

Imposing Sanctions on Russia Poses Potential Threat to National Security, Shalva Papuashvili says

By Liza Mchedlidze

According to Shalva Papuashvili, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, any measures involving the introduction of visas, border closures, or flight bans are considered sanctions. He believes that such actions imply an escalation in tensions between the countries and indicate a potential escalation in relations with Russia.

Papuashvili believes that if sanctions are imposed on Russia, he anticipates that there will be retaliatory measures taken by Russia. He asserted that these retaliatory actions could ultimately pose a threat to the security of Georgia.

"Any sanction signifies escalation. Escalation implies a potential military confrontation with Russia. We do not want to subject our population to this risk," said Papuashvili in his statement.

According to the Chairman, if Georgia bans flights to Russia and joins the sanctions, "it will be impossible to foresee the retaliatory measures and results from Russia's side."

Papuashvili stated that if Georgia proceeds with banning flights to Russia and participates in imposing sanctions, the exact nature of the retaliatory measures and the outcomes from Russia's side would become highly unpredictable.

"The opposition itself has finally acknowledged that imposing sanctions on Russia does not align with our country's inter-



ests. Any actions involving the introduction of visas, border closures, and flight bans can be considered as sanctions, indicating an escalation between the countries. Escalation leads us into an unpredictable spiral with unforeseeable consequences. Therefore, when sanctions are imposed, it is expected that retaliatory measures will follow, ultimately posing a threat to our country's security and economic well-being. I would like to remind everyone that the Russian

army is only 30 kilometers away from the capital, with the greatest military risk. Additionally, there is a significant danger that Russia might transition from an occupation policy to an annexation policy," stated Papuashvili.

Papuashvili expressed that those suggesting visa bans, flight bans, and imposing sanctions are essentially urging Georgia to take risks and escalate the situation with Russia, potentially leading to a military confrontation. He highlighted that

such proposals fail to provide guarantees of security or economic stability. The Chairman of the Parliament emphasized that any form of sanctions would imply escalation and increase the likelihood of a military confrontation with Russia. He asserted that Georgia is not willing to jeopardize the safety of its population in such a manner.

"Those who propose visa bans, flight bans, or urge us to impose sanctions are essentially advocating for us to take risks and

escalate the situation with Russia, potentially leading to a military confrontation. However, those suggesting sanctions do not provide us with any guarantees of security or economic stability. It is important to understand that any sanctions signify escalation, which in turn implies a potential military confrontation with Russia. We are not willing to put our population at risk in this manner," Papuashvili stated.



Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia Refutes Reports of Regular Sea Transportation Between Batumi and Novorossiysk

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Maritime Transport Agency has issued a statement regarding the shipments between the ports of Batumi in Georgia and Novorossiysk in Russia, denouncing the information circulated by Armenian media as 'false' and 'misinterpreted'. The agency explicitly stated that the claims made by certain Armenian media outlets, alleging the commencement of regular sea transportation between Batumi and Novorossiysk since April of this year, are unfounded and not in accordance with the facts.

According to the agency, in April, the Palau-flagged vessel Hacı Musa Ucak (IMO 9128544) did indeed undertake two commercial voyages between Novorossiysk and Batumi. However, it is important to highlight that these were not regular flights but rather commercial operations conducted systematically for commercial purposes.

The Maritime Transport Agency has stated that the company owning the ship, which is not subject to sanctions, intends to continue operating commercial routes.

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5376; Euro - 2.7462; GBP - 3.1586; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.1730; Swiss Franc - 2.8359

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CONTINUED FROM Page 1

Additionally, it has been clarified that

the cargo being transported is solely in transit and intended for the Republic of Armenia.

“Regarding the report concerning a specific shipment, the Palau-flagged vessel Hacı Musa Ucak (IMO 9128544) did indeed complete two commercial routes between Novorossiysk and Batumi in April. However, it is important to emphasize that these were not regular routes but rather purely commercial operations conducted on a systematic basis. The company owning the mentioned vessel, which is not subject to sanctions, intends to continue its commercial operations. Furthermore, the cargo transported is solely in transit and intended for the Republic of Armenia.

The Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia, in collaboration with the Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance,

consistently monitors both vessels and shipowners in compliance with international sanctions. Consequently, if a vessel or its owner is listed under sanctions, they are prohibited from entering Georgian ports and undertaking relevant procedures,” the statement reads.

Lasha Khutsishvili, the Minister of Finance of Georgia, has also refuted the claim that regular sea traffic between Batumi and the Russian city of Novorossiysk has commenced, stating that the information is inaccurate.

After the government session, Khutsishvili told journalists that the information provided by the Maritime Agency accurately reflects the reality of the situation.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

UNM Urges Start of Consideration for Draft Law Banning Entry of Sanctioned Persons into Georgia



The United National Movement is urging the parliament to review their faction’s proposed draft law, which aims to restrict the entry of individuals who are subject to sanctions into Georgia.

As per Levan Bezhashvili, the draft law’s restrictions will be applicable to both individuals and legal entities involved in

the occupation and military aggression of Georgia and Ukraine’s territories. Furthermore, it will also encompass individuals and legal entities cooperating with sanctioned companies.

According to the bill, Georgian and international companies that are included in the sanctioned list will face prohibitions on receiving financing from the Georgian budget and participating in tenders.

“Under the current government’s conditions, there is no guarantee that sanctioned persons will not enter Georgia in the future. Therefore, we demand immediate discussion of the draft law initiated by the United National Movement one year ago. We will address this issue during today’s Bureau session and expect the Parliament of Georgia to exer-

cise its powers in protecting the national interest by prohibiting the entry of sanctioned persons into the territory of Georgia,” said Tina Bokuchava, the chairman of the faction.

Kakha Kaladze: No Need for Visa Regime with Russia; Georgia Welcomes Tourists and Non-Sanctioned Businesses

According to Kakha Kaladze, the Mayor of Tbilisi and Secretary General of the Georgian Dream party, there is no necessity to implement a visa regime with Russia. He expressed the government’s openness to welcoming a large number of tourists to Georgia, as well as non-sanctioned business companies.

According to Kaladze, the opposition, which is currently calling for the implementation of a visa regime with Russia, had previously expressed a welcoming attitude towards the arrival of Russian tourists in the country.

“I believe that there is no need to es-

tablish a visa regime. In this regard, I echo the sentiments expressed by Msvildadze, Khoshtaria, and Saakashvili that we welcome as many tourists as pos-



sible to come to Georgia. We also welcome the arrival of non-sanctioned business companies. There is no problem in doing so,” Kaladze said.

G7 leaders in Hiroshima: ‘Our support for Ukraine will not waver’

The G7 has again condemned “in the strongest possible terms” Russian aggression against Ukraine and announced new sanctions measures being prepared against Russia, including a ban on Russian diamonds.

The G7 meeting was held in Hiroshima, Japan, from 19-21 May. It brought together leaders from the EU and Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy joined the G7 leaders

on 20 and 21 May.

“Our support for Ukraine will not waver. We will not tire in our commitment to mitigate the impact of Russia’s illegal actions on the rest of the world,” said G7 leaders in a communiqué.

The G7 leaders announced further measures to increase the costs to Russia and those who are supporting its war effort.

The G7 countries will: ensure that exports of all items critical to Russia’s war machine are restricted across all G7 jurisdictions;

take action to further prevent the evasion and circumvention of measures against Russia;

curtail Russia’s use of the international financial system, including by preventing third-country branches of Russian

banks from being used to avoid sanctions;

take steps to limit Russia’s revenue from energy and metals;

work together to restrict trade

in and use of diamonds mined, processed or produced in Russia.

“We will starve Russia of G7 technology, industrial equipment and services that support its war machine,” said the G7

leaders’ communiqué.

The European Union, for its part, is now focused on “shutting the door on loopholes” and “continuing to cut Russia off from critical supplies”, said Charles Michel, President of the European Council, before the Summit in Hiroshima.

“We will restrict trade in Russian diamonds. Russian diamonds are not forever and we will lay out openly and frankly why these sanctions are necessary and justified,” said Michel.

The G7 leaders also reiterated their call on third parties to cease providing material support to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, saying that they will continue to take actions against such actors.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Tuesday, May 23

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 27°C

Night T-storm

Low: 16°C

Wednesday, May 24

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 17°C

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

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