

Irakli Kobakhidze responds to Ukraine including Bidzina Ivanishvili's family members in sanctions imposed against Russia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Ukraine imposes new sanctions against Russia. The sanctioned list includes Russian citizens, individuals and legal entities working in Russia. Bidzina Ivanishvili's relatives were among those sanctioned.

Bidzina Ivanishvili's brother - Alexander Ivanishvili and his wife - Ketevan Kharaidze, as well as Bidzina Ivanishvili's aunt - Ucha Mamatsashvili and Ucha Mamatsashvili's son - Tite Mamatsashvili are on the list of those sanctioned.

Other Georgian businessmen working in Russia - Davit Iakobashvili, as well as Aleksandre and Giorgi Japaridze - were included in the list of sanctioned persons.

President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky signed two decrees on the imposition of sanctions. The package of sanctions was developed by the National Security and Defense Council. It includes 2,507 individuals and 1,374 legal entities.

According to Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of the council, it was difficult and time-consuming work.

"There are Russian oligarchs on the list, the names of some of them may be unexpected, as well as many companies and corporations," Oleksiy Danilov told Ukrainian media.

Sanctions imposed by the Ukrainian authorities on these persons include freezing of assets, restriction of trade operations, suspension of the possibility of leasing state property, prohibition of purchase of real estate, confiscation of licenses and other permits, prevention of capital withdrawal outside of Ukraine and other types of restrictions.

Irakli Kobakhidze, chairman of the "Georgian Dream" party, spoke to journalists about the sanctions imposed by Ukraine on the relatives and entourage of Bidzina Ivanishvili. He repeated once again that this is an attempt to open a "second front", but they will not be able to do it.

"You remember the direct call of the Secretary of the Security Council, Danilov, regarding the second front, and the same agency is blackmailing the country with sanctions. Several members of Bidzina Ivanishvili's family are mentioned in the sanc-



tions, but do you know what rhetoric preceded it and what is the context of all this, to blackmail the country into the war and open a second front here. This is a desperate attempt," he told reporters.

He also said that whether this decision of Zelensky will affect the diplomatic and partner-

ship relations between the two countries is up to the executive power.

"I don't know what kind of response this should be. It is the task of the executive to discuss such issues. I wasn't in a hurry. I would still remain in the mode of one-sided friendship with the Ukrainian government, for one

simple reason, we have friendly relations with the Ukrainian people, on the other hand, the country is in a difficult situation, because there is a war, therefore I would not give in to emotions and maintain one-sided friendship, including with Ukraine with the authorities. This is my position," he said.

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The World Bank publishes a new report on human capital in Georgia. The report on Georgia states that in the last decade, Georgia's economy has grown significantly, while poverty has decreased. However, there are challenges that could slow Georgia's path to long-term, shared prosperity.

Among such problems, the World Bank cites inequality, an aging population and a labor market that is still weak, especially for young people.

"High migration rates exacerbate the challenges already posed by an aging population." There is less labor left to support the country's growing number of elderly people.

Economic growth and prosperity are unevenly distributed, with many people and regions benefiting disproportionately from them," the World Bank report said.

According to the World Bank report, before the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the unemployment rate in Georgia was one of the highest among the countries of Europe and Central Asia. A large proportion of people are engaged in low-income and precarious work - half of the workforce is employed in the informal sector.

The World Bank publishes new report on human capital in Georgia



"Furthermore, the labor market opportunities for young people remain difficult. A disproportionately large number of young people who want to work (one in four in the 15-24 age group) are not in employment, education or training. The youth unemployment rate reaches 30%.

Youth inactivity and unemployment have long-term negative effects, as they prevent young people from gaining the necessary experience, send negative signals to potential employers, and may further hinder their job search," the World Bank wrote.

According to the World Bank report, the aging of the population in Georgia is accelerated by migration along with the accompanying effects of economic development.

"The challenge of an aging population is exacerbated by high rates of emigration, mainly for people of working age: this further reduces the size of the labor force.

Therefore, it will be essential to increase the skills and productivity of the remaining workforce to cope with the growing number of elderly people on the one hand, and to manage migration on the other hand," the World Bank report said.

The World Bank report also includes the GIN Index, which shows the existing inequality in the country. According to the GIN index, Georgia is among the most unequal countries in Europe and Central Asia.

