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Georgia asks NATO for medical assistance



► As of April 8th, there are 208 confirmed cases of the Coronavirus in Georgia, recovered - 50, fatal outcome- 3. Photo: NATO INT

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Georgian government has appealed to NATO for help. The document sent to the Euro-Atlantic Coordination Center (EADRCC) for Disaster Response requires material equipment for 100 checkpoints of the Defense Forces.

The list of requirements in the letter is divided into 3 categories and is accompanied by the purpose and quantity of use- equipment and hygiene, equipment for blocking roads and fast-consuming items such as disposable bio combiners, respirators N95, protective masks, disinfection tents and waterproof materials for disinfection tents, etc.

To recap, the Czech Republic was the first country to receive 100 tons of medical equipment from China with the help of NATO. The transport plane AN-124 24-25, owned by the Ukrainian company Antonov Airlines, performed this flight on March 24-25. Since then, medical assistance has already been provided to Slovakia, China and Romania through various programs.

22 Georgian opposition political parties and one independent MP have called on the gov't of the United States, the UK, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, as well as the EU, the World Bank, the European Monetary Fund, the EBRD, the European Investment Bank, the Development Bank, JICA and the Asian Development Bank to assist georgian in handling the challenges of Coronavirus. They expressed full support to the Georgian government's efforts to gain international financial support to avoid grave economic crisis in the country amid

the global coronavirus pandemic.

In a statement released on April 3rd, the opposition parties noted that the steps aimed to counter the COVID-19 outbreak, have 'hit a serious blow to the economy' and it's clear that the damage will be great.

"The economic crisis will also threaten the fragile democracy of the country, which has to pass an important test in this year's parliamentary elections," reads the statement, adding that despite the crisis the opposition expects to fulfill its commitments, implement constitutional and electoral reform and release political prisoners.

The opposition announced that among political forces there is a full consensus that the Georgian economy needs a significant direct financial injection to keep the country's economic balance during the pandemic and save the economy after the end of the pandemic.

As stated in the letter, the Georgian government faces the urgent need to gain international financial support, and no matter 'how critical we may be of them, we fully support this effort.'

Signatory parties and civil movements say that it is in the common and vital interest to receive international assistance, which will enable the country's

government, both today and after the elections, to form a government based on the political will of the Georgian people, to overcome the severe economic and social crisis.

Among others, it has been signed by the United National Movement, European Georgia, New Georgia, Republican Party, Civil Movement, Free Georgia, Girchi, European Democrats, For Victorious Georgia, Democratic Movement – United Georgia, Lelo for Georgia, as well as independent lawmaker Nato Chkheidze.

It is noteworthy that the EU already allocated 140 mln EUROS for EaP states and redirected the use of 700 mln EUROS to ease the coronavirus impact on the economy.

The EBRD is pledging financing to help firms in Georgia deal with the impact of the coronavirus outbreak. The EBRD has made available an emergency Solidarity Package of €1 billion for its existing clients across 38 economies, including clients in Georgia.

As for local allocations, the ruling Georgian Dream party members in the Georgian government as well as in the Parliament (105 people in total) will transfer third of their monthly salaries to the StopCov fund for 3 months.

A total of 23 793 096 GEL has already been accumulated in the StopCov fund as of April 8. The funds raised in the Stop-CoV fund, that was created on March 23, will be used to meet 'identified needs.'

The Georgian government allocated 2 bln GEL to assist the economy in emergencies. Besides, 351 million GEL has been allocated as the crisis budget.



► PM Gakharia held a video conference with the European Commissioner for Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Oliver Warhel, the main topic discussed was dealing with the global pandemic.

First case of COVID-19 reported in occupied Abkhazia

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Georgia's Russian-occupied Abkhazia region registered its first case of the novel Coronavirus on April 7th.

The de facto authorities of the region say that the infected individual is a 57-year-old man from Gagra, Georgia's westernmost town, who has recently returned from Russia. After testing positive for the Coronavirus, the patient was delivered to Gudauta hospital, where he now undergoes treatment.

