

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Georgians remain in Afghanistan, as Taliban takes over Kabul

The Taliban launched an intense offensive against Afghan government forces in late July and seized control of the capital, Kabul on August 15, and announced the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in the country. After entering the palace of the President of Afghanistan, the Taliban removed the flag of the Afghan government, as well as the US flag.

August 15, Taliban forces captured Bagram Air Base on the outskirts of Kabul. The complex is one of the main military facilities in the fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda. In addition to the airbase, part of the complex is the prison, as the BBC writes, there were about 5,000 Taliban fighters in the prison, who were released by the group.

The Afghan President left the country and fled to Tajikistan. This was reported by the Chairman of the Supreme National Reconciliation Council of Afghanistan. The ouster of Ashraf Ghani's government was one of the main demands of the Taliban to start peace talks. The Afghan Interior Ministry announced that it would hand over power to the interim government peacefully.

According to CNN, members of the administration of the Taliban and President Ashraf Ghani are expected to enter the interim government.

On Sunday, August 15, Taliban fighters entered the Afghan capital, Kabul. According to the official from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Taliban fighters were entering the city 'from all sides'.

BBC journalist Yalda Hakim writes that Taliban fighters do not face strong resistance in the city. According to the BBC, the Taliban has called on its fighters to refrain from violence in Kabul.

The evacuation of foreign diplomats from the city continues actively. More than 60 countries around the world, including Georgia, are calling on the Taliban to allow Afghans and foreigners to leave the country safely. A joint statement was released by the US State Department on August 15. Russia is not among the signatories of the statement.

"Given the deteriorating security situation, we support, work with and urge all parties to respect and facilitate the safe departure of foreigners and Afghans wishing to leave the country. Those in power in Afghanistan have a responsibility to



Foreigners and locals are leaving Afghanistan en masse due to the return of the extremist group Taliban to power.

protect human life and property, security and immediately restore civil order... The Afghan people deserve a safe and dignified life. We, the international community, are ready to help them," the statement said.

The airport was announced to be closed today, on August 16. Recall that 23 Georgian citizens are still in Afghanistan, these are ex-servicemen who work in the private sector. In particular, 17 citizens are employed in Canadian and 6 in American companies.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Georgians in Afghanistan could not arrive at the airport due to the tense situation in Kabul, as a result of which a Ukrainian flight, which they were supposed to take, flew without them. As the Deputy Foreign Minister noted, they were unable to arrive at the airport overnight because the situation in Kabul was tense,

and chose to stay at the base.

"The Turkish side has confirmed its readiness to help us bring armored vehicles to Kabul Airport. This operation is underway now and hopefully, in the near future they will be at Kabul Airport from where our partners will ensure their arrival in Georgia. Also, the Georgian government will send a separate board to take them. Now, the work on the permits is underway and our plane will fly to Kabul and ensure their arrival," said Alexander Khvtisiashvili, Deputy Foreign Minister.

Taliban spokesman said that the war in Afghanistan ended, respectively, over the existing form of government, the new regime will be known soon. In addition, the Taliban representative also guaranteed security to the population.

"We guarantee security for everyone, including citizens and diplomats. We are ready to have a dialogue with all Afghans and protect them," said Muhammad Naemi.

On the 15th of August, the Taliban occupied the capital of another province. The province of Nangarhar was captured by the Jalalabad group without a fight. The provincial governor handed over control of the city to the Taliban. Before, they captured Pul-e-Alam, the main city of Logar, which borders Kabul province, 70 kilometers from the capital, and is a gateway to Kabul. On August 12, the Taliban captured the third-largest city in Afghanistan, Herat, capital of the province of the same name. Last week, the group captured the capitals of 2 provinces in 2 days.

On August 6, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the assassination of Khan Manapal, the head of the Afghan government's press service. For the past few months, Taliban targets have been government officials, members of the

media, Afghan translators of the US military, Afghan pilots, and even comedians. On August 6, the Taliban closed a major checkpoint on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and announced that no one would be allowed to cross to the other side until Islamabad lifted or eased visa requirements for Afghans.

US President Joe Biden says the US mission in Afghanistan will end on August 31, ahead of schedule. The U.S. has left its main strategic point, Bagram Air Base. Only a small group of US troops will remain in Afghanistan and they will guard the embassy. The Taliban and the US signed the agreement in February 2020, during the Trump administration. According to the agreement, intra-Afghan talks were launched and the US withdrew its troops. The deadline for troop withdrawals was May 1, 2021, which was postponed after Joe Biden's presidency to September 11, 2021. Currently, the withdrawal of US troops from the country is completed much earlier than the deadline.

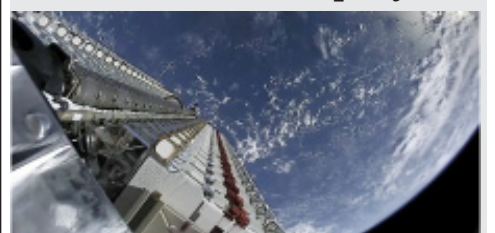
CONTINUED ON Page 2



Tensions between the Taliban and Afghan government forces have escalated in the country since the US-led invasion of Afghanistan.

