

President Zourabichvii Urges Action Against Anti-LGBT Attack on Tbilisi Pride Festival

By Liza Mchedlidze

On July 8, the Tbilisi Pride festival in Tbilisi was forcefully disrupted by approximately 2,000 anti-LGBT protesters. During the incident, clashes between the protesters and police occurred, resulting in the destruction of props. The organizers of the festival were escorted by the police out of the Lisi area in minibusses and yellow buses due to the police's inability to ensure the area's security.

Prior to the festival, the organizers had expressed that they had been assured by the Ministry of Internal Affairs about the event's protection.

Law enforcement officers were deployed near Lis Lake, surrounding the festival area. However, the limited police presence was unable to withstand the aggression of certain groups. Consequently, these groups managed to breach the festival area, leading to the intervention of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who escorted the Pride organizers away from the scene.

In a special briefing, The President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili emphasized that the country had failed to uphold the constitutional commitment to protect the rights of freedom of expression and assembly for all individuals. The President urged the Ministry of Internal Affairs to take concrete measures to prevent any acts of violence and called on the Georgian Dream government to refrain from using hate speech and engaging in actions that promote violence.

"People were not given the opportunity to hold their own



event, arranged in a closed space, at a pre-planned location, and under conditions agreed upon with law enforcement officers. The law enforcement structures had been provided with the condition of protection, and thus, all necessary measures had to be taken. Protecting the right to assembly means ensuring the event takes place, not vacating the premises. It seems as if security cannot be safeguarded in any other way - with this approach and intention, we

can imagine that all events, regardless of their form and content, which do not please radical groups, will fail if law enforcement officers continue to act in this manner, as they did today.

It is an alarming reality that the counteraction was incited, tested, and openly supported through posts circulated on social networks, not only by representatives of various branches of the ruling party but also directly by the party itself, including acting deputies. Thus, the

value of the urgent statements made by officials responsible for protecting human rights - the chairman of the parliament and the chairman of the human rights committee - is called into question when they assure us that they are defenders of human rights, while actions contradict their words.

In fact, by instigating these conflicts and failing to condemn these actions or hate speech, the ruling party, holding the majority in parliament, perpetuates

violence and assumes responsibility for all ensuing consequences. Today, I want to first and foremost call upon the Ministry of Internal Affairs to actively prevent all violent acts, as this is their duty as law enforcement, and I urge the management team to cease using hate speech and inciting violence. Such situations can easily occur with fully controlled messaging platforms," stated Zourabichvili.



Parliament Chairman Shalva Papuashvili: President Zourabichvili's Remarks on Police Encourage Foreign Ambassadors to Criticize

By Liza Mchedlidze

During an interview on Imedi TV, Shalva Papuashvili, the Chairman of the parliament, expressed his concern regarding the president's recent statement, noting that it further contributes to the perception that even a foreign ambassador can assert that the police are incapable of fulfilling their duties.

Papuashvili acknowledged that the police were unable to

ensure the security of the Pride festival on the given day. However, he emphasized that the police had correctly prioritized protecting the well-being of individuals.

The Parliament Chairman expressed his apprehension about the potential consequences of a foreign representative observing the president's criticisms of the local police force. He pointed out that such remarks

CONTINUED ON Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5930; Euro - 2.8248; GBP - 3.3100; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8354; Swiss Franc - 2.8966

Parliament Chairman Shalva Papuashvili: President Zourabichvili's Remarks on Police Encourage Foreign Ambassadors to Criticize

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

may provide an opening for others to make similar disparaging remarks about the police. Papuashvili acknowledged the challenges faced by the police in ensuring the event's success but commended their focus on pri-

oritizing the safety and health of the participants.

"When a representative of a foreign country observes the president making complaints about our own police, it opens the door for others to make similar remarks about our police force. While it is true that the police

were unable to ensure the smooth execution of the event today, they properly prioritized and focused on the most important aspect, which is the well-being of the people. The actions of the police were driven by their own interests," Papuashvili said.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

US Embassy in Georgia Urges Accountability and Denounces Violence as Tbilisi Pride Event is Cancelled

violence is unacceptable in any circumstances.

"Today, Tbilisi Pride was forced to cancel its planned, closed event because an uncontrolled crowd threatening violence denied attendees their Constitutionally protected right to peacefully assemble. The Georgian authorities have a duty to

that violence is unacceptable," the statement reads.

Ombudsman Urges Prompt Response by Ministry of Internal Affairs to Address Law Violations

assembly for all citizens and to promptly address any breaches of the law.

The Public Defender reiterated that the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly is safeguarded by the Georgian Constitution, allowing any group to exercise this right, regardless of societal acceptance of their views. It is the responsibility of the state to ensure the protection of all rights enshrined in national legislation.

Despite the prior agreement that the Ministry of Internal Affairs would ensure the safe conduct of the event and undertake preventive measures, the final outcome was unsuccessful, as stated by the Public Defender.

"As mentioned by the Public Defender in a statement earlier this week, the Constitution of Georgia guarantees the right to expression and peaceful assembly in our country. This right applies to all groups, regardless of societal acceptance of their opinions.

Undoubtedly, the responsibility for safeguarding the protection of rights granted by national legislation lies with the state. Despite the pre-arranged agreement that the Ministry of Internal Affairs would ensure the event's safe execution and implement preventive measures, the final outcome was unsuccessful," stated the Public Defender.



In a statement issued the US Embassy in Georgia expressed deep concern over the cancellation of Tbilisi Pride's planned and closed event due to the presence of an unruly crowd that posed a threat of violence. The Embassy emphasized that every citizen of Georgia is entitled to their Constitutionally protected right to peacefully assemble, and it is the responsibility of the Georgian authorities to safeguard these fundamental human rights.

The use or mere threat of violence and intimidation to suppress diverse opinions is not in line with the principles of democracy, and it goes against Georgia's rich history of tolerance, compassion, and pluralism. The Embassy called upon the authorities to take decisive action, holding accountable all individuals who violated the law, and to send a clear message that

protect the basic human rights of all of Georgia's citizens. The use or threat of violence and intimidation to silence differing views is undemocratic and contrary to Georgia's history of tolerance, compassion, and pluralism. We call on the authorities to hold accountable all those who broke the law and make clear

The Ombudsman has called on the Ministry of Internal Affairs to take swift and appropriate action in response to all law violations. In light of the recent anti-LGBT group attacks on the Tbilisi Pride Festival, the Public Defender has emphasized the need for the Ministry to protect the freedom of expression and



EBRD and EU provide major business grants to seven Georgian companies



The 'Capital Market Support' Programme, an initiative to support the local capital market expansion mechanisms, supported by the EU and carried out by the EBRD and local partners, awarded major business grants to seven Georgian companies.

These companies include Georgian Renewable Power Operations, Crystal, MBC, Rico Group, TBC Leasing, Tegeta Holding, and Energy Development Georgia. The awarded grants will help them co-finance the costs associated with the issuance of securities.

Launched 18 months ago, the

Capital Market Support Programme has supported the establishment and implementation of mechanisms to expand the capital market in Georgia.

It has created opportunities for companies to access resources and has encouraged the adoption of the Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) principles within the market.

As a result, the programme has introduced five "innovative" securities to the Georgian markets, including three green bonds, one gender bond, and one sustainability-linked bond.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Monday, July 10

Day Partly Cloudy High: 29°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 19°C

Tuesday, July 11

Day Partly Cloudy High: 23°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 15°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.