

Georgia in NATO Brussels Summit communique

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia has released a statement on NATO's Brussels Summit 2021. The Ministry welcomed the NATO Summit in Brussels which started on June 14, at which important decisions were made, both in the context of Georgia's accession and in terms of the Alliance's future.

"It is extremely important that the communique confirms the decision of the Bucharest Summit that 'Georgia will become a member of NATO' and that Georgia has all the 'practical tools to prepare for final membership,'" MFA wrote.

The Communique reiterated the decision made at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Georgia will become a member of the Alliance with the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as an integral part of the process; all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions, including that each partner will be judged on its own merits was once again reaffirmed.

NATO members also emphasized the importance of cooperation with Georgia: "As an Enhanced Opportunities Partner, Georgia is cooperating closely with the Alliance across a wide



"In accordance with its international commitments, we call on Russia to withdraw the forces it has stationed in all 3 countries (Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova) without their consent."



"Welcome the renewed and strong commitment by NATO to Georgia's territorial integrity, to the security and stability of the BlackSea and to the OpenDoorPolicy," President of Georgia wrote. Photo from March 2019.

range of issues. We highly appreciate Georgia's substantial contributions to NATO operations, which demonstrate its commitment and capability to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security."

The document also referred to the so-called Charles Michel agreement, which was welcomed by the alliance members and encouraged its full implementation by all sides. "This agreement paves the way for the important reforms which will help Georgia, an aspirant country, progress in its preparations towards membership. We remain committed to making full use of the NATO-Georgia Commission and the Annual National Programme in deepening political dialogue and cooperation. We commend the significant progress on reforms which Georgia has made and must continue

to make, and which have helped Georgia strengthen its defence capabilities and interoperability with the Alliance."

The Allied Member States' unequivocally and directly confirmed that they support Georgia's sovereign right to choose its foreign policy priorities and that any third party interference in this process is not to be welcomed. It is noteworthy that the member states underlined the cooperation in security in the Black Sea region, in response to Russia's increasingly destabilising activities, and welcomed the steps taken to implement the refreshed Substantial NATO-Georgia Package. "We stand ready to enhance our support to Georgia, including in building resilience against hybrid threats, in training and

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Great controversy in Georgian politics

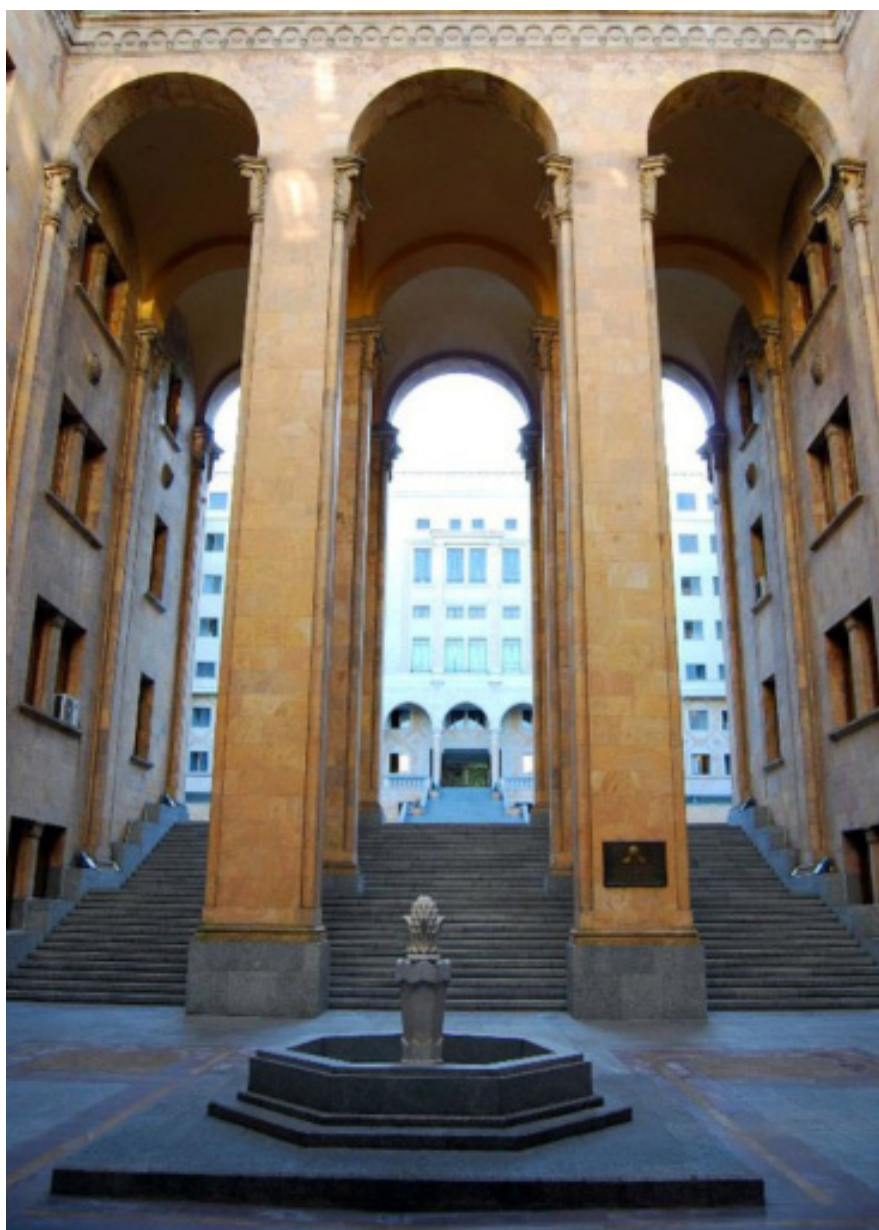
BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The main opposition party, United National Movement, Former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, who has returned to politics, was confronted by Bidzina Ivanishvili with a public letter, PM Irakli Garbakhvili announced the potential victory of Georgian Dream with a result of 53%.