A 50-year-old ethnic Georgian resident of Abkhaz-controlled Gali district, who also travelled to Russia, is undergoing treatment on Tbilisi-controlled territory, after testing positive for the virus on March 30th, in Georgian-controlled Zugdidi's hospital. More than 40 people who had contact with the woman or have suspicious symptoms have also been transported onto Tbilisi-controlled territory and are in quarantine in the seaside town of Anaklia.

As the news about Gali resident's COVID-19 diagnosis emerged, Sokhumi then promptly restricted movement between Gali district and the rest of Abkhazia by setting up roadblocks on Gali-Ochamchire highway. Abkhaz authorities also imposed a nighttime curfew in Gali district in an effort to contain the spread of the virus.

In a bid to halt the Coronavirus spread, on March 27th acting Abkhaz leader Valery Bganba declared a state of emergency in the region effective until April 20.

Fearing the Coronavirus outbreak, Abkhaz authorities imposed temporary restrictions on the Enguri Bridge crossing point,



Foreign Minister Zalkaliani: "We are as open as possible to help our fellow citizens who are beyond the occupation line as much as possible, and we have international partners involved in this."

connecting the region with Georgia proper on February 27th, a day after Tbilisi recorded the first Coronavirus case.

Prior to that, on February 25th, Sokhumi extended a travel ban barring 'foreign nationals,' except Russian Federation citizens. The Abkhaz authorities restricted the travel for Russian citizens into the occupied region on March 28th, as the confirmed cases surpassed 1,000 in the Russian Federation.

Georgian Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality Ketevan Tsikhelashvili says that the two Russian-occupied regions of Georgia Abkhazia and Tskhinvali face the threat of an outbreak of COVID-19 as people have moved freely between the regions and Russia over the past several weeks.

"Since the onset of the outbreak, hundreds of people have entered Abkhazia from the Russian Federation, which has been affected by the disease," Tsikhel-

ashvili warned on April 1st. Tsikhelashvili reaffirmed that Georgia is ready to provide support for its citizens living in the occupied regions.

She expressed hope that the de facto authorities will be able to address the issue in line with recommendations and take steps to trace people who had contact with the infected man.

Tsikhelashvili stated on April 1, that the attitude of the de facto authorities of Tskhinvali is 'alarming and concerning,' as they are refusing any cooperation with the central government regarding the Coronavirus or any other issue.

She expressed hope that the de facto government of Tskhinvali will act 'more reasonably' as the case concerns the life and health of people. So far, no COVID-19 confirmed cases have been reported from there.

As of the evening of April 8th, there are 8,672 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Russia.



Contact tracing is now carried out to track the spread of the disease, noted Abkhazia's health officer.

Given the situation created by the Coronavirus pandemic, the Georgian government has repeatedly reaffirmed its readiness to provide full assistance to the people living on the other side of the occupation line. As the PM of Georgia noted, "It does not matter which side of the Enguri people are infected, we will help everyone, both in terms of medical services and all the means that the state of Georgia provides to its citizens today."

At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in constant coordination with the diplomatic missions accredited in Georgia and with international organizations, as well as with international non-governmental organizations, in order to jointly provide humanitarian assistance to the victims of the conflict.

According to the statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to work closely with partner countries and international organizations in order to maximize the provision of appro-

appropriate humanitarian assistance to people living in the occupied territories.

As stated by foreign minister, Zalkaliani, the possibility of effective action and assistance is limited by the fact that the occupation regime has closed and blocked the checkpoints, which makes the humanitarian situation very difficult. It's noteworthy that on March 28th, 2020, a new hospital was opened in the village of Rukhi located about a kilometre from Enguri Bridge, which connects Russia-occupied Abkhazia with the rest of Georgia.

The hospital has the capacity to accept 100 patients and is fully equipped with modern technologies. A dormitory has also been provided for the family members of patients undergoing treatment.

"Everybody, who will cross the occupation line in need of medical care, will receive the assistance... This is the main function and mission of this powerful medical centre," PM Gakharia said.



