

Irakli Kobakhidze Responds to Kelly Degnan's Criticism of Supreme Court's Decision in Nika Gvaramia Case



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of the Georgian Dream party, responded to a question about the Nika Gvaramia case, stating that they adhere to a standard different from the American Embassy. He emphasized that when a court issues a decision, political comments are unnecessary.

Specifically, Kobakhidze was asked to evaluate the statement made by the US Ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan,

who expressed disappointment with the Supreme Court's decision regarding the Gvaramia case.

Kobakhidze stated that Gvaramia is currently serving a sentence for a specific crime, emphasizing that this case should not be linked to Georgia's EU candidacy status.

"We do not get involved in this case, therefore, we refrain from making assessments. Unlike the American Embassy, we adhere to the standard. The standard is that when the court makes a certain

decision, there is no need for political comments. There is no connection between Gvaramia's case and the candidacy status, there can be no connection between Gvaramia's case and the candidacy status. You all know that Gvaramia is not a media manager, nothing is written anywhere. Logically, there can be no connection between Gvaramia's release and the candidacy status. Gvaramia is serving a sentence for a specific crime, he stole 7 million GEL from a private TV company, from a free media, because he knew that

he had to give this company to the rightful owner. I remember that at the time when the Supreme Court issued a decision regarding Rustavi 2, the American Embassy's statement on this topic was also published. Even then, they condemned the Supreme Court's decision, even though the Strasbourg Court later confirmed that the Supreme Court's decision was fair. Accordingly, the Strasbourg court also determined that the American embassy's statement at that time was absolutely groundless and unfair. They are doing it again, which is unacceptable," Kobakhidze stated.

Kobakhidze criticized the embassy's statement, claiming it was an effort to politicize justice. He acknowledged that there was a previous instance where illegal actions were overlooked, leading to pressure on Judge Chkhikvadze and a violation of court independence. Kobakhidze expressed regret for turning a blind eye at that time and warned against repeating the mistake. He viewed the current attempt to interfere with the court as unprecedented and unacceptable, emphasizing that such statements should not be made by future ambassadors. Kobakhidze condemned any gross interference in the independence of justice.

"This statement of the embassy is an attempt to politicize justice. At one time, we somehow turned a blind eye to an absolutely illegal action, which was connected to the pressure on Judge Chkhikvadze. This was also a violation of the independence of the court. Perhaps we should not have turned a blind eye, because it continued, and once again we see an absolutely unheard-of attempt to interfere with the court. It is not correct to make such statements. I hope that such statements will not be made under the next ambassador. Such a gross interference in the independence of justice is unacceptable," said Kobakhidze.

Shalva Papuashvili Attributes 'Carelessness of Certain EU Officials' to Saakashvili's Return

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

According to Shalva Papuashvili, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, "the carelessness of EU officials" and specific European parliamentarians created an environment where Mikheil Saakashvili felt he could secretly return to Georgia and worsen the situation.

Papuashvili held those who protected, appointed, and associated themselves with Saakashvili responsible, accusing them of sacrificing Georgia for chaos.

"With or without Georgian citizenship, it is a fact that Mikheil Saakashvili has not given up on Georgian politics for years. He has been directly in-

involved in inciting radicalism from abroad. We have previously expressed concerns about this situation, as the convicted individual was able to move freely within the territory of the European Union, hold high-ranking positions in Ukraine, and navigate various corridors of Brussels. Such actions, including shaking the hand of a criminal and inviting him to various events, are absolutely unacceptable. It is due to this carelessness, exhibited by EU officials and certain European parliamentarians, that Mikheil Saakashvili was able to discreetly enter Georgia and disrupt the situation here. All those who protected, shook hands



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6208; Euro - 2.8622; GBP - 3.3287; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.1132; Swiss Franc - 2.9204

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with, appointed him to positions, or stood with him at conferences—essentially, those who supported the criminal—have sacrificed Georgia for chaos,”

stated Shalva Papuashvili.

Papuashvili remarked that the State Security Service of Georgia played a crucial role in saving the country by identifying and apprehending Mikheil Saakashvili in a timely manner.

