David Moran: We are strong supporters of Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations

Outgoing United Kingdom Ambassador to Georgia David Moran was only in post six months. Here he shares his impressions of Georgia with Georgian Times.

Christopher Coppola: I am giving everyone an opportunity to express his talents

Christopher Coppola, the famous Hollywood film director and producer, has taken part in a festival organised by the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Georgia and the NGO Children and Youth National Centre, part of his project PAH-FEST(Project Accessible Hollywood, Georgia 2013). The theme of the festival was famous seventeenth century Georgian writer Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani’s “Wisdom of Fancy”.

Screening of scandalous videotapes causes controversy

“We Have No Problems with the USA, These Problems are Being Invented by Saakashvili and His Friends”
The Georgian Times

Monday, June 24, 2013

LOCAL ISSUES

Screening of scandalous videotapes causes controversy

By LIKA MOSHISHVILTI

The videotapes depicting the torture of two detain- ees by certain police officers, which the authori- ties say were found in a large arms cache unearthed earlier this week in the Samegrelo region, have been shown to a large group of media and civil society representatives, political analysts, commen- tators and diplomats by the Interior Ministry.

The tapes shown on June 20 contain two separate epi- sodes in which two detainees, whose faces are covered on the video, are raped and tor- tured, offences which accord- ing to the Interior Ministry took place in 2011. In one epi- sode law enforcement officers are purportedly trying to ob- tain a confession from the de- tainee in connection with an al- leged terrorism case. Sound was much evident, which have English subtitles.

The Interior Ministry states that nine individuals, among them the detainees and former law enforcement officer and the man accused of sexually abus- ing two detainees, have been arrested in connection to scenes shown on the videotapes. “The public should know who was behind this. I want to remind everyone that Vano Merabish- vili was the [interior] minister at the time, all state officials during whose tenure such terri- ble things happened should be held accountable,” Interior Min- ister Irakli Garibashvili com- mented.

Irakli Alasania, the Defence Minister, told journalists on June 20 that the videotapes were evidence of “institutions of massive sadism” existing under the previous authorities. “Not only Vano Merabishvili but the President are politica- lly responsible for these insti- tutions of massive terror and sadism,” Alasania said.

President Saakashvili’s UNM party called for the set- ting up of a parliamentary in- vestigative commission to over- see the Interior Ministry’s probe into the crimes depicted on the videotapes in order to prevent the possible misuse of the case for political purposes. The President stated, “Every- one knows that in recent years the police have changed much, and no doubt the situation here has very much improved. But sadists and violentos may al- ways be in the ranks. Of course, it’s very regrettable if such people sneaked into my gov- ernment. There must be a very specific approach towards these people. They must not be covered up.”

On June 20 the UNM stat- ed that the videos revealed “such a grave crime that it should be stated unambigu- ously, and without any political speculation, that each and ev- ery person who was involved in and who has organized tor- ture and inhuman treatment and made videos showing [this crime] should be punished to the fullest extent of the law.” “A further statement released on June 20inns behalf of UNM Sec- retary General Vano Merabish- vili, who is now in pretrial de- tention facing multiple criminal charges, which he refrues and describes as politically motivat- ed, concurst that those behind the crimes depicted on the video- tapes should be held responsi- ble to the fullest extent of the law; however it adds that “if such things were taking place in the police” under the previ- ous authorities these were iso- lated instances and such crimes were in no way systemic in nature. “Speculation about such cases being of systemic nature represent part of a campaign directed against the previous authorities and me personally,” the statement reads.

The Interior Ministry’s de- cision to show these videotapes recording devices. A few journalists also walked out, among them talk- host Davit Paichadze, who said that before the screen- ing he had asked the Interior Minister whether measures had been to fully conceal the identities of those seen on the footage; Paichadze, who is per- ceived by many government supporters to be a sympathiz- er with the previous authorities, said that instead of giving him a clear answer the Minister started asking him why he had not talked about human rights when the UNM was in power, and he therefore left the meeting.

Nestan Tustishkhadze, Editor of Nogeazet, had similar comments. “I saw two scenes in which it was possible to identify the persons depicted – their faces were not hidden. I do not know who they were, victims or vio- lators, but I left the meeting af- ter this,” he says.

The Georgian Interior Min- ister has in fact told the audience prior to the screening that the confidentiality of those depict- ed on the video would be pro- tected and warned the audience that the footage was “very dif- ficult to watch.” He also said that it would not be appropri- ate to make the videos available to a wider public because “we think this would cause huge anxiety amongst the public.”

The Georgian Interior Min- ister stated last week that a large arms cache had been un- earthed in the western Georgian region of Samegrelo, which was hidden under “the direct super- vision of former high ranking officials of the interior minis- try during the previous govern- ment.” It included “a large quantity of explosives and ex- plosive devices; hand grenades; firearms and other weapons and military munitions; and a large quantity of narcotic and psychotropen medicines including heroin, opium, cocaine, sub- stances, etc.” Video footage released by the Interior Ministry showed that the cache includ- ed about two dozen Kalashni- kov assault rifles, at least sev- en RPG launchers, over 90 hand grenades, other munitions and military gear, which were supposedly stored underground in plastic barrels. It also includ- ed the videotapes shown on June 20 and files containing photos and private information concerning some individuals who were in the opposition to the previous authorities and who were subsequently planned in the event that the United National Movement won the October 1, 2012 par- liamentary elections.

Irakli Garibashvili not ruling out charges to be intensified against Vano Merabishvili

Irakli Garibashvili not ruling out charges to be intensified against Vano Merabishvili Interior Minister Irakli Garibashvili does not rule out charges against Vano Merabishvili with regard to the hidden cache discovered in Samegrelo region.

