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Opposition and GD representatives meet diplomatic corps at US Ambassador's Residence



► A meeting with the government and the opposition was held at the residence of the US Ambassador.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The first dialogue between the opposition and the government on the legitimacy of the elections was held on November 12, at the residence of the US Ambassador to Georgia. The dialogue lasted for several hours and was attended by opposition parties that exceeded the 1% threshold: Grigol Vashadze (Unm), Davit Bakradze (European Georgia), Giorgi Vashadze (Strategy Builder), Badri Japaridze (Lelo), Zura Japaridze (Girchi), Shalva Natelashvili (Labor Party), Aleko Elisashvili (Citizens) and Irma Inashvili (Patriots Alliance). Archil Talakvadze, the Georgian Dream leader, presented the Georgian Dream.

On November 12, the first round of negotiations between opposition representatives and the government was held via the mediation of the US and EU Ambassadors to Georgia. The parties agreed to hold a second round of dialogue in the coming days.

The opposition has been demanding new elections in the streets, as they consider the October 31 elections rigged. Both the government and the opposition are talking about the need for an agreement, but fail to negotiate. The opposition believes that early elections are necessary, whilst the government plans to negotiate only after recognizing the election results.

"Our position at today's meeting was unchanged that we see a way out of the

political crisis in holding new elections," European Georgia leader Davit Bakradze said after the meeting. According to him, the country is in a political crisis, and the responsible forces should gradually try to find a compromise.

Speaker of the Georgian Parliament Archil Talakvadze said that the dialogue serves to bring the positions closer. "Of course, the public should not expect major agreements at the first meeting, but the start of a political dialogue is positive and we have exchanged arguments. Most importantly, we listened to each other in a constructive environment and I believe and hope that this political dialogue will end with a concrete result," he said. According to him, the position of the ruling party is to check all the issues and questions asked by the opposition. Talakvadze says the Georgian Dream wants to reach an agreement where everyone respects the election results and the Georgian Parliament continues to function as provided in the Constitution.

Labor Party leader Shalva Natelashvili said that international partners were always talking about dialogue and compromise. According to him, this is a natural process. Natelashvili noted that re-elections are possible in 2 months and the opposition will not enter the parliament formed in the October 31 elections, as was said before.

The opposition is expecting the visit of US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo on November 17. As one of the leaders



► Davit Bakradze says there is room for compromise in negotiations with the government.

of European Georgia, Gigi Ugulava as said, a 'rally of a totally different format' is being planned, which will be dedicated to total counterfeiting and at the same time will be 'a kind of ceremonial meeting with Mr. Pompeo.' As Ugulava noted, the format of the rallies scheduled for November 17 and 18 will be different, there will be no political speeches, and locations that do not contradict security norms will be selected.

On the other hand, GD is hoping to host Pompeo without rallies in the coun-

try. "I hope the number of people who did not agree to hold a rally during Pompeo's visit will increase and common sense will prevail," Nikoloz Samkharadze, a member of the Georgian Dream's electoral list, said yesterday.

"It's interesting what they are protesting since all the international organizations, the observation mission, including the State Department itself, said that the elections on October 31 were fair, free and all fundamental rights were protected," said Samkharadze.

Full lockdown in Georgia is not considered, Gamkrelidze says

By LIZA NORWICH-GERWIK

The head of the National Center for Disease Control Amiran Gamkrelidze stated that lockdown and point restrictions may increase in the country.

“There is a partial lockdown and point restrictions in the country, which in all probability may be further expanded due to the epidemic situation. But a full lockdown is not considered at this stage,” Gamkrelidze said.

According to Gamkrelidze, restrictions necessary for the prevention of coronavirus were discussed at yesterday’s meeting, adding he would not speak about the details before the meeting of the Coordination Council.

He mentioned the importance of the current curfew:

“This type of restriction reduces the number of new cases by about 30% in a two-week interval, including the restrictions imposed on kindergartens, distance learning, etc. We have also discussed other types of restrictions with the Minister today, but I will not disclose this until considered by the Coordinating Council.”

Paata Imnadze, Deputy Director of the National Center



for Disease Control, spoke to Maestro TV about restrictions on night travel.

He said it has been scientifically proven that minimizing unnecessary contact between humans significantly reduces the rate at which the virus spreads.

“Unfortunately, the forecasts are not promising. Perhaps there will be more growth in the number of cases. The only way we can stop this increase is mask and distance, and the state-applied point restrictions.

Imnadze also discussed the

Covid-19 vaccine and its availability in Georgia after mass production:

“Probably, the mass production of the vaccine will start by the end of the year. Georgia is already a participant in the Global Fund, and we are in the

queue. We have paid the price in advance. The priority would be those countries who were involved in making the vaccine.”

