

President Zourabichvili opens conference, speaks importance of self-government

By Liza Mchedlidze

The President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, opened the international conference of the Local Self-Government Platform of Georgia "Efficiency and Challenges of Local Self-Government in Georgia" and addressed the Polish, American, Canadian and Israeli guests.

"The issue of self-government is one of the crucial issues of our future. If we want democracy, Europeanism and a strong state, we need strong regions - there won't be strong regions and there won't be a strong state, a strong Georgia!" said the President in her speech.

According to her, in order for the region to be strong, self-government should be real, put into practice and not remain only as a good legal framework and strategy.

"The issue of self-government is one of the crucial issues for our future. If we want democracy, Europeanism and a strong state, we need strong regions. This is a situation we cannot escape from. There will be no strong regions and no strong state, strong Georgia! Greater attention to regions - this has been one of my top priorities since day one, but attention alone is not enough.

In order for the region to be strong, self-government must be real, put into practice, and not just a good legal framework and strategy. A lot has been done in this direction, but most importantly, the region should be self-governing in practice, the municipality should be self-governing, which requires several preconditions, but if we do not do this, we cannot return to our traditional arrangement.

Georgia was strong when the self-governing units (then it was not called self-governing) were strong and were together. This unity, self-government and their independence is our niche. This arrangement of our state was broken by the Soviet system, it moved us to an ultra-



centralized system and thereby destroyed what was the foundation of our strength, which we must return to. We have the initial guidelines for this: we have adopted the "Self-Government Code".

However, all is not done yet; We have adopted a decentralization strategy, which needs to be implemented in three main directions - everything starts and ends with finance, if there is no new distribution of income, there will be no self-government either because it will not have the resources to implement its own decisions. Therefore, we should go further in this direction.

Second, there is the issue of transfer of property to self-governments, which is also written in the new code but has not yet been fully implemented, and which

is one of the foundations of the strength and new opportunities of municipalities.

And thirdly, there is the issue of citizens' involvement in the process of decision-making and budget allocation, which is also very important. This practice has already been introduced in several municipalities. In some places on a very small scale, in others a little more seriously, but this still only covers projects such as squares, sculptures, etc. It is not the citizen's full involvement in the processes that have become a true partner of self-government. The steps to be taken toward this require everyone's involvement. So, there is a lot to do," said the president.

The platform is organized by the Solidarity Fund PL (SFPL) branch in Georgia and the Association of Financiers of

Local Self-Governing Units of Georgia (GFA).

Representatives of the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development of Georgia took part in the event.

The participants of the conference discussed the best strategies for the effective management of local problems and the best international practices.

The main task of the platform is to assign priority strategies to Georgia's self-government bodies, which will allow them to better serve their citizens, improve sustainability, and better guide the collective vision of local self-government in Georgia. In addition, the platform aims to transfer financial and budgetary SOPs to local self-governing units.

Documents 'confirming' Ivanishvili entourage's ties with Russian businesses gathered by "Droa", Elene Khoshtaria says



By Liza Mchedlidze

Elene Khoshtaria, the leader of the "Droa" movement, said that documents have been collected in connection with the request for sanctions against Bidzina Ivanishvili, in which the connection of Ivanishvili's entourage with Russian businesses is confirmed.

According to her, the material collected is based on the investigations of various organizations, which confirm that Ucha Mamatsashvili, sanctioned by Ukraine, had a shared business with the sanctioned Russian businessman Georgy Poltavchenko during the beginning of Russia's war in Ukraine.

"For example, we have Ucha Mamatsashvili, in addition to his past contacts with Osmanov [documents], during the war, he had a shared business with the sanctioned Poltavchenko, where they had a shared business through his son. He also goes to Moscow regularly," said Elene Khoshtaria.

CONTINUED ON Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7569; Euro - 2.6849; GBP - 3.0618; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.4809; Swiss Franc - 2.7239

Documents ‘confirming’ Ivanishvili entourage’s ties with Russian businesses gathered by “Droa”, Elene Khoshtaria says

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

According to Khoshtaria, they also ob-

tained information about Iranian planes and ships that “Droa” claimed were carrying sanctioned cargo.

