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According to Gakharia, Georgia should ease the restrictions step-by-step.

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President Zourabichvili pardons Ugulava and Okruashvili



MEPs addressed the decision made by Zourabichvili and said that this is a huge step forward

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

President Salome Zourabichvili pardoned former Tbilisi Mayor Gigi Ugulava and former Defense Minister Irakli Okruashvili, she announced this decision at a special briefing.

"I would like to address the public, for whom my decision today will not be easy

to understand and may not even forgive me. Before I explain the reason for my difficult decision, I have to explain once again the essence of pardoning everyone: I did not pardon political prisoners, because I declare with full responsibility that there are no political prisoners in Georgia today," said Zourabichvili.

Georgian President Salome

Zourabichvili says she has made one of the most difficult decisions of her term, "I am responsible for finding a solution, easing the situation and maintaining stability, maintaining the country's international prestige - and that is why I have made this decision."

President's decision was followed by mixed reviews from both public and po-

litical figures. Irakli Kobakhidze, former chairman of the parliament and leader of the majority, says that "pardoning a criminal is the right of the president." He said they had no communication with the president on the pardon issue and learned of the decision from a briefing.

Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze said that this was an "unpopular decision, but as a politician, I understand why she had to make such a decision." According to him, the ruling party had no information about the release of Ugulava and Okruashvili.

MEPs have responded to the Georgian president's decision to pardon opposition party leaders Gigi Ugulava and Irakli Okruashvili via Twitter. "A step in the right direction. Congratulations to President Zourabichvili," wrote Andrius Kubilius, who a few days ago sharply criticized the ruling party of Georgia and linked the EU's assistance to Georgia to specific conditions, namely the ongoing reforms in the rule of law, judicial and electoral reforms.

European Parliament member Anna Fotiga wrote on her Twitter, "I welcome the pardon of political prisoners Gigi Ugulava and Irakli Okruashvili by the President of Georgia. The citizens of Georgia deserve only progress. I look forward to holding the 2020 elections freely and fairly."

European Parliament member Marina Kaljurand called the president's decision a step in good faith to ease tensions. "I welcome the pardon of Ugulava and Okruashvili as a step taken in good faith



Some leaders of the ruling party disagree with the decision.

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PM Gakharia says that Georgia should use this crisis to further develop its economy



The number of cases reported in Georgia has succeeded 695.

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

As the pandemic situation in the country is getting better, the leaders of the country are trying to ease the restrictions.

However, the Prime Minister of the country Giorgi Gakharia says that not extending the emergency situation does not mean that all restrictions will be lifted at once. According to him,

this is a very complex process that should be done step-by-step.

The prime minister stated that everyone must follow the recommendations provided by epidemiologists.

"I would like to urge every one of you to follow the rules recommended by the epidemiologists - face masks, social distancing, rules of hygiene, and so forth. All of this is essential in order for us to be effective within the global competition and for our economy to recover quickly," Gakharia stated.

The PM addressed teachers saying that "our body of teachers demonstrated very quickly how a global challenge can become the simplest, fastest, and most effective way to open whole new avenues of opportunity. We must continue this everywhere - in the fields of tourism and agriculture, in the economy, in every area of our economic, social, and political lives. Since we

say that the country must use this crisis as an opportunity, we must gradually make these opportunities work, in a manner that is as effective as possible."

The number of new coronavirus cases has decreased significantly. Over the weekend, only a few new cases were reported. According to the official

data, as of now, there are 695 reported cases of the virus in the country. Out of this, 12 have passed away, while 425 have recovered. Around the world, however, the number of the reported cases of the virus is still growing; there are more than 4,7 million reported cases.



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As the world celebrates IDAHOT, Georgian church marks Family Purity day



With the blessing of the Catholicos-Patriarch, members of the church were going around the city and blessing the population in Tbilisi.

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

On May 17th, the world celebrates International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. However, the Georgian Church has been celebrating May 17th as the Family Purity day since 2014.

Usually, the church calls on people to take the streets and march, however, because of the ongoing pandemic, the day was celebrated without public participation.

With the blessing of the Catholicos-Patriarch, members of the church were going around the city and blessing the population in Tbilisi.

On the other hand, Tbilisi Pride organised an international online demonstration against homophobia, transphobia and biphobia yesterday.

"Homophobia, Transphobia,

Biphobia is a huge problem for people living in Georgia. This is a problem for not only those who are being discriminated against, but also for those who believe that doing so is okay. This is a problem also for those who believe that they are not homophobes, but they do not want to see queer people in public, showing their own true selves," said representatives of the organisation.

Members of the LGBTQ community, activists, supporters, politicians, religious leaders, government and international

organizations talked about the challenges that the queer community faces.

