

The UN Security Council discussed the August war and the occupation of Georgian territories

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

On August 16, a closed session of the United Nations Security Council was held at which the 2008 war and the occupation of Georgian territories were discussed.

In a statement made after the meeting, the members of the UN Security Council called on the Russian Federation to fulfill its obligations under the ceasefire agreement, to respond in a timely manner to the facts of human rights violations that occur in the occupied territories of Georgia, and to cancel the annexation of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region's recognition of so-called independence.

After the meeting, the representatives of America, France, Ireland, Norway, Great Britain, Albania, Japan and Malta made a joint statement and said that the Russian war in Georgia in 2008 was the beginning of the Kremlin's aggressive policy not only toward the security of neighboring countries but also towards Europe.

"Russia's military aggression in Georgia in 2008 was the beginning of the trend of Russia's aggressive policy towards its neighboring countries and European security. This is what we see today in Ukraine. This is the path that Russia has continued. We firmly reaffirm Georgia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We condemn the flagrant violations of the territorial integrity of Georgia by the Russian

Federation. We condemn Russia's illegal invasion of Georgia and military mobilization in the occupied territories of Georgia, be it Abkhazia or the occupied Tskhinvali region, which are an integral part of Georgia," said the Ambassador of Albania, Ferit Hoxha.

According to the representatives of America, France, Ireland, Norway, Great Britain, Albania, Japan and Malta in the UN, it is important to continue the international discussions in Geneva and to fulfill the ceasefire agreement signed on August 12. The United Nations calls on Russia to cancel its recognition of the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions as states.

Speaking to reporters outside the Security Council, Hoxha condemned "Russia's continuous provocations, which go in parallel with the Russian unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine, the continued military presence and military drills on Georgia's territory, the enhanced so-called borderization process, unlawful detentions and kidnappings of the local population, hindrance of freedom of movement and lengthy closures of so-called crossing points, discrimination against ethnic Georgians in Gali and Akhgori districts, and the prohibition on education in residents native language."

The statement read by Hoxha calls on the Russian Federation "to fully implement its obligation and commitments under the EU mediated ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008 and withdraw



its military and security forces from the territory of Georgia without delay."

"We repeat the 14-year-old call and call on Russia to cancel the recognition of the so-called independence of the Georgian territories," the Albanian ambassador said.

Before the closed session of the UN Security Council, the Deputy Ambassador of Russia to the UN, Dmitry Polyansky, stated that the Russian delegation to the UN was against the issue of Georgia being discussed at the session of the Security Council. Dmitry Polyansky said that the situation in the

Caucasus is 'very stable' and this is why they have 'no reason to raise this issue':

"Our European colleagues decided to discuss the situation in Georgia, which is very strange. We are not talking about the state of Georgia, but about the country in the Caucasus. The situation in the Caucasus is very stable, that's why we have no reason to raise this issue.

According to him, in August 2008 there was 'a big provocation' by the Saakashvili regime and external forces also played a big role in the current situation. Polyanski said that the occupation of Georgian territories

by Russia was the fault of Western countries.

He said, "on the eighth of August of 2018, as you know, there was a terrible provocation of the Saakashvili regime in Georgia, which resulted in immense problems for this country and the emergence of two independent Republics. Since then, the regime has changed, and the current leaders of Georgia have already given their own assessment of what has happened then. They recognize this reckless mistake that was made by Saakashvili. They also are very much aware of the role of foreign powers in this situation."

TV Companies statement regarding the acceptance of Georgian Dream lawsuit is 'unreasonable', Communications Commission says

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Communications Commission has responded to the Formula, Mtavari Arkhi and TV Pirveli's statement regarding the Commission's acceptance of Georgian Dream's lawsuit and they evaluate it as 'unreasonable'. According to them, they suspect that television companies are purposefully violating the law and further accuse the Communications Commission of restricting the media from "reacting according to the requirements of the law."

The Communications Commission claims that all its decisions are in full compliance with the law, therefore, in their own estimation, there is no argument that the Commission's decisions threaten the freedom of speech



and expression of the media. The statement also mentions that the issue of the legality of advertising "has nothing to do with freedom of expression".

"According to the law, there are clear rules for placing broadcast

advertisements on air, which broadcasters are well aware of. The representatives of the television companies involved in the dispute appeal that the controversial video clip belongs to social and not political advertising, the con-

sideration of which is beyond the competence of the Communications Commission. It is the competence of the Communications Commission, therefore, the issue of broadcasting both social advertising and political advertising is for consideration by the Communications Commission.

