



Chronicle: The Caucasus In the Year 2015

January	
3 January 2015	The Georgian Ministry of Defense says that Defense Minister Mindia Janelidze spent New Year's Eve with Georgian soldiers at Bagram Air Field in Afghanistan
6 January 2015	The Russian military says Azerbaijan, Russia and Turkmenistan will hold joint naval exercises in the Caspian Sea for the first time in June and July 2015
7 January 2015	Azerbaijani authorities arrest ten men accused of taking part in militant activity with connections to Syria
7 January 2015	Georgia reports 5.49 million visits by foreign citizens in 2014, a slight increase in comparison with the previous year
8 January 2015	A man sets himself on fire in Azerbaijan's capital of Baku for reasons unknown in a street where the authorities have demolished old buildings in the last few months
12 January 2015	Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas says that Estonia is a "strong supporter" of the EU visa liberalization process with Georgia during a visit to Tbilisi
13 January 2015	Protesters demand Moscow apologize after a Russian soldier is suspected of killing six members of an Armenian family near a Russian military base in the Armenian town of Gyumri
15 January 2015	Protesters demanding the handover of a Russian soldier accused of murdering six members of an Armenian family clash with the police in the Armenian town of Gyumri
16 January 2015	The Georgian Ministry of Energy "strongly" denies remarks by the breakaway region of Abkhazia that talks on the Enguri hydro power plant have taken place with Tbilisi
17 January 2015	The Georgian Orthodox Church calls in a statement for "limits to freedom of expression" in order to protect believers' rights against insult to religious feelings
20 January 2015	The EU commissioner for European neighborhood policy and enlargement Johannes Hahn opens up the possibility for Armenia to sign an association

	agreement with the EU without its free-trade component after a meeting with Armenian foreign minister Eduard Nalbandian
21 January 2015	Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev meets with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin to discuss bilateral ties and energy issues
22 January 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili meets with his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoğlu and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos
23 January 2015	The Russian State Duma ratifies a military agreement signed in November in Sochi between President Vladimir Putin and Abkhazia's de facto leader Raul Khajimba that Georgia says is illegal
23 January 2015	Georgian Interior Minister Alexander Tchikaidze resigns amid allegations of providing "protection" to two police officers involved in an operation in which two men were killed almost nine years ago
24 January 2015	A package of legislative amendments submitted to the Georgian Parliament criminalizes a wide range of activities related to illegal armed groups abroad, including "travelling abroad for the purpose of terrorism"
25 January 2015	Lithuanian Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius starts an official visit to Georgia to discuss Georgia's EU and NATO integration during talks with Georgian high officials
26 January 2015	Vakhtang Gomelauri, former deputy Interior Minister, is appointed new Interior Minister in Georgia
27 January 2015	Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif says at a press conference after meeting with his Armenian counterpart Eduard Nalbandian in Yerevan that Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union opens new opportunities for Tehran to develop relations with Russia via Armenia
28 January 2015	A bus driver in Baku is hospitalized after setting himself on fire to protest against alleged misconduct by inspectors of the Azerbaijani Transport Ministry
29 January 2015	The foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Turkmenistan hold a trilateral meeting in the Turkmen capital of Ashgabat to discuss cooperation in transport, including the project of a Afghanistan–Turkmenistan–Azerbaijan–Georgia–Turkey transport link
February	
2 February 2015	Azerbaijan launches military maneuvers involving 20,000 soldiers amid rising tensions with neighboring Armenia
4 February 2015	Russian President Vladimir Putin signs into law the ratification of an "alliance and strategic partnership" treaty between Russia and the breakaway

	region of Abkhazia that is opposed by Tbilisi
5 February 2015	NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announces that a dozen NATO allies are supporting the implementation of a package of cooperation with Georgia, including the setting up of a joint training center in Georgia, following a NATO–Georgia Commission meeting in Brussels
5 February 2015	A Baku court finds two Azerbaijani citizens guilty of cooperating with representatives of Iran’s intelligence services and sentences them to jail on the same day
6 February 2015	Russia’s permanent representative at NATO, Alexander Grushko, says that a planned NATO training center in Georgia is a “provocative step” that can damage regional security
8 February 2015	US Vice President Joe Biden meets with Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili on the sideline of the Munich security conference to discuss relations in energy and security issues with Biden urging Georgia “to keep its focus on democratic reforms”
11 February 2015	Swiss public television reveals that Azerbaijani rights activist Emin Huseynov has been sheltered in the Swiss embassy in Baku since August 2014
11 February 2015	The Georgian Interior Ministry says that the head of administration of supervisory service at the Tbilisi Mayor’s Office has been arrested on bribery charges
13 February 2015	Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko announces the appointment of former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili as head of a newly established International Advisory Council on Reforms in Ukraine
13 February 2015	Romanian Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu stresses Romania’s support for Georgia’s European and Euro–Atlantic integration during a visit to Tbilisi
16 February 2015	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian withdraws from parliament protocols on the normalization of ties and establishment of diplomatic relations with Turkey, citing Ankara’s lack of political will
16 February 2015	Russian President Vladimir Putin’s aide in charge of overseeing relations with the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Vladislav Surkov, says during a visit to Abkhazia that despite economic difficulties Moscow does not envisage cutting financial aid to the region
17 February 2015	The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland starts her Caucasus tour in Baku and meets with President Ilham Aliyev to discuss bilateral ties and the situation in the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh
17 February 2015	The Georgian Prosecutor General’s Office urges Ukrainian authorities to extradite former President Mikheil Saakashvili to Georgia along with former

