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Deputy FM responds to Sergey Lavrov's statement on Georgia participating in peace platform



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In 2020 Abkhazia consumed as much electricity as Tbilisi



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BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Following the statement of the third President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia has released the explanation of the Ambassador of Georgia to the Republic of Malta (with residence in Rome) Kote Surguladze.

According to the ambassador, the relevant Maltese authorities are communicating with the Georgian Embassy on the issue of vaccines, and reports from other sources on this issue are not credible.

"Regarding the vaccines of Covid19, the Embassy of Georgia in Rome (which covers the Republic of Malta), began consultations with the relevant Maltese authorities in December 2020 on the issue of receiving appropriate doses of the vaccine for Georgia from Malta. It is noteworthy that vaccines were not yet available for Malta in December. The embassy, obviously, continues to consult with the Maltese side even today," said Kote Surguladze, adding that the Honorary Consul of Georgia in Malta was involved in the negotiations from the very beginning, trying to get the appropriate number of vaccines from Malta through his channels as well.

According to him, Maltese side is in communication with the Embassy of Georgia on the issue of supply of vaccines to Georgia, and therefore the decision will be communicated first of all to the Embassy and the Government of Georgia. "Therefore, all kinds of information that is spread on this issue through vari-

Georgia's Embassy to Malta states it continues to communicate with the country regarding vaccine



► "The Maltese side is in contact with the Embassy of Georgia on the issue of vaccines and information from any other source on this topic is speculation".

ous information sources is speculation," Surguladze reiterated.

Mikheil Saakashvili addressed the Georgian government on 27th of January.

"I offer a concrete proposal to the Georgian government, I hope they will listen. There is a EU member, the island of Malta, which the EU distributed vaccines to, they have one million more vaccines than they needed," Saakashvili announced, adding that Maltese government has decided to redistribute this vaccine to poorer countries, among which is Georgia.

The UNM leader said, that if he had this information, it should be known to the government as well - "why do not you apply to the Maltese government and why do not you ask for even a part of these vaccines of Georgia?! Why don't you do something?!" Later on, the Georgian government announced that it has been negotiating with Malta since December.

The national vaccination plan was presented on January 21 by the Deputy Minister of Health Tamar Gabunia. According to the plan, by the end of 2021, 60% of the population should be vaccinated with the coronavirus vaccine. By 2022, 1.7 million people in the country will be vaccinated as stated in the gov-



► Former President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili offers the government to ask for the vaccine in Malta in a video address.

ernment's calculations. The minimum cost of the plan is €64 million, the maximum - 158 million. The difference in budget is related to the difference in the price of vaccines. Georgia has already paid €17 million from the bud-

get to purchase the first stage vaccines (to evacuate 700 thousand people). As for the rest of the finances, as Gabunia says, this amount is envisaged in the loan agreement of the European Investment Bank.

Deputy FM responds to Sergey Lavrov's statement on Georgia participating in peace platform



► Khvtisiashvili remarked on Georgia's support for those long-term purposes, which are aimed at guaranteeing the security and prosperity of Georgia and the whole region.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

“Georgia will not be able to engage in the peace platform, where the country occupying Georgian territories is participating as well,” announced Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Khvtisiashvili as a response to the statement made by Russian FM Sergey Lavrov.

Lavrov has made a statement, welcoming aspirations of Iran, Turkey, Georgia, and several European countries to take part in recovering the economy of Nagorno-Karabakh. According to Lavrov, initiations are already being heard that Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, with the participation of Russia, Iran, and Turkey, are trying to establish relations in the region, taking into account the new reality.

Georgian Deputy FM Minister responded to Lavrov's statement, noting that as long as relevant steps are not taken in terms of de-occupation, such an initiative would not be promising. Khvtisiashvili stated his position that



► Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Alexander Khvtisiashvili.

any platform for cooperation should be based on mutual respect, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of the participating countries, therefore, “Georgia will not be involved in the peace platform together with the country occupying its territories.”

According to Khvtisiashvili, the ministry attaches great importance to the peace and stability in the region, which he believes to be one of the major preconditions for sustainable development in the South Caucasian countries. He remarked that Georgia supports those long-term purposes, which are aimed at assuring the security and prosperity of Georgia and the whole region.

