

People gather in Tbilisi to protest Namakhvani HPP construction



Varlam Goletiani: Our fight starts here and now. Photo: RFE/RL

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

Protesters gathered in Tbilisi to rally against the construction of the

Namakhvani HPP cascade. Activists have been protesting the construction of the HPP cascade for several months now and say they will not stop until their demands are met.

According to one of the activists, Varlam Goletiani, if the demands of protesters are not met, they are ready to paralyze the city. Addressing protesters, Goletiani said that they are demanding the resignation of the Economy Minister Natia Turnava who, he said, should be held accountable for the ongoing events.

Protestors demand:

- Enka leaves the Rioni gorge

- The agreement between Enka and the state be terminated along with all the other agreements issued since 2015 regarding the HPP.

- A moratorium in the energy sector.

- Minister of Economy resigns and everyone involved in the preparation of the HPP documentation be held accountable.

"Resolving the issue requires our unity and abundance, and this has been achieved today. So, the fight begins here and now. We will fight until everything is resolved in favor of the people," said Goletiani.

The decision to hold a rally in Tbilisi was made after an agreement between the government and activists was not reached. The government offered a moratorium on the construction of the HPP for a year, however, activists said that the preparatory work had not stopped.

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Anna Dolidze, former non-judge member of the High Council of Justice launches political party 'For People'

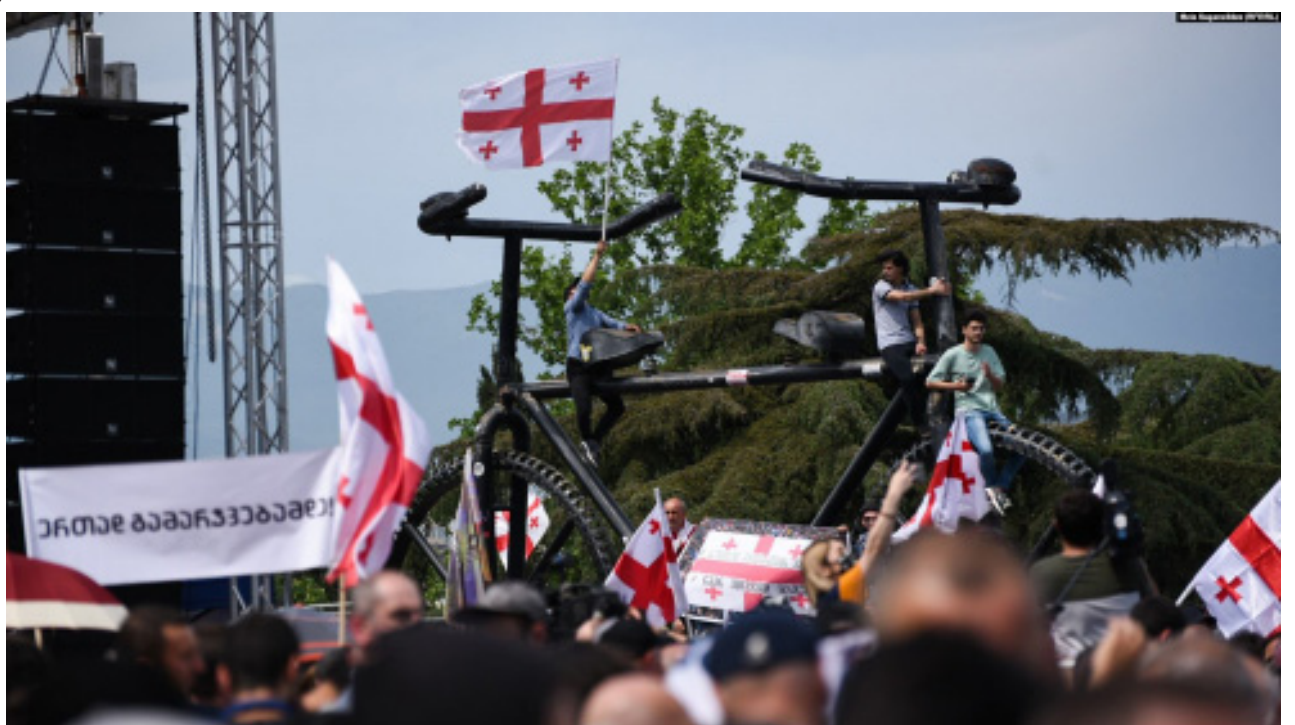
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Georgian PM Garibashvili visits Batumi with other leaders of the ruling party

Georgian Dream Chairman Irakli Kobakhidze also attended the meeting

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If the demands of the protesters are not fulfilled until 12:00 today, protesters plan to 'paralyze Tbilisi'. Photo: RFE/RL

EU, US Ambassadors to Georgia send a joint open letter to victims of June 2019 protests

By VERONIKA MALINBOYM

The Ambassador of the US to Georgia, Kelly Degnan, and the EU Ambassador Carl Hartzell have sent a joint letter to the activists who were injured during the June 2019 protests in Tbilisi. The letter came as a response to the open letter sent by civil activists on May 14, in which they expressed their protest over the law which provides amnesty to all those charged with violations and convictions related to June 19-21, 2019 protests in Tbilisi, including the violations conducted by law enforcement agents.

