

President Zourabichvili Pledges to Never Pardon Ex-president Saakashvili

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili said yesterday that she would never pardon former president Mikheil Saakashvili, claiming that he is neither a victim nor a political prisoner. "He deliberately entered the country illegally to cause destabilization," the president stated.

Zourabichvili has received severe criticism from opposition parties. According to Salome Samadashvili, a member of the Lelo- Partnership for Georgia faction, it is a tragedy of the country that the president missed 'a historic chance' when she could 'write a new, better future in the modern history of her country.'

A member of the United National Movement (UNM) opposition party, Zaal Udumashvili, has stated that Zourabichvili was appointed with the support of the ruling party and is still fulfilling the demands of the party.

In response to Zourabichvili's recent statement former president Saakashvili has stressed that he does not expect to be pardoned by the regime that 'made up' cases against him.

"I am a personal prisoner of Putin. They [GD] take instructions directly from Moscow and thus only the Georgian people can release me," reads the letter of the former President of Georgia.

Saakashvili has praised the decision of politician Elene Khoshtaria, who has started a hunger strike in Parliament in demand of Saakashvili's transfer to a civil clinic instead of a prison hospital. According to Khoshtaria, she has 'never been Saakashvili's supporter' and does not approve of many of his actions, however, she believes that the government's attitude to Saakashvili is 'cynical and unacceptable,' and that Saakashvili's life is at risk. Khoshtaria has stated that some other individuals also plan to join her strike.

According to "Ukrinform", Ukrainian Rada High Commissioner for Human Rights Ludmila Denisova has met with Mikheil Saakashvili's mother Giuli Alasania and her lawyer. As Denisova noted,



► According to Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili, Saakashvili is 'neither a victim nor a political prisoner', and he will not be pardoned.



► Saakashvili was arrested in Tbilisi on October 1, after being in political exile for eight years.

Saakashvili's mother is worried about the health of her son and fears that prolonged hunger could have irreversible consequences for his life and health. Saakashvili has been on a hunger strike for 34 days and has lost 20 kilograms.

Yesterday, the ex-president's mother appealed to the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky to ensure Saakashvili's return to Ukraine. According to Alasania, Saakashvili requires special medical treatment to survive after a 35-day hunger strike, however, the only place the government offers to place him is the prison infirmary. Saakashvili's mother, as well as his party members and supporters, claim that Saakashvili requires such treatments that cannot be provided in the prison clinic.

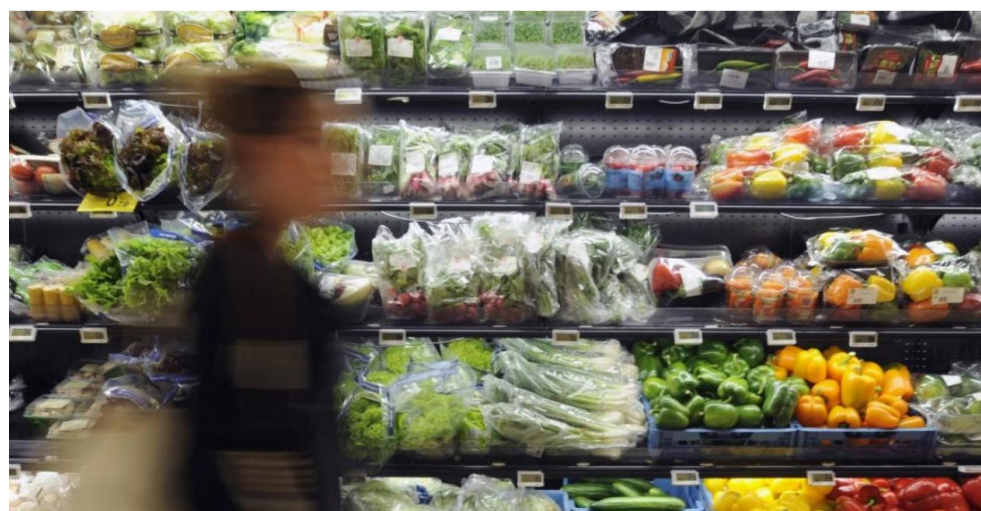
Georgia's Annual Inflation Reaches Record 12.8% In October

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat) published a report according to which in October the consumer price index in Georgia increased by 12.9% compared to the previous year. The biggest impact on the formation of inflation was the 18% increase in food prices, as well as the rise in fuel prices, which led to higher prices in the transport group. 12.8% is a record high inflation in Georgia during the last 10 years.

According to individual groups, the increase in prices is as follows:

In the group of food and non-alcoholic beverages prices increased by 18.4%, which was reflected in 5.73% of annual



► In one year, the price of vegetables increased by 43%, oil by 31%, and bread by 19%.

inflation. Prices increased for the following subgroups: vegetables and horticulture (43%), oil and fat (31.6%), bread and bakery products (19.4%), milk, cheese and eggs (18.2%), sugar, jam, and other sweets (18%), Fish (16%), mineral and spring water, non-alcoholic beverages and natural juices (13%), meat and meat products (11.2%), fruits and grapes (9.3%), coffee, tea and cocoa (6.4%);

Prices in the transport group increased by 19.6%, which was reflected in the growth of the overall index by 2.4%. Prices increased for the operation of personal vehicles (28.9%) and transport services (2.8%).

