



GEORGIA ALERT

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JOINT WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BY POLITICAL PARTIES UNITED NATIONAL MOVEMENT, LELO – FOR GEORGIA, DROA, GIRCHI – MORE FREEDOM, AND CIVIL MOVEMENT DEMOCRACY DEFENDERS.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK:

Poll results show 87% of Georgians see Russia’s war in Ukraine as “their war”

A public opinion survey conducted by the Tbilisi-based Analysis and Consulting Team [showed](#) that 87% of Georgians see Russia’s war in Ukraine as their own war. The overwhelming support for Ukraine amongst Georgians has also been [manifested](#) in large-scale peaceful demonstrations in Tbilisi, with tens of thousands gathering to show solidarity to Ukraine and condemn the Georgian government’s dubious positioning, including refusal to join sanctions against Russia, with the Prime Minister publicly [calling](#) international sanctions “ineffective”.

Regional GD leader and Political Council member snubs journalist’s question on “who started the war in Ukraine”

Chair of the Adjara government and a member of Georgian Dream’s Political Council, Tornike Rizhvadze, [refused](#) to answer a journalist’s question on who started the war in Ukraine. He equivocated and told the journalist to refer to an “expert in the field” or an “international court.”

Georgia’s Minister of Agriculture says exporting to the Russian market is “an opportunity” for Georgian companies

The Minister of Agriculture, Otar Shamugia, [responded](#) to Russia’s decision to open its dairy market for trade with Georgia, indicating that the Russian market is “an opportunity” for Georgian companies. David Arakhamia, a close ally of President Volodymyr Zelensky, majority leader in the Ukrainian Rada and the chief Ukrainian negotiator with Russia issued a [video](#) address calling the Georgian government’s decision “backstabbing and betrayal”. GD faction chair Mamuka Mdinardze and GD Chair Irakli Kobakhidze both [slammed](#) Arakhamia for the video, with the latter insinuating that Arakhamia was not expressing his own views. Kobakhidze [referred](#) to Arakhamia’s “ties” to Mikheil Saakashvili, adding that UNM members “can easily influence the decisions of Ukrainian authorities”.

Russia removes Georgia from “unfriendly countries”

Following its full-scale military aggression against Ukraine, the Russian government [issued](#) a list of “unfriendly countries”. While Georgia has long figured on this list along with the United States, EU countries and others, the Kremlin has removed Georgia from the list since the Georgian government’s positioning on Ukraine.

Fifteen activists arrested in Tbilisi during a Ukraine solidarity rally

Activists held a peaceful rally on March 7th in support of Ukraine, demanding that the Georgian government impose a visa regime with Russia, ban Russian propaganda media and close the sky for Russia. The police randomly [arrested](#) 15 activists when the peaceful rally was already disbursing. Protesting the arrests in front of the Government Administration building the next day, founder of Shame Movement Shota Dighmelashvili was also [arrested](#). Political Party Droa’s leader Elene Khoshtaria and two other party members were also arrested at the Government Administration building for pouring Russian ketchup in front of the building following secretive Russia-Georgia trade negotiations.

Transparency International (TI) Georgia released a [statement](#) following the arrests, stating that “law enforcement bodies and courts permanently violated activists’ rights and were engaged in selective application of legislation and arbitrary arrests of activists.” As a result, TI Georgia noted that the “situation in terms of freedom of expression, as well as freedom of assembly, has been deteriorating in Georgia.”

Another Russian opposition politician barred from entering Georgia

Another Russian opposition politician, Andrei Davydov, was not allowed to enter Georgia. [According](#) to Davydov, the refusal was "a purely political decision." He believes Moscow might have provided Georgian authorities with a list of people whose admission and stay in Georgia is “undesirable” by the Kremlin. Davydov stated that other Russian citizens were able to cross the border without hindrances. A few days earlier, Mikhail Fishman, journalist of RainTV/Dojd, Russia’s embattled independent TV station recently shut down by the Kremlin, was also not allowed to enter Georgia.

ICC files arrest warrants for three officials in the occupation regime of South Ossetia following the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia

The prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) based in the Hague [filed](#) arrest warrants for three officials in the occupation regime of South Ossetia, holding them liable for war crimes committed during the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia and dispersing at the highest international tribunal any previous Russian-propagated allegations that Georgia started the war or committed any crimes against civilian populations.