

Opinion & Analysis

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Politics

Abkhazia opens an embassy in Syria

The embassy of Abkhazia opened in the Syrian capital Damascus on October 6th.

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EU on selection process for supreme court judges in Georgia

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BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Cartu Foundation will hand over the territory of the hippodrome to Tbilisi, where the central park will be built. The information was first spread by Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze at a briefing. The next day the project was presented to the public.

According to Kaladze, a modern park will be built, which will be one of the largest and most important projects for the city. Park will be adapted for people of all generations: According to the Mayor, there will be a space in the park especially for children, young people, elderly people, everyone, where people can come, relax, unwind, play sports, etc.

A construction company has already been selected to carry out the works. The work will start directly in the next few days.

As the mayor informed, Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Cartu Foundation will gift the territory of the former hippodrome to the municipality completely free of charge, where the Tbilisi Central Park project will be implemented with the financial support of Cartu, which will cost several tens of millions. The 36-hectare area was bought by Cartu from private owners and given as a gift to the Tbilisi Municipality.

As city hall reports, the project that was presented to the public is the work

Tbilisi Central Park to be built on hippodrome territory with Cartu funding



"Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Cartu Foundation will gift the territory of the former hippodrome to the municipality completely free of charge," Kaladze announced.



City Hall presented the photos of what Tbilisi Central Park will look like.

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On the escalating pandemic, upcoming elections and the Karabakh conflict

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

Parliamentary elections are nearing as the pandemic, and economic issues escalate daily. Facts of violence have increased during the election campaign. Against this background, the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia has sharply deteriorated.

The Covid-19 epidemic has been on the rise since the beginning of September, with the daily number of new cases exceeding 300.

Previously, the authorities regarded this number as difficult to handle.

The epidemic was previously viewed as a 'favorable' factor for the government - the government boasted that it had managed to deal with the epidemic and demonstrated its effectiveness. Referring to the epidemic, the government started providing large-scale social assistance to the population in the run-up to the elections, which would otherwise have led to protests due to the attempt to bribe voters.

However, the increase in the scale of the epidemic already raises numerous doubts - has the government lost control of the epidemic? It is clear that in such conditions the epidemic will be more dissatisfying for the government and will reduce the authority of the government. The introduction of the type of restrictions that the government imposed in the spring could lead to a social explosion today.



The renewed war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Karabakh has been in the spotlight in recent days. The hostilities began on September 27th and have already exceeded the scale of the ongoing hostilities between these countries in April 2016. The parties blame each other for the resumption of hostilities. Some believe that Azerbaijan carries out a "policy of small victories," when as a result of hostilities, the enemy will at least seize some territory in Nagorno-Karabakh. It is also a psychological pressure on Armenia, a demonstration of its strength and a demonstration to the Azerbaijanis that billions

have not been spent on military armament in vain over the years.

The escalation of hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan poses 'usual' problems for Georgia, including possible arms transit to the warring parties, possible pressure and provocations from Russia, and maintaining peace among its ethnic Armenian and Azerbaijani citizens, among others. But this time a new topic has emerged, which could lead to a strain on Georgian-Azerbaijani relations during the ongoing hostilities in Karabakh. Georgian prosecutors, based on maps brought from Russia, have

launched an investigation into the possible crime committed by the 'previous government' while demarcating the border with Azerbaijan.

In particular, according to this version, Saakashvili ceded the territory of Georgia to the section of the Davit Gareji monastery complex. This topic was first made public by the head of the 'Main Channel' Nika Gvaramia. According to him, the Georgian Dream was going to start talking about this issue a few days before the elections, as if the named maps were accidentally found in the Ministry of Defense. One way or another, the prosecutor's office has started

to clarify the case. Authorities say the issue is too important for the country's interests and cannot be ignored, while the opposition says the issue is absurd and the government is trying to use it for elections, which could strain relations with Azerbaijan. Involvement of Davit Gareji in the pre-election period, according to the opposition, is a non-state action and a betrayal of the country's interests.

The 'main news' of the last days of the current election campaign is the escalation of violence first in Bolnisi, then in Gldani, and finally in Marneuli. As a result, opposition members and supporters, as well as journalists, were injured. The opposition sees in the chain of violence a deliberate attempt by the government to intimidate voters, members of the opposition and thus prevent defeat in the elections.

Against this background, Georgian political parties are joining the initiative of the Alliance for Democracies, an international foundation founded by former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, to "participate in elections in good faith." Election parties and candidates vow not to do anything that harms democracy. However, they have already made a similar reservation under the recently signed Code of Ethical Conduct.

(Translated from Georgian by Mariam Mchedlidze)

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of a Dutch company. According to Nikoloz Chkhetiani, Chairman of the Board of the Cartu

Foundation, the cost of its execution is expected to range between \$15-20 million - the sum that will be covered by the Cartu Foundation as well. It will take 2 years to implement the project.

"Cartu Foundation has spent more than \$ 3 billion on charitable projects over the past 25 years," said Chkhetiani. According to him, Cartu projects cover

almost all areas, but special attention is paid to environmental protection.

Asked why the presentation of the project coincided with the elections, as non-governmental organizations had earlier called on the Tbilisi City Hall to arrange a green space on the territory of the former hippodrome, Kaladze said that the area was

private and the City Hall could not do anything.

