

President Zourabichvili Hosts Reception for Ethnic Minority Representatives at Orbeliani Palace

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, hosted a reception for the representatives of the ethnic minority living in Georgia at the Orbeliani Palace within the framework of the campaign "Our Voice for Europe."

In her address, President Salome Zourabichvili expressed her satisfaction at hosting a diverse group of representatives as part of the campaign "Our Voice for Europe". She emphasized the importance of the campaign, which is set to conclude on December 15, being inclusive and involving citizens of all origins in Georgia.

President Zourabichvili discussed the concept of Europe and citizenship, emphasizing that in a European-type state, citizenship transcends nationality, encompassing ethnic origin, religious beliefs, and roots. She asserted that everyone in Georgia should have the opportunity to succeed and fully exist in a European-style state, highlighting Georgia's historical commitment to this principle.

"Everyone should have the opportunity to succeed and fully exist in a European-type state. Georgia has always provided and continues to provide this opportunity. Thus, Georgia was and will be European. In the culture



of Georgia, this value has always been of utmost importance—ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to preserve and develop their identity, language, and beliefs," Zourabichvili said.

Zourabichvili expressed warm congratulations to everyone gathered for the day, acknowl-

edging the beginning of Hanukkah for those of the Jewish faith and extending early congratulations to the Yazidi community for their upcoming holiday. She then recognized the imminent celebrations of Catholic Christmas and Orthodox Christmas, sending her best wishes to those celebrating it.

President Zourabichvili emphasized the significance of living together, not only in mutual respect but also in shared celebrations and moments of mourning. She acknowledged the diversity of holidays celebrated collectively, highlighting the unity that comes with commemorating important

events together.

The Georgian President also acknowledged the difficult day for Armenians due to the Spitak earthquake that occurred 35 years ago, expressing solidarity with Armenian citizens living in Georgia and recognizing the shared remembrance of this tragic event.

U.S. Urges Russia to Comply with Ceasefire Agreement and Ensure Humanitarian Access

U.S. EMBASSY IN GEORGIA

DECEMBER 6, 2023

U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE 59TH ROUND OF GENEVA INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS ON THE CONFLICT IN GEORGIA, DEC 5-6

U.S. Participation in the 59th Round of Geneva International Discussions on the Conflict in Georgia, December 5-6, 2023

The United States notes the conclusion of the 59th round of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) on the Conflict in Georgia, which took place December 5-6 in Geneva.

The United States delegation, led by Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the U.S. Mission to the OSCE Michael Carpenter, welcomed dialogue with participants to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Georgia. The United States called upon the Russian Federation, as a party to the conflict, to fulfill immediately its unequivocal obligation under the EU-mediated August 12, 2008 ceasefire agreement to withdraw its forces to pre-conflict positions, as well as to uphold its commitments to allow unrestricted access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and not impede international security arrangements on the ground. The occupation of 20 percent of Georgia's territory by Russia's forces undermines Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as does Russia's ongoing borderization. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are internationally recognized and integral parts of Georgia. The United States applauds Georgia's long-held commitment not to use force to resolve the conflict.

Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine reminds us that Russia's actions in Georgia are not isolated. We condemn Russia's behavior in the strongest possible terms, just as we condemn Russia's violation of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, which has continued since 2008. Russia is the only party to the conflict in Georgia that currently stations its forces on the territory of another sovereign state in flagrant violation of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and Russia's obligation under the 2008 ceasefire agreement. These violations resulted in the killing of a Georgian citizen in November by Russian occupation forces for traveling within his own country. We offer condolences to the family of Tamaz Ginturi and condemn Russia's actions that resulted in his death.

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The United States called upon the Russian Federation to promptly fulfill its obligations under the EU-brokered ceasefire agreement of August 12, 2008, by withdrawing its forces to pre-conflict positions. Additionally, the statement, released by the US mission after the conclusion of the 59th round of international discussions in Geneva, emphasized the need to allow unrestricted access for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6790; Euro - 2.8850; GBP - 3.3702; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8884; Swiss Franc - 3.0638

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CONTINUED FROM Page 1
a Georgian citizen in November by Russian occupation forces for

traveling within his own country. We offer condolences to the family of Tamaz Ginturi and condemn Russia's actions that

resulted in his death. The United States regrets that, due to a walk-out by participants from Russia and the de

facto authorities, the issues of Internally Displaced Persons and refugees, water, and gas could not be fully discussed.

