

## POLITICS

**Biden, Putin meet in Geneva, gulfs on issues remain after 'constructive' summit**



FULL STORY ON Page 2

## POLITICS

**Georgia's High Council of Justice elects candidates despite calls for postponement**



FULL STORY ON Page 3

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

In New York, the UN General Assembly, at its 75th session, adopted a resolution initiated by Georgia and 57 countries on "The Status of Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali Region / South Ossetia, Georgia." This year, the resolution was supported by 80 states.

Like last year, UN member states were given the opportunity this year to co-sponsor the resolution and thus become even more actively involved in international efforts to address the dire humanitarian situation created by Russian aggression and occupation. As a result, 57 countries from different regions of the world joined the ranks of co-authors of the resolution, which is an increase compared to last year. "This fact shows that the mentioned resolution is already a global initiative," the statement from Georgia's Permanent Mission to the United Nations said.

Georgia has been submitting this resolution to the UN General Assembly since 2008. The resolution condemns the forcible demographic changes in the occupied regions of Georgia, affirms the right of IDPs to return to their homes in a dignified and safe manner, regardless of ethnicity, and emphasizes the need to respect and protect their property rights.

In addition to the humanitarian context, the resolution has practical implications, as it instructs the UN Secretary-General to prepare an annual report on the situation of the IDPs living in Georgia and on the implementation of the resolution. This is particularly important in light of the dire human rights situation in the occupied

## Georgia in UN resolution and EU-U.S. summit joint statement



► UN General Assembly adopts resolution on status of internally displaced persons from Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region.

territories of Georgia and the lack of international monitoring mechanisms, which is another obstacle to the safe and dignified return of IDPs and refugees.

The resolution also calls on the participants in the Geneva talks to step up efforts to improve the security and human rights situation in the occupied regions of Georgia, which in turn will facilitate the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality and Prime Minister Gharibashvili welcomed the resolution and thanked all the countries who supported the resolution and became a co-author of the initiative. With this decision, each country has reaffirmed its support for the right of return of internally displaced

persons and refugees and expressed its support for each IDP. The PM has welcomed the resolution as well.

Previous day, on 15th of June, a joint statement issued after the EU-US summit mentioned Georgia as well.

According to article 28, parties 'are determined to continue to stand in support of the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the EU's Eastern partners and will support the reform path of Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova. We resolve to work towards long-term peace, resilience and stability in the South Caucasus.

Article further reads: "We stand with the people of Belarus and their demands for human rights and democracy. We resolve to hold the Lukashenka regime to account for its escalating attacks on human rights and

fundamental freedoms and for endangering aviation safety through the unprecedented and unacceptable forced diversion of an EU passenger airplane under false pretences, and the subsequent arrest of a journalist as part of a continuing assault on opposition voices and the freedom of the press."

Georgia is also mentioned in paragraph 27, which deals with relations with Russia. Washington and Brussels have pledged to coordinate policy towards Russia, creating a high-level EU-US dialogue format.

"We condemn Russia's continued actions aimed at undermining the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine and Georgia," the statement said.

The EU-US summit was held in Brussels after a seven-year pause. The parties agreed to adopt a pact defining transatlantic relations.



► EU, US will work out joint approach to Russia to support Georgia's territorial integrity.



# Biden, Putin meet in Geneva, gulfs on issues remain after 'constructive' summit



▶ Russian president said that during the meeting with the American leader, there was no complete trust between them, but only 'sparks of trust'.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

President Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin emerged from their 4-hour Geneva summit on Wednesday with the Russian leader deeming it "constructive" and the U.S. president calling it "positive." The first meeting between the presidents of the United States and Russia attracted worldwide attention. Such a great deal of interest in the summit was fueled by the strained relations between the two most powerful nuclear states in the world.

