

Georgian Dream’s lawsuit against Television Companies is ‘alarming’, Media Advocacy Coalition says

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Media Advocacy Coalition considers Georgian Dream’s lawsuit for the Communications Commission to sanction three Television Companies: Formula, Mtavari Arkhi and TV Pirveli for airing the “Home to Europe” commercial ‘alarming’.

According to Georgian Dream’s complaint, the video of June 23 and 24, 2022 on three channels has pre-election/political content, and it is a violation of the law to post and distribute the same video during the pre-election period.

The statement of the coalition states that the ban on posting of videos critical of the ruling party lacks a legal basis and threatens pluralism in the country.

According to them, such an attitude is incompatible with the principles of modern democratic state management:

“This is not the first time that the is-



sue of placing political advertisements by critical media is discussed in the Communications Commission. In 2020 and 2021, the commission sanctioned Mtavari Arkhi twice with the highest measure, the decisions made in complete disregard of the clear legal basis and the principles of proportionality were evaluated by the coalition as an attempt at censorship.

It is important that in accordance with

the Law of Georgia on Broadcasting, pre-election advertising is considered to be a pre-election advertisement, the purpose of which is to facilitate the election of the President of Georgia, the Parliament of Georgia, the representative body of the municipality - the Sakrebulo, the executive body of the municipality, and the highest official of the municipality - the mayor. In order to determine the viola-

tion in accordance with the practice established by the Tbilisi City Court, first of all, the pre-election/political characteristics of the advertisement placed on the air network should be evaluated.

Only then should its formal side be checked. In the ring distributed under the name of the “Home to Europe” campaign, none of the election subjects - none of the candidates for the position of public authorities - can be seen. Therefore, the material cannot meet the cumulative conditions, the combination of which would make it possible to evaluate it as a pre-election advertisement.

The Media Advocacy Coalition urges the Communications Commission not to continue the practice of restricting critical media outlets and to take into account both the importance of the contentious issue and the risks of limiting media freedom when making a decision.” statement reads.

‘Changes in the policy of CEC chairman elections is another refusal to Charles Michel reform’ ISFED director says

By Liza Mchedlidze

Fair Elections for Georgia’s director Nino Dolidze made a statement regarding the changes of the policy of electing the chairman of the Central Election Commission. Dolidze said that Georgian society has already seen the ruling party carrying out reforms based on what is politically profitable for them. She also added that changes in the policy of CEC chairman elections is another refusal to Charles Michel reform.

Nino Dolidze assessed policy changes based on political context a ‘problem’ adding that it should be calculated for long term perspective:

“At this stage, there were very long discussions regarding the method of electing the chairman of the CEC, and a multi-party agreement was reached during the Charles Michel agreement. The fact that based on consensus an agreement was reached on such an important issue related to the CEC chairman and the election of professional members was very important.

Changing the procedure for electing the chairman of the CEC means, first of all, rejecting Charles Michel’s document once again, I hope this will not happen. However, we have repeatedly seen such changes on the part of the ruling team that are favorable to them and fit the specific political context. In general, a very big problem is the frequent changes of the code and legislation. On the other hand, there is a problem with the fact that it is constantly adjusted to the political context and does not count on the long-term perspective. I hope these

changes will not be implemented.

“The current selection rule is based on a multi-party discussion in the parliament, an attempt to reach an agreement and negotiations, if it is revised, changed, or worsened, it will obviously not help the process, on the contrary, it will damage it.

Trust of the CEC chairman is crucial for trustworthiness in the elections. The chairman of the Central Election Com-

mission must be elected on the basis of broad multi-party consensus, otherwise questions will arise after every election.

I hope, because they are dissatisfied with the president’s decision, such changes will not follow. However, it is not easy to remove the president from this process. I cannot say what can be discussed in the future. Any changes related to election administration staffing should be the subject of a very broad discussion.

If any decision is made, it should be a step towards improvement, not towards deterioration.

Instead of constantly revising the legislation, it would be better for the governing team to make efforts to seek consensus and seek a candidate/s who are professional, impartial and have broad public support and trust,” said ISFED director Nino Dolidze.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

‘Officials in Georgia should change their tone’ Mykhailo Podolyak to Georgian Dream leaders



Mykhailo Podolyak, adviser to the head of the administration of the President of Ukraine, in an interview with Mtavari Arkhi, talked about the statements made by the Georgian ruling party Georgian Dream leaders, saying that ‘Officials in Georgia should change their tone, and if they cannot do it for some reasons, then they should reduce their public speeches regarding Ukraine’ as this will be good for their reputation.

According to him, people who justify the ongoing genocide in Ukraine will themselves be judged by the international community.

