimisation of the working staff", which involved firing professional journalists with great experience, hardly helped matters. Levan Kubaneishvili, a fellow supporter of the Rose Revolution government, succeeded her until 2009, but like Kintsurashvili ultimately resigned to avoid making a tense situation worse. Gia Chanturia then took over, until he himself was dismissed by the new government in 2012.

Significantly, the First Channel has become famous for changing its identifying logos as well as its Director Generals. Since the resignation of Zaza Shengelia they have changed practically every year, and become emblematic of the station's woes.



shame", a "city of tents" and other "performances" have been conducted by opposition parties and so-called "civil society" activists in front of its headquarters.

The first television station in Georgia began broadcasting in 1956. On 23 December, 2004, following the passage of the "law on broadcasting", this station was reorganised as "Georgian Public Television".

General, Giorgi Baratashvili, because it had asked him to submit a report outlining the programme schedules, the approximate budget for 2013-2014, a staff list and a list of staff salaries, but had not received it. But now the board itself is disintegrating. Over the past few days several trustees have left their posts. Some of them have cited external pressure, but have not named those

say in my interests. You cannot be on both sides, here and there". He added that during the most critical political period the First Channel had taken a neutral position rather than supporting the government.

The Director General of the First Channel at that time, Zaza Shengelia, resigned from his post in protest at this statement, saying that he did not agree that the First Channel

Tamar Kintsurashvili's logo was called the "Al-Jazeera" logo due to the weird way the letters were joined together. In fact this logo had won a tender. Kubaneishvili's modernised logo resembled the Soviet era one and identified GPB as "channel one" again, but this was part of a move away from the concept of Public TV in order to compete with commercial stations. The "falling head"

logo of Gia Chanturia's era was probably an attempt to "outdo" Kintsurashvili's "Al-Jazeera" for silliness. This coincided with the news programmes for ethnic minorities being broadcast at 7.00 in the morning, on the grounds that members of ethnic minorities never sleep and wanted pro-

grammes in their language at that time.

The last Director General of GPB lasted long enough to change the logo again, but it has come under attack from the Public Initiative Coalition, which says that it too closely resembles the Russian First Channel's logo.

Jihad Videotape Investigation: What's Up???

By DR. VAKHTANG MAISAIA, GT

On October 3, 2013, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia made a special statement concerning the so-called "Jihad Videotape by the Taliban". It announced that the investigation into this tape concluded a month ago and warrants have been issued against those identified as having committed this crime. For the first time in Georgia cyber-terrorism has become not something out of a story but a reality which will have an impact on their lives. At this crucial stage of the Presidential race the Georgian public are now waiting to be told the true motives and political backgrounds of those who conducted this action and who stood behind them.

In technical terms, terrorism is defined as follows: "the use or threatened use of violence on a systematic basis to achieve political objectives". So what kind actions constitute terrorism, and is so-called cyber-terrorism one of them?

According to the definition accepted in political science, terrorist attacks may take one or

- more of the following forms:
- Assassination
 - Arson
 - Bombing
 - Hostage-Taking
 - Kidnapping
 - Hijacking and/or Skyjacking
 - Seizure
 - Raids and/or Attacks on Facilities
 - Commercial and/or Industrial Sabotage
 - Hoaxes
 - Use of Special Weapons
 - Hi-Tech Terrorism
 - Ecological Terrorism

It is clear that cyber-terrorism constitutes two of these forms of terrorist attack – Hi-Tech Terrorism and Use of Special Weapons - and that these two forms of attack were committed against Georgia on June 4, 2013. The MIA has declared that a Kyrgyz citizen named Samar Chokutaev, a former high-tech computer specialist currently working for the Abkhazian mobile company Aquaphone, committed the attack. Between 6 February and 2 March of 2012 Chokutaev nurtured a group of Afghan students who undertook computer programming activities in Kyrgyzstan. The information we have indicates that there was a "three tiered" layer



of planning of this attack – it had a local level, as in Zugdidi, near the administrative border with Abkhazia, identified persons purchased mobile phone simcards and computer modems and transported them to the uncontrolled territories of Abkhazia, a regional level, as a citizen of a Central Asian country was selected to carry out the attack due to his experience of training Afghan students, and an international level, as the Jihad videotapes were uploaded to the two Georgian private internet service provider companies from Malaysia. This suggests many hands were involved, but at this stage only the executor of the attack has been identified, and he is currently taking the sole blame.

From the story given it is difficult to construct the full "mo-

saic" of who was involved in the cyber-terrorism attack on Georgia, as we cannot identify either the key master or their client. In fact it seems to me that this identification will never occur, due to a combination of interesting factors.

In order to plan and execute a terrorist attack four main elements need to be taken into consideration:

- Tactics** – how the attack will be implemented and coordinated
- Operational Planning** – what actions will be taken and how all resources, both financial and operational, will be mobilized to commit the attack
- Strategy** – how targets will be identified, how tasks will be distributed and how victims will be selected
- Politics** – what political

goals are being furthered and what is to be achieved in the political arena.

