

Georgia's Ministry of Defense and US Embassy Deny Media Reports of US Proposal for Military Base in Georgia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

On September 12, 'Mtavari Channel' reported that during his visit to Tbilisi in 2021, US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin stated, "The US expressed its readiness to open a full-fledged military base in Georgia." According to 'Mtavari Channel,' the government refused this offer.

In response, both the Ministry of Defense of Georgia and the US Embassy have issued statements refuting the claims and denying the accuracy of these reports, asserting that no such proposal has been made by the United States.

"The Ministry of Defense is responding to information published in the media regarding US-Georgia military-political relations, which is completely



false. This information has been spread by a politically biased individual and subsequently utilized by certain media outlets and politically engaged individuals to launch a disinformation campaign.

The statement further empha-

sized, "We urge the public to rely on verified information, especially when discussing such an important topic."

The US Embassy in Georgia also issued a statement confirming that the United States has not proposed the creation of an Ameri-



can military base in Georgia.

"The U.S.-Georgia defense relationship has been and continues to be based on enhancing interoperability and supporting Georgia's ability to deter further aggression and defend its sovereign territory, all of which helps

Georgia become more prepared for NATO membership. To clarify the record in response to recent media reporting, the United States has not offered to establish a U.S. military base in Georgia," The US Embassy's statement reads.

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili Leads Economic Council Session at Government Administration

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili, the Economic Council held a session at the government administration. According to the government, council members reviewed positive economic trends in the country.

According to their reports, a record increase in foreign invest-

ments was noted in the country. Specifically, the volume of direct foreign investments in Georgia in the second quarter of 2023 reached \$505.7 million, marking a 29.9 percent increase compared to the adjusted data for the second quarter of 2022.

"During the meeting, they discussed the foreign trade growth trend. In August 2023, the trade turnover reached \$1,766.1 million. From January to August,

the trade turnover increased by 16.8 percent, reaching \$14,001.1 million. In the same period, exports grew by 14.3 percent, reaching \$4,075.5 million. Imports increased by 17.8 percent, totaling \$9,925.7 million in January-August 2023.

At the meeting, they discussed current and planned large investment projects in Georgia's transport and logistics sector, including the develop-

ment of the Anaklia port. Information about the selection of a private partner was also presented.

At the Council meeting, they discussed the ongoing works for the 'Georgian Railway' modernization project. It was noted that upon its completion in 2024, the railway's cargo capacity will double.

The meeting discussed the harvest process. As of Septem-

ber 13, 51,000 tons of grapes have been processed, including 27,000 tons of Rkatsiteli, 20,000 tons of Saperavi, 1.54 thousand tons of Mtsvane Kakhuri grapes, and the rest are various grape varieties. According to information from the Government of Georgia, 5,600 winegrower farmers contributed to the harvest," the statement issued by the Government of Georgia reads.



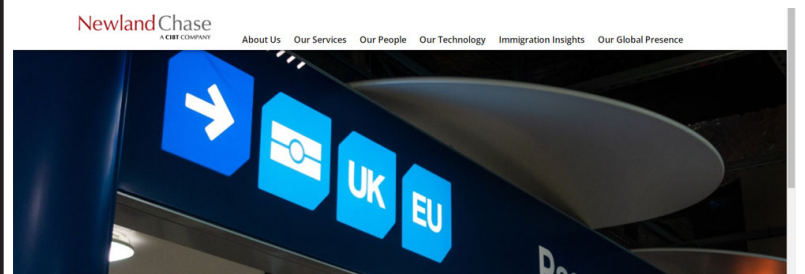
The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgian and Russian Citizens to Require Transit Visa for Travel via the United Kingdom

UK. This order does not affect citizens of Georgia or Russia in transit to the UK if they entered the UK before October 5, 2023.

According to information on the official website, in Great Britain, a normative act typically takes effect no earlier than



UNITED KINGDOM - Transit Visa Requirement for Russians, Georgians

September 11, 2023

On 8 September, an amendment to the Immigration (Passenger Transit Visa) Order 2014 went into effect, adding Georgia and Russia to the list of countries or

According to UK authorities, on September 8, 2023, the Immigration, Passenger Transit Visa Order was amended to include Georgia and Russia in the list of countries whose citizens require a transit visa when entering another country via the

21 days after its submission to Parliament. The reason for the order's immediate implementation, just one day after being tabled in Parliament, is the growing concern over the

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increasing number of Georgian and Russian nationals traveling to the UK and seeking asylum upon arrival.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia released information on the topic, stating, "Starting from September 8, Georgian citizens are required to obtain a Direct Airside Transit Visa (DATV) when transiting through a British airport. This visa is necessary when a person is traveling to a third country, has a connecting flight in Great Britain, and does not go through border checks."

