

## Saakashvili's return to deepen political crisis and tension, says MEP Viola Von Cramon



► "Saakashvili's intention to return to Georgia on the day of the elections will not serve the interests of Georgia," MEP Viola Von Cramon said.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

MEP Viola Von Cramon has released a statement saying that former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili's decision to return to Georgia for the October 2 municipal elections "will further deepen the crisis, create unnecessary tension, and damage precarious political processes as well as the democratic image of the country."

It became known several days ago that the former president Saakashvili is intending to arrive in Georgia as he posted a photo of a reserved ticket from Ukraine to Georgia for the evening of the day of municipal elections on October 2.

Saakashvili faces several criminal charges such as Violent dispersal of anti-government mass protests on November 7, 2007, unlawful raiding of Imedi television company by riot police, exceeding official powers by using violence and appropriation or embezzlement of budget money in large quantities. The ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party states that Saakashvili will be arrested upon his arrival to Georgia.

According to MEP Cramon, confrontation and violence are reaching 'extremely dangerous' levels in Georgia ahead of the elections and she believes

that against this background, "no politician who genuinely puts the interests of his country above everything else should rock the boat by provoking further polarization." Cramon states that the EU has no resources or desire

to mediate yet another 'unnecessary' political crisis, which, according to her, will inevitably occur in case Saakashvili returns.

"We, international friends of Georgia, remain committed to the people

of Georgia who deserve responsible politicians with the interests of their country at heart," reads the statement.

Nika Melia, the head of the UNM party does not rule out that the president of Georgia Salome Zurbashvili may pardon Saakashvili if he returns to Georgia. According to him, Georgian Dream does not trust Zurbashvili anymore, and they theoretically allow the possibility that she may pardon Saakashvili. The reason for this could be the fact that President Zurbashvili has recently criticized the government for denying the EU loan and said earlier this week that a coalition government is necessary for Georgia. As Melia announced, in order to have insurance that Saakashvili will stay in prison, Georgian Dream has instructed several prosecutors to prepare the ground for a new charge against him.

GD has dismissed reports on new charges and stated that there are no expectations that President Zurbashvili may pardon Saakashvili.

Shalva Papuashvili one of the leaders of the Georgian Dream stressed that Saakashvili has been sentenced to three years in the case of the murder of Sandro Girgvliani and six years in the case of beating Valeri Gelashvili. "I do not think that any of our international partners will express willingness to interfere in the release of a man who is convicted in the cases of murder and beating," he said.



► According to UNM head Nika Melia, the ruling party does not trust President Zurbashvili anymore and allows the possibility that she might pardon Saakashvili, if he returns to Georgia.



EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.1207 | EURO - 3.6450 | GBP - 4.2488 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.2953 | SWISS FRANC - 3.3610 |

# Salome Zourabichvili: It is clear that a coalition government is necessary

THE PRESIDENT SPOKE ABOUT HER OPINION ON COALITION GOVERNMENT IN HER INTERVIEW WITH JDD



Zourabichvili touched upon several issues, including the European future of Georgia



GD Mayoral Candidate Kakha Kaladze said that it is not the decision of Zourabichvili for Georgia to have a coalition government, rather, it is the choice of the Georgian people

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili talked about the necessity of creating a coalition government and its importance for Georgia in her interview with JDD.

The president said that overcoming polarization is complicated, yet very important. She also said that after 9 years of a one-party government, it is clear that the country is in need of a coalition government. At the same time, she said that it is hard to imagine how the coalition government will function in the country due to the “opposition being so antagonistic.”

In the interview, the president of the country also noted that the only way for the further development of the country is a close connection with the European Union.

“In the meantime, we must enjoy everything we can get: We have joined numerous Europe-

an programs, such as Erasmus, Visa Liberalization, numerous markets have opened, etc. Georgia is European at heart, and it is becoming more and more so daily. Georgia has the potential to be even more European,” said the President.

Zourabichvili also discussed the integration of Georgia to NATO and the impact of Russia on this, saying that Russia has

damaged some of the positions that Georgia had.

After the interview, MEP Viola von Cramon said that the role of Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili may be crucial in the coming weeks. She said this while replying to the Georgian President's interview with JDD, writing: “Important statement by the Georgian President. Her role in the next week

might be crucial,” on Twitter. According to Kakha Kaladze, the Tbilisi mayoral candidate of the Georgian Dream, neither the President of Georgia nor he has to decide what kind of government Georgia will have. Kaladze told the media about this while commenting on the president's statement.

Commenting on the same issue, the representative of the

majority, MP Irakli Kadagishvili said that the end of the one-party rule is the decision that should be made by the Georgian people in the parliamentary elections.

Zourabichvili gave an interview to JDD during her visit to France, where she also met the president of the country and other government representatives.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

### Georgian Patriarchate: In case of confirmation of the accusation, there should be a strict response to the illegal surveillance and eavesdropping

The Patriarchate of Georgia issued a statement, saying that in case of confirmation of the accusation, there should be a strict response to the illegal surveillance and eavesdropping on both clergy and laity, as well as in relation to the people who are responsible for the dissemination of the material. As the statement notes, the church has always guarded and will guard the seal of confession. “This is why it is so important for us a thorough investigation to be carried out by the state in a timely manner,” - reads the statement. The statement of the Patriarchate points out that if real evidence is obtained about the inappropriate actions of the specific clergymen mentioned in the disseminated materials, the ethical commission of the Patriarchate will have an appropriate response.

### Shalva Papuashvili says the President won't pardon Mikheil Saakashvili

Georgian Dream's Shalva Papuashvili stated while commenting on Saakashvili's potential arrival in Tbilisi that “international partners would not want to interfere in the release from prison of a person convicted in the cases of murder and beating.”

Asked whether President Salome Zurabishvili was expected to pardon Saakashvili, Papuashvili said there were no such expectations.

“The court of three instances of Georgia has ruled on two cases against Mikheil Saakashvili. He has been sentenced to three years in the case of the murder of Sandro Girgvliani. He has been sentenced to six years in the case of beating Valeri Gelashvili.

In addition, the cases of embezzlement of 8 million and Imedi are under consideration. I hope there is no group of people in this country who will question whether the verdicts in the cases of Sandro Girgvliani and Valeri Gelashvili should be enforced,” Papuashvili said.

**THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 30**

Day Rain  
High: 15°C

Night Rain  
Low: 12°C

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**FRIDAY OCTOBER 1**

Day Cloudy  
High: 14°C

Night Rain  
Low: 11°C

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