Of course it’s possible. Naturally, we will launch an investigation to find out who were ideologists of all this. In the years when the videos were shot, the Interior Minister was Vano Merabishvili and he was controlling everything. How do you think could anyone dare commit such action without this person’s will and his direct consent? This is absurd and this is a deliberate campaign aimed at justifying Merabishvili. But no one can escape responsibility,” said Garibashvili.

He said there was a well designed and detailed plan for intimidation, terror, torture and intimidation of people.

As for why the discovered video tapes were shown to the diplomatic corps, civil society and media, Garibashvili said it was made for the critics who talk about political motives of Merabishvili’s arrest.

MIA not going to cooperate with National Movement in the investigation process with regard to the video tapes

MIA not going to cooperate with National Movement in the investigation process with regard to the video tapes. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is not going to cooperate with the National Movement in the investigation process with regard to the video tapes discovered in Samegrelo region.

According to Irakli Ghashbakveli, the National Movement involvement in the investigation means involvement of the offenders in the case. “These people were representatives of the previous government and they were feeling very comfortable. I am sure many of them knew what going on in the prisons, police, etc. Therefore, they have no moral right to be involved in the investigation. This is ridiculous,” said Ghashbakveli.

He added that the National Movement members will be involved in the investigation process only if their guilt is revealed.
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David Moran: We are strong supporters of Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations

By EMMA BARBAROVA, GT

Outgoing United Kingdom Ambassador to Georgia David Moran was only in post six months. Here he shares his impressions of Georgia with Georgian Times.

Your Excellency, what impressions of Georgia do you take back to the UK?

Let me start by saying that I will never forget the great openness, friendliness and hospitality. These were everything I expected they would be. I should also say that I value having been here 6 months, because there was a temporary appointment between two full time ambassadors, so it was an unexpected, very pleasant surprise to be asked to come here.

How do Georgians differ from other Europeans? Do you like Georgian cuisine or any other specific aspect of Georgia?

I have been aware of Georgian cuisine for many years, I have worked elsewhere in the former Soviet Union since the 90s, and I have visited many restaurants all over the world, but I can say that there is no substitute for eating Georgian food in Georgia. I think what makes Georgians so special is a combination of musical talent and artistic energy, enjoyment of life and willingness to look out for the rest of the world and build friendships around the world which is particularly Georgian.

Do you like the Georgian countryside?

You have this variety of natural features and a lot of different climatic zones. I think this country is hugely appealing not only for tourists but people like filmmakers. You can make films, set in any part of the world in Georgia!

Can you remember any interesting cultural exchanges that have taken place between Georgians and the UK during your time here?

Over the past six months there have been all sorts of exchanges. A Georgian playwright took place in the Royal Court Theatre, and it was an absolute triumph in London. The British dance company Candoco (a contemporary dance company featuring disabled and non-disabled dancers) was brought here by the British Council. They showed that anyone, regardless of any physical disability, can have enormous talent. Georgian singers have travelled to Britain. A British military band (the Band of the Royal Marines) performed at the Queen’s Birthday celebrations hosted by the British Embassy in Georgia. So these exchanges have been constant and very popular in both countries.

What was the political situation in Georgia when you came here and how would you describe it now?

In January when I arrived I saw that people were still getting used to the idea of transition and coalition and elections. Now that mid-point between the last parliamentary elections and the presidential elections in October has passed, both Georgians and Georgia’s friends see the political parties here can work together constructively, even though one is in government and the other in opposition. This is not easy, but there are now plenty of examples of the two sides working together constructively. I think this builds on what really was a major achievement, the democratic and peaceful transfer of power last October.

Do you agree that there is a lack of democracy in Georgia?

I think that in all countries democracy is a work in progress. Georgia is building its own democratic system. There are all sorts of this, but in some things there have been real progress, and I am including here last year’s elections. This year’s elections are a chance to build further on this base. There are a number of other elements which also have to be built on constantly, as they do everywhere: judicial independence, media freedom, freedom of assembly and protection of minorities and people who are different, so that Georgia is a country for all Georgians.

What sort of mistakes did the previous government make?

I was not here during the previous administration. But I can say in general that it is hard to run a country, and every government will achieve certain things and fail to achieve others. The point is that you had an election in which the Georgians could see, different government, that government is now in power and exercises it peacefully and one of the greatest legacies of the previous government was that it accepted the result of the popular vote.

Cohabitation is not an easy process, and the Georgian public has seen many scandals since it began. For example, these endless releases of videos showing prisoners being tortured. What do you think about this?

Cohabitation isn’t easy. It needs constant effort from both sides and a mutual desire to work constructively together.

And there are people very committed to doing this on both sides. I would like to encourage this positive momentum but recognise that it is difficult for people to accept everything which comes from the other side of the political fence. The other thing I would say is that Georgia is not the first country to experience political cohabitation. Others have gone through this process successfully and I am confident Georgians will too. In terms of those videos, I haven’t seen them. I think when you are talking about evidence which can be used in judicial proceedings it is very important that the judicial process goes ahead. There is a place where evaluations are made. The court is a place where this evidence should be considered and judged. It is for the legal system to examine evidence as this and draw conclusions about it. This will demonstrate to the world that Georgia has judicial independence.

Do you think about Georgian’s position in the world?

We are very glad that Georgian is interested in getting closer to both the EU and NATO and we are strong supporters of Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations. When I say supporters, I do not mean just in the sense of saying we are in favour of Georgia getting closer. We have actually tried to help Georgia achieve this, both by giving expert advice and maintaining regular contact between our two countries. There is a constant flow of visits between London and Tbilisi, visits made by both ministers and officials. Senior foreign office ministers have been here and now David Usupashvili, your Parliament Speaker, is on an official visit.

