

Agreement between Belarus KGB and Georgia's SSS into full force

International partners and opposition representatives call the agreement dangerous and alarming

By Nika Gantsemlidze

The agreement on cooperation between the State Security Service of Georgia and the State Security Committee of Belarus entered into force on August 1.

Under the agreement signed in August 2016, the parties will exchange information in the field of state security, as well as cooperate in the fight against crimes against the constitutional order, as well as in the fight against the sovereignty and territorial integrity, transnational organized crime, terrorism, cyberterrorism and illegal selling of weapons.

Forms of cooperation include fulfilling requests and transferring personal information, holding joint events, sharing experiences, and many others. The agreement also provides for the joint sending of security representatives or attachés to the territory of another state for a specific or indefinite period of time. Belarus has similar agreements with other countries, including Ukraine.

MEP Viola von Cramon calls the cooperation agreement between the Georgian State Security Service and the KGB of Belarus dangerous.

"Why does Georgia implement an agreement after 5 years in a situation where everyone else in the world gave up the cooperation with Belarus? GEO government must respect human rights & not extradite journalists & HR defenders to Lukashenka," wrote MEP Viola von Cramon on Twitter.

After the document came into force, Belarusian activists and journalists liv-



Former US Ambassador to Georgia, Ian Kelly, called the agreement 'shameful'

ing in Georgia feared that they might be arrested on fabricated charges and extradited to Belarus.

Droa, the Georgian political party also commented on the ongoing events, saying that the decision is alarming.

"The decision of the Georgian government to sign a cooperation agreement with Lukashenko's KGB is alarming. This not only legitimizes Lukashenko's horrific and illegitimate regime, which is responsible for the deaths, torture, and political imprisonment of thousands of people but also threatens the lives of Belarusians seeking refuge in Georgia," reads the statement of Droa.

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Politics

Field hospital to be set up in the Olympic Village Gymnasium as Covid-19 cases increase

There are over 50,000 active cases in the country



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.1238; Euro - 3.6698; GBP - 4.3099; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.2534; Swiss Franc - 3.3884

Field hospital to be set up in the Olympic Village Gymnasium as Covid-19 cases increase

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

In Digomi, a field hospital is being set up in one of the gyms of the Olympic Village. The relevant video material was released exclusively by PalitraNews.

The Ministry of Health of Georgia said that additional information about the field hospital will be made public today.

The Covid-19 cases have been drastically increasing over the past few weeks in Georgia. Around 5,000 cases are being reported every single day, and the total active cases are higher than ever in the country.

At the time of writing, there are over 50,000 active cases in the country. Because of this, many experts are saying that if the numbers continue to increase with the same trajectory, there won't be any free beds in the hospitals for severely ill Covid patients.

Although no official information has been announced, the increasing cases of the Covid-19 and the lack of beds in hospitals could be the main reason for setting up the field hospital. As for the details about the number of beds or medical professionals present in the field hospital, there is no such information announced yet.

To curb the spread of the virus, the country has already adopted some regulations. For example, starting from Saturday, August 14, there is no public transportation in the biggest cities of the country. The restric-



The number of confirmed Covid-19 cases is increasing every fast in Georgia



Over 6400 people have died because of coronavirus in Georgia

tion is going to last until September 4.

In parallel with the suspension of public transport, the state offers special transport services to citizens, which will take them to the checkpoints. Additional checkpoints have been opened in Mtskheta and Tbilisi. For example, in the sixth building of the Technical University, vaccination against coronavirus is possible without prior online registration.

To further promote jabs, the President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, addressed the Georgian church to call on the believers to get vaccinated.

Metropolitan Nikoloz of Akhalkalaki, Kumuroloz, and Kari responded to the calling of the President, saying that the church representatives decided that the vaccination is a free choice of everyone. He also said that the church can't call on people to get vaccinated, as it is not a "medical organization". He also added that he is ready to get vaccinated in front of cameras "if it will be necessary to encourage people".

According to the official information of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, a total of 791,863 vaccines have been administered. Out of this, 237,149 people have already received both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. There are four vaccines available in Georgia - AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Sinopharm, and Sinovac.

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Russia responds to Patriot Alliance letter about improving Tbilisi-Moscow relations

The Russian government shares its concerns about existing bilateral ties and calls for improvement. According to the Kremlin press service, the letter responded to the address of Georgian Patriots Alliance to Russian President Vladimir Putin, asking for assistance in normalizing relations between

Tbilisi and Moscow.

"We share the concerns expressed in the letter about the existing bilateral ties and the call for the improvement of these ties. Russia has always come out in support of constructive relations with Georgia. As it is known, we were not the initiators of their termination," the Kremlin press service said.

The Kremlin called the appeal of the Georgian Patriots Alliance to the president a clear confirmation that "despite all the efforts of Russophobes and radicals, there are healthy-minded forces in Georgia who want to restore good neighborly relations between the two countries."

According to the Kremlin press service, the dialogue be-

tween Russia and Georgia continues, including in the format of the Geneva talks and at the bilateral level, using the informal dialogue between Karasin and Abashidze.

"Thanks to this, some results have been achieved in the trade and humanitarian fields," the Kremlin said.

The Georgian Patriots Alli-

ance wrote a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin a few weeks ago. In the letter, Irma Inashvili talks about the importance of restoring friendly relations with Russia, saying that this is the attitude of the Georgian people, but the government only creates an illusion in the normalization of relations with Russia.

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Former US Ambassador to Georgia Ian Kelly calls Georgia's agreement with Belarus Security Service shameful. He responded to this on his Twitter.

"Shameful indeed. The Georgian Govt recently withdrew from an agreement brokered by the EU — if they don't from this, it will be another sign that their priorities lie elsewhere," wrote Ian Kelly.

Tbilisi Human Rights House

has called on the authorities not to enter into a cooperation agreement with the Belarusian Security Service signed in 2016. According to them, the use of this document will endanger the Belarusian people in exile in

Georgia, especially human rights defenders, and activists.

The Agreement on Cooperation between the State Security Service of Georgia and the State Security Committee of the Republic of Belarus was signed in 2016. The agreement aims to develop close co-operation between the parties in the fight against international and transnational organized crime against terrorism, corruption, and other state security, the ministry said in a statement.

Weather

Monday, August 16

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 32°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 18°C

Tuesday, August 17

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 33°C

Night Clear
Low: 19°C

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