

Newly appointed Ambassador of Azerbaijan presented a copy of his credentials to Davit Zalkaliani



► The Foreign Minister of Georgia met with ambassador Guliyev on September 23rd.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The newly appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Georgia Faig Guliyev presented a copy of his credentials to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Davit Zalkaliani.

According to the Ministry, after the signing ceremony, the Minister congratulated the Azerbaijani Ambassador

on the start of his diplomatic mission in Georgia, wished him success in his future endeavors, and expressed hope that the high-level strategic and friendly relations between the 2 countries would deepen during his stay in Georgia.

According to the press release, during the meeting, the sides also discussed current issues on the agenda of cooperation between the countries, prospects, and directions for future cooperation.

On August 17th, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev appointed a new ambassador after recalling Ambassador Dursun Hasanov from Georgia.

The recall of the ambassador from Georgia coincides with the period when the information was published in the Azerbaijani media about the supply of weapons from Serbia to Armenia via Georgia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia assessed this information as misinformation.

On September 21st, Ilham Aliyev expressed his gratitude to Georgia and noted that Georgia did not allow the transfer of weapons to Armenia through its territory.

In his remarks on the latter subject the head of the state made the claim about Georgia's denial of access for unspecified shipments of "weapons to Armenia through its territory."

In his comments, Aliyev called Georgia a 'reliable partner' and said the refusal of the Georgian government to allow transit shipments of arms to Armenia was the reason "transport planes deliver weapons to Armenia through the territories of the Caspian countries and by air" instead.

"As you know, Georgia did not allow the transportation of weapons to Armenia through its territory [...] Georgia acted like a very reliable partner. I would like to express my gratitude to the Georgian government for this. I can say that we see the Georgian government as a reliable partner and friend," Aliyev said in the interview.



► President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has claimed Georgia has prevented transit for arms shipments to Armenia and said he highly appreciates the actions of the Georgian government.

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EMC and GYLA Submit Alternative Report on implementation of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to the UN

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC) and Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) publish a collective alternative report, which they submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee on August 17th, on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The alternative report is prepared within the fifth review cycle of Georgia's implementation of the Civil and Political Rights Covenant.

According to the statements of EMC and GYLA, the report assesses key developments of the last 6 years regarding all civil and political rights enshrined in the covenant, as well as the implementation of the recommendations issued by the Committee within the fourth cycle.

"The Alternative Report, in relation to the relevant articles of the Covenant, reviews serious cases of individual rights violations during the reporting period, such as the illegal killing of Temirlan Machalikashvili, the abduction of Afgan Mukhtarli, violation of the right to remain in a state during the extradition process of the North Caucasians in Russian Federation, violations during the August 2008 War, problems related to the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed by the law-enforcers, etc," the statement reads.

The report also assesses the harsh occurrences of violating human rights in the occupied territories, the severe social condition of the IDP's, the existing challenges in terms of anti-discriminatory politics and gender equality, shortcomings in the independence of the judiciary and the investigative system, the need for fundamental reform of the Code of Administrative Offenses, flaws occurring in juvenile justice, and challenges regarding freedom of religion. As noted, an important part of the reform is devoted to over-viewing the repressive drug policy in the country.

In their alternative report, EMC and GYLA assess the harsh violation of freedom of expres-



► The alternative report was submitted to the UN on August 17th.



► The assessments and information given in the alternative report are based on the research, fieldwork, and strategic litigation cases of EMC and GYLA and their analysis".

sion and assembly, including the events of June 20-21, 2019 (known as Gavrilov's night), the events of May 12, 2018 (police raided Georgian nightclubs), the right of LGBT to assemble and numerous violations in this regard. The report critically assesses the violation of media freedom, including the events of the Adjara Public Broadcaster and cases of gross interference in journalistic activities and incidents of injuring journalists, while covering the events of June 20-21.

According to the statement, one part of the report is devoted to the challenges concerning labor rights, issues of labor safety, barriers to housing rights, and protection from eviction,

As well as barriers to reform of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities in Georgia.

A large part of the report focusses on challenges regarding the participation of ethnic minorities in the political and social lives and challenges of integration policies in Georgia.

The statement reads that the information and the assessments given in the alternative report are based on the survey, fieldwork, and strategic litigation cases of EMC and GYLA and their analysis. In some cases, the report is based on the information provided by the state, as well as on the assessments of Public Defender and other local or international human rights organizations.

General Prosecutor's Office of Georgia signs a memorandum regarding crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

With the support of the Council of Europe, the General Prosecutor's Office of Georgia has signed a memorandum on the production of statistics on crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance and discrimination and the publication of a joint report. The document was signed by the Prosecutor General of Georgia, Irakli Shotadze, the Chairperson of the Supreme Court, Nino Kadagidze, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Vakhtang Gomelauri, and the Executive Director of the National Statistics Office, Gogita Todradze.