“In this regard, peace platforms are crucial, and establishing such platforms in our region, first of all, should be achieved through dialogues and cooperation between the three states of the South Caucasus, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, which is a prerequisite for the development of important regional projects and cooperation,” deputy FM stated. Khvtisiashvili also noted that Georgia came up with such an initiative when the armed conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia started to escalate.

THURSDAY JANUARY 28

Day ☁️ Cloudy
High: 13°C

Night 🌙 Partly cloudy
Low: 1°C

FRIDAY JANUARY 29

Day ☁️ Mostly cloudy
High: 11°C

Night 🌙 Cloudy
Low: 0°C

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In 2020 Abkhazia consumed as much electricity as Tbilisi

OCCUPIED REGION IS SUPPLIED FREE OF CHARGE

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Electricity consumption in occupied Abkhazia is growing at a high rate. By 2020, the region consumed about as much electricity as Tbilisi, which has a population of 1.1 million.

According to ESCO data, in 2020, the total output of the Enguri and Vardnili hydropower plants was 3326.8 million kWh. According to the balance sheet of electricity, free electricity received by Abkhazia from Georgia increased by 24% in 2020 and amounted to 2.55 billion kilowatt hours (76.7% of the total electricity generated). For comparison, the volume of electricity received by Tbilisi's energy distributor, Telasi, was 2.63 billion kilowatt hours. The market value of electricity supplied to Abkhazia is about \$ 89 million (3.5 cents per kilowatt).

In 2007-2020, 23914,408 million kWh of electricity was supplied to de facto Abkhazia, or 42.72% of the electricity generated by the Enguri and Vardnili hydropower plants.

The increase in electricity con-



► In 2020, Georgia imported 1610.1 million kWh of electricity. Russia's share in imported electricity is 570.6 million kWh or 35.4%.

sumption in Abkhazia is related to the extraction of cryptocurrencies in the region. The government has banned the introduction of blocks for cryptocurrency mining in the area, but is unable to monitor the ban.

Abkhazia is supplied with electricity generated by the Enguri HPP from Georgia. In January 2021, the station was stopped for renovation works, during which time Abkhazia will receive power from Russia before the station resumes production; however, not free of charge.

As for the total data, in 2020 electricity consumption in Georgia decreased by 4.8% and amounted to 12.17 billion kilowatt hours. The decline in consumption is due to the economic crisis in the country.

The electricity tariff in de facto Abkhazia has remained unchanged for years and amounts to 0.4 Russian rubles (40 tetris) per 1 kWh. According to reports, the facilities of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation and the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation pay 0.95 rubles for 1 kWh of electricity.

January 27 - International Holocaust Remembrance Day



► International Holocaust Remembrance Day - an international memorial day commemorating the end of the tragedy of the Holocaust that was occurring during the Second World War.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Yesterday, on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the world honored those murdered in the holocaust tragedy. A genocide, committed by the Nazi government against Jews, Roma, Soviet captives, black people, and other minorities in Europe, took place Between 1933 and 1945. The number of Jews killed as a result of the genocide

exceeds 6 million. In 2005, The United Nations declared January 27 International Holocaust Remembrance Day and called on states to work to raise awareness of Holocaust atrocities. Yesterday, Georgian officials, including the President of Georgia Salome Zurbishvili, Mayor of Tbilisi Kakhi Kaladze, and the chairman of the Parliament of Georgia Archil Talakvadze joined the rest of the world and

paid tribute to the Holocaust victims.

The Consul of the Israeli Embassy to Georgia visited the residence of the President of Georgia, where Zurbishvili hosted the ceremony dedicated to the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The Public Defender of Georgia, the Tolerance Center of the Public Defender, the Council of Europe Office in Georgia,

and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organized an online meeting to discuss the historical path and the consequences of the Holocaust. During the meeting, speeches were delivered by Nino Lomjaria, Public Defender of Georgia, Natalia Voutova, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Georgia, Ran Gidor, Ambassador of Israel to Georgia, and Adam Schmidt, Director of the Democracy, Rights and Governance Office, USAID/Georgia.

According to the Ombudsman's statement, during the

online event, the participants talked about the possibilities of condemning each expression of anti-Semitism and recalled interesting and important facts about the coexistence of the Georgian and Jewish people. They also talked about the importance of tolerance, measures to eliminate anti-Semitic attitudes, and the benefits of the coexistence of different people in the world. The event was also attended by representatives of academia, local and international organizations, students, and other stakeholders.



► Jewish children in concentration camps.