

PM Irakli Gharibashvili announces competition to elect the head of Anti-Corruption Bureau

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, opened the first session of the competition commission for the selection of candidates for the head of the Anti-Corruption Bureau in the government administration.

According to the government administration, at the meeting, the members of the commission, on the basis of voting, elected Revaz Javelidze, the head of the government administration, as the chairman of the competition commission.

"By Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili's order No. 289 of December 22, 2022, a competition was announced to select a candidate for the head of the Anti-Corruption Bureau, and a competition commission was created, and by order No. 304 of December 30, 2022, the composition of the commission was determined.

The members of the competition commission are Revaz Javelidze, head of government administration; Mikheil Sarjveladze, Chairman of the Human Rights Protection and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament; Anri Okhanashvili, Chairman of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Parliament; Giorgi Mikautadze, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Court; First Deputy Prosecutor General Bakur Abuladze; Acting Public Defender Tamar Gvaramadze; Aleksandre Kevkhishvili, representative



of "Transparency International - Georgia".

Based on the changes made in the legislation of Georgia, a legal entity under public law - the Anti-Corruption Bureau was created, which will carry out its activities independently and will be account-

able to the Parliament of Georgia and the Interagency Anti-Corruption Council.

The anti-corruption bureau will be headed by the head of the anti-corruption bureau, who will be selected through competition by the competition commission composed of representatives of state agen-

cies and civil society. As a result of the competition, no less than 2 and no more than 5 candidates will be selected. The head of the anti-corruption bureau will be appointed by the Prime Minister of Georgia for a period of 6 years," the government administration stated.

President Biden should call on President Zourabichvili to pardon Mikheil Saakashvili, Michael McFaul says

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Opinion | The world can't allow the ex-president of Georgia to die in detention

By Michael McFaul
Contributing columnist

January 4, 2023 at 2:05 p.m. EST



Georgia's former president Mikheil Saakashvili appears via video link from the hospital during a hearing in Tbilisi city court, Georgia, on Dec. 22. (Zurab Kurtsikidze/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock)

The former US ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul published an extensive opinion letter about Mikheil Saakashvili in the Washington Post and called on President Joe Biden, together with European democratic leaders, to immediately come out with a call to save Mikheil Saakashvili.

McFaul emphasized the medical report released by Mikheil Saakashvili's lawyers, about possible poisoning, and recently released pictures from the clinic showing Saakashvili exhausted and disoriented.

McFaul believes that President Biden and other leaders, based on humanitarian considerations, should call on Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili to pardon Mikheil Saakashvili and give him the opportunity to travel abroad for medical treatment.

McFaul also mentioned the resolution adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in October 2022, which talks about the necessity to release the political prisoner Saakashvili.

"President Biden, in close coordination with other democratic leaders in Europe, must make an urgent appeal to save Saakashvili. On humanitarian grounds, Biden and others must urge Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili to grant Saakashvili a pardon and allow him to travel to a medical facility outside the country — a measure already demanded by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which has also declared Saakashvili a political prisoner," he wrote.

McFaul wrote that Saakashvili's death will be Putin's victory and a blow to Georgian democracy. According to the American diplomat, Ukrainian President Zelensky understands this best, who last month called on the Georgian authorities to release the ex-president:

"Saakashvili's death in jail would be a victory for Putin and a blow to Georgian democracy. No one understands this better than Zelensky, who last month appealed to the Georgian authorities to "show mercy" by releasing the ex-president.

Zelensky was right to do so. The United States and the European Union should follow suit. The free world has stood together in defense of democracy in Ukraine. They should do the same in Georgia by pressing for Saakashvili's release," McFaul wrote.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Khatia Dekanoidze demands that the MPs be given the opportunity to visit Saakashvili



One of the leaders of the United National Movement, Khatia Dekanoidze, at a briefing held in the legislative body, demanded that the deputies of the parliament be allowed to visit the ex-president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili.

According to the information of the Parliament of Georgia, from now on, MPs will be able to visit Saakashvili only after receiving a special permit.

“The Georgian authorities continue to keep Mikheil Saakashvili in political isolation. I openly, publicly and very

strongly request that the deputies of the Parliament of Georgia be given the opportunity to visit Saakashvili as one of the components of our right and duty, which is very important. Thus, political prisoners of Putin The regime includes, among others, Kara-Murza and Alexei

Navalny”, said Dekanoidze.