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► The memorandum was signed by the Prosecutor General of Georgia, Irakli Shotadze, the Chairman of the Supreme Court, Nino Kadagidze, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Vakhtang Gomelauri, and the Executive Director of the National Statistics Office, Gogita Todradze.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 24

Day Cloudy
High: 28°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 17°C

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 25

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 27°C

Night partly cloudy
Low: 15°C

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EBRD has allocated €217 million to the Georgian Oil and Gas Corporation



European Bank
Reconstruction and Development

საქართველოს ნავთობისა და გაზის კორპორაცია
GEORGIAN OIL & GAS CORPORATION

€ 217 მლნ სესხსომ ხელშეკრულება

► The loan proceeds will exclusively refinance an existing Eurobond, issued in 2016 on the London Stock Exchange.



► The Bank is mobilising participation from several URP providers.

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Georgian Oil and Gas Corporation (GOGC), a major Georgian electricity and natural gas supplier, will receive €217 million from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which was allocated for refinancing Eurobonds, the corporation said.

The loan agreement envisages full refinancing of \$250 million worth of Eurobonds listed on the London Stock Exchange by the GOGC. Existing Eurobonds were placed by the corporation in 2016 for 5 years and according to the schedule, it was to be fully repaid in April 2021.

Since the beginning of the year, the GOGC, in cooperation

with major investment banks, has been actively organizing and managing the 2016 Eurobond refinancing process. Relevant information prospectus for potential investors has been prepared. Due to the spread of COVID 19 and its negative impact on the financial markets, which made the transaction impossible on acceptable terms, the corporation, in agreement with investment banks, refused to redeem the 2016 Eurobonds on the London Stock Exchange in April 2020 by issuing new Eurobonds.

As a result of active work with the EBRD, the Oil and Gas Corporation signed a 10-year loan agreement in September this year, which will allow it

to repay the loan obligation on favorable terms under the 2016 Eurobonds.

According to Giorgi Bakhtadze, General Director of the GOGC, the loan agreement will ensure the long-term financial stability of the corporation and also significantly

reduce its financial costs.

“The terms of the loan received are much better than we would have had before the pandemic refinancing process. The interest rate is twice as low. Also, the loan term is 10 years, while Eurobonds would be 5

years. Thus, despite the global difficulties caused by COVID 19, the GOGC has successfully coped with the process of securing refinancing of Eurobonds, which will help us to implement the planned projects more effectively,” said Bakhtadze.

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General Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia signs a memorandum regarding crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance

The meeting held at the Prosecutor’s office of Georgia was also attended by the Head of the Georgian Office of the Council of Europe, Natalia Vutova. The information is published by the Prosecution Service of Georgia.

According to the official information, the sides talked about the importance of producing statistics and publishing a joint report in the fight against crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance. As Prosecutor General, Irakli Shotadze noted at the meeting, production of joint statistics has always been a challenge for each agency. He remarked that after signing the memorandum, a modern, comprehensive system of statistics on the crime committed on the grounds of intolerance will be created, which will comply with the international standards and will be ‘accurate, credible and public.’

According to Shotadze, fighting against crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance is a priority for the Prosecutor’s office of Georgia.

“Since 2016, we have been actively pursuing a policy based on international standards, which has manifested itself in the development of recommendations for prosecutors with expert assistance from the Council of Eu-



► “We are glad that we were able to support our partners in this process,” said Natalia Vutova, the Head of the Georgian Office of the Council of Europe.

rope, training and professional development of prosecutors and prosecutors’ investigators, production of statistical data and specialization of prosecutors,” said Shotadze.

As the Minister of Internal Affairs Vakhtang Gomelauri

said, in the recent years, this category of crimes(crime committed on the grounds of intolerance) has become a priority for the Ministry of Internal Affairs at the policy level, which, as he noted, is affirmed by numerous activities carried out by the ministry in this direction.

“Since 2018, the Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department of the Ministry has been carrying out daily monitoring of the mentioned crimes and is a guarantee that crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance will not stay unnoticed,” Gomelauri Said.

As the Executive Director of the National Statistics Office Gogita Todradze noted, based on the memorandum, Geostat(National Statistics Office of Georgia) will receive data of crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance, will prepare a joint report, and will assure the dissemination of the data on an annual basis.

“This cooperation and the agreement of our agencies emphasize the readiness of the Government of Georgia and Geostat to put greater efforts in achieving mutual goals, which implies increasing access to legal statistics and facilitating the development of a national statistics system,” Todradze said.

As the Prosecution Service of Georgia informs, after signing the memorandum of cooperation, the agencies will publish a statistical report for the period from October 1st to December 31st, 2020, and all interested individuals will be able to learn about the single, segregated data on crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance.