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PETRA SEA RESORT

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Former NATO SACEUR General Jones on Vietnam, Ukraine and Russia

INTERVIEW BY VAZHA
TAVBERIDZE

It is probably one of the biggest historical blunders that any leader has made when Vladimir Putin decided to invade [Ukraine], - Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, General Jim Jones tells Radio Free Europe/RI's Georgian Service. "And we might never know why, what prompted the decision, but I think he, like all dictators, listens to people who echo his own views. I think that he saw the unfortunate withdrawal from Afghanistan as an indication that the United States would not be happy about an invasion, but they would believe that the war would be over very quickly. And eventually, like the annexation of Crimea, that this would become a fait accompli very quickly. Unfortunately for him, he was sadly mistaken."

Continued on page 2 General Jones. Source: CNN



Ukraine Latest: Moscow 'Ready for Talks' to End 'Tragedy' of War but Blames Kyiv for Lack of Discussion



Valdimir Putin. Source: Sky News

COMPILED BY ANA DUMBADZE

Vladimir Putin said Russia has always been "ready for talks" to end the "tragedy" of war in Ukraine. Speaking at the virtual G20 meeting, the Russian president gave his most pacific comments yet since invading Ukraine, but then blamed Kyiv for the lack of peace talks. His remarks have, unsurprisingly, not gone down too well with Kyiv. Mykhailo Podolyak, adviser to the office of the Ukrainian president, said the comments were merely "another distortion of reality" by the Russian president. "Murderers who commit a premeditated crime in cold blood, in the middle of it do not think how to stop the crime," he wrote on X, adding that the only

"workable solution" to end the war was for Russia to immediately withdraw all of its troops from Ukrainian territory. "Afterwards, sit down to discuss payments, compensation, and other legal consequences of the war," he said. However, the talks that Putin mentioned are unlikely to be successful, as neither side appears ready to give up on their red lines. For Ukraine, it wants to restore its full territorial integrity and push Russia out of the country entirely. For Russia, accepting this would be seen as a surrender and it is unlikely to give up the currently occupied territories, especially Crimea - which it illegally annexed long before this war, in 2014. Moreover, when it began its invasion, the Kremlin had hoped to bring Ukraine further into its sphere of influence and push it away from Euro-Atlantic security structures. But the invasion has had the

opposite effect, and Ukraine will now likely become part of the EU and, later, NATO.

IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE WEEK INCLUDE:

Volodymyr Zelensky said Ukraine's troops faced "difficult" defensive operations on parts of the eastern front, as bitter winter cold settles in. But he added that forces in the south were still conducting offensive actions.

The death toll from a Russian strike on a Ukrainian hospital in Selydove rose to three. After Tuesday's attack, rescuers spent the night clearing rubble and discovered further casualties.

The Russian foreign ministry said relations with the US were extremely thin and risked being torn at any moment. Spokesperson Maria Zakharova told reporters Washington's actions could lead to "unpredictable consequences."

Hungary's prime minister, Viktor Orbán, is threatening to block Ukraine's candidacy for membership of the EU. European leaders will meet on 14 and 15 December to discuss Ukraine's EU bid.

The European Council president, Charles Michel, said he expected a "difficult" meeting next month about Ukraine joining the EU. He promised to do "everything in [his] power" to make a decision in December.

The EU has approved a further €1.5bn (£1.3bn) payment in macro financial assistance to Ukraine. It is the tenth payment made as part of an €18bn program to keep the Ukrainian economy moving.

Russia's defense ministry said a group of Russian journalists had come under drone attack from Ukrainian forces in the Zaporizhzhia region. It said one reporter received medical treatment but no one was life-threateningly injured.

A Russian independent politician was summoned to a local prosecutor's office after declaring her intention to run in next year's presidential election. She has been critical of the regime.

The Kremlin said there were "no revisions" to its policy of pardoning prisoners in exchange for fighting in Ukraine. It followed local media reports of a Russian "satanist" killer who was released.

The Ukrainian air force said it shot down 14 Shahed drones launched by Russian forces overnight Tuesday. There were no immediate reports of casualties or major damage.

The US voiced concern that Iran may provide Russia with ballistic missiles for use in its war against Ukraine. The national security council spokesperson, John Kirby, said the development would probably be disastrous for the Ukrainian people.

The UN Human Rights Office said more than 10,000 civilians have been killed in Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion. It expects the real toll is significantly higher.

FINLAND TO CLOSE ALL BUT ONE RUSSIA BORDER CROSSING

One of the major developments of another week in Ukraine's war against Russia's invasion has been Finland's prime minister Petteri Orpo saying the country will shut three border crossings - leaving just one open in its 1,340km border with Russia - after Helsinki accused the Kremlin of pushing hundreds of asylum seekers to the border in recent weeks.

Finland accuses Russia of facilitating organized illegal crossings. The border also marks the frontiers of NATO and the European Union. Estonia, another NATO and EU member, also says Russia is pushing asylum seekers to its border

as a form of hybrid "warfare".

Finland's closures will begin at midnight on Friday. The Raja-Jooseppi crossing, in the far northern Lapland region, will remain open and asylum applications will be processed there, Reuters reports.

"The government has today decided to close more border posts," Orpo told a press conference. "Raja-Jooseppi is the northernmost [crossing] and it requires a real effort to get there".

Following Finland, Estonia has accused Russia of pushing asylum seekers to its border crossings.

The issue has become a point of contention between the two EU and NATO members and Russia, as they tussle over the fates of asylum seekers from often war-torn countries who have few possessions and face hostility and destitution.

RUSSIAN TROOPS STILL ATTEMPTING TO ENCIRCLE AVDIIVKA

After reports Russia is beginning to wind down its operations at the battered eastern city of Avdiivka, Ukraine's latest battlefield update suggests there is still heavy fighting in the area.

"The occupiers are still trying to encircle Avdiivka," Ukraine's general staff reported.

It said Ukrainian forces repelled some 30 separate attacks from Russian forces in and around the city yesterday alone.

Elsewhere, it reported no engagements around Bakhmut, but said more than 100 settlements across the frontline were shelled by Russian forces despite worsening weather conditions.

It also noted four attacks around Robotyne (in Zaporizhzhia), where Russia has been trying to recover lost ground.

EU, Sweden, and UNDP Join Hands with WECF - Georgia, to Support Labor Migrant Women's Return and Reintegration

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in partnership with "Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) - Georgia" civil society organization, unveiled a comprehensive study shedding light on the challenges encountered by labor migrant women upon their return to Georgia.

This eye-opening research, supported by Sweden and the European Union, serves as a vital resource for the Georgian Government, civil society, and the private sector. It aims to address the pressing social and economic needs of labor migrant women and dismantle barriers hindering their return and successful reintegration.

The research findings stem from 22 comprehensive interviews with labor migrant women, coupled with thorough analyses of Georgia's legislation, policies, and state programs.

The public release of the study on 22 November brought together representatives from the Georgian government, civil society, and international organizations. The event provided a platform for insights from migrant women and their family members.

In line with this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the discussion tackled some of the main challenges faced by Georgian women and showed a shared commitment to addressing and preventing all forms of gender-based discrimination.

Douglas Webb, UNDP Resident Representative a.i. in Georgia, emphasized the critical importance of women's economic empowerment. "Economic empowerment of women fosters the prosperity and resilience of the entire nation. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reports that six out of ten Georgian emigrants in the OECD countries are women. Identifying and overcoming the barriers faced



by migrant women, and ensuring their successful return and economic integration, are essential steps towards fostering inclusive growth, social progress, and sustainable development."

Eva Atterlöv Frisell, Deputy Head of Development Cooperation at the Swedish Embassy in Georgia, stressed the critical need to assist migrant women in their return to their homeland. "This study provides an opportunity to identify the specific reasons preventing the return of labor migrant women. Sweden stands as a steadfast partner in advancing initiatives and policies that empower women and promote gender equality."

Jurate Juodsnukyte, Team Leader for Governance and Human Capital at the EU Delegation to Georgia said she deplored the specific challenges migrant women face in Georgia in the context of increasing security threats in the region and globally, and highlighted how those challenges can be transformed into development opportunities through political will and appropriate policy measures. "The EU is investing in better migration management, including reintegration policies, access to jobs, and advocating for better social protection for the people of Georgia."

Ida Bakhturidze, Director of WECF - Georgia, noted that, "In the face of the

growing phenomenon of migration feminization from Georgia, as an increasing number of women seek employment opportunities abroad, the pivotal issue of ensuring their socio-economic stability upon return calls for immediate consideration. Delving into the research findings on the economic challenges faced by labor migrant women in Georgia, we emphasize the pressing need for inclusive policies and programs. Through our collective dialogue, we aim to catalyze positive change, envisioning a supportive environment that empowers these women to return, reintegrate, and actively contribute to the flourishing of our society."

The study reveals that despite Georgia's recent progress in developing migration systems, the feminization of migration is often overlooked. The experiences of labor migrant women illustrate that significant gaps and lack of gender perspectives in legislation, policy, and state programs hinder their return and sustainable reintegration.

During migration, labor migrant women have limited opportunities to accumulate financial capital, with family experiences hinging on remittance. In 2020, the Georgian diaspora contributed nearly \$2 billion in remittances, constituting 13% of the country's GDP. (Source: OECD)

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Human Rights Day 2023: Act for Rights Now!

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is launching a month-long campaign "Act for Rights Now!" dedicated to Human Rights Day 2023. Set to kickstart in November and extend through December 2023, the campaign will unite diverse stakeholders, including representatives from the Georgian Government, Parliament, civil society, the private sector, international organizations, diplomatic missions, and donor agencies, such as the European Union and the embassies of Germany, Norway, and Sweden. The events will feature collaborative initiatives, discussions, and activities that promote awareness, understanding, and engagement on human rights issues. By bringing together key stakeholders, UNDP seeks to foster a collective commitment to upholding human rights as a fundamental cornerstone of sustain-

able development. This year's Human Rights Day celebrates the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and spotlights the remarkable impact of this foundational document on countries, people, and communities worldwide. Douglas Webb, UNDP Resident Representative a.i. in Georgia, highlighted, "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a global blueprint for shaping a more equitable world, where the rights of every person are safeguarded, and societies are built upon the principles of equality, inclusion, and dignity. UNDP is committed to making this vision a reality, both in Georgia and across the globe." ### Check out the campaign calendar and follow #Act4RightsNow, #იმეტიერეფულებებისთვის on social media: @UNDPGeorgia (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).

Action Plan for Deoligarchization in Georgia Released



The action plan for deoligarchization has been released. As noted in the document, an action plan to prevent the excessive influence of interests in economic, political and public life was developed, which corresponds to the goals listed in the Georgia-EU Association Agreement and the Association Agenda for 2021-2027 and defines the scope of measures necessary for a systematic approach.

The document envisages taking steps in 7 directions, namely:

Fight against corruption (strengthening the fight against all forms of corruption and prevention of corruption, implementation of GRECO's recommendations).

Public procurement ("Maintaining transparency and accountability in public procurement").

Competition policy ("formulation and

implementation of effective competition policy").

Justice.

Fight against money laundering and terrorist financing ("Further strengthening of anti-money laundering policies, including transparency of information on legal entities and beneficiary owners, as well as timely and effective access to information on beneficiary owners, in accordance with MONEYVAL and FATF recommendations").

Monitoring of financial activities of political parties.

Media ("Strengthening media pluralism and media ownership transparency").

The document notes that this action plan recognizes the interrelated nature of potential problems, which provides an opportunity to establish a relationship between different areas of law and agencies implementing the activities of these areas.

"For greater efficiency, it also allows stakeholders to focus their resources on particularly vulnerable areas. Actions aimed at preventing the excessive influence of interests are actions that contribute to the identification, fight and prevention of phenomena related to oligarchy. The measures of the first category focus on strengthening the institutional structure and capacity of the relevant bodies so that they can carry out their activities in an independent, reliable, coordinated and professional manner. The measures of the second category focus on activities that prevent and/or limit individuals or groups of individuals from using excessive power for their own benefit/misuse or preventing the concentration of such power in the social, economic and political life of Georgia.

"This will contribute to greater health and strength, greater reliability of processes in competition, procurement, media, elections and other areas, where European standards will be considered; It will also help to better reflect the choices and interests of Georgian citizens. Another category of measures focuses on ensuring greater transparency and accountability in social, economic and political processes, so that the system is more inclusive and adaptive while remaining under democratic control. In other words, each activity in the following seven areas contributes to one or more tasks of strengthening the implementing agency; it will contribute to the improvement of existing legislation; to better regulating the field in accordance with the legislation of the European Union, or to strengthening the system in another way, in order to avoid the excessive influence of interests in the social, economic or political life of Georgia," the document states.



Georgian Journalist Tamuna Museridze Among the BBC's List of 100 Most Influential Women of 2023

Georgian journalist Tamuna Museridze was included in the BBC's list of 100 most influential women of 2023.

The BBC writes that Museridze, while searching for her biological parents, discovered that in the 1950s, a large black market of baby trafficking existed in Georgia, as a result of which thousands of babies were adopted by illegal parents.

In order for people to find their missing relatives, Museridze created a group on Facebook called "Vedzeb" (Looking For), which has more than 230,000 members.

"Museridze's organization has helped hundreds of families to reunite, but she

is still looking for her own family," writes the BBC.

Museridze responded to the BBC's inclusion in the list of influential women on the social media.

"This year, for the first time, the BBC was interested in the developments in Georgia!!! This year, for the first time, a Georgian woman was included in the list of world influential women!!! This year, along with Michelle Obama, I was in this list!!! I'm still shaking and I may not be able to organize the text well. But the main thing is that it was all worth it. Not understanding the truth and fighting for the truth was worth it! Never give up on your goals, never back down. Never give up and remember: with the bad, good must come!" Museridze wrote.



The Biltmore Tbilisi Hotel Honored with UN Global Compact Corporate Sustainability Award for Decent Work and Economic Growth

A comprehensive initiative the 'Empower Workforce, Drive Growth' project has been undertaken by the organization. By emphasizing the principles of fair employment, job creation, and sustainable economic practices, a contribution is being made toward the realization of SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth.

The team at The Biltmore Tbilisi Hotel aspires to create a positive impact on their employees, the community, and the overall economic landscape. They aim to foster an environment where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the sustainable development of our society.

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Former NATO SACEUR General Jones on Vietnam, Ukraine and Russia

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HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE SITUATION ON THE BATTLEFIELD RIGHT NOW?

I don't think there's any clear picture right now. The Ukrainian counter-offensive was unfortunately lacking in one key element, and that's air power. And then the Russians had plenty of time to mine the areas where they thought the Ukrainians would advance, and it just caused everything to slow down. But one thing is clear: that Mr. Putin's ambition to take over Ukraine in its entirety is not going to happen.

IS A DECISIVE BATTLEGROUND VICTORY STILL FEASIBLE FOR EITHER SIDE?

I don't know the answer to that. It doesn't look like it, although I think the stated ambitions on both sides have not changed all that much. But if you look at what's going on on the ground right now, I don't see a definitive advantage on either side, except for the fact that there's pretty much no doubt that Russia will not be successful in taking over Ukraine as a country. I think it's extremely important on almost a global basis that how this ends has to be seen as a victory for Ukraine and a defeat for Russia. I don't know what that looks like, but I'm pretty convinced that it has to end that way, because if it doesn't, the autocrats of the world will be emboldened. I would think that the President of China would rethink his position with regard to Taiwan perhaps. And if Vladimir Putin is re-admitted to the family of national leaders, to the international meetings, as though nothing happened, that would be the worst outcome. He's an indicted war criminal by the ICC, and that should stand for something. But how this ends, I think, is really, really important in terms of the perceptions that are going to reverberate all over the world and will cause many countries to behave differently one way or the other.

THE RUSSIANS ARE LAUNCHING ANOTHER OFFENSIVE AT AVDIIVKA. WEREN'T THEY SUPPOSED TO BE DEPLETED TO A DEGREE AS TO BE UNABLE TO MOUNT ANOTHER MASSIVE OFFENSIVE?

I think one thing that was always clear is that the Russian leader was willing to commit whatever manpower he needed to, because they outnumber the Ukrainians in terms of population and in their ability to launch a major offensive. I think that his ability to draft young men and throw them into the Russian army, even though they're fairly poorly trained, is something that you have to take into account. It's good to have enough man-



If you're going to fight a war, you need to fight a war to win, and you need to have the equipment that you need to prevail

power, it's another problem to have qualified manpower that is trained, organized and equipped to do the job. And the first year of the war, Ukraine was more on the defensive, which is much easier in terms of manpower losses. And then the second year, Ukraine wanted to go on the offensive. But they also found out that if you don't go on the offensive with at least a three to four or five to one ratio, you're going to take more casualties. And the fact that they were fighting a combined arms war without one of the key elements, which is air power, that slowed things down. I think the needed air power is on the way, but it's not going to be ready to go for quite a while. Once they get that, they can really complete that combined arms capability, for which they do have great comprehension. But they need to get it all together before they can really start making a difference.

GENERAL ZALUZHNY IN THE ECONOMIST, SAID: "IF YOU LOOK AT NATO'S TEXTBOOK AND AT THE MATH, FOUR MONTHS SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO REACH CRIMEA, FIGHT IN CRIMEA, RETURN FROM CRIMEA AND TO HAVE GONE BACK IN AND OUT AGAIN." WERE THE WESTERN MILITARY FORECASTS WRONG, OR DID UKRAINE UNDERPERFORM?

Generally speaking, it would have been better for the allies to provide the equipment that Ukraine needed to prosecute a more effective campaign, especially when they tried to go on the offense. The US was complicit in not providing the weapons rapidly enough, particularly the F-16s. We were too cautious about not giving the Ukrainians weapons that could strike into Russia, essentially causing them to have to fight the war with one hand tied behind their backs. But I think people realize that now, and the supply chains are better, the equipment is arriving at a faster rate. We'll have to wait and see. But the big missing piece is aviation. When they get the air power they need, it'll make a difference.

ZALUZHNY NOTED THEY'RE AT STALEMATE, BUT SAID HE DOESN'T SEE THE COMBINED ARMS MANEUVER AS A SOLUTION: HE IS BETTING ON TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT. WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US WHEN IT COMES TO THE UKRAINE WAR?

You'll get the first indication of where that leaves us in February at the Munich Security Conference, which I'm sure will be dominated by the Ukraine-Russia conflict. I was there last year, and many words spoken by political leaders were very encouraging. Like, "we're with you until the end." So it'll be interesting to see what the dialogue is this year, whether there's donor fatigue out there, and I think Mr. Putin is certainly counting on the fact that he can outlast the West.



General Jones. Source: United States Marine Corps



Ukraine understands that without airpower, the manpower bill goes up exponentially. They can't afford the Putin doctrine, just throwing men at the problem

Because the West is always wanting to end wars quickly, to do whatever you have to do.

ONE YEAR AGO, WE SAW THE IMPACT OF HIMARS ON THE BATTLEFIELD. WILL THERE BE AN ATACMS OR F-16 ERA TOO?

I think so. The military advice here in Washington would be to provide for that. But politically, there is fear in the capitals that if you give the Ukrainians the weapons that can strike into Russia, then they will do so, and it might cause a wider war. I don't think that's correct, to be honest with you. My first war was in Vietnam, and I was always frustrated by the fact that we couldn't pursue the enemy into Laos or Cambodia, or north of the DMZ, and there was so many restrictions on us that we did have the impression that we're fighting with one

hand tied behind our back, and I think that's a risky strategy that normally contributes to defeat of the one side that has had so many impositions on it. The fear, obviously, is that Vladimir Putin will escalate to a nuclear conflict. And everybody's concerned about that. But I do think that the important thing is to give the Ukrainians the panoply of weapons they need, and to certainly prevent Russia from advancing any further into Ukraine.

SO SHOULD WE EXPECT MORE, BETTER, LONGER RANGE ATACMS? AND WHAT'S THAT DEPENDENT UPON?

The military advice here is that they want to give them longer ranges. I'm not sure where the political leadership is on that. But you know, if you're going to fight a war, you need to fight a war to win. And you need to have the equipment that you need to prevail. Otherwise, you're working towards a stalemate, and that's not very good for anybody.

LET'S LOOK AT THIS FROM ZALUZHNY'S PERSPECTIVE: YOU ARE A GENERAL, YOU HAVE TO CONDUCT A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE, AND YOU ARE ASKED BY YOUR PARTNERS ON WHOM YOU ARE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON IN YOUR WAR EFFORTS TO GO INTO IT WITHOUT AIR SUPPORT. HOW DOES IT FEEL?

Not good. You know, in my days in Vietnam, we always had adequate air power, be it gunships or Phantoms- the North Vietnamese that we fought against did not have that. And they paid a heavy price militarily, regardless of how it worked out politically, and I think that Ukraine understands that without airpower, the manpower bill goes up exponentially. So you have to be very careful,



NATO deserves a lot of credit. The defense of Europe is now a valid concept

because for Ukraine, manpower is really important. And they can't afford the Putin doctrine, which is just throwing men at the problem. He doesn't care. They do.

WITH ALL THIS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, WHAT CAN BE DONE NOW? IN POKER TERMS, WHAT HAND HAS THE WEST GOT AND HOW IS IT BEING PLAYED?

Well, the list of things they don't have needs to be shortened. Aviation is the big missing piece. The land offensive was stymied by the amount of time the Russians had to prepare the field with mines and fortifications that make it much harder for the Ukrainians to achieve massive success, especially if they're trying to do so without airpower.

On the positive side, though, one of the good things is the resurgence of NATO. I think NATO deserves a lot of credit. The defense of Europe is now a valid concept. We know what that is, and we know where the line of defense is, for the defense of Europe and protection of other countries like Georgia, Moldova, and others. And if we're able to limit Russia's advance to what it is now, if that becomes a negotiating position, then I think the West will be able to say that they prevailed. And the battle between the autocracies and the democracies and other parts of the world will probably have a different outcome.

SO THAT WOULD BE PARTIAL VICTORY, BUT STILL A UKRAINIAN VICTORY. Right.

SINCE THE WAR STARTED, WE'VE SEEN PROFOUND CHANGES IN RUSSIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD - FINLAND AND SWEDEN GOING TO NATO, MOLDOVA ALIGNED WITH THE WEST, AZERBAIJAN RECLAIMING KARABAKH, AND ARMENIA DRIFTING FROM RUSSIA AND GETTING ARMS DELIVERIES FROM FRANCE AND INDIA. WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE TO GEORGIA IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES?

I think the closer the countries are to the threat posed by Mr. Putin and Russia, the more the relationship with NATO becomes important. NATO needs to reach out to those countries that are at risk and lend a hand towards explaining to them what it takes to become a NATO member. And frankly, I think, the Ukrainians should be doing the things to prepare for NATO accession that they can do right now, so they don't have to wait another couple of years. There's a lot of work that can be done right now to reassure the people of those at-risk countries that the NATO embrace is out there. And they should be doing things that they can do now to shorten the time between where we are now and eventual accession to NATO. At the end of the day, Russia has to be convinced that this was a mistake and, secondly, that NATO is going to be many times stronger and more capable than it was before the invasion. And that there is a line of defense for the defense of Europe, and countries like Georgia and others will probably be on it at some point.



How this ends is really important in terms of the perceptions that are going to reverberate around the world, affecting how many countries will then choose to behave



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Petra Sea Resort and Valor Hospitality Partners Forge Groundbreaking Collaboration in Georgia's Thriving Hospitality Sector



BY MARIAM GORKHELASHVILI

In a landmark move set to redefine Georgia's hospitality landscape, Petra Sea Resort has announced a strategic collaboration with Valor Hospitality Partners, a globally recognized hotel management company based in Atlanta, USA. The announcement, made at the prestigious Future Hospitality Summit, marks the first instance in Georgia where a resort of such scale will be fully managed by an international powerhouse like Valor Hospitality.

Petra Sea Resort, a multifunctional residential and investment complex nestled along the picturesque Black Sea in Tsikhisdziri, aims to offer a unique blend

of luxury, comfort, and sustainability. The resort covers a sprawling 20-hectare plot, with a remarkable one-kilometer coastline and a vision that transcends traditional resort experiences.

In an exclusive interview, Tinatin Kalandarishvili, Head of Petra Sea Resort Project, shared insights into the vision behind this collaboration:

"As Petra Sea Resort is a large-scale and very complex project, it was important for us to find an experienced management company to manage all facilities within the resort. Our goal is to offer a high level of services, and we are sure that with Valor, we can set a new benchmark in the region."

Michael Pownall, Co-founder and managing Partner (Africa & Middle East + CIS) at Valor Hospitality Partners, emphasized the global perspec-

tive they bring:

"Valor brings a global perspective to managing a mixed-use development which includes hospitality assets, branded residences, non-branded residences, commercial components, significant food and beverage, lifestyle, and community elements."

The collaboration is poised to contribute significantly to the growth and development of Petra Sea Resort.

"Together with Valor Hospitality partners, we are developing not only the management strategy of the resort but also optimizing the master plan to offer vast and diverse infrastructure for year-round living and leisure," Kalandarishvili stated.

Pownall added, "Being managed by a hospitality company brings the element of hospitality into the whole equation, which traditionally would have been more transactional in nature."

The decision to announce the collaboration at the Future Hospitality Summit, a gathering of industry leaders and professionals, was explained by Kalandarishvili:

"For Petra Sea Resort, it was important to show off the project within this event and attract the attention of industry professionals to the project in particular and to our country in general."

Pownall highlighted the significance of the event as a premium platform for networking and investment opportunities, aligning with their strategic goals.

The collaboration has garnered positive feedback from stakeholders, including investors and the public. Kalandarishvili explained:

"The collaboration was the idea of me and my team, and it was very easy to convince the shareholders of the company that this was the right thing to do."

Regarding industry trends, Kalandarishvili mentioned the incorporation of branded residences, reflecting a growing demand for luxury properties associated with well-known hotel brands.

The collaboration itself stands out as a distinctive feature, making Petra Sea Resort the first of its kind in the region. Kalandarishvili emphasized:

"The main distinctive feature is the collaboration with Valor. Petra Sea Resort will be the first resort of this scale to be managed by an international management company."

She then outlined the resort's commitment to sustainability:

"All the buildings of Petra Sea Resort will be designed and built in full compliance with the requirements of the current legislation, which will allow its residents to reduce the energy resources consumed by 30-40%."



Regarding technology, both leaders highlighted its role in enhancing guest experiences.

"New technologies help to reduce costs, lower staff workloads, increase revenue generation, and improve customer experience," Kalandarishvili noted.

The impact on the local community is a crucial aspect of Petra Sea Resort's vision.

"The resort will employ over a thousand local professionals and will contribute to their professional growth. Furthermore, the resort will support local suppliers and collaborate with them in each area of resort operations," she said.

Pownall, reflecting on community impact, emphasized: "The project will create positive momentum for the local economy, local colleges, upskilling, and

multi-skilling of existing talent."

In conclusion, the collaboration between Petra Sea Resort and Valor Hospitality Partners not only signifies a monumental shift in Georgia's hospitality sector but also sets a new standard for international collaboration and sustainable, community-driven resort development. As these two entities join forces, Georgia's Black Sea coastline is poised to become a global hub for luxury living and unparalleled hospitality experiences.

PETRA SEA RESORT

VALOR
REIMAGINING HOSPITALITY

EU, Sweden, and UNDP Join Hands with WECF – Georgia, to Support Labor Migrant Women's Return and Reintegration

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Post-migration, these women encounter challenges in accessing vital information about available state programs, educational avenues, or funding opportunities for successful reintegration into society.