“The only one who saved us is our State Security Service, which identified and arrested Mikheil Saakashvili in time. If it were not for the timely and professional response of our State Security Service, no one knows

what the situation would be today in the streets of different cities in Georgia—who fired the bullet and whose tank was parked. All those who shook Saakashvili's hand when he was known to be guilty, whether they

were Georgians or foreigners, sacrificed the well-being of the Georgian people for this disorder. The only thing that saved us was our security system,” stated Papuashvili.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Meeting Between Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili and Seán Ó Feargháil



Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili held a meeting with Seán Ó Feargháil, the Chairman of the Lower House of the Irish Parliament. The Prime Minister's press service reported that they examined the current partnership between Georgia and Ireland and explored possibilities for future collaboration.

The dynamic parliamentary

relations between the two countries were particularly emphasized. Special attention was given to the significant trade and economic potential that exists between them, emphasizing the need for its full utilization. The discussion touched upon the sub-

stantial Irish investments and the favorable business climate in Georgia. During the meeting, Georgia's successes in the path of European integration were acknowledged, and there was expressed hope that the country's progress would be duly appreciated.

The Prime Minister highlighted the crucial significance of Ireland's active political and

practical support, particularly during the country's pursuit of candidate status. It was mentioned that the government maintains inclusivity, consistency, and transparency in fulfilling the 12 priorities, establishing Georgia as a dependable partner of the European Union in the region.

The head of the government expressed gratitude to Ireland for its support in upholding Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Additionally, Ireland's noteworthy contribution to the EU monitoring mission was acknowledged.

Georgian Dream Determined to Prevent Georgia's EU Candidacy Status, Says Tina Bokuchava

Tina Bokuchava, a leader of the United National Movement, stated that the European Commission has officially announced in Brussels that only three recommendations have been fulfilled, not 11, and emphasized the need to halt the absurdity exhibited by the Georgian Dream party.

“They cannot deceive Georgian citizens or our European partners. Everyone can see what is really happening. The current

regime is doing everything to deliberately deprive our country of its European future. The policy of constant recrimination is outdated and it has no influence either inside or outside the

position is also very important, and we did everything we could to implement reforms - whether it was the de-oligarchization law or justice reform. Among them, for example, in accordance with



country,” said Bokuchava.

Furthermore, as noted by Bokuchava, the opposition made every effort to implement the recommendations. However, the ‘Georgian Dream’ is determined to prevent Georgia from receiving the EU candidacy status.

“Naturally, the role of the op-

position is also very important, and we did everything we could to implement reforms - whether it was the de-oligarchization law or justice reform. Among them, for example, in accordance with the requirements of the Venice Commission. When there is no political will for this because the government is determined not to implement the recommendations for the country to not receive the status of a candidate, the opposition will not be able to stand up to this,” stated Bokuchava.

Georgia: EU Ambassador visits construction site of future European School in Tbilisi to be opened in September 2024

On 18 June, European Union Ambassador to Georgia Pawel Herczynski and Georgian Education Minister Giorgi Amilakhvari visited the con-

struction site of the Eastern Partnership European School at Lisi Lake.

The EaP European School, funded by the European Union, is scheduled to open its doors in September 2024. It plans to offer two educational tracks (Georgian and International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme) that are focused on multicultural education, language acquisition, and high-quality teaching and learning.

The 26,090 square metre campus will consist of school and dormitory buildings, a rugby field, basketball and volleyball courts, a library and other educational facilities. The school's large variety of indoor and out-



door learning spaces will provide a multitude of unique opportunities for students to learn, live and play together.

This May, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) European School, hosted for now by the New School in Tbilisi, marked the

graduation of its fourth cohort of students. The School offers high quality education to pupils from six Eastern Partnership countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine – increasing their employment opportunities and promoting a better understanding of the EU.

Since the launch of the scholarship programme in 2018, a total of 145 students have been awarded with full two-year EU-funded scholarships to study on the IB Diploma Programme. Another 20 students will join the programme in September for the 2023-2025 academic years.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, June 22

Day Showers
High: 19°C

Night Showers
Low: 15°C

Friday, June 23

Day Showers
High: 21°C

Night Showers
Low: 15°C

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