	Justice Minister Zurab Adeishvili on charges of fraud and abuse of power
18 February 2015	US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland holds talks with Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian in Yerevan to discuss bilateral ties, democratic reforms in Armenia and the US role in providing a solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict
18 February 2015	Russia and the breakaway region of South Ossetia sign a border agreement in Moscow opposed by Tbilisi
19 February 2015	Armenian authorities reject claims that no request had been submitted to Moscow to ask for the transfer to an Armenian prison of a Russian soldier accused of having killed seven members of an Armenian family
19 February 2015	The Georgian Prime Minister's special representative for relations with Russia, Zurab Abashidze, says that Georgia's cooperation with NATO does not envisage the deployment of any "military infrastructure" by the Alliance on Georgian territory
21 February 2015	The Central Bank of Azerbaijan abruptly devalues the country's currency, manat, against the dollar and the euro
22 February 2015	Georgian Economy Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili says that the Georgian economy is expected to grow 2–2.5% in 2015 instead of initially forecasted 5%
23 February 2015	The Georgian presidential administration says that Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili held talks with his Ukrainian counterpart Petro Poroshenko in Kyiv and invited him to Georgia
23 February 2015	Authorities in the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh reject the release of two Azerbaijani nationals who were arrested and imprisoned last year on a number of charges, including murder
26 February 2015	Georgian Prime Minister's special representative for relations with Russia, Zurab Abashidze, and Russian deputy foreign minister, Grigory Karasin, meet in Prague to discuss humanitarian and trade issues as part of bilateral talks between the two countries launched in 2012
26 February 2015	Former Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili blames the Central Bank over the depreciation of the national currency lari
27 February 2015	Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta tells his Georgian counterpart Irakli Garibashvili at a meeting in Bucharest that Romania is a strong supporter of Georgia's EU and NATO integration
March	
2 March 2015	Georgian Foreign Minister Tamar Beruchashvili calls on Russia "to stop its aggressive policies against sovereign states" at the UN Human Rights

	Council in Geneva
4 March 2015	Former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili and adviser to Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko calls on the United States to provide Ukraine with weapons at a US Senate foreign relations committee hearing
5 March 2015	Founder of the opposition Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) Gagik Tsarukian announces his decision to leave his post and quit “active politics” at the party’s congress
5 March 2015	Top officials in Tbilisi's mayoral office resign amid a corruption scandal
6 March 2015	Georgian parliamentary chairman David Usupashvili says that Georgian-Russian relations are changing from “bad” to worse because of the situation in Ukraine
6 March 2015	Georgian energy minister Kakha Kaladze meets with Abkhaz officials to discuss rehabilitation works of the Enguri hydro power plant
7 March 2015	A court in Baku extends the pre-trial detention of Azerbaijani journalist Khadija Ismayilova by two months
10 March 2015	Georgian Economy Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili and Chinese Commerce Minister Gao Hucheng agree to launch a study on a possible bilateral free trade agreement between the two countries
10 March 2015	President Giorgi Margvelashvili convenes a special parliamentary session to discuss the stabilization of the national currency lari
10 March 2015	Opposition leader Nino Burjanadze accuses the United States of “insulting Georgia’s sovereignty” for inviting former president Mikheil Saakashvili, who is wanted by Tbilisi, to testify before the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee
11 March 2015	Azerbaijani security authorities arrest four men alleged to recruit Azerbaijani nationals to fight in Syria
11 March 2015	Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says that Russia is ready for talks on the restoration of a Russian-Georgian railway link via Abkhazia, but Tbilisi and Sukhumi need to agree on the terms
11 March 2015	Inmates of a prison in West Georgia are reportedly on hunger strike to protest the postponement of their trials
12 March 2015	The Kremlin says that Russian President Vladimir Putin has talked with his Armenian counterpart, Serzh Sarkisian, on the phone to discuss Armenia’s integration within the Eurasian Economic Union (EES)
14 March 2015	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian says that he supports constitutional reforms to switch to a parliamentary system in Armenia

