

## Droa leader Khoshtaria, ISFED file complaint at CEC over 'bloody' billboards

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Leader of the political movement Droa Elene Khoshtaria as well as International Society for Fair Elections (ISFED) has filed separate complaints in the Central Election Commission (CEC) over billboards showing opposition leaders on a bloody background.

According to them, the 'bloody billboards' violated Article 41 (6) of the Election Code which reads that all campaign materials should indicate the name and address of the organization that ordered the material as well as circulation-related information.

The billboards read "No to the National Movement, No to evil, No to betrayal" and show political and media leaders, including TV Pirveli journalist Nodar Meladze, European Georgia's leader Giga Bokeria, Mtavari Arkhi TV director-general Nika Gvaramia, leader of Girchi-More Freedom party Zurab Japaridze, MP Gubaz Sanikidze, UNM head Nika Melia, ex-President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili, and ex-Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia.

Businessman Mikheil Gabriadze has told TV channel Rustavi 2 that he and



"No to the National Movement, No to evil, No to betrayal" – reads the banner.



Leader of the political movement Droa Elene Khoshtaria and ISFED claim that the 'bloody billboards' violated Article 41 (6) of the Election Code, according to which, all campaign materials should indicate the name and address of the organization that ordered the material as well as circulation-related information.

his friends stand behind the 'bloody' billboards, claiming that he is not part of any political party, but believe that UNM should not return to power.

Khoshtaria believes that the Georgian Dream party is behind this campaign, however, ruling party leaders have denied the accusations.

GD chair Irakli Kobakhidze told the journalists that in the previous elections, as well as in this election, no one is surprised by hate speech, hatred and aggression, but stated that such an approach is not part of their agenda. He claimed that opposition-minded TV channels are the ones who stir up the atmosphere of hatred and aggression. According to him, he agrees with the content of the banners, but does not approve of the form of expression.

Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze denied any links with the banners as well and stated that putting them up was part of the opposition's dirty campaign. Kaladze stated that he dislikes the billboards, however, he stressed that they belong to advertising company ALMA and the City Hall has no right to interfere. According to ALMA, they only sell and rent space on constructions for banners and do not take responsibility for the content and design of the billboards.

On September 18, a photo was published on Facebook showing that a Covid-19 vaccination banner was replaced by the 'bloody' billboard. The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) of Georgia condemned the fact and stated that the NCDC had nothing to do with it.

Yesterday, NCDC addressed the advertising company ALMA with a letter and urged them to immediately restore the banners supporting the vaccination against Covid-19.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.1099; Euro - 3.6429; GBP - 4.2593; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.2372; Swiss Franc - 3.3425

# Health officials concerned about the dip in vaccination rate



The upcoming programs of the USAID will focus on vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.

According to Georgian Deputy Health Minister Tamar Gabunia, 7,720 individuals have received the coronavirus vaccine around the country on Sunday, which is the lowest figure since July.

vaccines.

According to the USAID, additional programs and international partners will facilitate increased access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and further strengthen the Georgian people's ability to manage the cases of COVID-19. As USAID noted, the main focus will be on vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.

Deputy Minister of Health also touched upon the easing of restrictions in the education sector and stated that in-person learning would resume on October 4 if the epidemiological situation stabilizes until then. According to her, NCDC and the Ministry of Education are preparing additional proposals regarding the safe opening of schools.

Georgia reported 662 new cases of coronavirus, 3,534 recoveries, and 34 deaths On Monday. Currently, 23,795 patients remain infected with Covid-19. In total, 563,530 of the 595,926 patients have recovered, while 8,575 have deceased.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Deputy Minister of Health, Tamar Gabunia announced yesterday that the rate of vaccination has decreased in recent days. According to her, the situation is alarming and indicates that there is a serious need to

further boost the vaccination program by expanding the information campaign.

Amid the slowdown, the capital is leading in terms of vaccination as more than 60% of the adult population is already vaccinated, however, the same statistics are not observed in other

regions of Georgia. Vaccination in the country is voluntary and, according to Gabunia, no other model is being considered so far.

