

## Politics

Opposition parties call on the government to fulfill the agreement made on March 8<sup>th</sup>

According to the statement, members of the parliamentary opposition are ready to support the agreed constitutional changes if all the points of the agreement are fulfilled.

UNDP and UK launch an initiative to provide home care services to the elderly and other high-risk persons



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# Opposition parties say Giorgi Rurua is being discredited by ruling Georgian Dream party



Opposition urges gov't to 'fully abide by' election agreement, release TV co-founder Rurua. Photo: IPN

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Opposition parties have urged the government to fully comply with all components of the March 8<sup>th</sup> agreement. In a joint statement released on 8<sup>th</sup> of June, they wrote that opposition parties

that are presented in the Parliament are ready to support the agreed constitutional changes, if all points of the agreement are met. According to them, the agreement could not be considered enforced as long as political prisoner Giorgi Rurua remains in prison.

The statement emphasises that the release of political prisoners Giorgi Ugulava and Irakli Okruashvili by the President of Georgia on May 15<sup>th</sup> was an important step in fulfilling the terms of the agreement. "At the same time, we believe that fulfilling all the components of the March 8<sup>th</sup> agreement and making constitutional changes is fundamentally important to prevent a possible political crisis in the country," the joint announcement reads.

"We are particularly concerned about the ongoing targeted campaign of Giorgi Rurua against the background of the legal fiasco, which has been launched by the government-run media in recent days."

In the letter, they express particular concern over recent 'targeted government campaign against Giorgi Rurua' during the ongoing 'judicial fiasco,' aiming to his discreditation through the media outlets managed by the government.

The opposition claims that this is another attempt to politicise the trial and justice system, which directly contradicts the spirit of the March 8<sup>th</sup> agreement and threatens the political consensus based on the agreement.

The statement is signed by the following parties: Girchi, United National Movement, European Georgia, National Democratic Party, Akhali Sakartvelo, Republic Party, Lelo, Labor Party, State for the People United Georgia, Victorious Georgia, European Democrats, Christian-Conservative Party, Civil Alliance for Freedom, Free Democrats.

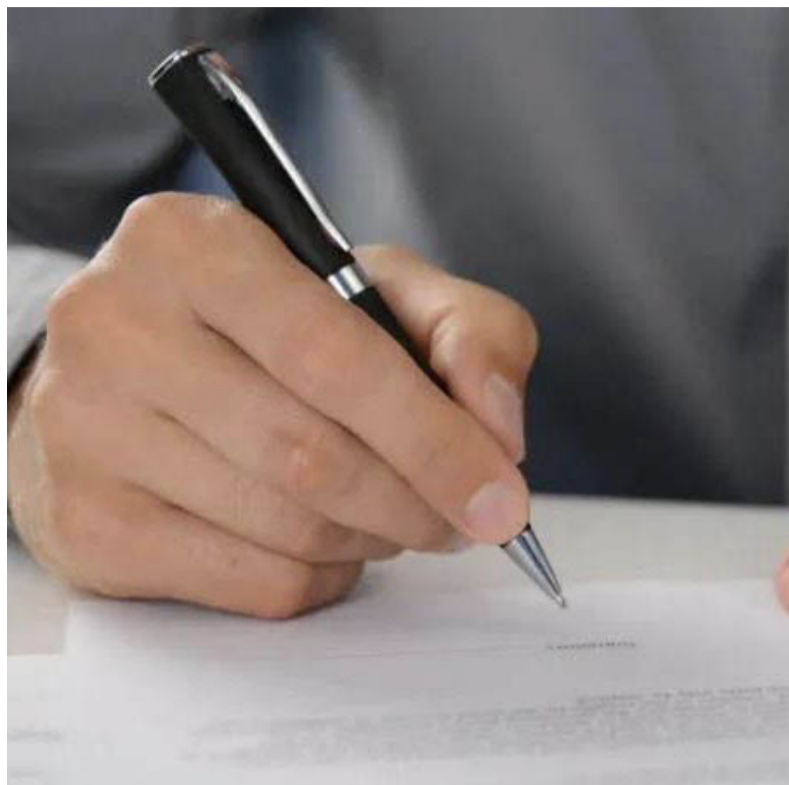
The statement was issued by the press center of the United National Movement. The Georgian Dream and the opposi-



On May 15<sup>th</sup> President Salome Zurbashvili pardoned Ugulava and Okruashvili 'to break the tension, not because they were political prisoners.' Photo: 1tv.ge

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# Opposition parties call on the government to fulfill the agreement made on March 8<sup>th</sup>



The agreement that has to be followed for fair elections.

BY ANASTASIA SOKHADZE

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, as a part of the political agreement reached between the United States and the EU diplomatic missions, the Georgian government took the responsibility to respond to actions that may be perceived as improper politicization of the judiciary and the election process.

