

## Sopo Japaridze Initiates Public Meetings in Batumi on Behalf of Mikheil Saakashvili

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

UNM's Sopo Japaridze, in the role of a representative for Mikheil Saakashvili, visited Batumi as a part of the election campaign.

As stated in the information provided by the United National Movement, Sopo Japaridze has initiated engagements with the public on behalf of Georgia's third president, Mikheil Saakashvili. Japaridze's objective was to 'closely listen' to the perspectives of citizens who wish to connect with Mikheil Saakashvili.

According to their reports, this regional campaign has commenced in Batumi. As part of this endeavor, Japaridze will personally engage with Mikheil Saakashvili's supporters and convey their messages to the third president of Georgia, who is currently seeking medical help in the Vivamed clinic.

"I am here as a representative of Mikheil Saakashvili, aiming to engage with the citizens of Batumi, comprehend their stances, and understand the challenges they face. This marks the commencement of a demanding journey as we navigate through intricate processes.



This phase is critical, as we work to support our nation and safeguard it from various threats. I commit to attentively listening to the viewpoints of each citizen who wishes to connect with Mikheil Saakashvili," Japaridze stated.

## Belgian Foreign Affairs Minister Visits Village of Odzi Near Occupation Line

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE



The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium, Hadja Lahbib, visited the village of Odzi, located near the occupation line.

According to the press service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Vakhtang Makharoblishvili, the representative of Georgia in the European Union, and the representative of the State Security Service briefed the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs about the dire humanitarian situation on the ground.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium emphasized that the European Union plays a role in maintaining the stability of the region, and Belgium is actively engaged in this process.

Hadja Lahbib stated that the purpose of her visit to Georgia is to engage in discussions on how to provide more effective assistance to the country as it progresses towards European Union membership.

"This visit is of significant scope and importance. From the

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meetings I have already conducted, including those with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and at the Office of the Public Defender, it is evident that there exists a robust and sincere aspiration for Georgia to become a member of the European Union. As such, this desire should materialize in accordance with the

European Commission's report and the forthcoming decision set to be published on December 30. Our presence here holds importance as we deliberate on opportunities, assess progress, and consider ways to provide continued assistance to the country," Lahbib stated.

"We need to strengthen the ties and reinforce the expressed desire to join. It is imperative

that we ensure this sentiment is heard, and upon our return to Brussels, we will actively communicate it. It's crucial to consider the geostrategic fragility of this region, where borders have remained unrecognized for decades. The European Union plays a pivotal role in maintaining stability in the region, and Belgium is deeply involved in this process," stressed Lahbib.

As per Vakhtang Makharoblishvili, the relations between Georgia and Belgium are dynamic.

"The fact that our relations have recently grown even stronger holds considerable significance. This is substantiated by a series of high-level visits at both executive and legislative tiers. Just a few months ago, the Prime Minister of Georgia vis-

ited Belgium, and now the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium is conducting an official visit to Georgia. Naturally, such forms of communication and dynamics contribute to the further enhancement of bilateral cooperation, as well as the intensification of collaboration within international organizations," stated Makharoblishvili.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Number of Dead in Shovi Disaster-Affected Area Reaches 31



The rescuers have discovered the bodies of two more individuals

als in Shovi within the disaster-stricken area, as informed by Temur Mgebrishvili, the head of the emergency management service, during a briefing with journalists.

He indicated that up to this point, the rescue teams have lo-

ngoing to find two more people.

"The search and rescue operation is currently being conducted with high intensity. Today, approximately 40 kilometers away from the disaster's epicenter, near the village of Sori, a deceased man's body was sighted. Furthermore, it should be noted that spot inspections are being carried out at the epicenter of the disaster.

As a reference point, we have designated an area of eight hectares, within which the body of another teenager was discovered today, along with a separate body fragment of an individual. Presently, the search operations are actively continuing, with two individuals still unaccounted for, warranting the continuation of the search and rescue operation.

In total, the bodies of 31 deceased individuals have been located. At this time, our focus remains on locating the two more individuals," Mgebrishvili stated.

### President Salome Zourabichvili Extends Congratulations to Ukraine on Independence Day



President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, extended congratulations to Ukraine on its Independence Day.

In her video address, Zourabichvili emphasized that

Georgia stands in solidarity with Ukraine on this occasion.

"Dear President, dear Ukrainian friends, Georgia stands by you today, on this Independence Day. Georgia wants to celebrate your independence with you, for

which you fought so bravely for a year and a half. We will be together on the day of your victory. I congratulate you on Independence Day," said Salome Zourabichvili.

## EU and UNDP to help Kyiv region inhabitants to rehabilitate their communities



The EU and UNDP announced on 23 August that they are starting work in the Ivankivka district, Kyiv region, to help local communities recover from the devastation caused by the war.

Project partners, experts from the international non-governmental organisation The HALO Trust, are already conducting a non-technical survey of the designated areas to minimise the threat of munitions explosions.

Specially trained teams will then begin demolishing damaged houses and clearing debris. Approximately 7,000 tonnes of waste and scrap metal will be removed from the community.

The work in the Ivankivka district is being carried out within the framework of the joint EU-UNDP 'Support to Early Recovery in War-Affected Areas of Ukraine' project, funded by the European Commission under the Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI).

(euneighbourseast.eu)

### Weather

Friday, August 25

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 19°C

Saturday, August 26

Day Clear  
High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 19°C

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