

Politics

Chair of Lietuva Committee on Foreign Affairs meets ruling party and opposition to discuss the crisis

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Georgian opposition ready for negotiations with the government

Melia said that the opposition is doing everything to de-escalate the situation

Georgia celebrates 100th anniversary of its constitution

The first constitution of the country was adopted on February 21, 1921

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BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

Candidate for PM Irakli Garibashvili named his cabinet ministers on February 19. The candidate to replace the former minister of infrastructure Maia Tskitishvili upon her resignation is the former deputy minister of infrastructure Irakli Karseladze. Former Deputy Minister of Defense Juansher Burchuladze has been nominated to take Irakli Garibashvili's post as Defense Minister.

Other members of the cabinet have been announced as follows:

David Zalkaliani as a Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Gocha Lortkipanidze as the Minister of Justice;

Ivane Macharavariani as the Minister of Finance;

Vakhtang Gomelauri as the Minister of Interior;

Natia Turnava as the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development;

Tea Akhvlediani as the Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality

Ekaterine Tikaridze as the Minister for Internally Displaced Persons, Health and Social Issues

Mikheil Chkhenkeli as the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport

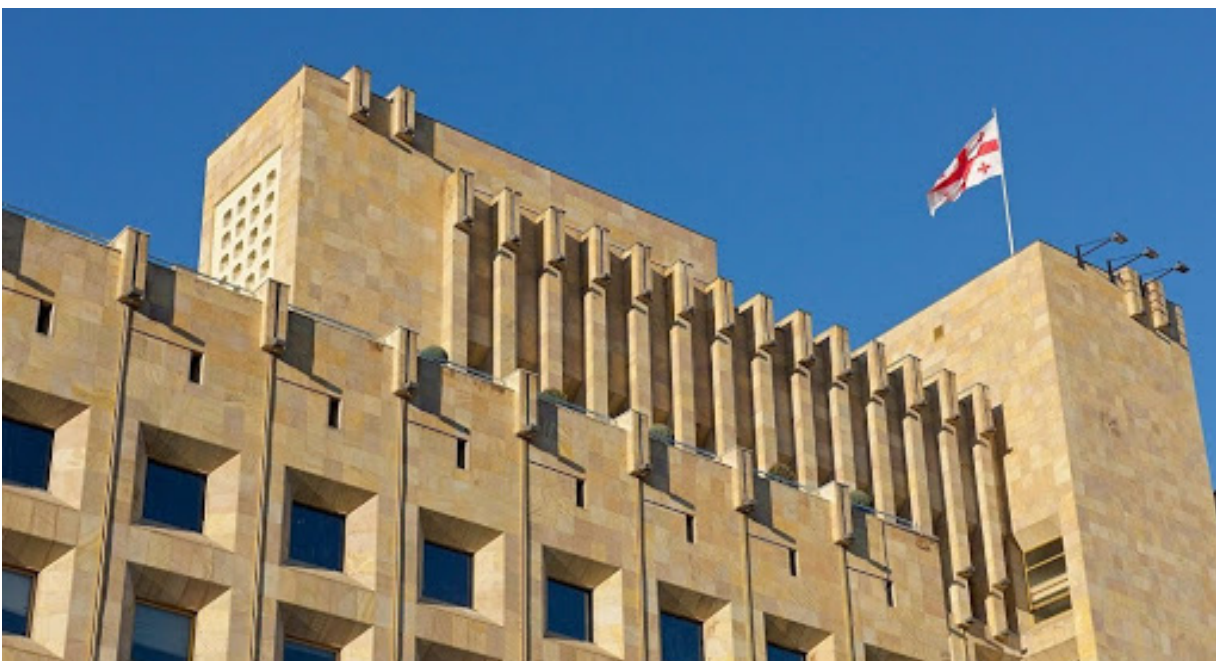
Levan Davitashvili as the Minister of Environmental Protection and Sport

The designated candidacy of Irakli Garibashvili has been named after the former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia announced

his resignation on Thursday, February 18. Gakharia explained that the reason for his decision was the inability to come to an agreement with other members of the ruling party regarding Nika Melia's sentencing. Gakharia added that Melia did break the law, however, his arrest would possibly threatened the health and lives of other citizens. Gakharia added that he hopes that his decision to resign will help contribute towards the depolarization and rivalry in Georgia, as both can prove harmful to the country's future.

Irakli Garibashvili has already served as the country's Prime Minister between 2013-2014 when he replaced the previous PM and founder of the ruling Georgian Dream party Bidzina Ivanishvili. Garibashvili's candidacy and his cabinet have to be approved by the Parliament within the next two weeks, or else early parliamentary elections will have to be scheduled. The voting is expected on February 22.

