

## GD Holds Rally Before Elections

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

On Wednesday, the supporters of the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party gathered at Liberty Square to attend the concluding rally of the GD ahead of the second round of the municipal elections.

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili announced at the rally that by gathering there the world would see the choice and strength of the Georgian people, who seek to end destabilization and ensure long-term, stable and peaceful development of the country.

As he noted, people today need peace, stability, employment, and prosperity, not chaos, boycott and revenge.

"We will overcome all problems through joint efforts. I strongly believe that the coming years will be the years of reconstruction and unification. It is my great desire to end the rivalry and unite," the PM announced.

According to him, in the history of independent Georgia, the Georgian Dream managed to ensure peace and stability for the longest time, which was crucial to implement fundamental and democratic reforms.

"In a few days, the Georgian people will



► According to Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili, in the history of independent Georgia, the Georgian Dream managed to ensure peace and stability for the longest time.

once again have to make a choice, not just between political parties, but justice and injustice, good and evil, peace and chaos, care and oppression, development and regression, between Georgia's future or return to the past," he underscored.

Tbilisi mayoral candidate Kakha Kaladze also addressed the supporters, urging all of them to participate in the upcoming elections, 'to finally end the political force's [UNM] ambitions based on violence and evil.'

According to Parliament Speaker Kakha Kuchava, Georgian Dream managed to bring strategic partnership with the European Union, the USA and NATO to a whole new level. "The next three years should be devoted to progress and implementation of new reforms," said Kakha Kuchava.

GD head Irakli Kobakhidze urged the public on Monday to actively participate in municipal election run-offs on October 30. He turned down the reports according to which the gathering of ruling party supporters is a counter-rally to the United National Movement (UNM) opposition party demonstration held on October 14. Kobakhidze stated that the ruling party supporters significantly outnumber those who attended the recent UNM rally.



► The local runoff elections will be held on Saturday, October 30.

## Georgia Further Polarized Before Final Round of Elections

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

With a few days left until the elections' second round, political powers are rapidly polarizing. Tension is rising in Georgian politics as leaders of the Georgian dream are predicting a convincing victory, while threatening the UNM with 'finishing them'. The ruling team refuses to pay attention to Saakashvili's hunger strike and criticizes the European politicians who are protesting Saakashvili's imprisonment.

The second round of self-government

elections should be held in 20 urban centers. Georgian dream plans to win every single center. Any other result is unacceptable to the ruling party. Another opposing consequence is a threat to the governmental party. According to leaders of the "Georgian dream", any municipality handed to the opposition, would be an island of revolution and the opposition will use it to mobilize their power. The ruling party planned a great political rally in the center of Tbilisi on October 28th, which will be used to cover up oppositions' October 14th rally with 60,000

people attending. Leaders of the Georgian dream are sticking to their aggressive rhetoric. There is little to no difference between Gharibashvili-Kobakhidze and Kaladze's announcements. They are all threatening the main opposition party UNM with 'ending them'.

The Georgian dream party has been the ruling party for nine years now. During this period, they have been fighting against the UNM, but if we take a deep look at the statistics, we can see that the UNM's rating is not getting weaker, on the contrary— it's been increasing.

In 2014 self-government elections, the UNM collected only 317,395 votes (22,42%), in 2016 parliamentary elections 477,053 votes (27,11%), in 2020 parliamentary elections 523,127 votes (27,18%), and lastly in the first round of 2021 self-government elections 541,188 votes (30,67%).

Before the second round of the elections, in the battle of 'votes mobilization' ex-prime minister Giorgi Gakharia's party's supporters gained 'a special meaning'.

Continued to page 2



EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.1428 | EURO - 3.6519 | GBP - 4.3427 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.4287 | SWISS FRANC - 3.4183 |

# Georgia Further Polarized Before Final Round of Elections

From page 1

Before the elections, leaders of the Georgian dream had been calling Gakharia a traitor and ultimately, his supporters were fired from governmental institutions. Now things have changed. Before the second round of the elections, the Georgian dream softened the aggression towards Gakharia, and his supporters were announced as potential voters of the ruling party. Gakharia, himself, declared neutrality and is not going to call for the support of any party. It's hard to say how his

supporters are going to act, but most likely they will choose the Georgian Dream over the UNM.

The rest of the primary oppositional parties are unified, as they managed to consolidate, before the second round. For a bright instance, Nika Melia, a Tbilisi governor candidate, established a so-called shadow cabinet, which is going to rule a capital city. Melia named his four deputies, who are leaders of main opposition parties.

As Georgian dream leaders announced, Kaladze will win in the second round and Melia has no chance to succeed over him.

Even though demonstrating such self-confidence, the ruling party is nervous about banners featuring Melia, promising free meals in schools, as well as higher pensions for senior citizens.