The investigation into this attack has only addressed the first element. It has identified the tactics used, and put a name to the person who executed the action, but he was only a medium-level link in the chain. We do not know who Chokutaev was communicating with and answering to. Unfortunately, due to scarcity of time the three other elements have not been addressed, so it is rather strange that the investigation should be declared complete.

Thanks to international involvement and the assistance provided by the special services of NATO member states, NATO itself (through the probable involvement of a new special service, the Emerging Security Challenges Division), Israel and the USA, the Georgian MIA has managed to reach the point of making an initial disclosure rather than complete the investigation, but has chosen to say that it is over. Probably, it is still ongoing, and the search for an "Islamic trace" in the planning of this attack is not going to be dropped. Suggestions in the evidence that an international terrorist grouping was involved in this matter as well as local and national personalities will still be

followed through.

With regard to the involvement of foreign intelligence services, it must be underlined that special services are capable of conducting a more sophisticated and well-motivated warfare strategy i.e. cyberwar, than other agencies. Both Georgia and Estonia have already experienced this. In 2007 the Russian Federation special services, probably a combination of the GRU and FSB, launched a massive cyber attack on Estonian government facilities and the NATO Anti-Cyber Cooperation Centre and in 2008, during the Georgia-Russia war, the same services managed to destroy Georgia's national electronic communications devices and computer network.

By and large, taking into account that MIA is to be disposed on high mood, it is necessary to mention that principle "Everything amid nothing" is not relevant case-study for current Georgian reality and many missions are to be achieved in the nearest future in order to avoid such fatal accidents.

Dr. Vakhtang Maisaia
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Director, the GT Azri Strategic Studies Centre

Georgia's Lopota Operation-Combat Terrorism or State-Sponsored Terrorism???

By DR. VAKHTANG MAISAIA, GT

The issue of what really happened in Lopota Gorge on August 28, 2012 has again been raised due to the new terrorist menace deriving from the Jihad videotape incident and the cyber-terrorist attack on Georgia it was part of.

"The story broke on 28 August 2012, when the Georgian media reported that five men from Lapankuri village close to the Russian border had been taken hostage by a group of unidentified militants. The hostages were released the same day, when the seventeen heavily-armed militants started ascending the steep Lopota Gorge towards the Daghestani section of the border and the snowcapped peaks of the greater Caucasus range." Thus states an article published on the "Open Democracy" website on July 1. But catching or killing terrorists, real or otherwise, can be used as a cover for what is really going on behind the scenes.

Soon after these events a statement was disseminated by the Islamic rebel force leadership in the North Caucasus. This accused the Georgian side of arranging a "trap for the mujahideen of the Caucasus Emirate" by "betraying and killing brave sons of the Caucasus", adding that "this is by no means the first time they have taken such a treacherous step in a bid to appease the Putinist regime in Russia" and threatening revenge attacks if this special operation was not stopped. This threat was renewed on June 5, 2013 by the Islamic Emirate leadership, a day before the Taliban clandestine combat group's attack on the Georgian military post in Helmand province in Afghani-

stan. This means that the Islamic Emirate leadership was aware of existence of the group of Chechen irregulars operating on Georgian territory which was later annihilated by the special destination units of the MIA, on the personal orders of Vano Merabishvili and Bachana Akhalaia. This operation took the lives of three Georgian citizens and eleven of the larger group of Chechen fighters. Ahmed Chataev, one of these, was imprisoned. He suffered a severe wound during the operation.

On July 30, 2013 Parliament held a special hearing under the auspices of the Office of the Georgian Public Defender (Ombudsman), currently Ucha Nanuashvili, who gave a Special Report on the status of Human Rights Protection in 2012, summarizing many pressing issues. Special attention was paid to the Lopota Operation, its ramifications, and what was described as the unnecessary loss of life. The report identified that the Chechen paramilitary group illegally deployed on Georgian territory, operating as a terrorist group, had actually been established, trained, equipped and armed by the then-leadership of the MIA and received its direct assistance throughout. Ex-officer of the Constitutional Security Department of the MIA Temur Kenkebashvili has confirmed that the militants were trained at Georgian bases in 2012. This amounts by all standards to state sponsored terrorism, and means the government knowingly provided material support to a group considered to be terrorist.

It is self-evident that this state-sponsored terrorism was supported by Mikheil Saakashvili, who presided over the authori-



tarian regime which ran Georgia at the time. His suspicious connections to some members of the business communities of certain Arab states, and his provision of material support to Islamic resistance movements at global level, including turning Georgia into a transit country, providing access to its banking system and acting as a weapons supplier, further demonstrates that his anti-Russian rhetoric, then and now, is lame at best and more a diversion than anything of substance.

From 2006 onwards Georgia's MIA, under first Vano Merabishvili and then Bachana Akhalaia, created guerilla groupings, the so-called "Georgian Tonton Macoute" paramilitary formations, to pursue not only external (asymmetric warfare with Russian forces) but also internal goals (such as oppressing political opponents at the regional levels, conducting a terror campaign against the Georgian population and committing political murders). This concrete policy-making process was put into effect by then Deputy Ministry of Internal Affairs Amiran Meskheli, the then Head of the Counter-Intelligence Department Police Major-General George Mazmishvili

and his Deputy Otar Ordzhonikidze.

