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BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The committees will consider the amendments to the Law of Georgia

Parliament to consider changes that allow government to impose restrictions



According to the PM, we still need restrictions, but we don't need the extension of curfew and state of emergency.

on Public Health in an expedited manner. The decision was made by the Bureau of the Parliament at the May 19 sitting. The Parliamentary Health Committee was named the leading committee.

According to the authors of the bill, in order to ensure that after the abolition of the state of emergency, given the challenges of the mass spread of coronavirus,

the processes do not become unmanageable and the Georgian government and other relevant agencies still have the opportunity to take appropriate measures, it is necessary to adopt and implement established norms in time.

Under the changes, the definition of quarantine measures will be expanded and the term 'isolation' will be specified.

Members of the United National Movement and European Georgia oppose the bill. They believe that with such changes, the role of parliament will be abolished and the government will make the decision to impose restrictions.

Local watchdog, Transparency International Georgia (TIG) words the plot of the bill differently, saying the proposed amendment suggests that 'the restriction of some basic human rights in the form of quarantine measures will be possible even without declaring a state of emergency', whilst the rules and scope of the restriction shall be determined by the Government. According to the ngo, the draft law contradicts the Constitution of Georgia and provides for the restriction of basic human rights by the government, which, according to the Constitution, should be restricted only in case of emergency, and by a decision of the Parliament.

Legislative initiative of the majority members suggests that under the quarantine measures may be restricted: The right to operate public institutions; The right of persons to move; The right to property, labor, professional or economic activity; Gathering of individuals to hold social events.

These rights, according to the Constitution of Georgia, are basic human rights and the basis and rules for their restriction are defined by the Constitution. E.g. Freedom of labor, professional and economic activity, and freedom of assembly may be restricted only by the President's



TIG says it is unconstitutional to carry out restrictive measures without declaring a state of emergency.

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Two opposing views of reality around the epidemic

By MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The Coronavirus epidemic continues in Georgia and, as in other countries, has created a new reality here, but with two different visions of reality - one is the one of the government and the other is the vision of the opposition. Most importantly, these two perceptions of the existing reality are radically different from each other.

According to the government's vision of the situation in Georgia, the fight against the epidemic is successful, the increase in the number of patients as a result of government measures is not large, and the country's health care system is successfully coping with the current scale of the epidemic. As for the losses caused to the economy and the population due to the restrictions, an anti-crisis program has been developed and it will help both the individual strata of the population and the business, depending on the country's capabilities. In addition, there is a schedule for phasing out the restrictions - at two-week intervals. Neither will the upcoming parliamentary elections be in danger, and they will be held within the set timeframe, under the new electoral system, which is provided for in the agreement reached with the opposition on March 8th.

According to the opposition, the situation is quite difficult. Authorities made mistakes in the fight against the epidemic, no mass testing was conducted and we do not know the actual number of infected people, doc-

tors are not properly provided with equipment and no training has been conducted for them, which is why the number of infected medical personnel is very high. The anti-crisis program presented by the government leaves a significant number of citizens in need completely unattended, and those who help, the amount provided is insufficient. In addition, the government is using the anti-crisis program for election purposes and will use it to attract voters' votes in the fall and to fund its supporters. The opposition accuses the government of incurring a number of spending and procurement schemes in the fight against the epidemic. "The government is using the state of emergency to pursue political and corrupt goals and is already actively involved in the pre-election campaign," the opposition said.

In short, the allegations made against the government are large-scale. In response, the government accuses the opposition of populism and hostility to the country's interests.

Authorities said the state of emergency in the country could continue for some time after May 22. The opposition strongly opposes this and believes that it will have catastrophic consequences for the country's economy. The opposition is demanding the opening of the economy and the abolition of 'absurd restrictions,' including the curfew. "Unless the government is not an enemy of its people, it won't continue the state of emergency," said Davit Chichinadze.

The opposition believes the government used the epidemic to make the parliament dysfunctional; it has stopped working. The ruling team found itself in a comfortable situation amid the constraints caused by the epidemic, it works in an environment where there is no competitor, operating without parliamentary control. The United National Movement (UNM) has said it will end its boycott of parliamentary sessions and called for a resumption of parliamentary sessions. "Ivanishvili, who is in isolation, has practically abolished the parliament," the United National Movement said. The United National Movement (UNM) demanded on May 29 that Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia attend a plenary session of parliament. Opposition groups called for an end to poverty alleviation in the country, but for the government to address the plight of those affected by the state of emergency.