“This is a process in which we cooperate with international institutions in Ukraine and beyond. In this process, we want the information on which the arguments regarding sanctions are based to be transparent. We have collected documents confirming Iranian planes flying over them, as well as documents on ships coming in, and the public response to them has been unclear or unsatisfactory.

According to her, they cooperate with Ukraine and other international partners in the process of sanctioning Ivanishvili and his entourage.

“This is a process in which we cooperate with specific international institutions in Ukraine and beyond. Also, in the pro-

cess, we want the information on which arguments regarding sanctions are based to be transparent. Specific documents are collected here, for example, documents confirming the overflight of Iranian planes. For example, regarding the incoming ships, the answer to which was either unclear or unsatisfactory.

For example, the direct contacts of Bidzina Ivanishvili’s entourage with Russian businesses, and here are the documents. We have gathered most of the investigations, both from “Transparency International”, this is a fact, and from another investigative journalist. All this is then verified by our international partners”, said Elene Khoshtaria.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

‘Anti-corruption movement’ to work with international partners to punish Irakli Kobakhidze and Tea Tsulukiani for ‘electoral fraud’

national sanctions should be all those who falsified the elections.

“There is a person in the Ministry of Culture who took an important part in the falsification of the 2020 parliamentary elections and 2021 municipal elections. Yesterday, a new detail became known to the public - the falsifier himself, who had a confrontation with other falsifi-

protect it, handed it over to the ruling party, and sacrificed it. Therefore, the question of his responsibility should arise. We intend to contact the data protection inspector to start an investigation regarding Thea Tsulukiani.

Also, we are working with international partners on the issue of sanctions, where one of the directions is to undermine Georgian democracy. Excavating the main root of what the ruler can do is falsifying elections, and restricting the expression of the nation’s free will, therefore Irakli Kobakhidze, Tea Tsulukiani, and the forgers should be objects of international sanctions, we will share the evidence with our partners. These forgers should be punished”, said Pavlenishvili.

‘We are trying to stand by Ukraine, such a decision is incomprehensible’ says Bregadze on Ukraine’s sanctions on Ivanishvili

Minister of Justice Rati Bregadze said that Ukraine’s sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili’s family and entourage “such type of decisions are completely incomprehensible and are not favorable towards Georgia”.

According to Bregadze, the representatives of the National Movement hold high positions in Ukraine, and “it is clear that the Ukrainian government probably takes their advice into account”.

“Such decisions towards Georgian citizens are completely incomprehensible, and we have seen this before when one of the high-ranking officials directly called for Georgia’s involvement in the war, and Georgia did not understand all of this, and on the contrary, we try to maintain peace as much as possible, protect our national interests, stand by the Ukrainian people. And

when similar decisions are made in Ukraine, it doesn’t matter who makes them, it’s completely incomprehensible to us, and we think it’s not good for Georgia, when Georgian citizens are subjected to similar sanctions without any explanation, and this is completely A trend decision.

I, in this case, do not expect anything [Ivanishvili’s sanction], I state my position that similar types of decisions against Georgian citizens, which are not accompanied by any justification, are uniquely tendentious.

We have repeatedly talked about the fact that the representatives of the United National Movement hold high positions in Ukraine, this is also completely incomprehensible to us, and it is clear that the Ukrainian authorities probably take into account their advice, which has nothing to do with the law, and when someone makes a similar decision, they should be kind and agree with it. give reasons. Therefore, it will not be appropriate to make more comments on such frivolous decisions,” said Bregadze.



According to Irakli Pavlenishvili, a member of the “Anti-corruption Movement”, they will work with international partners to include the members of the ruling team - Irakli Kobakhidze and Tea Tsulukiani - in the list of those sanctioned due to election fraud.

As he said while talking to journalists, the object of inter-

ers, made public the evidence we have been talking about in recent years. We observed and saw how the will of the Georgian people was forged.

As for Tea Tsulukiani, who moved from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Culture, the personal information of Georgian citizens was known to the “Georgian Dream” party, “Georgian Dream” and State Security Service. The responsibility of the Ministry of Justice is clear, it is the Ministry of Justice that has access to our personal data. They were responsible for protecting personal data, but they did not



Weather

Monday, October 24

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 20°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 12°C

Tuesday, October 25

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 19°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 8°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.