

## SSG launches investigation into alleged fact of state secret information disclosure



► The investigation is underway under the second part of Article 320 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, implying disclosure of state secrets.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

The Georgian State Security Service has launched an investigation into facts of public disclosure of information about the official duties of SSG employees and officials. According to the agency, the investigation is underway under the second part of Article 320 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, implying disclosure of state secrets. The investigation is being conducted by the General Inspection of the State Security Service.

"The facts of public dissemination of information on the official duties of the employees and officials of the State Security Service have recently increased, which is a clear violation of the Law on State Secrets," SSG noted.

The agency informs that intensive investigative measures are being carried out to detect persons involved in possible criminal acts, have a legal response, and prevent subsequent disclosure of information containing state secrets.

According to the Head of the State Security Service, Grigol Liluashvili, the launch of the investigation is connected with the publication of specific documents which contain signs of state secrets.

The statement of the SSG came after Nika Gvaramia, founder and CEO of opposition-minded Mtavari-Arkhi TV channel, accused Georgian Dream of 'mass illegal surveillance'. On August 1, he released alleged memos of the State Security Service, involving eavesdropping on politicians, representatives of non-governmental organizations, journalists and a foreign embassy employee. In response to the allegations, the Vice-Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia Archil Talakvadze stated that the information spread by Mtavari TV was 'another fake news' and ruled out the existence of recordings.

The Head of the SSG did not confirm that the launch of the investigation was related to Gvaramia's case and stated that the exact information would be released once the investigation is completed.



► The Head of the State Security Service Grigol Liluashvili announced that the exact information would be released after the investigation is finished.

# Georgia marks 13 years since Shindisi battle



► The 17 fallen warriors of the Shindisi battle are Aleksandre Oniani, Emzar Tsilosani, Vepkhia Jishkariani, Zviad Katsadze, Teimuraz Beridze, Ilia Gabunia, Ilia Sheklashvili, Irakli Janelidze, Kakha Koshadze, Levan Mikeladze, Marlen Baramia, Mikheil Dvalishvili, Nikoloz Porchkhidze, Roman Zoidze, Ruslan Tsuladze, Peliks Kakauridze and Shmagi Kupatadze.



► Junior sergeant Aleksandre Oniani who died in the Battle of Shindisi was awarded the Order of Georgian National Hero, the highest state award.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

The Battle of Shindisi, one of the most notable and significant clashes in the August War, took place on August 11, 2008, between Georgian and Russian militaries. The Russians greatly outnumbered Georgians and ordered them to surrender, but Georgians refused. During the unequal battle, which lasted

for 45 minutes, 17 Georgian soldiers of the II Infantry Brigade of the Georgian Armed Forces were killed. Only four soldiers survived the confrontation. "The heroes of the Shindisi battle set an example of one of the most outstanding sacrifices in our history. This day proves that there are no big or small battles as any battle may become a lesson of devotion to the homeland for future generations," Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili

stated. As the PM announced yesterday, at the decision of President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili, one of the heroes of the Shindisi battle Aleksandre Oniani was granted the highest state award Order of Georgian National Hero. Junior sergeant Oniani did not surrender alive to the enemy and blew himself up in the last minutes of the battle. As the president remarked, the self-sacrifice of the heroes of Shindisi is a proud page in the

history of Georgia. "The Country that has such devoted soldiers has no excuse for mourning and despair," she noted. Georgian Defence Minister Juansher Burchuladze, State Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality Tea Akhvlediani, and the Commander of the Defense Forces, Major General Giorgi Matiashvili paid tribute to the memory of Shindisi heroes and laid wreath at their memorial in Gori. "On this day, the

story of self-sacrifice of Georgian soldiers, fight against the enemy and outstanding heroism was written in Shindisi," the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality said. The Russo-Georgia war began on August 8, 2008, and lasted five days. 228 Georgian civilians, 170 soldiers and 14 police officers were killed during the conflict. Around 30,000 citizens of Georgia were forced to abandon their homes in the occupied Tskhinvali region.

## EU Commission strengthens financial support for Eastern Partnership countries by €35 million to speed up vaccination

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

The EU Commission has increased its assistance package from €40 million to €75 million 'to deploy safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and speed up the vaccination campaigns' in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The newly adopted programme is part of Team Europe's global COVID-19 response and is based on a partnership among the Member States, the EU cooperation, and the WHO. According to the EU, the additional €35 million assistance package will increase access to vaccines in the Eastern Partnership region amid the global vaccine shortage.

"This assistance complements the EU's support to the COVAX



► The financial support will be distributed to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

initiative, the world's facility to ensure fair and universal access to COVID-19 vaccines, and work towards an equitable and transparent distribution of vaccines over the Eastern Partner countries," EU reports. The first package of support worth €40 million was launched in partnership with the World Health Organization in February to strengthen preparedness and local readiness for safe and effective

vaccination of the population. The package provided substantial medical supplies across the region, including over 11 million items of personal protective equipment, 12,000 lab kits, over 1,500 ventilators, and over 20,000 PCR testing kits. The support included training of health managers and medical staff involved in the vaccination campaign, key logistical support for the delivery and management



► "The EU is determined to support our Eastern neighbours to speed up vaccination as this will be decisive for ending the pandemic and launching the socio-economic recovery of the region," Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi stated.

of the vaccines and supplies, vaccination data and safety monitoring, communication and community engagement, as well as support for the development of a digital COVID certificate.

"The EU is determined to support our Eastern neighbours to speed up vaccination as this will be decisive for ending the pandemic and launching the socio-economic recovery of the region. We care for

our partners." Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi stated.

Várhelyi visited Georgia in July and stated that "the EU stands by Georgia and its people, including in challenging times such as the fight against COVID-19 crisis. He announced that the European Union would allocate €3.9 billion to help Georgia improve transport and logistics connectivity.

<b>THURSDAY</b>		<b>AUGUST 12</b>	
<b>Day</b>		Mainly sunny	High: <b>36°C</b>
<b>Night</b>		A few clouds	Low: <b>21°C</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b>		<b>AUGUST 13</b>	
<b>Day</b>		Clouds	High: <b>36°C</b>
<b>Night</b>		A few clouds	Low: <b>22°C</b>

published by **The Messenger**

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