The Public Defender addresses domestic violence amid pandemic

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

The Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia considers prevention of domestic violence and violence against women as a priority and encourages the state to secure an effective and timely response to the cases during the state of emergency. The Ministry of Internal Affairs stated that despite the curfew, the number of reports of domestic violence hasn't risen with the rate of application

in crisis centers and shelters for victims of violence also remaining the same on average.

In response to domestic violence against women and LGBT persons as well as increased risks of applying, the Public Defender of Georgia finds it significant that the following steps are implemented:

- A special campaign should be launched against domestic violence to ensure that victims are provided with the information and have access to the protection and assistance services online, available in multiple languages.
- The methodology of monitoring and estimating the risks



The Public Defender demands the implementation of preventive measures in connection with domestic violence.

of domestic violence should be elaborated by the law enforcement authorities.

- In cooperation with shelters, municipalities should develop packages of financial support for the victims, who have left or will leave the shelter amid the altered economic reality.

Public Defender of Georgia proceeds to monitor the execution of decisions and policy documents adopted by the relevant authorities in relation to domestic violence and violence against women under the circumstances of the novel Coronavirus.

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 Day Sunny High: 11°C
 Night Cloudy Low: 1°C
FRIDAY APRIL 10
 Day Sunny High: 15°C
 Night Low: 5°C

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The administration of government hold videoconference about Coronavirus



► Interagency council meeting.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

On April 8th, an interagency council held a videoconference about the Coronavirus. According to Prime Minister Gakharia, the council decided that Vani would join the list of municipalities of Georgia, where proactive temperature screening of the residents is performed and special checkpoints are organized.

The council considered the recommendations of epidemiologists since one of the recent cases of the Coronavirus has been observed in the municipality of Vani. Even though relevant measures have been already

implemented, additional events will support the effectiveness of the steps taken.

The members of the council discussed the process of inspecting the restrictions determined by the state of emergency for the factories which continue manufacturing.

As the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Natia Turnava says, in the past two days, 76 factories were inspected countrywide with the accompanying labor inspection, discovering defects in 14 of them.

The factories were given a certain amount of time to eliminate the flaws.

A similar type of monitoring is carried out on agriculture markets and construction sites. The council members also discussed the subject of producing face masks, noting that Georgian-manufactured masks are already in stock and promised to expand the accessibility gradually.

In addition, the readiness of the primary healthcare system

is being monitored actively. The PM emphasized the necessity of the mentioned process and strengthening proper control groups supervised by Dimitri Khundadze, Chairperson of the Healthcare And Social Issues Committee.

The MPs paid attention to the process of bringing Georgian citizens back home. With the information of the Minister of For-

eign Affairs, Davit Zalkaniani, 5000 citizens have been brought back to Georgia. The price of the tickets is being controlled strictly which is determined to be up to 200 Euros.

The latest details confirm 208 cases of the Coronavirus, with 50 recoveries and 3 deaths. Recent data shows that 4682 people are quarantined and 375-hospitalized.



► Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze informs that up to 130 construction sites have been reviewed.

Coronavirus tests back in stock

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

At the briefing held at the government's administration, the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Ekaterine Tikaradze talked about the import of Coronavirus tests.

As Tikaradze says, the state has access to an additional 10 000 golden standard PCR tests and 18 000 more are still being imported. We also own 4 000 antibody tests and 2 000 of the exact type is on the way.

The minister also mentioned the rapid tests, explaining that those tests demand special supervision and should be used cautiously. According to her, there are 2 000 rapid tests available at the moment and 52 000 are on the way, but as soon as the National Center for Disease Control confirms the high standard of reliability, the Ministry will order 200 000 more.

Tikaradze paid attention to the number of patients hospitals will be able to receive at the same time. At the time of



► The Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Ekaterine Tikaradze

writing, 3500 beds are available in hospitals, meaning that the Georgian healthcare system will be able to receive hundreds of patients daily for a month.

