

## State Security Service: "Georgian Citizen and Leader of Islamic State Group Arrested by in Targeted Operation"

By Liza Mchedlidze

The State Security Service released information saying that they have detained Georgian citizen Malkhaz Paksashvili, allegedly a "leader of a terrorist organization Islamic State."

Paksashvili was arrested following a court order, as part of a targeted operation conducted by the counter-terrorist center.

The State Security Service of Georgia's statement indicates that the individual who was arrested had a strong association with high-level military leaders within the Islamic State organization. The detainee was also identified as the 'deputy' of one of the groups belonging to the aforementioned terrorist organization.

As per the investigation, the defendant traveled to Syria in 2013 and became a member of the Islamic State terrorist organization. The accused played an active role in the organization's combat operations. However, the State Security Service alleges that the individual had affiliations with senior military commanders within the Islamic State group.

Malkhaz Paksashvili, who was apprehended on suspicion of assisting terrorism, has been sentenced to imprisonment by the Tbilisi City Court as a pre-



ventative measure. Prosecutor Maia Silagadze stated to reporters that the accused did not admit to the crime. The prosecutor also mentioned that there is substantial evidence in the case, including protocols of interviews with witnesses, expert reports,

and video recordings.

"I cannot talk about the details of the case, but I can confirm that he has been in Georgia for several years. After we obtained evidence that the defendant joined a terrorist organization and participated in various

operations, the prosecution petitioned the court to issue a warrant for his arrest," said the prosecutor Maia Silagadze.

The case is classified as top secret, therefore, the April 22 court session was held in closed format.

The detainee was charged under Article 328 of the Criminal Code of Georgia (joining a foreign country's terrorist organization and aiding it in terrorist activities), which provides for imprisonment from 10 to 17 years.

## Georgia and Italy Sign High-Level Dialogue Declaration to Strengthen Bilateral Relations

By Liza Mchedlidze



On April 21, 2023, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Ilia Darchiashvili, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Italy, Antonio Tajani, signed a joint declaration on the establishment of a high-level dialogue between Georgia and the Republic of Italy.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the document, the parties recognize the significant progress achieved in the bilateral relations between Georgia and Italy since 1992, which creates a solid basis for strengthening and diversifying the existing cooperation agenda.

"The high-level dialogue reflects the dynamic cooperation between the two countries and reveals new perspectives of partnership."

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5105; Euro - 2.7533; GBP - 3.1085; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.0807; Swiss Franc - 2.8091

# Georgia and Italy Sign High-Level Dialogue Declaration to Strengthen Bilateral Relations

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The parties reaffirm their commitment to common values and interests and their desire to uphold the rules-based international order.

Within the framework of the declaration, the parties express

their firm will to raise the existing bilateral relations between the two countries to a higher level and outline the future perspectives of mutually beneficial cooperation.

The said format consists of four thematic dimensions, which include political, defense and se-

curity, trade-economic, as well as cultural, educational, and scientific fields.

The meetings within the framework of the dialogue, which will be held periodically, will be co-chaired by the ministers of foreign affairs. Delegations composed of high-ranking

representatives of the relevant ministries/agencies will participate in the sessions.

A joint communique will be published as a result of each meeting.

The declaration on the high-level dialogue was signed during

Foreign Minister Ilya Darchiashvili's visit to Rome.

Within the framework of the visit, the head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia held meetings with the representatives of the legislative and executive authorities of Italy," the statement reads.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Georgian Citizens in Sudan Relocated to Secure Location for Evacuation Purposes, MFA Says



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia has reported that Georgian citizens in Sudan have been relocated from the vicinity of Khartoum airport to a more secure location, where preparations for their evacuation are being made.

The agency has acknowledged the challenging circumstances on the ground, and cannot currently specify the timing of the Georgian citizens' evacuation due to the unpredictable and volatile situation in the area.

"With the joint work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

plete evacuation from Sudan," the Foreign Ministry stated.

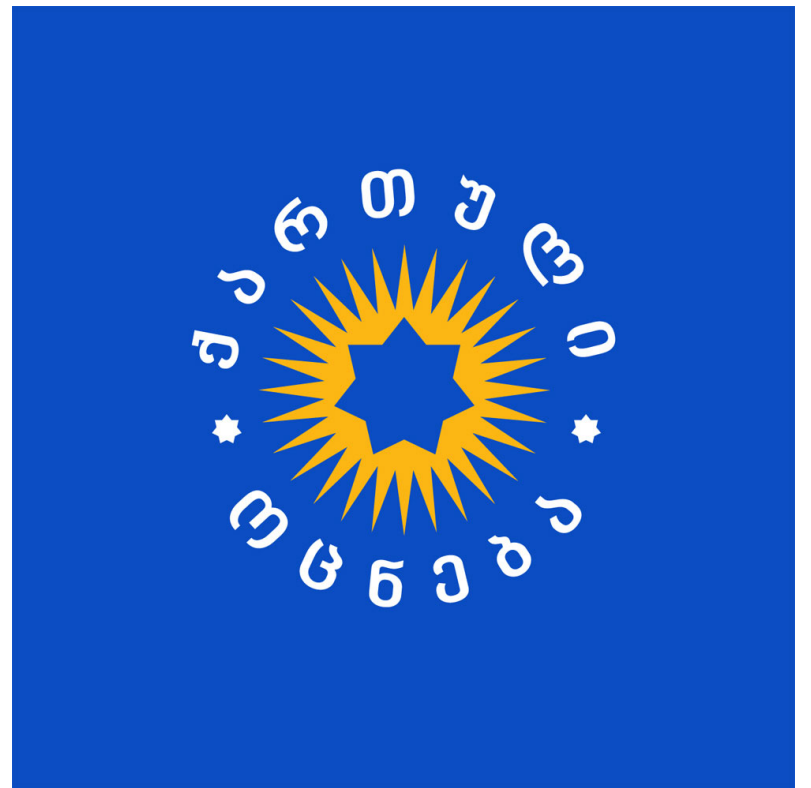
The ministry is maintaining regular communication with the Georgian citizens in Sudan.