The Georgian Dream considers the accusations of suspending the activities of the Parliament unfounded. Mamuka Mdinaradze claimed that it has actually become more active in the sense of crisis and healthcare management and economy. As for the summoning of the Prime Minister to the Parliament, the Georgian Dream considered it populism, as Gakharia has to deliver a speech in the Parliament on June 1st anyway.

Opposition groups called for a boycott of the parliamentary elections. "We must not allow the government to adjust the date of the

elections to its own comfort," the opposition said. It seems that the government is not going to postpone the elections. The date of the parliamentary elections has already been announced - October 31, which was mentioned by the former Speaker of the Parliament Irakli Kobakhidze.

He said that if the state of emergency became necessary, constitutional changes would be

possible in July. According to the Constitution of Georgia, parliamentary elections will be held on the last Saturday of October in the calendar year of the expiration of the term of office of the Parliament. However, the date of the elections is set by the President of Georgia no later than 60 days before the elections.

(Translated by Mariam Mchedlidze)

UNDP helps vulnerable IDPs to weather the pandemic

IDPs in collective centers receive COVID-19 information, protective gear and other support

TBILISI, 19 May 2020 – Recognising that the COVID-19 pandemic poses development threats to society and hits the most vulnerable, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched a five-month initiative aimed at assisting up to 5,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in 100 collective centres in Georgia's Shida Kartli, Imereti and Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti regions. With USD 60,000 in funding from UNDP's global Rapid Response Facility, the project is being run in partnership with the Georgian Charity Humanitarian Centre "Abkhazeti" (CHCA).

"Internally displaced persons are at heightened risk of contracting COVID-19, especially those who live in crowded collective centres with limited access to water, sanitation and healthcare services," said UNDP Head **Louisa Vinton**. "We are providing immediate aid to the most vulnerable IDP communities, in an effort to ensure that older people and those with health issues are not left behind in preparedness and response to the crisis."

Since April 2020, UNDP has assessed the needs of the selected collective centres and kicked off a series of activities to assist their residents. 3,000 information flyers and 500 posters have been distributed, informing internally displaced persons about coronavirus threats and preventive measures. Indoor and outdoor premises of the centres have been disinfected and protective gear and sanitary supplies, including masks and sanitisers, have been provided to the residents.

In the coming months, UNDP will continue to assist economically vulnerable IDP families, supplying them with food and hygiene kits. Up to 70 extremely vulnerable older people living on their own will receive home-care services that will be provided by the Charity Humanitarian Centre "Abkhazeti" directly or through the respective state and non-state service providers.

In addition, UNDP will provide assistance the recently established Multi-Sectoral Coordination Platform, which was established to coordinate the COVID-19 response in the IDP collective centres and address the most pressing challenges faced by IDP communities.

Assistance to internally displaced persons is part of UNDP's wider response to the pandemic. It echoes the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals by ensuring that response and recovery "leave no one behind," especially the poor and vulnerable.

Parliament to consider changes that allow government to impose restrictions

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decree, which is approved by the Parliament of Georgia. "The Constitution does not provide for any other grounds for restriction, and therefore the restriction of these rights without a state of emergency is unconstitutional," says TIG.

Organization also notes that the law project equals quarantine measures with the state of emergency and gov't not only organizes different activities and

operating of institutions/individuals, but imposes restrictions and determines the rules for the use of quarantine measures.

TIG announces that the restrictions on this scale of basic human rights should only be made in cases of extreme necessity, and that is why the Constitution provides for restrictions on the rights of assembly, labor, professional and economic activities only in a state of emergency and war.

NGO's third concern is 'ignoring the role of parliament in restricting basic human freedoms,' since when declaring a state of emergency, the role of parliament is decisive and it is the authority of the people's representative body in the Parliamentary Republic to approve the state

of emergency and the extent of the restriction of rights in this situation.

