

'We should reach a consensus through compromises' Mdinardze on the procedure of electing the public defender

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

At the meeting between the political groups in the Parliament ended, the MPs had to discuss the procedure for selecting the candidacy of the Public Defender.

After the meeting, the chairman of the "Georgian Dream" faction, Mamuka Mdinardze, told the media that there were differences of opinion on the part of the opposition parties that attended the meeting, although they demanded that the process of choosing the ombudsman be inclusive and involve non-governmental organizations.

Mdinardze states that it will be easier for the ruling team to agree on procedures with the opposition than on the candidacy of the ombudsman.

"They have different opinions and attitudes. "European socialists," said that the previous case should be excluded. They believe that it was a previous case in that we directly appointed a "Nazi" as a public defender, and this should not happen to us. Others believe otherwise. We may face more problems than

the candidates, we have to reach a consensus through compromises. We will work so that a more or less acceptable candidate is elected," said Mamuka Mdinardze.

According to his own report, the parliamentary majority will meet with non-governmental organizations tomorrow, and in the evening the team will introduce their vision to the public.

Giorgi Khojevanishvili, a member of Giorgi Gakharia's "For Georgia" party, emphasizes the importance of the involvement of the non-governmental sector in the process. The faction attended the meeting of the working group. Khojevanishvili said that the starting point for his team will be how acceptable the candidate is to society.

The Vice-Speaker, "Citizens" leader Levan Ioseliani talked about the need to agree on the candidate. According to him, the opinion of non-governmental organizations is important, although it is possible for political groups to take responsibility and submit candidates. Ioseliani criticized the factions that did not attend the meeting.



Mamuka Mdinardze

Deputies of "National Movement", "Strategy Aghmashenebeli" and "Lelo" did not attend the meeting in the parliament.

As Davit Usupashvili, a mem-

ber of "Lelo", stated, the faction will be involved in the parliamentary activities from the stages of committee, bureau, and sessions.

"Strategy Aghmashenebeli" and "National Movement" have both announced that they will support the candidate selected by the civil sector.

Khatia Dekanoidze questions whether Georgia is fulfilling international obligations or not

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

According to the National Statistical Service of Georgia's information, 7459 Russian businesses were registered in Georgia from March 1 to August 1.

As reported by the agency "Sakstat", 544 of the registered Russian businesses are limited liability companies (LLCs), 6913 are individual entrepreneurs, and 2 are branches of foreign enterprises.

The National Statistics Service says that the activities of 542 out of 544 Russian LLCs registered in Georgia are unknown, the field of activity of 1 company is coffee processing, and another 1 is hotels without restaurants and similar accommodation facilities.

As for the 6913 Russian individual entrepreneurs registered in Georgia, the activities of only two of them are known, and the field of activity of 6911.

The largest number of Russian businesses in Georgia, 2169 businesses were registered in March. In particular, in March of this year, 147 Russian LLCs, 2021



individual entrepreneurs and one branch of a foreign enterprise were registered in Georgia.

1601 Russian businesses were registered in April, 1370 - in

May, 1219 in June, and 1100 in July.

The non-transparent state of Russian businesses registered in Georgia is a problem - there is a

big question mark, whether Georgia fulfills its international obligations, Khatia Dekanoidze, the chairman of the "National Movement" faction, said regard-

ing the released information of the statistics of Russian business registrations in Georgia.

According to Dekanoidze, this is the problem that worries the majority of Georgian citizens in terms of security.

"I am working in this direction so that our partners have information regarding the fulfillment of international obligations by Georgia. Regarding the registration of Russian business and the opaque state of the field of active work, this is a big problem, it is the problem that worries the majority of Georgian citizens in terms of security. This is also included in the fulfillment of international obligations in relation to Ukraine. You know that there is an international obligation not to allow money from free capital to enter Russia, which will help Russia to activate military activities against Ukraine even more actively. Therefore, in this situation, the government of Georgia raises a lot of doubts and there is a big question mark whether Georgia fulfills its international obligations or not," said Dekanoidze.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Ombudsman should be elected out of NGO's candidates, 'Lelo' leader Davit Usupashvili says

"Lelo" party leader Davit Usupashvili, in an interview with journalists, spoke regarding "Lelo's" position over the election of the new ombudsman. Usupashvili said that Lelo's position is that the parliamentary political groups should select

sition groups.