At first, GD leaders laughed at them, but then promised that they would provide 500 GEL assistance to senior citizens.

Mikheil Saakashvili has been on a hunger strike since October 1st, demanding freedom. Nevertheless, the government is not going to release him from prison. In fact, the ruling party does not think twice before

commenting on Saakashvili's 'special diet'. On the other hand, Saakashvili should spend 6 years in prison, maybe more, because other charges are being added to him such as the "illegal crossing of the state border". Consequently, men who helped Saakashvili with illegal state border crossing are also arrested.

Among western politicians, there is a rising number of authority figures and parliamentarians, who are requesting Saakashvili's freedom. The announcement, signed by five euro parliamentarians, sug-

gests a specific plan to free the ex-president. "The Saakashvili case" should be discussed by the European Court of Human Rights, prior to that he must be released. GD leaders are answering the messages from the west with anger and disrespectful criticism, telling them to not interfere in domestic affairs, suggesting to 'mind their business.'

Saakashvili refuses to receive any medical help as of now, and his health is deteriorating daily.

(Translated by Zaur Mgebrishvili)

# Georgia at the Future of World Tourism Summit

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia together with the National Tourism Administration participated in the World Tourism Summit in Spain. The Future of Tourism World Summit is supported by the United Nations World Tourism Organization and our country was represented by Mariam Kvirivishvili, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, and the Acting Head of the National Tourism Administration.

Within the framework of the summit, a high-level ministerial was held, at which Kvirivishvili delivered a speech. High-level bilateral meetings of the Georgian delegation were also held.

Various panel discussions were also held within the framework of the summit, where the participants shared their experiences gained during the covidium period. Talks focused on tourism recovery plans, the hospitality industry, urban tourism, consumer and tourist protection.

"The first task and priority of the Government of Georgia is to eliminate the problem of employment and create new jobs," Kvirivishvili said at the World Tourism Summit while intro-



► Georgia begins talks on direct Tbilisi-Madrid flights.



► The Future of Tourism Word Summit is being held in Barcelona, where 80 representatives of 70 countries are attending.

ducing the "Renewed Regions" project, which is implemented in all regions of Georgia at the initiative of the Prime Minister and promotes not only the development of basic infrastructure in all regions, but also the development of tourism infrastructure. The talks also touched upon the importance of employment that our country and other countries have in the reality of Covid-19.

"This event will contribute to the recognition and positioning of our country and we are proud that Georgia is considered one of the best examples."

The Future of Tourism World Summit was held in Barcelona, Spain on October 26-27, attended by 80 speakers from 70 countries, ministries, administrations and international organizations.

During her visit to Spain, Kvirivishvili also met with the heads of European airlines. At the meeting with the representatives of "Air Europe" and "Iberia", the sides discussed the relations between Georgia and the Kingdom of Spain in the civil aviation sector.

The Deputy Economy Minister provided detailed information to the representatives of the airlines on the pace of economic recovery in Georgia, paying special attention to the situation in the civil aviation and tourism sector and the positive trends observed after the gradual lifting of pandemic restrictions.

Kvirivishvili emphasized the

importance of the resumption of direct flights between Kutaisi and Barcelona from October 31 that will further deepen economic relations between the countries. She also underlined that the appointment of direct flights between Tbilisi and Madrid will have a positive impact on tourism growth and attracting investors - initial negotiations are underway with both airlines.

"Diversification of markets and direct destinations is a top priority for us, to facilitate the flow of more tourists from Europe to our country," Kvirivishvili said.

Recall that direct, weekly flights between Kutaisi and Barcelona will begin on October 31, at the western Georgian Kutaisi International Airport, by Hungarian airline Wizz Air.

The meeting with the airlines was attended by the Ambassador of Georgia to the Kingdom of Spain Iliia Giorgadze and the Acting Head of the National Tourism Administration. Ambassador stated that Georgia 'is working very actively to schedule flights between Madrid and Tbilisi,' noting that Air Europa and Iberia are 'leading Spanish airlines.'

"I am sure that in the near future there will be direct flights between Madrid and Tbilisi, and it will cover not only Spain and Georgia but also Latin and Central America, which will help attract more tourists to Georgia."

THURSDAY OCTOBER 28

Day Sunny High: 16°C

Night Partly clouds Low: 3°C

FRIDAY OCTOBER 29

Day Sunny skies High: 16°C

Night Mostly cloudy Low: 7°C

published by **The Messenger**

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia

Founded by Prof. **Zaza Gachechiladze**  
**Tamar Gachechiladze**  
Publisher

Phone: +995 99 56 56 21; +995 77 76 00 00  
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge  
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

**Nino Metreveli**  
Commercial Director

**Mariam Mchedlidze**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Natalia Kochiashvili**  
Executive Editor

**Nino Kavelashvili**  
Design and Layout

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.