

Recognition of So-Called Independence of Georgian Occupied Regions by Belarus not On Agenda, Says Georgian MFA

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

The Georgian Foreign Ministry has stated that considering the bilateral relations between Belarus and Georgia, recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali by Belarus is not on the agenda. The statement came after a Russian reporter's interview with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, where it is stated that Lukashenko does not rule out the possibility of recognizing the independence of the two occupied territories.

As Russian news agency quotes, when asked about when Belarus would recognize the independence of those regions, president Lukashenko answered: "As long as I understand and President [Vladimir Putin] tells me there is a need for it."

Georgian foreign ministry spokesperson Mari Narchemashvili claims that separate remarks from the interview were extracted and spread in the Russian media with targeted accents and interpretations, noting that Belarus in this regard remains loyal to the fundamental principles of international law.

Meanwhile, Abkhaz authorities have



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also responded to the Belarusian leader's remarks, noting that they positively assess the statements and express hope that Belarus will follow the path of Russia and recognize the independence of Abkhazia. The so-called Foreign Ministry of occupied Abkhazia stresses that "Abkhazia is open to dialogue with Russia-friendly states" and is interested in establishing official contacts with Belarus.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov

has announced that the Kremlin would not send any signals to Alexander Lukashenko regarding the recognition of the independence of Tskhinvali and Abkhazia or recognition of Crimea as a Russian region, noting that "Our ally and partner will make his own decision when he considers it necessary." He added that Lukashenko is well-aware of the situation and noted that 'there is no need for additional signals'.

Other than Russia, only Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru, and Syria have recognized the independence of the occupied territories of Georgia.

Tetnuldi Resort Hosts Freeride World Qualifiers

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The World Tour Qualification (FWQ) stages are underway at Tetnuldi Resort of Svaneti Mountains as part of Freeride Week. According to the Ministry of Economy, the event is hosted by Georgia for the first time and is organized by the Mountain Resorts Development Company and supported by USAID, the City of Mestia, the Svaneti destination management organization Shan Land, and the National Tourism Administration.

"This event is very important for our country, because on the one hand it will strengthen Georgia's position, increase the visibility of Georgian ski resorts, and on the other hand, it once again shows the readiness of our resorts and compliance with international standards, especially in terms of infrastructure - that we can host such high-ranking events in our country," said Mariam Kvrivishvili,

Deputy Minister of Economy.

The FWQ stage consists of small 2-star and large 4-star competitions. Small competitions ensure the participation of local and beginner athletes, while large competitions provide high-level foreign athletes participation and international coverage. As many as 120 athletes from 20 countries (Switzerland, Sweden, Austria, France, New Zealand, Germany, Great Britain, etc.) will participate in the competition.

In freeride there is a hierarchy of events and the annual calendar is planned according to these hierarchies. Georgia has been given the unique opportunity to host the highest level of the Freeride World Qualifiers in its first year. Qualifiers, the event was rated 4 stars. The higher level of this competition is only the Freeride World Tour, which Georgia will be able to host after the successful completion of the qualification stages.





6 in 7 people worldwide plagued by feelings of insecurity, reports UN Development Programme

The new UNDP report shows a growing sense of insecurity among people despite years of development growth prompting calls for solidarity and refocusing development efforts

8 February, New York – Global development progress does not automatically lead to a greater sense of security, according to a new United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report on human security released today.

New data and analysis in the report, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene*, shows that people's sense of safety and security is at a low in almost every country, including the richest countries, despite years of upwards development success. Those benefiting from some of the highest levels of good health, wealth, and education outcomes are reporting even

greater anxiety than 10 years ago.

To tackle this disconnect between development and perceived security, the report calls for greater solidarity across borders and a new approach to development; one that allows people to live free from want, fear, anxiety and indignity.

"Despite global wealth being higher than ever before, a majority of people are feeling apprehensive about the future and these feelings have likely been exacerbated by the pandemic", said Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator. *"In our quest for unbridled economic growth, we continue to destroy our natural world while inequalities are widening, both within and between countries. It is time to recognise the signs of societies that are under immense stress and redefine what progress actually means. We need a fit-for-purpose development model that is built around the protection and restoration of our planet with new sustainable opportunities for all."*

The imperative to act now has never been more clear, as new findings also show that global life expectancy at birth is falling for

a second year because of COVID-19, and overall human development measures are also moving downward. Furthermore, climate change is likely to become a leading cause of death around the world. Even with moderate mitigation of emissions, some 40 million people might die because of changes in temperatures before the end of the century.

The report examines a cluster of threats that have shifted to become more prominent in recent years including those from digital technologies, inequalities, conflicts, and the ability of healthcare systems to tackle new challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing these threats, report authors argue, will require policymakers to consider protection, empowerment, and solidarity alongside one another so that human security, planetary considerations and human development all work together and not despite each other. This means that solutions for one problem shouldn't exacerbate other problems.

"A key element for practical action highlighted in the report is building a greater sense of

global solidarity based on the idea of common security. Common security recognises that a community can only be secure if adjacent communities are too. This is something we see all too clearly with the current pandemic: nations are largely powerless to prevent new mutations of this coronavirus from crossing borders," said Asako Okai, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Director, UNDP Crisis Bureau./

The report also notes the strong association between declining levels of trust and feelings of insecurity. People with higher levels of perceived human insecurity are three times less likely to find others trustworthy.

Other new findings in the report include:

The more highly developed countries tend to capitalize more on the benefits from planetary pressures and suffer less of their consequences, highlighting how climate change is pushing inequalities further apart.

About 1.2 billion people live in conflict-affected areas, with almost half of them (560 million) in countries not usually considered to be fragile, indicat-

ing that the traditional ideas about which countries are most vulnerable to conflicts need to be revisited.

In 2021, despite the highest global GDP in history, and despite COVID-19 vaccines becoming more readily available in some countries, global life expectancy declined for the second year in a row. Declining by about one and a half years on average compared to a pre-COVID world.

There are large and widening gaps in healthcare systems between countries. According to the report's new Healthcare Universalism Index, between 1995 and 2017, the inequality in healthcare performance between countries with low and very high human development worsened.

The concept of human security, first introduced in UNDP's milestone 1994 Human Development Report, signalled a radical departure from the idea that people's security should be only assessed by looking at territorial security, emphasizing the importance of people's basic needs, their dignity, and their safety to live secure lives.

On 2-4 February, the CyberEast project, a joint project of the European Union and the Council of Europe, delivered a training course on financial investigation, virtual currency and darknet for a group of 21 Georgian investigators and prosecutors.

The event in Tsinandali, Georgia, was the last in a series of similar training initiatives offered by the project in all the countries of the region (except Belarus).

Participants were familiarised with blockchain analysis and other issues, such as different Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASP) and the way Georgian citizens own and trade cryptocurrencies.

CyberEast plans to organise more activities to support the

Georgia: CyberEast delivers training course on financial investigation, virtual currency and darknet

criminal justice institutions in the EaP in strengthening their capacities in cybercrime and electronic evidence. The project will focus on parallel financial investigations and intelligence, online crime proceeds, financial fraud and money laundering offences, as well as looking more closely into the matters of virtual currencies and Darknet investigations in the context of 'follow the money' concept.

Reportedly, almost 30% of hidden services on Tor relate to some form of illicit activity, including selling illicit drugs, weapons, compromised data, counterfeit documents, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and other illicit products.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Wednesday, February 9

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 15°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 4°C

Thursday, February 10

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 9°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 2°C

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