"The exercise of parliamentary control by parliament in a state of emergency is of particular importance, as the risk of disproportionate human rights violations is greater in this situation," says TIG statement.

It is also underscored that after the state of emergency was declared on March 21st, 2020, Parliament has not in fact exercised parliamentary control for 2 months and has not discussed the proportionality of human rights restrictions.

Organization says this project completely excludes the participation of the Parliament in this process, whilst its role is especially important in a criti-

cal situation, and it is particularly dangerous for the democratic development of the country to illegally transfer the powers established by the constitution to the government.

Statement also notes that in this election year, it is especially important to ensure human rights, including freedom of movement and assembly, thus calls on the Parliament of Georgia not to support the proposed bill, which 'will pose a significant threat to the democratic governance of the country and will unconstitutionally restrict the basic rights and freedoms provided for in the Constitution of Georgia and international acts.'

The Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia yesterday spoke about the need to maintain certain restrictions and noted that this is due to the epidemiological situation. According to him, it will be irrational

to remove all restrictions at once, putting every citizen and economic recovery at risk: "Therefore, we need restrictions, but at the same time we do not need a state of emergency and a curfew. That's why we appealed to the Parliament to make these restrictions reasonable, effective and aimed at specific goals," Gakharia said, adding that each step should be extremely careful and thoughtful.

PM emphasized that today the government is trying and effectively finding a balance between managing the risks of the epidemic, reviving the economy and maintaining a vibrant political process.

If the bill is passed, the legislative change will take effect on May 23rd, 2020, which coincides with the lifting of the state of emergency that has been declared throughout Georgia since March 21st.

Weather

Wednesday, May 20

Day Clear
High: 25°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 13°C

Thursday, May 21

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 30°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 17°C

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UN to allocate \$1 mln to support COVID-19 response in Georgia



Georgia is one of the first 46 countries to receive \$1 million from the United Nations to protect vulnerable groups from COVID-19 shocks.

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The United Nations has allocated \$1 million to help Georgia respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the UN Office in Georgia, funding will help vulnerable communities deal with the pandemic.

Georgia is on the list of the top 46 countries that will benefit from funding and response from the United Nations COVID-19 Trust Fund to protect the most vulnerable groups from the socio-economic shock caused by the pandemic. The inter-agency finance mechanism was launched by the UN Secretary-General, Antyonio Guterres on 31 March 2020, to help countries mitigate the emergency and bolster the post-crisis social and economic recovery.

Mid May the Trust Fund allocated \$1 million to a group of UN agencies in Georgia to respond to the health crisis and deal with the negative socio-economic consequences of a pandemic of vulnerable groups.

The head of the Government Administration Natia Mezvrishvili thanked partners for assistance: "We appreciate all

the support from international partners to ensure the smoother transition from the global pandemic to a post-crisis reality," she said.

Sabine Machl, UN Resident Coordinator in Georgia thanked Governments of the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and Denmark who have provided a first contribution to enable the work of the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund that helps support Georgia's response to the pandemic and its impacts on human lives and livelihoods.

According to her, the UN is responding both to the immediate needs of the health system, in particular the front-line workers, as well as longer term needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in society and in this programme with a specific focus on children and the older people.

The focus of this project is the provision of critical hygiene and medical supplies and equipment for healthcare and social and public-sector workers, and their beneficiaries. The support to vulnerable rural households and older people to withstand the

shock is also an important component. The project also has a goal to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene in conflict-affected areas, and provide vital support to municipalities and village representatives to deliver critical social services.

A key area of the UN team's support will be also to address the specific vulnerabilities of older people and support children as well as pregnant and nursing women, providing them with essential health services, education and child protection services including prevention of violence against children as well as risk communication and community engagement.

This assistance is part of UN's broader COVID-19 response in Georgia to help the authorities respond effectively to this unprecedented crisis. Since the first case of Covid-19 was detected in Georgia on 26 February, the UN country team has supported the Government to prepare and address immediate health needs as well as potential social and economic impacts with a focus on those furthest behind: women, children, older people, refugees, migrants and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.

UNDP Head in Georgia Louisa Vinton says Georgia's response to the pandemic has undoubtedly saved lives and it will be studied in the future as a best practice.