European Georgia has issued a statement on the occasion of the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, stating that it is the duty of all decent people to stand up to violence and protect the rights of fellow citizens.

The party also points out that some citizens still live in hatred, violence and fear. "Unfortunately, so far, no government

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Tbilisi Pride organised an international online demonstration against homophobia, transphobia and biphobia yesterday.

Weather

Monday, May 18

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 25°C

Night Clear

Low: 15°C

Tuesday, May 19

Day Clear

High: 25°C

Night Clear

Low: 12°C

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COVID-19 economic impact could reach \$8.8 trillion globally, ADB reports



The global economy could suffer between \$5.8 trillion and \$8.8 trillion in losses—equivalent to 6.4% to 9.7% of global gross domestic product

The global economy could suffer between \$5.8 trillion and \$8.8 trillion in losses—equivalent to 6.4% to 9.7% of global gross domestic product (GDP)—as a result of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, says a new report released by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) today.

The report, Updated Assessment of the Potential Economic Impact of COVID-19, finds that economic losses in Asia and the Pacific could range from \$1.7 trillion under a short containment scenario of 3 months to \$2.5 trillion under a long containment scenario of 6 months, with the region accounting for about 30% of the overall decline in global output. The People's Republic of China (PRC) could suffer losses between \$1.1 trillion and \$1.6 trillion. The new analysis updates findings presented in the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2020 published on 3 April, which estimated COVID-19's global cost to range from \$2.0 trillion to \$4.1 trillion.

Governments around the world have been quick in responding to the impacts of the pandemic, implementing measures such as fiscal and monetary easing, increased health

spending, and direct support to cover losses in incomes and revenues. Sustained efforts from governments focused on these measures could soften COVID-19's economic impact by as much as 30% to 40%, according to the report. This could reduce global economic losses due to the pandemic to between \$4.1 trillion and \$5.4 trillion.

The analysis, which uses a Global Trade Analysis Project-computable general equilibrium model, covers 96 outbreak-affected economies with over 4 million COVID-19 cases. In addition to shocks to tourism, consumption, investment, and trade and production linkages covered in the ADO 2020 estimates, the new report includes transmission channels such as the increase in trade costs affecting mobility, tourism, and other industries; supply-side disruptions that adversely affect output and investment; and government policy responses that mitigate the effects of COVID-19's global economic impact.

"This new analysis presents a broad picture of the very significant potential economic impact of COVID-19," said ADB Chief Economist Yasuyuki Sawada. "It also highlights the

important role policy interventions can play to help mitigate damage to economies. These findings can provide governments with a relevant policy guide as they develop and implement measures to contain and suppress the pandemic and lessen its impacts on their economies and people."

ADB's COVID-19 Policy Database provides detailed information on the key economic measures that ADB members are taking to combat the pandemic.

Under the short and long containment scenarios, the report

notes that border closures, travel restrictions, and lockdowns that outbreak-affected economies implemented to arrest the spread of COVID-19 will likely cut global trade by \$1.7 trillion to \$2.6 trillion. Global employment decline will be between 158 million and 242 million jobs, with Asia and the Pacific comprising 70% of total employment losses. Labor income around the world will decline by \$1.2 trillion to \$1.8 trillion—30% of which will be felt by economies in the region, or between \$359 billion and \$550 billion.

Apart from increasing health spending and strengthening health systems, strong income and employment protection are essential to avoid a more difficult and prolonged economic recovery. Governments should manage supply chain disruptions; support and deepen e-commerce and logistics for the delivery of goods and services; and fund temporary social protection measures, unemployment subsi-

dies, and the distribution of essential commodities—particularly food—to prevent sharper falls in consumption, the report says.

Since the situation is rapidly evolving, ADB will update its impact assessment considering additional spillover channels as needed.

ADB is actively supporting its members as they address the effects of COVID-19 through its \$20 billion response package announced on 13 April. The bank has approved a series of measures to streamline its operations for quicker and more flexible delivery of assistance. Visit ADB's website to learn more about our ongoing response.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

(Source: ADB)



The novel coronavirus has spread worldwide very quickly

As the world celebrates IDAHOT, Georgian church marks Family Purity day

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has been able to take such steps to significantly improve the situation. Ivanishvili's team has been protecting violent groups and using them for their own political purposes," reads the statement.

European Georgia says restricting speculation and violent groups is important for the

country's security, as the vast majority of perpetrators are pro-Russian and are backed by Russia, both politically and financially.

"It is the duty of all democratic and dignified, political or public groups to unite to protect individual freedom within the country and the freedom of Georgia as a whole," the party said.

May 17th is an International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. On this day, the Georgian Patriarchate celebrates the Day of Protection of the Family Purity. Ilia II imposed this holiday after the members of the church violently dispersed civilians gathered to celebrate this day on May 17th, 2013.