In their letter, Ambassadors Degnan and Hartzell thanked the signatories for their letter and reinstated that as Georgian partners, they have worked to end the political crisis which erupted in the country following October 2020 Parliamentary elections:

“The 19 April Agreement was a compromise brokered through a challenging mediation process and its contents are fully owned by Georgia’s political leaders.



Under its first article, the agreement outlines a commitment to address cases of perceived politicized justice”, the joint state-

ment reads.

Ambassadors also noted that the amnesty law referenced in the April 19 agreement “pertains

to a painful episode of the Georgian history,” not only for the victims but also because of the challenges that it posed to the

country’s democratic institutions:

“The amnesty law referenced in the Agreement pertains to a painful episode in Georgia’s history, not only for the victims of the events of 19-21 June 2019 but also because of the challenges the events posed to Georgia’s democratic institutions. In such a polarized environment, an inclusive process in Parliament is needed to foster reforms that will prevent a recurrence of such tragic events and bring greater transparency and accountability”.

The joint letter also underscored the importance of all stakeholders to ensure the implementation of the agreement:

“Following the Agreement’s conclusion, it is now vital that all stakeholders ensure its successful implementation in the interest of ending Georgia’s paralyzing political crisis. This allows all parties to work to further Georgia’s democratic consolidation and pursue Justice and accountability through strengthened democratic institutions,” the letter concluded.

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The protests initially started in Namakhvani, where protests have been ongoing non-stop for the past several months. They say that in addition to the environmental threat, the government has relinquished state interests.

The ruling party insist on the importance of Namakhvani HPP cascade. The Ministry of Economy has stated many times that this project is “one of the most necessary steps for the country’s energy independence and security.”

Weather

Monday, May 24

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 29°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 15°C

Tuesday, May 25

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 27°C

Night Showers
Low: 15°C

Anna Dolidze, former non-judge member of the High Council of Justice launches political party ‘For People’

By VERONIKA MALINBOYM

Former non-judge member of the High Council of Justice has launched a new political party ‘For People’. Dolidze stated that the party will act as a counter-force between the ruling Georgian Dream and the opposition United National Movement party. Dolidze also noted that the party’s main values are unity, solidarity, and social justice:

“We choose a way of governing where social equality is the main driving force of the state, where hunger will not be the main challenge of the country and caring for each family will be not a duty but a thoughtful responsibility,” Dolidze said.

Dolidze stated that in the nearest future, the party will decide whether it will appoint its own mayoral candidate, noting that the United National Movement’s decision to appoint the candidacy of Nika Melia was a mistake, which might, in the long run, facilitate another victory of the Georgian Dream.



Following her resignation from the High Council of Justice, Dolidze has become the chairperson of the For People political platform. She has also joined the October 2020 Parliamentary Elections as a majoritarian candidate from the Didube-Chugureti district in Tbilisi.

Earlier this year, Dolidze has

been calling on the Ombudsman of Georgia to hold an immediate investigation into the fact of possible illegal surveillance against her. The calls came shortly after the controversial interview with a former employee of the State Security Service. In this interview, Vano Gulashvili confessed to allegedly damaging the

projector belonging to the opposition during the June 20 rallies, as well as illegally installing several surveillance devices in the homes of some of Georgia’s top-ranking officials, including Anna Dolidze, upon the request of the former Deputy Interior Minister, Kakhaber Sabanadze.

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Georgian PM Garibashvili visits Batumi with other leaders of the ruling party



PM Garibashvili said that they discussed the ongoing events in the country and the upcoming elections

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

Several GD representatives met with local party leaders in Batumi.

Organizational issues of the upcoming local self-government elections were discussed at the meeting where participants discussed current political developments in the country.

“The party leaders have started meetings in the regions for several reasons, including one to properly prepare for the upcoming elections. Today we met activists from Adjara, and talked about our plans as well as the political climate in the country,” said Kobakhidze with re-

porters after the meeting.

Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili also talked with reporters after the meeting in Batumi. As he said, the Georgian Dream aims to win every single ‘municipality and city’ in the upcoming elections. He also said that the Georgian Dream has already started working with its partners as well as members to prepare for the upcoming elections.

After the meeting, the reporters asked Garibashvili several questions, including one about the former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia. The question was about the future political activist of the former

PM. Garibashvili answered the question by saying that he ‘would also like to know’ what Gakharia is going to do.