Here is a chart outlining what goals the "State Sponsored Terrorism" was pursuing and what concrete steps were taken to

State-Sponsored Terrorism Indicator	Fulfillment in Georgia	Means of fulfillment
Financing and Support of Terrorism by various means	X	Providing forged IDs and passports and equipping the "Lopota Group" with armaments
Granting Political Asylum to Terrorists	X	Granting asylum to "Russian Papasidris" (Ali Dabuev) amongst others
Planning Terrorist Acts at national level	X	Elaboration by the then MIA leadership of its State Sponsored Terrorism Strategy between 2009 and 2012
Granting PR and Media support to Terrorism	—	
Granting Training and Logistical Support to terrorists	X	Training Islamic militants at the Shavnabada and Vaziani military bases near Tbilisi
Creating a Legal Vacuum in Terrorism Combating Sphere Involving Special Services in State Sponsored Terrorism missions domestically and abroad	X	Development of an Operational Planning Chart by the CID, ATD, CSD and MIA of Georgia in 2009-2012

achieve them.

An investigation of the Lopota operation is now underway and its results could be far reaching, with serious consequences not only for Georgia but the international community. The previous Georgian government, led by outgoing President Mikheil Saakashvili, was tied in with various levels of organized crime and international cartels involved drugs,

weapons and money laundering. Its claim that it was preparing itself to fight a nontraditional war with Russia and was combating terrorism is but a ploy designed to conceal the real intent of its

actions: to maintain a mafia state at any cost, and kill and terrorise the population as part of a large game of subterfuge and political control.

In summary, it is to be underscored that the new government of Georgia led by Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili has refused to continue implementing the State Sponsored Terrorism strategy and has rather enhanced the national

security system of Georgia by reforming the MIA structures, abolishing visa-free travel with Iran and beginning the investigation of the Lopota incident. Other concrete steps it has taken include expressing a readiness to cooperate with Russia in combating terrorism, as part of the 2014 Sochi Olympics security provision, maintaining the Georgian component of the anti-Terrorism mission in Afghanistan until 2014 and improving human rights conditions in Georgia.

"The Georgian public has unfortunately lost a valuable human asset in Dr. George Khutsishvili, who was indeed one of the most brilliant representatives of the knowledge society and has passed away so early and unexpectedly. His death has caused great pain to his friends' souls, and we express deep condolences to his family members - Mrs. Nino Tsikhistavi and his daughter Victoria Khutsishvili. We really miss him and will always miss him in our hearts".

On behalf of Dr. George Khutsishvili's friends,
Dr. Vakhtang Maisaia

US Government comes to Standstill: Beginning of Economic Implosion?

By STEVEN G. TRAYLOR, Contributing Journalist, GT

Tick-tock tick-tock, the clock has struck twelve on the 1st of October and the Congress of the United States has vacated the US Capitol.

And what else? Oh yes, 'they' shut down the US government!

This situation is but days old, but unfortunately has made the United States look bad in the eyes of the rest of the world, as the world's economic superpower has now 'stumbled' domestically thanks to the self-righteousness of two branches of its government, the Legislative and Executive, and their inability to compromise on the philosophical issues represented by "Obamacare".

Much bigger problems are now on the horizon, each much more important than a mere philosophical standoff. But it is now President Obama's duty to put out a sign that reads "closed for business" because the purse strings of the government are controlled by the Lower House of Congress, the House of Representatives, and legislative agreement between the President and the House was not reached by midnight on the 30th of September.

The standoff between conservative Republicans and the Democrat Obama is over his landmark legislation to provide federally-sponsored health care insurance, through a government programme common in Europe but new to Americans. During the Clinton Administration an attempt was made by then First Lady Hillary Clinton to sponsor a similar mandatory health insurance initiative. This legislation never gained the level of approval President Obama's was successful in obtaining some three years ago, when the Affordable Care Act - Obamacare for short - was approved by the Congress.

House of Representatives elections are held every two years, and in 2010 a new, more conservative group of members was elected, changing the balance of power. It is this intake of legislators which is making its voice heard today, based on the results of this week's vote in the House.

The world knows this standoff happen, but most people do not know why. In fact this scenario began developing almost in the week the newly elected 44th President of the United States, former Senator Barack Obama, was sworn in on the 20th of January 2009.

A Democrat, his Republican challenger Senator John McCain had for all intents and purposes lost the election on 15th of September 2008, the day Lehman Brothers, a century old investment banking firm, announced it was filing for bankruptcy protection.

Lehman Brothers was simply the first to step towards future corporate bankruptcies. They admitted they could not meet their obligations and asked the federal government for a 'bailout', but then- President George W. Bush's administration refused federal assistance. Between September 2008 and the date Obama took office over a million American jobs were lost and many other financial institutions followed the same path as Lehman Brothers. As corporations defaulted on their obligations homeowners defaulted on their mortgages and Americans starting lining up at the unemployment offices.

