

Prime Minister of Georgia Addresses 'Inconsistent' International Responses to Conflicts at Qatar Economic Forum

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili voiced his concerns regarding the inconsistent international responses to conflicts during a panel discussion held at the annual economic forum in Qatar. He specifically drew attention to the 2008 war in Georgia and the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Gharibashvili pointed out that following the 2008 war, both the United States and Europe maintained regular business relations with Russia and pointed out the lack of substantial international sanctions during the 2008 war in Georgia and questioned the logic behind such inconsistent responses. He highlighted the disparity between how the conflict in Georgia was perceived compared to the war in Ukraine, raising the question of why different conflicts are treated differently.

The PM emphasized the potential negative consequences for Georgia if bilateral economic sanctions were imposed on Russia. He expressed concerns about the potential collapse of Georgia's economy and the harm it would cause to the Georgian people.

"Georgia's economy will collapse, and we will harm our people if we impose bilateral economic sanctions on Russia. As you know, we had a war in 2008. Do you remember anyone who imposed sanctions against Russia during that war? No one. No one in the world had the right or adequate reaction. So, my question is: where is the logic? Our war is not considered a war while the war in Ukraine is? I



must express our deep disappointment that it was business as usual after the 2008 war with Russia. Despite the destructive nature of that war, Russia continues to occupy 20 percent of our country's territory, establishing two military bases on our historic land, and recognizing the so-called independence of our historical regions. This occupation persists." Prime Minister said.

When questioned about whether Georgia, under the circumstances of non-imposing sanctions, poses a threat to the European integration process, Prime Minister Gharibashvili referred to the "second front", a term frequently mentioned by 'Georgian Dream'.

In response to the moderator's question, Prime Minister

Gharibashvili said that the Ukrainian side has publicly expressed a desire to see a 'second front' in Georgia. Gharibashvili highlighted that Georgia has already experienced enough wars, including a civil war and the 2008 conflict with Russia, since gaining independence. He emphasized the challenges faced by a small nation with a population of 4 million directly engaging in a war with Russia.

"Ukrainian friends may have different expectations. They have publicly stated their desire to see a second front in Georgia. We have already experienced enough warfare - after gaining independence, we faced two wars in the 90s: a civil war and, later, the 2008 conflict with Russia. As a small nation with a population

of 4 million people, we directly engaged in war with Russia," responded the Prime Minister to the moderator.

Another topic discussed at the forum was the restoration of flights between Georgia and Russia, which Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili emphasized as an integral part of the trade. The moderator inquired whether Georgia's decision to resume flights was causing annoyance among its allies. The moderator also referred to a statement from the US State Department that was previously made, expressing concern over the resumption of flights between Georgia and Russia.

"First and foremost, America is a highly valued strategic partner for Georgia, and we deeply

appreciate everything that America has done for us. We are also grateful to Europe. Georgia, as a sovereign nation, possesses the right to pursue its own national interests. As I explained earlier, we have economic and trade relations with Russia. Additionally, there is a significant Georgian diaspora of one million people residing in Russia, making direct flights between our countries a common occurrence. However, it is important to note that these flights do not imply any political consultations with Russia. As I previously mentioned, they are purely part of our economic and trade interactions, akin to how the EU and America engage with Russia," stated Gharibashvili.



Irakli Kobakhidze Stresses Significance of Informing International Community about 'Demands' on Georgia by Ukrainian Officials

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

According to Irakli Kobakhidze, the Chairman of "Georgian Dream," the Prime Minister delivered a 'remarkable' speech at Qatar Economic Forum which focused on Georgia's priorities, policies, and addressed significant topics such as the

ongoing war in Ukraine and our relations, including those with Russia-Georgia.

Irakli Kobakhidze expressed solidarity with Ukraine and its people, emphasizing that Georgia's support is not limited

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5879; Euro - 2.7825; GBP - 3.2020; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2326; Swiss Franc - 2.8646

Irakli Kobakhidze Stresses Significance of Informing International Community about 'Demands' on Georgia by Ukrainian Officials

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to words and it extends to concrete actions. He mentioned the country's endorsement of rel-

evant documents condemning military aggression and affirming Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

However, he clarified the

Georgian Dream's position on sanctions, stating that Georgia will not impose sanctions on Russia. The reason behind this decision, according to Kobakhidze, is the understanding that imposing sanctions would negatively impact Georgian people and the country, adding that sanctions are not deemed appropriate in the Georgian government's approach.

"We express our solidarity with Ukraine, the Ukrainian people, and this is expressed not only by words but also by concrete actions. We support all relevant documents that condemn military aggression and support Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. However, our

position regarding sanctions is clear. We do not impose sanctions against Russia. The logic is simple. We cannot punish our own people, our own country. Therefore, sanctions are naturally not considered," Kobakhidze said.

The Chairman of "Georgian Dream" highlighted the statements made by Ukrainian officials, including the Secretary of the Security Council and Zelensky's chief advisor, and once again accused them of wanting to open a 'second front' in Georgia:

"Let us bring to your attention the [Ukrainian] officials who openly called for a second front to be opened in Georgia. It was

the Secretary of the Security Council, the highest-ranking official after the president. Danilov explicitly demanded the opening of a second front. Additionally, Podoliak, who remains Zelensky's chief advisor, also directly spoke about opening a second front in Georgia," he stated.