15 March 2015	Hundreds of people take part in a protest in Baku to express concern over the devaluation of the manat, the Azerbaijani currency
16 March 2015	Former Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili launches a TV talk show to counter TV channel Rustavi 2 which he accuses of serving the opposition
16 March 2015	President Giorgi Margvelashvili says that he supports introducing mandatory quotas to increase the number of women in Parliament in forthcoming elections
17 March 2015	Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili attend a ceremony to mark the launch of the construction of the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) in Kars, Turkey
17 March 2015	A NATO survey team visits Georgia to develop proposals over a planned joint evaluation and training center
18 March 2015	Russian President Vladimir Putin and de facto leader of South Ossetia, Leonid Tibilov, sign an “alliance and integration treaty” in the Kremlin which gives Russia the responsibility to ensure the security of the breakaway region
19 March 2015	The US State Department welcomes a decision by the Azerbaijani authorities to release activists from jail, but says that many others still remain in prison
19 March 2015	De facto leader of South Ossetia, Leonid Tibilov, says that the region wants to join Russia, but will not take this step in the near future as there are “many concerns” about this idea
21 March 2015	Tens of thousands of people demand that the government step down during a march in Tbilisi
23 March 2015	The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry says that a contract soldier with the Nagorno Karabakh forces has defected to the Azerbaijani side
23 March 2015	Opposition leader Irakli Alasania says that his Free Democrats party will not back the United National Movement party in a no-confidence vote against the government
26 March 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili criticizes media outlets and journalists for misrepresenting the situation in Georgia as “chaos”
28 March 2015	Deputy head of the Russian Duma's Committee for CIS Affairs, Oleg Lebedev, meets with Armenian lawmakers in Yerevan and says that a Russian soldier, who is accused of killing seven members of an Armenian family, will be tried by a Russian military court in Armenia
31 March 2015	Georgian government officials snub the state of the nation address delivered by Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili in Parliament

31 March 2015	Azerbaijan expels a Human Rights Watch researcher and bars him from entering the country to attend the trial of two activists
April	
1 April 2015	The Ukrainian Prosecutor-General's Office rejects Georgia's request to extradite former President Mikheil Saakashvili, now serving as adviser in Ukraine, saying the request is politically motivated
2 April 2015	The defense ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey meet in Tbilisi to discuss military cooperation and regional peace and security
6 April 2015	A Council of Elders in Pankisi Gorge in north-east Georgia appeals to the authorities to take measures to prevent the recruitment of youngsters from the region for the fight with the Islamic State in Syria
8 April 2015	Georgian Defense Minister Mindia Janelidze appears at a hearing before lawmakers and says that the military threat from Russia remains high
9 April 2015	In reaction to an ex-convict being suspected of fatally shooting two policemen, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says that the state will be "merciless" with convicts released from jail who turn criminal again.
10 April 2015	The Vatican says that Pope Francis has met with Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili for discussions on the development of bilateral relations
12 April 2015	Pope Francis calls the massacres of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey during World War I "genocide" during a Sunday mass
14 April 2015	Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan criticizes Pope Francis for calling the mass killings of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey "genocide"
14 April 2015	The foreign ministers of Denmark, Poland and Sweden pledge support to Georgia's European integration process on a joint visit to Tbilisi, less than six weeks before the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga
15 April 2015	The European Parliament passes a resolution using the word "genocide" to refer to the massacres of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey with the Turkish Foreign Ministry saying that the resolution is an attempt to rewrite history
15 April 2015	The Georgian Economy Ministry states that Georgian and Russian civil aviation authorities have agreed to expand direct regular flights between the two countries
16 April 2015	Data released by the Georgian Central Bank show that remittances to the country declined by 22.8% in the first quarter of 2015, including a large fall in money transfers from Russia
17 April 2015	The Georgian Parliament discusses legislative amendments aimed at criminalizing participation in illegal armed groups abroad, including "calls

	for violent actions”
20 April 2015	Georgian parliament speaker Davit Usupashvili meets with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Groysman to discuss ways to enhance parliamentary cooperation between the two countries
22 April 2015	Turkey recalls its ambassador to Austria after political parties represented in the Austrian parliament issued a joint declaration calling the massacre of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey a “genocide”
23 April 2015	During an official visit to Tbilisi Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko states that Belarus supports Georgia’s territorial integrity
24 April 2015	Armenia marks the 100 th anniversary of World War I massacres of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey with French President Francois Hollande and Russian President Vladimir Putin attending the commemoration in Yerevan
24 April 2015	Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksandr Lukashevich says that Russia has a negative view of the Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in Riga in May 2015
25 April 2015	French President Francois Hollande meets with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Baku to discuss rights abuses in Azerbaijan and the conflict with Armenia over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh
27 April 2015	Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) says that an Iranian soldier, who claimed that he had faced religious discrimination, has defected to Armenia
28 April 2015	The Georgian Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection resigns, citing family reasons. A week earlier the Minister for Regional Development and Infrastructure had also resigned
29 April 2015	Georgian Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, Levan Kipiani, resigns, becoming the third member of the cabinet to resign within a week
May	
1 May 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili names parliamentary deputy Tina Khidasheli as new defense minister
4 May 2015	Georgian Foreign Minister Tamar Beruchashvili visits Germany and meets with her German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Berlin to discuss Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations and bilateral relations
4 May 2015	The Georgian Foreign Ministry summons Armenia’s ambassador over the meeting between the Armenian parliament speaker and the parliament chairman of the breakaway region of South Ossetia in Nagorno Karabakh
5 May 2015	Deputies from the parliamentary committees on EU integration of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine issue a joint declaration on inter-parliamentary