Furthermore, the study identifies historical structural barriers and socioeconomic backgrounds in Georgia that obstruct women migrants' equal participation in various facets of life, including economic, social, cultural, and political activities. These barriers include high unemployment levels, loss of qualifications, limited access to care infrastructure, and inadequate basic social protection services, such as low pensions and expensive healthcare. Additional

obstacles encompass the lack of unemployment assistance, housing challenges, and excessive interest rates on loans from commercial institutions.

The research provides sector-specific recommendations for state agencies and local and international organizations, integrating empirical findings and international best practices. These recommendations stress the importance of aiding labor migrant women's dignified return to minimize the social cost of feminized migration and optimize their potential contributions. Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on embedding gender perspectives systematically into the country's legislation, policies, and programs concerning migration, ensuring sustainable reintegration upon return.



The full report is available on the UNDP website.

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The Sweden-funded UN Joint Program for Gender Equality is a flagship initiative assisting Georgia in making social, economic, and policy strides toward achieving meaningful gender equality for everyone, everywhere. The program is implemented jointly by three UN agencies – UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women.

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With funds from the European Union, WECF – Georgia promotes the political and economic empowerment of Georgian women and supports women and girls to actively engage in political, economic, and social activities.

Plant Based Treaty Awards Georgian Businesses for Environmental Guardianship ahead of COP28 in Dubai

BY KATIE RUTH DAVIES

In its annual Emissions Gap report, the UN Environment Program says the climate action plans of governments will fail to limit the global temperature to under 1.5 - 2 degrees Celsius this century. At 3 degrees Celsius of warming, scientists predict the world could pass several catastrophic points of no return, from the runaway melting of ice sheets to the Amazon rainforest drying out.

COP28 UAE, kicking off next week, is set to be a milestone moment when the world takes stock of its progress on the Paris Agreement. The first Global Stocktake (GST) will provide a comprehensive assessment of progress since the adoption of the Paris Agreement. This will help align the efforts on climate action, including measures that need to be put in place to bridge the gaps in progress. The COP28 UAE presidency will work to ensure that the world responds to the GST with a clear action plan.

Ahead of COP28, the Plant Based Treaty-Georgia team gathered to applaud the remarkable efforts of individuals, businesses, and organizations in Tbilisi who are tirelessly working towards creating positive change, demonstrating that thinking globally and acting locally can truly make a difference to combating environmental issues.

Winners were selected through a poll listing the Georgian endorsers of the Plant Based Treaty so as to identify outstanding candidates in various categories. The final winners were chosen by the public through a social media poll, ensuring that the community has a voice in honoring those who have truly made an impact.

Before we meet the winners, let's talk



about the Plant Based Treaty. The Plant Based Treaty (PBT) is an international agreement aimed at reshaping our food system to align with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. When national governments sign, they commit to three key demands: ending animal agriculture, switching to plant-based food systems, and restoring Earth's damage caused by animal agriculture through reforestation and rewilding. Your signature, whether as an individual, business, group, or city not only shows support for this treaty to be adopted globally but also signifies active implementation of changes at the individual and local levels.

Animal agriculture is devastating our planet. The Plant Based Treaty offers a practical path to dismantle this destructive industry. The Treaty spotlights the overlooked impact of animal agriculture on the climate crisis, a key aspect often ignored in climate negotiations. A

prominent Oxford study concludes that a vegan diet is the most effective way to reduce your environmental impact, surpassing measures like recycling, going car-free, or avoiding transatlantic flights. The PBT climate campaign is one of the few advocating for the interests of non-human animals, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life on Earth. PBT asserts that for climate justice, we need animal justice. In fact, we must consider all planetary boundaries, social justice issues, and their intricate interactions.

Now let's look at who won the Georgian Plant Based Treaty Awards 2023.

The City's Choice Award is a distinguished award dedicated to a business in support of the Plant Based Treaty, which plays a pivotal role in shaping the city's eco-conscious future. Whether by expanding their range of vegan options, offering vegan products, or operating as a fully vegan establishment, these busi-

nesses exemplify a commitment to sustainability and contribute significantly to the city's green endeavors. The nominees were Freak Shop, Zero Effect and Pizza Verde. The winner was Freak Shop.

The Sustainably Sweet Prize is for a compassionate vegan establishment in Tbilisi that brings joy to the daily lives of individuals and adds a touch of enchantment to special occasions through their extraordinary sweet creations. Their remarkable treats stand as a testament to the belief that no harm to animals is necessary to indulge in delightful confections. The nominees were Sweet Vegan and Sladenkiy Tbilisi, and Sweet Vegan won.

Tbilisi's Favorite Vegan Eatery Award is bestowed upon a wholly vegan establishment in Tbilisi, where both residents and visitors find themselves returning repeatedly for more than just the delectable cuisine. Beyond the culinary delights, this establishment is unwaver-

ingly committed to fostering social change by championing non-violence towards animals and promoting sustainable living. Their dedication extends beyond the plate, aiming to safeguard the well-being of all living beings on our planet. All nominees are endorsers of the Plant Based Treaty. The nominees were: Kiwi Café, Shpana and Glück. The winner was Kiwi Café.

The Outstanding Organization Award celebrates the unwavering dedication and commitment of an esteemed organization located in Tbilisi, one which exemplifies a profound commitment to serving the community, striving to make a positive impact. They stand as leaders, setting a commendable example and inspiring transformative change through their efforts to educate the public. All nominees are endorsers of the Plant Based Treaty: Choose to Help, Parki Ar Minda, and Vegan Georgia. The winner was Parki Ar Minda.

A Special Award, "Kartveli veganebis mavis jildo" (Vegan Father of Georgia Award), was given to Vakhtang Ushveridze, an individual who is not only an enthusiastic supporter of the Plant Based Treaty campaign but also exemplifies kindness, compassion, unwavering commitment, and long-term dedication to activism. His significant contributions have played a pivotal role in shaping the animal rights movement in Georgia.

"We believe he deserves this title as a symbol of the community's profound respect and gratitude, acknowledging his incredible efforts in the relentless pursuit of animal liberation," the PBT organizers noted.

To find out more about the international Plant Based Treaty and how you can endorse it as an individual or business, check out their website: <https://plantbasedtreaty.org/endorse/>

Gault & Millau
GEORGIA

X



On November 11, the presentation of the new, autumn-winter menu was held with Gault & Millau Georgia" at ATI Rooftop Restaurant, located on the 10th floor of the beloved "Sheraton Grand Tbilisi Metechi Palace Hotel". Five modern Georgian dishes were presented at the event. Each dish on the menu is inspired by well-known and unknown ingredients characteristic of different regions of Georgia. Famous restaurateurs, chefs, and representatives of gastronomic culture were gathered in the evening. The dinner was crowned by the presentation of the prestigious award of "Gault & Millau Georgia" to ATI restaurant. ATI Rooftop Restaurant" is a modern Georgian kitchen, bar, terrace, and lounge. The refined interior, the best panoramic view of the city, and exceptional service accurately reflect the culture of Georgian hospitality and are always a new discovery for Georgian and foreign guests. The culinary team of ATI is composed of representatives of different regions; all of them contribute to the restoration of old traditional tastes and adapting them to modern receptors.