It is said that the new Government of Georgia is pro-Russian, while some said that the previous government was pro-American, pro-European etc. Do you think it is easy to choose a single direction and be pro-something?

I am sure it is possible to be pro-something. Russia is Georgia’s neighbour, this is a geographical fact. I think geographers have to be taken into account in foreign policy and everything else. Britain sees no problem, and indeed an advantage, in building better relations with neighbours, as this can improve internal security, regional security and even international security. Better relations are what diplomats like me try to promote.

What is your diplomatic advice or message to Georgia’s politicians?

Firstly I’d like to say thanks to everybody I have met for being so hospitable. It has been a very pleasant time to be in Georgia and I am determined to return here from time to time. I am not sure what I can give as advice, I can just give encouragement. There are many good things going on in Georgia, and not just since October but even before. The work to push democracy forward, to create a country which promotes and protects the rights of every Georgian whether it is in its own democratic system, or in the media, or anywhere else.

What can you say about the economic relations between Georgia and Great Britain?

This is an area where we can do much more together. The level of mutual trade at the moment is pretty low: for example, I think last year Georgians exported only about 20 million pounds worth of goods to the UK. British exports to Georgia were worth probably 120 million or something like that. There is a scope for doing more, and we have created a British business group here, involving British businesses and Brussels working in international businesses, to help drive this process in Georgia.

There is also a well-established British-Georgian Chamber of Commerce which is trying to do the same in both the UK and Georgia. I think there is not about a month or two in July-August, they are about creating a continuing legacy of using sport to encourage children around the world to be more active and more healthy and also show through the Paralympics that there is no limit to human ability. Everyone has potential and abilities. I know that Georgia will host the World Youth Games in 2015 and this is very exciting, because it provides another opportunity for us to work with Georgia in trying to promote the issues of youth sports and disabilities and recognising the ability of the disabled, promoting their potential and raising their profile.

U.S. Embassy to Georgia releases statement on Wall Street Journal article

The U.S. Embassy to Georgia has released a statement on the Wall Street Journal article.

“The U.S. Government is focused intently on shutting down any Iranian attempts to evade sanctions, including through possible business connections in Georgia.”

We are working closely with the Georgians on this issue.

Contrary to certain statements in the article, we see undiminished interest on the part of the Georgian government in strong relations with the United States, and a continued strong desire for Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration.

U.S. concerns including Iran sanctions evasion here have grown in recent years, and pre-date the current Georgian government, says the statement posted on the website of the Embassy.

The Wall Street Journal published an article with the title ‘As Sanctions Bite, Iranians Invest Big in Georgia’. According to the article, despite the U.S. sanctions against Iranian business, Iranian products ranging from rooftop materials to sour-cherry jam are pouring into Georgian markets, made more attractive by Iran’s weak currency. Iran’s government itself is buying Georgian land, Iran’s agriculture minister has told Iranian media. To the article the U.S. Treasury’s official says ‘we are focused on shutting down any Iranian attempts to evade sanctions, including through possible business connections in Georgia’.

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Amazing SOCAR-McDonalds on the black sea coast in Batumi
“We Have No Problems with the USA, These Problems are Being Invented by Saakashvili and His Friends”

By MAKA DEKANOSIDZE, GT

The so-called cohabitation government is on the verge of deadlock. The President’s party and the new governing coalition cannot agree with each other on this and that, and no end to this slanging match is in sight.

Now the President and the UNM are saying that Georgia is under threat of international isolation, following statements made in the US Congress. Here Georgians go interviews with the leaders of the Republican Party, Levan Berdzenishvili, who is also a member of the governing coalition, about this.

Mr. Berdzenishvili, for several days the UNM has been trying to whip up public hysteria by saying we are at risk of international isolation. Are these statements made by various members of the US Congress so serious?

First, I must point out that the statement you are talking about has been made by the US Congress about Russia. The US Congress has proposed to the President to use force to bring Russia into line.

The President considers the opinions of congressional representatives fatal to Georgia. However, these lies will not ruin Georgia, and neither can Saakashvili ruin Georgia by claiming that Vano Merabishvili is a holy person. The Georgian public and government are 100% right about this man.

Who is this person? It is clear that this person is a friend or enemy of our country, and if this isn’t clear to anyone we will help them understand.

The senior US government members know what is really going on, that is why they are keeping silent. If they believed that Vano Merabishvili was an angel, trust me, John Kerry, Joe Biden and Obama would fall over themselves to be the first to demand that we take our hands off Merabishvili. They do not say anything because they have been provided with the correct information, and we will provide more information about Merabishvili too.

We have found the diary of Megi Kardava, showing how this monster was raised. We will send this as well. It is not possible to become a sadist by chance, no… we will also give it to you journalists to read, and you will understand that when a parent treats you like that, it is obvious what kind of person you will grow into.

You have said that the UNM will disband in autumn, but your fellow members, Speaker of Parliament David Usupashvili, has said that the survival of UNM would be impossible without the Georgia Dream co-alliance working together with the UNM to change the paragraph in the Constitution giving the President excessive powers, as we have done. Cohabitation does not mean saving Vano Merabishvili, and the Republicans have no different attitude to other parties in this regard. We would like to see the UNM as a par- ty, but if it wants to commit political suicide we cannot interfere. Unfortunately, they still cannot extricate themselves from Saakashvili. Regardless of our desire to save them, they will face problems. I cannot see any reason to blame the Republi- cans for acting in accordance with the law. I repeat that we will cooperate with the UNM in drafting important laws; any other kind of cooperation is not possible for us.