"But here, as everywhere in the world, COVID-19 has also exposed social vulnerabilities and economic imbalances. The UNDP therefore welcomes the resolve of Georgia's leaders to go beyond 'business as usual' to design a recovery plan that builds on the positives and neutralizes the negatives to map out a path to a green, fair and inclusive future", said Vinton.

UNDP has adjusted its annual \$20 million (about €18,482,528) programme for

In June, Adjara Group opens your favorite restaurants, cafes, and hotels

We wish to thank our guests, friends, and partners for their ongoing support and loyalty. We miss you very much and we are looking forward to seeing you soon again.

It is our great pleasure to announce that from June 7th, we will be welcoming you at Lolita, Cafe Stamba, and outdoor restaurants of Rooms Hotel Tbilisi and Rooms Hotel Kokhta as well as at Fabrika's courtyard. And from June 15th, Rooms Hotel Kazbegi and Rooms Hotel Kokhta will open for guests again.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created many challenges for all of us and now more than ever, we must care for each other. The well-being of our guests and employees is of paramount importance to us. Therefore, we have been working tirelessly on new health and safety regulations to ensure a safe and protected environment for everyone.

Adjara Group has been actively involved in addressing challenges caused by coronavirus through which the company gained significant experience and knowledge. As you may know, Adjara Group's largest hotel, Holiday Inn Tbilisi, became a quarantine zone for returning citizens for a mandatory self-isolation period. Moreover, our restaurants, strictly adhering to all necessary safety standards, were operating take-away services.



Indeed, we've been able to overcome many difficulties by actively working and fully complying with the instructions of the Georgian government, World Health Organization, as well as the World Tourism Organisation. We believe that together we will overcome today's challenges and continue to create unique hospitality and culinary experiences in the spirit of our traditional warmth and energy.

Georgia to assist in the pandemic response.

Support has been provided in informing vulnerable groups and remote communities about COVID-19 risks and prevention, supplying Russian-occupied Abkhazia and IDP (internally displaced persons) communities with protective gear, medical supplies, training and grants to protect rural livelihoods.

Besides that, on 1st of May, a loan agreement was signed between Georgia and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to implement a rapid response project against COVID 19. Within the framework of the loan agreement, the IBRD will allocate €73.1 million in loans.

Loan duration is 26 years (including preferential period 13 years); Interest rate type is Euribor-based fixed margin (as of April 30, 2020, Euribor is - 0.170%, fixed interest rate is 1.25%, interest rate is automatically fixed after borrowing); Single administration fee as well as the loan liability tax will be both 0.25%, which were accrued on the outstanding loan amount.

According to the explanatory note, the aim of the project is to prevent, identify and respond to the threats posed by the COVID 19 pandemic in Georgia.

The project consists of 3 parts and includes support for Georgia's healthcare sector for rapid response to COVID 19, strengthening the epidemiological capacity of public health cen-

ters, increasing general testing and expanding access to critical medical devices and equipment; Also, directly or indirectly provides social and financial support to COVID 19 affected families and individuals through a targeted social assistance program and temporary financial assistance.

The project is implemented by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs. The project completion date is April 30, 2022.

Accordingly €29 million will be spent on healthcare, on measures against the spread of the coronavirus, as well as the costs associated with treating infected individuals and, if necessary, equipment needed for healthcare infrastructure. Meanwhile, €44 million will be allocated for social assistance.

Deputy Financial Minister Giorgi Kakauridze said that this amount of money is not enough to meet all the challenges caused by the coronavirus, but he announced that another loan agreement will be signed this week with the Asian Development Bank that will provide an additional €100 million.

In addition, a loan agreement was signed between Georgia and the IBRD on March 30, € 45 million (€ 150 million) financial resource will be allocated to the country's state budget. It will be a 25-year loan, with a 14-year 'grace period' and incorporates a 1.25% annual percentage rate (APR).



