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Georgia wins case against Russia in ECtHR



► The decision of the European Court of Human Rights cannot be appealed.

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

According to the decision of the European Court of Human Rights Grand announced on January 21, Georgia has won the case related to the 2008 war against Russia. At the hearing held at 14:00 Tbilisi time, it was announced that the Court had satisfied all the basic requirements listed in the Georgian complaint.

According to Georgia's appeal, during the armed conflict with Georgia in August 2008, the Russian Federation violated the following articles of the European Convention on Human Rights: The right to life (Article 2); Prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment

or punishment (Article 3); The right to liberty and security (Article 4); The right to protection of private and family life (Article 8); Protection of property (Article 1 of Additional Protocol 1) and freedom of movement (Article 2 of Protocol No.4)

The statement of the European Court of Human Rights notes that Russia also violated article 38 by not cooperating with the Court. The statement also reads that Russia is controlling Georgia's Tskhinvali and Abkhazia regions and is responsible for the violation of human rights in the country. The Court also said that Abkhazia and Tskhinvali are territories of Georgia.

According to the official website of the European Court of Human Rights,

the complaint was filed by Georgia on 11 August 2008 and was declared partially admissible by the court on 13 December 2011. The first hearing in the case was held in September 2011; The case was transferred to the Grand Chamber on 3 April 2012; Witnesses were heard in court on June 6-17, 2016; And the last discussion took place on May 23, 2018.

The issue of compensation for victims should be considered separately by the European Court of Human Rights. The parties have one year to submit their positions.

The leaders of Georgia have already commented on the decision of the ECtHR. The president of the country, Salome Zourabichvili noted this is a "historic

decision and a huge victory for Georgia." The President thanked the Ministry of Justice of Georgia and added that the ministry "played a crucial role in this".

According to the Public Defender, the decision of the European Court of Human Rights on the August 2008 war is the most important tool for protecting the rights of citizens affected by the conflict.

Previously, Georgia has won a case against Russia in the European Court of Human Rights. It was a case involving Georgian citizens deported from Russia in 2006. The European Court of Human Rights made a ruling on this case in 2014. In January 2019 the Russian Federation was ordered to pay 10 million euros.



► European court satisfied all the basic requirements listed in Georgia's complaint.



► The issue of compensation for victims should be considered separately by the European Court of Human Rights.

Salome Zurabishvili met with EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell in Brussels

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The President of Georgia Salome Zurabishvili met on January 21 in Brussels with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell.

Borrell stressed the importance of Georgian political parties finding common ground in the current political situation. It was noted at the meeting that Georgia needs a fully functioning representative parliament that will have the confidence of the population. They talked about the inclusive, green and sustainable recovery process necessary to overcome the problems caused by COVID-19. Also, according to the EU, Georgia should implement a broader reform agenda, including in the judiciary.

The focus of the conversation was on issues related to the pandemic. Borrell spoke about the EU's solidarity with the Georgian people, which was reflected in the



► The High Representative welcomed the considerable progress made by Georgia in implementing commitments made under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, and its continued contribution to the EaP.

€ 183 million in assistance that the EU will provide to Georgia for protective equipment, strengthening the healthcare system and socio-economic recovery. The EU has also committed € 150 million in macro-financial assistance, half of which has already been paid.

Josep Borrell noted the EU's commitment to ensuring the availability of COVID-19 vaccines, including in neighboring EU countries. Georgia can use additional EU assistance, in particular through the World Health Organization, to properly prepare for the vaccination campaign.

Borrell and Zurabishvili also discussed the humanitarian situation in the occupied regions of Georgia. According to an EU press release, the human rights situation remains a major concern as people are denied access to free movement and access to adequate health care.

The EU leader reiterated that the EU is committed to the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Georgia and fully supports Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

The issue of the Association Agreement was also discussed. Borrell praised Georgia's progress in this area and the country's unwavering contribution to the Eastern Partnership program.