Yesterday, a hidden cache of weapons, drugs and video footage was found in Samegrelo. Is there a threat of informal groupings emerging to de-stabilize our country?

No, the UNM is not a threat anymore. Irakli Alasania’s announcement of finding those things has created a great panic, but this is unjustified. The head of the EU Mission has asked us why he never found these things when he had so many people on the ground but we did. The UNM has been keeping weapons, drugs, lists of who should be detained, and finally a plan of what to do in a Georgian in the event of victory in these hidden storages. We will present what we have found to the diplomatic corps and journalists, and this will not be all. There is more footage of human rights violations which has not been seen yet.

Vladimir Komorev, the head of the Russian Duma’s Defence Committeee, has stated that if Georgia is accepted into NATO, there will not be without Abkhazia and Ossetia. Is this your understanding?

Love for the country should always be more important than party interests. NATO has stated very clearly that no country, including Russia, can affect the decisions of NATO and I have scientifically proven that the Russian Federation is very con- cerned about NATO’s positive attitude towards us. Recent developments at our administra- tive border are connected with us trying to join NATO. I think they are also connected to the detention of Vano Merabishvili, as Russia considers him a useful person. Regardless of Russia’s con- cerns, we would like to estab- lish relationships with NATO and our neighbor will just have to adjust to that. Geor- gia will be under the same um- brella as Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, the Czech Rep- ublic, all the countries whose citizens saw Russian tanks move in while they slept. When Georgia joins NATO it will act- ually improve relations with Russia, as happened in the Bal- tic countries when they became NATO members. European in- tegration and joining NATO are the desire of the majority of the Georgian population and no party will change this.

Georgia knocked on NATO’s door during Shevardnadze’s era, a big and serious step was taken by Saakashvili and we will take the final step into this structure and thus have one problem less to solve. Therefore, the concerns of the Russian “Derjavniks” that Georgia might join NATO soon, is not without foundation. However, they will also realize that it is better for Georgia to be a NATO member, and to forget about invading our territories. They have a good relationship with Armenia and they would like to go to Iran and the ocean, which no one can do through Ar- menia but not the occupied ter- ritories. History has given another chance to the small countries, and I assure you that you and I will expand our membership of the Alliance and thus be- come a secure country.

Nino Burjanadze: UNM has to start de-naturalization process instead of co-habitation

Nino Burjanadze calls “National Movement” criminal organization and demands to ban it. As the leader of the “Democratic Movement”, Nino Burjanadze stated on today’s press-conference that she is shocked from the information obtained at the yesterday’s meeting held in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

According to Nino Burjanadze, the debate about whether there is a systemic crime abuses and misleads the society. As the leader of the “Democratic movement”, the society has seen many examples and experienced existence of the systemic crime in the country.

“National Movement is a criminal organization and it should be banned. Their political and legal responsibility should be questioned. Not specific doers of the crime, but the organizers of the ideology and creators of such verticals should be punished, which will be clear with the legal investigation. I am sure that the criminal trace will lead to the closest environment of Saakashvili” - stated Nino Burjanad- ze.
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Fiber Optic Technologies
"Georgian Fascism and its Historical Roots"

By DR. VAKHTANG MAISIA, GT

A hidden cache of arms videos, some of which depict horrific episodes of physical abuse and ill-treatment of various people (including rapes) was recently discovered in the Zugdidi region of Western Georgia. These items are believed to belong to an illegal paramilitary group, the so-called “Georgian Death Squadron”, which is allied with the United National Movement and run by the infamous Georgian “butcher” brothers Megi and Levan Kardava.

More than 13,000 tapes were discovered. Some contain illegally shot footage of people’s private lives and others scenes of sadistic violence so unpleasant that the Government of Georgia is trying to prevent ever being seen by the general public. These materials directly indicate that systematic political crimes were committed by the authoritarian former UNM regime led by Mikheil Saakashvili and his clan. The President must take full responsibility for the committing of these crimes, as such consistent and systematic abuse, by the same individuals, could only have taken place on his authorization.

Mikheil Saakashvili is mentally diseased, suffering from a sexual malevolence complex very similar to that of Adolf Hitler. The systematic criminality depicted on these tapes is a natural product of the immoral and deviant executive environment created by Saakashvili and the sadistic individuals he chose to gather around him. The General Juri Khabazi of Dina and his unit have never submitted a report to the Ministry of Defence. The military junta’s secret policy is to: “The preventive arrest of beings who are considered threats to state security”. These beings are summarily arrested and then judged by Ministry of Internal Affairs without trial. Mikheil Saakashvili’s brutal regime adopted exactly the same practices.

By 14 February 2005 when President Saakashvili introduced the political jargon “Zero Tolerance” and the motto “Everyone has to be in prison” during his official presentation to parliament. Subsequently the Ministry of Internal Affairs Vano Merabishvili was to tell all law enforcement agency personnel to “Kill everyone who resists you in any way and eliminate criminals where you find them without arresting them.” This “Zero Tolerance” policy bore a strong resemblance in practice to a similar initiative launched by Hitler’s Third Reich. In 1937 he pronounced special decree number 1000, which empowered Hitler’s law enforcement agencies, principally the DINA – the military junta’s secret police in contact: “The preventive arrest of beings who are considered threats to state security”. These beings are summarily arrested and then judged by Ministry of Internal Affairs without trial. Mikheil Saakashvili’s brutal regime adopted exactly the same practices.

- The existence of at least 190 political prisoners and 25 political exiles, confirmed by the Parliament of Georgia on December 5th 2012, fully indicates that the previous endemocratic Georgian regime committed mass murder with the authorization of the Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance. The prison videotapes, which inspired the so-called “broom revolution” in September 2012 were released by the Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance.

