

NGOs Demand Release of Detained Protestors in Batumi, Georgia, Citing Interference in Freedom of Expression



ISFED
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
FAIR ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY



**TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL
GEORGIA**

By MESSENGER STAFF

Non-governmental organizations Transparency International - Georgia (TI) and the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) are responding to the developments in Batumi.

According to the NGO, it is worrisome that the Ministry of Internal Affairs continues the practice of illegally arresting peaceful protestors, which is a gross interference in the freedom of expression and contradicts both the Georgian Constitution and internationally recognized standards.

They call on the agency to stop arresting peaceful protestors, illegal restrictions on freedom of expression, and immediately release all detainees.

"We are responding to the events that took place in Europe Square in Batumi. Yesterday, June 3, the police arrested six people, including 2 minors, for unfurling banners at a peaceful rally in Batumi.

It is worrisome that the Ministry of Internal Affairs still continues the practice of illegally arresting participants of a peaceful protest, which is a gross interference in the freedom of expression and contradicts both the Georgian Constitution and internationally recognized standards.

dards.

As it is known, on June 2, in front of the Parliament in Tbilisi, 7 participants of a peaceful assembly were arrested because of banners with similar content, and they were taken to temporary detention centers in Telavi, Gurjaani and Dusheti.

Until now, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has not made any clarification regarding the need to transfer detainees to regional isolation cells. This raises suspicions that the reason for this decision could be the limitation of the right of defense for the detainees and the obstruction of unhindered communication

with the lawyers.

It should also be noted that the detention period of the detainees was extended up to 48 hours without justification.

We consider the tendency of arbitrary and unlawful arrests of peaceful protest participants by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to be worrying.

We call on the Ministry of Internal Affairs to stop arresting the participants of the peaceful protest, illegal restriction of freedom of expression and to immediately release all those arrested," the statement read.

Protesters Arrested at Parliament Rally Granted Release, Trial Delay Expected

By MESSENGER STAFF

Activists Levan Nishnianidze and Lasha Janjghava, who were detained at the June 2 rally, were released from Dusheti pre-trial detention center on the

basis of a warrant.

According to the lawyer, the trial, which was expected to take place today, is likely to be postponed.

The rest of the detainees, among whom are human rights defenders Eduard

Marikashvili, Nika Romanadze and Saba Brachveli, remain in Telavi and Gurjaani isolators.

On June 2, at the rally near the Parliament, the police arrested 7 citizens because of the banners. Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili was mostly mentioned on these banners, while some citizens stood with empty banners. Those arrested are charged with petty hooliganism and resisting the police.

Lawyer Eka Kobesashvili states that it is not clear to her why the Ministry of Internal Affairs used the extended 48-hour period of detention if it was possible to release the activists based on their signatures.

On June 2, at the rally in front of the parliament, the police arrested citizens because of the banners. Mostly, the banners mentioned Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili. As it is known, 7 people are arrested.

The chairman of the Democratic Initiative of Georgia, Eduard Marikashvili, is among those arrested. Eyewitnesses say that he was holding a blank sheet of paper in his hand. According to reports, several people needed medical help due to the confrontation with the police.

On June 3, the action "Protect Freedom of Expression" was held in Batumi in parallel with Tbilisi. In Batumi, the police arrested several people on Europe Square. The police confronted the citizens because of the posters and arrested 4 people, including 2 minors.

Initially, citizens gathered near the parliament in support of Lazare Grigoriadis' father, Beka Grigoriadis, who was arrested on June 1 for trying to set up a tent. The court fined him 2000 GEL.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Beka Grigoriadis Sets up a Tent Behind Parliament Building



After several days of unsuccessful attempts, Beka Grigoriadis, the father of the detained activist Lazare Grigoriadis, pitched a tent behind the parliament on June 3rd.

Every day we will be here, my plan is to save my son, my Lazare from the injustice that my child faces. I tried my best to find out everything, I found out and made sure that he is being blamed for something he did not do.

I was there that day when they were arrested, I have not seen anything like that, if I have seen it in Moscow. I think that the policemen are especially doing something to lower the institute on the international arena, to spoil its name. If something was good in Georgia, everything will be ruined, so that the European Union will tell us that you don't deserve anything, stay with Russia.