After taking office, Joe Biden imposed two series of economic sanctions on Russia following the poisoning of Alexei Navalny and the bombing of ammunition depots in the Czech town of Vrbětice; and just a few months

ago, he called Putin a murderer and sides then summoned ambassadors. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called Biden's statement 'unprecedented' in Russian-American relations and warned Washington that Russia would respond "absolutely" to the US president's remarks. In response, the Kremlin listed the US as a hostile state and banned its consulate from hiring citizens of the Russian Federation and third-country nationals.

After the summit, Putin said that the return of the ambassadors was also discussed at the meeting, although this information has not been confirmed by the White House so far. "We also agreed that the Russian Foreign Ministry and the US State Department will begin consultations on the whole complex of diplomatic relations," Putin said. As for his reference to being a 'murderer', as Biden recently agreed, Putin has responded by criticizing the US for killing civilians in Iraq and for holding

a secret prison at Guantanamo Bay.

Press conferences that were held separately made clear that the sides remain at odds over human rights, cyberattacks and Ukraine.

"I think there was no hostility, quite the contrary," said Putin.

He noted they reached an agreement to start negotiations on cybersecurity, but took no responsibility for the cyberattacks and election meddling that U.S. intelligence has blamed on Russia and Russia-based cyber criminals. When asked by an about Russia's human rights abuses and imprisonment of political opponents, the Russian president brought up the January 6 insurrection, seemingly expressing sympathy for the rioters who were arrested.

"People came to the U.S. Congress with political demands," Putin said. "They are being called domestic terrorists."

Russian president was also asked about Ukraine, in particu-

lar, the prospect of its membership in NATO. He said there was nothing tangible here that could have become a topic of discussion. He once again accused Kiev of escalating the conflict.

"As far as I understand President Biden, he agrees that the settlement of the situation in south-eastern Ukraine should be based on the Minsk agreement," Putin said.

Regarding the commitment to Ukraine, the Russian President said that Russia has only one obligation: to facilitate the implementation of the Minsk Agreement.

According to Putin, sides have agreed to start consultations on cyber-attacks and cyber security.

As for Alexei Navalny, whom Putin called a 'double convict': "He was deliberately going to be arrested," he said, again accusing the Russian opposition of violating the law. Speaking of Navalny, Putin actually accused the US of supporting Russia's political opposition, while the

Russian leader called the Navalny Anti-Corruption Fund an 'extremist' organization.

"This organization has publicly called for mass unrest, abused minors in street rallies, which is prohibited by law in Russia, instructed them on how to supply Molotov cocktails and disclosed the personal data of police officers," Putin said.

In his introductory speech, Biden noted that a direct meeting with the Russian president was important to him to avoid misinterpretations of what he wanted to convey to the interlocutor. He said his goal with the meeting was to establish a relationship that is 'stable and predictable'. By Biden's telling, he raised uncomfortable topics including ransomware attacks emanating from Russia, the wrongful imprisonment of 2 Americans and Putin's mistreatment of political opponents.

Continued to page 3

FRIDAY		JUNE 18	
Day		Mainly sunny	High: 34°C
Night		Clear	Low: 20°C
SATURDAY		JUNE 19	
Day		Sunny	High: 35°C
Night		Clear	Low: 22°C

---

published by **The Messenger**

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia  
 Founded by Prof. **Zaza Gachechiladze**  
**Tamar Gachechiladze** Publisher

Phone: +995 99 56 56 21; +995 77 76 00 00  
 E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge  
 http://www.messenger.com.ge

**Nino Metreveli** Commercial Director  
**Mariam Mchedlidze** Editor-in-Chief  
**Natalia Kochiashvili** Executive Editor  
**Nino Kavelashvili** Design and Layout

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact. All contributions should be submitted by e-mail. The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper,

and, therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements. The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.



## EXCHANGE RATES:

US DOLLAR - 3.1657 | EURO - 3.8356 | GBP - 4.4674 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.3968 | SWISS FRANC - 3.5194 |

# Georgia's High Council of Justice elects candidates despite calls for postponement

BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

The Georgian High Council of Justice has selected nine candidates to become judges for the country's Supreme Court. The appointment has been made despite repeated calls of foreign diplomats and local NGOs to postpone the process until after the large-scale judicial reform is carried out in the country.

