

## Prime Minister Gharibashvili and EU Ambassador Highlight Georgia's European Aspirations at EU Day Celebratory Event



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

During the celebration of Europe Days, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili expressed his belief that the European states will make the right political decision this year by granting Georgia and its people the status of a candidate.

According to Gharibashvili, the government has made significant efforts over the past decade to strengthen Georgia's ties with Europe, bringing the country closer to Europe.

The prime minister expressed his 'sincere admiration' for the EU Ambassador to Georgia, Pawel Herczynski's impressive fluency in Georgian and conveyed gratitude for addressing the public in the Georgian language.

Prime Minister Gharibashvili emphasized that throughout history, Georgians have consistently seen themselves as an inseparable part of Europe, leading to their clear aspiration of achieving full membership within the expansive European family.

"You know that in the last 10 years,

our government has done a lot to bring our country even closer to Europe. I remind everyone once again that it is the merit of our government that signed the association agreement, the free trade agreement, the visa-free regime and the European perspective.

As you are aware, over the past decade, our government has taken substantial measures to enhance our country's proximity to Europe. I would like to reiterate that it was through the efforts of our government that we signed the association agreement, the free trade agreement, the visa-free regime, and initiated the European perspective. These achievements serve as a testament to our unwavering commitment to align ourselves with the European Union and work towards building a stronger relationship with our European counterparts.

We understand very well that more work needs to be done and more reforms need to be implemented in order for the country to attain candidate status and move closer to Europe.

I believe that our European friends, the European states, will make the singularly

correct political decision this year by granting candidate status to Georgia and its people. Our country, people, and government deserve this recognition. While we recognize that granting this status is a symbolic gesture, we understand its immense importance as a significant decision.

Once again, I would like to emphasize the complete readiness of our government to continue implementing the necessary reforms for the benefit of our country and its people. Furthermore, these reforms will bring us even closer to our European friends and society," Gharibashvili said.

Prime Minister Gharibashvili stated that Georgia shares numerous common values with Europe and its people, and these values, according to him, are rooted in Georgian Christian heritage.

According to the European Union Ambassador to Georgia, Pawel Herczynski, in his statement to the media, 70 years ago, countries came together to safeguard peace, prosperity, and freedom. Presently, Georgia is presented with an opportunity to join this collective effort.

"We gathered to celebrate Europe Day, which Georgia sees from a European per-

spective. This is a great success. The next stage is to obtain candidate status, which will bring Georgia even closer to EU membership," Herczynski said.

Pawel Herczynski stated that almost seven decades ago, the independent, sovereign, and free nations of Europe made a pivotal choice to come together and speak as a unified entity, aiming to preserve peace, prosperity, and freedom across Europe.

Pawel Herczynski stated that with the current 27 member states of the European Union, European leaders have decided to expand Europe, with Georgia being a potential candidate country. Georgia has already been granted a European perspective, which was a historic achievement, and the EU expects further progress based on how reforms are implemented in the country.

The EU Ambassador to Georgia stated that the goal of becoming a united, safe, and economically strong member of the European family is supported by the vast majority of Georgia's population, and he believes it is a historic opportunity for the country.

## State Security Service of Georgia's Successful Counter-Terrorism Operation in Georgia Results in Apprehension of Foreign Citizen Linked to ISIS



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

According to the State Security Service of Georgia, the national counter-terrorist system, in collaboration with competent agencies, has successfully identified the activities of the terrorist organization Islamic State in various foreign countries. As a result, one foreign citizen has been apprehended.

Bacha Mgeladze, Acting Director of the Counter-Terrorist Center, has reported that due to comprehensive counter-terrorist operations, substantial materials and evidence have been acquired, leading to the identification of terrorist activities taking

place in foreign countries.

Mgeladze revealed that a device containing electronic data was acquired, and it contained satellite images of strategic locations in the United States of America and European capitals. Through extensive counter-terrorist operations, the individuals associated with the terrorist organization, their communication methods, areas of interest, and potential targets for attacks outside of Georgia have been successfully identified.

Mgeladze stated that in light of the risks posed by international terrorism, the State

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.4834; Euro - 2.7377; GBP - 3.1321; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2233; Swiss Franc - 2.7853

# State Security Service of Georgia's Successful Counter-Terrorism Operation in Georgia Results in Apprehension of Foreign Citizen Linked to ISIS

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Security Service has decided to promptly share the information obtained during the ongoing criminal investigation with Georgia's international partners and neighboring countries such as Turkey:

"We obtained a device carrying electronic information from which satellite photos of strategic objects of the United States of America and European capitals were extracted. Within the framework of large-scale counter-terrorist measures, the persons in contact with the ter-

rorist organization, communication forms, methods, areas of interest, and possible attack targets outside Georgia have been identified.