After the meeting, Irakli Kobakhidze also talked about the Former Prime Minister and accused him of lying. “Gakharia lied on February 17-18, and it was a massive lie. Sadly, the lying continues even now, and people will see the signs of the lie even better in the near future. He turned his back on his own team,” said Kobakhidze.

Gakharia resigned as Georgia’s prime minister on February 18, citing differences between him and other members

of the Georgian Dream over the arrest of Nika Melia, chairman of the United National Movement.

After Gakharia’s resignation, Irakli Garibashvili became the Prime Minister of the country. It is the second time for Garibashvili to serve as the Prime Minister. He previously held the same position in 2013-2015.

Soon after resigning, Gakharia said that he had no intention of quitting politics, and announced that he would be coming back soon. As of now, his plans remain unknown.



Kobakhidze accused former Prime Minister Gakharia of lying while talking with reporters

The award ceremony of the winners of the essay competition was held at the European University in Tbilisi.

The essay competition was organized by the European University and the Embassy of France in Georgia. The topic of the competition was Georgia’s European Future and was held in the framework of the Europe Days 2021.

The competition was attended by 11th and 12th graders from both private and public schools around the country. Pupils from almost all regions of the country participated in the competition.

Award ceremony of essay competition held at European University

The winners were chosen by an invited commission and received several prizes. The first place was awarded an electronic scooter, the second-place holder received a laptop. As for the third place, the award

was a camera.

In addition, the French Embassy selected several constants who will spend one day at the Embassy of French in Tbilisi. During the ceremony, the Am-

bassador of France to Georgia Diego Colas was awarded the title of Honorary Doctor of the European University.

The event was musically accompanied by pianist Nika Nikvashvili, soprano Mariam Roinishvili and Zakaria Paliashvili’s Opera and Ballet Orchestra with the members of the Tbilisi chamber ensemble. The event was held considering the Covid-19 regulations and was attended by the Ambassadors of EU member states, representatives of the Georgian Ministry of Education, as well as the heads of several European universities.



Ceremony was held at the European University in Tbilisi



The competition was organized by the European University and the Embassy of France in Georgia

From dancing to teaching ballet: Interview with Gvantsa Gavashelishvili



The Messenger asked Gvantsa Gavashelishvili, a renowned Georgian ballerina to talk about the importance of her profession, its essence, and the strenuous yet enjoyable path she covered to become who she is today- the lead teacher of Maka Makharadze Ballet Studio.

Gvantsa Gavashelishvili first fell in love with the art of dancing, specifically ballet, at the age of 10, when she enrolled in Chabukiani Choreographic School. Gvantsa notes that the school and its teachers had the first and most important influence on her:

-Gvantsa, how did Vakhtang Chabukiani Ballet school, the most prestigious one in the country, define your future?

-In a week I was in love with the school, which was a sacred experience- similar to the one you get in a museum when you

visit an exceptional show. The essence of the old era, that of the generation of Vakhtang Chabukiani and classical Georgian ballet. The first teacher was Mr. Vakhtang who was a phenomenal specialist and the leader of the school. He taught me how to create the main pillar on which my current work stands. It filled my childhood

with unbelievable impressions and paved my future.”

“It was during that period when Nino Ananiashvili returned to Tbilisi, took over the leadership of the ensemble, held many premieres, gathered the troupe, and strengthened it.

I started working with Nino Ananiashvili as a soloist at the Tbilisi Opera and Ballet The-

ater, where I spent 7 seasons. Then I lived in America for 5 years, and it was one of the greatest experiences of my life.

- What is the difference between the Georgian and American realities in this field?

- Ballet is incredibly developed and important in America and has been raised to the level of show business. Every famous dancer is familiar to the public, not only theatergoers. As a dancer you're always going to achieve what you really do deserve to there.

- Gvantsa, you now work as the lead teacher of ballet in the ballet studio of Mrs. Maka Makharadze. Tell us about your experience as a teacher.

- I was always interested in teaching. We, dancers, were constantly learning through each other's mistakes. When looking at our peers, we had to notice their flaws and as a group work together to better our performances and individual skills. I have always loved sharing my experience and advice with others and getting feedback from them as well, which is ulti-

mately what being a teacher is all about.

I have been here for 4 years now with my students. When I see their smiling faces in the audience or on the stage, I feel this unbelievable joy and pride! I can't do otherwise... I have to and will give them everything I know...I love watching how every student finds themselves in this form of art, and how they almost always turn their weaknesses into strength.

The main thing that helps me find inexhaustible energy to work with children is that I remember myself as a child ... I remember everything about my teachers. I realize that even one of my words can strongly affect the psyche of the child and have a great impact on them. Therefore, it is an activity that requires great tact and simplicity. Just as a surgeon's mistake can end up being catastrophic, so can that of a teacher.