	cooperation
6 May 2015	A court in Baku finds a leading Azerbaijani opposition activist guilty of large-scale dealing in narcotics
7 May 2015	Armenia signs a trade deal with the United States in Washington aimed at boosting investments
7 May 2015	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian attends a service at the Washington National Cathedral together with US Vice President Joe Biden to commemorate the mass killings of Armenians during World War I
7 May 2015	Georgian Interior Minister Vakhtang Gomelauri tells members of parliament that a new reform proposal envisages decoupling security and intelligence agencies from the Interior Ministry and creating a separate State Security Service
8 May 2015	The Georgian Parliament approves a legislative package aimed at easing visa and migration rules that were tightened some months ago
11 May 2015	The Chinese Agriculture Minister Han Changfu meets with Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili during a visit to Tbilisi with Garibashvili stressing that the strengthening of trade and economic relations with China is of special importance to Georgia
11 May 2015	Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili meets with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg during a visit to Brussels with Stoltenberg saying that Georgia is moving closer to NATO and NATO–Georgia cooperation is “well on track”
11 May 2015	Georgian–US military exercises set to last two weeks start at the Vaziani military base in Georgia
14 May 2015	A court in Baku prolongs the pre-trial detention of Azerbaijani investigative journalist Khadija Ismayilova
14 May 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili signs a memorandum of understanding on the establishment of an Investors Council with EBRD President Suma Chakrabarti to address obstacles faced by investors in Georgia
15 May 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili meets with his Armenian counterpart Hovik Abrahamyan at the Georgian Black Sea resort of Batumi to discuss strengthening bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries
18 May 2015	The office of Abkhaz leader Raul Khajimba announces that Russian General Anatoly Khrulev, who was wounded during the August 2008 war, is named Chief of the General Staff of the armed forces in the breakaway region of Abkhazia

19 May 2015	The head of the Georgian Orthodox Church Patriarch Ilia II emphasizes during a meeting with Austrian President Heinz Fischer Georgia's European choice and says that the country will "definitely achieve" the goal of European integration
19 May 2015	An apartment building in Baku catches fire killing 15 people and injuring about 60
19 May 2015	Georgian Economy Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili visits Iran and says that an agreement was reached with Tehran to resume cooperation in energy, tourism, agriculture and education
20 May 2015	President of the European Council Donald Tusk says during the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Riga that the Summit is not about taking giant steps, but going forward "step-by-step"
21 May 2015	President of the Georgian National Bank Giorgi Kadagidze says that no additional pressure is expected on the Georgian lari in the medium term
22 May 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says that the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga was very successful for Georgia as the country is expected to get visa waivers in the Schengen area
25 May 2015	Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov holds talks with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, in Moscow to discuss the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and the strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries
25 May 2015	Business associations in Georgia say that a proposed bill that envisages transferring supervisory functions from the Georgian Central Bank to a separate agency poses a threat to the country's banking sector
26 May 2015	Georgia marks independence day with festivities
27 May 2015	Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian visits Damascus and meets with his Syrian counterpart Walid al-Muallem and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad as thousands of Syrian-Armenians having left the country since the beginning of the war have taken refuge in Lebanon and Armenia
29 May 2015	The Georgian Parliament passes a bill criminalizing participation in illegal armed groups abroad during its second reading
29 May 2015	Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili criticizes a bill removing supervisory functions on the banking sector from the Georgian National Bank while setting up a Financial Supervisory Agency
30 May 2015	Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko appoints former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili as governor of Ukraine's Odessa region, meaning that he loses Georgian citizenship after receiving Ukrainian citizenship on 29 May 2015

June	
2 June 2015	Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves stresses his country's support for Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations during an official visit in Tbilisi
5 June 2015	The IMF says it is "concerned" over a bill that would strip the Georgian National Bank of its supervisory functions on the banking sector
5 June 2015	The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) says that Azerbaijani authorities have ordered it to halt its operations and close its Baku office
7 June 2015	Chen Changzhi, a senior Chinese legislator, visits Georgia and meets with Georgian top officials while touring wineries in the Georgian region of Kakheti
10 June 2015	Georgia reintroduces one-year visa-free stay for citizens of over 100 countries after tightening visa rules nine months ago
11 June 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili meets with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev while attending the opening ceremony of the European Games in Baku
12 June 2015	The President of Armenia's Olympic Committee does not attend the opening ceremony of the European games in Baku
13 June 2015	The United States welcomes the Azerbaijani government's decision to allow opposition activist Emin Huseynov to leave the country and fly to Switzerland, but calls on the government to extend this good will to other incarcerated activists
14 June 2015	At least 12 people die and more are missing after heavy flooding in Tbilisi's Saburtalo and Vake districts, with the Tbilisi zoo also flooded
15 June 2015	Georgia declares a national day of mourning for flood victims
15 June 2015	A native of Pankisi Gorge in Georgia is arrested on charges of recruiting for the Islamic State
15 June 2015	The body of a Russian soldier is found near a Russian military base in Gyumri, Armenia, with Russian media speculating that he was killed by a fellow soldier
17 June 2015	Demonstrators in Armenia protest a 16 percent hike in electricity prices
17 June 2015	A tiger which escaped the flooded zoo in Tbilisi is shot after attacking and killing a man in the city center
20 June 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says that the government is planning measures to increase safety along the Vere river following deadly flooding