Due to the international terrorist risks, according to the decision of the State Security Service, the information obtained

within the framework of the ongoing criminal investigation was promptly shared with Georgia's international partners and neighboring countries, including Turkey.

In addition, operative search, investigative and secret investigative actions are actively being

carried out in the service at this stage. The State Security Service of Georgia continues its uncompromising fight against international terrorism.

Georgia remains one of the reliable partners of the international counter-terrorist system," said Mgeladze.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Georgia's Counter-Terrorism Center Denies Existence of Terrorist Infrastructure in Georgia



During a briefing at the State Security Service, Bacha Mgeladze, the Acting Director of the Counter-Terrorist Center,

stated that there is no terrorist infrastructure of any kind in Georgia, and denied the information circulating in foreign media about the existence of military training and bases for terrorist purposes on Georgian territories.

Mgeladze further revealed that an ongoing investigation has yielded alarming information, which they promptly shared with their partners and even provided to the Turkish authorities. He added that the Turkish anti-terrorist service conducted a large-scale operation at two locations on May 5 based on the information they provided.

"There are no training camps and there is no training of terrorists and fighters. I will tell you more, an investigation has been going on in the State Security Service for a long time. Within the framework of this investigation we have obtained large-scale and resonant information,

alarming information, which we promptly shared with our partners. In addition, we provided information to the Turkish side, and accordingly, based on the information provided by us, the Turkish anti-terrorist service and various units conducted a large-scale anti-terrorist operation at two locations in Turkey yesterday, May 5," said Bacha Mgeladze.

### Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili Meets With IMF's James John

The Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili met with the Mission Chief of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Middle East and Central Asia Department James John.

During the meeting held at the government administration, the economic situation of the country was reviewed, high-

lighting the strong recovery demonstrated by the country following the Covid-19 crisis. Despite the global challenges

during the meeting with the head of the IMF mission.

Irakli Gharibashvili expressed gratitude to James John



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for the unwavering support of the International Monetary Fund in Georgia's structural, financial, and economic reforms. The Prime Minister highlighted the country's continued dedication to implementing reforms.

# Georgia to Host ADB's 57th Annual Meeting in 2024

INCHEON, REPUBLIC OF KOREA (5 May 2023) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced Tbilisi, Georgia, as the host of its 57th Annual Meeting to be held from 2 to 5 May 2024.

This will be the first time for Georgia to host ADB's Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting is an opportunity for ADB Governors to consider development issues and challenges facing Asia and the Pacific. Several thousand participants, including finance ministers, central bank governors, senior government officials, members of the private



The theme for the 57th Annual Meeting is "Bridge to the Future".

sector, representatives of international organizations and civil society organizations, youth, academia, and the media, regularly join the meeting.

"Georgia is a vibrant hub for regional trade—and a crucial bridge between Asia and Europe," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa. "The 2024

Annual Meeting will provide an important opportunity to showcase the country's rich heritage and tremendous potential."

"The slogan we've chosen for the 57th ADB Annual Meeting represents the need of synergy regionally and globally so that after Recovering, Reconnecting and through the Reforms, we

can jointly build the Bridge to the Brighter Future," said Georgia Finance Minister and ADB Governor Lasha Khutsishvili.

The theme for the 57th Annual Meeting is "Bridge to the Future". The theme of the 56th Annual Meeting is "Rebounding Asia: Recover, Reconnect, and Reform".

ADB began its partnership with Georgia in 2007 and is one of the country's largest multilateral development partners. ADB has committed 82 public sector loans, grants, and technical assistance for Georgia for a total of \$3.9 billion. Its ongoing sovereign portfolio in Georgia includes 17 loans worth \$1.75 billion.

ADB will continue to help Georgia respond to growth uncertainties arising from geopolitical developments and climate-related risks while helping facilitate the private sector's more active role in the economy. The

bank will seek to finance climate-resilient solutions in water resource management, irrigation, urban transport, and infrastructure to boost green energy exports to neighboring countries.

The bank will help unlock Georgia's potential for agribusiness, tourism, and regional trade, and address unemployment and growing skills gaps. ADB investments will incorporate gender equality, green development, and innovation as key elements of business sector development including a clearer rationale for the full commercial viability of state-owned enterprises.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

## Weather

Monday, May 8

Day Partly Cloudy High: 20°C

Night Few Showers Low: 12°C

Tuesday, May 9

Day Partly Cloudy High: 21°C

Night Few Showers Low: 12°C

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# Europe Day celebration in Tbilisi