Whether he liked it or not, presidential candidate McCain was tied to Bush, and the Republican challenger was unable to distance himself from the economic policies of his president. Eventually newly sworn in President Obama inherited over 9% unemployment, nearly double the figure when Bush had taken office and it was still rising.

A tidal wave of government funding was soon put in place, a veritable tsunami of money. This was the President's way of dealing with the situation inherited from President Bush & Company. To do this, he borrowed more money from the Federal Reserve. The debate will never end as to whether this was the correct way to restart the economy.

Today's situation is a direct product of this 2009 policy. From Obama's perspective, Congress had no choice but to fund the economic measures he proposed in 2009 and 2010, as he was presiding over the worst economic situation since the 1929 Great Depression, in which unemployment hit 25%. Indeed, it is believed that "recession" would have become "depression" had not the moderate-to-liberal Obama acted to kick start some form of economic growth. But the right of the Republican Party has never forgiven him for getting the USA deeper into debt. The debate on this issue has yet to conclude, and was to come to a head on midnight, 30th September. Tick-tock, tick-tock.

Initially Congress went along with what the President saw fit to do, but always in the



back of Republican minds was the debt ceiling - another inheritance from George W. Bush, but now Obama's responsibility. When Bush was first elected President in 2000 the Congressional Budget Office estimated that the government would run an average annual surplus of more than \$800 billion a year from 2009 to 2012. But the economic policies of the Bush Administration, a combination of tax cuts, funding two wars and reducing the role of the government, pushed the Bush Administration into the red in the middle of 2008. Consequently a ceiling was placed on government debt. Conservatives believe that the signature legislation of the Obama administration, the Affordable Care Act, is more than the American government can afford, as nearly 57% of government spending is tied to predetermined programmes such as Social Security, Medicare and national defense. Therefore they are trying to pass legislation designed to eliminate, delay, or defund the programme.

The House Republicans placed a rider amendment on other legislation which said in essence that 'we want to stop Obamacare', sending it to the Senate for approval on the 30th of September. The Democratically controlled Senate rejected outright any legislative measure which referred to Obamacare, or would change this approved law, now some three years old. Tick-tock, Tick-tock.

The US government is funded from October to October each year. Congress must approve all the funding it requires to operate. If it doesn't? All engines stop and some 800,000 government employees and others do not receive pay cheques, and many are furloughed, i.e. told to go home until further notice.

The conservative House intake of 2010 has created a group of anti-Obama Republicans with a narrow desire to pursue an obstructionist agenda and collectively challenge the President whenever possible. These particular Republicans, and, yes, some Democrats, are referred to as 'Tea Baggers', a reference to the Boston Tea Party, in which a small group of early settlers in the New Colonies flung British tea imported from England into Boston harbor, protesting against what they saw as the unjust taxation policies of the British monarch they were then subject to. Today, the Tea Baggers want to hold their President hostage until they get their narrow-minded way on **any issues** they feel committed to.

If **Obamacare** didn't exist this group of ideologists would contrive **others to challenge** the President over. In the end, the American people will pay the price, not the politicians who have created this government stoppage. The US government only has enough money to pay its bills until around the 17th of October. Unless Congress agrees to raise the debt ceiling, and Obama signs this agreement into law, we will see an even bigger crisis emerging. If the government cannot legally borrow enough money from the Federal Reserve to conduct its day to day business, from securing national **defense** to keeping open America's national parks, the American government will go into default. Tick-tock - the clock *may* fall off the wall.

If this happens, it will be the first time in American history that the "faith and credit" of the US Government has ever been called into question, and that the US has failed to meet its fiscal obligations. There will probably be another economic

implosion, but worse than that of September 2008. It will be more like the great crash of 1929. Tick-tock, Tick-tock, the clock is on the floor.

The American government needs to get its house in order, as the world is observing the political infighting and thinking - what on earth are they doing over there? The consequences of the shutdown, and the global reaction to it, will not just be domestic. International money markets exist and survive on the will of the American economy, and a default will have ramifications for the entire world, including the EU, which has the 2nd biggest economy in the world, and China and Japan, which have the world's second and third largest national economies.

Effects on the lives of Georgians

At the present time, the US domestic political 'goings on' have no direct effect on the day to day lives of people in other parts of the world. However, this will change if it appears that the American government will not be able to obtain the funds it needs to operate any time soon. The US stock market will respond negatively to what is happening, as will Asian and European markets. This will in turn complicate the international money markets, and businesses which rely on borrowing money from banks will find the cost of doing so much higher, if they can borrow at all.

Businesses will need to adjust to the effects of another world economic crisis, much larger than the one triggered when Lehman Brothers announced "we're broke!" They will react in various different ways, but the most obvious will be in their hiring and firing practices, which will be repli-

cated across the globe and shatter any confidence Georgian citizens had that they might get a job or retain one. It will also hinder the creation of new businesses, such as cafes, as neither the prospective entrepreneur nor their potential customers would have the funds or faith to make them work.

