

## Georgia Marks State Flag Day on January 14<sup>th</sup>

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

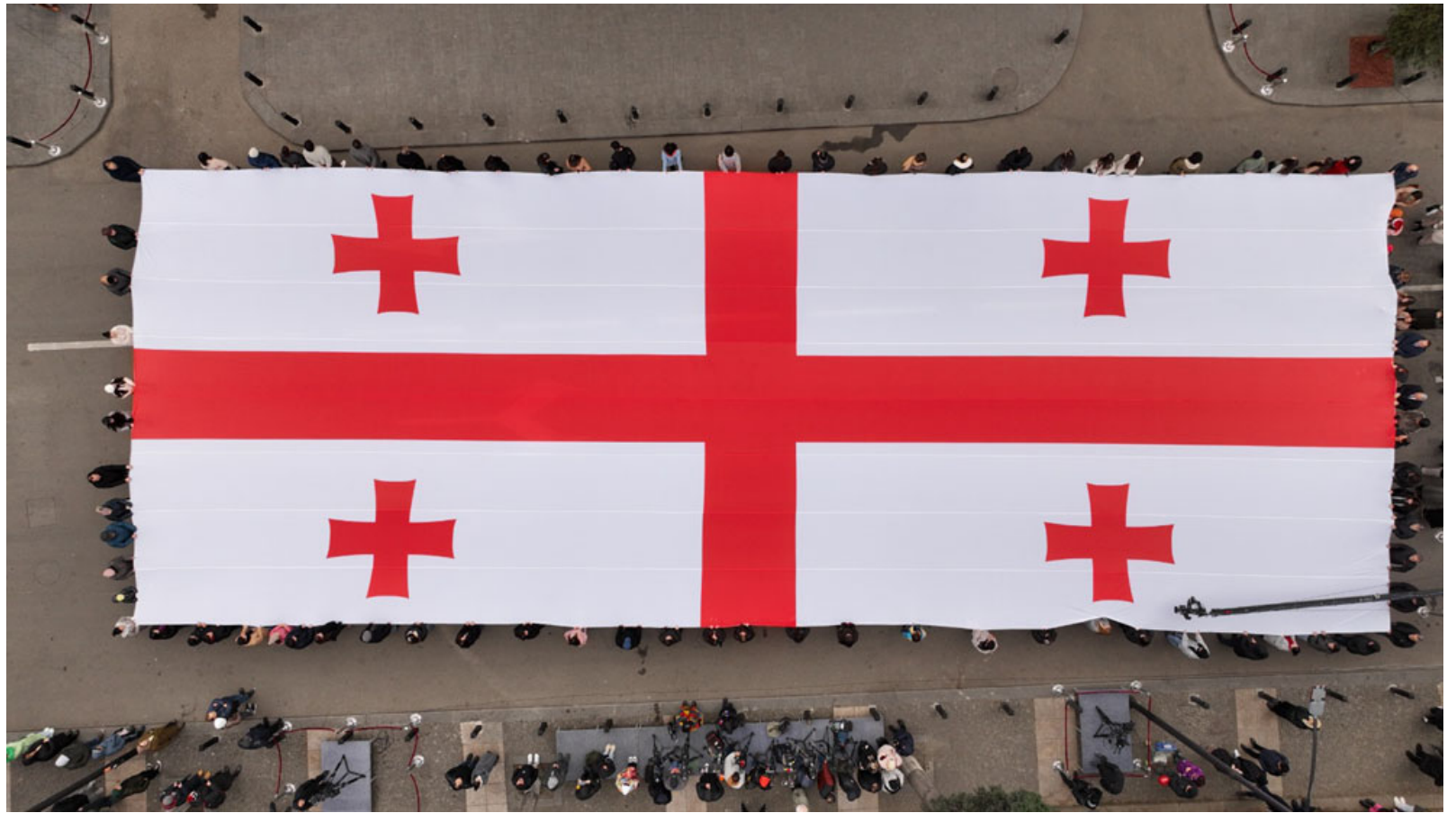
Georgia celebrated its State Flag Day on January 14. The State Council of Heraldry congratulated citizens on this day and issued a statement. As mentioned in the statement, this year's date is remarkable because it marks the 20th anniversary of the restoration of the historical flag.

"The state flag of Georgia is a symbol of state independence. The five red crosses depicted on the white field stood over Tbilisi and Tskhum (Sebastopolis) for centuries, marking the extreme east of European Christian civilization. It is significant that even today, with this flag, Georgia regains its place in the big European family.

This year's date is also remarkable because it marks the 20th anniversary of the restoration of the historical flag. The Council congratulates the public on Flag Day and calls on citizens to show proper respect to the flag when raising and displaying it," the statement reads.

During her speech at the event commemorating the Day of the State Flag of Georgia, President Salome Zourabichvili addressed the youth, emphasizing that the flag of Georgia belongs to them. She urged them to carry this flag to where the future of the country lies and not allow anyone to alter the values that exist under this flag or paint a different image of Georgia.

"This flag represents all of this, and it serves as our protec-



tor—guarding us and preserving the values that unite us. Without our unity, the flag loses its power and purpose. Therefore, we are obliged to achieve, despite everything, that great power in the country and in any state, which is called the unity of the people.

I want to tell the young people that this flag belongs to you; it is yours to protect. You must carry this flag to where the future of this country lies and not allow anyone to change the val-

ues that exist under this flag. Preserve those values and do not let anyone paint a different image of Georgia. You all understand what I'm talking about today, and I don't want to talk about it, but you understand well. You have protected the country, and thus you will protect this flag. This flag will be a permanent symbol of Georgia, and I wish it victory," Zourabichvili said.

