

Communications Commission fines 'Mtavari Arkhi' and issues a warning to 'Formula' and 'TV Pirveli'



By Liza Mchedlidze

The Communications Commission issued a warning to Television companies Formula and TV Pirveli for airing the clip 'Home to Europe', and fined the main channel 118,688 GEL, thus satisfying Georgian Dream's lawsuit against media companies.

The case concerns the airing of the video of the June 24 pro-Western and anti-Russian rally. The ruling party filed a lawsuit against the aforementioned companies for including pre-election/political content which portrayed 'Georgian Dream' leaders negatively.

The media companies consider 'Georgian Dream's' lawsuit as a punitive measure and note that "such a deliberate attack of the government on the critical media will become another obstacle to the European integration of the country".

The acting General Director of Mtavari Arkhi, Giorgi Gabunia, said that the TV company is not going to pay the fine imposed by the Communication Commission as they are planning on appealing the decision.

"First of all, it should be emphasized that we were fined once again for a pro-Europe video, which I'm not surprised with, of course. They didn't miss this chance to make our already difficult financial situation even

worse. We also heard direct threats that if we continue like this and another pro-European clip will appear on our broadcast, our license may be revoked. I will not be surprised by this, moreover, the oligarch's clip is broadcasted here, where a carrot can be seen and I am waiting for when we will be fined for that carrot. It is not a problem, we are not going to pay this fine. We will file an appeal, as in the previous case, and see what happens next." Giorgi Gabunia told Mtavari Arkhi.

According to the Coalition for Media Advocacy, the decision of the Communications Commission on August 23, 2022, against three critical broadcasters: Formula, the main channel, and TV Company First, is of a political nature and is not based on legal grounds.

According to them, the decision made by the commission contradicts the practice established by the Tbilisi City Court, according to which, in order to determine a similar violation, first of all, the pre-election/political characteristics of the advertisement placed on the air network and its formal side should have been evaluated. Not a single election entity, not a single candidate for the position of public authority, can be seen in the controversial ring spread in the name of the campaign 'Home to Europe'.

Accordingly, the material does not meet the cumulative conditions, the combination of which would create the possibility of evaluating it as a pre-election advertisement.

The Media Advocacy Coalition stated that the decision of the Communications Commission, according to which the Communications Commission warned 'TV Pirveli', and 'Formula' and fined 'Mtavari Arkhi' 1% of the annual income, is unfounded and significantly worsens the media environment in Georgia.

The Media Advocacy Coalition believes that the decision of the Communications Commission on August 23, 2022, against the three broadcasters is of a political nature and is not based on legal grounds.

"The decision taken by the commission contradicts the practice established by the Tbilisi City Court, according to which, in order to determine a similar violation, first of all, the pre-election/political characteristics of the advertisement placed on the air network and its formal side should have been evaluated. Even in the controversial ring spread under the name of the campaign 'Home to Europe', not a single election subject - not a single candidate for the post of public authority - can be seen. Accordingly, the material does not meet the cumulative conditions, the combination of which

would create the possibility of evaluating it as a pre-election advertisement.

The interests of the company 'Formula' are protected by the member organization of the coalition Georgian Democratic Initiative (GDI). Based on the fact that the decision of the Communications Commission significantly worsens the media environment in Georgia, the member organizations of the Media Advocacy Coalition are ready to

protect the interests of the broadcasters even at the stage of continuing the dispute in the court," the statement reads.

According to the information of the Communications Commission, 'TV Pirveli' and 'Formula' were warned in a written form, and 'Mtavari Arkhi' was fined 1% of the broadcaster's annual income due to the illegal posting of political advertisements on the air during the non-election period.

Nino Dolidze talks persecution and pressure on 'Fair Elections' from the government

By Liza Mchedlidze

The head of 'Fair Elections' (ISFED) Nino Dolidze once again spoke about the Ruling party 'blocking' the organization from working group meetings of the revision of the Electoral Code and said that this decision is 'selective and discriminatory':

"The accusation that 'Fair Elections' wanted to participate in the formation of the government is not true, because the organization has never made any statement regarding the formation of the government, nei-

ther expressed a desire nor a demand in this regard," Nino Dolidze said.

Nino Dolidze also talked about persecution and pressure on 'Fair Elections' by the government. According to her, it is very important for the country to fulfill the 12-point recommendation that the European Union presented to Georgia.

"Here, one of the main things was the active involvement of civil organizations, and it was for this purpose that 'Fair Elections' decided to participate in

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The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgia to host Noble Partner 2022 the multinational military training for the 6th time



According to the Ministry of Defense of Georgia, Georgia will host a Noble Partner the multinational military exercise for the sixth time. An informative briefing regarding the start of the military exercises was held at the Ministry of Defense of Georgia.