As the World Bank writes, inequality in Georgia appears at an early age and is related to many characteristics, such as ethnicity and gender, although it is also observed from the point of view of regions - in the poorest regions, not only are there more people in need, but it is also a challenge to provide quality services.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7657; Euro - 2.7082; GBP - 3.0987; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.4913; Swiss Franc - 2.7544

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

Uncertainty in Georgian politics

A few months ago, the opposition promised a “hot” political autumn and thus justified the summer’s passivity, but the autumn has come a long time ago and the activity of the opposition has stayed a promise. On the contrary, the opposition part of the political spectrum is experiencing a clear crisis and does not pose any real threat to the ruling “Georgian Dream”.

One of the main manifestations of the opposition’s weakness and vulnerability are the internal problems of the “National Movement”, which is considered the main opposition party. The party has been virtually absent from the political scene for a long time. The real leader of the party, Mikheil Saakashvili, is not only arrested but also declares that he is no longer interested in Georgian politics. However, for many supporters of the “National Movement”, this party is associated with Mikheil Saakashvili, and his departure from Georgian politics will significantly weaken the “National Movement”.

The media has been talking about the internal problems of the “National Movement”. The real purpose of not a small part

of these materials is to further weaken this opposition party. This incentive has to be the main idea around the campaign launched against the current leader of the party, Nika Melia, claiming that it costs the party about 1.5 million to keep him, which Melia categorically denies.

It is also said that without Saakashvili, the “National Movement” may break up into several parties - primarily separating Nika Melia’s and Kezerashvili’s groups from each other. On the other hand, “National Movement” claims that everything is under control and that the party maintains its integrity. However, it is clear that this party is not having a good time either in terms of rating or its own activity.

The weakening of the “National Movement” should, at first glance, make room for the strengthening of other opposition forces and give a real face to the once popular “third political force” formation plan, although there is no change in this regard either.

Giorgi Vashadze, an enthusiast of the formation of the “Third

Political Force”, the leader of “Strategy Agmashenebeli”, again states that a large union of opposition parties of Western orientation is being formed, which is the only way to defeat the “Georgian Dream”. Such unification of the opposition is welcome, but so far no real steps have been taken in this direction.

The main controversy between the government and the opposition is regarding the fulfillment of 12 demands of the European Union. The opposition claims that Georgian Dream is only imitating that it is trying to fulfill these demands, while Georgian Dream claims that the opposition is boycotting and hindering the work done by the ruling party to fulfill the mentioned demands.

The history of the development of the anti-oligarchic law has shown that Georgian Dream and the opposition have different visions of the demands to be fulfilled, and the opposition cannot take its point of view during decision-making.

No matter how Georgian Dream debates, the official party will still get its way and the opposition will only play the role of

“democratic decoration”. That is why a number of representatives of the opposition claim that the pro-Western opposition has nothing to do in the parliament and that they should not mislead the public by being there, as if they were able to do something. This part of the opposition considers street actions and mobilization of people’s protest as a way of struggle.

There is a significant change in the official part of the political spectrum - Georgian Dream lost the parliamentary majority. Five of its members have moved to the “renegade” four, and now 9 members of “Dream” have joined the new political party People’s Power, whose main message is to criticize Georgia’s Western partners and incite anti-Western sentiment in the country.

Georgian Dream officially dissociates itself from anti-Western rhetoric, although it enters into a coalition with this anti-Western party. “People’s Power” claims that it remains in the parliamentary majority.

In the creation and strengthening of “People’s Power” and anti-Western propaganda, the

opposition sees the game initiated by Bidzina Ivanishvili, who is trying to catch several rabbits together:

To please Russia, to trade politically with the West, to maintain and increase the pro-Russian electorate, to block the fulfillment of EU demands with “People’s Power” votes, to create a new political landscape, and to rely on the openly anti-Western “People’s Power” along with the Georgian Dream.

The Georgian media also talked about the fact that Bidzina Ivanishvili may go for extraordinary elections. Early elections were a demand of the opposition in the spring, but as experts point out, the opposition in its current state is not ready for the elections and will be doomed to defeat. This is one of the reasons for planning extraordinary elections for Ivanishvili. The second reason is the uncertainty in the Russia-Ukraine war.