The government will also have to prepare, as the downturn will affect their ability to provide government services, and **to begin** new infrastructure projects and maintain existing ones. If any Georgian citizen has ever used the phrase "the crisis" to describe the economic situation between 2008 and 2011 they will be saying it in capital letters if the US government becomes a defaulter nation between now and the end of this month.

1st Sign Post Up Ahead

The US Embassy website says the following about the funding of the US representation in Georgia. "Departmental entities will continue to operate until their respective balances are insufficient to continue. While many appropriated funds expire after one year, the Department has some accounts that are 2-year funds or no-year funds. The Department will continue as many normal operations as possible; operating status and available funding will need to be monitored continuously and closely, and planning for a lapse in appropriations must be continued". When asked by The Georgian Times how this affected funding for short term and non-essential personnel, the Embassy responded, "During this time of a partial government shutdown, the State Department must severely constrain spending. We are taking steps to do that by limiting some activities".

On 3 October, the US Treasury Department release a report that suggests a default might lead to "a financial crisis and recession that could echo the events of 2008 or worse. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew noted that simply "postponing a debt ceiling increase to the very last minute is exactly what our economy does not need - a self inflicted wound harming families and businesses".

Think Russian ruble default in 1998, and the side effects that had for Georgia. Ten years later, in 2008, *THE Crisis* came - and to some extent, is still being felt today. What is going on in America could have an effect on you within the next six months if the US becomes a defaulter nation for the first time in its history.

Tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock.

Tamar Rukhadze: Today the media deals with vulnerable topics more carefully, and with greater responsibility

By EMMA BAIRAMOVA, GT

As we know, journalists must be more responsible than ordinary citizens because they have the ability to influence people's opinions. However, very often some journalists forget their responsibility, use incorrect terminology and distort facts. How can we prevent this? In this interview with The Georgian Times Tamar Rukhadze, Executive Director of the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, talks about the main problems in the Georgian mass media today.

Are journalistic ethics respected in the Georgian mass media at present? How satisfactory is the conduct of Georgian journalists? How often do they breach ethical principles?

We should begin by noting that the journalistic ethics situation in Georgia is better than it was a few years ago, both in general terms and in regard to specific topics, which the media now cover more carefully. Take for example children's issues: nowadays we never see those ethical breaches concerning reporting on children and teenagers we used to see before, as the media no longer identifies those teenagers who could somehow be connected with a criminal or a crime. But now we have quite different problems, such as cases in which a journalist tries to make their story more emotive by using children. As a rule such reports are filed with good intentions, to call people's attention to a problem and persuade them to help poor families, and they often succeed in doing so but at the same time very often infringe children's rights.

Most of the ethical infringements we see occur in reports on people's private lives, criminal cases and social issues. In the printed press we also encounter hate speech, but the TV stations and news programmes are more careful about this. We rarely see hate speech in news programmes.

How often do we see journalistic "incompetence" in print or on TV, cases in which journalists do not use correct legal terminology or misrepresent facts?

Incompetence and lack of professionalism have generated a lack of public trust in the mass media. Misrepresenting facts and using legal or other terminology incorrectly are two

different things, but using incorrect terminology also distorts facts. This happened on May 17, when the demonstration against homophobia was reported by the media to be a gay parade or a parade by LGBT or gay supporters. Due to the mass media the public were given false information about what was happening. This is an example of where using the wrong terminology fundamentally changed and distorted the facts.

The first and eleventh of the eleven resolutions of the Charter of Journalistic Ethics concern the distortion of facts and the accuracy of information. The first states that a journalist must respect the truth and the right of society to receive truthful information and the eleventh that a journalist must consider the distortion of facts to be the most serious professional offence.

How does the Charter respond to violations of ethical principles by any media source?

The Charter of Journalistic Ethics reacts in several ways to the violation of professional and ethical standards. Our main reason for being here is to receive complaints against journalists. Any citizen who considers that a journalist has violated any point of the charter can complain about that journalist to us. The Council of the Charter will examine this complaint, asking both sides to comment, and decide whether any of the principles of the charter have been violated. Different rules and procedures apply to signatory and non-signatory journalists, as not all journalists have signed up to the charter, but citizens can send us complaints against either.

The Charter also can react to violations by making public statements when its council of nine members considers this necessary. These public statements more often than not have a preventative character, as they warn the media about the way it handles a certain topic. Sometimes such a statement can be a response to a certain issue relevant to the public which concerns the media.

The Charter also has continual contact with the media outlets, individual journalists and editors. In the event of any irregularity we contact them personally.

From May the Charter began to offer a special consultation service for journalists. If a journalist is preparing a report



or article on a sensitive topic and needs advice, or has any questions about how to write the report without making an ethical mistake, they can apply to us at any time and receive our opinion. Our experience of this until now is that, as a rule, journalists take into consideration our recommendations.

