

NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Ambassadors of EU countries accredited to Georgia are addressing the government in Georgia due to the violence on July 5 and events, that followed-up anti-PRIDE rally held by ultra-right extremists, with participation of several clergymen. Letter was sent to the Minister of Internal affairs Vakhtang Gomelauri; PM Irakli Gharibashvili, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Vice-PM Davit Zalkaliani and Minister of Justice Rati Bregadze received the copies.

The ambassadors note that the violence in the streets of Tbilisi has cast a shadow over EU-Georgia relations and Georgia's image as a country upholding basic human rights. Signatories reminded Georgian authorities that the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression constitute key universal human rights and are assured under the Georgian Constitution. "Yet, on 5 July, the participants of LG-BTQI+ Tbilisi Pride were unable to exercise these rights in the face of imminent threats to their safety."

They write that Physical infringements on the safety of civic activists and journalists caused by targeted organized violence were alarming. In this context ambassadors recalled that journalists must be able to carry out their job safely and securely in any democracy: "We mourn the tragic death of TV cameraman Lekso Lashkarava and await the results of the investigation into the cause of his death."

Heads of EU Missions expressed regret that 'authorities did not call publicly for the protection of those peacefully marking Pride events, take other necessary actions to prevent or deter hate driven speech or, in the end, provide sufficient protection as violent acts against activists and journalists were carried out.'

In the letter, the representatives of EU countries remind the Georgian authorities that observance of the norms enshrined in the Constitution of Human Rights is reflected in the Association Agreement between the EU and Georgia and the

Heads of EU Mission send letter to gov't over Pride related events and their follow-up



► "Rhetoric against values also poses a threat to national security." Photo: Guram Muradov / Civil.ge

European Convention on Human Rights. "They unite us and make us proud, but also oblige us to take action in their defence and to protect the most vulnerable persons in our societies," the letter read.

According to the statement, intensified rhetoric against these values also poses a national security risk, increasing the

vulnerability of Georgia's democracy, already faced with significant disinformation challenges. They called for further immediate and appropriate political and legal actions. All violent incidents and criminal acts need to be effectively and quickly investigated and duly prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

"We call on all relevant authorities to uphold the rule of law and to act in effective prevention of any future attempts at such criminal acts. Further efforts to address hate speech, incitement of hatred and intolerance need to be an integral part of these efforts. In parallel, we call on all sides to act responsibly and refrain from actions that could further aggravate the situation."

Recall that hate groups have insulted the EU flag raised in front of the Georgian Parliament several times. Same violent group abused more than 50 journalists, some of whom are still receiving treatment and are unable to work due to injuries. Lekso Lashkarava, the cameraman of TV Pirveli, who was injured on July 5, died on July 11. Examination has not yet determined whether the physical injuries sustained a few days ago were the cause of his death, MIA speaks of possible drug overdose.

The joint letter of 25 embassies calls the desecration of the EU flag an 'alarming fact', since the flag embodies the fundamental values on which the EU-Georgia relations are based. "The double attack on the flag is also a direct attack on Georgia's democratic and pro-European aspirations."

Signatories of the letter are delegation of the European Union to Georgia and Embassies of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.



► The 25 ambassadors of the EU countries call the desecration of the EU flag an alarming fact.

EXCHANGE RATES:

US DOLLAR - 3.1430 | EURO - 3.7084 | GBP - 4.3603 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.2381 | SWISS FRANC - 3.4178 |

Res claims that the Georgian side exchanged Gakheladze for Gobozov

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

STATE SECURITY SERVICE OF GEORGIA DID NOT CONFIRM THE FACT

Agency Res has reported that Anatoly Bibilov, the de facto president of the Russian-occupied region of so-called South Ossetia pardoned Zaza Gakheladze at the request of the Russian Patriarch Kirill. According to the news agency, Gakheladze was released in exchange for Gobozov, a citizen of so-called South Ossetia.

