

## Mykhailo Podolyak criticizes Georgian Gov't, says they have 'pro-Russian' values

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The advisor of the administration of the President of Ukraine, Mykhailo Podolyak, in an interview with Ukrainian media, spoke about Georgia-Ukraine relations, where Georgia stands during the Russia-Ukraine war, and the situation of imprisoned former president Mikheil Saakashvili.

Podolyak discussed the government of Georgia and said that it is impossible to have negotiations with them because the ruling party is in his own words, 'in a different reality', as 10 months after the beginning of a war, they still do not understand 'whose side they should be on', adding that Georgian people made a huge mistake in electing the 'Georgian Dream' party.

"I have a very simple attitude towards Georgia. There are Georgian people, however, unfortunately, they made a huge mistake when they elected such a government. The government named Mr. Ivanishvili, who looks at the Russian Federation with wide-open or wide-shut eyes, expects it to solve some energy-related problems, not to continue the 2008 war, which means prolonging the occupation of Georgian territories," said Podolyak.

A representative of the Zelenskiy administration called the situation in Georgia 'strange, as according to him, the government supports pro-Russian values and at the same time, they want to have access to the European market and money.

Podolyak compared Georgia to



Hungary, which wants to live by its own rules - close to Russia's authoritarian values and at the same time enjoy the benefits of the free, democratic world.

According to him, there are also many small countries, including the Baltic countries, which are ready to help Ukraine with weapons.

"There are countries like Georgia. And it will be recorded as a very surprising fact in history that the Georgian government in 2022-2023, which was attacked by the Russian chau-

vinist elite in 2008, continues to show disrespect to Ukraine while freeing Europe from the process of Russian expansionism. Let Georgians live with this in the future," said Podolyak.

According to Podolyak, Georgia, which was an example of democratic transformation in the past, is now in a 'strange situation' because 'reformer' President Saakashvili is being 'killed' in prison. In his opinion, the treatment of the former president will be recorded in the history of Georgia.

"It's phenomenal. The country, which in the mid-2000s was considered an example of democratic transformation, carried out powerful economic, anti-corruption reforms (yes, not without problems, but carried out), today returned to a strange situation, when they want to kill the reformist president in prison. You can understand how this will appear in the history books," Podolyak stated.

The representative of the Ukrainian government stated that the official Kyiv is calling on

Tbilisi to transfer Saakashvili to Ukraine or another country for treatment. According to him, Ukraine does this not for political but for humanitarian purposes.

"For me, this is important because it is a symbolic gesture, it shows that Georgia, despite its political preferences, is not a dehumanized country. If they like, for example, the Russian Federation, God be with them, but there are humanitarian components, humanistic components that should be chosen correctly," said Mykhailo Podolyak.

## Bill Browder says Mikheil Saakashvili is 'held captive' by the Georgian government

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE



Bill Browder, the author of the Magnitsky Act, spoke about Mikheil Saakashvili's health in an interview with Voice of America and said that the photo he saw of the imprisoned ex-president, made it clear for him that Saakashvili is extremely suffering physically, said he is being 'tortured' and discussed the consequences Georgian government might face in future if he dies in prison.

"I saw a photo of Mikheil Saakashvili taken in prison and it was clear from that photo that he is extremely suffering physically. It seems that his medical needs are neglected, he is tortured and he is probably poisoned. A photo says more than a thousand words. So when I saw a photo of a person who was once strong, healthy, it became clear that he is on the brink of death. We have to do something, and we

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6867; Euro - 2.8871; GBP - 3.2598; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.9148; Swiss Franc - 2.9093

# Bill Browder says Mikheil Saakashvili is 'held captive' by the Georgian government

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have to do it fast," Browder said.

Browder called the treatment of Mikheil Saakashvili a 'shameful, evil act,' which will remain a terrible stain on the Georgian government.

"I think that what we are looking at now is the treatment of the former president by the government of Georgia, and it has reached the point where he [Saakashvili] is dying. This is such a very

shameful and evil act that it will leave a terrible, terrible stain on the government of Georgia. If Saakashvili dies in prison, then I can't even imagine what will happen to the members of the current government of Georgia. They will probably never be able to do business again, they won't be able to have accounts and they won't be able to travel anywhere in the world. That's what will happen if Mikheil Saakashvili dies in prison," said Browder.

