

Georgian, Polish PMs Discuss Security Challenges, Georgia's EU Integration



► "Our common desire is for this war to end and for peace to be established in Ukraine", Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili said.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Yesterday, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili hosted his Polish counterpart, Mateusz Morawiecki, in Batumi. As the governmental press service reports, the sides discussed the security challenges created in the region as a result of the ongoing hostilities in Ukraine, as well as the applications submitted by the Associated Trio countries (Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova) on EU integration. In this regard, the Prime Minister of Georgia stressed the importance of the support of international partners in this process, including Poland.

"Poland is Georgia's outstanding friend and partner, with having strategic cooperation and close relations in many areas," Garibashvili announced after the meeting. The Prime Minister stressed that the two countries are successfully cooperating in both bilateral and multilateral formats and are interested in further expanding the multidimensional relations.

The Prime Minister expressed gratitude towards Polish President Lech Kaczyński, who arrived in Tbilisi with European leaders in August 2008, during the large-scale



► Polish Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, reaffirmed support towards Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as, Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

war with the Russian Federation, stressing that "Georgians, will never forget the heroic behavior of President Kaczyński".

The head of the government announced at the joint press conference that he had

informed his Polish colleague on the "active political and humanitarian assistance" that Georgia provides to Ukraine at 'all international and political levels'. According to him, the Georgian Government

has co-sponsored resolutions in aid of Ukraine and has supported the recently launched International Criminal Court investigation into war crimes committed in the conflict.

According to the Polish Prime Minister, there are rumors about Georgia not being fully involved in sanctions, however, as he noted, PM Garibashvili assured him that "Georgia is doing everything possible to stop this aggression, uphold democratic values and support the freedom and sovereignty of Ukraine".

The Polish PM noted that everything must be done to stop this aggression. He mentioned the initiative voiced by Poland to deepen the sanction packages already adopted by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, stressing that "this barbaric approach to Ukraine is unacceptable".

"Russia's current aggression is an aggression against our values, each demolished house must be followed by yet another sanction," he noted.

PM Morawiecki expressed strong support towards Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as, Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.2209 | EURO - 3.5549 | GBP - 4.2442 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 3.0748 | SWISS FRANC - 3.4261 |

US Ambassador Meets Opposition, Comments on Sanctions Against Russia

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan held a meeting with opposition members of parliament on March 17. According to her, very good discussions took place, during which they talked about the current developments in the region and her meetings in Washington.

After the meeting, she emphasized the importance of two key issues - constant communication with all political parties in order to express US support for Georgia; and unity against unprovoked Russian aggression.

Degnan has also touched upon Georgia's responses and stance in the face of current catastrophic events taking place, namely Russian unjust and unprovoked military intervention in Ukraine - the war in the biggest country of Europe that the whole world has been observing for over 3 weeks now. To condemn Russian aggression, the West imposed a series of sanctions on Russia and is providing military, economic, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. The cities of Ukraine are being bombed and attacks take place not only on military facilities but also civilian ones, even places like shelters, hospitals, and educational institutions become targets of Russian artillery.

As of now, Georgia has shown its support to Ukraine in international institutions like CoE,



► "It is now important to show a united front against Russian aggression, which kills thousands of citizens and destroys Ukrainian cities."

United Nations, and such. Humanitarian assistance has also been sent and mass demonstrations have been taking place on the main avenue of the capital, Rustaveli, where people gathered to show solidarity to fellow Ukrainian people and condemn Russian aggression; they also demanded the government to increase the support, however, the head of the gov't PM Irakli Gharibashvili and members of the ruling party have been reluctant to join the sanctions imposed by West.

"I think it is important not to confuse the issues when we talk about the implementation of international sanctions. Georgia is fulfilling international sanctions," Degnan said, noting

it must be understood that Georgia, like most countries, enforces international sanctions as much as it can.

The ambassador also remembered that a billion dollars were allocated to support Georgia in 2008. The US and other countries have made significant investments to help strengthen Georgia's containment capabilities. Georgia's defense forces are stronger than they were in 2008, which is the result of strong cooperation and partnership in the field of security with Georgia, the US, and Georgia's other friendly countries. She emphasized that in the current situation, it is very important now that we all show a united front against this Russian aggression, which

is killing thousands of citizens and destroying Ukrainian cities.

