

Tbilisi Pride Releases Statement, Demands Justice for Transgender Victims Amid Attack

By Liza Mchedlidze

Tbilisi Pride calls on the Ministry of Internal Affairs to immediately and effectively investigate and ensure the safety of transgender women victims of the attack.

"On May 29, 2022, in the Chugureti district, 5 transgender women were attacked by a group of about 30 men with bricks and stones in their home.

The attackers physically assaulted transgender women as well as the homeowner and damaged their home. At the time of the attack, transgender women were threatened with death. There is a suspicion that the group attack was pre-organized.

This is not a single case of transphobic and gender-based assault. Dealing with crime is part of the daily lives of transgender people.

All of this echoes the impunity of the perpetrators and the government-sponsored violence against members of the LGBTQ+ community. The state still does not have a policy aimed at eradicating homophobia and

transphobia, which makes it impossible to protect the rights of LGBTQ+ people and enforce anti-discrimination legislation.

"In such crisis situations, it is even more apparent that it is critically important for the state to provide shelter for LGBTQ+ people who are victims of hate crimes and domestic violence. A space necessary for the protection of physical integrity, health and life," the statement reads.

The violence took place on the morning of May 29th when a man came to victims' house and demanded sex services. Being denied the service irritated the man which resulted in verbally abusing the women, threatening to kill them and calling tens of people to organize the group violence towards them.

Transgender women are demanding police to be mobilized near their homes for at least the next few days.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has launched an investigation into the incident under Article 151, Part 2, Subparagraph A of the Criminal Code of Georgia.



Military Support for Will not be Considered, Irakli Kobakhidze Says



By Liza Mchedlidze

Georgian Dream chairman Irakli Kobakhidze told the press the Ukrainian government is in a state of diplomatic demarche towards Georgia. According to him, the visit of the Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili at such times is

connected with obstacles.

When asked by an Imedi TV journalist why the Prime Minister is not planning on visiting Ukraine, Kobakhidze answered:

"Why do prime ministers of many EU member states not visit, for example? Everything has its reason. In our case, the obstacle is that in our case, there

is one specific important factor, which naturally hinders the possible visit of the Prime Minister. It is the fact that the ambassador was first invited to the so-called consultation, then generally dismissed, though the act, as far as I know, has not been issued in this regard either."

"Practically, the Ukrainian government is still in a state of diplomatic demarche towards Georgia, at which time the Prime Minister's visit to Ukraine is, of course, connected with certain obstacles," he said.

The chairman also said the support would be politically humanitarian also noting that no form of military support would be considered.

"Consequently, our support will be political, it will be humanitarian, but as for any form of military support, it will certainly not be considered, and on our part this is naturally excluded," Kobakhidze said.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Erdogan to Speak with Ukraine and Russia Presidents Today

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says he will speak by telephone with the presidents of Ukraine and Russia today, May 30.

Erdogan says he wants the war between Russia and Ukraine to end as soon as possible, but he says the situation is getting worse by the day.

The Turkish president says he calls on the parties to resolve the conflict through diplomacy and dialogue.

"On Monday I will have a telephone dialogue with both Russia and Ukraine. "We continue to call on both sides to use the means of dialogue and diplomacy," Erdogan said.

Germany to Allocate 1 Billion Euros Grant to Ukraine

Germany intends to provide a grant of 1 billion euros to Ukraine. The information is spread by the German Ambassador to Ukraine Anka Feldguzen.

As the diplomat wrote on Twitter, he discussed the issue with Ukrainian Finance Minister Sergei Marchenko.

"I discussed with the Minister of Finance Sergei Marchenko the current situation in the financial field and the issue of grant allocation (1 billion euros) as assistance from Germany," the German ambassador wrote.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8657; Euro - 3.0689; GBP - 3.6108; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.3259; Swiss Franc - 2.9882

Will Europe Accept Georgia's European Choice?

By MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The main expectation of the government and the opposition in Georgia is currently a possible EU response to Georgia's application to become a candidate for EU membership. It is difficult to say what the EU response will be, but for Georgia, refusing is tantamount to recognizing the country as Russia's sphere of influence. In any case, such will be the perception of this refusal by Moscow.

In the post-Soviet period, Georgia aspires to become a member of NATO and the European Union. According to a survey by NDI, 71% of respondents supported Georgia's accession to NATO in March 2022. Interestingly, this percentage of support was also recorded in a poll conducted 10 years ago, when the Georgian Dream came to power.

As for the EU, 82% of respondents supported joining the union in March this year, while 10 years ago support was 4% less. According to the respondents, joining NATO and the European Union will ensure the security and democratic develop-

ment of the country.

No other country in the Caucasus, except Georgia, is aiming to join NATO and the European Union. But in the post-Soviet space, Ukraine and Moldova have similar foreign policy orientations as Georgia.

Ukraine, like Georgia, wants to join NATO, while Moldova and Ukraine also want to join the European Union. In such a situation, a number of experts and politicians began to talk about the formation of a new region, sometimes called the Black Sea region, sometimes the new Eastern Europe.