The United States notes the partial reopening of two crossing points on the administrative boundary line with the South Ossetia region of Georgia and we continue the call for their full reopening, which would have a positive impact on communities in conflict-affected areas. The

United States praises the effectiveness of the ongoing Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM), which defuses tensions at the local level and delivers concrete results to people living within this conflict-affected area and hopes to see the resumption of the Gali IPRM in the nearest possible future," the statement reads.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Klaar Highlights Tamaz Ginturi's Murder by Russian Occupying Forces as Main Focus in Geneva Negotiations



Toivo Klaar, the EU Special Representative for the Crisis in

the South Caucasus and Georgia, expressed optimism and satisfaction with the recent Geneva negotiations. He remarked, "It is good that we had the opportunity to hold the 59th round of the Geneva negotiations, and it is good that all parties are participating."

Klaar highlighted that the main focus during the Geneva

negotiations was directed toward addressing the tragic case of Tamaz Ginturi, a Georgian citizen killed by Russian occupying forces. He emphasized the need to explore preventive measures to ensure similar incidents are avoided in the future.

"From our side, we emphasized that all participants should consider how to create an atmosphere where people living near the administrative border will not be afraid to go to the church or cemeteries because they might be arrested or killed.

The Geneva platform is the only one we have. It's not ideal; we've been having these meetings for 15 years, and it's probably fair to say that it would be nice to have more progress. At the same time, the fact that we have the opportunity to meet and discuss various issues is certainly important. We all wish we have more results 15 years from now," Klaar stated.

US Deputy Assistant Secretary Joshua Huck Meets with Opposition Representatives



US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Joshua Huck met with representatives of the opposition. According to them, the meeting covered various issues, including US observation missions for the 2024 elections, the potential for a coalition government, and support for Georgia's

European agenda. "We discussed the pre-election period and the election process to avoid repeating the abomination

that 'Dream' committed in 2020 and 2021. It is crucial for the Dream to understand that any attempts to falsify elections again will result in severe and inescapable criticism, preventing the legitimization of any unlawfully held elections," stated one of the leaders of 'Lelo,' Badri Japaridze.

TruthTechThon hackathon on media literacy brings together 150 young Georgians

A total of 150 young people took part in the TruthTechThon hackathon, organised in Georgia by the Media Development Foundation with EU support.

The event aimed to provide young people with an opportunity to create digital resources using cutting-edge technology to enhance media literacy, combat disinformation, and bolster the trustworthiness of information.

Thirteen out of 30 teams made it to the final round.

The first place was won by



'EasyVerify', an innovative tool that helps users verify the authenticity of information with three clicks.

Second place went to 'Natsarkekia', an innovative and fun game that uses the storyline of a Georgian fairy-tale, Natsarkekia, to teach school children about media literacy.

The 'Open Evidence' initiative won third place. This is a machine learning tool that helps users in the in-depth analysis of the media environment in Georgia and reveals current trends.

The activity was supported by DW Akademie and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Friday, December 8

Day Light Rain
High: 8°C

Night Light Rain
Low: 6°C

Saturday, December 9

Day Light Rain
High: 8°C

Night Light Rain
Low: 6°C

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*The Ambassador of Italy to Georgia, H.E. Enrico Valvo and the General Director of Georgian National Museum, Academician David Lordkipanidze opened the exhibition **The Etruscan World Treasures from the Museums of Chiusi, Chianciano and Florence** on December 6.*

After the opening H.E. Enrico Valvo hosted a reception say farewell to his friends and colleagues he has worked with during his 4 years in Georgia. The Messenger wishes H.E. Enrico Valvo good health, prosperity, all the best and success in future career.







