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Social Assistance to Vulnerable Children Increases to ₾150 on International Children’s Day



By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Countries around the world have marked the International Day for Protection of Children on June 1 since 1950. On this day, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili announced that his Government would raise assistance to socially vulnerable children from ₾100 to ₾150. Garibashvili said the program would apply to over 215,000 children, for which the state would allocate ₾341 million.

“Last year we doubled assistance for socially vulnerable children. Today, this assistance will increase to ₾150. We will continue and scale up our efforts to reduce child poverty and ensure their development,” Garibashvili said, wishing peace, health, and prosperity to children and their families.

The Head of the government emphasized in his remarks that ‘looking after the better future of children and creating conditions for their development and health was a precondition of Georgia’s strength and a key task’ of his team.

Minister of Education Mikheil Chkhenkeli also congratulated children on this day wishing them a happy and successful future. He also referred to the ongoing war in Ukraine and its tragic effects on the children in the country.

“As the Minister of Education and Science, I am proud of the fact that our team has made a significant contribution to providing a better learning environment for these children,” he remarked in reference to Ukrainian-language classes opened at select Tbilisi and Batumi based schools for pupils

from Ukraine stranded by the conflict. Chkhenkeli underlined that children “must have an equal opportunity to receive education in a safe and peaceful environment and live a healthy life,” noting the role of teachers and parents in the process.

On June 1st the Georgian Interior Ministry launched an information campaign against child marriage in partnership with the local office of the United Nations Population Fund.

“Do not Take Childhood Away” initiative aims to eliminate child marriage and increase awareness about the availability and reliability of the police to react to relevant cases in a timely manner. Within the program, representatives of the Ministry have handed out booklets in Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani languages

to communities across the country, sharing information on the goals of the campaign.

Expected to run for a month with events in Tbilisi and other regions of the country, the project is supported by the UNFPA as part of the UN program for gender equality.

International Children’s Day was celebrated with events in downtown Tbilisi’s recreational parks, with visitors hosted at Mziuri, Kikvidze, and Vaso Godziashvili parks on Wednesday.

Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze announced the Professional State Youth Theatre would host the International Children and Youth Theatre Festival with the support of Tbilisi City Hall and the National Youth Palace. The festival program will run between June 1-6.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 2.0249 | EURO - 3.2466 | GBP - 3.8120 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.8818 | SWISS FRANC - 3.1546 |

Georgia Strongly Supports Ukraine, PM Says

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Georgia has continued to strongly support Ukraine both politically and diplomatically, as well as in humanitarian terms since the beginning of the full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili says in a written report on the Government's activities.

The report highlighted strengthening further close dialogue with strategic partner Ukraine as Georgia's priority. It is noted that in 2021, high-level bilateral visits were exchanged. On July 19-20, the Presidents of Ukraine and Moldova partook in the Batumi International Conference.

According to the report, solidarity with Ukraine is expressed not only in the practical format of bilateral support but also in the strong position of Georgia within all international platforms. The report notes that Georgia has sponsored / co-sponsored resolutions and joined the declarations supporting Ukraine across all international platforms. It was also noted that on 22-23 February 2022, against the background of an extremely tense situation, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia paid a visit



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to Kyiv and held bilateral political consultations.

“On 28 February 2022, Georgia acceded to EU restrictive sanctions on Donetsk and Luhansk. At the same time, the total number of statements, declarations, and decisions in support of Ukraine by Georgia within the framework of international organizations since February has reached 260,” the report reads.

It is also noted that when most of the states withdrew their diplomatic missions from Kyiv, the diplomatic and consular missions of Georgia did not stop functioning, remained on the ground in Kyiv, Lviv, and Odesa, and continued to coordinate Georgia's support for Ukraine in assisting Georgian citizens.

The report also focuses on the Georgian Government's humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, including housing and other resources to Ukrainian citizens entering Georgia. As of today, up to 1000 tons of humanitarian cargo have been sent to Ukraine. Georgia allocated \$7 million to Ukraine and continues to assist 28,000 war-affected Ukrainians living in Georgia.

