

## European Parliament Approves Resolution on Sanctioning Bidzina Ivanishvili and Transferring Mikheil Saakashvili Abroad

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Mikheil Saakashvili, the third president of Georgia. 577 members supported the resolution, and 33 went against it. The resolution refers to Saakashvili's health condition and the situation created around him.

The resolution noted that recent medical reports have expressed concern that Mikheil Saakashvili's condition may deteriorate irreversibly. American doctors said that medical studies also indicate traces of heavy metals and other agents in his body, which may be the result of poisoning.

The resolution of the European Parliament also mentioned that on December 14, 2022, they already called on the Georgian authorities to release him on humanitarian grounds and allow him to be medically treated abroad.

The assessment expressed in the previous resolution is repeated by the European Parliament in the new resolution and again calls on the authorities to allow the third president of Georgia to undergo treatment abroad.

At the same time, the European Parliament also supported the amendment regarding the



sanctioning of Bidzina Ivanishvili. 362 members of the European Parliament supported the record on Ivanishvili, 121 were opposed, and 151 abstained.

According to the amendment, the European Parliament called

Bidzina Ivanishvili an 'oligarch' and noted that his personal role in the situation created around Saakashvili is big. Therefore, the European Parliament calls on the European Council to consider imposing sanctions on

Ivanishvili.

With a new resolution, the European Parliament also calls on the President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili to use her authority to ease this situation and pardon Saakashvili.

The resolution mentions that the situation created around Saakashvili deepens political polarization, which hinders Georgia's aspiration to the Euro-Atlantic path.



## Kakha Kaladze Accuses MEPs of Blackmailing

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Kakha Kaladze responded to the MEP Andrew Kubilius's statements regarding the decisive factor of Mikheil Saakashvili's health condition for Georgia's EU candidacy status. Kaladze said that on the way to European integration, the government will play by Georgian rules and act in the national interests of the people, for which, according to him, the government is doing everything.

"If their political decision will be made regarding not giving the status, despite the fact that our government has done everything, is doing everything on this difficult path as part of the European integration, they should not keep that status for themselves," said the mayor.

According to Kaladze, the document can not be valuable,

when people are told that a 'philanthropist' Ivanishvili should be sanctioned.

"I said in the morning that I did not expect anything new or different from the resolution, and the result is really the same. There is nothing new about the resolution, it has no value. When lies, forgery and patronage of criminals are spoken of with direct references, this resolution certainly cannot have a serious face.

According to Tbilisi Mayor, the ruling Georgian Dream party and himself have been doing everything in their power to make Georgia join the European Union faster. Kaladze added that not granting Georgia a EU candidacy status was a 'political decision':

"To be honest, since 2012, our government has been doing everything and is still doing every-

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6532; Euro - 2.8434; GBP - 3.2032; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.5551; Swiss Franc - 2.8770

# Kakha Kaladze Accuses MEPs of Blackmailing

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

thing to make our country a member of the big family called

Europe as quickly as possible. We implemented many specific projects. There were many successes despite the difficulties.

Even today, we deserved to receive the status, but there was a political decision to not give it. They did this against the government of our country," he said.

Kakha Kaladze accused MEPs of blackmailing and playing 'games' and said that Georgian authorities will only play accord-

ing to the interests of the country:

"It's part of the game and the blackmail that we've been seeing all this time, and that's what the public is seeing. The government of Georgia will play by Georgian rules, act in the interests of the country and act in the national interests of our people.

If their political decision will be made regarding the granting of the status, despite the fact that our government has done everything, is doing everything on this difficult path in the part of European integration, they should not let us keep that status for themselves," said Kaladze.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Irakli Kobakhidze Compares Resolution Adopted by EU Parliament to Supreme Council of Soviet Union



Chairman of Georgian Dream, Irakli Kobakhidze, compared the resolution adopted by the European Parliament to the decisions of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union and stated

that even the Supreme Council of the USSR would be 'jealous' of them. He spoke about this in Rustavi 2's Night Courier program.

"Society has become accustomed to absurd notes in the resolutions of the European Parliament, which is a very sad event, but it is a fact. It should also be emphasized that neither the European Commission nor the European Council share the absurd notes later. This happened in the previous two cases and it will happen in this case as well, I'm sure. What is wrong with the European Parliament, I don't know now. We were as careful as possible about the institutions of the European Union, that's why we talked and focused, for example, on specific odious MEPs.

But in this case, the public

sees everything, it is a systemic problem that this institution, which is called the European Parliament, has. This is a very serious problem, such a decision, I will say frankly, would be envious even of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union. I remember very well what was happening in the late 80s, the sessions of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union were being broadcast. What happened there, the same thing happened today and the same thing happened in the case of the previous two resolutions in the European Parliament, this is a complete disaster," he said.

According to Kobakhidze, MEPs and initiators of these changes 'knowingly' protect criminals and criminal political power because they have a specific interest.

### Ivanishvili and Authorities Have Completely Missed Path to EU, Badri Japaridze Says



Badri Japaridze, general secretary of Lelo, commented on the resolution adopted by the European Parliament regarding Mikheil Saakashvili's health condition and said that the anti-democratic steps of Georgian Dream caused a strong negative reaction of the western, demo-

cratic world.

