

## PM Appoints Head of his Administration Darchiashvili as Foreign Minister

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Prime Minister announced the resignation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the public on April 4. Davit Zalkaliani will continue to work as the Ambassador to the United States, and he will be replaced by the current head of the government administration Ilia Darchiashvili.

Zalkaliani addressed the public after the announcement of the decision. He recalled the history of his diplomatic activity and noted that he has been working in this field for 30 years.

The former minister spoke about the achievements during his ministry in the field of foreign policy and European integration.

"To deal with one of the main challenges of our country, which is occupation, Georgia has been able to clearly defend its position in all international formats. We have been represented everywhere and Georgia holds leading positions on all platforms. Our European and Euro-Atlantic integration is one of the top priorities of our foreign policy. I am proud that during our ministry we approved a foreign policy strategy document, which clearly outlined the main directions of foreign policy.

I am proud to have participated in the negotiation process of the Association Agreement with the PM, the initialing, and subsequent signing by the PM. Like in deep and comprehensive free trade, we have made significant progress in terms of visa liberalization and I think the most successful stage of our ministry was the application made for EU membership I wish Ilia success in this regard as it is the most serious challenge for our country as a whole. We need unity and consolidation, both in the executive and in the legislature as ever," Zalkaliani said.

He also promised to continue his work in a new position with even higher responsibility and that during his tenure as Ambassador, our cooperation with the United States will reach a qualitatively higher level.



After being introduced by the PM, Darchiashvili said that each Georgian diplomat will continue to defend the best interests of the country abroad as usual.

The newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, met his deputies on his first day in office to stress that the Ministry would keep its focus on the fulfillment of strategic goals and objectives of Georgian foreign policy.

"Work will continue on Georgia's territorial integrity and de-occupation, promoting the country's European and Euro-Atlantic integration process, deepening relations with strategic partners, encour-

aging trade and investment, and strengthening the Georgian diaspora, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said."

"Future efforts of the Ministry team will again be aimed at effectively addressing foreign policy challenges facing the country," the release read.

Darchiashvili's professional career started at the Bank Republic, where he worked in different positions from 2003 to 2012. From 2012 to 2014 he worked at the Embassy of Georgia in the Republic of Poland. In 2014-2015 he became the First Deputy Director of the LEPL Municipal Development Fund of Georgia and

later CEO of the same fund. He was the First Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia from 2015 to 2016. During the same period, he worked as a member of the Supervisory Board of the Georgian Airports Association.

The new foreign minister was the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia in 2016-2017; 2017-2021 - Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the Republic of Poland, and from 2021 - Head of the Administration of the Government of Georgia.

### The News in Brief

## Kaladze Calls Information On the Smuggling of Weapons 'Sheer Lie'



By THE MESSENGER STAFF

Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze calls the information provided by the Ukrainian Intelligence Service about the smuggling of weapons a 'sheer lie' and says it is a deliberate provocation Kaladze writes about it on Twitter.

"Today, a blatant lie has been spread as if Georgia and Russia are secretly negotiating smuggling into Russia via Georgia. It is a deliberate provocation aimed at casting a shadow over Georgian-Ukrainian relations. Those behind it have bad intentions towards two friendly countries," he wrote.

According to the intelligence service of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, Russia is establishing a smuggling route through the territory of Georgia.

The statement of the Intelligence Service reads:

"Due to the imposition of international sanctions, the Russian Federation has lost the ability to supply the military, dual-use and civilian goods.

In order to circumvent the sanctions, Russian agents are setting up smuggling routes that pass through the territory of Georgia.

At the same time, the representatives of the Georgian intelligence services received a directive from the political leadership not to hinder the activities of smugglers."

The Ministry of Finance of Georgia responded to the information and said that it was "a completely unfounded and absurd accusation."



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.0902; Euro - 3.3998; GBP - 4.0503; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.6626; Swiss Franc - 3.3325

# Georgian Authorities Deny Information on Russia Smuggling Sanctioned Products Using Georgian Territory



According to the Ministry of Finance of Georgia, any sanctioned products are subject to strict customs control by the Georgian government.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Main Intelligence Director of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and the Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine Iryna Vereshchuk stated yesterday that the Georgian political leadership has agreed with Russia to smuggle sanctioned goods through Georgia. The Georgian authorities categorically deny the information, calling it 'absurd'.

According to the Ministry of Finance of Georgia, the information on Russia creating smuggling channels for sanctioned products using Georgian territory is 'a completely baseless and absurd accusation'. The Ministry stated that since the very first days of the imposition of sanctions on the Russian Federation by the international community, Georgia has been strictly controlling all customs checkpoints in the country and has been monitoring incoming and outgoing cargo. The Ministry announced with 'full responsibility' that any sanctioned products are subject to strict customs control by the Georgian government.

"It should be noted that all our international partners are informed about this in detail. Georgia will continue to exercise

strict control in this area and share information with partners," the statement reads.

The ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party MP Gia Tsagareishvili assessed the information as 'provocative'. According to him, some sources in Ukraine, as well as the Georgian opposition, were spreading 'lies' regarding this matter.

The ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party MP and Parliament Vice-Speaker Giorgi Kakhiani said that the spread accusation was 'insulting for Georgia'. He stressed that the statement was not true and questioned whether the information was related to the hybrid war waged against Georgia.

The Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine alleged in the statement that bypassing the sanctions, Russian agents are setting up smuggling channels that run, among others, through Georgia. The statement also claims that the representatives of the Georgian special services were instructed by the political leadership not to interfere in the activities of smugglers. The intelligence service further stressed that the possibility of resuming air traffic between the Russian Federation and Georgia is currently being considered.



The Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine claimed that representatives of the Georgian special services were instructed by the political leadership not to interfere in the activities of smugglers.

## EU: Russian authorities are responsible for atrocities in Bucha and other Ukrainian towns

The European Union has condemned in the strongest terms reports of atrocities committed by the Russian armed forces in a number of occupied Ukrainian towns that have now been liberated.

"Haunting images of large numbers of civilian deaths and casualties, as well as destruction of civilian infrastructures show the true face of the brutal war of aggression Russia is waging against Ukraine and its people. The massacres in the town of



Bucha and other Ukrainian towns will be inscribed in the list of atrocities committed on European soil," EU High Representative Josep Borrell said in a declaration on behalf of the EU.

He added that the Russian authorities are responsible for these atrocities, committed while they had effective control of the area: "The perpetrators of war crimes and other serious violations as well as the responsible government officials and military leaders will be held accountable."

Borrell said the EU would support all measures to ensure accountability for human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law in Ukraine by Russian Armed forces. "In particular, we fully support the investigation launched by the ICC Prosecutor into war crimes and crimes against humanity as well as the work of the OHCHR Commission of Inquiry. The EU is assisting the Ukrainian Prosecutor General and Civil Society focused on collection and preservation of the evidence of the war crimes," said Borrell.

He assured that the EU would continue to firmly support Ukraine and would advance work on further sanctions against Russia, as a matter of urgency.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

### Weather

Tuesday, April 5

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 19°C  
Night Showers Low: 8°C

Wednesday, April 6

Day Showers High: 18°C  
Night Showers Low: 10°C

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