

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

Hearing of Interior Minister Gomelauri canceled in Parliament

Parliament Chairman announced the hearing was canceled due to the journalists' protest.

Yesterday, the Chairman of the Georgian Parliament announced that the planned hearing of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was canceled. He stated that the reason was the ongoing protest of media and opposition representatives.

Due to the recent events in the country, including the steps taken by the Ministry of Internal Affairs during Pride Week, the deputies were to hear the extraordinary sitting of the Minister of Internal Affairs Vakhtang Gomelauri on July 18.

Vakhtang Gomelauri, upon arriving in Parliament, was stopped from speaking at the first minute by the opposition parties. Opposition MPs went to the rostrum and did not allow the minister to continue his speech.

At the same time, journalists continued to protest, coming to the legislature with photos of the deceased cameraman, Lekso Lashkarava, and displaying banners that read 'Punish the Criminals' in the courtroom.

Before the cancelation of the hearing, UNM's Tina Bokuchava said that the only thing "Georgians want to hear right now is that Gomelauri and Garibashvili resign." One of the leaders of the Georgian Dream, Mamuka Mdinardze, called on the journalists to stop their protest, saying they were involved in an "immoral political activity."

The opposition representatives say that canceling the hearing means that the



Gomelauri's special sitting at the Parliament should have focused on the recent events in the country.



The opposition representatives state that canceling the hearing illustrated the government's fear.

government is afraid of the protest.

The opposition demanded Vakhtang Gomelauri to Parliament before July 5 events, urging him to announce that he was going to protect the security of the Tbilisi Pride members and other activists.

A 'March of Honor' was planned in Tbilisi on July 5 as part of the Tbilisi Pride Week, which was canceled after violent groups in different parts of the city attacked the media representatives, and raided offices.

Fifty-five people were injured in violence by pro-Russian, homophobic, ultra-conservative, and nationalist groups. Pout of the 55 injured, 53 were journalists. One of the victims, Lekso Lashkarava, who was severely beaten, died on July 11.

The opposition and activists in the country are strictly demanding for the Prime Minister and the Internal Affairs Minister to resign. The feedback from the international partners of the country was also critical, with the US State Department talking about potential sanctions. The events were also very negatively assessed by European partners of Georgia.

News in Brief

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Zurabishvili: Human rights violations are unjustified, especially in the parliament

Salome Zurabishvili responds to the events in the parliament today and says

that such cases have a damaging effect on the country's image.

According to the President, human rights violations, especially in the legislature, are unjustified.

Salome Zurabishvili also responds to the ruling team's boycott of the critical channels and says that the media should be allowed to work freely.

Today, the Minister of Internal Affairs Vakhtang Gomelauri was scheduled to hear at the special sitting of the Parliament. However, the deputies of the oppo-

sition parties stopped Gomelauri from giving a speech. They stood in front of the tribune and unfurled banners with photos of the deceased cameraman, Lekso Lashkarava.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, drug dealer who "sold Heroin to Lashkarava" is arrested

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, they arrested a drug dealer who

sold heroin to TV first cameraman Lekso Lashkarava on July 10.

The agency says he was arrested on July 17.

"The accused was selling drugs illegally, and on July 10, 2021, in Ponichala, he sold Heroin to TV 1 operator Alexander Lashkarava and his accomplices," the statement reads.

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Former US Ambassador Kelly on Garibashvili: “We, Americans, know the danger of a leader who makes up facts”



Garibashvili claims he’s never heard the US and Europe making critical remarks.

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The Former Ambassador to Georgia, Ian Kelly, took to Twitter over the weekend to talk about the statements of Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili, who previously said that he “never heard of the US and Europe making critical remarks” around the UNM-era judiciary system in Georgia.

Ian Kelly reminded Garibashvili of the criticism towards the judiciary system during the previous government of

Georgia saying that the remarks of the Georgian Prime Minister are not true.

“Not true. Look at the Human Rights Report — there was always criticism of the UNM-era judiciary. Take 2011: “false, politically motivated charges,” “Abuse of prisoners by govt officials,” “judicial authorities continued to act in favor of the ruling party”. Those are just a few examples of US criticism of Saakashvili’s judiciary. Georgians should know the truth,” wrote Ian Kelly on Twitter.

