

## Restrictions on movement to be lifted next month

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Interagency Coordinating Council meeting of June 22 lifted some of the restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of the Covid-19. According to the decision, restrictions on movement during night hours will be lifted from July 1. According to the City Hall, from July 1, Tbilisi Metro and municipal buses will serve passengers as usual.

To reduce mobility, the restriction on movement came into force on 28 November 2020. From 21:00 to 05:00, the movement of persons both on foot and by vehicle, as well as being in public space was prohibited. From June 1, 2021, the restriction period was reduced from 23 hours to 4 o'clock in the morning.

Besides that, wearing the facemask will no longer be mandatory in open spaces. However, the facemask requirement stays in force for indoor spaces, in places where the population concentration is large, to be considered conditionally, for example, fairs, markets, public transport and bus stops and this issue will be strictly controlled by the relevant services of the Tbilisi Transport Company in the future.

Public catering facilities as well as hotels and restaurants that have already been subject to regulations will be open until 00:00. As for nightclubs, they are completely banned," said Giorgi Ghibradze. As noted by the Chief of Operational Staff at the Interagency Coordination Council, at this stage, the regu-



The Coordinating Council clarifies that the restriction on movement will no longer apply from 23:00 on June 30.

lation regarding work until 00:00 will also apply to open facilities during the holiday seasons. The Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development Natia Turnava expressed readiness to meet with the representatives of nightclubs and

discuss with them the issue of assistance to this industry.

However, according to Natia Turnava, in the conditions of the pandemic, the summer tourist season will be better than expected, but it will not be complete. She estimates that at the peak of the tourist summer season, Georgia will approach about 70% of the number of tourists arriving by air, compared to the same data of 2019, which was a record tourism year for Georgia.

At the briefing, held after the council meeting, PM Gharibashvili informed that a million doses of vaccine will arrive in the country in two weeks and that an intensive vaccination process will start. The head of the government noted that mass vaccination centers are planned to be mobilized in big cities throughout Georgia and representatives of local authorities will be involved in this process. This process will continue in stages and by the end of the year, more than 3.6 million vaccines will be mobilized in Georgia. The PM discussed the timing of the introduction of additional doses of vaccines with the Health Minister and the heads of the clinics.

According to the NCDC, due to tempo-

rary delays in the delivery of the AstraZeneca vaccine purchased from the Kovacs platform, it is not possible to vaccinate people registered for the 2nd dose of the vaccine for the second vaccination within a period of up to 10 weeks after the 1st dose. All citizens who have planned to be vaccinated with this vaccine will be given the opportunity in the near future, for which an additional announcement will be made. However, all citizens who have booked their second vaccination within 10-12 weeks of the 1st dose will be able to get the vaccine without delay on the date of their choice.

According to Amiran Gamkrelidze, NCDC head, the citizens are guaranteed to be vaccinated for the second dose within 12 weeks. "We have about 1,600 doses of AstraZeneca in our network. And for those who have booked four to ten weeks after the first vaccination, we ask them to be a little patient, we apologize again. They will be provided with additional information on when 43,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine will be delivered to the country," he said, adding that in a few days it will be possible to provide it and UNICEF is working intensively on this.



The National Center for Disease Control has issued a statement regarding the delay in the delivery of AstraZeneca doses.

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# Where does Georgia stand on the agenda of Western politics?

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

Significant developments in recent weeks - the NATO summit, the EU-US summit, the Putin-Biden meeting - have shown the place of Georgia in Western politics. It is clear that Georgia's integration into Western structures - NATO and the EU - is not a matter of the near future. Another question is what the Georgian government can do to speed up this process.

Georgia's last two governments, the National Movement and the Georgian Dream, have consistently stated their Western orientation - their desire to join NATO and the European Union, albeit in the short term. The Georgian Dream government recently announced that it would apply to join the European Union in 2024. However, skeptical predictions have already been made regarding this promise.

The Western-oriented political opposition accuses the Georgian Dream of doing virtually nothing since 2012, during its eight

years in power, to implement the country's chosen Western course. The reason for this is considered to be the course of 'not irritating Russia' declared by the formal and informal leader of the coalition from the very beginning. According to this concept, Georgia should not have been the subject of controversy between Russia and the West. For Georgia, the only hope to stop Russian aggression is the support of the West.

In this regard, it is interesting to note the important events in world politics in recent days, where the mention of Georgia, or, conversely, the failure to get into the issues discussed, well illustrates the real place of Georgia in Western politics.

A summit of 30 NATO member states was held in Brussels on June 14. The communiqué reiterated, among other issues, the decision of the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Georgia (as well as Ukraine) would become a member of the Alliance and that Russia could not block the process, but no specific date

was set. Named and it will not be considered in the near future.

At the same time, if in the past it was sometimes said in Georgia that the MAP might not have been needed to join the Alliance, now it has been directly stated that Georgia's membership in NATO will be possible only as a result of the "Membership Action Plan". NATO continues to strongly support Georgia's territorial integrity, calling on Russia to end its occupation of Georgian territory and to withdraw its recognition of the "independence" of Sukhumi and Tskhinvali.