In your opinion what are the main problems in the Georgian media? How can these be resolved, at least partially?

Of course, the Charter's function is not only to make statements against journalists. Our goals also include raising the media's literary standards and increasing public trust in the media. The Charter tries to work in all directions which facilitate the enhancement of the media environment, be it media monitoring on different topics, contributing to new media laws, conducting seminars and trainings and so on. The Georgian media is quite young, especially the TV media, so we constantly need to acquire more knowledge and deepen our existing knowledge and experience. We still have the same problems we have always had: lack of professionalism, political influence and lack of financial independence. All these problems are closely related to each other, and making improvements in only one of these areas cannot be sufficient.

How important is the Charter's role in developing the Georgian media?

In my opinion the role of the Charter is very important, for the reasons mentioned above. Today the media deals with vulnerable topics more carefully, and with greater responsibility, and tries to respect the norms of ethics. Although this is due to a desire amongst journalists and editors to do so, this is also to

some extent to the merit of the Charter and those organisations which are constantly trying to help the media to improve.

In Georgia media outlets often become weapons of propaganda for different political forces, and in some cases newspapers and TV and radio stations stop functioning and their journalists lose their jobs. This gives the impression that journalism is an unstable profession in Georgia, and deprives new journalists of the opportunity to develop as professionals. How do we resolve this situation?

It is very difficult to give advice to journalist who find themselves in this situation. Many factors are at work here. It is very hard to find any sort of job in this country, and in the media as elsewhere journalists do not have the opportunity of doing the level of work their qualifications and skills fit them for. This problem can be partially resolved by giving the media financial independence, because state and political influence are stronger where the media is not independent financially and has to look for different ways to obtain money. Of course, the situation here does not create a stable environment for journalists, and this affects their professional development.

How do you select members of the Charter?

Every active journalist who seeks to respect professional and ethical standards and is ready to follow the principles of the Charter can become a member of it. To do this a journalist has to submit an application and at the same time find two existing members of the Charter who will recommend them.

How did you come into existence?

The Charter of Journalistic Ethics was created on 4 December 2009. 139 national level journalists confirmed with their signatures that they were ready to follow the eleven principles of the Charter. Journalists themselves chose to create such an organisation and made great efforts to do so, not only in Tbilisi but the regions, with the sup-

port of foreign colleagues and international organisations.

In Georgia and everywhere else the media needs regulation, and in order to prevent the government becoming the main regulating body the media must be able to self-regulate. This is why the Charter and other relevant organisations are necessary.

NEWS

Irakli Garibashvili: The USA helped us investigate the so-called Jihad case

As the Georgian Minister of Internal Affairs Irakli Garibashvili stated, the USA helped Georgia investigate the so-called Jihad case. He stated this in the program „Big Politics“ „of TV 3“. As he said this case was complicated as cyber crime is the 21st century's challenge being very hard to investigate. „Though I am proud of declaring that the workers of our ministry used their professionalism opening the hardest case. The American party helped us investigate this crime. I would like to restrain from noting details, as investigation is going on until we find our real reasons for making and uploading this video, or what the motivation was and who the supporters were. I think we have provided the society with enough information at present,“ - stated Garibashvili. In response of the question in which companies' internets reached Samir Chokutae, Garibashvili stated they were two foreign companies, acting in Georgia. Garibashvili responded to the statement of National Movement members reckoning the investigation untrustworthy. From my point of view their statements are not authoritative. Gigi Ugulava had the most reasonable position. Unfortunately, „Nationals“ try to make the part of society misunderstand, but their trial will not have a result. I would like to calm „National Movement“ down saying do not seem to be guilty,“ - stated Garibashvili. The minister does not exclude Samir Chokutae to act alone. „Everybody who knows how videos are made can say it was not hard to prepare the video. We said that it consists of materials from open sources. We suppose that he was the only creator,“ - said Garibashvili adding that investigation has no other suspects but examining several versions. On the questions whether he sees Russian Special Services trade, the Minister stated that the fact of Chokutae's being in Russia two times does not allow him to suppose it.



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ANNOUNCEMENT

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Economy of Argentina in cooperation with the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry on October 15, 2013 conducts a trade mission in Tbilisi on the following Topics: Food and Beverage, Pharmaceutical Products, Textile, Plastic Industry, GNC and etc.
Venue: Sheraton Metekhi Palace (20 Telavi Str, Tbilisi).
 Beginning at 9:00.
 For participation in the above mentioned venue please contact with the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry by phone or by
 E-Mail: nato.ch@gcci.ge; Tel.: +995 32 2 69 37 97
 Participation is Free of Charge

JSC «KAZNEX INVEST» Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Kazakhstan in cooperation with the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry on October 9, 2013 conducts a trade mission in Tbilisi.
Venue: Courtyard by Marriott (4 Freedom Square · Tbilisi, 0105 Georgia, Grand Ballroom).
 Beginning at 10:00.
 For participation in the above mentioned venue please contact with the Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry by phone or by
 E-Mail: nato.ch@gcci.ge; aisulu_22@mail.ru , Tel.: +995 32 2 69 37 97
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NEWS See daily news on www.geotimes.ge