23 June 2015	Armenian police use water cannons and force to end a protest in Yerevan where demonstrators criticized a 16 percent increase in electricity prices
24 June 2015	The IMF, EBRD, Asian Development Bank and World Bank send a joint letter to Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili requesting that he not strip the National Bank of its supervisory functions over the banking sector
25 June 2015	Georgian Defense Minister Tina Khidasheli visits NATO headquarters in Brussels for a planned meeting of defense ministers
26 June 2015	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian announces that the case of a Russian soldier accused of killing seven members of an Armenian family is handed over to Armenian investigators
27 June 2015	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian vows to provide financial help to Armenians to cope with a planned increase in electricity prices amid protests in the capital Yerevan
28 June 2015	Thousands of demonstrators protesting rising electricity prices defy police's orders to clear Yerevan's central Baghramian Avenue
29 June 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says in a newspaper interview that he will always support introducing a constitutional clause that defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman
29 June 2015	Georgian Foreign Minister Tamar Beruchashvili meets with Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei on the sidelines of a meeting of Eastern Partnership countries in Minsk
30 June 2015	The Georgian Parliament supports a proposal that would repeal imprisonment for the possession and personal use of small amounts of marijuana
July	
1 July 2015	A court in Azerbaijan sentences 10 people to jail for joining the Islamic State
1 July 2015	Russia says that Georgia's NATO integration is a "security threat" and in conflict with the August 2008 ceasefire agreement during the 32 nd round of Geneva talks
2 July 2015	Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov pays a first official visit to Georgia and discusses energy projects with Georgian leaders, including a potential transit route for Turkmen gas to European markets via the South Caucasus
2 July 2015	The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry protests plans by the leader of the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh, Bako Sahakian, to visit London
3 July 2015	In a second reading, the Georgian Parliament passes a legislative package envisaging the decoupling of intelligence and security agencies from the

	Interior Ministry
5 July 2015	A missing tiger from Tbilisi's zoo is found dead three weeks after the zoo flooding
6 July 2015	The Armenian police forcibly clear the last demonstrators on Baghramian Avenue in the capital Yerevan
8 July 2015	Sixteen U.S. senators write a letter to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev citing concerns about a crackdown on civil society in Azerbaijan
8 July 2015	Georgia holds joint military exercises at the Vaziani base outside Tbilisi together with five NATO members
8 July 2015	The Russian-owned firm Electric Networks of Armenia (ENA) is fined by the Armenian Public Services Regulatory Commission for violation of consumer rights following demonstrations in Yerevan and other cities against electricity price hikes
11 July 2015	Georgian opposition politician and former Parliament Speaker Nino Burjanadze meets with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin and State Duma speaker Sergey Naryshkin during a visit to Moscow
12 July 2015	The Georgian Prime Minister's special representative for relations with Russia, Zurab Abashidze, says that recent activity by Russian border guard forces placing banners to mark the "border" with South Ossetia is a "provocation"
13 July 2015	European Council President Donald Tusk postpones his planned visit to Armenia and Georgia due to the Greek debt crisis
13 July 2015	Georgian Agriculture Minister Otar Danelia meets with his Chinese counterpart Han Changfu in Beijing to discuss cooperation between the two countries, including exports of Georgian wine to China
15 July 2015	Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili signs a bill on the decoupling of security and intelligence agencies from the Interior Ministry into law
15 July 2015	The Special Commission on Constitutional Reforms releases draft articles of a draft constitution for Armenia that would transform the country into a parliamentary republic
17 July 2015	SOCAR Georgia Petroleum and Sun Petroleum Georgia say that they will challenge fines imposed by the Competition Agency following accusations of price-fixing
20 July 2015	European Council President Donald Tusk starts his visit to the three South Caucasus countries in Tbilisi and notes that Georgia is "definitely a front-runner" in the Eastern Partnership program, while condemning recent demarcation signposts at the South Ossetian administrative boundary line as a "provocation"

