

## US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degan Urges Prioritizing Georgia's Interests Over Political Games

By Liza Mchedlidze

US Ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degan, stated that there is a well-defined guide outlining the necessary steps to bring Georgia closer to the desired goal of obtaining candidate status. She highlighted that if the parliament follows these steps, it will contribute to Georgia's progress and increase its chances of receiving candidate status in December.

According to Kelly Degan, she is confident that the European Commission will conduct a meticulous evaluation of the inclusivity of the process and the progress made regarding the 12 priorities.

"I am not in a position to judge the report or the European Commission's assessment of progress. I'm sure they'll make a very careful assessment of the work that has been going on here, how inclusive the process has been or hasn't been, and what progress has been made on those particular 12 priorities. I think the fact that the Venice Commission issued an opinion on the Common Courts Law and the Deoligarchization Law, providing a very clear guidance on what is needed to meet expectations, is a sign of how committed the European Commission is to Georgia's success in this process. There is a clear guide on the steps required. If the parliament takes these steps, it will bring Georgia closer to where we all want it to be, receiving candidate status in December," said Kelly Degan.

Kelly Degan stated that the United States has been providing support to Georgia in its endeavors to establish a democratic system for three decades. This support encompasses backing civil society and promoting the development of a free,



robust, and accountable media. Degan said that if Georgia remains divided, it is Russia that stands to gain the most from such divisions.

"Georgia was polarized when I came here three and a half years ago. There were attempts to unify Georgians. We all agree that the more divided Georgia is, the only one who benefits is Russia. The Russian disinformation and pro-Russian disinformation that have continued to confuse and divide this country for the past three and a half years are very dan-

gerous. Georgians know about this tactic. You have experienced Russia's efforts to divide, confuse, and intimidate the population for many decades. I hope there is an effort to unite, not only for this wonderful opportunity that will bring you closer to European integration, the clear choice of the majority of the Georgian people but also in the face of Russian aggression against Ukraine. Now is the time for the Georgian people to unite, following the model of 'Strength in Unity'. It is not difficult to listen to each other,

to accept different opinions," Kelly Degan said.

US Ambassador Kelly Degan emphasized that while politicians often engage in political games for public display, it is crucial to prioritize Georgia's interests. According to her, The United States is particularly invested in Georgia's successful journey towards EU membership and stated that the key focus should be on fostering unity and collaboration to secure a prosperous future for Georgia, as there is strength in unity.

## British Ambassador Mark Clayton Reaffirms UK's Support for Georgia's Euro-Atlantic Aspiration

By Liza Mchedlidze

During his address at the official birthday celebration of King Charles III, the British Ambassador to Georgia, Mark Clayton, expressed the United Kingdom's unwavering support for Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspiration. He reiterated the statement made by the UK Foreign Minister in March, emphasizing that the United Kingdom remains a steadfast friend of Georgia and will continue to do so.

Mark Clayton highlighted that the previous year has been of great significance for the relations between the United Kingdom and Georgia.

"This year, we had the honor of hosting the Minister of Foreign Affairs Darchiashvili in London for the annual strategic talks, the Wardrop Dialogue. Our Foreign Minister James Cleverley paid a return visit to Georgia in March, which was

the first visit of a UK Foreign Secretary to the country since 2016. These visits are important and allow for in-depth dialogue with the Prime Minister and ministers on important issues. However, this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to our relationship with Georgia. From defense cooperation to cyber security, a lot is going on, and there will be much more to come. Tomorrow morning, we will discuss these matters based on the work of the British Council, which supports the study of English in Georgian schools," the ambassador said.

He also emphasized the involvement of the British Armed Forces contingent in the planned exercises in Georgia.

"Later this year, the largest contingent of the British Armed Forces will participate in planned exercises in Georgia. We will continue working with parliament, the government, civil society or-

ganizations, human rights defenders, the LGBTQ community, and others. Additionally, we will collaborate with the media to combat misinformation and interference in Georgia's democracy. We fully support Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspiration. As our Foreign Minister stated in March, the United Kingdom is a steadfast friend of Georgia and will remain so," said the British ambassador to Georgia.

During his speech, Ambassador Mark Clayton also addressed the ongoing war in Ukraine and emphasized that the United Kingdom, along with its partners, will continue to stand by Ukraine for as long as necessary. He acknowledged the significance of the past year for Ukraine, highlighting Russia's aggressive and unprovoked war against the country, which has persisted for two years. The



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6164; Euro - 2.8602; GBP - 3.3393; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.1076; Swiss Franc - 2.9165

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ambassador expressed pride in his country's role in supporting Ukraine's efforts to uphold the shared values of the UN Charter. He further mentioned that supporting Ukraine in its struggle is a priority of the UK's foreign policy, as stated by their Foreign Secretary. Together

with their allies, the United Kingdom is committed to supporting Ukraine.