President Zourabichvili pardons Ugulava and Okruashvili

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towards diffusing tensions. I call on all sides to work together on the implementation of the 8/03 agreement & look forward to further disc. once the state of emergency is lifted," writes MEP.

Sopho Kiladze, a member of the ruling party, compares the pardon of political leaders Gigi Ugulava and Irakli Okruashvili to the president's decision to pardon the prisoners convicted of serious crimes.

"We remember that a few months ago there were decisions of the president that

we did not agree with. These were, in fact, scandalous pardons. In this case, too, we are dealing with pardons that we do not agree with," stated Kiladze.

For the last few months, leaders of many countries have been addressing the developments in Georgia and were saying that the situation in the country is getting worse. They were especially emphasizing on the political prisoners. However, as the President of Georgia noted, the decision was not influenced by anyone as she believes that there are no political prisoners in the country.



After leaving the prison, Irakli Okruashvili said that he would continue fighting for Rustavi 2.

Emanuel Almendinger - Country of Liquid Sun



main fundaments; namely, church, school and community associations.

Shortly after being settled in Georgia, the best land proved to be at the disposal of the German colonists. They sowed the land, grew vegetables and bred cattle but they were most interested in grape growing and wine making. They achieved a certain success with their vineyards and wine which sold well on the Tbilisi market due to its inexpensive price and satisfactory quality.

Together with a diligent work ethic, the German colonists also followed an active social life. A number of social associations functioned in the German settlements at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centu-

ries such as trade unions, vine-growers' association and other associations which were created upon the basis of the members social-cultural interests such as bicycling clubs, stage companies and singing clubs, amongst others, as well as community-focused associations such as firemen's brigade and hunters' association with the tatter not only catering to the colonists' love of hunting but also having the function of protecting property and cattle from thieves.



The German community was one of the most interesting, cohesive and well-to-do parts of Georgian society of the nineteenth to twentieth centuries. It is a well known fact that many prominent German figures contributed to the development of Georgia and the promotion of the country's culture in Europe. On Ekaterine II's instruction, German scientists travelled throughout the Caucasus and were commissioned to study the region and submit a report on economic situation to government officials.

It was the practice of Russian higher-ups to spread the opinion far and wide that Caucasians, including Georgians, were completely incapable of reforming the agriculture industry and its branches because of their "laziness," "negligence" and "lack of talent." The Russian government officially announced that favourable conditions were to be created in the Caucasus for German colonists to live and take care of the region's agricultural development.

The settlements and farms which were created by the German colonists in Georgia are still considered as exemplary countrywide. The strength of the German community was based upon the three



Several foreign entrepreneurs worked in Georgia during the second half of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century with many having their own farms and enterprises. Prominent amongst them was the German colonist, Emanuel Almendinger.

In 1908, two cognac factories were opened in the German colony of Helenendorf located in the Borchalo province of the Tbilisi region. One of them belonged to Emanuel Almendinger and the other to the association of German colonists the Union, "Union.". The products which were manufactured by both of the German factories were inferior beyond compare in terms of their quality and or the scale of production as compared trade operations even with the to the larger products of the larger companies operating working at that time such as , for example, the Sarajshvili factory. However, the German manufactures are still worth mentioning, -with their production, certainly, deserving attention.

Almendinger's cognac factory had its own vineyards planted with Georgian grape varieties. Putting the factory into operation was conditioned by the abundant grape harvests in the 1900s and the decrease of wine prices. These facts allowed Almendinger to put launch his wine and cognac enterprises in the German colony of Ekaterinenfeld, located in the Boinisi region. At that time, a bucket of grapes cost only 60 copecks. High-quality wine materials were used for spirit distillation and, upon the basis of the produced spirit, in addition to cognac, they also made fortified wines. The fortified wines, which they called Madera, were made by the Germans according to special technology and sold at Tbilisi trade facilities. The colonists made the barrels, in which they aged the spirits for cognac, by their own efforts. In addition to Tbilisi and other Georgian cities, the production of Almendinger's factories was exported to various Caucasian cities and was successfully sold.

Georgian grape harvests decreased between 1909 and 1910 which sent wine prices up and reduced cognac production. In 1914, due to World War I, the sale of spirit drinks was prohibited with spirits only able to be used for medicinal purposes. Almendinger's factory found it difficult to remain in operation between 1914-1917 and was finally closed in 1916 with the arrival of the Bolsheviks.

In 1941 and following Stalin's order, a great tragedy befell the German settlements in Georgia when the colonists and their families were evicted and sent in exile to Siberia and Kazakhstan. Only a few-those who had non- German spouses-escaped persecution. The farms which had been established by the German colonists were ultimately destroyed but the traces of their culture can still be noticed in various regions of Georgia.