They also agreed that such actions should be avoided in the future. The release of political prisoners - Giorgi Ugulava and Irakli Okruashvili on May 15<sup>th</sup> by the President of Georgia was an important step in fulfilling the terms of the agreement.

"We believe that fulfilling all the components of the agreement and adopting constitutional

changes is fundamentally important to prevent a possible political crisis of the country. Opposition parties, which are represented in parliament, remain ready to support the proposed constitutional changes if all points of the agreement are met. The agreement cannot be considered enforced until political prisoner Giorgi Rurua remains in prison," said the statement.

Against the background of the legal fiasco, a deliberate government campaign is underway to discredit Giorgi Rurua.

The ongoing deliberate government campaign is against the background of the legal fiasco in order to discredit Giorgi Rurua. It is clear that there will be another trial and an attempt to politicize the justice system. This, in turn, directly contradicts the spirit of the March 8<sup>th</sup> agreement and threatens the political consensus under the agreement.

Accordingly, the political parties are willing to call on the government to fulfill the requirements of the statement made on March 8<sup>th</sup> which will allow the country to prepare for the 2020 parliamentary elections in a less politicized environment and strengthen the democratic system.

The statement was signed by the following parties: Girchi, United National Movement, European Georgia, National

Democratic Party, Akhali Sakartvelo, Republic Party, Lelo, Labor Party, State for the People United Georgia, Victori-

ous Georgia, European Democrats, Christian-Conservative Party, Civil Alliance for Freedom, Free Democrats.



The statement signed by opposition parties, including Girchi.

## Opposition parties say Giorgi Rurua is being discredited by ruling Georgian Dream party

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tion parties reached an agreement on constitutional amendments on March 8<sup>th</sup> with the active participation of facilitator diplomats. In 2020, 120 deputies will be elected by a proportional system and 30 deputies by majoritarian, the election barrier will be 1% that ensured by the so called 'locker,' so that a

party with less than 40% of the vote cannot form a parliamentary majority.

The opposition says the second part of the agreement calls for the release of political prisoners, the existence of which was denied by the authorities, thus arguing that their release was not a matter of agreement. After the president pardoned Irakli Okruashvili and Gigi Ugulava, the opposition demanded the release of Giorgi Rurua. The current co-founder of the opposition-minded TV channel Mtavari Arkhi was detained on November 18, 2019 for alleged possession and carrying of a firearm, a charge Rurua dismisses.

## UNDP and UK launch an initiative to provide home care services to the elderly and other high-risk persons



United Nations Development Programme.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

UNDP shares the statement which reports that in the

frame of the new initiative, launched by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UK, 4000 vul-

nerable people at high risk of contracting COVID-19 including, older people living on their own, persons with chronic diseases and special needs, and people who need additional support in self-isolation will be provided with home care and other services in Tbilisi and the regions.

According to UNDP Georgia, As the country mitigates its restrictions regarding COVID-19, sustaining assistance to vulnerable persons is the key to preventing any renewed outbreak of the virus.

With over USD 60,000 in the UK funding, the initiative will

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### Weather

Tuesday, June 9

Day ☀ Clear  
High: 32°C  
Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 18°C

Wednesday, June 10

Day ☀ Clear  
High: 33°C  
Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 19°C

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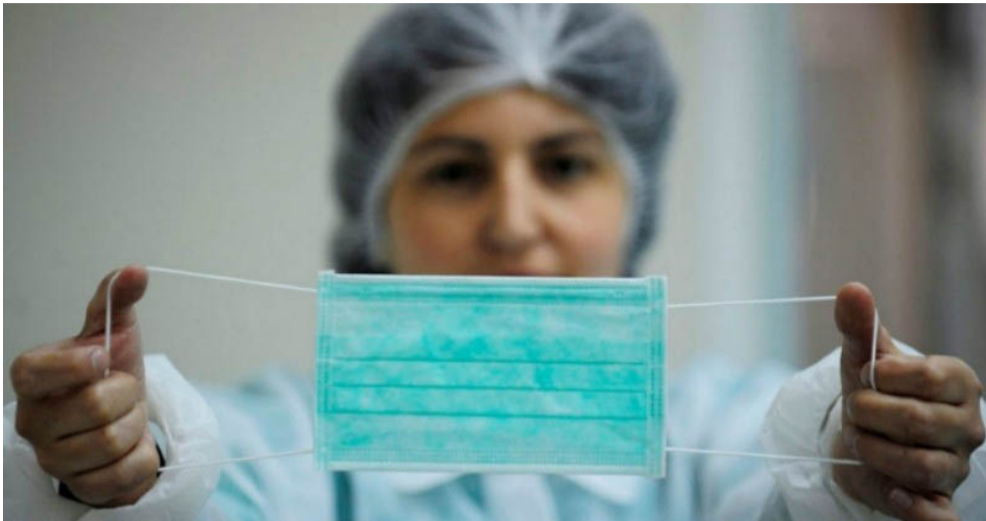
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## Government lifts up more restrictions



The major recommendation and regulation for passengers are to wear masks while traveling.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

From June 8<sup>th</sup>, the Government of Georgia lifted imposed restrictions, in particular, intercity travels are permitted, restaurants are able to give out all types of services from today onwards and currency exchange kiosks are reopened.