22 July 2015	Georgian parliament speaker Davit Usupashvili says that Georgia expects more from NATO to speed up the process of the country's integration into the Alliance following a meeting with NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow in Brussels
24 July 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says that the government will subsidize increased electricity tariffs from 1 August for vulnerable families
27 July 2015	Dozens of people resume protest against electricity price hikes in the central square of Yerevan
27 July 2015	The brother-in-law of Azerbaijani activist Emin Milli, Nazim Agabeyov, is arrested in Baku on drug charges
29 July 2015	A group of six Iranian lawmakers start a visit to Georgia to study reforms that have helped the country ease regulations and facilitate business activity
August	
1 August 2015	Armenian Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamian says that money from the sale of one of the country's power stations could be used to subsidize an increase in electricity prices
3 August 2015	Ukraine's state security service denies reports on declaring Georgian opposition politician Nino Burjanadze persona non grata in Ukraine
5 August 2015	The Georgian Prime Minister's special representative for relations with Russia, Zurab Abashidze, says that it would be a wrong decision if Russia decided to reinstate trade restrictions on Georgian products
8 August 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says that "peace has no alternative" on the seventh anniversary of the Georgian-Russian war
9 August 2015	Iranian Parliament speaker Ali Larijani says at a meeting with Georgian MPs in Tehran that the Iran nuclear deal has opened a "new chapter" that will encourage political and economic cooperation between the two countries
11 August 2015	The Azerbaijani police arrests a football player on charges of not reporting a crime in the stage of its planning in relation to the beating of a journalist to death
12 August 2015	A Russian military court in Armenia sentences a Russian soldier accused of killing an Armenian family to ten years in prison
13 August 2015	A Baku court sentences Azerbaijani human rights activists Leyla Yunus to 8 and a half years in prison and her husband Arif Yunus to seven years on charges of economic crimes
17 August 2015	The Georgian parliament passes a controversial banking law that foresees transferring banking supervision responsibilities from Georgia's National

	Bank to a newly created agency
19 August 2015	Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili says in reference to Russian military exercises in the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia that “it is unacceptable to carry out military maneuvers on occupied Georgian territory”
22 August 2015	Azerbaijani police clashes with protestors in the town of Mingachevir following the death of a young man after he was questioned by the local police
24 August 2015	Azerbaijan and the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh claim “enemy casualties” after an outbreak of violence
26 August 2015	NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg makes a two-days visit to Georgia to open a joint military training center for NATO and Georgia
27 August 2015	The Russian Foreign Ministry says that the opening of a joint NATO–Georgia training center outside of Tbilisi is a “serious destabilizing factor” in the region
29 August 2015	The Georgian TV station Imedi announces that it suspends its political talk shows from Autumn
September	
1 September 2015	A Baku court sentences Azerbaijani journalist Khadija Ismayilova to seven and a half years in prison on charges including tax evasion
1 September 2015	Armenian police clash with protesters amid demonstrations against energy price hikes in Yerevan
1 September 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili announces that Economy Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili will replace Tamar Beruchashvili as Foreign Minister
3 September 2015	The Georgian Parliament overturns a presidential veto on a package of bills that transfer supervisory functions on the banking sector from Georgian National Bank to a newly created agency
4 September 2015	Norway’s Foreign Minister Børge Brende says in Tbilisi that Georgia can rely on the support of Nordic and Baltic states, including during the forthcoming NATO summit
7 September 2015	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian secures 200 million USD during a visit to Russia to be used to modernize the Armenian military as well as a 25 USD gas price cut
8 September 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili meets with Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Erlan Abdyldaev during a stopover in Bishkek on the way to an

	official visit in China
9 September 2015	Georgian Defense Minister Tina Khidasheli starts a tour of European countries, including Poland, the Baltic States and the United Kingdom, as part of an effort to “consolidate” support for Georgia ahead of the NATO summit in Warsaw next year
10 September 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili meets with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on the sideline of the World Economic Forum in the Chinese port city of Dalian to discuss launching free trade talks between the two countries
11 September 2015	Azerbaijan cancels a visit by a European Commission delegation citing a European Parliament resolution that condemns the country’s human rights situation
12 September 2015	Armenian police in the capital Yerevan use force to clear demonstrators protesting recent electricity price hikes
14 September 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili slams a protest by grape growers over low prices in Georgia’s eastern region of Kakheti as a “provocation” by the opposition United National Movement party
15 September 2015	Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev criticizes a European Parliament resolution that condemns Azerbaijan’s human rights situation during a joint press conference with Czech President Milos Zeman in Baku
15 September 2015	The head of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia, Kęstutis Jankauskas, meets with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin in Moscow as part of the first visit of a EUMM head to Russia since 2011
17 September 2015	Former mayor of Tbilisi and one of the leaders of the United National Movement opposition party, Gigi Ugulava, receives a prison sentence of 4.5 years for mispending public funds while serving as mayor
22 September 2015	A taxi driver in the Azerbaijani city of Sumqayit dies following a self-immolation to protest alleged misconduct by local police in the seventh self-immolation protest since the beginning of 2014
25 September 2015	Georgian Energy Minister Kakha Kaladze meets with chief executive of Russia’s Gazprom Alexei Miller in Brussels to discuss cooperation in the gas sector
25 September 2015	Armenian police say that three civilians have been killed by gunfire from Azerbaijani forces in villages near the two countries’ border
26 September 2015	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian tells a government commission that Azerbaijan is guilty of a “blatant violation of the cease-fire” signed in 1994 to end the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict
28 September 2015	Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili signs a bill into law that introduces new rules for electing the chief prosecutor