MORE NEWS IN BRIEF
ON P. 2



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6335; Euro - 2.8376; GBP - 3.3011; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2545; Swiss Franc - 2.9109

Georgia: winners of EU-supported ‘Meliora 2022’ corporate responsibility award announced

The fourth award ceremony of ‘Georgia’s Responsible Business Awards – Meliora 2022’ was held on 30 May 2023, supported by the EU.

This annual competition, also supported by Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), and implemented by the Centre for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSR DG), aims at developing corporate responsibility in Georgia and promoting it in society. It awards business companies for the best initiatives and projects that promote corporate social responsibility.

The winners in the different categories of ‘Meliora 2022’ are: ‘Green Initiative’

Winner large company: Tegeta Holding, project ‘Tegeta for Environment’

Winner SME: Biodiesel Georgia, project ‘Biofuel from Waste



– Clean Environment and Energy Independence’
‘Responsible Employer’

Winner large company: Majorel Georgia, project ‘Feel Good’
‘Supporting Communities’

Winner large company: APM Terminals Poti, project ‘APM Terminals for Poti’

Winner SME: Edena, project ‘Support for Demotivated Women’

‘Cross-Sector Partnership – Shared Responsibility’

Winner SME: Qwerty, project ‘Supergmiri.ge support’

‘Transparency and Report on CSR and Corporate Sustainability’

Winner large company: TBC Bank, project ‘Sustainability Report 2021’

‘CSR Manager of the year’
Winner: Ana Kukhaleishvili, company ‘BIM Cube’

Responsible SME of the year
Winner: MBC

A total of 250 people attended the awarding ceremony, including diplomats, government officials, local and international experts, and civil society and business representatives.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

TBILISI. 2 June 2023 – The National Forestry Agency of Georgia’s Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, in collaboration with BIOFIN and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), launched a brand-new crowdfunding platform called ‘Forest Friend’. The platform supports reforestation efforts in Georgia by inviting private companies, individual supporters and volunteers to contribute to the growth of new forests. Its slogan, ‘Meet you in the forest you help grow!’ emphasizes the importance of collective action in safeguarding the environment for future generations.

The Forest Friend platform is a user-friendly and transparent resource, allowing contributors to track the progress of their donations and see the impact of their contributions in real-time. The platform offers various options for monetary and in-kind contributions, learning and networking.

‘Forest Friend’ was set in motion on 22 May, International Day for Biological Diversity. On 1 June, Otar Shamugia, Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia; Kakha Tsertsvadze, Head of the National Forestry Agency; and Nick Beresford, UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia, officially

Meet you in the forest you help grow!

Georgia launches ‘Forest Friend’ crowdfunding platform to restore degrading forests

presented the platform to the public at an event that took place at Tbilisi Botanical Gardens.

‘Georgia’s forests are an integral part of our country’s identity, and we are committed to restoring them. With the launch of the Forest Friend platform, we invite all Georgians and friends of Georgia to join us in this im-

portant effort,’ Minister Shamugia said.

Kakha Tsertsvadze, Head of the National Forestry Agency, noted that the Forest Friend platform will be a game-changer in mobilizing public support for the reforestation process. ‘The platform will inspire people to take action, plant trees and

make Georgia a greener and more sustainable country.’

Nick Beresford, UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia, stressed that UNDP is proud to work with the Georgian Government and international partners to protect unique natural resources. ‘We believe that initiatives like ‘Forest Friend’ will not

only help protect the environment but also create a sense of community and collective responsibility towards our planet,’ Beresford said.

For more information and to contribute to the Forest Friend crowdfunding platform, please visit the website at <https://forestfriend.ge>.

The News in Brief

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

PM Gharibashvili Attends Erdogan’s Inauguration

Government Administration reports that Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili attended the inauguration of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President-Elect of the Republic of Turkey.

‘The inauguration ceremony was held at the palace of the President of the Republic of Turkey in Ankara.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan addressed the guests of the event.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey hosted high-level guests for a dinner at the Çankaya Palace after the inauguration.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by representatives of about 100 countries, including state leaders, prime ministers, as well as high-level delegations and representatives of international organizations,’ reads the statement.



Weather

Monday, June 5

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 29°C

Night Light Rain
Low: 17°C

Tuesday, June 6

Day T-storm
High: 26°C

Night Showers
Low: 16°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.

On the occasion of the Italian National Day, the Ambassador of Italy H.E. Mr. Enrico Valvo and Mrs. Nadezda Valvo held a Reception on June 2.





