

## Minister of Justice Criticizes Zelensky's Request for Georgian Ambassador's Departure from Ukraine

By Liza Mchedlidze

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky requested the Georgian ambassador to depart from Ukraine within 48 hours. The purpose of this request is to engage in consultations in Tbilisi regarding Mikheil Saakashvili's potential return to Ukraine. Zelensky expressed concern that the Georgian authorities are responsible for the harm being inflicted on Ukrainian citizen Mikheil Saakashvili, emphasizing the involvement of Russia in this matter.

Additionally, Zelensky urged international partners to intervene and resolve the situation, emphasizing that no European government has the right to execute, as life is a fundamental European value.

However, Rati Bregadze, the Minister of Justice, expressed strong disapproval of Zelensky's statement.

According to Bregadze, the statement made by President Volodymyr Zelensky was deemed 'completely unacceptable' due to the lack of supporting evidence. Bregadze expressed his disagreement, stating, "When it comes to the fact that someone is being tortured in Georgia, naturally, I will never agree with all of this." He further emphasized Georgia's role as a leader in protecting human rights, especially within penitentiary institutions, stating, "If human rights are protected anywhere in this region...Georgia is definitely the leader here."

Bregadze also questioned the definition of torture and its application in the given situation, stating, "It will be very interesting to see what our dear society thinks about what torture is. If a person needs treatment and is in one of the best clinics, we offer food, we constantly encourage him to get proper treatment and food from doctors. Is this torture? Or if it is torture, that we had about 2,300 visitors."



The Minister reiterated the commitment of the Ministry of Justice to upholding human rights, stating, "No matter who he is, regardless of his political position or the state he represents, as a nation, we maintain our dignity and firmly uphold human rights, including within our penitentiary institutions, at a very

high level." Bregadze emphasized that such a statement would not be accepted by anyone. He expressed disappointment, highlighting Georgia's consistent support for the Ukrainian people during times of crisis, stating, "It is indeed disheartening, especially considering that Georgia consistently supports the Ukrainian

people in all crisis situations."

Regarding the issue of torture, Bregadze remarked, "This is not torture; it is self-torture." He further suggested, "This individual inflicts torture upon himself, and if anyone tortures him, it is done by his political entourage."

## Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Condemns 'Extreme Diplomatic Escalation' by Official Kyiv

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia has expressed deep concern over the decision made by the Ukrainian authorities to summon the Georgian ambassador from the country for consultation. The Ministry views this action as a significant escalation of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

According to the statement, the reason provided by the Ukrainian authorities makes this decision particularly incomprehensible.

"The decision of the Strasbourg court puts an end to speculations about the health condition of the convict Mikheil Saakashvili, once again confirming the highest standards of protection for Mikheil Saakashvili's rights by the state. Against this backdrop, the decision of the Ukrainian authorities significantly harms the strategic relations between the two countries and represents a direct interfer-

ence in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state.

We hope that official Kyiv will reconsider its decision and make efforts to further develop historically friendly relations between the two countries.

We would like to emphasize once again that Georgia's support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people is unwavering. Since the beginning of the war, Georgia has been providing political and humanitarian support to Ukraine at both the bilateral level and in various international formats.

It is also significant that, even in the face of Russian military aggression, the diplomatic representation of Georgia in Ukraine has not ceased functioning.

Georgia's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Giorgi Zakarashvili, conveyed Tbilisi's official position to the Ukrainian side

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6055; Euro - 2.8408; GBP - 3.3113; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9015; Swiss Franc - 2.9089

# Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Condemns 'Extreme Diplomatic Escalation' by Official Kyiv

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during the meeting held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine in Kyiv today.

Here, we would like to point out that Georgia will continue to express solidarity and support for Ukraine, which is currently at war. Given the active phase of the conflict, the Georgian side,

aware of its great responsibility in international relations, particularly towards its partners, refrains from any additional reaction in response to Ukraine's steps, which would further aggravate bilateral relations and worsen the already difficult situation," as mentioned in the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Irakli Kobakhidze Affirms Georgia's Fulfillment of All 12 Recommendations

evident that we have effectively addressed the priorities. Last year, we were also ready to be granted candidate status, and there is no valid reason for Georgia to be denied that status. While a political decision will be

### Kakha Kaladze: Saakashvili Used Self-Harm as a Strategy to Avoid Punishment

According to Kakha Kaladze, the mayor of Tbilisi, Mikheil Saakashvili attempted to dem-

Strasbourg. We know very well what Strasbourg wrote in relation to the mentioned case. Therefore, there is an answer to every question. What Saakashvili tried was a PR campaign against Georgia. It was an attempt to show the world that human rights and the

of the PR strategy. Nothing actually happens. The main thing is that this person gets the appropriate calories. Mikheil Saakashvili is serving his sentence in a clinic because a campaign was launched about his health problems. This person



During a press conference held in the Parliament, Irakli Kobakhidze, Chairman of the Georgian Dream party, stated that Georgia has fulfilled its priorities. He mentioned that last year they were prepared to be granted candidate status, and in the current circumstances, there is no valid reason for Georgia not to receive the candidate status.

"Indeed, everything, including the latest statistics, indicates that the government, primarily with the involvement of the Parliament, has fulfilled all twelve priorities presented by the European Commission. We are prepared for consultations regarding the legislation, and there will be no obstacles in this regard. Numbers are often susceptible to manipulation; however, upon closer examination, it becomes

made in December, the specific outcome cannot be predicted in advance. Nevertheless, if we consider a decision based on facts, Georgia undoubtedly qualifies for candidate status," stated Irakli Kobakhidze.

onstrate to the global community that human rights were being violated in Georgia.

"The court has made a decision, Mikheil Saakashvili has been sentenced to prison for specific crimes. As you know, he appealed and brought the matter to

rights of prisoners were being violated in Georgia," said Kaladze.

According to Kaladze, Saakashvili engaged in self-harm as part of his strategy to evade punishment.

"This person was in a self-harm mode. This was also part

has been in self-harm mode all this time in order to escape punishment. Certain doctors and politicians came forward and said that he was poisoned by the government. They should come out now and apologize to the public for the lie," stated Kaladze.

## Georgia: Lagodekhi History Museum officially opened with EU and UNDP support



The Lagodekhi History Museum officially opened in Georgia on 1 July.

The complete rehabilitation of the museum, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme, was funded by the EU and local municipalities. The total cost of the project is GEL 724,999.

The museum premises were renovated to offer visitors a brand-new space for exhibitions and educational activities.

The courtyard of the museum has been tidied up, there are open reading areas and an adapted outdoor stage. The artefacts reflecting more than 40 centuries of Georgian history, stored for years in boxes, are finally on display in special showcases.

A Mediatek Youth Centre, a modern type of youth centre, has been set up on the first floor of the museum building with UNDP support.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

### Weather

Wednesday, July 5

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 33°C

Night Clear

Low: 21°C

Thursday, July 6

Day Clear

High: 34°C

Night Clear

Low: 22°C

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