

US Ambassador to Georgia Highlights Contrasts Between Kremlin-Inspired Law and American Law on Lobbying Activities

By Liza Mchedlidze

In response to the question about the lobbying activities in the case of Mikheil Saakashvili, the US ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan, highlighted the distinction between the law inspired by the Kremlin and American law, based on documents from the US Department of Justice.

According to Kelly Degnan, the Kremlin-inspired law, which was rejected by Georgia in March, specifically targeted Georgian NGOs and civil society organizations working on behalf of Georgia.

On the other hand, the American law focuses on law firms and lobbyists hired by foreign entities to work in their favor.

Degnan further noted that they have witnessed the outcome of a Russian-style law in Russia, which led to the expulsion or closure of NGOs and civil society groups that were doing beneficial work.



Degnan emphasized that Georgia already possesses great transparency and regulations under its legislation. Therefore, she believes that the matter is not about transparency, as it already exists in Georgia.

"In my opinion, we have witnessed the consequences of a Russian-style law that forced NGOs and civil society organizations engaged in beneficial work in Russia to either close down or relocate. The rejected Georgian law, which was under consideration in March, addressed this matter. I would like to reiterate that Georgia already has robust transparency measures and regulations in place within its legislation. Information about the activities of donors and non-governmental organizations in Georgia is fully accessible to anyone genuinely interested. Therefore, I do not believe that the issue revolves around transparency since it is already well-established in Georgia," stated Degnan.

GYLA Calls for Release of Detained Protesters in Batumi Amid Concerns Over Prioritization of Russian Citizens' Safety

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Georgia's Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

expressed apprehensions regarding the recent protests in Batumi linked to the arrival of a Russian cruise ship. GYLA called on

the Ministry of Internal Affairs to release the 23 individuals detained during the demonstrations.

GYLA raised concerns about the law enforcement's apparent prioritization of Russian citizens' safety over others, leading to restrictions on protesters' constitutional rights. The organization emphasized the need to safeguard the rights and freedoms of all citizens, without discrimination based on nationality or other factors.

According to the statement, there is information concerning the ship owner and related companies and their sanctions.

The organization has raised concerns about the law enforcement's apparent prioritization of the safety of Russian citizens over other cases, leading to limitations on the constitutional rights of the protesters. GYLA emphasized the significance of safeguarding the rights and freedoms of all citizens, without any form of discrimination based on nationality or any other criteria.

"It should be noted that there is information about the ship owner and related companies regarding their sanctions.

The protest against the 2nd cruise Russian ship started late last night, July 30, and has continued throughout the night, still ongoing. The police mobilized on-site did not allow the participants of the rally to gather

at the port. The law-enforcement structure points to security protection as the basis for limiting freedom of expression and assembly.

It is alarming that the law enforcement structure, compared to all other cases, is especially concerned about the safety of Russian citizens and, based on this, including using forceful methods, restricts the constitutional rights of demonstrators to peacefully protest against the Russian occupation and Russian influence in Georgia. It should be noted that the Ministry of Internal Affairs organized a safe corridor for Russian citizens to prevent any obstacles for them to get to the city from the cruise. Currently, the police have again fenced off the area around the Batumi harbor with double fences.

The Georgia's Young Lawyers' Association continues to monitor the ongoing protest in Batumi and protect the interests of the illegally detained persons; however, until now, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has not provided information about the location of the detained persons. Lawyers are not given the opportunity to visit their clients in the pre-trial detention center," the statement reads.

საია შინაგან საქმეთა
სამინისტროს
ანტიკონსტიტუციური
ქმედებების
შეწყვეტისაკენ
მოუხმობს

საია ბათუმში მიმდინარე მოვლენებს ეხმიანება

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Protests Lead to Early Departure of 'Astoria Grande' Cruise Ship from Batumi Port



On the morning of July 31st, the cruise ship 'Astoria Grande' once again arrived in Batumi port, bringing Russian tourists

to Georgia. However, the ship's arrival was met with active demonstrations and vocal protests from the citizens who demanded the removal of Batumi from the cruise ship's destination list.

Throughout the protests, law

enforcement officers were present, and the port area was fortified with iron barricades. The situation escalated to a physical altercation, resulting in

the arrest of 23 individuals by the police. As a result of the intense protests, the cruise ship departed from the port of Batumi ahead of its scheduled departure time.

It is noteworthy that a few days prior to this incident, the same cruise liner had already left Batumi port amidst the ongoing protest. Furthermore, there were reports suggesting that the 'Astoria Grande' website had removed Batumi port from its list of cruise ship destinations during this period of unrest.

Allegations of Police Assault During Batumi Protest: Public Defender Refers Incident to Investigation Service

As per the information from the public defender, there are allegations of physical assault against one of the detainees during the protest rally in Batumi.

The statement released by the Public Defender mentions that they have referred the incident to the Special Investigation Service.

During a meeting with three citizens who were arrested at the protest, one of them, identified as R. M., reported experiencing verbal and physical abuse by police officers. The Office of the Public Defender immediately informed the Special Investigation Service about the alleged mistreatment of R. M. and expects a prompt and effective response.



საქართველოს სახალხო დამცველი
PUBLIC DEFENDER (OMBUDSMAN) OF GEORGIA

The Public Defender of Georgia will continue investigating the alleged rights violations of those arrested at the rally and will keep the public informed about the situation, according to the statement.

Provision Heavy Machineries in Akhagori and Tsalka Municipalities Within the GGP Grassroots Human Security Grant Program of the Embassy of Japan in Georgia

Within the Grassroots Human Security Grant Program (GGP) of the Embassy of Japan, 2 heavy machineries (backhoe loader) have been purchased for Akhagori and Tsalka Municipalities to improve the provision of municipal infrastructural services and to reduce the vulnerability of the local community to natural disaster. Total budget of the projects: 136,000 USD.

The newly appointed ambassador of Japan to Georgia, H.E. ISHIDZUKA Hideki handed over the heavy machineries to the municipalities and highlighted the vital importance of disaster response and disaster risk reduction, as well as, the developed municipal infrastructure for human security.

It was Ambassador's first business trip to the regions. During the trip Ambassador met locals, as well as, representatives of central, regional and local governments and discussed the possibilities and existing challenges in the municipalities.

The "Grassroots Human Security Grant program" (GGP)

provides assistance to relatively small projects and aims at the improvement of human security

in Georgia in the following priority fields: environment protection, agriculture, infrastructure,

healthcare and education. Since 1998, within the GGP program alone, the Japanese Government

has funded more than 200 projects, in total amounting to around 25 million USD.



Weather

Tuesday, August 1

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 34°C
Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 22°C

Wednesday, August 2

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 36°C
Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 21°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.