The minister noted that hospitals are being reviewed daily to avoid mishaps during

the peak period. General practitioners are being trained actively, so that patients without the need of hospitalization will be placed in quarantine zones under their observation. The state is able to cope with 10 000 patients a month.



► Georgia will be able to cope with 10 000 patients.

Levan Cherkezishvili - Country of Liquid Sun

Prince Levan Cherkezishvili (Cherkezo) was born in the village of Tokhliauri, Sagarejo district. He received his secondary education at the First Gymnasium in Tbilisi where he studied together with Ivane Machabeli. After finishing the Gymnasium, he continued his studies in the St-Petersburg University's Department of Agronomy. At that time in St-Petersburg, Ivane Machabeli and Ilia Chavchavadze were working on a translation on Shakespeare's King Lear. It is said that once, when Levan Cherkezishvili called on Machabeli and did not find him at home, he left a note. Chavchavadze liked his handwriting so much that he decided to ask him to copy King Lear. It was in this way that Levan Cherkezishvili and Ilia Chavchavadze became friends. Their friendship deepened even more and grew into a business relationship when Chavchavadze invited Cherkezishvili to work at the Princes Bank which he even headed with Chavchavadze for some years.

When discord occurred between Chavchavadze and Machabeli over Bank business, Cherkezishvili supported Chavchavadze. The situation became very tense even to the point of Cherkezishvili's teeth being broken in an altercation with supporters of Machabeli.

Time passed and Cherkezishvili's son, Ivane, met Ivane Machabeli's daughter, the beautiful Elene and fell in love. Vano admitted to his father that he was going to marry Machabeli's daughter and hope appeared that the hostility between the "Iliaists" and "Machablists" would come to an end as a result of this event.

Levan Cherkezishvili never abandoned his basic profession and was eagerly engaged and involved with development of viticulture in Georgia. He had vineyards in Tokhliauri, Manavi, Badiauri and Kurdgelauri. When he was not at the Princes' Bank, he spent his spare time in his vineyards which he did until the loss of Georgia's independence and its emergence as a Soviet Republic. Cherkezishvili was married to Darya Vakhvakhishvili, the daughter of



Konstantine Dadashkeliani's granddaughter, Nino Abkhazi. Together, they had 12 children. Levan's mother was Barbare Makhashvili.

Levan Cherkezishvili's sons, Ivane and Mikheil, were students at Petrograd University. They were so actively involved in the student rebellion against the Emperor of Russia that, on their coming to Georgia, they often held meetings in their father's vineyards where, standing on the barrels full of wine, they called upon the peasants to take them away, saying "Take them! Everything is yours, the land is yours and the vineyards are yours!" Obviously, the peasants fulfilled the young princes' "order" with pleasure although some of them also looked indignantly upon the young men. There was a case when peasants they tied the rebel princes and took them to Levan to teach them a lesson.

An abstract from the chronicles of the Sagarejo People's Theatre gives evidence of the many-sided activities of Levan Cherkezishvili: "Aleksandre Tskhvedadze decided to give the first performance in one of the large classrooms of the newly-built school and he began with the preparations. Rehearsals were conducted every day. The core of the theatre's troupe consisted of students of Petersburg University, just returned from Siberian exile, Levan Cherkezishvili, from Tokhliauri, alongside Maro Cherkezishvili, Aleksandre's brother, Ioseb Tskhvedadze and local residents Niko Kurdovanidze, Ioseb Gulisashvili and others. The troupe selected Aleksandre Tskhvedadze's *Happy Marriage* and Giorgi Eristavi's *Stingy* for staging with Levan Cherkezishvili undertaking the role of stage director".

In 1921, when the Communists seized Levan Cherkezishvili's house in Tbilisi (it was located at 8, former Chernyshevsky Street) and all of his moveable and immovable property, his friends advised him to see Filipe Makharadze with the request of returning his house but he refused and said that he would never go and see the man who killed Ilia Chavchavadze.

Levan Cherkezishvili died in Tbilisi in 1929.