First Public Sector Hepatitis C Treatment Programme in Georgia

By TAMTA ASANDZE, GT

The Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance and the Open Society Foundation - Georgia have developed a three-year programme for Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment of Hepatitis C in penitentiary institutions. This is the first time such a programme is implemented in the public sector in Georgia and it will be the first programme in the Soviet country in which infected patients in the penitentiary institutions will be treated free of charge.

The programme plan specifies the number of the patients to be treated per year, the criteria for their selection, treatment and financial resources. This programme will need. It has been elaborated with the help of national and international experts. The programme plan specifies the number of the patients to be treated per year, the criteria for their selection, treatment and financial resources. This programme will need. It has been elaborated with the help of national and international experts. The programme plan specifies the number of the patients to be treated per year, the criteria for their selection, treatment and financial resources.

The programme will in future support the treatment of patients not only inside the penitentiary institutions but also outside them.”

Ira Khabazi from OSFG says that, “This is a crucial step towards solving the hepatitis problem in prisons, though it can only be solved gradually. Hopefully, the programme will in future support the treatment of patients not only inside the penitentiary institutions but outside them.”

The programme has been developed with the Ministry of Health. Initially, it will be implemented in the penitentiary institutions, and its screening and treatment activities will reach each infected inmate,” says Soza Subar, the Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance.

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the hepatitis C virus. Severe forms of the infection can develop in 6 months from the date of infection. Chronic hepatitis C can result in liver fibrosis, cirrhosis of the liver or liver cancer. The virus is spread through the blood. The majority of the infected receive this virus from a shared needle, through intravenous drug use, receiving a blood transfusion and undertaking cosmetic procedures like manicures, tattoos etc.

The spread of hepatitis C and lack of access to treatment have been serious problems in the penitentiary system for several years, and infection rates have increased dramatically. In most cases, hepatitis C is fatal. According to experts, launching this programme in the penitentiary system will lower the prices of the relevant medicines for all.

Civil society organizations have already discussed this programme. The plan will be presented to government and donor organizations for funding and service providers selected by competitive tender. Pending Cabinet approval, the programme will be launched in September.

There is stagnation in medical establishments - Davit Sergeenko

There is stagnation in medical establishments - Davit Sergeenko

There is stagnation in medical establishments, Healthcare Minister Davit Sergeenko said in response to the statement of the insurance companies.

Some insurance companies say they face stagnation.

According to the Minister, there are strikes in hospitals almost every day.

‘There are strikes at hospitals almost every day because of delays accounts. I don’t understand what the insurance companies mean in stagnation, but I know that there are problems. Our efforts are aimed at eradicating these problems’, Sergeenko said.

Rostom Sosiashvili, detained for violation of the occupation line on 29 May, released

Rostom Sosiashvili, detained for violation of the occupation line on 29 May, released

Rostom Sosiashvili, detained for violation of the occupation line on 29 May, has been released, the Ministry of Internal Affairs told reporters.

The release was a result of the meeting held under the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism.

Participants of the meeting reviewed the incidents and occurrences that have taken place since the meeting on 31 May. All appreciated that the situation has generally been calm and quiet, with fewer detention cases.

Participants discussed the increased level of fencing activities along the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) and its impact on local communities, especially with regard to restrictions to their freedom of movement and threats to their livelihood.

The co-chairs of the meetings, EUMM and OSCE, encouraged participants to find pragmatic solutions to the alarming issue of local communities’ access to water, as well as cemeteries.

Issues related to detained, missing and wanted persons were discussed; participants took note of some positive developments.

The importance of early warning regarding military exercises was reiterated.

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The Georgian Times

LOCAL ISSUES

NEWS

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US Congress considers critical amendment to cooperation document with Georgia

By LIKAMOSHIASHVILI, GT

The latest video footage from the Samegrelo cache of arms, weapons and drugs has been broadcast several times. The screening of the videos was publicized for media, NGO and diplomatic representatives at the MA was controversial. Some of these attacks prevented against the showing of the videos and others said that the identities of those featured were protected.

However, including President of the Georgian Times Mangaliai Galashvili, are demanding that they be made public. Galashvili said that the material we have watched is blinding evidence of criminality, the prosecution of the victims was impossible. Some, including me, are demanding that these videos be broadcast.

The material depicts crimes which took place in a deforested forest in the Samegrelo in 2011. It is clear from the footage that one video shows sexual humiliation and another video shows a man being beaten, his prop is broken and another video shows sexual humiliation. The current situation is completely differently than the former government will soon be held responsible for their crimes.

The UNM has long used similar methods. “We have to establish a culture in Georgia where no one will enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution because they are a member of the government or opposition,” she says. However, Georgian government and parliament do not want to establish a culture in Georgia where no one will enjoy immunity from criminal prosecution because they are a member of the government or opposition,” she says. However, Ser- rido Riani from the parliament minority regards the Con- gress statement as “very important for Georgia” and “it is necessary to judge against opponents should not turn into a trend. The state must keep in mind that each step in the relations with the United States means the creation of security problems for Georgia,” he declared.

Katka Gogoladze, Director of EU Studies at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and Inte- llectual Studies, shares Ria- tian’s opinion. “It’s very impor- tant for Georgia to have good relations with the U.S. and EU. Thus I think the government should act according to this position and react appropriately to it, as doing otherwise might endanger the country’s security,” she said GT. However Georgian Ambas- sador to the US Archil Gogoladze thinks that Congress has been acting on the “unilateral infor- mation provided by certain forc- es.” He notes that as recently as June 5 Congressman Turner, the author of this statement, voted against the US President in the Military Committee. “The fact that in one week important for Georgia, the Con- gressman Turner’s vision suggests that the US wants to become a key ally after a peaceful and uni- fied Georgia,” he declared.