PM Candidate Irakli Garibashvili names his cabinet



Chair of Lietuva Committee on Foreign Affairs meets ruling party and opposition to discuss the crisis



spoke with the leader of the opposition United National Movement party, Nika Melia, who tweeted shortly after the meeting:

“Either Georgia goes with the Lithuanian way or it turns into Belarus. When we were entering the EU and NATO, left and right always worked together. We never imprisoned anyone. If repressions and conflicts continue, Georgia’s chances are killed”.

The current political crisis was caused by the recent Tbilisi court ruling which sentenced Nika Melia to be kept in custody as a result of his refusal to post the bail for his release. The Georgian Ministry of Interior then went on to temporarily postpone Melia’s arrest amidst the resignation of the Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia who claimed that such a decision was caused by his inability to come to an agreement with a ruling party on Nika Melia’s case. Lithuanian Foreign Ministry is calling both the authorities and the members of the opposition to abstain from any actions that can cause further “division of the society” and refrain from “using force against the citizens.”

By VERONIKA MALINBOYM

On February 20, Zygimantas Pavilionis, Chair of the Lietuva Committee on Foreign Affairs, held meetings with the ruling Georgian Dream party and the United National Movement opposition party to address the ongoing political crisis.

Ahead of his arrival to the country, Zygimantas Pavilionis announced that his visit to Georgia would be aimed at meeting “friends from political spectrum” in order to “build bridges, heal common wounds and build common future in the EU and NATO.” In his Twitter post, Zygimantas Pavilionis reinstated that “Lithuanians have never abandoned Georgians, not even in the darkest hour”.

Earlier this week, the Baltic Times reported that the Board of Lithuanian Simas held an emergency meeting in which it has been decided to send Zygimantas Pavilionis in order to help the country find a way out of the current political deadlock. The media outlet also cited Zygimantas Pavilionis saying that he has some personal input in the country already, as, during the presidential term of Valdas Adamkus, Pavilionis was

responsible for leading the Georgia group in the past Seimas. The politician then went on to say that he has friends on both [political] sides and will do his

best in order to restore peace between them.

Upon his arrival to Georgia, Zygimantas Pavilionis met with the chair of the parliamentary

committee of foreign relations, Maka Botchorishvili, as well as the chair of the parliamentary group of the EU integration, Nikoloz Samkharadze. He also



Weather

Monday, February 22

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 7°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 1°C

Tuesday, February 23

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 8°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 3°C

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Georgian opposition ready for negotiations with the government



According to Melia, the political climate in the country worsens every hour

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The Chairman of the United National Movement Nika Melia stated that the opposition is doing everything in their power to de-escalate the situation in the country and that they are ready for a dialogue with the government. He also noted that the negotiations should be oriented at finding common ground.

According to Melia, the political climate in the country is worsens every hour. He thanked every partner of the country who has shown their readiness to help.

International Partners have actively reiterated that the political crisis in Georgia is deepening and requires dialogues between the parties.

After the decision, the former PM of the country Gakharia announced about his resignation. After this, the Chairman of the Georgian Dream ruling party Irakli Kobakhidze announced that Irakli Garibashvili would be the candidate of the ruling party. Garibashvili has already served as the Prime Minister of Georgia once.

The ongoing events in the country have sparked protests in Tbilisi. According to

the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 25 people were detained during the rally in front of the Parliament. All of them are accused of disobeying the lawful request of a police officer. According to the agency, after all the arrests, all the detainees were released.

“Despite numerous calls and warnings, the protesters did not obey the lawful request of the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, continued to act illegally, after which they were arrested,” the ministry said in a statement.

The activists gathered on the Rustaveli Avenue and wanted to set up a tent in front of the parliament, which the police

didn't allow. This was followed by a confrontation between activists and law enforcement officers.

