

# The US Embassy Issues a Statement on the Appointment of Supreme Court Judges

International corps in Georgia calls on the Parliament to pause the appointment

By Nika Gantsemlidze

The US Embassy to Georgia has issued a special statement regarding the appointment of Supreme Court judges in Georgia. The statement notes that the US Embassy is disappointed that Parliament is once again moving forward with the Supreme Court appointments before it has completed the independent assessment of the previous waves of judicial reform.

The statement also reads that the Parliament of Georgia and its leaders had previously agreed to do so. The US Embassy in Georgia is also concerned that these activities are proceeding without the participation of the judges of the High Council of Judges.

The statement of the US Embassy also notes that while the High Council and the Parliament have rushed to appoint the judges in the supreme court over the past few years, there has not been any activity in the non-judge appointments, although the positions have been vacant for several months.

The statement of the US Embassy also notes that the people of Georgia are supposed to have power and voice in the process of selection of these influential and important judges, who are being appointed for a lifetime on the Supreme Court and these power and voice should be given to the people through the non-judge High Council members.

"The exclusion of independent voices from this process adds to the impression that Supreme Court judicial appointments are being made without meaning-



US Embassy says they are disappointed in the process

ful transparency, accountability, or impartiality," reads the statement of the US Embassy.

The Embassy of the United States to Georgia has once again encouraged and called on the Parliament to prioritize the appointment of impartial, independent,

and non-judge members to the High Council of Justice before going forward with further Supreme Court judge appointments. The statement also calls on the Parliament to finish the independent assessment of the previous waves of reform by Spring 2022.

"Important work has been done since independence to strengthen Georgia's judicial branch, with the assistance of the United States and others. Georgia's closest partners and supporters, as well as Georgia's political leaders, are united in agreeing that judicial reform needs to continue," noted the statement of the US Embassy.

According to the US Embassy, the current goal of the parliament now should be to build an impartial, transparent, and merit-based judicial system to ensure full confidence in the judicial system of the Georgian people.

During the hearings in the parliament, one of the candidates, Nino Sandodze denied the existence of the so-called 'clan', both now and during the previous government. The judge believes that there are 'targeted actions' in Georgia aimed at "reducing the legitimacy of the judiciary in the long run."

The process of selecting judges of the Supreme Court is underway in a question-and-answer mode in the Parliamentary Committee.

Most of the parliamentary opposition is not involved in the process, the Public Defender's Office and the diplomatic corps are not involved either. EU Ambassador H.E. Carl Hartzell said on November 25 that the process of appointing judges should be 'paused' before further steps are taken in judicial reform.

International partners and civil society still believe that the process needs to take full account of international recommendations, as well as reform the High Council of Justice.



The EU Ambassador to Georgia, H.E. Carl Hartzell, said on November 25 that the process should be paused



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.0967; Euro - 3.4931; GBP - 4.1233; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.1048; Swiss Franc - 3.3460

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

# Georgia Introduces Restrictions on Travel from Some of the Countries Due to the New Covid Variant

The World Health Organization has called the new variant of the coronavirus, Omicron, 'disturbing', which, according to preliminary data, is characterized by multiple mutations and an increased risk of re-infection.

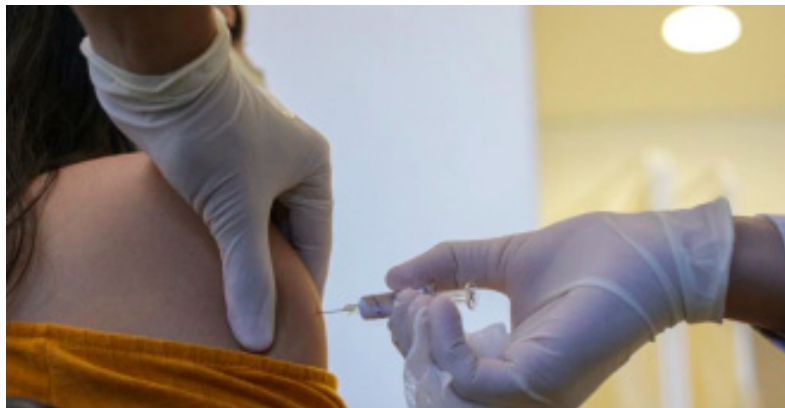
The WHO said in a statement on Friday that the number of cases of this variant of the coronavirus (originally called B.1.1.529) was increasing in all provinces of South Africa. The World Health Organization says it will take several weeks to determine what the impact of the new variant of the coronavirus is and how contagious it is.