Due to the fact that social and political advertising is within the supervisory area of the commission, there was no legal basis for declaring the complaint inadmissible regarding the controversial video. As for the review of the content of the video, according to the legislation, within 7 working days of receiving a complaint against the broadcaster, the commission appoints a preparatory session and makes a decision only to accept the complaint for consid-

eration or reject the complaint. The broadcasters involved in the dispute should be well informed that according to the legislation, the discussion of the substance of the dispute - the evaluation of the content of the video clip and the decision of the issue of the propriety of placing it on the air is not done at the preparatory session of the Communications Commission. The Communications Commission determined in the format of the preparatory session that the question of the legality of placing advertisements by broadcasters was disputed.

Regarding the issue of media restrictions and suppression of free speech by sanctioning broadcasters, the Communications Commission writes that the issue of legality of advertising is

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8019; Euro - 2.8378; GBP - 3.3682; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.5530; Swiss Franc - 2.9469

14 years have passed since Russia-Georgia August War

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

Each anniversary of the August War is a special summary of the past year. Today, it is already clear to everyone that in August 2008 it was not Russia's episodic attack on Georgia, but the open aggression of Putin's regime against the neighboring post-Soviet countries, which he considers to be a preparatory step for victory over the West.

In the West, they clearly realized that the two-pronged response of the West to the August 2008 war and turning a blind eye to aggression only encouraged and made Russia's aggressive policy more extensive. On the 14th anniversary of the August war, Jim Risch, a member of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that the world's weak response in 2008 gave Putin a sense of impunity. This emboldened Putin, who has since invaded Ukraine twice, aided Assad in Syria, developed Wagner's mercenary squad, and established de facto control over Belarus.

The position of Republican Congressman Adam Kinzinger is approximately the same. In an interview with Voice of America,

he noted that Georgia was the first country that was attacked by modern Russia. At that time, judging by the reaction to this attack, the world "seemed to be asleep," the West was focused on the fight against terrorism, and many "naively thought" that in the post-Cold War era, Russia was generally still an ally. Such an attitude only encouraged Russia's further aggression.

It is similar to the statement issued by the group of European parliamentarians, which states that "14 years ago, in gross violation of international law, Russia launched an aggressive war against Georgia," the consequences of which are clearly felt throughout Europe. Russian aggression against Georgia went largely unpunished and contributed to the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the launch of a full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine in 2022. They never hid that the aggressive steps in the 'post-Soviet space' were directed against the West. Dmitry Medvedev, who was the President of Russia in 2008, reappeared on the 14th anniversary of the August War. According to Medvedev, 2008 'was a signal' for the USA and NATO, but the West failed to understand and

understand this signal, "continued its extremely dangerous course", and therefore Russia had to give a tougher response in 2022, which "changed the whole world irreversibly." The world, hopefully, has, in fact, 'changed irreversibly' but not in the way Putin wanted. In any case, the war in Ukraine is not going on as the Kremlin wanted.

The announcements made in Georgia were doubled by another anniversary of the August war. Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili again blamed the previous government for the August war, according to him, it was "the betrayal of Saakashvili and his team," they killed the country, the people, and the military.

Gharibashvili declared Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region 'occupied by Russia', but according to him, "this happened 14 years ago". This caused a negative reaction in the critical media and the opposition, giving the impression that "everything was fine" until 2008. However, the Russian hybrid war against Georgia started after the collapse of the Soviet Union. By encouraging the separatist regimes and providing them with military assistance, in the early 1990s,

Russia effectively occupied a large part of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region, but Shevardnadze agreed to give the status of "peacekeeping forces" to the Russian military in these two regions.

Blaming Saakashvili's government for the August war was the main message for the deputies who left the Georgian dream and are distinguished by their anti-Western statements. Dimitri Khundadze said that Saakashvili did not make a mistake, but it was a "deliberate implementation of Russian policy." Saakashvili himself seems to be upset about Georgian politics, at least his lawyers claim that Saakashvili is no longer interested in Georgian politics and only thinks about Ukraine.

On the 14th anniversary of the war, it should be considered a positive event on the part of the Georgian government, at least the President and the Speaker of the Parliament, that they noted the aggression carried out by Russia and the occupation of Georgian territories, and the Foreign Ministry called on the Russian government to de-occupy Georgian territories.

However, these statements do

not change much in the image of the current government, which stands out for its anti-Westernism after the war in Ukraine.