According to Browder, Mikheil

Saakashvili is being held captive by the government of Georgia. He noted that the Magnitsky Act was specifically designed to deal with situations like this.

"In my opinion, he's being held captive by the Georgian government, which is treating him terribly. The Magnitsky Act is specifically designed to deal with situations like that. Sergei Magnitsky was in that situation — when you torture someone slowly, until they die.

Now we need to compile a list of those officials who do not allow [Mikheil

Saakashvili] appropriate treatment, who are responsible for his ill-treatment. If he is not released very quickly, then we must either immediately impose sanctions on these people or threaten them with very severe sanctions.

The very idea that the Georgian government leaves him in custody when he is in such a dire and neglected condition is clearly a violation of his rights. The Magnitsky Act is designed to deal with situations like this," Browder said.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### PM Irakli Gharibashvili meets with the Ambassador of France to Georgia



The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, met with the Ambassador of France to Georgia, Sheraz Gasri. At the introductory meeting,

the conversation touched on the existing relations between Georgia and France and the prospects of future cooperation.

It was noted that France is a friend and reliable partner of Georgia. The head of the government thanked the French am-

bassador for his strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, as well as the policy of non-recognition. The importance of France's

support for Georgia's integration into the European Union and NATO was emphasized at the meeting. It was noted that Georgia will continue to support European values and play a constructive role in supporting peace and stability in the region.

### No reputable investor will enter Anaklia port project, Badri Japaridze says

Lelo party leader Badri Japaridze, called the investment of 300 million dollars by the state in the Anaklia port project a 'realm of fantasy' in an interview.

According to him, no reputable investor will enter the project, where the state will have a 51% share.

"The government of Georgia allegedly terminated the contract with the Anaklia Development Consortium due to a delay of several months. The question arises - who benefited from this, our state? of course not. Three years have passed and we have

not laid a finger on the finger, we have lost huge opportunities.

the state will have 51%, no reputable investor will enter. There-



Such decisions are taken by the current government. Investing 300 million dollars by the state is the realm of fantasy. Where

fore, the statement we heard on this matter is for propaganda purposes," said Japaridze.

### Russia appoints new head of so-called Ukraine "special military operation"

FROM CNN'S MICK KREVER

Russia's defense minister has appointed Valery Gerasimov as commander of the Joint Group of Forces leading the country's so-called "special military operation" in Ukraine.



Vladimir Putin, center, together with Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, left, and Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces and First Deputy Defence Minister Valery Gerasimov, right, observe the main stage of the Vostok-2022 strategic command post exercise at the Sergeyevsky range in the Primorye Territory on September 6. (President of Russia)

Gerasimov replaces Sergei Surovikin, who had been appointed to the role on Oct. 8, 2022, and was in charge of Russian forces during their retreat from large swaths of Ukraine's Kherson region. Surovikin will now serve as a deputy commander, according to a statement from the Russian Defense Ministry.

"On 11 January 2023, Russian Defence Minister General of the Army Sergei Shoigu assigns new leadership of special military operation," the ministry said Wednesday on its official Telegram channel.

"Chief of General Staff General of the Army Valery Gerasimov has been assigned the commander of the Joint Group

of Forces," it said.

"The deputy commanders are: the Commander-in-Chief of Aerospace Forces General of the Army Sergei Surovikin, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army General of the Army Oleg Salyukov, as well as the Deputy Chief of General Staff of Russian Armed Forces Colonel General Aleksey Kim," it added.

The ministry said that the changes were necessary because of "the amplified range of tasks, the necessity of closer cooperation between services and branches of the Armed Forces, as well as of improving the quality of all types of maintenance and efficiency of commanding the groups of forces."

## Weather

Thursday, January 12

Day Light Snow  
High: 0°C

Night Light Snow  
Low: -3°C

Friday, January 13

Day Light Snow  
High: 1°C

Night Cloudy  
Low: -3°C

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