Russia “has not yet been defeated” and Ivanishvili will have more opportunities to record his victory, and in 2024, when the next parliamentary elections should be held in Georgia, Russia may already be defeated, and therefore betting on anti-Western rhetoric will no longer be very profitable.

The News in Brief

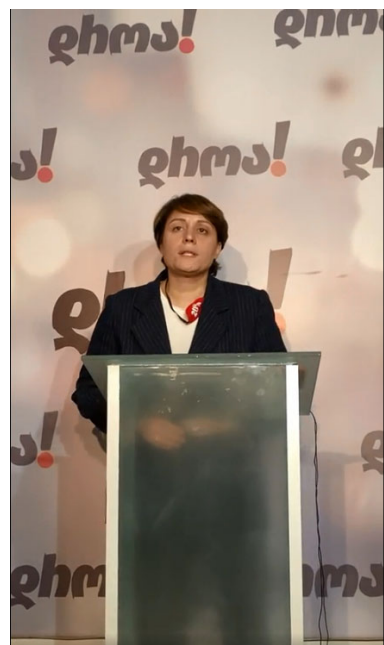
PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

“Droa” leader Elene Khoshtaria discusses Ukraine’s newly imposed sanctions on Ivanishvili’s family

The chairman of the “Droa” party, Elene Khoshtaria, responded to Ukraine imposing sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili’s entourage and said that Ukraine sanctioned only Ivanishvili and not the whole country of Georgia:

“The sanctioning of Bidzina Ivanishvili’s family members is related to his activities as an oligarch. Sanctions are intended to put pressure on oligarchic rule. The main reason, during this cruel war, is the direct ties with the Kremlin,” she said.

As Khoshtaria stated at the briefing, due to ties with Russia,



Ukraine did not sanction Georgia, but personally Bidzina Ivanishvili’s entourage.

According to her, the “Droa” party will continue to work with Ukraine and its partners to expand the list of sanctioned people and countries that punish Russian oligarchs because of their ties to Russia and the Kremlin.

“Ukrainian President Zelensky signed a resolution, according to which Ukraine introduced personal sanctions against

Russian oligarchs. Family members of Bidzina Ivanishvili and Davit Iakobashvili were included in the list of Russian oligarchs.

Of course, we all understand that the sanctioning of Bidzina Ivanishvili’s family members is connected to his activities as an oligarch. Sanctions are intended to put pressure on oligarchic rule. The main reason, during this brutal war, is direct ties with the Kremlin. This is the criterion according to which Ukraine justifiably authorizes these persons.

We should also understand how important it is that Ukraine separated the Georgian state, the Georgian society, from the clan that has hijacked our country today. Due to its ties with Russia, Ukraine sanctioned the entourage of Bidzina Ivanishvili personally, not Georgia,” said Khoshtaria.

Ioseliani responds to criticism on the presentation of all 19 candidates for the position of ombudsman

“Citizens” leader Levan Ioseliani explained why the party

decided to nominate all 19 contestants as candidates for public defense.

According to the opposition vice-speaker of the parliament, with this decision, all candidates will be given the opportunity to present themselves before the parliament and express their opinion.

According to him, the ruling party does not have enough votes to nominate its own candidate, they need the support of the opposition to finally elect a candidate.

“This is the most transparent, the most democratic process that can be done in the parliament

for these people, and we are the supporters of this process, naturally.

As for the skepticism and criticism of my colleagues, I can only say one thing to them, it seems that they have no hope in their own party that someone will not support the “Georgian Dream” candidate, otherwise it is inconceivable to me, how could they be against it, given to everyone A chance to present his views to the Parliament under equal conditions.

“Georgian Dream” does not have enough votes, and if they have their candidate or candidates who will support them, they will also appear publicly. If they had enough votes, then I would receive criticism, but since they don’t have enough votes and someone from the opposition has to fill them, therefore the argument that “Georgian Dream” can have its own candidate is completely illogical,” said Levan Ioseliani while talking to journalists.

The “Citizens” party plans to nominate 19 candidates to the parliament, i.e. all those who applied for the position of public defender.



Weather

Friday, October 21

Day Light Rain
High: 15°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 7°C

Saturday, October 22

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 17°C

Night Clear
Low: 6°C

published by

The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia’s English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

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.