At the NATO Bucharest Summit (April 2008), Ukraine and Georgia were told that they would one day become members of NATO, but did not specify a specific date for membership. Russia took advantage of this "ambiguity" and attacked Georgia's sister in 2008. Since 2014, it has been waging war against Ukraine.

The EU has set up an Eastern Partnership program for the six post-Soviet republics between it and Russia. But participation in the partnership did not mean

the right to join the EU. Only three of the six Eastern Partnership countries - Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia - actually participated in the partnership.

Therefore, in May last year, these three countries formed the so-called Association Trio and asked the EU to recognize this trio and recognize their right to become candidates for EU membership in the future. Then the EU refused to do so.

But the Russian aggression against Ukraine, which began in late February 2022, changed a lot. Ukraine has demanded quick membership in the European Union, followed by Moldova and Georgia, and filled out the application forms for membership. In Georgia, 83% of respondents support applying for EU membership and only 5% do not support it.

No one expects a quick accession to the EU. It is clear that these three countries are not satisfied with the status of candidate and especially membership, but the EU will have to make a political decision in this case and grant candidate status to all three countries will be a

clear incentive support in the face of Russian aggression, especially Ukraine.

The EU will answer the application at the end of June and various predictions are being made about a possible response.

Georgia found itself in a difficult situation. War has two colors - black and white. Georgian society has further distanced itself from Russia. In March 2022, 90% of respondents said that Russia is a major political threat to Georgia, 83% believe that Russia is a major economic threat to Georgia, and 77% believe that Russia's aggression against Georgia continues.

Georgia (54%), USA (53%) and Ukraine (45%) are recognized as Georgia's main partners. Only 4% of respondents consider Russia as Georgia's main partner.

Against the background of such public sentiment, the statements of government officials, which are pleasing to Moscow and the same government has strained relations with a number of government officials in war-torn Ukraine, seem even more bizarre. A number of steps taken by the Georgian authori-

ties, such as the arrest of Nika Gvaramia, are considered to be a deliberate distancing of Georgia from the West.

The ruling Georgian Dream is preparing for the EU to refuse candidate status. The opposition is already being blamed for this, as they, together with their "lobbyists" in the European Union, seem to be trying to deny Georgia the status of a candidate.

The pro-Western opposition agreed and wrote a joint letter to the European Union to grant Georgia candidate status. The main problem that can prevent Georgia from gaining candidate status is the policy of the current government.

Georgia is really entering a turning point. If Georgia fails to get the candidate status, it will be a serious defeat for Georgia's Western orientation and will strengthen the position of pro-Russian forces, just as Moscow believes that Georgia and the Caucasus as a whole remain under Russian influence.

The status of a candidate for EU membership, with certain conditions to be fulfilled, will facilitate Georgia's Western choice.

Supporting inclusive service delivery in Georgia

The UK and UNDP assist Georgia's Ministry of Internal Affairs to provide efficient services for all citizens, including people with disabilities



შინჯანს სანჯანოს სანონისტრო



Tbilisi, 25 May 2022 – The UK Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have supported the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to make Georgian public services more accessible and inclusive.

This two-year initiative focused on two service providers operating under the Ministry –

the Service Agency and the Unified Service Centre of the Patrol Police.

In partnership with GEC Consulting and the Innovations and Reforms Centre, the UK and UNDP provided both agencies with support that included:

• Assistance in reforming and improving various public services.

• Adapting a call centre to the needs of people with hearing impairments.

• Training over 150 police officers and the MIA staff in disability service and communication.

As part of this support, the Unified Service Centre conducted 'user journey mapping' to

reveal areas for improvement in service delivery. The Centre used this data to introduce standardised procedures and an up-to-date system of service quality monitoring, introduced guidelines for frontline officers, developed an Accessibility Plan, and adapted its premises for people with vision impairments.

The UK and UNDP also helped the Unified Service Centre to introduce a new quality management instrument for the public sector, called the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), which is successfully used by more than 4,500 public agencies in EU Member States.

"The Ministry of Internal Affairs is one of the key public

agencies to provide citizens with essential services. The ongoing reform will ensure inclusive and effective service delivery that benefits people and builds public trust in public institutions," said Aleksandre Darakhvelidze, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs.

"The UK's Good Governance Fund is proud to support more inclusive and accessible public services in Georgia. We support the Ministry of Internal Affairs and welcome the successes that have already been achieved," said Ellen Wichmann, Head of Programmes, British Embassy in Georgia.

"Leaving no one behind must be a guiding principle for all pub-

lic agencies tasked with protecting and serving citizens. Our support equips the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the tools and approaches it needs to fulfil its duties," said Anna Chernyshova, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Georgia.

This assistance to the Ministry of Internal Affairs is part of the UK's 10.4 million USD (7.9 million GBP) programme (phase 1 and 2) to support public administration reform in Georgia. UNDP is implementing this initiative in partnership with the Administration of the Government of Georgia, line ministries and public agencies.

Weather

Monday, May 30

Day Clear
High: 32°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 18°C

Tuesday, May 31

Day Clear
High: 32°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 18°C

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