An important news item regarding Georgia in the NATO Brussels Summit Communiqué is the mention of the April 19 agreement, which will help Georgia to "move forward on the path to membership". In other words, Georgia's integration into NATO will depend on the building of democratic institutions in Georgia. Clearly, this further enhances the importance of fulfilling the agreement reached through the mediation of

Charles Michel.

After meeting with Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili in Brussels on March 17, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg emphasized the importance of developing democratic institutions and expressed hope that "Georgia will adhere to the democratic standards it has worked so hard to develop in recent years."

Georgia was also discussed at the US-EU summit on June 15. The joint statement referred to Georgia as a victim of Russian aggression with Ukraine and stressed the need to strengthen cooperation in the context of the Eastern Partnership, but for that Georgia must fulfill its obligations to develop democracy.

At the same time, the EU has published a new strategy on relations with Russia, which also mentions Georgia. The document talks about Russia's direct military and hybrid actions in Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, where Russia is trying to present itself as a mediator but is in fact a party to the conflict.

The EU will also pay special attention to Russia's continuing violations of international law in relation to Georgia and Ukraine.

As for the June 16 meeting of the US-Russian presidents, nothing seems to have been said here about Georgia, although Georgia is probably referring to Joe Biden's formula: "If the Russian government takes harmful action, the US will give a strong and important response." In the South Caucasus, the pre-existing "status quo" was broken after the Karabakh war in 2020, and the positions of Russia and Turkey were significantly strengthened, which means a reduction in Western influence.

It is clear that the West will not lose interest in Georgia, but the relations between Georgia and the West will depend a lot on the development of events in Georgia.

In particular, the implementation of democratic reforms in the areas set out in the April 19 document. Heavy political debates and controversies are expected over the implementation of the Charles Michel document. The main part of the opposition entering the parliament is to hold early parliamentary elections by 2022 and change the government of the Georgian Dream.

# US Ambassador Kelly Dignan on appointment of judges to Supreme Court, municipal elections

BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

In her speech at the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) Ambassador of the United States to Georgia Kelly Dignan stated that the process of appointment of judges in the Supreme Court by the country's High Council of Justice should be temporarily suspended until the fundamental judicial reforms outlined in the EU-brokered opposition between the government and opposition of April 19.

"Inclusive, wide-ranging debate and discussion on what kind of judicial reform should be implemented is essential. Until such a discussion is held, this process should be postponed. The constitution of Georgia says that the judiciary must be independent, this is the condition for the Georgian people. Accordingly,

parliament must fulfil its obligation and act in accordance with the requirements of the con-

stitution," Ambassador Dignan said.

Dignan added that it is en-

tirely possible to suspend this process:

"Everyone should take these

issues very seriously. I have said

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## Weather

Wednesday, June 23

Day ☀️ Clear  
High: 36°C

Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 19°C

Thursday, June 24

Day ☀️ Clear  
High: 36°C

Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 19°C

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## Protesters to rally against the illegal detention of Georgian citizen in Tskhinvali



By VERONIKA MALINBOYM

A rally against the illegal detention of the Georgian citizen Zaza Gakheladze is planned for tomorrow by his relatives near the border line, however, local authorities have already referred to it as 'provocation' and promise to bring the participants of the rally to justice.

According to the local authorities, "despite the statements of

the Georgian side calling to resolve the issue within the framework of international mechanisms, some opposition forces in Georgia are trying to disrupt the negotiation process":

"On June 17 of this year, the leader of the Georgian Public Movement Ertobashia, Davit Katsarava, announced another provocative initiative on his Facebook page on June 23, which aimed to encourage the Georgian

government to take more active steps to facilitate the release of the convict.

Given the nature of Unity Power's activities, it is possible that protesters will attempt to cross the 'border' illegally. The implementation of such provocative initiatives, regardless of whom they come from, causes significant damage to the negotiation process. We emphasize that the attempts to violate the

administrative and legal regimes established on the 'border' will be thwarted 'within the framework of the current legislation', the statement of Tskhinvali Security Services reads.

One year ago, on July 11, Zaza Gakheladze was wounded Kaspri with a firearm and then captured by Russian military services, as he allegedly, opened fire near the border. Gakheladze was charged under two articles of the Russian

Criminal Code - "attempted murder" and "illegal crossing of the state border." On February 5, Tskhinvali court sentenced him to 12 years and 6 months in prison.

June 23 is Zaza Gakheladze's birthday, and, to draw more attention to his arrest and subsequent sentence, his family will hold a rally in the village of Kvemo Chala.



## European Union provides passport readers to Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia

The EU, together with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), has donated 20 passport reader devices to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) of Georgia. The equipment with a total value of •22,000 (GEL 90,000) will further develop the abilities of the Georgian government to combat irregular migration and enhance border security.