THURSDAY		JUNE 2	
Day		Sunshine	High: 33°C
Night		A few clouds	Low: 19°C
FRIDAY		JUNE 3	
Day		Sunny	High: 34°C
Night		Mostly cloudy	Low: 21°C

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Ombudsman: Number of families with children enrolled in the socially vulnerable base increased by 28%

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Public Defender of Georgia issued a statement on June 1, International Children's day, assessing the current situation in the country in terms of children's rights.

The ombudsman emphasizes that no child should have to test the tragic consequences of the war on themselves. The ongoing hostilities in Ukraine have claimed the lives of hundreds of children, left many injured, lost parents, had to leave their homes, and, for more than 3 months, have been dealing with war trauma.

"Consequently, it is particularly important this year to take effective steps to support children affected by the Ukraine war and internally displaced persons in Georgia, to provide a safe environment and to strengthen their families," the ombudsman said.

According to the Public Defender, the problems of child poverty, violence against children, lack of rehabilitation, support services, and the lack of a child-friendly environment have been acute in Georgia for years, requiring fundamental changes and coordinated action by the state.

Ombudsman named the rising rate of child poverty as one of the main challenges for the country. Compared to the previous year, the number of families with children enrolled in the 'Unified Database of Socially Vulnerable Families' increased by 28% and the number of minors involved in the program reached 235,252.

However, according to the ombudsman, the existing programs in the country still do not provide long-term support to families living in poverty and increase their social function. The statement emphasized that at the state level, there is still no effective strategy and mechanism for reducing child poverty and child labor.

"Also, although the implementation of state child care in large residential



institutions is fundamentally contrary to the fundamental principles of the rights of the child and has a devastating effect on adolescents, there are 3 such institutions in the country and no concrete plan for their deinstitutionalization has been approved yet."

Public defender says that it is important to raise public awareness on

the one hand and to provide timely and coordinated action by government agencies, which, with an individual approach tailored to the best interests of the child, provide for those with different needs, including those living in poverty.

For the sake of ensuring proper protection of the rights of the child in the country, Ombudsman called the state to

increase the effectiveness of child welfare support programs and services, develop additional targeted programs and ensure their geographical accessibility, and ensure timely and effective management of the deinstitutionalization process, within the framework of which each child will be provided with the closest and safest environment to the family.

'We Will Not Allow This' - Morgoshia Tbilisi Threatens the Announced Pride Festival

BY MESSENGER STAFF

Koka Morgoshia, one of the founders of the pro-Russian, pro-Putin, violent organization Alt-Info, is threatening to disrupt the festival announced by the Tbilisi Pride and says it will 'not be allowed'.

"June 28 - July 2 event was announced, here are two events. There are two events, one is a stone movie screening indoors. I do not think anyone watching a movie indoors is interesting for us. The second is meeting with NGOs, Eugene meets each other every day and already Total Prides have during the meeting. The third is the

festival. They have known since July 5 that they can not hold Pride, have a bad experience, and have come up with a great location, a private property, which is about 5 hectares, to hold the festival.

"Obviously, the Georgian people, including us as a part of the Georgian people and the political force representing the vast majority of these people, we will not allow this," Morgoshia said.

According to Tbilisi Pride, this year Pride Week will be from June 28 to July 2, but will not be held in the March of Honor. According to the organization, the week consists of three main events: Screening of a new Georgian stone film. The story of



homophobia, struggle, and survival is narrated on a movie screen. A regional conference where LGBTQ activists from Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Belarus will gather to discuss common geopolitical struggles. A grand Pride Festival that brings together local and international artists. Last year, the March of Honor was to be held on July 5, but before that, Rustaveli Avenue was occupied by violent groups. They physically assaulted journalists, cameramen, and passers-by. On July 5, more than 50 media representatives were injured, including TV First cameraman Lekso Lashkarava, who died on July 11.