Kelly stated that he, as an American, knows the danger of a leader “who makes up facts” instead of facing the truth.

The Prime Minister of the country talked about the lack of criticism on the UNM-era judiciary system of Georgia while discussing the feedback that the appointment of six Supreme Court judges was followed with.

“Until 2012, the court was a unit of the ordinary prosecutor’s office. I, unfortunately, and to my great surprise, have never heard a critical remark from either the United States or Europe towards the court, which is unfortunate and not fair,” said Garibashvili.

Garibashvili also told reporters that judicial reform is a continuous process and it can’t be over in a day or two. He even said that in terms of judicial independence and transparency Georgia is doing better than some of the EU countries.

“I promise everyone that this misunderstanding with our strategic key partner will be eliminated and we will answer all the questions. It needs more communication, more relations, and



Ian Kelly reminded the Georgian Prime Minister of some of the critical statements made by international partners during the UNM government.

more explanation,” added Garibashvili.

Parliament approving 6 Supreme Court judges was followed by negative feedback from international partners of the country.

The United States Department of State and Secretary of State Antony Blinken issued statements on July 16 expressing deep disappointment with the appointment of six judges by the Georgian Parliament and calling

on the Georgian authorities to implement the April 19 agreement.

On July 15, the US Embassy in Georgia stated the necessity to suspend the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court. For her part, on July 16, US Ambassador Kelly Degnan said that the US’ message should be taken seriously by the Georgian authorities.

Ambassador of Japan to Georgia Imamura Akira makes the first visit to Ozurgeti Municipality

On July 15, Ambassador of Japan to Georgia IMAMURA Akira visited Ozurgeti Municipality. During the visit, the Ambassador opened the “Project for Improvement of Sanitation in Ozurgeti Municipality”, funded within the Grassroots Human Security

Grant Program (GGP) of the Embassy of Japan. Within this project, 57,329 USD worth of waste collection truck and special containers for plastic bottles have been purchased and will be located in the seaside of Ozurgeti Municipality. The equipment was purchased within the frame-

work of the Green Strategy developed by the city of Ozurgeti and the Guria region. This project will support Ozurgeti Municipality to move toward garbage segregation and sustainable waste management.

This is the second project funded by the Embassy of Japan in Ozurgeti Municipality this year. In January, the Embassy handed over 4 reanobiles to the Emergency Situation Coor-

dination and Urgent Assistance Center, one of which is placed in Ozurgeti Municipality.

During the trip, the Ambassador Imamura and Madam Ambassador visited the rehabilitation center in Ureki City, which has been constructed within the framework of the GGP Human Security Grant Program of the Embassy of Japan in 2014. With the help of the center, the Humanitarian Asso-

ciation “Guria” successfully provides rehabilitation services to people with disabilities.

Together with the MP Ms. Nino Tsilosani, the Ambassador also visited the Ozurgeti Youth Center of the Young Pedagogies Union and met with young people. During the meeting, the Ambassador briefly discussed a broad spectrum of cooperation between Georgia and Japan, underlining the specific projects in the areas of culture and education. The Youth Center has been rehabilitated within the GGP Grant Program of the Embassy of Japan in 2011.

As a final activity of the trip, the Ambassador took part in the Agro-Festival “Tea Route”. Within the festival he met with small and medium sized tea entrepreneurs and tasted Georgian tea and other locally produced products. The Ambassador delivered a speech at the festival and emphasized the important role of tea in Japanese culture and economy.



News in Brief

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The Ministry of Internal Affairs links Lashkarava’s death to a drug overdose and does not say anything about the fact that he was severely beaten by violent groups a few days before his death. On July 12, the agency said that “according to the interim conclusion of the exami-

nation, the cause of death of Lashkarava was drug overdose.”

Journalists meet Hartzel in Batumi with a silent rally: ‘Media is an object of attack’

Journalists met EU Ambassador Carl Hartzel at a silent rally at Batumi Airport.

Journalists carried banners with the captions: ‘LekSOSTvis’, ‘Media is the object of attack’.

Media representatives say that they will let everyone know of the conditions under which journalists work in Georgia and will fight until those responsible are punished.

Weather

Monday, July 19

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 39°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 24°C

Tuesday, July 20

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 40°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 24°C

published by

The Messenger

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