30 September 2015	Foreign Ministers of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine hold a joint meeting with US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the sideline of the UN General Assembly to discuss “security challenges and regional cooperation”
October	
1 October 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says that Georgia’s “future is bright” during a speech before the UN General Assembly, while stating Georgia’s NATO aspirations and mentioning developing “strong relations” with China
5 October 2015	The Armenian parliament votes to hold a referendum to change the constitution in order to introduce a parliamentary republic whereby the president will no longer be elected by direct vote, but by parliament
5 October 2015	Opposition groups protest against proposed changes to the Armenian constitution outside of the Parliament in the capital Yerevan, fearing that these changes would allow President Serzh Sarkisian to remain in power
5 October 2015	A court in the Georgian town of Kutaisi orders the pretrial detention of three activists of the United National Movement opposition party over an incident involving a confrontation with a lawmaker of the Georgian Dream party
8 October 2015	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian signs a decree setting 6 December 2015 as the date for a national referendum on the country’s planned constitutional reform
8 October 2015	NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg says that Georgia is making progress on its path to NATO integration during a press conference following a meeting with Georgian Defense Minister Tina Khidasheli and Georgian Foreign Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili in Brussels
9 October 2015	Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Davit Dondua says that Georgia is not likely to be offered a NATO membership action plan (MAP) at the NATO’s summit in Warsaw next year
10 October 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili meets with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev during an unannounced visit to Baku to discuss bilateral cooperation and regional security
11 October 2015	Georgian Energy Minister Kakha Kaladze says that Georgia will consider gas supplies from Russian gas company Gazprom to add to what the country is already receiving if the offer is commercially viable
12 October 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili congratulates Alexander Lukashenko on his re-election as President of Belarus, saying that he is confident that friendly relations between the two countries will further develop
13 October 2015	The chairman of the Azerbaijani Central Bank says at a parliamentary session that the country is considering a possible free floating exchange rate

	for the national currency, manat
14 October 2015	Data released by the National Bank of Georgia show that money transfers from abroad to the country in the first nine months of 2015 have declined by more than 26.7% year-on-year
16 October 2015	Leaders of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), in which Armenia and Azerbaijan are members, sign a statement on combating international terrorism and an agreement on military cooperation at a summit in Kazakhstan
16 October 2015	Russian President Vladimir Putin says that the CIS member states could create a joint border force, citing the critical situation in Afghanistan
17 October 2015	Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev dismisses National Security Minister Eldar Mahmudov, who served since 2004
19 October 2015	The leader of the breakaway region of South Ossetia, Leonid Tibilov, says that he plans to initiate steps for a referendum on joining the Russian Federation
20 October 2015	Seven officials with the National Security Ministry in Azerbaijan are arrested on charges of abuse of power following the dismissal of the National Security Minister
20 October 2015	Chief of the General Staff and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, General Viktor Muzhenko, visits Georgia and meets with Chief of the General Staff of the Georgian Armed Forces, Major General Vakhtang Kapanadze, in Tbilisi to discuss military cooperation between the two countries
21 October 2015	The head of the Georgian Rustavi 2 television channel, Nika Gvaramia, accuses the Georgian government of blackmailing and threatening him if he does not “step aside” from his position
24 October 2015	A Georgian leader of the opposition United National Movement (UNM) party, Giga Bokeria, is questioned by officials of the State Security Service in connection to an alleged “conspiracy to overthrow” the government
27 October 2015	Former Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili speaks of the need to diversify gas supplies in Georgia through purchasing more gas from Russian state company Gazprom and increasing transit of Iranian gas
29 October 2015	Wiretapped recordings emerge of two phone conversations by former Georgian President and current governor of the Odessa region, Mikheil Saakashvili, in which he discusses the need to “defend” the Rustavi 2 television channel through “physical confrontation”
30 October 2015	Rustavi 2 television channel head Nika Gvaramia says that he will no longer call for a rally of viewers in defense of the channel following the release of wiretapped recordings of former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili

	calling for defending Rustavi 2
November	
1 November 2015	Ruling New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) claims victory in the country's parliamentary elections which were boycotted by opposition parties
2 November 2015	Central Election Commission (CEC) chief Mazahir Panahov says that the ruling New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) has won the majority of votes in the parliamentary elections of 1 November in Azerbaijan with a voter turnout of under 56 percent
5 November 2015	Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev meets with Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili during a visit in Tbilisi and pledges the "strategic partnership" and the further development of friendly relations between the two countries
6 November 2015	Nine civil society organizations in Georgia release a statement condemning the ruling of a Tbilisi court to replace the top management of the television channel Rustavi 2 as "unlawful"
10 November 2015	EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini praises Georgia's "good work" in implementing the visa liberalization action plan during a visit to Tbilisi
12 November 2015	Human rights defender Arif Yunus is released from jail in Baku due to ill health, but is not allowed to leave the country
16 November 2015	The opposition United National Movement party (UNM) launches the start of a campaign to increase the monthly pension by 50 Georgian laris to 210 Georgian laris from next year
17 November 2015	Deputy Head of Georgia's State Security Service, Levan Izoria, says that although Georgia is not on the list of countries with a high risk of terrorist attacks, threats are "treated seriously"
19 November 2015	Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin hails direct dialogue with Georgia following a meeting with the Georgian Prime Minister's special representative for relations with Russia, Zurab Abashidze, in Prague
20 November 2015	Protesters rally in the Armenian capital of Yerevan against constitutional changes that would transform the country into a parliamentary republic
22 November 2015	The Georgian State Security Service says they have arrested a Georgian man upon his return from Turkey on terrorism charges
24 November 2015	Access to at least two pro-Islamic State websites in Georgian language is blocked
26 November 2015	Georgian Interior Minister Giorgi Mgebrishvili meets with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Baku to discuss cooperation on regional security