Katka Gogoladze, Director of EU Studies at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and Inte- llectual Studies, shares Ria- tian’s opinion. “It’s very impor-
The company “Georgia Invest” with the support of the “Bank of Georgia” and Georgian Government, has started the construction of the largest trade-entertainment complex in the country and in Caucasus. The complex will be located around 180,000 square meters in the western part of Tbilisi. Initially this major international project will start with the construction of DIY (“Do It Yourself”) hypermarket “MaxHome.” “MaxHome” is the first contemporary, innovative chain of construction hypermarkets of DIY format in Georgia. The seventeen thousand square meter hypermarket will be opened in 2014 on one of the busiest highways of Tbilisi, in the neighborhood of existing major shopping centers – Tbilisi Mall and Goodwill.

60,000 product items – home, cottage, garden, construction and decorative-finishing materials, lighting and appliances, floor coverings and tiles, heating equipment, sanitary ware and water supply, tools, woodwork etc. from famous international brands and manufacturers – will be allocated in the store. Location of the hypermarket, a wide range of products, a high level of various services, active promotion of wholesale, discount systems and ability to make complex purchases in one place, will minimize material and time costs for customers and meet the demands of Georgian consumers.

Long term professional experience of management team and staff and the support of Russian and European partners guarantees that the visitors of the hypermarket, and in future “MaxHome” chain, will positively evaluate the advantages of this shopping center and become its loyal customers. The mission of “MaxHome” is to assist customers in making their homes better and more comfortable, to convert time-consuming and expensive process of repairing and renovation into an interesting and affordable process for everyone.

The company “Georgia Invest”, together with the large international trade chains and partners, plans to start active construction and development of the rest of the site next year, in order to create a modern, multi-functional trade center, which will meet the newest technologies.
Moscow is ready to restore ties with Georgia but doesn’t intend to revere its decision to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on June 11.

“I think the current President of Georgia made a big mistake and I think he is not denying this. I told him: Mikheil Nikolayevich, it’s time to discuss everything, but let us avoid bloodshed. Unfortunately however it all ended with war,” said Putin in his interview with state-owned English-language television station Russia Today. “At a reaction to this, Russia took the steps which led to the recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Let us imagine taking a step backward from this position now. But this issue is also a kind of red line for Georgia, which Georgia cannot cross, because Georgia believes that Southeastern Caucasus is the country of its integrity,” the President of Russia added.

Putin said that many foreign journalists have blamed Russia for the souring of relations with Georgia, but it is clear to him to make people sleep and maintain the power. These incidents are now recognized globally as “legal actions.”

Kakha Kaladze: I advise not to watch those videos, because it is a real nightmare

GETIMES GE

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In addition, according to the Minister, every involved in the torture and blackmail person and publicly punished including clients and those who did it. Kakha Kaladze also doesn’t exclude President’s responsibility regarding this issue and states that

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The Georgian Times

Monday, June 24, 2013

POLITICS

By LIKA MOSHEASHVILI, GT

Maia Panjikidze - Salaries Were Too Low in MFA and were Balanced by Bonuses

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He said that despite not attending the meeting with diplomats at the Ministry of Internal Affairs yesterday, he is informed by the embassy employees and is shocked and surprised about what he was told.

“The US embassy was presented on yesterday’s meeting. They have informed me about it. Therefore, I am informed, shocked and surprised with the news delivered by our representatives. They spoke about the footage. The U.S. calls on the government of Georgia to immediately investigate the facts in the video footage” – Richard Norland said.

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Christopher Coppola: I am giving everyone an opportunity to express his talents

By EMMA BAKARADOVA, GT

Christopher Coppola, the famous Hollywood film director, producer and creator, has been part of a festival organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Georgia and the NGO Children and Youth National Centre, part of his project PAH-FEST (Project Accessible Hollywood, Georgia). The theme of the festival was famous seventeenth-century Georgian writer Natan Saba Orbeliani’s “Wisdom of Fanacy”.

PAH-FEST, created by Coppola, is a week-long digital festival that originates from cities throughout the US and internationally. PAH-FEST encourages in a visually dynamic and civic engagement and promotes the production of fictional and documentary videos which can be shared and enjoyed globally. People from all walks of life who have engaging storytelling ideas are provided with digital equipment and a professional “helping hand” in order to create their own short digital films. Here Christopher Coppola tells the Georgian Times about his project and his impressions of Georgia.

Mr. Coppola, do you know about Georgia and why did you decide to come to Georgia?

A long time ago, I think 24 years, I watched a movie whose name, as I remember, was “Moscow in Love”. It was a collection of love stories between many different people in Moscow and one of the characters was a smart female lawyer who was in love with a Georgian man. He was such an interesting character: he drank, he had lot of passion and energy, he seemed larger than life, he had lot of passion and energy, he seemed larger than life.

Lasha Zambakhidze knows about the festival I run – the Project of Accessible Hollywood – and suggested that I bring it to Georgia. Since 2006 we have travelled all over the United States and to other countries and have used digital technology to help people learn basic filmmaking skills so the ycan share their stories about themselves, their community, their way of life and give them an opportunity to demonstrate their talent. This is also a nice way for people from around the world to make a connection. The premise of PAH is that everybody has a film inside them, a little bit of Hollywood inside them. We want people to feel that they are stars, big directors, great editors and cinematographers. The main reason I created PAH is that it gives a chance to a new generation to express their emotions using digital technology. So participating in this project will give people from Tbilisi, Tbilisi and other cities an opportunity to show the world a little bit more about Georgia, because frankly most people, in the US for example, think that Georgia is still the USSR or Russia. By doing these creative pieces and helping people share their stories we can make people around the world more educated.