Kobakhidze emphasized the importance of fully informing the international community about the demands made of Georgia, including those by Ukrainian high-ranking officials. He stated that this matter carries great significance and it is essential to share this important information with Georgia's international partners.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Chairman of Georgian Parliament Holds Meeting with NATO's Javier Colomina



According to the press service of the Parliament of Georgia, Chairman Shalva Papuashvili had a meeting with Javier Colomina, the special representative of the North Atlantic Alliance in the Caucasus and Central Asia. During the meeting, Papuashvili expressed his gratitude to the NATO representative for his personal efforts in promoting Georgia's integration into NATO.

The Georgian Parliament chairman discussed the security challenges faced by Georgia and highlighted the significant importance of Georgia's progress toward NATO membership in the current geopolitical situation.

Colomina expressed a positive assessment of the ongoing coop-

eration between Georgia and NATO. He emphasized that Georgia is a highly valued partner of NATO, and the alliance's commitment to supporting Georgia's territorial integrity remains strong. In their discus-

sion, Shalva Papuashvili provided an update on the implementation progress of the 12 recommendations from the European Union. He expressed optimism and hoped that the European Council would grant Georgia the status of a candidate country by the end of the year.

Colomina acknowledged and welcomed Georgia's advancements in implementing demo-

cratic reforms. He assured that NATO will maintain its support for Georgia's efforts.

Foreign Relations Committee Delegation Holds Meetings at the UK House of Commons

The Chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, Nikoloz Samkharadze, and the Committee members met with the Chair of the Foreign Relations Affairs of the House of Commons, Alicia Kearns; the Chair of the Education Committee, Robin Walker; the Chairman of the British All-Party Parliamentary Friendship Group on Georgia, Jonathan Djanogly and the Group members.

During a meeting with Mme. Kearns, the focus was on strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation in defense and security. Both parties emphasized the importance of the strategic partnership and discussed intensifying the parliamentary dimension of the Wardrop Strategic Dialogue. Regional security, the threat from Russia, NATO enlargement, and Great Britain's support for Georgia's EU integration path were also

discussed. They agreed to schedule an official visit of the Foreign Affairs Delegation to Georgia within a year.

In another meeting, Georgian MPs discussed school, voca-

cluding the adoption of the Education Code, expanding vocational education, and internationalizing the higher education system.

Furthermore, a meeting took



tional, and higher education with the Chair of the Education Committee. They emphasized the digitalization of education and the development of e-systems in the sector. Sharing experiences in this field was deemed important. Georgian MPs also presented projects and plans, in-

place with Mr. Djanogly, who heads the Friendship Group with Georgia, and the Group members. The key topics of discussion included bilateral agenda items, security challenges, EU membership, the regional and neighborhood context, and the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Forest Protection Brings Benefits to 1,300 Residents of Machakheli Gorge

UNDP and Japan assist Georgia in protecting unique Colchic forests and promoting affordable green energy

BATUMI. 23 May 2023 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and

the Government of Japan are launching a groundbreaking project aimed at safeguarding the unique Colchic forests in the Machakheli Gorge of Georgia and increasing access to affordable green energy for local communities.

The 12-month initiative draws on US\$545,000 in funding from Japan and close collaboration with Georgia's Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Ajara Autonomous Republic, and the administration of Khelvachauri Municipality.

The initiative is set to enhance forest protection measures in the Machakheli Gorge, reduce climate-related risks, and introduce sustainable renewable energy practices, including solar energy and biomass, among the local communities residing in the area. Its implementation will bring environmental, energy and social benefits to over 1,300 residents of the villages located in the support zone of Machakhela National Park.

By partnering with the central, regional, and municipal authorities, UNDP and Japan

foster a sense of ownership and participation among local stakeholders and empower communities, especially women and youth, to take an active part in the sustainable management of forest resources.

Furthermore, this collaborative effort contributes to Georgia's commitment to the Paris Agreement by supporting a 10 percent increase in the carbon-capturing capacity of forests by 2030 compared to 2015 levels and a 30-35 percent drop in national greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

Weather

Thursday, May 25

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 31°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 16°C

Friday, May 26

Day Showers
High: 27°C

Night T-storm
Low: 16°C

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ROYAL DISTRICT THEATRE

MAKA MAKHARADZE'S BALLET STUDIO AND
ETERI ANDJAPARIDZE'S "PIANOTHEATRE"

Cast:
Eteri Andjaparidze,
Datuna Aladashvili
Piano Duo

„Vera District Dance Class“ Students
Actors: Maka Makharadze, Nata Murvanidze,
Tamar Makashvili, Nika Tetradze

Choreographer – Gvantsa Gavasheli
Costume designer – Anka Kalatozishvili
Manager – Nino Metreveli

Project Director
Maka
Makharadze



Sergei Prokofiev

Samuel Barber

PETER AND THE WOLF

(Musical Fairy Tale)

SOUVENIRS

(The Plaza Hotel Divertissement)

Thursday, 1 June
To International Children's
Protection Day

Friday, 2 June
To Lexo Toradze

Saturday, 3 June
To Temur Chkheidze

2023

20:00



Tickets: <https://biletebi.ge/maka-makharadze-ballet-studio/Schedule>