According to the statement of the Parliament of Georgia, since October 3, 228 permits were issued to members of the parliament to visit Saakashvili - which, according to the statement, shows that the deputies are not using the permit to get to know the conditions of the prisoner, but for personal and business meetings.

imprisoned third president of Georgia to physically attend the trial. She told “Interpressnews” that they have never given a similar recommendation to patients admitted to the clinic.

“If he can go in and out, then why is he lying in the clinic? His condition is of moderate severity and he continues to be treated in the therapeutic department...

The director of Vivamed explains why they do not recommend the transfer of Saakashvili



Nino Nadiradze, general director of Vivamed clinic, said that they will not issue a recommendation to transfer the

While the patient is in the clinic, we cannot give such a recommendation. When he will no longer be in the clinic, where he will be next, that institution

gave a recommendation. Another case is when the patient takes you for examinations, moves to another clinic, etc.,” said Nadiradze.

China ‘under-representing’ true impact of Covid outbreak, says WHO

BY SIMONE MCCARTHY

The World Health Organization has accused China of “under-representing” the severity of its Covid outbreak and criticized its “narrow” definition of what constitutes a Covid death, as top global health officials urge Beijing to share more data about the explosive spread.

“We continue to ask China for more rapid, regular, reliable data on hospitalizations and deaths, as well as more comprehensive, real-time viral sequencing,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a media briefing in Geneva Wednesday.

“WHO is concerned about the risk to life in China and has reiterated the importance of vaccination, including booster doses, to protect against hospitalization, severe disease, and

death,” he said.

Speaking in more detail, WHO Executive Director for Health Emergencies Mike Ryan said the current numbers released by China “under-represent the true impact of the disease” in terms of hospital and ICU admissions, as well as deaths.

He acknowledged that many countries have seen lags in reporting hospital data, but pointed to China’s “narrow” definition of a Covid death as part of the issue.

The country only lists those Covid patients who succumbed with respiratory failure as having died of Covid. In the two weeks prior to January 4, China reported fewer than 20 deaths from local Covid cases, according to figures released on the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention website.

WHO officials, who have grappled with China’s tight control of data access throughout the pandemic, have become increasingly vocal in their calls for reliable information as a major outbreak rips across China’s urban centers in the wake of an

abrupt relaxation of disease controls last month.

There, the outbreak has overwhelmed hospitals and crematoriums, triggered shortages of basic medicines, and sparked fears of an even darker month ahead as experts warn of a spread to less resourced rural areas during the upcoming Lunar New Year.

The surge in cases in a coun-



try of 1.4 billion has also raised global concerns about the potential emergence of new variants – and of China’s levels of monitoring and sharing data. A number of economies have implemented Covid testing requirements for travelers from China, citing a dearth of data on strains circulating there.

On Wednesday, the European Union “strongly encouraged” its member states to introduce a requirement for a negative Covid test for passengers traveling from China to the EU, according to a statement released by the Swedish presidency of the bloc.

The WHO’s Tedros said Wednesday it was “understandable” that some countries were taking these steps, “with circulation in China so high and comprehensive data not forthcoming.”

Chinese health officials presented recent genomic data to a WHO advisory body during a closed-door meeting Tuesday. The variants detected there are known and have been circulating in other countries, with no new variant yet reported by the China CDC, the body said in a statement Wednesday.

But the group and WHO officials continued to stress the need for more forthcoming genomic

data. The latest situation adds to longstanding challenges for the UN body, which faced criticism at the start of the pandemic that it did not push China hard enough for data, amid concerns Beijing was obscuring critical information. Beijing has repeatedly defended its transparency.

“There’s a lot more data that needs to be shared from China and additionally from around the world so that we can track this pandemic as we enter this fourth year,” Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO’s technical lead on Covid, said Wednesday.

“We need more information on sequencing around the country, (and for) those sequences to be shared with publicly available databases like GISAID so that deeper analyses can be done,” she said. GISAID is a global initiative that provides access to the genomic data of different influenza viruses.

Information about China’s outbreak would also be shared with WHO member states during a broader meeting on Thursday, WHO officials said.

Source: CNN

Weather

Friday, January 6

Day Partly Cloudy High: 10°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 2°C

Saturday, January 7

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 8°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 0°C

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