

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Bidzina Ivanishvili's legal team accuses 'Credit Suisse' of blackmailing

Bidzina Ivanishvili's legal advisers have released a statement regarding the ongoing dispute with 'Credit Suisse', where they say that the bank is 'blackmailing' Ivanishvili and for this reason, they have decided to publish details.

Ivanishvili's lawyers wrote that the financial disputes of the former Prime Minister of Georgia were complicated by the adoption of the European Parliament resolution, according to which the European Commission recommended the sanctioning of Bidzina Ivanishvili.

"On December 14, 2022, the European Parliament adopted a resolution recommending the sanctioning of Ivanishvili to the executive bodies of the European Union.

Based on this background, the bank made the last transfers to the client exactly after December 14. Why we highlighted this circumstance: We said that the trust on the island of Guernsey manages the largest part of Ivanishvili's Credit Suisse saved funds.

These funds are now in another Swiss bank but under the management of a Credit Suisse trust. Neither Credit Suisse as a bank nor its trust has and cannot have any financial interest in not following Ivanishvili's instructions with respect to the funds belonging to him.

Accordingly, we termed these actions of the Guernsey Trust as political blackmail, as it had



been obstructing transfers since March initially under the pretext of "the geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe".

In this regard, there was a long correspondence between the lawyers for several months. Meanwhile, Credit Suisse re-

ceived the first resolution of the European Parliament on June 9, 2022, which called on the Council of Europe to sanction Ivanishvili.

Credit Suisse saw a solution in this resolution, albeit with a delay, because already in July,

when the European Council meeting was held and it did not reflect any sanctions against Ivanishvili, after that the Credit Suisse Trust stated that due to the resolution of the European Parliament, deprived It was possible to transfer funds to the ben-

eficiary.

Thus, based on the price-loss (non-shared) resolution, the bank did not transfer the amount to the client and could not indicate the norm on the basis of which it did so," the statement reads.

President Zourabichvili holds briefing in response to rally in front of President's Administration

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili addressed those gath-

ered near the President's administration building, who were demanding that Mikheil Saakashvili not be pardoned by the president.



The president came out to the yard with the members of the administration and addressed the rally participants with a microphone, however, she stopped her speech due to the noise of the rally participants and scheduled a briefing.

"If you came here, on someone's spread rumors, people who are spreading their created rumors about me, where were they in 2007, where were they when the tragedies of Misha's time happened, when we were standing in the streets.

I will tell you where those who spread the message boxes were today - either they were in Misha's headquarters, or they were hiding in positions or they were in 'Cartu'.

Those who spread the message box today, it turns out, know what I will do; It turns out they know when I will; It turns out they know why I will do it," Zourabichvili told rally participants.

Later at the briefing, President Zourabichvili stated that during the last few days the pressure on the President is going on in various forms and message boxes. They threaten her, question her morality, and 'teach' her how to fight Saakashvili 'when he is already down'.

"I know that this rally was not only organized by those people, but it was accompanied by various message boxes that have been circulating these days and it was done deliberately to put pressure on the president, from a party whose leaders were nowhere to be found in 2007.

This is the year when everything happened.

These people, who are threatening me today in various ways, including my career and so on. These people were nowhere then and now they are teaching me, asking me about morality, and teaching me how to fight against Saakashvili, who has already fallen," she said.

Zourabichvili said that the current government pardoned Murusidze and Chinchaladze and appointed them to permanent positions, which threatens the future of Georgia as they are 'blocking' the European path for the country.

According to Zourabichvili's, two forces, the ruling party, and the opposition have profited from Mikheil Saakashvili's return to Georgia. She said that one force was urging him to return to Georgia and was a promising revolution, and the other force was 'playing with his Georgian character' and tricking him into returning.

Zourabichvili said that Georgia has been put on hold around Saakashvili's issue and both the ruling party and opposition are profiting from this situation.

The president added that the bullying, humiliation, and blackmailing of the woman, the president, is unacceptable and she does not clearly understand why she is involved in this and asked why are NGOs not saying anything regarding this matter.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7055; Euro - 2.8789; GBP - 3.2634; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.7862; Swiss Franc - 2.9145

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

President's Fate in Georgia

Today, one of the current topics of Georgian politics is the issue of taking the imprisoned third president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, abroad for medical treatment. This is demanded from the current Georgian government, due to the serious health condition of the ex-president, and the leaders of Georgian Dream categorically refuse to transfer Saakashvili abroad for treatment. The created situation reminded many of the fate of Saakashvili's predecessor and subsequent presidents. It made the subject of discussion the general question of how far the institution of the president has been established in Georgia.

The position of president in Georgia, like many post-Soviet countries, was introduced after the restoration of independence. The first president of Georgia was Zviad Gamsakhurdia. If his presidency had been in a "peaceful" country, in whose domestic affairs Russia would not have interfered, the fate of Zviad Gamsakhurdia and the country would have been different.

Zviad Gamsakhurdia was

overthrown by semi-criminal armed groups and had to leave Georgia to Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev. And then, having returned to Georgia, he died under unknown circumstances in a mountainous village in Western Georgia.