Intercity travels by buses and minibuses are restored countrywide. According to the regulations, both passengers and drivers must wear masks while traveling and the buses must be provided with defensive barriers. The vehicles must be disinfected frequently and ventilated regularly. The railway travels for passengers are determined to restore from May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Open space cafes and restaurants have been functioning since June 1<sup>st</sup>, however,

from now on, all restaurants are eligible to restore their services. General recommendations of restaurants and cafes include the use of a reservation system and favouring no-cash payments. Indoor restaurants must keep 2 meters distance between tables with a maximum of 6 customers at a table (1 metre distance between customers). Spaces must be cleaned with a 2-hour regime and must be provided with natural or artificial ventilation systems. Hotels that fulfill the regulations of the Ministry Of Labor Health And Social Affairs and have received certain permission from the authority are able to function as well. According to Georgian hotel, cafe and restaurant federation, hostels are still restricted to work so far, unless they offer individual rooms to the customers.

Currency exchange kiosks, which had

been disallowed to work since March 31<sup>st</sup>, reopen as well. The National Bank calls for the points to strictly obey the rules and the recommendations.

The act of legislation which responds to violating the regulation of wearing masks will be unveiled to the bureau of the Parliament in the session of June 8<sup>th</sup>. According to the legislature act, an individual who does not wear a mask to the public indoor places will be fined with ₾ 50, and if a person without a mask is admitted to the indoor facility, the owner (juristic person) will be fined with ₾ 500. Taxi drivers and passengers are also re-

quired to wear masks, otherwise, they will also face an administrative penalty of ₾ 20-30. The changes will enter the code of administrative offense and criminal code of Georgia.

A few restrictions remain in force- gathering of more than 10 people, intercity travels for passengers by railway trains and air transport, transporting more than 3 people by taxi (one of them is a driver) and holding sporting, cultural and entertaining events.

As of June 8<sup>th</sup>, only one new case of the Coronavirus has been reported and 8 patients have recovered. Overall, there are 810 cases, with 683 recoveries and 13 deaths. 2915 citizens are quarantined and 237 are hospitalised.



There is only one reported coronavirus case and 8 recoveries on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June.

## UNDP and UK launch an initiative to provide home care services to the elderly and other high-risk persons

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be implemented by the Georgia Red Cross Society (GRCS) in co-

operation with the Tbilisi City Hall and 29 municipalities across Georgia.

British Ambassador to Geor-

gia Justin McKenzie Smith says he has been deeply impressed by the response of Georgia to the pandemic.



“GRCS will launch an online learning platform for home care staff, volunteers and informal caregivers, to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to deliver professional and community-based home care,” reads the statement.

“One thing we have learned is that the virus is indiscriminate in who it affects. However, some are particularly vulnerable. The UK is proud to help Georgia’s municipal authorities and the Georgia Red Cross Society to provide professional home care services to those most in need. These services can make a huge difference to people’s lives,” Smith noted.

According to Louisa Vinton, UNDP Head also made a statement:

“Georgia stands out in having protected its elderly and frail population from the ravages of the pandemic, But particular vigilance is needed now as the economy reopens and social life resumes. With this new initiative, we are assisting those who are most at risk and, at the same time, promoting the idea that care services should be provided to all in need even after the pandemic passes.”

As UNDP reports, in 2013, the government of Georgia introduced the Universal Healthcare Programme, which aims to provide accessible medical services to all citizens. Long-term care service for older people and persons with special needs was not included in the programme, therefore non-governmental organisations were the providers of the services.

As the statement reads, according to the data of the Social Service Agency, there are up to 772,300 pensioners registered in Georgia and based on the infor-

mation of NGOs, they require professional home care, however, the NGOs can afford to satisfy only 15% of these demands. “Tbilisi is the only city in Georgia where home care is partly covered by municipal service providers, but even there, only 1,200 out of 20,000 people in need of professional home care are eligible to receive this service from the municipality.”

Aside from the professional and community-based home care services, which The UNDP and UK initiative will provide to 4,000 beneficiaries in Tbilisi and 29 municipalities across the country, GRCS will launch an online learning platform as well, which will enable home care staff, volunteers and informal caregivers to gain the skills and knowledge needed for professional and community-based home care.

As the UNDP reports, the assistance to home care services is a part of an even wider initiative, which is implemented with funds from the UK aid from the UK Government. In close cooperation with the national partners, UNDP assists the Government of Georgia to carry out the Public Administration Reform (PAR). The project echoes three out of six policy areas identified in the PAR Roadmap 2020: Policy Development and Coordination, Human Resources Management and Civil Service Reform, and Public Service Delivery.