"The sanctions are aimed at influencing Russia's actions. I state clearly, no one is asking the Georgian government to impose bilateral sanctions if they do not want to if that is not what they have decided to do. Bilateral sanctions are to be decided by the Government of Georgia. What is expected from all countries, including my country, which stands against Russian aggression, is the implementation of the international sanction regime.

According to her, Georgia has always been a good partner in the enforcement of international sanctions, be it sanctions against Iran or other countries that work against the interests of countries like Georgia, the United States, and all countries that believe in freedom, stability, and security.

"So I think it's important not to confuse issues when we talk about enforcing international sanctions. Georgia is fulfilling international sanctions. Many sanctions may not have a direct impact on Georgia. So, I think it's important to understand that Georgia, like most countries, enforces international sanctions as much as it can. There are consequences for any country that does not comply with the international sanction regime. We all know this. I think the key issue is that we all send a single message of support to Ukraine, and one way to do that is to enforce

the international sanctions regime," Degnan concluded. The US ambassador was asked by journalists about the construction of a road connecting Georgia and Chechnya which was mentioned at a meeting of the Russian Security Council. As Kelly Degnan noted in response to a question, it is important that Russia first fulfills the promises it made in 2008 regarding Georgia.

"As I remember, this road is quite an old project and was designed around 1970-1980. However, it should be noted that before Russia talks about any new projects, roads, and promises, it is necessary to fulfill the agreement reached in 2008, promises and withdraw first of all Russian troops from the territory of Georgia. The main thing is for them to keep the promises they made after the 2008 war, and then talk about the rest of them," Degnan said.

The Ministry of Infrastructure of Georgia also addressed this issue via a statement, where they expressed a desire to 'respond to media reports on the construction of a Georgian-Chechen road to the Russian Security Council and state unequivocally that Georgia has never considered, nor will it consider, and construction of a road connecting Georgia with Chechnya.' Ministry emphasized that the issue of road construction has never been on the agenda of the Georgian side and, therefore, any information about it is false.

THE NEWS IN BRIEF

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European Space Agency Suspends Mission of Mars Rover with Roscosmo

Due to the war against Ukraine, the European Space Agency has suspended the mission of Mars rover indefinitely with its partner Roscosmo, the Russian state space corporation. The decision to suspend cooperation with Roscosmo was taken by the ESA Board of Directors at a meeting in Paris. "We express our deep sorrow over the tragic consequences of the aggression against Ukraine and the loss of human life. "While acknowledging the impact of scientific space research, ESA fully supports the sanctions imposed on Russia," the ESA said in a statement. The head of Roscosmos, Dmitry Rogozin, called the decision "shameful" and said that Russia would continue the investigation independently. It is noteworthy that the Russian Aviation Agency, in response to Western sanctions, suspended the supply of Russian missile engines to the United States. "We do not consider it necessary to comment on such fabrications."

Dekanoidze: Zelensky administration is ready to involve the President in the Parliament of Georgia

According to UNM MP Khatia Dekanoidze, the administration of the President of Ukraine is ready to involve Volodymyr Zelensky in the Parliament of Georgia. Dekanoidze said in his speech in the parliament that he had communicated with the administration of the President of Ukraine several times on this topic.

President Zelensky's administration President Zelensky is ready to join the Georgian Parliament and address the Georgian public from the Georgian Parliament.

"I have high hopes that President Zelensky's wish to address the Georgian society from the Georgian Parliament will not be left only at the request of the opposition, me, or any other person," Khatia Dekanoidze said. Earlier, Lelo MP Salome Samadashvili voiced this initiative in the parliament and said that the Georgian parliament should invite the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky to address the session. "This would be the most correct step to demonstrate our political support and to show where Georgia stands today," Salome Samadashvili said at the meeting, which was followed by noise from Georgian Dream MPs.

FRIDAY		MARCH 18	
Day		Snow	High: 4°C
Night		Snow	Low: 1°C
SATURDAY		MARCH 19	
Day		Rain	High: 3°C
Night		Rain	Low: 1°C

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