

Public Defender visits Mikheil Saakashvili at hospital

By LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Public defender Nino Lomjaria visited Mikheil Saakashvili at the Vivamed clinic. She told reporters that the former President's health condition has worsened since their last meeting.

"I spoke with Mikheil Saakashvili for about 10 minutes, he is having trouble and cannot talk for longer. I'm not a doctor, but I remember what he was like last year at Gori Hospital. Visually, the difference is striking. His health condition, in my opinion, has deteriorated sharply.

He has lost a lot of weight and is practically lying down all the time. As the doctors confirmed to me, he does not stand up, does not walk, and does not sit up.

Especially, as the doctor says, it has become more difficult and since the beginning of October, there has been a decline in the dynamics of his health condition. As the doctor says, he connects it to the case when the prosecutor and the judge entered his cell. Emotionally, since then, his situation has worsened. He is malnourished, he eats little, not enough," she said.

According to Lomjaria, she is waiting for the expert opinion, after which she will probably have a recommendation on the case.

"The petition will probably depend on the expert's report, which I know will be multifaceted, and after that, we will probably have a recommendation," she said.



Georgia to send 'de-oligarchization' draft law to Venice Commission

By LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

According to Mamuka Mdinaradze, executive secretary of the Georgian Dream, the ruling party will send the draft law 'on de-oligarchization' to the Venice Commission for a legal opinion.

Mdinaradze said at the briefing held at the party office, that they will no longer discuss the

draft law in the third reading and will wait for the conclusion of the Venice Commission.

The Georgian Dream called on the commission to evaluate the law in a timely manner.

"We said that we don't see any problem with sending the draft law to the Venice Commission, but we also said that we should first find out what we are dealing with. As a result of commu-

nication with the Venice Commission, it became clear that the information about the withdrawal of the conclusion on the Ukrainian analogue law, or return it with a corresponding note is a lie. The Venice Commission will deliver its conclusion to the Ukrainian Parliament next year.

In addition, it is known to the public that the European Com-

missioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi, has urged us to send the bill to the Venice Commission. The same request was voiced by the new EU ambassador to Georgia, both through mass media and during personal communication.

In the conditions when the same Ukrainian law received the approval and highest evalu-

ation from the President of the European Commission when Ukraine and Moldova received the candidate status, and Georgia received the European perspective from the European Union, at the same time, the Ukrainian Parliament is waiting for the Commission's conclusion, we really do not consider it necessary to send it.

However, because we respect the call of our friends, because, as we have already said many times, we don't see any problems, because there is no room for speculations, there is no room to accuse this country and the Georgian Dream, we made the decision to send the bill to the Venice Commission for a legal opinion.

Accordingly, we will refuse to discuss the law in the third reading and will wait for the conclusion of the Venice Commission.

According to Mdinaradze, the information voiced by the US ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Dignan, that Ukraine had withdrawn the 'de-oligarchization' bill from the Venice Commission, turned out to be a lie.

"I will refrain from assessing why the ambassador of our main strategic partner country does not answer what she relied on when she said that Ukraine withdrew the de-oligarchization bill from the Venice Commission, although the fact is that the information voiced by her, as if Ukraine had withdrawn the de-oligarchization bill from the Venice Commission, turned out to be a lie. Unfortunately," Mdinaradze stated.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

PM Gharibashvili says unemployment dropped to historic minimum

Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili announced at the govern-

ment meeting that in the last year, more than 100,000 new jobs have been created in Georgia and unemployment has dropped to a 'historical' minimum. "We have a decline in poverty and there is growth in all directions, be it tourism, export, domestic production, in short, we have a positive indicator in all directions. Taking into account the dynamics of actual mobilization, we increase the planned rate of tax revenue of the consolidated budget for 2023 by approximately 290 million GEL. In addition, the planned rate of income, the planned rate



of loan repayment and other income will increase by approximately 270 million GEL. Therefore, next year, our resources will increase by 660 million GEL, and accord-

ingly, the combined budget will increase by the same amount, and the total budget will be 25 billion GEL," Irakli Gharibashvili said.

Commission. As stated in the statement, this is a 'positive step'. "We welcome the statement of the Parliament of Georgia regarding sending the draft law on 'de-oligarchization' to the Venice Commission for consideration, which is a positive step. It is important to consult with the creators of international standards and implement their recommendations," the European Union

EU Representatives in Georgia call 'de-oligarchization' draft law submission 'positive step'

The Representatives of the European



Union in Georgia issued a statement regarding Georgia's submission of the draft law 'on de-oligarchization' to the Venice

Representation in Georgia's statement reads.

Joint statement by the UN Country Team on entry into force of plain packaging regulation of tobacco products

Tbilisi, 28 November 2022

December 31, 2022 is the deadline set by the Law of Georgia "On Tobacco Control" for the regulation of plain packaging of tobacco products to come into force. Plain packaging was expected to enter into force in 2018, but was postponed until the end of this year. Currently, a legislative initiative on another postponement of this deadline has been submitted to the Parliament of Georgia. We call on the Parliament of Georgia to reject this legislative initiative and ensure that the plain packaging regulations will enter into force within the timeframe specified in the current law.

To reduce the enormous



health, social and economic damage caused by active and passive tobacco use in Georgia, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a strong tobacco control legislation in 2017, which was later recog-

nized by international organizations and experts as a visionary law that serves as an example for many countries in the region. Just two years after the successful implementation of this law,

studies show a significant decrease in tobacco use and second-hand tobacco smoke pollution in Georgia, which resulted in the reduction of the burden of tobacco-attributable diseases.

To build on this success, further comprehensive tobacco control measures need to be implemented in line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Regulation on plain packaging for tobacco products is one of the most powerful regulations that make tobacco products less attractive and reduce the ability of tobacco products to mislead consumers about the harms of smoking.

The United Nations in Georgia would like to commend the firm position of the decision-makers of the Parliament of Georgia of various convocations and the Government of Georgia on the smooth implementation of tobacco control regulations. We hope that the Parliament of Georgia will take immediate steps to avoid another postponement and to ensure the plain packaging regulation enters into force in the beginning of 2023 and will thus help to protect the health of the current and future generations of Georgia.

Weather

Tuesday, November 29
 Day Light Rain
 High: 11°C
 Night Mostly Cloudy
 Low: 8°C
Wednesday, November 30
 Day Light Rain
 High: 9°C
 Night Light Rain
 Low: 6°C

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