

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

## US Senators Jeanne Shahin and Dick Durbin Visit Georgia

Senator Shahin and Senator Durbin are on an official visit to Georgia after participating in the Munich Security Forum, according to the US Embassy in Georgia.

According to the embassy, within the framework of the visit, Shahin and Durbin will meet with heads of state, members of legislative bodies and representatives of civil society to discuss bilateral relations between the countries, as well as the geopolitical importance of the Black Sea region:

"The Black Sea is a key geopolitical region for European security, especially in light of Russia's brutal war in Ukraine. Vladimir Putin is already acting to extend his malign influence in the region, and we know that his hegemonic ambitions go beyond taking over Ukraine. It is important that the US actively cooperates with its Black Sea partners and formulates a stronger policy towards the region. This is exactly what I plan to discuss over the next few days...

Georgia has important elec-



tions ahead of it and the opportunity to advance the democratic agenda. I call on our partners to prioritize [these issues], work to create a better future for the Georgian people and achieve more stability in the region. I also look forward to meeting with our allies in Romania. [Romania], an important NATO member, has played a significant role on the Ukrainian war front, facilitating the flow of Western equipment to support the fight against Putin and to help refugees fleeing the violence. There is much to discuss and I appreciate the opportunity to interact with our partners and allies in person," Shahin said.

"Georgia, which experienced Russia's brazen seizure of Georgian lands by military force in 2008, knows very well the future threat from Putin."

With the separation from the Soviet Union came the great prospect of defining the country's future directly within the transatlantic democratic societies – a vision that has not yet been fully realized and which I hope will be further encouraged during this visit" Durbin said.

## Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili: World Should End War in Ukraine

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Irakli Gharibashvili in his speech at the Munich Security Conference discussed the ongoing war in Ukraine and said that peace has no alternative:

"There is no alternative to peace, and I will tell you here that Georgia follows the peaceful policy of conflict resolution. Regarding sovereignty, territorial integrity, we very clearly stated that Georgia has a peaceful plan to restore its territorial integrity."

Gharibashvili added that the world should end the war in Ukraine, because if it continues, it will result in more destructive power. He also emphasized the impact Russian aggression had on Georgia in the 2008 war, adding that the aggression is still ongoing:

"I would like to thank the OSCE and other participants who are actively involved in the mediation process. You mentioned the international discussions in Geneva, this is also the platform we have for relations with Russia. Therefore, I must repeat that this war must stop."

We have seen the result of war in our own country in 2008. A lot of people died, we completely lost control over our territories, and as I said, Russia still has military bases on our territory. This is an ongoing process, it has not been stopped.

I would also like to mention that after the 2008 war, we have not seen any sanctions imposed on Russia. On the contrary, we saw business as usual with Russia, so I would say it was a very bad signal that sanctions did not follow our case. I must mention that the international community must be formed. How will we go forward.

If this war continues, it means that it will have even more destructive power. More innocent people will die. The world must end this war," said Gharibashvili.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Ursula von der Leyen Expresses Readiness to Continue Cooperation With Georgia Over EU Candidacy Status



The President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen responded to the meeting with the Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili in the social network Twitter. As Ursula von der Leyen pointed out, the European Union

is ready to continue working with Georgia so that the country achieves progress in fulfilling the 12 recommendations set by the European Commission in June 2022 and makes the most of the European Union's economic investment plan, especially for the development of projects connect-

ing the Black Sea. "I had a good opportunity to discuss the main issues of the Georgia-EU agenda together with the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili. We are ready to continue working with Georgia so that the country can

make progress in fulfilling the 12 recommendations set by the European Commission in June 2022 and make the most of the EU's economic investment plan, especially for the development of projects connecting the Black Sea," Ursula von der Leyen wrote.

PM Gharibashvili Calls Mikheil Saakashvili 'Good Actor' at Munich Security Conference

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili spoke about Mikheil Saakashvili at the Munich Security Conference. According to Gharibashvili, the third president of Georgia is receiving appropriate treatment, and as for the footage released from the clinic, according to him, 'Mr. Saakashvili is a good actor'. "I don't want to speculate on this matter, President Saakashvili is being treated in a private clinic. I want people to know that he came to Georgia a year and a half ago, on October 1, to be exact, and the idea of his return was to make a revolution

and inspire mass murders." His plan failed and he ended up in prison. We transferred him to a private clinic. I won't bore people



with details, but since the question was asked, I want to answer it. He is being treated in a private clinic for more than 8 months now, the government of Georgia provides maximum comfort and treatment, all the privileges that other prisoners do not have. You mentioned footage, photos, I will say that Mr. Saakashvili is a good actor. The

Government of Georgia is doing everything possible, providing maximum support. We made an offer to his family to bring any doctor, from any country, from

any clinic, if he needs real treatment, bring him to Georgia, this is my answer," Gharibashvili said. According to the Prime Minister, Saakashvili's family hired lobbying companies and is spreading a lot of false information. "What you hear, what you see on video, on Facebook, on social networks, does not represent reality," Gharibashvili said.

European Joint Research Centre opens its laboratories for training academia and entrepreneurs

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) is opening its research laboratories and facilities to training and capacity building for people working in academia and research organisations, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the public and private sector in general.

The JRC is offering access to its non-nuclear facilities to researchers and scientists from EU Member States and countries associated with the Horizon Europe programme, including Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. For nuclear facilities, the JRC is open to EU Member States and to countries as-

which can improve the suitability of their proposals for the Open Access to Research Infrastructures programme.

Scientists and technicians will have the opportunity to be trained in chemistry; bio-sciences/life sciences, physical

sciences, ICT, and foresight. Several calls have already been opened. (euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Monday, February 20  
Day Showers High: 13°C  
Night Mostly Cloud Low: 2°C  
Tuesday, February 21  
Day Mostly Cloudy High: 6°C  
Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 1°C

sociated with the Euratom Research Programme, including Ukraine. After following a training and capacity building course at the JRC, scientists are more familiar with the JRC laboratories

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The English - Speaking Union  
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BANK OF GEORGIA Main Supporter  
Invites 16-20 year old young speakers to take part in the Public Speaking Competition  
The theme of the competition is "Relations between nations are too important to be left to governments alone". Speakers may interpret this theme in any way they see fit, but they should not use the theme as their title. Each speaker will be allocated 5 minutes. The competition will be held in three rounds. The first round March 8, 11, 13 at the English Language Centre "British Corner". The date and theme of the second round will be announced later.  
The competition is sponsored by the Bank of Georgia.  
ESU-Georgia will send the lucky winner to London to take part in the final and organize 5 day stay in England. The deadline for registration is March 6  
Contact us: "British Corner", Vake Park (entrance from I. Abashidze St.). Tel.: 591339993, 557030080 E mail: britishcornerbc@gmail.com www.esugeorgia.com

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