The project 'Assisting the Georgian Government and Local Communities in Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19' will be implemented by UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA in collaboration with all other UN agencies resident in Georgia. Photo: MarketWatch

David Kalandadze - *Country of Liquid Sun*



Kalandadze is ancient Georgian family name, The main branch of this family lived in the village of Khidistavi in the Chokhatauri district from which they migrated to neighbouring villages and their dwelling places named after them: Kalandadze district in Erketi and Ianeuli, Kalandadze river-side forest in Tolebi, Kalandadze place in Intabueti and Jvartsma (presently Chaisubani). Kaiandiadze pasture in Kvabgha, Kalandadze graveyard in Tavpanta and Sakvavistke (presently Dablatsikhe) and Kalandadze spring in Bukistsikhe, amongst others.

David Kalandadze was born in 1889 in the village of Khidistavi Chokhatauri district, Ozurgeti region, Kutaisi Province. Khidistavi, which is located on the Chokhatauri-Bakhmaro road, is distinguished by its geographic location and remarkable population.

After finishing the Khidistavi primary school, David Kalandadze continued his studies at the Kutaisi Gymnasium, David's father, who was a well-to-do man, was anxious to provide his children with a good education. After finishing the gymnasium, David Kalandadze left for Kharkiv where he was enrolled in the Pharmaceutical Department of the city's University and studied chemistry and the technology of food products as well as the French and Latin

languages. After graduating from the University, he undertook practical activities in Kharkiv and worked at various private pharmacies in the city for certain period of time. In 1915, at the age of 26, he returned to his homeland.

David Kalandadze's return to Georgia coincided with the beginning of the First World War. The boundless Russian Empire was involved in the War and, on the order of Nicholas II, men were called to the army on a mass scale. The War made life stricter and also held it back. Educated people were required to work in various positions. Kalandadze worked as chemist and pharmacist for several years at various places, having acquired extensive practice, and accumulated a rather large personal capital. He was the shareholder and member of Supervisory Board of Jacob Zemel's pharmacy, well-known in Tbilisi, as well as the Factory of Champagne and Mineral Waters. David also had close relations with the Sarajishvili Factory, located on Olga Street in Tbilisi, which, after the death of the great manufacturer and Maecenas was directed by his wife, Ekaterine Porakishvili, from 1911. Kalandadze had business contacts with companies producing spirits, vodka, cognac, liqueur and other alcoholic beverages. Amongst them was the Sesiashvili Brothers firm, estab-

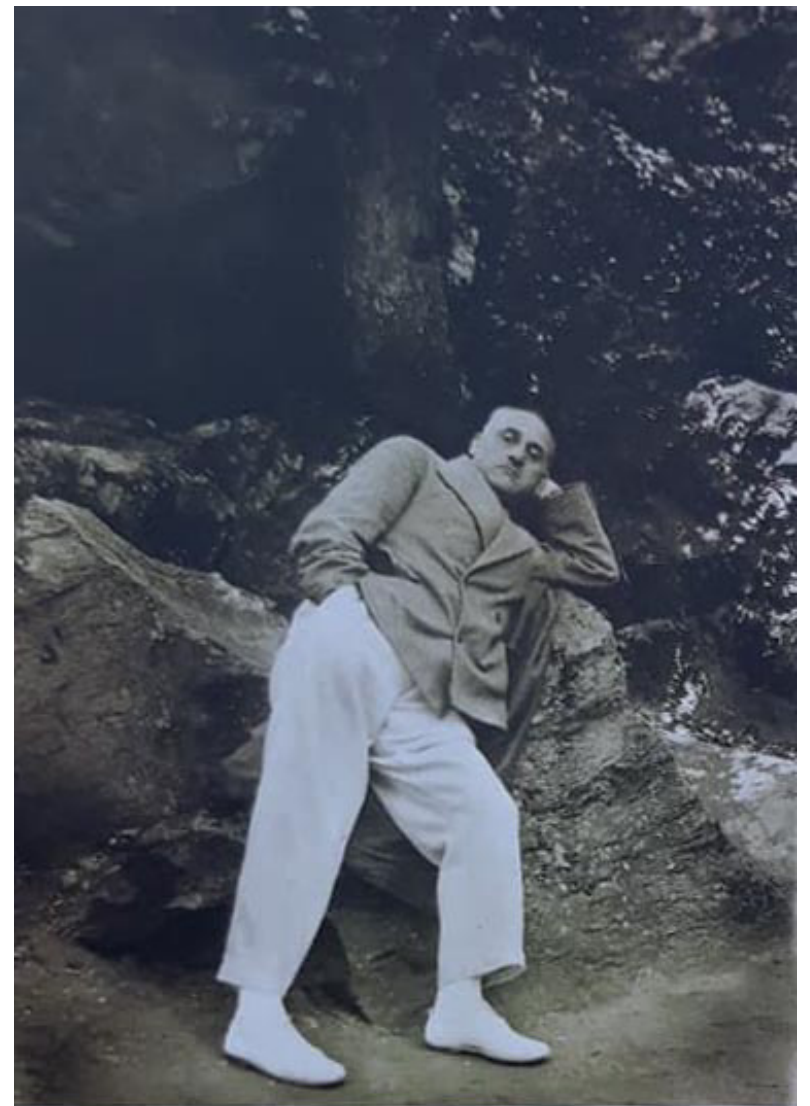
lished in 1890, whose main factory was located on 6 Sadguri Street in Tbilisi and with a branch office in Batumi where Kalandadze made friends with the brothers. Mikheil and Dimitri Sesiashvili, and later became their relative with his marriage to Dimitri's daughter. This marriage proved to be short-term although it did not interfere with business relations with the Sesiashvilis and their firm.

