

Khoshtaria: We Are Starting a Protest Against the Introduction of Ivanishvili's Glory in School Textbooks



Elene Khoshtaria

BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Elene Khoshtaria says that starting tomorrow she will start protesting against the inclusion of texts containing Bidzina Ivanishvili's content in the school textbook.

He said the protest will take various forms and will con-

tinue until a result is achieved. Elene Khoshtaria calls on the society to join her.

Elene Khoshtaria posted a photo from one of the school textbooks on her Facebook page, in which, according to her, Bidzina Ivanishvili is praised.

"You will get an answer to

this Soviet ugliness, along with bitterness! We will not stop until this ugliness is corrected. They wanted the glory of the leader in the school textbook," said Elene Khoshtaria.

It should be noted that in other textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education we find similar texts about

Bidzina Ivanishvili.

One example is the publishing house Diogenes 9th grade history book, which was awarded the Griffith by the Ministry of Education in 2020.

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of the Georgian Dream, a well-known philanthropist and philanthropist,

became the head of the government, the Prime Minister. Despite the change of government, Georgia's European course has not changed and, on the contrary, integration has deepened even more (page 410)," reads the 9th grade history textbook.

Georgian Dream's Constitutional Games

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

Georgian Dream refuses to accept the constitutional amendments, which provide for a 2% election threshold. This has angered much of the opposition political spectrum as the ruling party violates another condition set out in the April 19 agreement and deprives newly formed small political parties of the opportunity to develop, which are unlikely to cross the 5% threshold.

Recently, Mikheil Saakashvili's hunger and trial have been in the spotlight of Georgian politics, but a number of steps taken by the government have brought other issues to the public's at-

tention, including the appointment of new judges and constitutional reform.

Just as Prime Minister Gharibashvili was in Brussels to meet with Council of Europe President Charles Michel, the Georgian Dream was appointing new judges to the Georgian parliament, with party leader Irakli Kobakhidze saying a constitutional amendment passed in the first reading would provide for a 2% threshold. Presumably, it would no longer be implemented.

The agreement reached on April 19, mediated by Charles Michel, between the government and the opposition also provided for electoral reform, including holding the next parliamentary elections in a

fully proportional system and introducing a natural or at most 2% threshold for the next two parliamentary elections.

Although the Georgian Dream left the agreement unilaterally in early July, it said it would remain committed to the reforms envisaged in the document.

On September 7, the Parliament of Georgia has already adopted the package of relevant amendments in the first reading and needs two more hearings to enter into force. The amendments to the constitution need 113 votes, the Georgian Dream has 84 votes, the amendments required the votes of the opposition parties - "National Movement", "Lelo" and others.

It seems that there was a consensus on this issue, which is rare in Georgian politics, but on November 30, Irakli Kobakhidze turned everything upside down when he told reporters that there was no need to make these changes.

But if the constitutional amendments are adopted, which will be a "gift" to the opposition, the wording "next elections" will be removed from the draft, so the threshold will be reduced and the transition to a proportional system will take place only in 2024 and will not apply to snap elections.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.1210; Euro - 3.5302; GBP - 4.1447; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.2381; Swiss Franc - 3.3950

Georgian Dream's Constitutional Games

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Kobakhidze's statement was followed by the outrage of the opposition, that the current ruling party is not worth breaking the floor and there is no point in thinking about an agreement with him. However, moral reproach is largely useless in politics. The main thing is to find out what calculations the "Georgian Dream" can have.

Kobakhidze's statement about removing the words "next elections" and enacting the changes from 2024, suggested that the "Georgian Dream" allows the possibility of holding early parliamentary elections, which is required by the opposition.

"Dream" wants him to hold these elections not with a purely proportional system, which will take effect in 2024, but with the existing mixed system (120 pro-

portional + 30 majoritarian). GD's MPs are very hopeful of the government, as it believes that it will not be difficult to withdraw its candidates as MPs.

On the other hand, Kobakhidze linked the adoption of the 2% threshold to the "good behavior" of opposition parties. Badri Japaridze, one of the leaders of "Lelo" said what it means. According to him, in exchange for the low threshold, the Georgian Dream demanded the removal of the rule of appointment of the Prosecutor General (by a 3/5 majority) from the constitutional amendments.

In addition, the ruling party may suggest holding some negotiations with smaller parties, from which it may require separation from the "radical" opposition.

Kobakhidze, obviously, voiced what the "Georgian Dream" agreed on, including the leader who left his politics. What can

the opposition do in this reality?

On behalf of the United National Movement, Nika Melia asked the Speaker of the Parliament to ensure that the ruling party adopts the current constitutional amendments in the second and third readings within a month, in December of this year, with the participation of the main opposition party.

Otherwise, the "National Movement" will leave the parliament. He probably imitates "Lelo". As for the other smaller opposition parties (Girchi II, Elisashvili's Citizens, Strategy Builder), they are unlikely to leave parliament.

Paata Manjgaladze, a representative of the Strategy Builder, said that one could not rely on street rallies alone and that the opposition should create discomfort for the Georgian Dream even if it was in parliament. According to Giga Bokeria, the Georgian Dream will adopt

the constitutional amendments only as a result of strong pressure from inside the country and especially from outside. However, such conditions are not seen at present.

In short, the situation is as follows: "Georgian Dream" feels strong and refrains from constitutional changes, which were previously imposed. European friends talk about the implementation of democratic reforms, they also agree, but it does not go beyond that. The United National Movement and its allies will continue rallies demanding early parliamentary elections and the release of Mikheil Saakashvili.