So will Project Accessible Hollywood give Georgian stars the chance to express themselves in Hollywood?

I think everybody has a way of visually sharing themselves, and everybody is a star. It does not matter whether you are in Hollywood or anywhere else. It is not necessary for you to come to Hollywood; it is better that Hollywood comes to you, like this project does. This project gives young filmmakers the opportunity to learn

Latin American, Russian and other actors only being allowed to play killers, prostitutes or things like this. How true is this?

This has been true in history of Hollywood. You know that some of the greatest actors ever had different names but changed them to more American sounding ones. My broth- er Nicholas Cage’s real name, Nicholas Coppola, he changed it to Cage to make him sound more like a leading man, and Tom Cruise and others have done the same. Many of these stereotypes are true, for example another that is men can work longer in Hollywood than women, as they can continue to work even when they get older whereas women can’t. It always has been like that. The only way to make your mark in Hollywood is to do

Americans and this is the way it should be. Newcomers have to work hard to achieve success. Georgian actors who get roles in Hollywood achieve great success just by doing this. It is not easy. What do you think of Georg- ia? Do you like the country? What impressions will you take back to America?

I like the hospitality of the people to each other; loving human connections which do not exist much in Hollywood. I like the passion in the hearts of people. I love their storytelling. I like sitting at the table with my Georgian friends and speaking with their parents. I like Georgian cuisine, and that food with cheese, eggs and bread. I love Chatinchichi. When I go back I will tell all my friends and film-makers and storytellers about the

best cinematographers came from Georgia, but I know that in Hollywood some of them are not as well known. Do you think Georgia is an appropriate place to make Holly- wood films in?

Yes, definitely. I have made a film in Romania. There is no difference. We can make a film here as well. I see a lot of talent entered actors here, I see a lot of talent and dedication, and I see an interesting history here. I have worked with Georgian students and although they were not ready for the roles on offer I cannot deny that some have real talent and are not scared of doing anything they have to do. You have to compete with other countries to create good filmmakers, but in co-production with other countries anything can happen.

Who is the best actor in Hollywood in your opinion, apart from your brother Nico- las Cage?

Oh, I don’t know. I think the stars of today are not very good actors, they are like boys, not men. There is no real man in Hollywood like Clint East- wood or Clark Gable. For example, Ashton Kutcher and Leonardo DiCaprio are good actors but they are boys. Women in society have lost something in the emasculation of men and stars. They want to see real men. We need a man who say “where are the men”? And that is a problem. I think my brother Nicolas Cage is a man, I think Robert Downey Jr is a man and a good actor. As regards women Meryl Streep is great. But what has hap- pened to the great actresses, what has happened to the Katharine Hepburns and people like that? Unfortunately, they do not exist anymore.

What about your own projects in Hollywood? What are you doing now?

What I like is teaching. I am also going to do something with Georgia. I will continue to work with PAH and give new talents a chance to express themselves. By the way, in the 60s and 70s when my uncle started out there were low budget movies where directors working under him could learn on the job. Nobody does this anymore. I want to create my own school for teach- ing with students, giving them an opportunity to learn how to make movies, how to raise money for schools. So I want to combine education with enter- tainment.

Continued on p. 13
Ketevan Kekoklidze, World Famous Mezzo Soprano: The Story Of Having It All

By TAKO AGARASHVILI GT

She used to sit in the front row drawing juggs, fruit or kettles. She was fairly talkative, polite, self-assured and humble. Once her mother came to see her and she got really angry on the woman because her daughter was doing it. I can still hear the voice of the teacher saying—“She is talented, hardworking and her mind is flying somewhere far away from here, I don’t think we can catch up with it.” Ketevan Kekoklidze, the Georgian girl in that art school? seven years ago, first drifted away to accounting and then found her crystal shoe as a mezzo soprano and conquered the world.

Ketevan lives in Vienna. She is happily married. She is in demand. She is living her dream. When our generation were growing up there wasn’t even a slight hint that we had a bright future. We were children of war, poverty, darkness, cold, armed men running around and people flying from random bullets. At that time we only knew electricity. It was a different world. But she disagrees. There are many different stories out there: Cinderella, Lady D. Pretty Woman and Ugly Duckling. I don’t think Ketevan’s is like any of those. She is writing her own story of a girl who has it all.

Her path is not the limit for her. She has debuted in Vienna, not just any movie but Carlos Saura’s, “Don Giovanni.” She was worried sick, she even burned her hair doing a romantic scene, but she managed just fine. Like I said, she is one of a kind. After speaking to her, it looks like Don Giovanni’s favourite mezzo soprano has much more to come. You have won quite a few of contests. How did you even get to compete in them?

 시행권

Ketevan was very impressed and said, “I want people all over the world to know the good work of Geor- gian talents on the internet; this is a very small number of actors and fame and success are just a dream to their theatres to perform. Thanks to this victory I débuted at Covent Garden (London), the Royal Opera (Madrid) and at the Santiago Opera, where after 5 years waiting I joy having a premiere in a couple of days. What do you perform most, tragic or comic? I can’t say one more than the other. I think it’s a balance. One must perform different characters in order to grow, ad- vance and succeed. My repertoire mainly consists of young women and young men. Mezzo sopranos often perform so called ‘role’ roles, in which I luckily I don’t die at the end. I try my best to portray young characters. With age this will become harder, but these roles are necessary and useful, they advance and promote singers for more difficult and dramatic roles later in life.