As for the meeting, which was held between the parliamentary entities regarding the manner of election of the ombudsman, as Davit Usupashvili stated, they will only participate in the committee, bureau, and plenary sessions, but will not be involved in the work of the working groups.

"Lelo's position on working groups remains unchanged." We said that we will engage in parliamentary activities. For us to have an independent, strong ombuds-

mental organizations, to select a candidate who will be supported jointly by the government and the opposition. We remind you that 90 votes are needed to elect an ombudsman," Usupashvili said.

'Achievements in the direction of Europeanization make Georgia a worthy candidate for EU membership' Papuashvili says

The Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, responded to the German Chancellor's statement on

anization make Georgia a worthy candidate for EU membership.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called for the expansion of the European Union, which includes Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova. "Georgia's achievements in the direction of Europeanization, as well as the history of dedication and self-sacrifice to the common European cause, make Georgia a worthy candidate for EU membership," Shalva Papuashvili wrote on Twitter.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in Prague that he is in favor of the expansion of the European Union, which should eventually include the countries



the ombudsman candidate from among the candidates proposed by non-governmental organizations, exactly as the previous ombudsman was selected, he also added that this position is shared by the vast majority of the parliamentary oppo-

man in the future as well, to fulfill the very clear instruction of the European Union, that we should manage to appoint an independent and highly trusted candidate as ombudsman, we suggest to everyone - from the people trusted by non-gov-



the social network and wrote that the achievements in the direction of Europe-

of the Western Balkans - Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. Reuters reports.

New Mission Director Begins Work at USAID/Georgia



Tbilisi — Mission Director John A. Pennell began his tenure yesterday as the new leader of USAID/Georgia.

Pennell brings more than 25 years of USAID and international development experience to this role. Most recently he served as the Mission Director for USAID/Libya from 2019 to 2022. Prior to this, he served as USAID's Deputy Mission Director for Ukraine and Belarus in 2015-19, helping to oversee the Agency's largest Mission in the region and its efforts to counter malign in-

fluence. He also previously worked in Ukraine from 2000-01.

He takes over leadership of USAID's foreign assistance to Georgia that totals over \$80 million annually. U.S. foreign assistance through USAID strengthens Georgia's resilience to malign influence, consolidates democratic gains through enhanced citizen responsive governance, and enables high-value employment through increased economic growth. Over a period of 30 years, the U.S. government has provided nearly \$6 billion to Georgia.

On the work ahead, Pennell said, "Georgia has been a key partner for the United States since its independence, and I am honored to lead the USAID presence here. This is of course a challenging time for the world, with the Rus-



sian invasion of Ukraine compounding other challenges posed by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. But I look

forward to leading an outstanding team of Americans and Georgians at this Mission. Together with our partners in national and local government, business, and civil society we can find solutions to these challenges that will move Georgia ahead toward Euro-Atlantic integration and other development goals."

Pennell has also served as the Deputy Mission Director for USAID/East Africa, based in Nairobi, Kenya, where he led efforts to ramp up USAID's Somalia program. He has also served in other management and technical positions with USAID including in Afghanistan, El Salvador, Indonesia, Iraq, and Uzbekistan.

He is currently a PhD candidate in War and Defense Studies at King's College-London. He holds a Master's degree in Na-

tional Security Strategy from the National War College, a Master's degree in Political Science from American University, and a Bachelor's degree in Politics from The Catholic University of America. He speaks Russian and Spanish.

Pennell takes over from Peter Wiebler, who served as Mission Director from 2018 until his departure earlier this year to assume new duties for USAID.

About USAID in Georgia: USAID is the world's premier international development agency and a catalytic actor driving development results. Over 30 years of partnership with Georgia, USAID has supported the country's transformation into a developing democracy that is increasingly integrated into Western political, security, and economic institutions. For more information, please visit: https://www.usaid.gov/georgia.

Weather

Wednesday, August 31

Day Clear High: 36°C

Night Clear Low: 21°C

Thursday, September 1

Day Clear High: 37°C

Night Clear Low: 22°C

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