According to the official version, he killed himself, according to another version, he was killed. Zviad Gamsakhurdia was transferred to Chechnya and buried in Grozny, and later, during Saakashvili's presidency, he was transferred to Georgia and buried with great honor in Mtatsminda Pantheon. After the overthrow of Gamsakhurdia, the forces that came to power blamed everything on the president's institution, saying it should be abolished. However, Eduard Shevardnadze, who came to power, returned the institution of the president in 1995 and he himself was elected president twice, although he did not complete the second presidential term.

After the Rose revolution, Shevardnadze had to resign in November 2003 and, as he told

the journalists, he went 'home'. After that, Shevardnadze stayed at home until his death in 2014 and did not participate in public and political life anymore. The new president Saakashvili was negative towards his predecessor. As they say, at first he wanted to arrest and try Shevardnadze, but he refused to do so on the advice of his Western friends.

The fate of Mikheil Saakashvili himself turned out to be difficult. Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Georgian Dream were and are extremely hostile towards him. However, Saakashvili admitted defeat in the 2012 parliamentary elections and handed over power to Bidzina Ivanishvili's bloc.

A one-year 'cohabitation' period also took place when Saakashvili remained in the position of president, however, in Georgian politics, cohabitation was made a curse word, and the Georgian Dream blamed everything bad during this period on cohabitation. Saakashvili had to leave Georgia and became actively involved in Ukrainian politics. Saakashvili has made

many mistakes, but perhaps the main mistake was returning to Georgia in the fall of 2021 after eight years.

As it turns out now, there was a difference of opinion in the "National Movement" regarding Mikheil Saakashvili's return to Georgia. The leader of the party, Nika Melia, for example, did not want this, while others, on the contrary, promised Saakashvili a great turnout of the people. However, as it turned out, it was wrong to hope for this.

The health condition of Mikheil Saakashvili, who is currently in prison, is grave.

Georgia had two more presidents after Mikheil Saakashvili. These two presidents were already elected with the support of the Georgian Dream and Bidzina Ivanishvili personally, as a result of the change in the constitution, they no longer had real power and turned into symbolic presidents, but their relationship with the ruling party turned out to be quite difficult.

The 4th President Giorgi Margvelashvili (2013-2018) ended his presidency with a bad

relationship with the Georgian Dream, the next, the current president, Salome Zourabichvili, has already become the object of criticism from the Georgian Dream many times. The last reason for this criticism is Mikheil Saakashvili.

Speaking to the BBC, Salome Zourabichvili said that the former president should not die in prison. According to him, Saakashvili's situation is "a very important issue for the country's reputation and dignity." According to President Zourabichvili, if a relevant conclusion is made regarding Saakashvili's health condition, then the court should make a decent decision, thus solving two problems:

The first refers to Saakashvili's health problem, and the second shows that the court is independent, which is also important for the country. Georgian Dream government officials rule out transferring Saakashvili anywhere for treatment. Opponents of the government demand Salome Zourabichvili pardon Mikheil Saakashvili. According to them, Saakashvili's situation is so difficult that this issue cannot be prolonged any longer.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Former Ombudsman responds to Zourabichvili's statement regarding NGOs

Former Public Defender Nino Lomjaria responded to President Salome Zourabichvili's statement that NGOs should make statements against the president being 'bullied'.

According to Lomjaria "calls

cation - the function of human rights defenders is not to protect persons in power from citizens or political opponents, no matter how intense the opposition, pressure or political attack. Of course, when the pressure takes illegal forms, it's a different matter, however, calls from government officials that human rights defenders should protect officials during political attacks are becoming a very wrong practice.

Protection of rights means protection of those who are not in power, i.e. the weak, from those in power. In the case of the President of Georgia, she has so much power, so many constitutional levers (be it the appointment of a decisive member of the Council of Justice, pardon, constitutional proceedings, appeal to the Venice Commission, right of veto, etc.) that he can freely put pressure on the members of the ruling party.

This post is not only about the president, during the public defense

I was also often asked to protect ministers or members of the ruling party, which is a wrong understanding of human rights protection and manipulation of this concept. I think that we should not support this wrong definition," wrote Lomjaria.

15 EU reps meet Minister of Justice regarding Mikheil Saakashvili case

Representatives of 15 EU member states and the USA held a meeting with the Minister of

Justice of Georgia, Rati Bregadze.

As the German ambassador to Georgia said after the meeting, a meeting with Rati Bregadze was held in the Ministry of Justice regarding the third president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili.

"We were here with representatives of 15 EU member states and the USA. We met with the Minister of Justice regarding the case of Mikheil Saakashvili. We discussed current procedures and health issues. I can't go into the details," Peter Fischer, the German ambassador to Georgia, told Formula TV.



Weather

Thursday, December 29

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 6°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: -3°C

Friday, December 30

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 6°C

Night Clear

Low: -2°C

by government officials that human rights defenders should protect officials during political attacks are becoming a wrong practice."

"As a former public defender, I would like to make one clarifi-

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