At the same time, everyone is well aware that only large-scale actions can lead the government to make concessions. "Georgian Dream" thinks that the "radical opposition" will not be able to do that.

People and communities at the heart of UNDP's work for persons with disabilities

3 December 2021

On International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reaffirms its strong commitment to protecting disability rights, encouraging leadership and participation of persons with disabilities and assisting Georgia to build an inclusive and equal society.

As Georgia strives to address the economic and social crisis brought on by the pandemic, reopen the economy and build forward better, International Day of Persons with Disabilities serves as a reminder that a more inclusive society will see a swifter post-COVID recovery. People with disabilities must be empowered to be fully represented at all levels of this process.

Ongoing harms of the pandemic are especially evident for people with disabilities as the disruptions in education, healthcare and social services have been amplified. People with disabilities still lack full access to information about COVID protection measures introduced by the Government to contain the spread of the virus and promote



timely vaccination. In many cases, they also lack opportunities to be part of vital decisions and engage in concrete actions undertaken amid the pandemic.

UNDP urges decision-makers and society at large to address these challenges and ensure that people with disabilities are at the centre of the pandemic response and recovery.

Georgia's strong legal commitments and the encouraging transformation of public attitudes over the past ten years hold

a promise that the country is on the right track to building an inclusive and equal society. However, substantial gaps in implementation mechanisms and the state and social practices still prevent people with disabilities from being fully engaged in society and having a voice and agency in economic, political and social life.

UNDP urges the authorities and public agencies to include persons with disabilities and organisations of people with dis-

abilities in all decisions that may affect the implementation of their rights and freedoms in full compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the spirit of its main message – "nothing about us without us."

UNDP welcomes the establishment of the Inter-Agency Coordination Committee as a National Mechanism responsible for the CRPD implementation in Georgia.

This critical mechanism is expected to play a decisive role in promoting the rights of people with disabilities and ensuring their participation in society.

UNDP reaffirms its support to the Committee in establishing a participatory and inclusive working process that will ensure the engagement and leadership of people with disabilities.

We look forward to a fruitful collaboration for inclusive and equal Georgia where no one is left behind.

Weather

Monday, December 6

Day Clear
High: 15°C
Night Clear
Low: 3°C

Tuesday, December 7

Day Clear
High: 14°C
Night Clear
Low: 3°C

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Local Human Rights Tulip 2021 awards for Georgian human rights activists handed out by Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on 2 December

The ceremony has been held in the run-up of the International Human Rights day, which is marked every year on 10 December. The Local Human Rights Tulip award has been initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands in 2018 and is being organized in Tbilisi for the fourth time.

At today's event, the Ambassador of the Netherlands, H.E. Maaïke van Koldam,

has awarded three courageous and outstanding human rights activists, who conduct their work in various regions of Georgia, with a local Human Rights Tulip prize.

The winner is Hurie Abashidze, human rights activist from Adjara.

The second prize went to Lusine Dostibegian, youth activist from Tetrtskaro, and Aleksï Merebashvili, human rights lawyer from Gori.



The Netherlands is a strong supporter of protecting human rights and carries out various projects throughout the world, including Georgia, in this respect.



H.E. Maaïke van Koldam



Sopho Kotiashvili



Hurie Abashidze



Lusine Dostibegian



Aleksï Merebashvili





High-Level Meeting on Enhancing Access to Justice for Sexual Violence Victims

Biltmore Tbilisi Hotel, 2 December. Initiated by UN Women and the United Nations Gender Theme Group, the high-level meeting hosted discussions on enhancing the access to justice for sexual violence victims within the framework of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

Representatives of the legislative and executive branches of the Georgian Government, the diplomatic corps and international and local NGOs attended the meeting, among them, Sabine Machl, UN Resident Coordinator in Georgia; Kaori Ishikawa, UN Women Country Representative in Georgia; Nino Tsilosani, Chair of the Gender Equality Council of the

Parliament of Georgia; Niko Tatulashvili, Advisor to the Prime Minister of Georgia on Human Rights; Natalia Voutova, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Georgia; Ulrik Tidestrom, Ambassador of Sweden to Georgia; Kelly C. Degnan, Ambassador of the United States of America to Georgia; Aleksandre Darakhvelidze, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia; and Natia Merebashvili, Deputy Prosecutor General of Georgia.

The purpose of the high-level meeting was to enhance access to justice for sexual violence victims in Georgia, which requires clear political will and adequate regulation. Participants discussed such

issues as prioritizing the elimination of sexual violence on the political agenda, harmonizing the national legislation with the Istanbul Convention and other international standards, sharing best practices on the prevention of sexual violence against women and other important issues.

Sexual violence remains one of the most hidden crimes in Georgia. According to the 2017 National Survey on Violence against Women, 9 per cent of women have experienced sexual violence as children; however, reporting of the crime remains low. For example, investigations were launched for only 31 rape cases in 2020, and 22 reached the courts.

One of the reasons behind this situation is that the victims have little access to justice and specialized services. Moreover, women's silence is provoked by prejudices on rape and inadequate societal attitudes, which blame the victims for what happened. It is noteworthy that addressing sexual violence is the main focus of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign in 2021. The high-level meeting is held within the framework of the UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality, implemented with the generous funding of the Government of Sweden.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence has been marked globally since the 1990s. The campaign will be launched on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and end on 10 December, Human Rights Day.

Photos by Leli Blagonravova