According to Badri Japaridze, Bidzina Ivanishvili and the authorities subordinate to him have completely missed the path to the European family.

"The European Parliament demands the impeachment of Bidzina Ivanishvili. This means that the anti-democratic steps of Georgian Dream caused a strong negative reaction of the western/democratic world, which is especially damaging for our country at this historical moment, when in a few months the issue of granting Georgia the status of EU membership candidate should be decided.

The future of our people and our state is connected with the path to the European family, which is completely missed by Ivanishvili and the authorities subordinate to him," Japaridze says.

## Opinion & Analysis

# Georgian Political Landscape After Saakashvili's Trial

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The former president remains in prison as a result of the recent trial. The Georgian Dream, which is in power, feels strong and mockingly looks at the United National Movement, which was recently embroiled in internal conflict, and which has set as its primary task the transfer of Mikheil Saakashvili for treatment. The official rhetoric also underwent a change.

On February 6, Tbilisi City Court Judge Giorgi Arevadze left former President Mikheil Saakashvili in custody. Mikheil Saakashvili's lawyers applied to the court on December 1, 2022, for his release or postponement of his sentence due to the deterioration of his health.

Since then, court sessions have been in the spotlight, local

and foreign experts have been questioned. The trial could have been prolonged, but the judge did not go to the deliberation room and announced his decision there.

In principle, the decision had been expected. The ruling party has repeatedly warned President Zurabishvili to not pardon Saakashvili, saying it would lead to undesirable and dangerous processes for the state. People's Power also held a protest near the presidential palace - with the same warning. Judge Giorgi Arevadze also knew the government's position.

Although the Georgian Dream claims that the court is independent, not many believe it. The opposition has repeatedly stated that the issue of Saakashvili's imprisonment is up to Bidzina Ivanishvili, who is behind the government, adding that Ivanishvili is following Putin's instructions. This is the point of view of the opposition, and if this is true, then cannot expect much from the court. The court's decision put the political party associated with Saakashvili's name and the main opposition force, the

United National Movement, in an even more difficult situation, which has internal conflicts and whose leadership recently changed, in principle, it found itself in a difficult situation. The main argument of the new head of the party Levan Khabeishvili against Nika Melia was about Saakashvili - nothing much is being done to free him. After the court's refusal to transfer Saakashvili for treatment, the party had to do something, he believes.

According to the decision of the new leadership of the party, the parliamentary faction of the National Movement suspended its work in the parliament, although it did not leave the parliament. Permanent protests were also announced at various locations in Tbilisi and in regions. According to Khabeishvili, Ivanishvili and the Georgian Dream should no longer have the opportunity to live in peace.

The first protests were held, but they were not attended by many. This was followed by mocking comments from the government representatives and of-

ficial spokespersons, - "For any protest to bring results, people's support is necessary, which, fortunately for us, the opposition does not have," said Thea Tsulukiani. According to others, Saakashvili's party is disappearing from the political scene and this will be good for Georgian democracy and many others. The Georgian Dream, which is in power, has greater resources and effective means of propaganda. A certain part of society believes that Saakashvili does not eat food and is "in a self-harm mode".

Saakashvili's lawyers will appeal the city court's decision in the Tbilisi Court of Appeal, and at the same time, they are going to appeal to the Strasbourg court about the use of a temporary measure.

Non-governmental organizations and part of the opposition once again appealed to President Zurabishvili to pardon Saakashvili. The acting president also explained his position in detail. He blamed the government and saw both the opposition and the solution: "Once and for all, Saakashvili should confess his crime and free the country and the opposition on the condition of leaving politics," Zurabishvili said.

The government has also changed its rhetoric to some extent - if until now there was talk of polarization and the European

Union demanded its reduction in its famous 12 points, now Irakli Kobakhidze said that "the problem in Georgia is radicalization, not polarization", polarization is not more in Georgia than in other countries and "today the degree of radicalism is qualitatively reduced" because "the radical opposition is severely weakened".

The Chairman of the Parliament Shalva Papuashvili noted the same. He also pointed to the solution - "recognition of democratic institutions by radical groups" and the only way to achieve this is "to take a firm and unambiguous position towards the groups that have left the democratic framework, both inside and outside the country."

It should be assumed that this provision will be followed by an attack on the "radical opposition" in the name of democracy and will be even more harshly criticized by the 'UNM lobbyists' in the West, who want to drag Georgia into the war.

The Chairman of the Parliament made another statement on the day of commemoration of Davit Aghmashenebeli and noted that the Georgian Dream today is the political force that embodies Davit Aghmashenebeli's values. According to him, Davit Aghmashenebeli made history because he had a "cold and rational mind" and made "necessary decisions at the right moment".

## Weather

Thursday, February 16

Day Mostly Cloudy  
High: 3°C

Night Partly Cloud  
Low: -4°C

Friday, February 17

Day Mostly Cloudy  
High: 3°C

Night Mostly Cloudy  
Low: -4°C

published by

The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia  
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze  
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000  
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge  
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli

Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze

Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili

Layout Designer, Photographer

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.