According to the agency, Gobozov, who was detained by the Georgian side near Lars, is already in Tskhinvali.

According to the Press Service of de facto Foreign Ministry of so-called South Ossetia, in addition to the involvement of the Russian Patriarch in the release, Gakheladze himself wrote a letter of pardon to Anatoly Bibilov, apologizing for his actions and thanking the 'Ossetian authorities for humane treatment'.

July 11 marks one year since Zaza Gakheladze was illegally taken prisoner by the de facto Tskhinvali regime. A few weeks ago, the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Ilia II sent a letter to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill requesting the release of Zaza Gakheladze.

Initially, the de facto Supreme Court of the Russian-occupied Tskhinvali region sentenced Zaza Gakheladze to 12 years and 6 months in prison.

The Georgian news agency,



► Gakheladze has been an illegal prisoner for over a year.



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Netgazeti reported yesterday that they have contacted the State Security Service of Georgia. According to them, the authorities did not confirm the information. The representatives of the State Security Service of Georgia say that Gakheladze has been freed thanks to the intervention of international mechanisms.

According to "Res", Gobozov was detained on neutral territory on the Russian-Georgian border, after which he was in

Georgia prison. The agency's statement also reads that the Georgian side gave Gobozov to the Ossetian side a day prior to the release of Zaza Gakheladze. A TV company IR also issued a video of Bibilov and Gobozov's meeting. According to Russian and Ossetian media, Vadim Gobozov was detained in September 2020 on the neutral territory of the Russian-Georgian border, about 300 meters from the Lars checkpoint.

According to media reports,

40-year-old Vadim Gobozov killed Alan Muzashvili, a 39-year-old dual citizen of Russia and Georgia, who had previously killed Gobozov's father, Alika Gobozov. Both the victim and Vadim Gobozov were truck drivers. The confrontation between them was followed by a traffic jam and verbal abuse.

According to the media, due to the fact that the crime took place 300 meters from the Georgian border and about 2 kilometers from the Russian border, the

Georgian side launched an investigation into the case.

Netgazeti also reports that the former Public Defender of Georgia, Ucha Nanuashvili confirmed the news about Gobozov. He said that as he is aware, there was an exchange between so-called South Ossetia and Georgia. Asked what the non-confirmation of the exchange by the Georgian State Security Service indicates, Ucha Nanuashvili said that the state wants to create a different narrative.

Exhibition Life and Death: Glorious Pompeii in Vani and Tbilisi

From July 17, 2021, the viewer will have the opportunity see the exhibition that will be presented Archaeological material from the Pompeii Archaeological Park

The Italian Embassy continues its cooperation with the Georgian National Museum: this time it is visiting Georgia for the first time. This is the first time an exhibition of this level has been hosted by a regional museum.

The exposition offers the viewer to get acquainted with the life and daily life of an ancient city destroyed by a volcanic eruption two thousand years ago. The exhibition features artefacts such as pottery, household items, ornaments, architectural decor, sculptures and frescoes that once adorned the walls of ancient city houses, as well as precious jewelry and plaster figures of the victims of the eruption of Vesuvius in 79.

The exhibition, curated by the Pompeii Archaeological Park, is organized by the Italian Embassy and the Georgian National Museum in cooperation with the Italian company



Glocal Project Consulting. The exhibition is a continuation of the exhibition initiatives that have been held in recent years with the support of the Italian Embassy and have achieved unprecedented success:

These exhibitions were visited by 250,000 visitors.

The exhibition "Life and Death: Glorious Pompeii", which will open on July 17 at the Otar Lortkipanidze Archaeological Museum in Vani, provides an excellent opportunity to draw a parallel with the city of Vani.

The exhibition will be open to the public in Vani until mid-September, after which it will move to the capital of Georgia.

FRIDAY		JULY 16	
Day		Sunny	High: 32°C
Night		Clear	Low: 19°C
SATURDAY		JULY 17	
Day		Sunny	High: 34°C
Night		Clear	Low: 20°C

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