On June 8, the deputies of the main opposition party National Movement appeared in the parliament for the first time - 32 MPs. The party decided to enter parliament on May 30. Tako Charkviani, the chairman of the Law and Justice party, also entered the parliament together with the National Movement. Thus, the number of deputies in the parliament increased to 148. Shalva Natelashvili, the leader of the Labor Party, and Elene Khoshtaria, the founder of the Droa movement, have so far refused to run for parliament.

The current parliament has become multi-party and representative, which was called for by the friends of the West, and now, ideally, they must work constructively to implement the plan set out in the Charles Michel document. However, judging by the debates that have taken place since the opposition entered parliament, constructive cooperation has so far emerged.

Representatives of the majority met the appearance of United National Movement in the parliament with mocking comments. On June 8, when the United National Movement arrived in parliament, the Georgian Dream closed its session early, and the United National Movement made statements in



parliament only the next day.

The National Movement was reminded of the many statements made earlier that they would not enter the parliament under any circumstances. For their part, the UNM party remind the ruling team of the 'red lines' that were previously strictly drawn and then violated,

that there are no political prisoners and that no one can be released, as well as the categorical exclusion of early parliamentary elections, which Charles Michel's document Dream "will not be able to collect 43%.

The National Movement has entered the parliament but is not going to sign the document

provided by Charles Michel. The reason is the amnesty provided by this document for the events of June 19-21, 2019, which is known as Gavrilov Night. Nika Melia and others, who are accused of trying to storm parliament, do not plead guilty and oppose extending amnesty to all those accused of ordering a brutal crackdown on protesters. Georgian Dream does not take into account the remarks of the opposition and the Parliament has already adopted in the second reading the version of the law on amnesty, which was submitted by Georgian Dream.

The UNM is categorically demanded to sign the document of Charles Michel, and in this respect Georgian Dream and the Western friends are united. Otherwise, according to the representatives of the Georgian Dream, the participation of the main opposition party will be excluded from the formats provided for in the document of Charles Michel.

The main political sensation of the last week was probably the open intervention of Bidzina Ivanishvili, who left politics for the second time. On June 7, Bidzina Ivanishvili wrote a letter stating that the resignation of former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia in February on the grounds of refusing to arrest Nika Melia was a "direct betrayal" of his team and his state. Ivanishvili also denied rumors

that Giorgi Gakharia's new political party, Georgia, was his political project. Such rumors were spread intensively, because Gakharia did not criticize Ivanishvili and did not say anything after Ivanishvili attacked him with the most serious accusations.

Gakharia's return to politics, as experts say, came as a serious problem for the Georgian Dream as the former prime minister and his team, formerly part of the Georgian Dream government, 'appropriated' the electorate that feeds the current ruling party. There was also talk that in such a case, the Georgian Dream would not have been able to collect 43% in the autumn self-government elections.

The position perceived Bidzina Ivanishvili's attack on Gakharia, firstly, as proof that Ivanishvili's statement about leaving politics was illusory, and secondly, they considered Ivanishvili's attempt to transfer Gakharia's party to the opposition electorate and deprive him of votes. Instead, let's say Lelo or Strategy Builder, that is, to try to gain the support of the electorate that does not vote for either the Georgian Dream or the National Movement. In this case, Gakharia's party would be the 'third force' that has long been talked about by some opposition parties. Great rage broke out against Gakharia and his new team.

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili also spoke about the progress of the economy to encourage his team and announced 53% support instead of 43% in the fall and announced a convincing victory in all municipalities.

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exercises, and in secure communications. We look forward to the next NATO-Georgia exercise in 2022."

According to MFA, for Georgia, as an aspirant country, the principle of transatlantic unity and the steps taken to strengthen it are especially valuable and Georgia appreciates the strong, consistent and effective support of the member states

Weather

Wednesday, June 16

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 33°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 19°C

Thursday, June 17

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 30°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 18°C

towards the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-recognition policy.