In connection with the 14th anniversary of the August War, the opposition talked a lot about the anti-Western nature of the "Georgian Dream." "Today we have an anti-European government, which increases the dangers for our country," said Badri Japaridze, the leader of Lelo. The position of Nika Melia, the chairman of the main opposition party 'National Movement', was even stricter.

Giorgi Margvelashvili, the fourth president of Georgia, was no less harsh in his assessment - today Georgia has a government controlled by Russia, and thinking about achieving something good by cooperating with it, let's say fulfilling the 12 points proposed by the European Union, would only be self-delusion.

In the current situation, perhaps the opposition and the West should be formed as to what can be achieved from the current government of Georgia, which claims today that it is busy fulfilling the requirements of the European Union. The opposition does not believe this. However, there is not much time left until the end of the year, and the general image should soon become clear.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

The president of Latvia appoints Edite Medne as a new Ambassador to Georgia

The President of Latvia, Egils Levits, presented the credentials of the new Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Latvia to Georgia, Edite Medne.

The official ceremony was held at Riga Castle. The information was released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia.

The newly appointed ambas-

sador said that Latvia is and will remain a reliable partner of Georgia. She expressed her support for Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations and implementation of reforms.

"I am committed to the promotion of economic and cultural ties between Latvia and Georgia, and I intend to work closely with the Latvian diaspora," Medne said.

Medne started working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia in 1995.

Before being appointed as the ambassador to Georgia, she held the position of the deputy head of the mission in the Embassy of Latvia in Ireland.

Civil organizations demand the establishment of a visa regime for Russian citizens

Civil organizations issue a joint statement demanding the immediate establishment of a visa regime for Russian citizens.

As mentioned in the statement of the organizations, the legal status of the persons who have already entered the territory of Georgia should also be reviewed.

"The organizations once again express our full support to the Ukrainian people in their struggle for freedom, we recognize that the Russian Federation has committed acts prohibited by the international/law of war in

Ukraine and Georgia and continues to violate the territorial integrity of our country today, we demand that a visa regime be established for the citizens of the Russian Federation.

It is known to the public that in the period of January-June 2022, the rate of arrival of Russian visitors to Georgia increased significantly. In addition, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, about 6,400 Russian companies were registered in Georgia, which is 7 times more than the annual rate of 2021. Russian exports have increased significantly, and the mass influx of Russian citizens and businesses clearly indicates that the citizens of the occupying state are free to use occupied Georgia to

escape the difficult economic situation created by the sanctions against the Russian Federation.

We believe that the control of Russian citizens and businesses entering Georgia is a matter of the country's national security. In particular, the continued occupation, the ethnic cleansing committed by the Russian Federation in Georgia, crimes against humanity, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the approach often used by the Russian Federation - the so-called killing of its own citizens. Under the pretext of protection, in connection with intervention in a foreign country - creates a sufficient basis for establishing a visa regime." the statement reads.

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CONTINUED FROM Page 1

clearly regulated by legislation and broadcasters should under-

Weather

Wednesday, August 17

Day Clear
High: 38°C

Night Clear
Low: 22°C

Thursday, August 18

Day Clear
High: 36°C

Night Clear
Low: 21°C

stand that it is their responsibility not to violate the law by broadcasting advertisements.

"When placing advertisements in compliance with the law, the Communications Commission will not have any reason to initiate proceedings. Therefore, according to the law, television stations are obliged not to place inappropriate commercials on the air and to comply with the requirements of the law,

both when placing political and social advertisements.

"We emphasize here that since 2014, there has been no decision of the Communications Commission that limits media freedom, on the contrary, both the approach of the Commission and all decisions, as well as the existing legislation, confirm and are uniquely aimed at increasing media pluralism and the degree of freedom of expression in the

country as much as possible. According to the legislation of Georgia, all content parts, except for advertising, are deregulated, therefore, the Communications Commission has made a number of decisions on the issue of both social and political advertising. Broadcasters are aware of the approach and decisions of the Communications Commission, therefore, there is a reasonable suspicion that specific television sta-

tions are purposefully violating the law, and subsequently, they accuse the Communications Commission of restricting the media by responding to the requirements of the law."

Three television companies, Formula, Mtavari Arkhi, and TV Pirveli, issued a joint statement regarding Georgian Dream's lawsuit against them. According to the statement, the Communications Regulatory Commission's acceptance of the lawsuit is an orchestrated punitive action against the channels.

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.

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