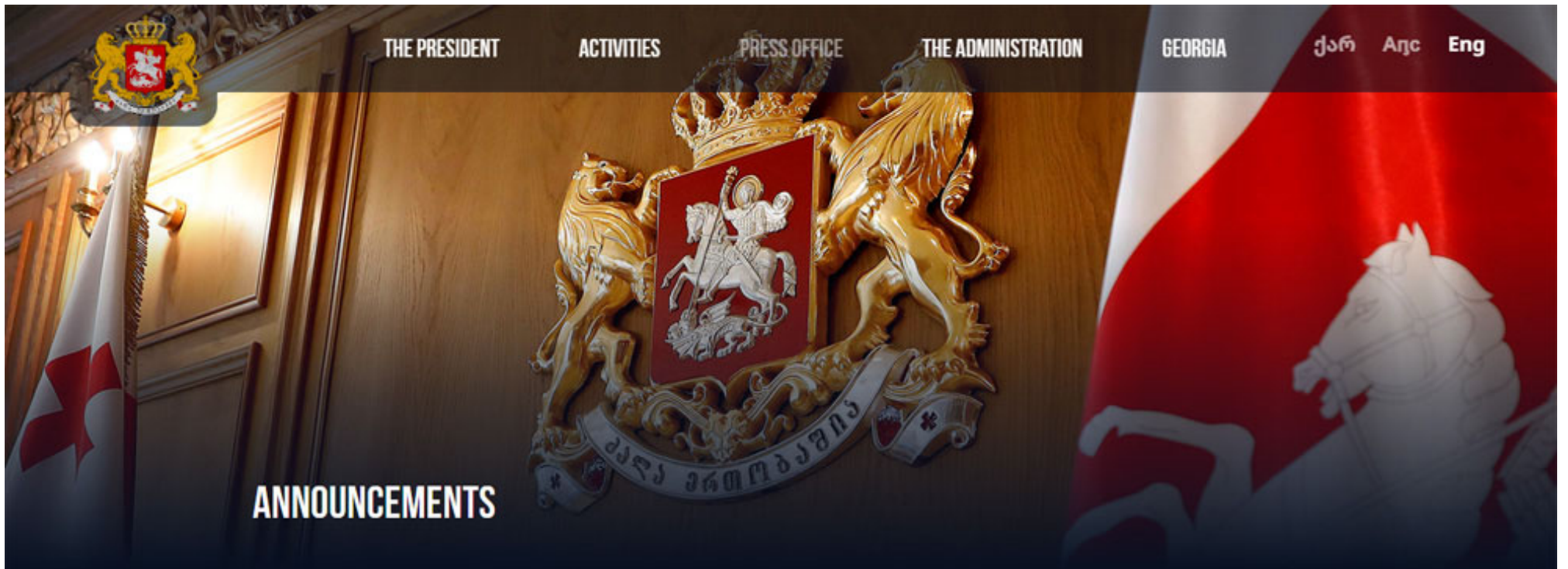


## President Responds to Tbilisi City Court's Decision on Mikheil Saakashvili's Case



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili responded to the Tbilisi City Court's decision to deny Mikheil Saakashvili the postponement or release of the sentence on February 6.

According to the statement released by the administration, the president does not and cannot discuss the justice/injustice of this decision, but the political evaluation of this decision is up to everyone. According to her, the only thing that is clear with this decision is that the Georgian people were sentenced to go around in a closed circle and remain 'hostage' to this situation.

"Unprecedented discrediting of the country continues, it prevents us from developing our relations with our partners in the right way, it prevents us from expressing our solidarity

towards the Ukrainian people and the country during this most difficult trial, which damages the Georgian tradition, prevents us from our recognized European perspective, prevents us from working on the 12 recommendations and to fulfill it, therefore to receive the status of our candidate.

The country is hostage to this one and only issue. At this time, all other crucial issues for us are not even discussed at the public level today. The necessary strategy is not being developed by the government - neither on the growing trends of the outflow of our manpower, mostly young people, nor on the mass influx from Russia and preventing its possible threats.

A completely offensive question and doubts arose about us for the largest part of our population - whether Georgia follows its declared orientation or re-

turns to Russia's orbit.

The country's reputation was damaged, trust was shaken, our place in the new geopolitical context became uncertain. That in itself could be dangerous if Russia believed that we had lost the clear support of our traditional partners.

This kind of discrediting is the result of the joint efforts of the ruling party and the opposition: on the one hand, the government's rhetoric, stubborn decisions and incomprehensible leniency towards Russia (excessive caution when mentioning Russia, persistent rhetoric of evasion of sanctions, or a positive assessment of the resumption of flights) which contrasts with a strict attitude towards Ukrainians and our partners and often offensive criticism. On the other hand, messages damaging the country's reputation by some representatives of Mikheil Saakashvili's family,

which turned into a well-planned and implemented campaign (selective and unjustified identification with Putin's Russia and Navalny's imprisonment, mention of Auschwitz), were no less damaging, beyond the 'humanitarian positioning'.

No presidential pardon can help this mutual discredit, because it is only an expression of the individual and personal will of the president, and not a sign of a new approach of the regime or a real depolarization, which Europe demands from us. Considering the statements of the former president and as a result of his unrecognized and unrepentant crimes, it is expected that, in case of his release, he will become an active opponent, not only of the government but actually of the country's reputation and therefore of its European chances.