The purpose of Noble Partner 2022 is to increase readiness and interoperability between Georgia, the US, regional partners,

and allied countries to ensure a stable and secure environment in the Black Sea region.

For the first time in history, representatives of the armed forces of Japan and Sweden will participate in the exercise this year.

Georgia, USA, Bulgaria, Ro-

mania, Moldova, Greece, Great Britain, Turkey, Slovakia, Norway, Hungary, Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Poland, Japan, Lithuania-Poland-Ukraine Multinational Brigade, and Swedish Armed Forces.

“Georgia will host the multinational exercise ‘Noble Partner’ for the sixth time. An information briefing related to the start

President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili participates in Second Summit of Crimean Platform

The President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili participated in the second summit of the Crimean Platform. The summit was created by the initiative of the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky.

The summit was held in an online format and aims to im-

prove the effectiveness of the international response to the ongoing occupation of Crimea, respond to growing security threats, increase international pressure on the Kremlin, de-



occupy Crimea, and return it to Ukraine.

The President of Georgia addressed the participants of the summit: world leaders and representatives of international organizations. Zourabichvili delivered a speech at the second summit of the Crimean Platform.

“It is a great honor for me to represent Georgia and the Georgian people. It is necessary to stand together to protect the values that unite us and which, I believe, will shape our common future. I am proud to join the

Crimea Declaration on behalf of Georgia. We once again reiterate our support for your [Ukraine] regarding territorial integrity and sovereignty as well as your de-occupation strategy.

Crimea is Ukraine.

Tomorrow Ukraine will celebrate its Independence Day, and tomorrow will be 6 months of its courageous resistance to Russian aggression.

It’s not just a coincidence of dates. We all know that Russian aggression did not start in February, Crimea was the starting point. Challenges to peace and security and unrequited aggression against countries’ territorial integrity and sovereignty lead to more aggression and instability,” the President of Georgia said.

Nino Dolidze talks persecution and pressure on ‘Fair Elections’ from the government

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working groups with other organizations, where we wanted to use whatever knowledge and experience we have in this direction for the European integration of the country and actually carry out such a reform that would receive a positive assessment from the European Commission, in the electoral section.

As for the blocking of our organization in this task force, I think it was selective and discriminatory. Not with other organizations, but only for ‘Fair Elections’ they had a request to

separate from rallies and various types of political announcements. I say once again, that civil organizations stood together at the rallies for our European future, for the fact that we want integration and candidate status in Europe.

As for the allegation that ‘Fair Elections’ wanted to participate in the formation of the government, it is not true, because the organization has not made any statement regarding the formation of the government, nor expressed any desire or demand in this part.

Civil organizations stood together at the rallies, and this demand in relation to ‘Fair Elections’ only, is discriminatory. I think it is not only discriminatory, but this demand has been continuing for so long, I think it is persecution and pressure on our organization”, said Dolidze.



Nino Dolidze believes that the reason for the remarks of the ruling party towards the organization is related to the error revealed during the 2020 elections and PVT, regarding which ‘Fair Elections’ made an explanation and took responsibility for the error, which implies a change of director.

“The organization admitted the mistake, although the director was changed, despite this, the same accusations still continue regarding PVT, although the rul-

ing party knows very well that it was a mistake and was not in any way a deliberate or planned revolutionary scenario,” she said.

According to her, it is important for the authorities to understand what the controlling Watch Dog organization means, that they often criticize, and because of this, the persecution of the organization is unacceptable and unimaginable in a democratic society.

“Fair Elections’ is an independent and impartial organization

in whose decisions no one can interfere, and obviously, the organization has no political affiliation or interest. It is in our interest that the elections are held freely and fairly, when violations occur during the elections, of course, we are talking about this,” Dolidze said.

She answered the question of whether she considers the demand for the resignation of the government to be biased by the organization.

“We do not consider the request for resignation to be biased, because it was a question of a specific person in the executive authority taking responsibility for the status of a candidate for the European Union. There was no talk of any unconstitutional demand here, or specifically talk against the ‘Georgian Dream’ party, nor was there a demand for Snap elections,” said Nino Dolidze.

In addition, as Nino Dolidze pointed out, the hostile attitude towards ‘Fair Elections’ on the part of ‘Georgian Dream’ has been felt since she herself was appointed as the head of the organization.

According to Nino Dolidze, despite this, the organization tried to cooperate with the ruling party.

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.

Weather

Wednesday, August 24

Day Clear High: 32°C

Night Clear Low: 18°C

Thursday, August 25

Day Clear High: 32°C

Night Clear Low: 18°C

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