For reservations: +995 577213034
Sheraton Grand Tbilisi Metechi Palace
20 Telavi Street, Tbilisi

UNICEF Georgia Reflects on 30 Years of Progress



BY SHELBI ANKIEWICZ

Georgia celebrated its 30th anniversary with The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Monday by commemorating World Children's Day and discussing the progress the country has made over the last three decades.

In 1989, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which is a global set of legally binding laws to protect children's well-being. Georgia opened its UNICEF office in 1993, when the goals shifted from humanitarian assistance to rehabilitation and development, and, in 1994, they joined the CRC. During the celebration, participants emphasized the importance of accelerating the CRC, building an inclusive society for everyone, recognizing how far children in Georgia have come, and recognizing what still needs to be overcome.

"As we look back, we can celebrate, but

there are still too many challenges that kids endure," said Sabine Machl, UN Resident Coordinator.

Jesper Moller took over as the UNICEF Representative for Georgia five months ago. He has worked with UNICEF for 22 years, however, in his position in Georgia, he focuses primarily on upstream work, which is composed of policy, legislative reform, influencing, and working with the government so they can fulfill their commitments. When summarizing the country's results over the past few years, he highlighted specific areas that have had major developments.

According to Moller, many achievements have been made in health, especially in the field of vaccines. The availability of research, updating immunization schedules, and consistently updating new vaccines have increased allowing more children to avoid contracting diseases. It was also noted that the mortality rate has dropped more than 50% in the past three decades.

Moller says Children's access to education and psychologists has also made significant progress thanks to UNICEF. Due

to development in Georgia's national legislative framework, technical support, and advocacy of education issues, the percentage of children that now have access to preschool education rose from 46% in 2011 to 72% in 2022. Another way the education system is being reformed is by students who are chosen to act in the roles of their higher-ups, such as nurses, teachers, and administrators, to give feedback as to how the school system can do better.

"The more roles young people themselves have in decision-making support, the more sustainably we are looking at solutions," said Moller.

After the country's progress was summarized, two people were designated as National Ambassadors of UNICEF Georgia. They were awarded in person with plaques, for their verbal declaration of their commitment to being a voice for children across Georgia through personal platforms. Moller says that advocacy and communication about these topics concerning children are very important, and this is one way to spread awareness.

The first person was Irma Khetsuriani, a para-athlete wheelchair fencer who will be representing Georgia in the Olympics next year. This is her first time working with UNICEF, and she showed a strong willingness to advocate for children's rights. The second person was Nikoloz Rachveli, a conductor and composer who has cooperated with UNICEF for a long time but has "renewed" his commitment to children in Georgia and the work being done to help them.

"Indeed, it's an important day for UNICEF Georgia, but also an important day globally," said Moller.

Monday night was a special event to commemorate what has been accomplished over the last 30 years. However, Moller said Georgia is on a five-year cycle, where every five years a strategic program of cooperation with the Government of Georgia is presented to the executive board of UNICEF, which is comprised of UN member states. Once

the new proposed program is approved by the board, those actions are implemented within the government; currently, Georgia has two more years before it enters a new cycle.

When looking forward to what still needs to be accomplished, the education sector is always a top priority. Moller says reform in both primary and secondary education is still needed, plus the need to position the teacher profession more strongly. Another aspect is mental health, not only in children but in young adults – Moller wants to engage more actively with people in this field, but that would require additional reforms to meet their needs.

Moller said another aspect moving forward is to further develop the social work profession to ensure children, regardless of where they live, have access to services.

"We will continue to operationalize the code on child rights, which is a very important foundation for advancing social service delivery for children into

the municipalities," said Moller. "So we want to see more reform with municipalities to make sure the municipalities are equipped with the right finances and resources to deliver basic social services."

Other topics that were highlighted at the event included: The Early Learning and Development Concept; a better inclusive general education, with the introduction of digital resources and international practices; child poverty (decreased from 37.7% in 2004 to 20.4% in 2022), prevention of family separation by moving children from large scale institutions to family-based care; and the decline in violence against children.

World Children's Day is celebrated each year on November 20, the same day the CRC was adopted in 1989. The day serves as an opportunity to spread awareness and raise funds for children all around the world to put them on a path to a better future.

"Children are the heart of society and the indication of a country's progress," said Machl.



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For Better, for Worse, in Climate Change and Democracy...

OP-ED BY NUGZAR B. RUHADZE

There are so many threats around to worry us - hunger, unemployment, pandemics, incurable diseases, a possible asteroid impact, floods, earthquakes, alien invasions, climate change, artificial intelligence takeover, social-media-generated idiocy, and what not.

Pythagoras, the ancient Greek philosopher and polymath, is said to have declared that humankind should beware of the materialism of scientists, ignorance of the clergy, and chaos of democracy. I will not judge whether this is true or not, but the good old man seems to be somewhat naïve in light of today's world position. In the last 25 hundred years since the time he allegedly pronounced these words, things have changed unrecognizably. And even if his antique wisdom is still to be believed, nobody would make it the subject of bitter controversy, because we usually take those ancient wisdoms for granted, and a scientist in our time might be as materialist as an idealist, a contemporary clergyman can wax brilliantly in our days, and democracy, which has served Mankind in such a good faith, could hardly be described as something chaotic.

And here comes another renowned philosopher - Noam Chomsky, a modern-day American professor and public intellectual, who argues that the biggest threats to humankind are global warming, nuclear war and deteriorating



Image source: eu4climate.eu/georgia

democracy. Well, this statement could be reckoned way more credible: global warming is already a tangible actuality, the worldwide thermonuclear conflagration has been at our doorstep since 24 February, 2022, the day the Russian military trespassed onto Ukrainian real estate, and democracy needs urgent help to continue as a system of government in which state power is vested in the people.

Question: are any of these imminent

iniquities of our current life on Earth stoppable? Or slightly handleable at least? An inveterate pessimist would say "no". But a healthy optimist's straight-away response would be: "Yes, they are!" Indeed, humankind could be broken down into these two categories, and if the pessimists prevail, the world is going to be done with very soon. All the above problems have been created by human hands, and could be taken care of through the selfsame human

hands and the available resources sitting in those dexterous hands.

If I minimize the arena of human action and bring it down to the level of only one nation, say, Sakartvelo, the reason for optimism should remain just as viable. And here's why: this country, with its plethora of sunshine, fertile soil and spring water bursting out of the ground every step of the way, with its riches harbored under and above the earth surface, nature's gifts scattered all over

the place, and the helpful weather day and night, could be turned into a land of opportunity in just a twinkle of an eye by its talented people. Nothing should seem impossible: we could curb the menacing climate change, maintain peace, and keep up democracy no matter how flimsy and shaky it looks right now.

