

Opposition Announces a Rally in Tbilisi on November 6

It was announced to protest the results of municipal elections



Opposition holds a protest yesterday on Rustaveli Avenue

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

Yesterday, on October 31, the opposition gathered at Rustaveli to protest the results of the elections. Representatives of the opposition also discussed the plans. Political movement "Shame" also joined the rally.

The representatives of the movement said that the elections were rigged, and the government of Georgia is not legitimate. They say that the only way to get back the democratic processes to the

country is a massive, peaceful protest.

According to the chairman of the National Movement, Nika Melia, no one should have the illusion that they can get away with the "stolen elections".

Melia also said that they are not planning to give up. According to him, they are going to fight against 'injustice' with high motivation.

Melia said that they will visit Batumi on Tuesday to protest on the spot, then in Kutaisi and other cities, and on Saturday, the rally will be held in Tbilisi.

According to the chairman of the UNM, this will be a different action that the whole world will see.

He added that the scale of the rally would be larger than it was on October 14 as well as the content and aim of the protest would be different - protecting the interest of the state.

Nika Melia told the Georgian Dream that this fight, which is spreading across the country and is dedicated to justice and the return of stolen votes, will inevitably mean "the release of those arrested, who

were detained just because they were supporters of the opposition."

Mamuka Khazaradze, one of the leaders of Lelo, is leaving the parliament. He said this during a rally on Rustaveli Avenue.

"There is no point of doing work with people who stab you in the back and steal votes from you. Because of this, I have decided to leave parliament today," said Khazaradze.

Self-government elections were held in Georgia on October 30. The CEC has already published results, according to which Tsalenjikha is the only municipality where an opposition candidate won. In other major cities and self-governing communities, GD candidates won.

Yesterday's protest was announced by the opposition shortly after the accountment of the results of the elections. Before the elections, on October 14, UNM held a rally on Freedom Square in support of Mikheil Saakashvili and demanded his release from prison.



Khazaradze announced that he is giving up his Parliament mandate

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Georgian Political Crisis Deepens With Elections

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The 2021 self-governmental elections gained far-reaching importance for Georgia. The crisis that started after the 2020 parliamentary elections will deepen if the opposition wins none out of 20 urban centers, in the second round of the elections, or the results of elections would be more believable to the opposition if half of their winning expectations live up to the hype. Yet, there is no perspective to relieve the crisis.

GD leaders actively claim that they'll gain a convincing victory in all locations, where the second round is going to be held. Their announcements carry bile and hatred towards oppositional powers, calling UNM and its allies "criminal groups", "radical anti-governmental and anti-church powers",

who wish to destabilize the process instead of building up a country. Statements about victory and "bad opposition ending" are not the same and they contain a great threat to political processes.

The opposition talks about the importance of coalition ruling, but GD does not approve of the idea of coalition ruling, therefore, it is not acceptable to them. However, in Europe, which our country minds to join, coalition ruling, moreover in parliamentary ruling conditions, is a usual case. Additionally, it is a kind of democratic governing.

Results of the 2020 parliamentary elections, which the opposition denies, give GD the ability to prevent a threat of coalition ruling, but in some urban centers, where the second round should be held, there is a high chance of oppositional candidates

winning. While facing these perspectives, GD leaders threaten that the central government will not cooperate with them and those oppositional candidates who win certain urban centers would fail to do anything. Again, this is a strange announcement to democracy, because self-government has its constitutional rights, also it is pretty normal for self-government not to be one-party and the central government could cooperate with oppositional self-governments. Nevertheless, in this case, the government has its logic – they see "oppositional islands" as "revolutionary hearths", thus perceive it as critically "dangerous". This may lead to a strengthened desire for snap parliamentary elections, also weakening of administrative resources during future elections in those regions, where self-government would be con-

trolled by the opposition.

The governmental party opposed its massive rally of 27th October to October 14th crowded oppositional rallies, with people brought from different regions.