PM Gakharia announced that 60% of the Georgian population will be vaccinated this year

BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

On January 21, Prime Minister Gakharia announced that 60% of the Georgian population will receive vaccination by the end of 2021. He added that the first ones to be vaccinated will be high-risk groups – residents of long-term care homes, medical workers, senior citizens over 65.

PM Gakharia said that Georgia will receive vaccines from the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility (Covax), to which country is a member. The Prime Minister said that six months ago, Georgia presented its plan to receive half a million vaccines in the nearest future, and the payment has already been made. "The main goal is to prepare the



healthcare system for such a volume of vaccinations within a year," Gakharia said.

Similar plans were announced earlier this month by

the head of Georgia's National Centre for Disease Control, Amiran Gamkrelidze, who said that by the end of this year, 3.7 million people will be vaccinated in the country. According to him,

by vaccinating at least 60% of the population of Georgia, the country will be able to return to the normal way of living. He also added that people under the age of 18 will not be receiving vac-

cines yet, as such the age group has not yet been studied.

Vaccination of 60% of the overall population will amount to a total of €65-170 million of the country's budget, and the vaccines are expected to be received in the first quarter of 2021. As of right now, according to Health Minister Eraterine Tikaradze, Pfizer might be the first vaccine to arrive, and, in the long run, Georgia is considering the storage of AstraZeneca, which does not have to be kept at -70 degrees Celsius, and can be kept at 2-8 degrees instead.

According to Tikaradze, only the high-quality vaccines that have already acquired approval from the World Health Organization will be purchased for Georgian citizens. Similarly, Prime Minister Gakharia reinstated that while the negotiations with the anti-COVID-19 vaccine producers continue, the country is committed to only importing the vaccines that have been approved by the World Health Organization.

FRIDAY JANUARY 22

Day Sunny
High: 4°C
Night Clear skies
Low: -4°C

SATURDAY JANUARY 23

Day Sunny
High: 6°C
Night Clear skies
Low: -4°C

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What services will need mandatory registration at fast payment machines?

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Starting January 15, 2021, the requirement for mandatory identification of the payer has been activated for payments made by fast payment machines. According to the recommendation of the National Bank of Georgia, in order to protect the personal data of consumers, when performing various transfer operations through self-service terminals, it became mandatory to enter the user's personal number and SMS code sent to the mobile phone. Reform is in full compliance with the requirements of the new law of Georgia 'On Facilitation of Prevention of Financing of Terrorism and Money Laundering' adopted in 2019, which in turn is based on international standards under the European Directive and FATF 40 recommendations.

The amendment linked to a law passed by Parliament sets the registration as mandatory step in respect to certain transactions, specifically those that carry increased risks of money laundering and does not affect a number of categories of services.

The identification/verification process is mandatory when transferring money to the following services: gambling and lottery, online games, insurance and private pension funds, financial services, including: deposit to the bank account of individuals and legal entities, services of microfinance organizations and lending entities, leasing, e-wallet replenishment, financial markets and remittances, Internet marketing, transport and logistics, tourism services, network marketing, charity, consulting services; political parties; services related to the purchase of real estate.



► "Entering a personal number and SMS code when transferring through self-service terminals is part of a strategy to combat money laundering and terrorist financing," the Banking Association said.

Identification, regardless of the amount, is not required at all for the following payments made by the device: Utility payments; Payments to the state treasury/state pension fund; Civil transport; postal service;

Education; Sports and recreation circles; Media/Press Subscription; Household services; Health & veterinary (except for the drug trade); visa service fee; a certain type of insurance that is exempt from identification

requirements by law; Purchase of low-risk goods.

Any other type of payments made with fast payment machines has a zero identification obligation. Accordingly, this requirement applies to only those

types of payments, which carry a relatively high ML/FT risk and there's need to fully monitor them in order to mitigate the risks of money laundering and funding terrorism.



► According to the NBG, the relevant representatives of the financial sector were fully informed about the upcoming changes. They had a certain deadline to inform the users about the new regulation entering into force in 2021.