These devices will be deployed in the facilities of the MIA Academy and will contribute to the training of border control officers.

"Improving border security is an area of close cooperation between the EU and Georgia and the EU has consistently supported it over the last years," said Catalin Gherman, Deputy Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to Georgia.

"This is part of the EU's wider support to ensure the modern and efficient management of borders in Georgia and the safety and security of Georgians."

The passport readers were donated as part of the EU-funded programme 'EU4 Security, Accountability and Fight against Crime in Georgia' (SAFE).

## US Ambassador Kelly Degan on appointment of judges to Supreme Court, municipal elections

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before that the assessment that the non-appointment of judges will lead to the collapse of the system at this stage is not the case, because the court has a

sufficient number of judges, and it is entirely possible to suspend this process", Kelly Degan noted.

Regarding the municipal elections that are scheduled to take place in the fall of 2021, Ambassador Degan said that she ex-

pects the elections to proceed in a calm atmosphere and the results will be reliable:

"Municipal elections scheduled for October this year will become an important test of democracy and electoral system of Georgia. Everyone expects the

elections to proceed in a calm atmosphere, and their results to be completely trusted by the country's population [...] It is very important that during the municipal elections we are able to see that social media are bringing more use to the election

process, as well the reduction of hate language, disinformation, and lies. More information about the electoral plans and plans of the political parties should be spread on social media," Degan concluded.



# “Advancing on the Italian Design Days”

The Ambassador of Italy in Georgia, Mr. Enrico Valvo, inaugurated on June 21, alongside the Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia, Mr. Irakli Karseladze, the event “Advancing on the Italian Design Days in Georgia” – organised in collaboration with the Italian Trade Agency (ITA).

The event brought again to Georgia the excellence of Italian architecture and design for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic, as part of the “Italian Design Days”, traditional promotional campaign organized by the Italian MFA and Embassies across the world.

A large team of public and private partners from Italy contributed to the event – most of whom have been able to travel to Georgia.

A rich “menu” of initiatives has been offered to the Georgian public, revolving around three key words: “Restoration, Innovation and Sustainability”.

These three key concepts have been developed by presenting experiences related to the excellences of Italian design in the world from an artistic, academic and business point of view.

The Italian sculptor Edoardo Malagigi – whose works have been part of the most prestigious international exhibitions in this sector, such as the Venice “Biennale” and the “Abaco Space Contemporary Art” in Berlin - created, especially for this occasion, a 100% eco-sustainable art piece. The sculpture “Cupola”, exhibited for the first time at the inauguration, has been realized exclusively from waste and recycled materials provided by the Georgian Social Enterprise “Green Gift”. It is a reproduction – on a bigger scale – of an iconic item of Italian design, the legendary coffee maker that Aldo Rossi realized in 1985 for the manufacturer “Alessi”.

The Italian Council of Architects, Planners, Landscapers and Conservatives (CNA) kindly made available the tables of the annual “Italian Architect” award – exhibited as well during the event.

They also participated in the main session of works held today, which consisted of a Workshop aimed at stimulating interactions between companies, scholars, experts and professional associations – from Italy and Georgia – represented both in-person and remotely. Prestigious Ital-

ian actors in this field such as “Assorestauro”, “Istituto Europeo di Design” (IED) and “Politecnico di Milano” also participated.

At the Workshop Italian architectural firms made themselves “Ambassadors” of Italian restoration and design in Georgia, presenting respectively the restoration studio of a historic-cultural building located in Imereti and a presentation about the potentialities of Italian design and urban planning with a view to enhancing touristic development in Georgia, taking as an example the thermal city of Tskaltubo.

From the Georgian side, many public and private actors - in addition to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development - joined the event, including the Municipal Development Fund (MDF), the Association of Architects and the Union of Architects, the State Academy of Fine Arts, the Young Ambassador of Georgia to Italy, Ms. Mariam Botchorishvili.

A short award ceremony was held within the photo contest “L’italianita’ in Georgia” (“Italianness in Georgia”), launched by the Embassy in coordination

with Milan’s “Istituto Europeo di Design” – IED, aimed at rewarding the ability to represent (through a photograph) the artistic and cultural ties between Italy and Georgia.

Ms. Nino Zakaraia was awarded the first prize and Mr. Nicolo Vincenzo Malvestuto received the “Jury Prize”.

The first prize consists of a scholarship – fully covered by the prestigious “Istituto Europeo di Design” (IED) of Milan – for a Summer course to be delivered in English in 2022 in one of IED’s Italian offices, while the winner of the “Jury Prize” received a 100% made in Italy kit of photography comprising a bag, camera case and tripod.

As stressed by the Ambassador of Italy, Mr. Enrico Valvo, the Embassy intends to keep moving forward on this path, through initiatives developed on several levels – artistic, economic, cultural – but all with an ultimate objective: making increasingly available the beauty of Italian Design to the Georgian public and fostering co-operation between Italy and Georgia in this field spanning 360 degrees.





# “Advancing on the Italian Design Days”

