

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili Accuses US Embassy in Georgia of Pressuring Court

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili states that he met with the judicial members of the Council of Justice and heard from them information about alleged pressure from the US Embassy in Georgia.

"It was a closed meeting. I cannot share the content of our conversation with you. I heard a lot of information, including disturbing, I would say. There was some pressure, interference, which is unacceptable. I also heard a lot of good initiatives, new ideas that are in the council and we talked about them.

I confirm to you that I received the information, I heard from Mr. Dimitri [Gvritishvili], from other judges. I cannot talk about these facts publicly. Probably, the time will come and society will understand," Gharibashvili said.

The prime minister stated at a press conference that Georgia's judicial system is independent and strong, and the judges are qualified.

"Firstly, as a citizen, you should be proud that our court

is ahead of many European courts. And I ask that you all respectfully refer to all the judges.

All judges you must be referred to with great respect and addressed respectfully, I demand this as the Prime Minister and I urge you to be correct. The trust of our citizens, of you, my friends, in the court is at a historical maximum," Gharibashvili addressed the journalist.

According to the PM, he will do his best to protect the court from any interference.

"I am proud of our court, I am proud of all the judges, they are highly qualified professionals who serve our country, serve to strengthen our country, protect our sovereignty and national policy. For this, I would like to thank Nino Kadagidze, all the judges for your work.

We as the government and I as the Prime Minister will do everything to strengthen your independence, your freedom further. We will find maximum support for your initiatives, new programs. Today, we have a court free from corruption, from any



interference, from pressure, it is of course because of our team, Nino Kadagidze and the judges," said the Prime Minister.

Gharibashvili said that under the rulership of the Georgian Dream the court became independent and free from the inter-

ference of both internal and other countries. According to him, any attempt to interfere in the court of a sovereign state is not allowed.

MFA of Georgia Ilia Darchiashvili Meets with Foreign Minister of North Macedonia Bujar Osmani

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Ilia Darchiashvili met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia Bujar Osmani.

The Minister of North Macedonia stated at a joint briefing with Ilia Darchiashvili that the OSCE listens to the concerns and worries of the people who suffered during the conflicts.

According to Osmani, in the context of Georgia, the OSCE team is actively working with IDPs, young people, and people who live in isolation.

"We must seek ways of reconciliation wherever possible. Tomorrow I will visit the regions to listen to the parties, to see the challenges. Focusing on people is our ultimate priority. I will meet with representatives of NGOs and discuss issues that are very important.

I would like to emphasize the important role played by the civil society, the strong contribution it made to the construction of democracy in Georgia. A strong civil society is a key democratic ingredient. Engagement with civil society and youth is important and emphasized by the OSCE Special Representative on Civil Society and Youth Affairs.

Within the framework of my visit, I would like to assure you that the OSCE will provide significant support for the fulfillment of obligations in three directions, which will contribute to the process of your internal reforms. Let me assure you that my goal as the OSCE chairman

country is to strengthen cooperation, to support peace and stability in this difficult period," Osmani said.

ability in this difficult period," Osmani said.

The Minister of the Foreign Affairs of Georgia stated at a joint briefing with Bujar Osmani that Georgia will continue to support the priorities set by the chairing country.

"We highly appreciate the readiness of North Macedonia to facilitate the settlement of the

existing conflicts and to keep these issues at a very high level on the agenda of the OSCE chairmanship. I would like to thank North Macedonia for supporting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, both in the direction of the existing mechanisms within the OSCE organization and outside the organization.

Also, your support for the non-recognition policy is important. During the meeting, we talked about the 2008 Russia-Georgia conflict, the consequences caused by the conflict, the difficult situation in terms of humanitarian, social and human rights. I had the opportunity to share our visions and opinions with my colleague.

Also, we talked about the ceasefire agreement of August 12, 2008, which I think is one of the main issues when it comes to conflict resolution. Another round of Geneva negotiations was held recently. I would like to take this opportunity to express my special thanks to the OSCE for supporting this very important process.

Also, I had the opportunity to share with my colleague the peace policy of our country, the policy that our country implements in the direction of the occupied territories, which was one of the issues we discussed at our meeting. It is important that Minister Osmani will visit the occupation line tomorrow, he will visit the refugee settlement, and for that I would like to express my special thanks. He will have the opportunity to see the situation on the ground himself," Darchiashvili stated.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Supreme Court Chairman Nino Kadagidze Supports Four Judges Sanctioned by US State Department



Chairman of the Supreme Court and Chairman of the Supreme Council of Justice, Nino Kadagidze, stated at the joint press conference with the Prime

Minister Irakli Gharibashvili that she supports the four judges sanctioned by the US State Department for alleged corruption. "Therefore, I cannot accept a single statement about the existence of corruption in the court. Despite my personal request, I have not been provided with any substantiated evidence, even as-

sumptions and hints as to what has become the basis for accusing my colleagues of corruption. Therefore, I fully support them. I, as the Chairman of the Su-

preme Court and the Chairman of the Council of Justice, will be the guarantor of their and each of our judges' inviolability and freedom," Kadagidze said.

According to her, even beyond the specified 12 recommendations, the Georgian judiciary system is ahead of many friendly and neighboring countries.