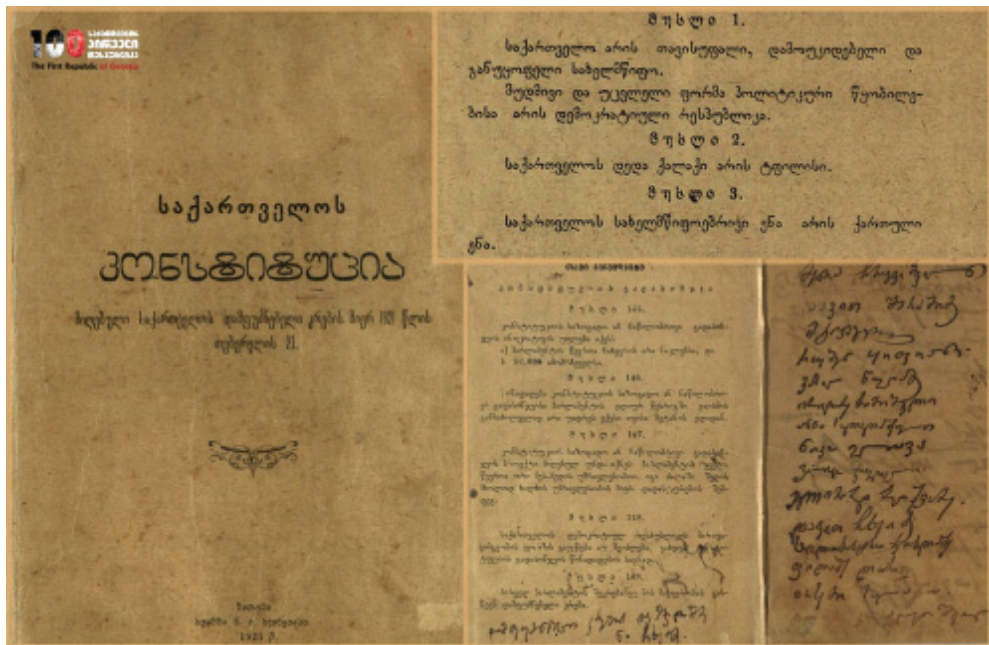
The Public Defender stated that the police prevented the protesters from setting up their tents, emphasizing that when the entrance to the building is not blocked, it is unjustified to deprive them of this opportunity. The ombudsman stated that the placement of such temporary structures is protected by freedom of assembly.

Georgia's international partners have been stating that such a situation in the country is damaging the country's democracy, taking the country back in time.



Melia's sentencing was followed by a wave of protests in Tbilisi

Georgia celebrates 100th anniversary of its constitution



The constitution was adopted four days before Georgia was occupied by the Soviet's Red Army

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The Independent Republic of Georgia adopted its first constitution on February 21, 1921, four days before the occupation of the country by the Soviet Red Army. The Constitution adopted in 1921, consisting of 17 chapters and 149 articles, was based on the principles of the Act of Independence of Georgia adopted on May 26, 1918. The constitution guaranteed the rights of women, religious and ethnic minorities; the death penalty was abolished.

International partners of the country congratulated Georgia on the anniversary of the constitution. The Ambassador of the EU to Georgia Carl Hartzell noted that the document adopted a century ago underlines Georgia's European values.

According to Hartzell, the first consti-

tution of Georgia firmly placed the country in a broad family of European values. According to the ambassador, it put the principles of democratic governance, respect for human rights, protection of the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, as well as freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and print media, at the forefront.

Hartzell noted that he was very happy to participate in the event dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Constitution of Georgia.

The EU Delegation to Georgia also issued a statement regarding the 100th anniversary of the Constitution. As we read in their statement, in many ways, the constitution was ahead of its time.

“The 1921 Constitution was a remarkable achievement, enshrining a proud legal tradition in support of a progressive



EU Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzell noted that the document adopted a century ago underlines Georgia's European values

and modern Georgian state. Most of all, it demonstrated the high democratic aspirations of the Georgian people,” reads the statement.

The statement once again reaffirmed the EU's commitment to supporting Georgia on its path towards a strong democracy.

The US Embassy to Georgia also issued a statement. According to the US Embassy in Georgia, now more than ever, it is important for the Georgian people to unite around the core values enshrined in the First Constitution. The US Embassy statement also noted that Georgia's first constitution was an important step to integrate Western democracies into society.

The first meeting of the Constitutional Commission of Georgia was held on June 7, 1918. After the election of the Constituent Assembly, in March 1919, a new Con-

stitutional Commission of fifteen members was formed, which took over the materials of the previous commission and continued its work. The composition of the commission members has changed several times. It was first headed by Rajden Arsenidze, and later by Pavle Sakvarelidze.

The full draft of the Constitution was published in May 1920 and distributed to the members of the Constituent Assembly for consideration. Many meetings of the assembly were dedicated to the discussion of the project.

On February 21, 1921, when the Constituent Assembly of Georgia adopted the first constitution of Georgia at a meeting in Tbilisi, the Georgian Armed Forces fought the Russian army on the outskirts of Tbilisi.