In 1920, Mikheil Sesiashvili, David Kalandadze, Alexander Jakeli and Ivan Fokas concluded agreement with each other in Batumi and provided assistance to Prince Oldenburgsky, who did many good things in Georgia, for the making of cognac and champagne wines. Tiebo exhausted by disease, ultimately had to sell his marvelous Klo-Uguruli. From 1926, Kalandadze worked basically in Tbilisi and managed a small capacity spirit, wine and vinegar factory located near the Mukhran Bridge (presently, the Baratashvili Bridge). This period was extremely difficult for Georgian people with a change in the system of government which was followed by repressions in 1937 and then the difficult years preceding the Second World War.

The Second World War started in 1942 and the country was in a military regime. Kalandadze did not stop his activities but supplied spirits to military hospitals and clinics and vinegar to food facilities. He was one of the first who began to produce wine vinegar based upon industrial processing. Before then, vinegar was homemade with the use of sour wine. Vinegar is a complex biological product and has specific technological peculiarities - the production of vinegar of a nutritional value from high-quality wine by complex biological implies the use of spirits and vinegar ferment. Kalandadze, who excellently processes coped with the new initiative, was the director of the first factory producing natural vinegar industrially. During this period, a Gurian man from Khidistavi by the same surname of Kalandadze and who held an ordinary position at the factory was found guilty of smuggling spirits from the territory of the factory, and punished according to the law. He was detained by the law enforcement officers whilst trying to leave the territory and arrested. The arrested Kalandadze mentioned David Kalandadze as a co-actor of confirmed his participation in the crime.

David Kalandadze spent a year in jail before the truth was revealed. His factory and family members were searched and his money, jewelry and other possessions were seized-and illegally so-as well as his movable and immovable property and his bank accounts were frozen. Kalandadze was found to be innocent but the experience impacted very negatively upon his health and well-being and resulted in a worsening of his diabetes.

After being cleared of the charges, Kalandadze, as famous pharmacist, was suggested, upon the request of the leaders



Жена Д. Каландадзе Эленэ Габунія
D. Kalandadze's wife, Elene Gabunia

of the Central Pharmaceutical Department, to put an oxygen factory into operation in Tbilisi. Oxygen production in Georgia was dispersed in the form of small, primitive and hardly functioning workshops with oxygen in a permanent deficit despite the high demand.

Kalandadze began to set up the oxygen factory in 1949. It required a highly efficient staff, the selection of a proper workforce, the acquisition of equipment and the setting up of workshops. For the purpose of mastering the task, he went to Russia and after obtaining a cer-

tain knowledge on the topic, he began to produce oxygen. Most importantly, the issue of supplying the factory with oxygen cylinders was settled which was a difficult problem to solve at that time. The only technologically sound oxygen factory in the Republic was located in Navtlughi, and the produced oxygen, in addition to medical purposes, was used in the building industry.

David Kalkandadze worked in that position until 1955. He died at the age of 66 owing to complications from diabetes. He was buried in Tbilisi at the Vake graveyard.