Do you think there are any roles more meaningful to any character or roles? Usually mezzo sopranos play strong, beautiful, determined women. So, yes, I resembl- e a lot of them, both person- ality and looks wise. It’s an advantage for me, and a great job for designers and costume designers, that I look like the characters I stage. Sometimes we play vengeful women who have been abandoned because the sopranos stole their beloved. Sadly people say that opera is too over the top and distant from reality, but this is wrong. Opera is really close to reality, the characters are real people with real feelings and weak- nesses. As I said, I look a lot in common with my charac- ters. But I must admit I have never dreamt of becoming my favourite character – Cinderel- la. Although my life is full of similar stories, personally wise we are very different. This year I am debating as Carmen (in Tokyo), so I’m curious to see if I will find her in me, as this character is the symbol of a woman in love. It is hard to portray a charac- ter very different from your own. As I said, I often play male characters. This requires a cer- tain and powerful performance. For example if it’s the role of a grown man like Julius Caesar. Usually when the public think of the role they don’t wear a dress and I try to be a bit masculine in my manners. But people always worry about female manners, walk and behavior change. Prepare psychologi- cally as well, being convincing and confident on the stage is the main aim of an actor.

As a young actor in a movie by Carlos Saura, did this show you at your best, like the stage? I think it’s rather incon- dent on stage than in front of the camera. I think it’s about the experience of comedy and that one thing was new for me. It was the first but I believe I did it well. Are you an artist or a sing- er?

I am an artist. It’s the twenty-first century, the era of movies, TV and computers, and the internet (in a good way) with great shows. If they don’t see the same qual- ity of performance as the ope- ra, they won’t come again. Acting in opera requires a lot of preparation, no singing, acting and performing.

The growing economic crisis fewer and fewer people are visiting the opera. Promoting it is our primary job, together with the right marketing cam- paign. If you could sing incognito to the entire world, aria would you sing? What is your dream? What would you want to say to us all?

It would be the aria from Carmen, I think it is very different, we still have our moments. I like all Georgi- an classics. It’s a pity there is so much poverty and the agony of war, I never gave up dreaming. Most of me, I wouldn’t tell anyone. I’d tell the world never to give up, to keep dreaming, because dreams do come true.

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Continued from p. 12

Do you particularly like Orbelian’s “Wisdom of Fan- cy”?

Yes. This PAF festival in Georgia is all based around Or- belian. What I like about him is the concept of the living sto- ry, human stories not just fa- bles like Aesop’s. Here we have to celebrate who is killing the story, the king, the warior or the prince, how they are telling the story and why the story is be-

The Georgian Times

ART & CULTURE

Monday, June 24, 2013

Chant de la Ville de Toulouse. I was happy to see that the public there remembered me and I was pleased with that. Secondly the juror of that contest came to Georgia and picked a few Georgian talents on the internet; this is a very small number of actors and fame and success are just a dream to their theatres to perform. Thanks to this victory I débuted at Covent Garden (London), the Royal Opera (Madrid) and at the Santiago Opera, where after 5 years waiting I joy having a premiere in a couple of days. What do you perform most, tragic or comic? I can’t say one more than the other. I think it’s a balance. One must perform different characters in order to grow, ad- vance and succeed. My repertoire mainly consists of young women and young men. Mezzo sopranos often perform so called ‘role’ roles, in which I luckily I don’t die at the end. I try my best to portray young characters. With age this will become harder, but these roles are necessary and useful, they advance and promote singers for more difficult and dramatic roles later in life.

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SUNDAY BRUNCH

Gather around with your friends and family on Sundays for brunch at Tbilisi Marriott where we will cater to every family member! Sunday Brunch at Parnas captures the essence of Marriott’s glamorous culinary tradition where Chef Pedro Gonzalez offers a variety of delights on the buffet with comfort cuisine combined with modern flavor. Everyone will find Sunday Brunch exciting with unlimited complimentary wines from Telavi Wine Cellar, mimosas for the ladies and kids’ game room equipped with Xbox KINECT for your little one to enjoy!

Every Sunday, 12:3 PM
Buffet - 47 GEL + VAT
Buffet, unlimited white and red wine - 59 GEL + VAT
Children under 9 free of charge. Ages 9 to 13 - 25 Gel + VAT
Special discounts for the parties 10 and more
10% discount for our returning guests

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TbilisiMarriott.com
QSI Tbilisi is pleased to announce that the 2013 Graduates will attend the following Universities next year

Valentine Clary, daughter of Jean Louis and Sylvie Clary, will attend McGill University in Quebec, Canada majoring in Psychology and minoring in Music.

Sophiko Kashakashvili, daughter of Elene Gelovani and Benedict Kashakashvili will attend ECLA of Bard College in Berlin, Germany majoring in Psychology and minoring in Visual Arts.

Aleksandre Pachuashvili, son of Mamuka Pachuashvili and Maya Chakignitze, will attend Ferrum College in Virginia. His major is undecided.

Henry Christopher Hartman, son of Colonel Jeffrey Hartman and Maria Hartman, will attend Villanova University in Pennsylvania on a ROTC scholarship. Chris will major in History and minor in Russian and German.

Stepan Denk, son of Dana Denkova, will attend Anglo-American University in Prague and will major in International Relations.

Olga Cheltsova, daughter of Anna Meltzer and Alan D. Meltzer, will attend Mary Washington College in Virginia. Olga will major in International Relations and minor in Humanities.

Nicholas Doudnikoff, son of Charles Burges and Olga Mandrugina, will attend Towson University in Maryland and will major in Chemistry.

Cathrine Salby, daughter of Christian and Nina Salby, will attend Suffolk University in Massachusetts. Cathrine’s major is undecided.

Aryana Givechian, daughter of Efat Yazdani and Mohammad Hassan Givechian, will attend John Cabot University in Rome, Italy and will major in Liberal Arts.