It was announced on September 17 that The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will allocate USD 5,4 million as additional

assistance to Georgia to fight against Covid-19. In partnership with the Zinc Network, USAID will develop a series of public service announcements that will bust vaccine myths, inform the public about the benefits of getting the vaccine shot, and share fact-based information about

# Foreign trade turnover increased by 22.3%



In the first 8 months of 2021, the largest import groups were Cars, Oil and oil products, Copper ores and concentrates, Medicines and Natural gas.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) released preliminary data, according to which, in January-August 2021, the foreign trade turnover of goods in Georgia (excluding undeclared trade) amounted to \$8,683.5 million, which is 22.3%

higher than the corresponding period of the previous year.

Of this the export was \$2 610.8 million, an increase of 26 %, while imports amounted to \$6 072.7 million, which is 20.7% more.

Georgia's negative trade balance in January-August 2021 amounted to \$3,461.9 million, which is 39.9% of foreign trade turnover.

At the same time, in January-August of this year, the share of the 10 largest trading partners in the total foreign trade turnover of Georgia amounted to 70.1%. The largest trade part-

ners of the country are Turkey - \$1 286.9 million, Russia - \$1 011.9 mln. and China - \$941.3 mln.

In particular, the share of the 10 largest exporting countries in Georgia's total exports amounted to 77.7%. China ranks first in the top 3 largest exports with \$421.8 million, Russia is in second place - \$377.1 million, and Azerbaijan - \$347.0 mln.

As for the share of the 10 largest import partner countries, the total import of Georgia amounted to 67.8%. Turkey is in the top 3 - \$1 075.4 million, Russia - \$634.8 million. and China - \$519.5 mln.

According to preliminary data from Geostat, in January-August, copper ores and concentrates took the first place in the top ten exports of commodity groups with \$517.9 million, accounting for 19.8% of total exports. The second place is taken by cars with \$293.4 million, and in third place are ferroalloys with \$265.5 million.

And, the largest import commodity group was presented in the form of passenger cars, whose imports amounted to \$547.6 million and accounted for 9% of total imports. The second place was occupied by oil and oil products at \$492.1 mln, while in third place were copper ores and concentrates with \$445.9 mln.

According to Geostat, exports without re-exports accounted for 72.7% of total exports. This figure increased by 28.7% compared

to the same period last year and amounted to \$1,899.1 million.

In August 2021, the producer price index of industrial products increased by 1.2% compared to the previous month, while the index increased by 16.4% compared to the corresponding month of the previous year.

According to Geostat, compared to July of this year, prices increased by 0.3% for the mining and quarrying group, which had an impact of 0.02% points on the change in the total index. During the same period, prices increased by 0.9% for the group of products of the manufacturing industry, which contributed 0.74% points to the change in the overall index. Among the products included in the group, there is a 4.8% increase in prices for basic metals.

In addition, a 4.1% increase in prices was recorded for the group of electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning, which contributed 0.42% points to the change in the total monthly index. During the 12-month period, the formation of the index was mainly influenced by the

change in prices for the following products: Mining and quarrying: Prices decreased by 1.1%, which was reflected in the change in the overall index by -0.16%.

The group notes a -9.2% drop in prices for metal ores; Manufacturing Products: Prices rose 18.3%, boosting overall index growth by 14.61%.

Prices increased in the following subgroups: food products (16.5%), other non-metallic mineral products (11.2%) and basic metals (47.3%); Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning: Prices rose by 10.7%, impacting the annual change in the overall index by 1.12%; Water supply, sewerage, waste management and recycling services: prices rose by 30.1%, impacting the overall index by 0.83%.



Last year, compared to 2019, passenger turnover decreased by 1,690,000, which was affected by the pandemic.

## Weather

Tuesday, September 21

Day ☀️ Clear High: 30°C  
Night 🌧️ Partly Cloudy Low: 18°C

Wednesday, September 22

Day 🌧️ Overcast High: 27°C  
Night 🌧️ Showers Low: 15°C

published by **The Messenger**

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia  
Founded by Prof.

**Zaza Gachechiladze**  
**Tamar Gachechiladze**  
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000  
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge  
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

**Nino Metreveli**  
Commercial Director

**Mariam Mchedlidze**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Natalia Kochiashvili**  
Executive Editor

**Khatuna Gogichaishvili**  
Layout Designer, Photographer

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.