	and the fight against organized crime and terrorism
27 November 2015	Village elders call for an investigation into a police raid in the Nardaran settlement in Azerbaijan on 26 November in which two police officers and four suspected militants were killed in an attack against a “criminal gang” planning terrorist acts according to official sources
27 November 2015	Deputy Head of Georgian State Security Service Levan Izoria says that “up to 50 Georgian citizens” are fighting with extremist groups in Syria, but that the flow of fighters from the country to Syria has declined
December	
1 December 2015	Protesters in Armenia’s capital of Yerevan rally against planned constitutional changes that would transform the country into a parliamentary democracy
1 December 2015	The Georgian State Security Service says that four people have been arrested on suspicion of having links to the Islamic State
2 December 2015	Georgian Defense Minister Tina Khidasheli meets Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Baku to discuss strategic cooperation, including the security of pipelines running from Azerbaijan to Turkey via Georgia
3 December 2015	Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says in Baku that Turkey and Azerbaijan have agreed to speed up the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline project (TANAP) in order to complete it before 2018
4 December 2015	Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili signs a decree terminating the Georgian citizenship of former President Mikheil Saakashvili, who is now governor of the Odessa region in Ukraine and has been granted Ukrainian citizenship
6 December 2015	A referendum is held in Armenia about a proposal to switch from a presidential to a parliamentary system of government. The referendum passed with 66.2% of the vote.
6 December 2015	Two persons died and 29 workers are declared missing after an oil rig, owned by Azerbaijani state oil company SOCAR, catches fire on 4 December
9 December 2015	A retired military officer is arrested in Armenia on charges of spying for Azerbaijani secret services
10 December 2015	Police in Yerevan prevent demonstrators protesting the results of a referendum on constitutional reforms from putting up a tent in the city’s Liberty Square
10 December 2015	Georgian Economy Minister Dimitri Kumsishvili and China’s International Trade Representative, Deputy Minister of Commerce Zhong Shan, sign a memorandum of understanding to launch negotiations on a free trade

	agreement between the two countries
11 December 2015	Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili visits Ashgabat, Turkmenistan's capital, to participate in an international conference marking 20 years of the country's neutrality
13 December 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says that the arrival of a first container train from China's port of Lianyungang to Tbilisi en route to Istanbul is a landmark event for the country
16 December 2015	The Council of Europe launches an official probe into Azerbaijan's compliance with the European Convention on Human Rights
16 December 2015	The number of prisoners serving life terms in Armenia and on hunger strike to demand that their cases be reviewed reaches 35
17 December 2015	Defense ministers of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey hold a trilateral meeting in Istanbul to discuss strategic cooperation and regional stability in the Black Sea and Caucasus region
18 December 2015	The European Commission says it will propose to the EU-member states to allow visa-free travel for Georgian citizens since Georgia has fulfilled all the benchmarks of its visa liberalization action plan
19 December 2015	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian and his Azerbaijani counterpart, Ilham Aliyev, meet in Bern in an attempt to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict
21 December 2015	The central bank in Azerbaijan announces its decision to abandon its currency peg and float the national currency, manat, with the manat falling by nearly 48 percent against the U.S. dollar following the announcement
22 December 2015	The Russian Foreign Ministry announces that visa requirements are eased for Georgian citizens starting from 23 December 2015
23 December 2015	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili announces his resignation on live television, but does not give a specific reason to explain his decision
23 December 2015	Armenia, Georgia, Iran and Russia agree to work on the development of a power transmission system to foster electricity trading between the four countries during a meeting of energy ministers of Armenia, Georgia and Iran with the chief executive of Russia's power distribution grids company, Rosseti, in Yerevan
24 December 2015	The National Bank of Georgia (NBG) sells 20 million US dollars at a foreign currency auction to support the national currency lari in its ninth intervention this year
29 December 2015	Russian presidential aide Vladislav Surkov meets with leaders of the breakaway region of Abkhazia and discusses Abkhazia's relations with Turkey

30 December 2015	The Georgian Parliament confirms Giorgi Kvirikashvili as the new Prime Minister, replacing Irakli Garibashvili and becoming Georgia's third Prime Minister since the Georgian Dream coalition took power in 2012
------------------	--

Source: Caucasus Analytical Digest 69–80, <http://www.laender-analysen.de/cad/>