But talent is a huge asset, and not enough alone for success when push comes to shove. Membership in the European family of nations first and foremost means that we will emulate the West in putting together talent, labor, wits, rationality and sense of time, which must rush us to where we want to be. This will prepare our people to get into step with the rest of the world, to fight the evils and vices that have inflicted the Earth. Let's forget the small size of our population and the minor extent of our wealth: We will take on our fair share of the struggle. A contribution of any magnitude has its value, but what matters most is not to be ignored and forgotten; to let our endeavor be fruitful, substantial and weighty. Do these words sound too loud? So what! I want them to be audible enough to be heard by the listening ears in every possible direction: west and east and north and south. The chance of cooperation and interaction for Sakartvelo is everywhere to grab at and not let go of. All that humankind in general is worried about concerns our people in the same precise way - for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health. That's why our well-done Quickstep, Waltz and Foxtrot with the rest of the world makes so much sense.

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Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Tbilisi Organizes Art and Music Event

On October 13, the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Tbilisi, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth of Georgia, organized an Evening of Arts and Classical Music by Emirati and Georgian artists.

The cultural event, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United Arab Emirates and Georgia, was attended by representatives of the Georgian government, relevant ministries and agencies, parliament members, the diplomatic corps, international organizations, and cultural circles.

In his opening remarks, the Ambassador of the UAE to Georgia, H.E. Ahmed Alnuaimi stressed the dynamically evolved relations between the two nations and the remarkable achievements recently witnessed in bilateral agenda, most notably the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and highlighted that this evening's occasion presents an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the last three decades



and the two countries leadership's dedication to strengthening the people to people connections.

The UAE Ambassador expressed his sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth of Georgia for their assistance in organizing this event, as well as to the Emirati companies operating in Georgia for their contribution and sponsorship.

On his part, the honorable guest of the event, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Mr. Aleksandre Khvtisiashvili praised a positive trend of bilateral ties between the two countries and emphasized the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement which was signed recently, in addition to the positive practice of exchanging high-level visits.

The Deputy Foreign Minister expressed his gratitude to the Embassy for organizing such an event and took the chance to thank the UAE Government for granting visa-free access to Georgian citizens, highlighting that this decision will increase the visitors flow and will foster people to people communication.

Take a Photo, Make a Photo

BLOG BY TONY HANMER

I've been reviewing a lot of my old photographs this last while, needing to pull some out for various uses or viewing requests. One thing which has struck me is the divide between the serendipitous "taking" of a photo and the careful "making" of one.

"Take a photo" implies, to me, that you stumbled upon a scene or event and were ready to snap a shot of it. It might be a landscape (one you've seen for the first time or one which you have revisited myriad times or indeed lived with, the latter, say, outside your window). It might be a street scene or a still life which impresses itself upon you. But it's nothing you planned. You are there at the right time and in the right place, click went the shutter, and your image is pre-

served. You might have had time only for a single frame before the moment is lost, but you got it.

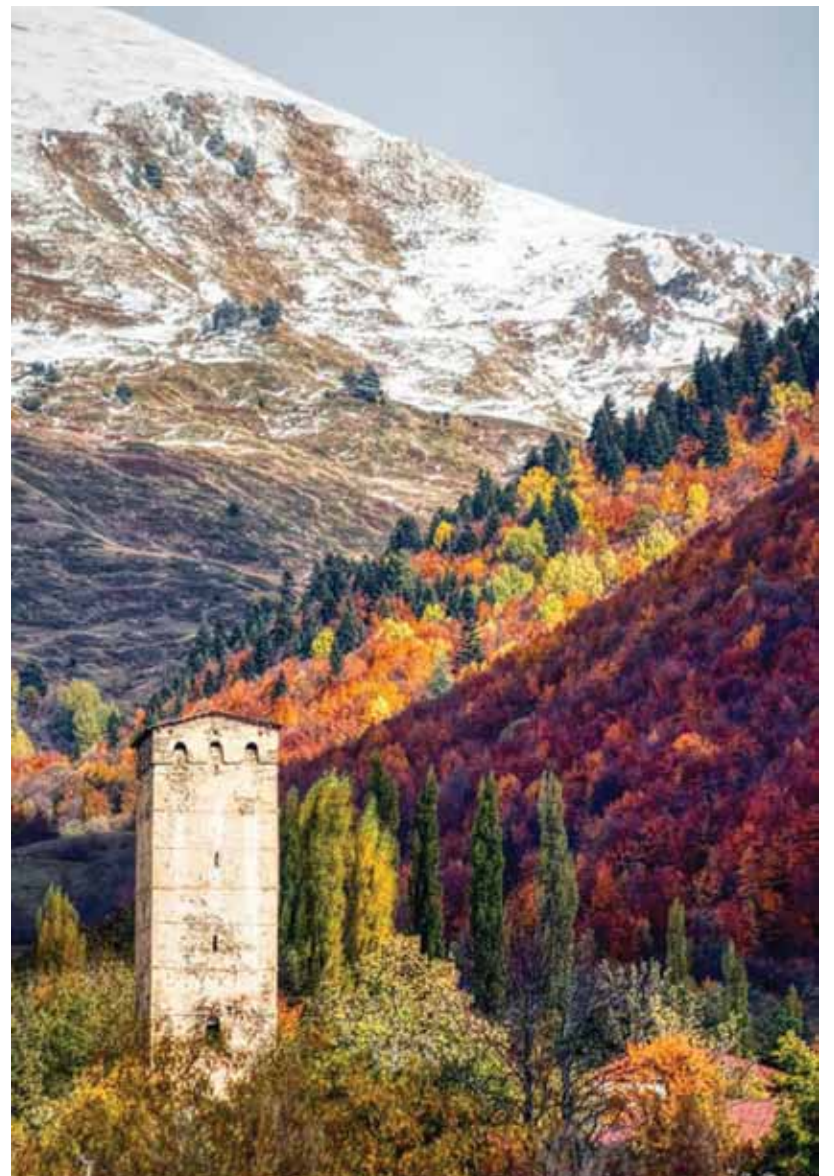
You might still process your "chance" frame in various ways: cropping out extraneous details, changing it to black and white from a color original, or altering the colors or contrast to suit your vision of the ideal version of it. Much if not all of this can be done in the darkroom as well as on the computer, so we are not differentiating between film and digital photography at all. You might be a philosophical "purist", striving to alter the image minimally if at all before presenting it to the world. Or you might not bother with such constraints and just do whatever you deem is necessary to make it what your mind's eye sees.

The "made" image might have had much more done to it; it might have even moved out of the category of photography and more into that of illustration. This implies that it has been altered far from the start of the original negative, slide or digital file-as-shot. Again, though, this may have happened either in the darkroom or on the computer. Some examples I have of this are prints which I have "solarized" or processed with the Sabattier effect. I printed from the black and white negative onto paper; then, while it was still in the developing solution, I briefly switched on a white light. This has the effect of reversing half the tones of the image, and turning others flat gray. It is hard to standardize to get the identical result every time even from identically exposed prints, and this somewhat haphazard nature of it is what gives some of its appeal.