PARLIAMENT PASSES BILL SETTING 3-YEAR TRIAL PERIOD FOR NEWLY RECRUITED JUDGES

Parliament passed with its final reading on October 4 amendment to the law on common courts envisaging setting three-year probationary period for newly recruited judges before their appointment for life.
 Appointment of judges before retirement is envisaged by new constitutional model, which will go into force after new president, elected in the October 27 election, takes office. Currently, sitting judges hold office for a ten-year term.
 The constitutional provision, approved in 2010, also provides for possibility of setting a trial period for judges of "not more than three years" before they take office for life. This new provision also gave flexibility to lawmakers by saying that such a probationary period "may" be set.
 Supreme Court Chairman, Kote Kublashvili, called on the lawmakers on October 3 not to hurry with approval of this amendment, setting the three-year probationary period, and to launch detailed discussions over this issue with all the stakeholders.
 Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary, uniting over thirty non-governmental and media organizations, has spoken out against the setting of a three-year probationary period and offered the Parliament to postpone

enforcement of the constitutional provision, which envisages appointment of judges for life. The coalition called on the authorities to focus on improving new judges' recruitment criteria and practice, as well as on improving mechanism for disciplinary sanctions against judges, rather than rushing to move on a new system of appointing judges before retirement.
 Back in 2010 when the previous Parliament was discussing new constitutional model, the Venice Commission, Council of Europe's advisory body for legal affairs, recommended in respect of this probationary period provision that it was "problematic", citing that it may undermine independence of judges as they may feel under pressure to decide cases in a particular way during the trial period.
 Shalva Shavgulidze, a lawmaker from the Georgian Dream parliamentary majority group, who sponsored the bill, said that the proposal includes a provision to elaborate detailed criteria and procedures based on which monitoring of judges should be carried out during the probationary period.
 Criteria and procedures of monitoring should be elaborated before May 1, 2014 with "broad" involvement of all the stakeholders, including through consultations with the Venice Commission, MP Shavgulidze said.
 Monitoring, according to the bill, has to be carried out by the High Council of Justice (HCoJ), a body in charge of overseeing judicial system.

Sitting judges, who are serving their ten-year term, will not automatically be re-appointed for life after the new constitutional model goes into force. MP Shavgulidze, however, said that sitting judges, willing to take the office for life, will be able to at first step down and reapply to undergo three-year probationary period, putting them in an equal condition with newly recruited judges.
 This bill, passed with its final reading on October 4, was among those about 160 legislative amendments, which the Parliament passed since September to put existing laws in line with the new constitutional model, which will go into effect after the presidential elections, and which will significantly increase authority of the PM at the expense of cutting presidential powers.
 In a separate development, related to the judiciary, on October 4 the Parliament failed again to fill two vacant seats in the High Council of Justice. Two out of six non-judge members of the 15-seat HCoJ, according to the law, should be confirmed by the Parliament with two-thirds majority. Proposed candidates fell far short of required 100 votes; low number of votes in favor for each of the three proposed candidate indicated that even many of the GD lawmakers did not vote for them.
 On October 4 the Parliament went on recess till October 30 – move related to upcoming presidential election, giving lawmakers more time to engage in campaigning for presidential candidates of their respective parties.

Georgian Contemporary Art Will Take Brussels by Storm

By TAKO AGARASHVILI, GT

Pablo Picasso thought that every child is an artist, but the hardest thing is remaining one. He certainly had a point. Too much thinking about how we behave, what people think and our daily routine intimidate the artist out of all of us. Being an artist is not a profession, nor a job, it's a freefall. An artist is a free spirit, who flies over the open field under the blue sky and sees it as cuboid or round; happy or sad; sunny or rainy... an artist is in total control of space, because the space he is freefalling into exists only in his mind.

An artist doesn't necessarily hold a brush or pencil while freefalling. An artist can express things in more ways than a single human mind can think of.

In fact the tough part in art is not just remaining an artist, but seeing and feeling an artist in a person. Paintings, sculptures and drawings don't make one an artist, but spirit, personality and dedication. That's what makes the tough and competitive gallery business so sensitive and delicate. Hanging paintings on the walls and even selling them doesn't make a display of pictures an exhibition. An exhibition requires a hunch, a knack, and a certain inner touch.

To be frank, I don't know if you are born with this knack or you develop it, but I know for sure that Karin Dhadamus was gifted with it. She is the proud owner of a fairly new gallery, Dhadamus Contemporary, which is based in both Brussels and Buenos Aires. Karin works with upcoming artists from Georgia and Argentina, whose work is deeply rooted in their political, economic, cultural and spiritual backgrounds. Her major aim is to give wide visibility to strong and ambitious contemporary artists with fresh new approaches and ideas.