He said in an interview that, presumably, the vaccine would not be available in Georgia until Spring 2021.

EU to host annual awards for socially responsible businesses in Georgia

The EU has announced that it would host the third annual Georgian Responsible Business Awards ‘Meliora 2020’. ‘Meliora’ is the most visible award in Georgia for celebrating excellence in corporate social responsibility (CSR). The goal is to raise awareness of the need for CSR among businesses and citizens, and acknowledge the companies making strides in this area. The focus of ‘Meliora 2020’ will be corporate social responsibility in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic. Georgian businesses can apply for the following four categories:

- Supporting employees during the COVID-19 pandemic;



- Supporting clients, customers and suppliers during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Supporting society/communities during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and most suffered industries during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The winners will be selected by an independent jury consisting of leading Georgian and international experts. The nominees will be evaluated based on the consistency and effectiveness of their efforts, sustainability of their results, and proper design of their initiatives.

The application deadline is 7 December. ‘Meliora’ is organised by the Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia with the support of the EU and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 13

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 12°C

Night Mostly clear
Low: 5°C

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14

Day Cloudy
High: 11°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 5°C

published by **The Messenger**

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High Council of Justice denies Court did not uphold 99% of parties' claims

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The High Council of Justice of Georgia stated that the Court satisfied more than 16 % of lawsuits filed by several opposition party members and NGOs, requesting the revision of polling station results, and subjected 17 polling stations to recount. Results of voting in one of the polling stations were annulled, the High Council of Justice claims.

“We would like to respond to the statement of some politicians who said the common courts of Georgia did not satisfy 99 % of the lawsuits filed in the revision of the results of the 2020 parliamentary elections”. According to the council, the presented statistics “make it clear that this statement is a lie and serves to mislead the public.” The Council stated that a total of 96 lawsuits have been filed in the common courts of Georgia. Of these, 60 lawsuits sought annulment or recount of voting results in various polling stations.”

According to the Council, the rest of the lawsuits (more than 37% of the total number of lawsuits) concerned the legality of leaving the complaints submitted by unauthorized subjects to the District Election Commission unconsidered.

Insofar as Article 42, Article 78, Paragraphs 20 and 21 of the Organic Law of Georgia on the Organic Law of Georgia



► High Council of Justice calls on all entities to spread information on the settlement of election disputes based on real data on the movement of cases in the Court.

confirmed the fact of filing complaints by unauthorized persons, the possibility of the court reviewing and evaluating the substantive part of the request was excluded.

“We call on all stakeholders in the election results to release only information on the settlement of election disputes based on real data of cases in the Court,” the statement said.

This statement of the High Council of Justice coincided with the statement of the Georgian



Young Lawyers' Association. The organization says that out of their 38 lawsuits seeking recounts, only 12 were upheld.

According to the current data of the CEC, 9 parties are overcoming the 1% threshold in the October 31 elections, and eight parties refuse to enter the Parliament.

Opposition parties have called for the election to be rigged, saying their complaints and lawsuits have not been resolved in district commissions and courts.

Gov't is working on the fourth phase post-crisis plan, PM Gakharia says

BY LIZA NORWICH-GERWIK

Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia's statement at the government sessions regarding post-crisis works was released by the government's press service. The statement reads that the fourth phase which specifically aims at supporting social and business has been in the works.

“We have already started a new wave of work in the fourth phase of this work, which will be directly aimed at the social support of our citizens, as well as business support.”

According to him, in the coming days, meetings will be held with representatives of businesses, as well as the largest employers to find a solution that will help the economy, further growth potential, and maximize job retention for citizens.

The Prime Minister also discussed the problem of unemployment amid the Covid-19 pandemic, saying that they will hold meetings with the largest



business employers to help economic growth and reduce unemployment and loss of jobs.

“These are some of the already well-proven mechanisms that have worked well in the previous

stages in terms of supporting our citizens, those who lost their jobs, as well as targeted social support for the most vulnerable families and, so to speak, a whole package of tax incentives for businesses.

We are now modernizing all this in order to start meetings in the coming days with representatives of specific, sectoral businesses, as well as the largest employers in order to find a solution that will

help our economy, on the one hand, maintain further growth potential and, on the other hand, to keep jobs for our citizens as much as possible.”

Gakharia stated that the restrictions and partial lockdown will continue throughout the country as the Covid-19 pandemic number of infected are increasing daily:

“We are pursuing a strategy of adaptation and point limitations. Of course, we will continue this process, but every citizen must understand that the health-care system is not inexhaustible in terms of both equipment and human resources.”

The PM added that the goal for the country is to achieve double-digit growth of the economy and the government is ready to do everything possible. Gakharia says that a special team, “including the Georgian government's economic team, the National Bank and international partners,” has assembled to work on this specific plan.