The information emphasized

that Great Britain has implemented this requirement for over a hundred countries.

Prime Minister of Georgia Meets with Slovak Ambassador for Farewell Meeting

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, held a farewell meeting with Pavel Vizdal, the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Georgia.

According to the Government of Georgia, the meeting focused on the significant progress made in bilateral relations between

Georgia and Slovakia, encompassing political, economic, and cultural aspects.

"During the conversation, they discussed important projects aimed at supporting the country, with a particular emphasis on Slovakia's assistance to the health sector. The meeting took place at the government administration, where the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic affirmed his strong support for Georgia's EU membership. Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili expressed gratitude to the Ambassador of the Slovak Republic for further strengthening the existing strategic partnership between the



two countries and wished him success in his future endeavors,"

the government's press release reads.

TBILISI. 13 September 2023 — The newly inaugurated Ukrainian House in Tbilisi marks a significant milestone in enhancing support for Ukrainian nationals living in Georgia. The initiative is spearheaded by the Ukrainian community organization "Georgian-Ukrainian Platform" with support from the Government of Germany through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Ukrainian House stands as a symbol of unity and collaboration, committed to supporting Ukrainian nationals who sought refuge in Georgia amidst the devastating war that continues to inflict unmeasurable suffering upon the Ukrainian people and has profound global repercussions.

This multifunctional space, situated in the heart of Tbilisi, addresses the needs of Ukrainian non-governmental organizations and volunteer groups committed to assisting Ukrainian beneficiaries in Georgia. The Ukrainian House will serve as both a communal hub, an operational office space, and a referral point for various socio-economic services tailored for Ukrainian nationals.

In addition to its core mission, the Ukrainian House will be a focal point for cultural exchange. Its dynamic calendar of events will cater to both adults and children, fostering integration and enhancing the growth of Georgian-Ukrainian relations.

The Ukrainian House officially opened its doors on 13 Sep-

Ukrainian House Opens Its Doors in Tbilisi

UNDP and Germany promote social integration of Ukrainian nationals living in Georgia



tember 2023, during a ceremony attended by Tanja Hutt, Deputy Head of Mission, German Embassy in Georgia; Oleksandr Shulha, charge d'affaires of Ukraine in Georgia; Anna Chernyshova, UNDP Resident Representative a.i. in Georgia, Valentina Marjanishvili, Head of the Georgian-Ukrainian Platform, and members of the Ukrainian community in Georgia.

"Germany is proud to contribute to the establishment of the Ukrainian House in Tbilisi. We are confident that this vibrant space will offer support to various Ukrainian community groups in Georgia, while actively fostering social integration," said Tanja Hutt, Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy in Georgia.

"Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has led to the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. Nearly one-third of the Ukrainian population was forced to flee their homes, including more than half of all Ukrainian children. Around 25,000

found shelter, security, and hope in Georgia, and UNDP, with the

generous support of Germany, is committed to assisting them. We're establishing a community space for Ukrainian civil society organizations, providing grants to entrepreneurs, and offering vital support for employment, recovery, and integration," said Anna Chernyshova, UNDP Resident Representative a.i. in Georgia.

"The establishment of the Ukrainian House reflects the close ties between Georgia and Ukraine. This space will offer practical assistance to Ukrainians living in Georgia and will foster connections and nurture talents within our community through cultural and educa-

tional events," noted Valentina Marjanishvili, Head of the Georgian-Ukrainian Platform.

The establishment of the Ukrainian House in Tbilisi is part of UNDP's broader efforts, funded by the Government of Germany, to support refugees and Ukrainian nationals living in Georgia. In partnership with CARE Caucasus, UNDP boosts economic recovery and income generation for refugees and Ukrainian nationals by creating a grants programme for entrepreneurs and providing business training, employment advice, and job-matching services within Georgia's private sector.

Weather

Thursday, September 14

Day Clear High: 25°C

Night Clear Low: 14°C

Friday, September 15

Day Partly Cloudy High: 25°C

Night Clear Low: 16°C

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