The member states adequately assessed the attempt of the Russian Federation to separate the 2 occupied regions from the rest of Georgia by 'violent' methods, and highlighted the frequent cases of borderisation, abduction of Georgian citizens, their illegal detention and harassment. The Alliance calls on the Russian Federation to comply with the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008.

The Allies paid particular attention to supporting the rule-based international order. It was stressed that Russia, through its

illegal actions, hinders the maintenance of this order, which in turn undermines the security, stability and democratic values of allied and partner countries.

Georgia also welcomed the decision of the Alliance to update the NATO Strategic Concept, which will be approved at the 2022 Summit of the Alliance. The Georgian side hopes that the issues related to open door policy will be adequately reflected in the new strategic concept and will share the recommendations on enlargement and the decision of the Bucharest Summit in the NATO 2030-United for a New Era document. Georgia hopes that the clear and concrete strat-

egy of the Alliance towards the Black Sea region will be formed in the new strategic concept of NATO.

Alliance decisions to strengthen containment and defense policies were also highlighted in the MFA statement. NATO began strengthening its south-eastern flank in 2014 by increasing the readiness of the armed forces and new military deployments on its territory. It is in this context that NATO is actively working to strengthen Black Sea security. At the summit, the Allies agreed to improve the Alliance's preparedness, response and defense. The Georgian side welcomes this decision

and hopes that NATO's involvement in the Black Sea region will further increase, which will be a significant deterrent and further strengthen security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Member States also focused on strengthening resilience, which is crucial to the Alliance's 3 core objectives - collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security. Given the fact that destructive actors often use conventional and hybrid warfare methods to destabilize allied and partner countries, Georgia welcomes the strengthening of the Alliance's capabilities in this area and the deepening of cooperation with non-member countries.

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Georgian businessman and right-wing politician urges government to cancel Tbilisi Pride events



BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

Georgian businessman, a right-wing politician, and founder of the Unity, Essence, Hope movement urged the Georgian government to cancel Tbilisi pride events scheduled for July 1-5. Vasadze stated that the events will lead to societal unrest like in previous years and gave the government time until June 25 to cancel them, or else face 'people's reaction.'

"Today is June 15, we are giving a deadline until June 25. Our government has ten days to cancel Tbilisi Pride in order to avoid escalation and confrontation processes within our society and to discredit Georgia in the region," Vasadze said.

Vasadze also added that regardless of whether the Georgian government decides to cancel it, Tbilisi Pride events will not occur anyways because "people will gather and stop these anti-Chris-

tian and anti-Georgian activities."

Leader of the Tbilisi Pride Giorgi Tabagari called on the authorities to respond to Vasadze's statements appropriately and noted that it is because of the government's inaction that Vasadze is capable of spreading his violent and hateful statements:

"This man was openly abusing people in 2019 and then the state did nothing to stop him, the

prosecutor's office did nothing. The result of this inaction is that Levan continues to do the same in 2021. He openly lobbies for the adoption of Russian laws in Georgia, threatening the security of people and the state! This man is a threat to the security of the country and the state must respond accordingly," Tabagari

said.

Tbilisi Pride events of 2021 aimed at boosting society's awareness of the LGBT issues is scheduled for July 1-5. On July 5, the activists will march in solidarity with other social movements down Rustaveli avenue.

Covid-19 vaccinations will soon be available in shopping malls in Georgia

BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

Earlier yesterday, Deputy Minister of Health Tamar Gabunia announced the opening of vaccination centers in the shopping malls across Georgia. According to Gabunia, starting July, when the country is expected to receive an additional batch of vaccines, a large-scale immunization programme will be launched and additional vaccination centers will be created across the country.

According to the head of the National Center for Disease Con-

trol Amiran Gamkrelidze, Georgia has already passed the peak of the third wave of pandemic in the mid-May and the mortality rate that has increased as a result is now expected to decrease gradually:

"We went through the peak in mid-May and after 2-3 weeks, after of the peak, the number of deaths has increased. Now, with this indicator is decreasing in the country, and it will continue to do so, we increase the infection rate. But as you know, each death is a tragedy", Gamkrelidze said.

Gamkrelidze added that the period of four months, after which those who have contained coronavirus are able to get vaccinated, will be decreased in Georgia starting from July, when additional doses of vaccines are delivered. Gamkrelidze added that it is not yet known

how fast such individuals will be able to get vaccinated:

"In many countries, it is 1-2 months, in some this period is only 2 weeks. We will assess the international best practices and reduce the waiting period in July, perhaps".

As of June 15, a total of 1,092

new cases of Covid-19 have been confirmed in Georgia, as well as 23 deaths and 775 recoveries. The total number of Covid-19 cases in Georgia since February 2020 has now reached 355,368, 341,103 of which have recovered and 5,083 have died.