Kadagidze stated that "mistakes can happen to everyone", and for this reason she is waiting for the decision to be reviewed.

President Salome Zourabichvili Meets with Foreign Minister of North Macedonia Bujar Osmani

The President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia and acting Chairman of the OSCE Bujar Osmani and discussed the current events in the region and the situation in the occupied territories of Georgia.

According to the President's

administration's press service, the meeting touched on the war in Ukraine as a challenge for the security of the region and Eu-

ful cooperation, including the support that the OSCE provides in terms of strengthening democracy and carrying out essen-



rope, and the importance of peace in the Caucasus region was emphasized.

"The President of Georgia informed the acting chairman of the OSCE about the human rights and humanitarian situation in the occupied territories of Georgia.

The President of Georgia thanked the OSCE for the fruit-

tial reforms, which is so relevant for the European integration process of Georgia, especially now that the country is waiting for candidacy.

The acting chairman of the OSCE expressed his readiness to further strengthen the support for the country's institutional reforms," the statement reads.

Opening of the Project for Provision of Garbage Truck in Mtskheta Municipality Within the GGP Grassroots Human Security Grant Program Of the Embassy of Japan in Georgia

On October 24, 2022 the opening ceremony was held in Mtskheta Municipality, for the project funded by the Government of Japan, based on the goodwill of the Japanese people. The opening ceremony was attended by H.E Mr. IMAMURA Akira, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Georgia; State Representative in Kvemo Kartli Region, Giorgi Dokhturishvili; Mayor of Marenuli Municipality, Kenan Omarov and Head of the City Council, Amiran Giorgadze.

Within the project, the garbage collection truck was purchased to ensure the timely collection of waste for protecting the environment and public health in the villages of Shaumiani and Tsereteli Administrative Unites of Marneuli

Municipality. The project was funded within the GGP Grassroots Human Security Grant Program (GGP) of the Embassy of Japan. Grant amount 82,243 USD.

The "Grassroots Human Security Grant program" (GGP) provides assistance to relatively small projects and aims at the improvement of human security

in Georgia in the following priority fields: environment protection, agriculture, infrastructure, healthcare and education. Since 1998, within the GGP program alone, the Japanese Government has funded more than 200 projects, in total amounting to around 25 million USD.



Weather

Tuesday, April 11

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 17°C

Night Showers

Low: 12°C

Wednesday, April 12

Day Light Rain

High: 14°C

Night Cloudy

Low: 8°C

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AFG Charity Gala 2023

American Friends of Georgia (AFG) held Spring Charity Gala on April 1, 2023 at the Sheraton Grand Tbilisi Metechi Palace Hotel.

The Gala raised record amount in total 132 450 USD. The funds raised will go to two of the main projects of AFG: Dzegvi Shelter and Hospice Feristvaleba and Palliative Homecare program. (For more information about organization and projects visit: afgeorgia.org).

The event was attended by representatives of diplomatic corps and the business world, leading international and Georgian organizations and corporations.

Patron of Gala was traditionally a long-time partner of American Friends of Georgia Petrocas Energy Group, Gala's Gold Sponsor Schumi winery & MZE. Silver Sponsors: Adjara Group, TBC Bank, Silkroad Hospitality, Bronze Sponsors: Deloitte & Liberty Bank. Sapphire sponsors -leading international and local corporations as well as family foundation and individual donors from the US: Simon Sidamon-Eristoff, Andrew and Catherine Baxter Sidamon-Eristoff, Kyra Cheremeteff & Thomas Richardson, Elizabeth Zaldastani Napier, Richard and Mariam Otkhmezuri Charlton, Susan Graham, M.D. and Jon Kucera, M.D., Andrea Dee Harris, Nino Japaridze, Liberty Pattillo, Lika Arce, Keith Harrison,

Elena Barnum. In addition, many Georgian companies donated presents and amazing raffle prizes.

The event started with a cocktail reception in the lobby of the Sheraton Grant Tbilisi Metechi Palace Hotel with an art display by prominent Georgian artists auctioned later by Cliff Isaak, Auctioneer Extraordinaire and Honorary Consul of Canada to Georgia. The reception was followed by dinner especially designed by Sheraton's chef. Exceptional wines were provided by Schumi winery. A diverse musical performance included the young ballerinas of V.Chabukiani Tbilisi State Ballet School, Tbilisi Women Choir led by Omar Burduli, French Composers' Association member, composer and pianist Nika Nikvashvili & Lela Mchedlidze, the first violin in the Symphony Orchestra of Tbilisi Opera and Ballet State Theater.

The highlight of the evening was the auction of donated outstanding art by such artists as Lado Gudishvili, Korneli Sanadze, Tamuna Melikishvili, Levan Bujashvili, Marc Chagal, Mamuka Tsetskhladze, Lia Shvelidze, Ketil Shalamberidze, Lena Kiladze, David Sulakauri, Nina Kipshidze, Yuri Mechitov, Georgi Alexi-Meskhishvili, Maka Gotsiridze, Rusudan Chikvaidze, Tutu Kiladze, Tinatin Chkhikvishvili, Nina Ananiashvili, Irakli Moreli, Tornike Robakidze, Merab Gugunashvili.



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