Firstly, this was a demonstration of power by GD and it was accordingly assumed by the opposition. The Saakashvili factor stresses pre-election tensions even more. At first glance, GD locked up its "main enemy" in prison, where, according to ruling party leaders, he should spend several more years. On the other hand, Saakashvili's hunger strike gives even less time for GD to act properly. Some people may want the death of the ex-president and they do not hide it either, but in fact, this could be the hardest hit to the ruling team. Not giving up a claim, that Saakashvili should be hospitalized in a local prison hospital

except a special clinic, is nothing but a loss to the government.

A prison hospital is not only poorly equipped but also half of the service staff are prisoners and criminals. GD leaders are hesitating. They refuse to pay attention to European parliamentarians and politician's demands, to hospitalize Saakashvili, and also do not let Ukrainian journalists and Saakashvili's lawyer enter Georgia.

If we consider the fact that Ukraine counts as a strategic partner of Georgia and Saakashvili is a citizen of Ukraine, who was actively involved in Ukrainian politics, his imprisonment and mistreatment could affect Georgia-Ukraine relationships in a negative sense, apart from driving the country backwards.

(Translated from Georgian by Zaur Mgebrishvili)

Ruling Party Wins All But One Run-offs, Opposition Announces Protests

The second round of municipal elections were held on Saturday, October 30

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

The ruling part of Georgia, Georgian Dream, won 19 out of 20 mayoral districts in Georgia, including the capital city, Tbilisi.

The chief of the Central Election Commission, Giorgi Kalandarishvili said that the election was competitive, free, and transparent. On the other hand, independent monitoring organizations, for example, Transparency International, announced that they had identified up to 150 violations during the election day.

The head of the largest opposition party, United National Movement, UNM, Nika Melia said that he was denouncing the elections and called on his supporters to gather in Tbilisi to agree with a plan for the future.

Melia, who was Tbilisi Mayoral candidate, said that no one in the country should have the

illusion that they can get away with 'rigged, violent, and insulting elections'. Second rounds were held in 20 municipalities in the country. This includes four major cities of the country, as well as the smallest towns. The opposition only managed to win one municipality, Tsalenjikha.

While the ruling party celebrated its win in the elections, several international organizations, as well as opposition representatives made critical comments.

The leader of Girchi - More Freedom wrote on Facebook that the elections were rigged and as a result, Georgia has a non-le-

gitimate government, and with this, thinking about the further development of the country is unimaginable.

According to the OSCE/ODIHR, the second round of local elections was well administered, but continued polarization and heightened negative rhetoric negatively affected the process.

The head of the mission, Albert Jynsson, said election day was generally calm, although people mobilized outside the polling stations and observers acting as party supporters were concerned.

According to the OSCE/ODIHR, candidates generally

had the opportunity to run the campaign freely, but there were complaints of intimidation and pressure. At the same time, they said, inequality in resources and the inadequate advantage of being in power played an additional role in favor of the ruling party and shifted the scales on its side.

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, ISFED, observed the second round of local self-government elections in 8 different municipalities, including 5 self-governing cities and 3 self-governing communities. The organization revealed various irregularities, including violations of control, agitation, deliberate cancellation

of ballot papers, and so on.

ISFED considers the second round of self-government elections to be a missed opportunity for the democratic development of the country. According to the ISFED chair, the trends revealed on election day have damaged confidence in the electoral process.

The leader of the UNM, Nika Melia, announced a rally that was held yesterday at 7 on Rustaveli avenue. Melia said that he and his team would visit Batumi, Kutaisi, and other cities in Georgia to meet with supports and discuss the next steps.



The ruling party won 19 out of 20 mayoral districts in the country



ISFED chair assessed the elections as a missed opportunity for the future development of Georgia

Weather

Monday, November 1

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 19°C
Night Partly Cloudy Low: 9°C

Tuesday, November 2

Day Partly Cloudy High: 21°C
Night Overcast Low: 12°C

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