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EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.1678 | EURO - 3.6740 | GBP - 4.3174 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.4115 | SWISS FRANC - 3.4704 |

President Zourabichvili Talks About the Importance of Vaccination, Calls for COVID Passes

By Nika Gamtsemlidze

ZOURABICHVILI TALKED ABOUT IT AT A SPECIAL BRIEFING ON WEDNESDAY

The President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, spoke at a special briefing at the Orbeliani Palace about overcoming the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. She addressed the authorities to take urgent and strict measures.

President focused on several important steps that she believes must be taken. Among them are mandatory vaccination for risk groups, adoption of Covid Passes for entering public places, and even paid treatment for those who did not receive the vaccine.

Zourabichvili also addressed the Patriarchate of Georgia and called on them to give a clear example to people about vaccination. She also noted that she is against any type of additional restrictions of economic activity.

The president called the consequences of the pandemic a catastrophic situation for which, in her estimation, everyone is responsible. Paata Imnadze, Deputy Director of the National Center for Disease Control, says that if vaccination of the population continues



► Zourabichvili said that it is important to vaccinate more people.



► Only 33% of the population is fully vaccinated in Georgia.

at this rate, the coronavirus will never go away.

“We will never get rid of this virus. A big and bad forecast could be that many countries will get away with it, but we won't. If we continue to move at this pace, Covid will always be around,” said Imnadze.

Yesterday, it was announced that the government of Poland will give Georgia 468,000 doses of the Covid-19 vaccine, Pfizer. It was reported by the Ministry of Health, saying that the first part of the donation has already

entered Georgia. Yesterday, the Deputy Minister of Health, Tamar Gabunia, also talked about the importance of vaccination in the country. She said that the support of the Georgian church could be a very important factor for vaccination in the country.

“Georgia has an experience of having a very serious breakthrough with the support of the Church. For example, in the TB management program, the Georgian church stood by those who needed help and supported them to overcome this difficult

path,” said Gabunia. Against the background of the deteriorating epidemiological situation in Georgia, the rate of vaccination has sharply decreased.

The daily vaccination rate in October was only twice as high as 9,000, and since the beginning of November, it has not even reached 4,000, while the Ministry of Health and the National Center for Disease Control considered it necessary to get at least 30,000 vaccinations a day.

Vaccination in Georgia started on March 15, 2021. Only 33.1% of

the adult population is fully vaccinated at this time.

In the first phase, to achieve the goal of immunization, the National Center for Disease Control considered it necessary to vaccinate at least 60% of the adult population by the end of the year.

However, later the director of the center, Amiran Gamkrelidze, stated several times that due to the spread of the more complex and contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus, at least 80% vaccination was needed to stop the epidemic.

Georgia's Annual Inflation Reaches Record 12.8% In October

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At the same time, prices decreased for the purchase of vehicles (-1.3%); Housing, water, electricity, gas: The group recorded an 11.9% increase in prices, which was reflected in annual inflation by 1.75%. Prices increased for the subgroups: electricity, gas, and other fuels (13.9%), ongoing maintenance and repair of housing (7.3%), water supply, and other housing-related services (4.5%);

Prices in healthcare increased by 8.4%. Accordingly, the group's contribution to the annual index was 0.65%. Prices increased for the subgroups of medical products, apparatus, and equipment (12.7%), hospital services (5.3%), and outpatient services (3.6%).

Maia Makharashvili, head of the Khechinashvili Clinic, says

medical services have not become more expensive with them, but the increase in prices has affected basic equipment purchased in other countries in foreign currency, especially given the depreciation of Lari and higher costs of transportation.

In this background, it's important that in October, according to the data provided by the Social Service Agency, the number of recipients of subsistence allowance increased to 633 586, which constitutes 17% of the population.

Compared to September, the number of recipients of social benefits has increased by 5,430 people. 129,311 people receive an allowance in Tbilisi, which is the highest number in the country. Capital is followed by Imereti, where 82,216 people receive social benefits. Kvemo Kartli is in third place with 75 842 allowance recipients.

According to the agency, the amount transferred to the families receiving subsistence allow-



► Georgia ranks 21st in the world in terms of dependency on remittances.

ance in October amounted to €43,377,707. Compared to September, the amount increased by € 236,685.

According to the Ministry of Health, based on the government's decree of May 23, 2020, the social status of the families on the list of beneficiaries is not regularly checked, unless requested by the family. Consequently, individuals who have previously received assistance, despite a possible change in their

social status, continue to receive assistance. Georgia's economy is highly dependent on remittances. In January-September 2021, a record amount of remittances, \$ 1.7 billion, was transferred to Georgia, which is 28% more than the previous year. According to the National Bank, Georgia received the most money from the Russian Federation, which amounted to \$ 301 million in the first nine months of 2021. Italy comes next with \$ 282.7 million,

the USA is in 3rd place with \$ 210 million, and Greece is 4th with \$ 181.5 million.

According to the World Bank, Georgia ranks 2nd in the world in terms of remittances. 13.3% of the country's economy is generated by remittances sent by Georgian citizens working abroad. Without these funds, the size of the country's local demand would have been much smaller. World Bank statistics are based on 2020 data, when Georgia received \$ 1.88 billion in remittances, while net remittances amounted to \$ 1.55 billion. World Bank statistics show that the share of remittances is highest in low-income countries. In the first place in this regard is Tonga, whose 37% of GDP is filled by remittances. Second comes Tajikistan (28.6% of GDP), whose significant part of the population is employed in Russia and other CIS countries. Like Georgia, more than 10% of the economy in Ukraine and Armenia depends on remittances.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 5	
Day	Cloudy High: 14°C
Night	Cloudy Low: 10°C
SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6	
Day	Cloudy High: 15°C
Night	Mostly cloudy Low: 7°C

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