The few surviving prints I have made this way are precious to me in several ways. For one, each is unique due to the method. For another, for most of them, the original negatives are lost and all I have are that one or several prints. In this way, each such print has become an original in its own right, successor to that lost negative.

(It is possible to produce a solarized version of a photo, in color or monochrome, digitally too. You merely want an A-shaped tone curve of it, nothing more).

Or I might have taken the same landscape shot many, many times over a long period, even years; at different times of day, in different weather conditions, lightings, seasons. So there may be multiple versions of the same thing: some just for reference, others worthy of being



called personal masterpiece varieties of that scene. One such, for me, is the between-seasons shot I made from a north-facing window of our house in Svaneti a couple of years ago now, having made it over and over again for more than a decade. It shows some mountain scenery and the sole complete tower of our village of Etseri, the Dadeshkeliani tower, reputed to be the tallest of all Svan towers and the model for the one in Tbilisi's Ethnographic Museum above Vake Park. This photo gets the existing composition's season, weather and lighting perfect, and I may never surpass it. Most satisfying, after so much time revisiting it at all times of the year. More made

than taken, because I have shot so many versions and variations of it while waiting for something this close to perfect to appear when I was at home, ready, and available.

Take or make your photo.

Tony Hanmer has lived in Georgia since 1999, in Svaneti since 2007, and been a weekly writer and photographer for GT since early 2011. He runs the "Svaneti Renaissance" Facebook group, now with over 2000 members, at www.facebook.com/groups/SvanetiRenaissance/. He and his wife also run their own guest house in Etseri: www.facebook.com/hanmer.house.svaneti2



BI Auction's Meet the Artist: Oleg Timchenko



Oleg Timchenko

NAME ONE ARTWORK EVERYONE SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR OWN EYES.

All works should be seen with your own eyes. But since you ask for just one, I would choose the Sistine Chapel painted in fresco by Michelangelo.

WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TO THE DEVELOPING VIRTUAL SPACE FOR ART?

The virtual space will never replace museums and the act of seeing original works. From the point of view of art promotion and sales, one can make good use of the virtual space. However, it can be deceiving – good works can lose out and poor works can win.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR PLACE IN GEORGIAN ART?



I assign for myself the same place in Georgian art as other artists. Judgements will be made with time.

WHAT CHANGES DO YOU SEE IN GEORGIAN ART?

Georgian art, as elsewhere in the world, is influenced by the advancement of technology. With the use of computer



Another week, and another great exhibition opened in the National Georgian Museum on November 18, giving us another brilliant Georgian artist to discover.

"We at BI Auction want to introduce Oleg Timchenko. If you have yet to meet him or his artworks, know that once you do, you will undoubtedly fall in love with his style," says BI Auction Co-Founder & Partner Bengu Akcardak Kucuk.

Born in 1957, Oleg Timchenko graduated from the Tbilisi Academy of Art in 1982. He works as an artist and professor in the Academy of Art, having had multiple personal and group exhibitions in Europe and America.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR WORK AND INFLUENCES.

I am a painter but I have worked in different genres, including photo art, installations and performance art. At different times I have been influenced by different movements and artists, including Marc Chagall, trans-avant garde artists, the expressionists of the KG Brücke Group, performance artist Joseph Beuys, pop artists Andy Warhol, abstract expressionist artists Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline.



graphics and special effects, more prominence is being given to forms and less to content, ideas and concepts.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR GEORGIAN ART AND ARTISTS?

I wish Georgian art to remain art. And I wish Georgian artists good exhibitions and appreciative audiences!



3rd Tbilisi International Voice Competition – OPERA CROWN

BY MARIAM MTIVLISHVILI

The 3rd Tbilisi International Voice Competition – OPERA CROWN is taking place at the capital's Opera House from November 20 to 25, 2023.

To introduce the competition, a press conference was held on November 20 in the Mirror Hall of the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre. Eliso Chirakadze, Director of the Tbilisi International Voice Competition OPERA CROWN; Rusudan Matsaberidze, Head of the International Relations and Development Department of the Theatre and Executive Director of the OPERA CROWN Competition; Tamar Tsulukidze, Head of the Creative Process Promotion Department of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia; Archil Jaliashvili, Founder of "Gemuani"; Abdulaziz Hasan Zakri, Founder and General Director of "Al-Mutfarrda"; and Ana Chechelashvili, Sales Director of Marriott Hotel, were present.

On the stage of the Tbilisi Opera, 42 young singers from 20 countries (Georgia, South Korea, USA, Great Britain, Ireland, Israel, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Moldova, Armenia) are appearing before an international jury composed of the Artistic and Casting Directors of the world's leading opera houses and agencies:

Peter Mario Katona – Director of Casting at The Royal Opera House Covent Garden

Samuel Gelber – Director of Artistic Planning at the Washington National Opera

Robert Körner – Casting Director at Wiener Staatsoper

Szilveszter Ókovács – General Director at the Hungarian State Opera

Peter Theiler – Artistic Director at Semperoper Dresden

Sarah-Jane Davies – Head of Casting at the Scottish Opera

Henning Ruhe – Artistic Director at Göteborg Opera

Olga Rostropovich – Artistic Director at the Galina Vishnevskaya Opera Center and President at the Mstislav Rostropovich Foundation

Virginio Fedeli – Producer and Artist Manager of the Atelier Musicale International

Badri Maisuradze – Artistic Director of Tbilisi Opera and Ballet State Theatre, Chairman of the Jury

The Competition opened with Opera Gala featuring laureates from previous competitions. It is divided into three rounds: the first round held on November 21-22, the second on November 23, and the final third round on November 25. The winners will be announced and awarded during the closing ceremony on November 25 at 6 pm, where the finalists will perform before an audience, accompanied by the Orchestra of the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre conducted by maestro Zaza Azmaiparashvili.

Supporters of the competition include the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia, Tbilisi City Hall, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, the National Tourism Administration, Marriott Hotel, Al-Mutfarrda, Gemuani, Château Mukhrani, Rtvelisi.

Eliso Chirakadze, Director of the Tbilisi International Voice Competition OPERA CROWN, spoke about the competition's establishment in 2018, aiming to support and launch the careers of young opera singers from Georgia onto the global stage. She expressed pride in the renowned jury members, including representatives from leading opera houses like the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Washington National Opera, Vienna State Opera, Hungarian State Opera, Dresden Opera House, and others.

Tamar Tsulukidze, Head of the Creative Process Promotion Department of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth of Georgia, highlighted the importance of the competition in promoting Georgian opera music and attracting international visitors to the country. She emphasized the positive impact on the professional and career development of young participants.

Abdulaziz Hassan Zakri, Founder and General Director of "Al-Mutfarrda," expressed gratitude for being a strategic partner of OPERA CROWN, describing it as a prestigious event that discovers and promotes young talents globally.

Archil Jaliashvili, Founder of "Gemuani," expressed honor in being a partner of the competition, seeing it as a historic event and an opportunity to showcase Georgian products to 27 countries. He hoped for the competition to gain global recognition and for more people to discover Georgian culture and achievements, highlighting the significance of a Saudi Arabian company as one of the partners.



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