The conflict in Sudan between the national army and the fighters of the "Rapid Support Forces" has been ongoing since April 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Georgian Dream Delegation to Attend Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg

The press service of the Georgian Dream party has announced that Irakli Kobakhidze, the party's chairman, will lead a delegation from the Parliament of Georgia to participate in the spring session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg from April 24-27.

Within the framework of the spring session, the chairman of "Georgian Dream" will meet the rapporteurs of the monitoring committee of the European Council on Georgian issues, Claude Kern and Edite Estrela.



Members of the delegation will have working meetings with partners in various committees. The session will be addressed by the European Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatovic. The delegation includes Vice-

Speaker of the Parliament Archil Talakvadze, members of the parliamentary majority, Irakli Chikovani, Khatia Tsilosani, Givi Mikanadze, member of People's Power, Eka Sepashvili.

# Cultural Heritage in Action shares digital toolbox and resources with experts worldwide

The EU-funded Cultural Heritage in Action project, a peer-learning scheme for cities and regions on cultural heritage that ran between January 2020 and January 2023, has presented a digital toolbox, a catalogue of good practices and a thematic analysis as its outcomes.

The project aimed to improve the management of cultural heritage sites through enhanced



citizens' participation, promoted cultural heritage as a tool for local sustainable development, and explored the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.

Over the last three years, the project brought together hundreds of local policy-makers, cultural heritage specialists, and practitioners, and facilitated peer-learning activities.

Now, the project shares a digital

toolbox for culture and cultural heritage specialists featuring good practices and findings from the peer-learning activities; a catalogue of 60 good practices highlighting local innovative practices; a thematic analysis capturing knowledge from three years of learning with local practitioners; and short videos showcasing cultural heritage from different cities and regions.

The project's outcomes and results are expected to be valuable for cultural heritage specialists, policy-makers, and practitioners worldwide.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

## Weather

Monday, April 24

Day Overcast  
High: 19°C

Night Showers  
Low: 10°C

Tuesday, April 25

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 20°C

Night Clear  
Low: 9°C

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# Italian Innovation and Research Day in Georgia

– Award ceremony of two “STEM Study Visits to Italy” – 2023 edition.  
Strong friendship, partnership in the related fields further enhanced.

The traditional yearly “Italian Innovation and Research Day in Georgia”, celebrating Italian genius in the field of science – as it commemorates annually the birth of Leonardo Da Vinci – and nowadays cooperation of Italian high-tech and innovation sectors with Georgian counterparts, was held today (21/04/2023) at the Headquarters of the Agency for Innovation and Technology of Georgia (GITA).

Two Georgian Innovators, Ms. Mariam Zenaishvili and Mr. Toma Pirtskheliani, were awarded within the “STEM Study Visit to Italy” – 2023 programme, which consists of a unique opportunity to gain experience in crucial fields such as digital transformation, support to entrepreneurial development, programs for startups. Host entity will be “Innovaway” (<https://www.innovaway.it/>) a company located in the metropolitan city of Naples, in South-

ern Italy, deeply intertwined with the “ecosystem” of support to innovation of Campania Region. The company, active in the fields of digital transformation and multilingual IT management services, will act as a platform designed for the skills of Georgian young innovators and tailored with a view to their personal and professional development

H. E. the Ambassador of Italy in Georgia, Mr. Enrico Valvo, welcomed the “strong public support and affection surrounding this initiative. The closing ceremony of last year’s STEM program, held in Naples last December – which I had the privilege to attend in person [https://www.esteri.it/en/sala\\_stampa/archivionotizie/retediplomatica/2022/12/grande-successo-per-stem-study-visit-to-italy/](https://www.esteri.it/en/sala_stampa/archivionotizie/retediplomatica/2022/12/grande-successo-per-stem-study-visit-to-italy/) – was broadly participated and enjoyed the presence of a very special guest, more than famous in Naples and Tbilisi, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia. This was

a symbolic, although important, recognition of a special merit of such program, which is to acknowledge and promote Georgian talents in Italy”.

Both Gita’s Chairman, Dr. Avtandil Kasradze, and COTEC’S President, Professor Luigi Nicolais, attended the event and signed a new partnership Agreement, further enhancing the already solid cooperation between Italy and Georgia in the related fields. The Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Mr. Irakli Nadareishvili, also participated, stressing the strong Governmental support towards this initiative and the wish to see the presence of Italian high-tech companies in Georgia further increased, in line with the partnership goals.

Ambassador Valvo recalled: “Italy can be a key partner for Georgia, helping to identify solutions for improving skills of workforce and getting closer to best EU

standards, while sharing best practices. And of course it goes both ways”, mentioning the strong reputation of Italian Universities and Research facilities, and the records of National industry in the fields of automation, cyber security, space industry and expertise, with deep roots of know-how in satellites production, management, and contribution to the activities of the International Space Station.

Prior to the event’s conclusion, a “story-telling” moment by the private sector was organized. Two entrepreneurs operating in both countries, in the respective innovation sectors, Mr. Stiven Muccioli and Mr. Vakho Turnava, provided an authentic business perspective on innovation, informing the public about how they established an actual, successful partnership in the field of innovation and IT. They also touched upon further opportunities in this respect.