Clayton, while speaking to reporters, expressed that they have been closely following the case of Nika Gvaramia for the past year and affirmed their commitment to closely monitoring the case moving forward. Ambassador Clayton emphasized that

the United Kingdom strongly supports a free and robust media as a fundamental element of democracy. Regarding the 12 recommendations, he mentioned that they are closely monitoring the progress concerning the candidate's status.

"When it comes to the 12 priorities, the UK is in a different position as we are no longer a

member of the EU, although we support Georgia's EU and NATO membership for a number of key reasons. Polls show that the Georgian people want to join the European Union, and all major political parties also express their support for Georgia joining the European Union. This is a very important democratic fact. Therefore, we are

closely monitoring the progress regarding the candidate's status. It is not my role to comment on the trial, although we are following the proceedings. The UK strongly supports free and robust media as it is a fundamental element of democracy. Therefore, we strongly support the right of all of you to do what you do," stated Clayton.

The German and Georgian governments agreed on this during the two-day German-Georgian government negotiations in Berlin. In total, Georgia and Germany agreed on a package of measures worth up to 68 million euros for the next two years.

The Georgian and German Governments agreed to expand their cooperation in the energy sector during the intergovernmental development negotiations that ended today. The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is providing 23 million euros for the market launch of a green hydrogen economy. This cooperation is the

## Germany will support Georgia with 23 million euros for the market launch of green hydrogen.



first concrete investment project in green hydrogen technology in the Caucasus region. The region has potential for renewable energy and thus green hydrogen because of its abundant hydro-power, high solar radiation and very good wind conditions. Among other things, the funds will be used to build an electrolysis plant with a hydrogen storage tank and wind turbines for the necessary electricity production in the coming years.

In addition to the energy com-

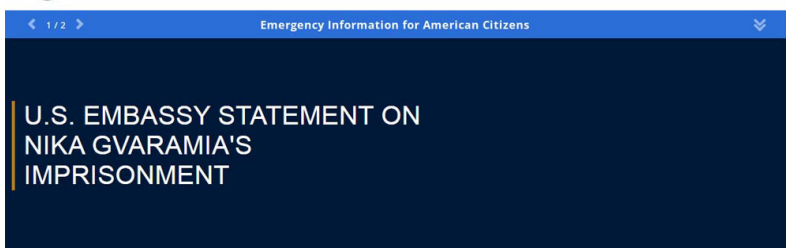
mitment, the Georgian and German governments have agreed on further cooperation. The package of measures includes a total of up to 68 million euros for the next two years. For example, water supply and wastewater disposal in Batumi and Ajaria as well as local public transport in Tbilisi and Batumi are to be improved to make the cities more sustainable and fit for the future. A second priority is the training of skilled workers for Georgian companies.

### The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

#### US Embassy in Georgia Expresses Concern over Continued Detention of Nika Gvaramia

U.S. EMBASSY IN GEORGIA



In response to the decision of the Supreme Court regarding Nika Gvaramia's case, the U.S. Embassy reiterated its profound concern over Gvaramia's continued detention. The Embassy once again emphasized its deep concern regarding this matter.

"The U.S. Embassy reiterates our deep concern about the continued imprisonment of Nika Gvaramia. The United States has raised questions and concerns regarding the case since its inception, including the timing and nature of the charges, as well as the sentence. Numer-

Nika Gvaramia, the general director of the "Mtavari" Channel. The court deemed the cassation appeals filed by Nika Gvaramia's lawyer, Kakhaber Damenia, and the prosecutor's office as inadmissible.

#### Vakhtang Gomelaury Meets Head of EU Representation in Georgia and Ambassadors of EU Member States Embassies

The Minister of Internal Affairs, Vakhtang Gomelaury, held

a meeting with Pawel Herczynski, the head of the European Union Representation in Georgia, as well as ambassadors and representatives from the embassies of European Union member states.

According to information provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, ambassadors and representatives from Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Kingdom of Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Greece, France, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, and the Kingdom of Sweden participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, the par-

ties discussed the issue of holding the events planned within the framework of the Tbilisi Pride Week in a safe environment. Vakhtang Gomelaury provided European partners with detailed information about the activities of the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the organizers of "Tbilisi Pride," and the joint working group of international partners.

It was noted during the meeting that the joint working group is actively engaged in ensuring the safety of the events by sharing information and coordinating efforts.

The Minister of Internal Affairs expressed gratitude to the head of the EU representation in Georgia, the ambassadors of the EU member states, and the embassy representatives for their active and close cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.



### Weather

Wednesday, June 21

Day Showers High: 21°C

Night Showers Low: 15°C

Thursday, June 22

Day Showers High: 18°C

Night Showers Low: 14°C

ous international and Georgian human rights defenders have echoed these same concerns. A functioning democracy depends on protecting media freedom and prohibiting political prosecution. Even the perception of selective or politically motivated justice puts Georgia's European future at risk, and undermines the rule of law, constitutionally protected human rights, and democracy itself," the statement reads.

On June 19, the Supreme Court of Georgia made a decision to uphold the imprisonment of

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