Karin picked four Georgian artists: Levan Mindiashvili (New York), Uta Bekaia (New York), Tato Akhalkatsishvili (Tbilisi) and Irakli Bugiani (Dusseldorf) and took their work to Berliner Liste 2013 (the internationally known art fair). These artists have totally different personalities, their work is completely different from each other's, in fact they have

only one thing in common – quality, gifts, great talent and a true, raw, humble, kind kid inside them which has remained an artist for all these years.

The story of Dhadamus Contemporary began in 2011, when Karin, who had travelled from Brussels to Buenos Aires to extend her hotel business, visited the Laguanacazul Art Gallery and met Levan, who was living in Buenos Aires at the time. Levan happened to be working for the gallery. Karin

but will open in June/July next year. Levan and Uta and I decided to establish the gallery here in Brussels until then.

Congratulations on that! You hosted your first exhibition, Omar Yamil (ARG), in June. How did it go, both artistically and commercially?

It was a beautiful exhibition. We sold well, but the timing was wrong.

What do you mean by timing?

It was the end of the aca-



dem spotted a painting. He gave her a tour and told her all he knew about the painting she liked, but she was already in love with the piece. She waited patiently until the end of the tour then told Levan she wanted to buy it. When she returned to pay for it two days later the lady on duty told her the painting was Levan's, but he had been too shy to admit it to her.

From being a proud owner of Levan's painting Karin has become a proud promoter of Georgian, Belgian and Argentinian art. Here she tells us how, why and what her future plans are.

You were in the hotel business. What made you turn to art?

I have been running a small hotel in Brussels for 16 years now, but I always wanted to do something with art. Three years ago I managed to buy a huge building in Buenos Aires. One of the main reasons I loved the building and bought it is because it would allow me to establish an art gallery within the hotel and have them both in the same building. The hotel/gallery is still being renovated

dem year. The weather was very cold; it cut the number of people passing by. People were focused on leaving for the holidays. So art wise, that was bad timing.

How about Berliner Liste 2013? I know you have just got back. How did it go?

Yes, Levan, Uta, Tato and Irakli participated. It was our first international exhibition. It was two weeks ago. In terms of sales Berliner Liste is not the right place in general. My guess is that less than 5% of the works there were sold. Yet for us it was a major success: we did sell (a bit), but money was not the major goal of my first exhibition.

Berliner Liste is an important event. You picked these guys in particular. Did it feel risky?

I did not hesitate for a second, because the moment I saw their work I believed in them. Besides, I trust Levan's judgement. I feel honoured that these artists chose me. I also strongly believe there is a lot of talent in your country. I am proud to be able to promote it.

What makes you choose



tant. He or she has to be original, but without constantly re-inventing him or herself.

Tell me about the gallery business.

First, it's about finding the right artists and creating some continuity. A gallery has to stand for something. It needs a character, a personality. I believe this is the first ingredient, a weapon which helps you compete and survive in this tough business. In that sense I was lucky to meet Levan.

How did you link to the other Georgian artists you have shown?

Through Levan I met Uta. They came to visit me in May. We sat down for breakfast, started brainstorming and decided to go ahead. It just felt right. Then Levan introduced me to the art of Tato and Irakli. I met them personally in Berlin. I realised that their art work really reflects their personalities. We felt like a team from the start. Our bond was so strong that other artists and galleries were curious and admired the positive energy we have in the gallery.

What other countries' art are you interested in?

Belgian art, since I am Belgian. We have our own identity in art, fashion... I am interested Argentinian art as well because of my love for that country. Art is like an unwritten history book. It reveals the cultural, economic, political and personal heritage of the artist in a subtle, unconscious way.

I think you are writing quite a few pages in it!

I hope so.

You are preparing a bomb-showing Georgian artists in Brussels in December. And I know it's going to be big.

The Brussels event will indeed be big. It requires a lot of preparation. It will take place

in Tour & Taxis, an amazing huge building here in Brussels. I will also show some other artists from Georgia who are not part of my gallery. I hope they will decide to join it after the exhibition.

Can you name them?

Lado Beroza, Davit Kukhalashvili and – we are still negotiating with some others. I hope to have at least ten. I will be in Tbilisi on November 23 - 28 to meet more artists I can work with.

You met the Georgian Ambassador Natalie Sabanadze here in Brussels. Did you convince the Ambassador of the merits of your approach to art?

She is excited. The Embassy recommended to me two artists living in Antwerp. I hope to get them to join us too. She absolutely welcomed the idea of organising this event around Georgian art and promised to sponsor it. She knows Levan and Uta's art. In her opinion they are amongst the best Georgian artists. She also expressed clearly how much she loves Tato's work. She owns some of Levan's pieces. Levan has opened the door to Georgian art. I believe that being so fond of these artists has convinced her to sponsor the coming event.

I'm pretty sure this is not the only door he has opened so far.

Absolutely! Thanks to him and Uta I have my gallery and my great artists. Buying his painting and wanting to do something with his art brought me here. If someone had told me two years ago that I would be running a gallery with Georgian artists I would have called them crazy. One important thing to know about me is that I can move mountains if I have the passion, but don't ask me to do something I don't believe in. And I do believe in art.

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