The responsibility for plunging the country into this state is

shared equally between those who convinced the former president to enter and those who let him in and actually don't let him out anymore.

The authorities managed to practically remove the European way and the implementation of the 12 recommendations from the political agenda," the statement reads.

Zourabichvili wrote that everyone should stop speculating and playing with the future of this country, take responsibility and stop damaging the country's image.

"This issue should be removed from the Georgian political space and this country should be given the opportunity to breathe, live, develop and receive the status of an honored candidate of the European Union! This is the will and order of the people of Georgia towards their government, and no one has the right not to do everything to fulfill this will," she said.

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Proceedings on the lawsuits filed by the Government of Georgia against the President Salome Zourabichvili in the Constitutional Court were stopped. According to the court's statement, the government will no longer sue the President in the Constitutional Court.

On January 11, the claimant's [Georgian government's] statement on the rejection of the claim was registered in the Constitutional Court of Georgia.

The Georgian government had a dispute over two constitutional issues: The constitutionality of the inaction of the President of Georgia regarding the appoint-

## Gov't of Georgia Withdraws Constitutional Lawsuits Against President Zourabichvili



CONTINUED FROM Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6459; Euro - 2.8364; GBP - 3.1746; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.7305; Swiss Franc - 2.8592

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

ment of the head of the diplomatic representation of Georgia; and the constitutionality of the inaction of the President of Georgia regarding the issue of appointment and dismissal of Georgian ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions.

The Government of Georgia applied to the Constitutional Court on June 10, 2022 - the Plenum of the Constitutional Court accepted the lawsuit for consid-

# Gov't of Georgia Withdraws Constitutional Lawsuits Against President Zourabichvili

eration on June 24. The government demanded an explanation regarding the appointment and dismissal of Georgian ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions, claiming that in the past one year, the president repeatedly left without response the candidates for ambassadors

nominated by the government. With the second lawsuit, the government applied to the Constitutional Court on August 16 - the government claimed that by refusing to appoint Davit Bakradze as ambassador, that is, by rejecting the submission of the Georgian government, Presi-

dent Zourabichvili directly invaded the exclusive constitutional authority of the Georgian government to implement the country's foreign policy. According to the government's position, "it is clear from the inaction of the President of Georgia that the President of Georgia is acting not for legal

reasons, but for political reasons, which the Constitution of Georgia does not grant her."

As the court explained, as a result of the rejection of the claim, the case in the Constitutional Court is settled. Based on this, the Constitutional Court stopped considering the cases.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### MFA of Ukraine: Government Should Stop Political Settlement with Saakashvili

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine responded to the decision of the Tbilisi City Court on the postponement of the sentence or release from the sentence for Mikheil Saakashvili. The Ukrainian agency expressed disappointment about the

judge's decision.

The MFA of Ukraine wrote that the Georgian government should stop the political settlement with Mikheil Saakashvili and hand him over to Ukraine.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the court did not take into account the doctors' report regarding the seriousness of Mikheil Saakashvili's health condition and also rejected the request to transfer him abroad for treatment.

"The court did not take into account the doctors' report about the severity of Mikheil Saakashvili's illness. It also refused to transfer the citizen abroad for treatment. The Georgian authorities should immediately stop the political settlement with the Ukrainian citizen, ensure the protection of his rights and hand him over to Ukraine. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine will continue to protect the interests of the Ukrainian citizen Mikheil Saakashvili, who should be released," the agency wrote.

### PM Irakli Gharibashvili Meets with Tea Tsulukiani and Her Deputies

The government administration released the information regarding Irakli Gharibashvili holding a working meeting with

projects, it was mentioned that it is planned to design and/or start rehabilitation works of about 50 cultural heritage monuments and other buildings throughout the country.

"Among them is the continuation of work on the elimination of existing deficiencies in the



## Коментар МЗС

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Тбіліського міського суду  
в справі Міхеїла Саакашвілі



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Tea Tsulukiani and her deputies. In the press release issued by the Government Administration, it is mentioned that while talking about infrastructural

Gelati monastery complex in accordance with UNESCO's recommendations, which should be published from February 10 of this year," the release reads.

# EBRD lends \$16 million to Credo Bank in Georgia

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is extending a Georgian lari-denominated financial package worth US\$16 million to Credo Bank in Georgia.

The financing package includes a micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) credit line of up to US\$10 million to support investments by



local firms across the country. A further US\$4 million will be lent under the EBRD Women in Business (WiB) programme, which aims to promote women's entrepreneurship by boosting access to finance and advising women-led firms. This programme is

supported by Sweden and the European Union in Georgia.

Credo Bank will also receive US\$2 million under the EU4Business-EBRD Credit Line for small-business upgrades to modern, greener technology, making firms more sustainable and competitive at home and abroad. Borrowers will receive grants upon the successful implementation of their investment projects and technical assistance, both funded by the EU under its EU4Business initiative.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

## Weather

Wednesday, February 8

Day Cloudy  
High: 2°C

Night Cloudy  
Low: -2°C

Thursday, February 9

Day Cloudy  
High: 3°C

Night Mostly Cloudy  
Low: -3°C

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