On November 28, in connection with the spread of the new strain of the coronavirus, Omicron, Georgian authorities announced that regulations would be imposed on citizens of 8 countries when crossing the Georgian border.

According to the information, everyone with a travel history from these eight countries will have to self-isolate for 14 days. Among these countries are South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, and Malawi.

"After 14 days of isolation/quarantine, individuals will undergo PCR examination. In the case of Georgian citizens, the costs of the quarantine hotel and

WHO received information about the new variant on November 24



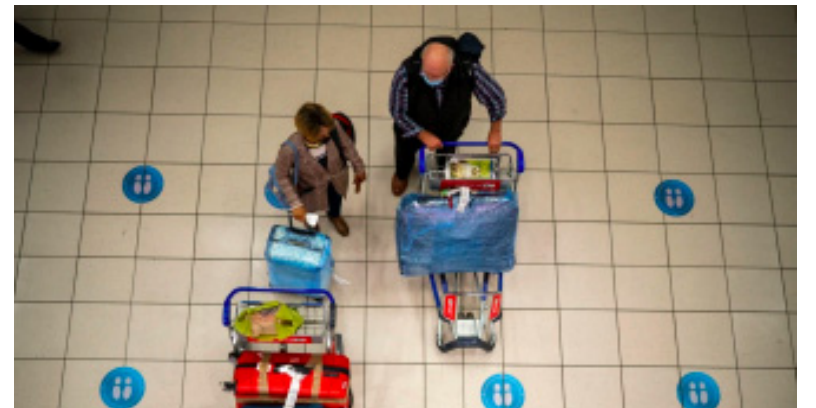
The WHO announced that the number of cases of the new variant was increasing in all provinces of South Africa

PCR examination will be covered by the state, and in the case of foreign citizens - by the foreign citizen himself," said the statement regarding the restrictions.

According to the director of the Infectious Diseases Hospital, Tengiz Tsertsvadze, at this stage, it is unknown whether the new strain of coronavirus, Omicron, is more dangerous than the

delta strain currently spreading in Georgia. In addition, according to Tsertsvadze, it has not been investigated yet whether the existing vaccines will affect the new strain.

Allergologist-immunologist Bidzina Kulumbegov says that the information on the new strain of coronavirus, Omicron, suggests that it may be less af-



Everyone from travel history from 8 countries will have to self-isolate for two weeks in Georgia

ected by existing vaccines, as well as immunity acquired as a result of already transmitted strains. He suggests that such a case would increase the risks of reinfection.

The immunologist says that personal protective equipment, such as wearing a face mask, frequent disinfection, and keeping a distance, protects us from

all types of strains. According to Amiran Gamkrelidze, director of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, Lugar's laboratory is working on a protocol to determine where a new strain of coronavirus can be suspected in Georgia. He said in case of detection of specific spaces, there will be stricter supervision.

## Protection and Promotion of Gastronomic Heritage: From Italy to Georgia

On November 25, multifunctional space, Fabrika, hosted a seminar - Protection and Promotion of Gastronomic Heritage: From Italy to Georgia. The event was opened by the Ambassador of Italy to Georgia, H.E. Enrico Valvo and the Vice Prime Minister of Georgia and the Minister of Environment and Agri-

culture of Georgia, Levan Davitashvili.

The seminar was dedicated to the main themes of the Sixth World Week of Italian Cuisine. The Speakers included Daniele Ceratto and Dauro Zocchi, representatives of the University of Pollenzo Gastronomic Sciences, who came to Georgia after the

invitation of the Italian Embassy.

They introduced the guests to the achievements of the University of Pollenzo Gastronomic Sciences and the Slow Food Biodiversity Foundation and shared the Italian experience, which can now be used in Georgia through the project "Ark of

Taste - Atlas of Georgia".

The aim of the project is to describe the Georgian gastronomic treasures and the food diversity presented in Georgia, using Italian experience and knowledge, and, as a result, to preserve this invaluable gastronomic heritage of Georgia.



### Weather

Monday, November 29

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 18°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 7°C

Tuesday, November 30

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 18°C

Night Clear  
Low: 8°C

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*On the occasion of the 6<sup>th</sup> Week of Italian Cuisine in Georgia Tbilisi's Desk of the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) organised, in collaboration with the Italian Embassy in Georgia, the "Showcase for Italian Spirits" evening. Professionals from the hospitality sector and other distinguished guests - in the evocative setting offered by Marriot hotel - had the opportunity to enjoy a menu revolving around classics from the Italian cocktail tradition known all around the world, from Aperol Spritz to Negroni, Prosecco and Campari-based beverages.*