Politics

SpaceX considers Georgia as a pilot country in satellite internet project



FULL STORY ON Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.1175; Euro - 3.6730; GBP - 4.3212; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.2470; Swiss Franc - 3.4120

SpaceX considers Georgia as a pilot country in satellite internet project



Space Exploration Technologies Corporation is an American space rocket manufacturer. The company was founded in 2002 by Elon Musk.

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

SpaceX has expressed interest in Georgia's involvement in the internetization process, therefore they consider Georgia as one of the first pilot countries where SpaceX will provide satellite internet to the population. The involvement of Georgia and Georgians in their future plans was also discussed.

Elon Musk's company SpaceX, with the help of the Georgian Agency for Innovation and Technology (GITA) will start the official procedure for obtaining an Internet provider license in Georgia. GITA spreads information about it. According to the report, the company considers Georgia as a pilot country to which satellite internet is provided

"SpaceX- was interest expressed on the internet on inclusion, therefore, considered Georgia as one of the first pilot countries, where they considered the population of satellite Internet service and SpaceX- found GITA- help start the official procedure of Georgia's internet provider to get a license," states the information shared by GITA.

Irakli Nadareishvili, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Avtandil Kasradze, Chairman of the Agency for Innovation and Technology, and Levan Beridze, Consul General of Georgia in San Francisco, are holding meetings in the United States. To discuss future collaborations, they met with SpaceX Senior Financial Officer Brett Johnson and Chief Financial Officer

David Finley. The meeting was also attended by Bill Reichert, one of the investors of SpaceX.

SpaceX's project Starlink is a global satellite system, which aims to provide high-speed internet to places where internet connection is unstable, expensive, or inaccessible. SpaceX believes that Starlink will be able to provide stable internet connection worldwide starting from September 2021. SpaceX's project Starlink is a global satellite system, which aims to provide high-speed internet to places where internet connection is unstable, expensive, or inaccessible. SpaceX believes that Starlink will be able to provide stable internet connection worldwide starting from September 2021.

Georgians remain in Afghanistan, as Taliban takes over Kabul

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

For reference, Georgia completed the withdrawal of its defense forces from Afghanistan at the end of June 2021, after the NATO Coalition Forces decided that the Strong Support Mission would no longer continue.

The Taliban have resumed

hostilities following the announcement by Joe Biden that the United States and its allies are withdrawing troops from the country. Despite Biden's claim that the Taliban are unlikely to gain control of the entire territory of Afghanistan, the radical group has managed to gain control of 80 % of the country in about a month and a half.

"After the capture of Kabul by the Taliban, Donald Trump called on Joe Biden to resign," Deutsche Welle writes. Trump says it is time for Joe Biden to shamefully resign because of

what he has done in Afghanistan.

In addition to Trump, President Biden has also been criticized by members of the Republican Party. U.S. Senate Republican Party leader Mitch McConnell said the chaotic evacuation of U.S. citizens and support staff indicates a disgraceful failure by the U.S. government. The statement was also made by Republican Party leader Liz Cheney. She said the situation in Afghanistan is an illustration of what happens when the US avoids solving world problems.

Weather

Tuesday, August 17

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 32°C

Night Clear

Low: 19°C

Wednesday, August 18

Day Clear

High: 34°C

Night Clear

Low: 20°C

published by

The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze
Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Natalia Kochiashvili
Executive Editor

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

News in Brief

PREPARED BY
THE MESSENGER STAFF

MFA says Davit Zalkaliani is in constant contact with Mevlut Cavusoglu concerning the return of Georgian citizens from Afghanistan

According to Georgia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Davit Zalkaliani, the country's foreign minister, is in frequent contact with his Turkish colleague, Mevlut Cavusoglu, for the homecoming of Georgian citizens from Afghanistan.

Georgian citizens are to be transported from the employment site to the airport with the assistance of the Turkish side, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"As it is known, yesterday the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held talks with partner countries and organizations based on the instructions of the Prime Minister of Georgia to evacuate Georgian citizens. The Ukrainian side was ready to transport citizens, but due to the difficult security situ-

ation in Afghanistan, Georgian citizens could not reach Kabul airport," reads the statement.

MEP Marina Kaljurand urges the Georgian gov't to annul the information exchange agreement between the SSG and the Belarusian KGB

Marina Kaljurand, a member of the European Parliament, has called on the Georgian authorities to terminate the agreement on the exchange of information with the State Security Committee of Belarus.

Belarusian exiles who have found a safe home in Georgia, according to the MEP, should be protected, stated the MEP.

"I urge the Georgian authorities to annul the information exchange agreement between the SSG & the Belarusian regime's infamous KGB. Lukashenka has been usurping power since 09/08/2020 falsified election. Belarusian exiles who found safe haven in Georgia must be fully protected!," wrote Kaljurand on Twitter.

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.