The ambassadors of EU and USA, as well as members of the countries opposition and civil society representatives, have repeatedly called for the appointment to be postponed and for the body to adhere to the EU-brokered agreement signed on April 19.

The new nine appointed candidates are Giorgi Gogiashvili, Gocha Abuseridze, Levan Tevzadze, Ketevan Meskhishvili, Giorgi Shavliashvili, Revaz Nadaraia, Bidzina Sturua, Eka Zarnadze and Lasha Kochiashvili, however, their candidacies must be approved by the Georgian Parliament in order for them to occupy their seats.

Several Georgian NGOs have issued an open letter condemning the High Council of Justice's vio-



lating the fundamental clauses of the April 19 agreement. Transparency International, Open Society Foundation, Institute for Development of Freedom of Information, Georgian Democratic Initiative, Center for Social Justice, International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy have expressed the following sentiment:

"Despite numerous calls, including from our international partners, they have not shown the will to improve the judiciary and make real reforms to the system, including changing the rules for electing non-judicial members and making decisions by the board to nominate the best and impartial candidates", the statement reads.

The NGOs added that "such bold steps could not have been taken by the so-called Klan and the High Council of Justice without the unconditional support of the government and commitments to the agreement reached through the mediation of Western partners."

NGOs are calling on the High Council of Justice to end the violations of the EU-mediated agreement on the parliament to launch fundamental justice reform immediately.

## Biden, Putin meet in Geneva, gulfs on issues remain after 'constructive' summit

From page 2

According to the US President, he said at a meeting with Putin that the US will continue to unwaveringly support Ukraine and sides agreed to continue diplomatic efforts under the Minsk agreement.

Biden also noted that he will continue to support Alexei Navalny and all those whose rights are being violated. Here Biden referred to American citizens serving sentences in Russian prisons.

"I told him, 'How can I be president of the US and not speak out against human rights abuses?' I told him that if Navalny died, it would be devastating for Russia," Biden told reporters, adding that Putin always thinks the US is trying to 'defeat' him.

In addition to human rights, Biden spoke with Putin about cyberattacks against American companies and the situation in Belarus, but failed to reach an agreement here.

Biden said he also tried to establish some basic rules of the road, sharing with Putin a list of 16 elements of critical infrastructure he suggested be considered off limits for cyber attacks. Biden said he told the Russians the U.S. has "significant cyber capabilities," without



►: "I think Putin wants the Cold War the least. This is not in the interests of either the United States or Russia," Biden said.

elaborating on what they are, and if the Russians or criminals inside Russia continue to violate norms "we will respond." Biden suggested Russian officials in

the meeting had a moment of acknowledgement when he described what a cyber attack could do to Russia's pipelines for instance.

The sides agreed to formal talks on updating arms-control agreements.

Another issue raised at the Geneva summit, which was not

mentioned by Vladimir Putin at his press conference, concerns the security of Afghanistan. "It is also in Russia's interest that there were no terrorists in Afghanistan," Biden said, adding that he had told Putin that the security problem in Afghanistan was directly linked to the Russian president.

Asked whether the meeting with Putin was needed at all if agreement could not be reached and the positions brought closer, the US president said he was doing what he had to do: "The first is to define the areas in which we can interact, the second is a personal meeting, the third is to clearly state our position. There is a lot of work ahead and I am not saying that we have already achieved something."

A statement on strategic stability was issued after the summit of the US and Russian presidents. "We reaffirm our commitment to the principle that no one can win a nuclear war and that it should never be repeated. To achieve this, the United States and Russia will soon launch a comprehensive bilateral dialogue on strategic stability."

Recall, that issue of Georgia was not the topic of discussion at the summit.