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, con-

gratulated Georgian citizens and stated that the Georgian flag is the embodiment of the country's spirit and identity.

"I extend my congratulations to all the citizens of our country on the occasion of the main national symbol – the state flag. The state flag stands as the most visible embodiment of the Georgian spirit, national identity, and our freedom and independence," stated Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili.

Gharibashvili expressed his

gratitude to everyone contributing to the strengthening of Georgia through their daily work.

"The flag preserves our great history and guides the unshakable will of Georgian citizens towards a singular goal – to protect and strengthen our freedom. It is a symbol of our unity; we share one homeland and one future. Many Georgians sacrificed their lives for this future. Today, as we pay respect to our flag, we once again bow to their eternal memory," said Gharibashvili.

## Polish Ambassador Says He Received Unofficial Reprimand for Proposing Closure of Stalin Museum in Georgia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

According to Polish Ambassador H.E. Mariusz

Maszkiewicz, he received an unofficial reprimand from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia for proposing the closure

of the Stalin Museum. In an interview with the publication Sova.News, the ambassador mentioned that due to his stance

on the museum, the agency 'tried to put him in his place.'

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia tried to put me in my place, but I responded with a strong expression... I won't discuss this topic, regardless of the explanation.

Do you realize that Georgian officers in the Polish army were also killed in Katyn? This is not a matter open for discussion. It's not about religious feelings or emotions; it's not like I'm touching something delicate or offending someone.

No, it's just an objective truth. You should just take it. Maybe someone thinks it's difficult, but it should be accepted as a disease diagnosis," said the Polish ambassador in a conversation with Sova.News.

In response to the journalist's question about whether he was

summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, the ambassador clarified that such a thing did not happen; According to Maszkiewicz, what he received was an unofficial reprimand.

"No, no. To tell you the truth... I won't go into details, but there was some informal reprimand. At that time, I handled it very delicately... Obviously, as a representative of Poland, I cannot react differently," said Maszkiewicz.

In 2022, during a discussion hosted by the Rondeli Foundation, Polish Ambassador Mariusz Maszkiewicz mentioned that he understood why Georgia could not join the sanctions against Russia but called for "at least one symbolic gesture"—closing the Stalin Museum in Gori.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

**UNM Leader Tina Bokuchava Condemns Foreign Ministry's Summoning of Danish Ambassador for Referring to Ivanishvili as 'Oligarch'**



Tina Bokuchava, a leader of the 'United National Movement,' responded to the summoning of the Danish Ambassador to Georgia, Anne Toft Sørensen, by the Foreign Ministry of Georgia. The summoning was in response to her calling Bidzina Ivanishvili an 'oligarch.' Bokuchava expressed her dismay, stating that it is disheartening for the foreign ministry of the country to summon the Danish ambassador over matters related to Ivanishvili.

again have the opportunity to prioritize the protection of the national interests of the country, rather than the interests of Bidzina Ivanishvili," Bokuchava stated.

"Once I worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and I was very proud when, as a Georgian diplomat, I represented the interests of our country. Unfortunately, now we see that all state institutions have

been subordinated to Bidzina Ivanishvili, and they perform all their tasks with complete obedience. This is the vicious oligarchic rule, which is completely incompatible with the European future of the country.

After the change of government, in the conditions of the coalition government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will once

again have the opportunity to prioritize the protection of the national interests of the country, rather than the interests of Bidzina Ivanishvili," Bokuchava stated.

**Georgia Signs Agreement with Polish Company for Anti-Aircraft Missile Complex Purchase**



The Ministry of Defense of Georgia has signed an agreement with a Polish company for the purchase of an anti-aircraft missile complex. The Ministry is disseminating information about this.

The Deputy Minister of Defense of Georgia, Giorgi Khaindrava, met with

representatives of the Polish company MESKO S.A., as reported by the ministry. According to their reports, the conversation touched on the importance of introducing modern NATO-standard weapons in Georgia, which will help strengthen the country's defense capabilities.

"The parties also discussed cooperation plans between the Ministry of Defense

and the Polish company. Subsequently, an agreement on the purchase of a Polish-made anti-aircraft missile complex was signed. This document was prepared within the framework of the Defense Forces Development Program of Georgia," the statement reads.

**EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes: European Commission approves Euro 126 million Romanian State aid scheme to support ports facing increased trade flows**

On 11 January, the European Commission approved, under EU State aid rules, a Euro 126 million Romanian scheme to support investments in ports facing increased trade flows after Russia's war against Ukraine.

The measure will be partly funded through EU Cohesion funds, supporting investments in the field of environment and transport infrastructure (TEN-T), and will contribute to the functioning of the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes by facilitating the trade flows in and out of Ukraine.

"This Euro 126 million scheme will allow Romania to reduce bottlenecks created by the



sudden surge in goods arriving in the Danube and Black Sea coast ports. The aid will support port operators to process and store queuing goods, thereby reducing the blockade caused by Russia's war against Ukraine," said Margrethe Vestager, European Commission Executive Vice-President in charge of competition policy.

Between March 2022 and November 2023, over 58 million tonnes of grain, oilseeds, and related products have left Ukraine through the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes. They have enabled the export of around 60% of Ukraine's grain since the start of the war.

In total, the Solidarity Lanes have allowed Ukraine to export about 112 million tonnes of goods, and to import around 40 million tonnes of goods it needs: from military and humanitarian aid, to fuel and other products.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Monday, January 15

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 5°C

Night Clear  
Low: -3°C

Tuesday, January 16

Day Clear  
High: 8°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 0°C

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