“Personally, I, as well as President Zelensky and Davit Arakhamia, understand very well that the Georgian people stand by Ukraine. This nation understands well the essence of the ongoing war in Ukraine. These people share the values of freedom and democracy and are

categorically against outdated Russian technologies.

Everyone knows what is happening in Ukraine. While civilians are being killed in Ukraine, no one can criticize us and no one can say that we don’t understand something. Officials in Georgia should

change their tone, and if for some reason they can’t do it, then reduce their public speeches about Ukraine - it will be good for their reputation. People who justify the ongoing genocide in Ukraine will themselves be judged by the international community. It would be desirable for these people to think about their reputation and future and not be excluded from the international community,” Podolyak said.

He also spoke about the former Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili and delogarchization, noting that it is necessary to impose sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili and he is sure that there will be individual sanctions.

“A person can earn money, but you understand that they finance the killing of people without any money, so you have to pay a price. Of course, as in Georgia, there was a wave of rich people. We call them oligarchs. They have a lot of money.

They buy parties, seize mandates in the parliament and influence political processes. Ukraine understood this and came out against it. We are trying to bring this process to the end. Georgia should also go this way. They should be big businessmen, but they should not influence politics. Unfortunately, we do not see this in Georgia today. Delogarchization is an effective way and I am sure the country will go through this way. Therefore, it would be desirable that the Georgian oligarchs, who are on the side of Russia, pay the corresponding price,” said Mykhailo Podolyak.

‘It was a mistake not giving Georgia an action plan for NATO membership in 2008’ says Andrius Kubilius

European Parliament member Andrius



Kubilius, in an interview with Formula, said that after the August 2008 war Western countries made a mistake when they did not give Georgia an action plan for NATO membership.

According to Kubilius, the fact that the occupation of Georgian territories by the

Russian imperial forces in 2008 was not followed by a response is ‘a big geopolitical mistake’.

“We can now state even more firmly that it was a very big mistake of the West in 2008 that Georgia and Ukraine were not given the action plan for NATO membership. It was that the Kremlin learned that it will do whatever it wants in countries like Georgia and Ukraine, and the imperial, colonial war that started in 2008 in Georgia was a clear signal of what was going to happen, what was going on, and then it was followed by the occupation of Crimea, and then we saw aggressive War in Ukraine. It started in Georgia and continues to this day, and I hope that the Western world will understand much better the suffering of the Georgian people, the suffering of the Ukrainians, why these people were suffering and why it was a very big mistake not to respond

to the occupation of the territories of Georgia in 2008 by the Russian imperial forces very clearly and In a direct way, because there was an effort to dialogue with Putin, after the war in Georgia, it was a very big geopolitical mistake of the West” said Andrius Kubilius.

Georgian villages on Google Maps

EU, UNDP and Georgian Farmers’ Association work in partnership to create an agricultural map of Georgia

Weather

Thursday, August 11

Day Partly Cloudy High: 34°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 22°C

Friday, August 12

Day Clear High: 35°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 22°C

TBILISI. 9 August 2022 – Over 50 rural locations are pinpointed on Georgia’s AgroMap, an interactive Google-based information system that contains vast data on agricultural businesses, service providers, training institutions, professional associations, and other players in the agricultural and food sectors. Along with the private companies and non-governmental organizations, the AgroMap also lists state programmes and initiatives supporting agricultural entrepreneurship.

Users can search information by location or industry and get in touch with specific companies to place their business requests.

They can also assess the quality of obtained information and the effectiveness of business interaction.

The AgroMap was launched in 2020 through a pilot initiative focused on Dedoplistskaro Municipality. For now, the resource lists over 50 locations across Georgia and offers information on 500 companies and organizations, arranged by 24 activity sectors.

The Georgian Farmers’ Association, the country’s largest agricultural union with up to 4,000 members, created the AgroMap with support from the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP).

“The European Union assists Georgia to introduce new technologies in agriculture and rural development. Digitalization has the potential to transform rural living by, making farming jobs more attractive for younger generations and helping farmers work more precisely, efficiently and sustainably,” said **Ketevan Khutsishvili**, Programme Manager for Rural Development, Civil Protection and Crisis Management of the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia.

“UNDP supports Smart Agriculture as part of the digital transformation agenda. The

AgroMap connects rural businesses with new market opportunities, business partnerships and training. It is a great digital tool that can boost progress in Georgia’s agricultural sector,” said **Anna Chernyshova**, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Georgia.

“The AgroMap is a step forward in the digital transformation of Georgia’s agricultural sector and food industry. It helps rural entrepreneurs make business contacts online and pins Georgian villages on the world’s electronic map,” said **Nino Zambakhidze**, Georgian Farmers’ Association Chairperson.

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