Mayor called the accusations absurd, noting that under the previous government, this particular hippodrome area was alienated to private individuals, the identity of which is easy to find. "Then, for 52 million, if I am not mistaken, Bidzina Ivanishvili redeemed it, because

this area was supposedly aimed at implementing the building and development project," he announced.

He also responded to the opposition, who assessed the gifting the hippodrome territory to the city as voter bribery.

"There is no bribery of any voter, there is no illegal action," Kaladze said.

Weather

Wednesday, October 7

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 18°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 10°C

Thursday, October 8

Day Clear

High: 20°C

Night Clear

Low: 10°C

published by

The Messenger

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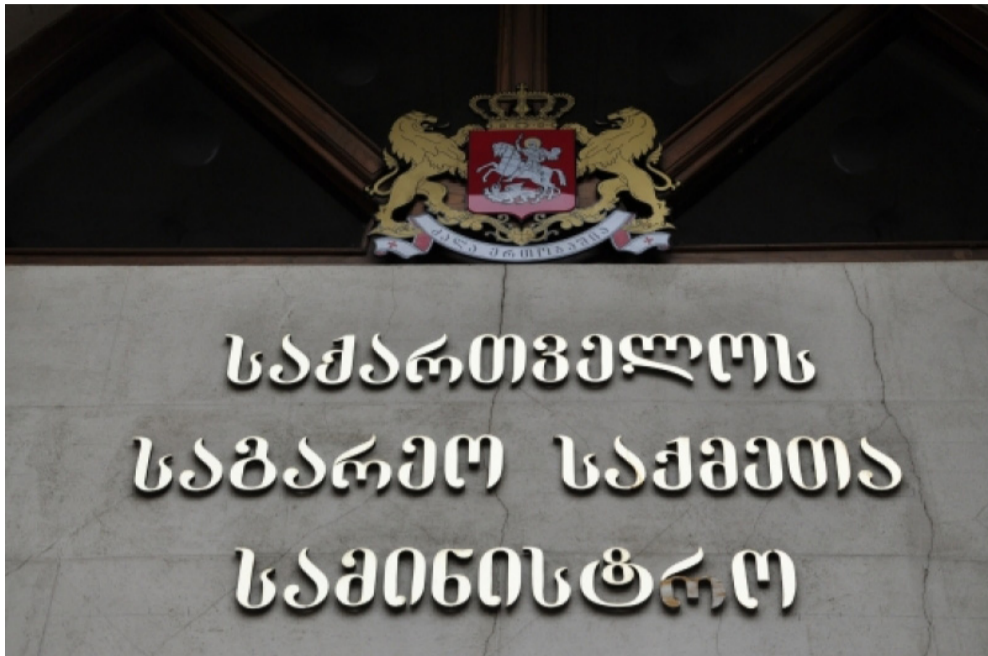
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Abkhazia opens an embassy in Syria



According to the Foreign Ministry, the opening of the embassy is a continuation of the illegal decision taken by the Assad regime under pressure from Russia.

By ANASTASIA SOKHADZE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has responded to Abkhazia's decision to open the embassy of Abkhazia in Syria, assessing it as an illegal decision taken by the Assad Regime.

The Abkhazian delegation, led by Alkhas Kvitsinia, head of the de facto president's administration, includes de facto foreign minister Daur Kove, also known as the member of Parliament Omar Jinjolia, de facto Deputy Defense Minister Nodar Filia, and others. According to the agency, members of the delegation will meet with Syrian leaders.

Russia's ally, the Syrian government, recognized Abkhazia and so-called South Ossetia as 'independent' in May 2018.

Georgia has ceased diplomatic relations with the Syrian Arab Republic. The decision of the Assad regime was condemned and assessed as a violation of international law by the European Union, the OSCE, the UN, NATO, and several dozen countries around the world.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to the opening of the embassy. According to the Foreign Ministry, this is a continuation of the completely illegal decision taken by the Assad regime under pressure from Russia in 2018 and thus continues to grossly violate the fundamental norms and principles of international law.

"The entire international community, leading European countries, the United States, and international



A delegation of the de facto government of Abkhazia occupied by Russia is in Syria.

organizations have strongly condemned the Assad regime's illegal decision to join the so-called Russian occupation regimes in Sukhumi and Tskhinvali. However, we are convinced that one day, when the current illegitimate regime in Syria ends and the country begins to develop democratically, this illegal decision will be reconsidered, and Syria will return to the framework of international law

based on the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity," stated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Syrian opposition distances itself from the decision of opening an Abkhazian embassy in Syria; it has made several condemnatory statements, reaffirming that they unequivocally support Georgia's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

On 5 October, the EU issued a statement on the Georgian Parliament's newly adopted legislative amendments aimed at reviewing the selection process for supreme court judges.

The statement said that "[t]he European Union and other key observers had repeatedly expressed concerns over the shortcomings in this selection process". The EU further expressed its regret that the country's parliament did not take into account the opinion of the Venice Commission on this legislation.

"This was a missed opportunity to create greater public trust in this process," stressed the EU.

"The European Union will assess the legislation and its implications, taking into account the upcoming Opinion of the Venice Commission, and expects that Georgia will further consider the rules of the selection process in light of the Venice Commission's recommendations," underlined the statement.

In conclusion, the EU added that "upholding the highest standards of ethics and integrity in its judiciary is key for Georgia's credibility in the eyes of its citizens and international partners, and for the advancement of the EU-Georgia partnership".

(euneighbours.eu)

EU on selection process for supreme court judges in Georgia



Photo: Unsplash.com