

## Prime Minister Gharibashvili Highlights Georgia's Determination to Safeguard National Interests and Pursue Peaceful Progress

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

During his speech at the event commemorating the establishment of the State Security Service, Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, emphasized that Georgia has experienced numerous attempts to exploit it as a means to either harm or benefit other countries. He firmly stated that their primary objective is to safeguard the national interests of their own country and not to prioritize the interests of any other nation.

"This is the only peaceful period during which the country has not lost territories, experienced any wars, serious conflicts, or challenges. This outcome is undoubtedly a result of our government's right vision and policy, which stands as the only viable option. We are acutely aware that Georgia has been subject to numerous attempts to manipulate it for the benefit of individual countries. Nevertheless, our fundamental principle remains unwavering - to protect the national interests of our country and not to serve the interests of others. I want to underscore this point emphatically.

Over the past decade or more, our focus has been on fortifying the sovereignty of our nation, not relinquishing it to external powers. This bears immense significance. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your exceptional professionalism and unwavering patriotism. This job demands precisely these qualities - professionalism and patriotism. On behalf of our government, we thank you once again," Gharibashvili said.



Gharibashvili expressed his belief that Georgia can steer clear of geopolitical crises and other persistent threats. He emphasized the imperative to maintain peace within the state and ensure the protection of Georgian citizens' interests.

The Prime Minister emphasized that the regional and international role and importance of Georgia are increasing day

by day and they need to support, maintain, and strengthen it. He expressed his belief that the country will succeed in peacefully ending the occupation, unifying the nation, and achieving integration as a result of correct pragmatic and results-oriented policy.

"Furthermore, the regional and international role and significance of our coun-

try are growing steadily, and it requires encouragement, preservation, and further enhancement. I firmly believe that, thanks to our pragmatic and results-oriented policy, our nation will achieve success in peacefully resolving occupation issues, unifying the country, and achieving integration," The PM stated.

## Tbilisi Mayor Kaladze Affirms Georgia's Non-Participation in Sanctions Against Russia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze assessed the decision that bans the export of cars from the USA and the European Union to Russia and Belarus via Georgia. He emphasized that the Georgian Dream considers the interests of the nation and its citizens and refrains from participating in sanctions against Russia.

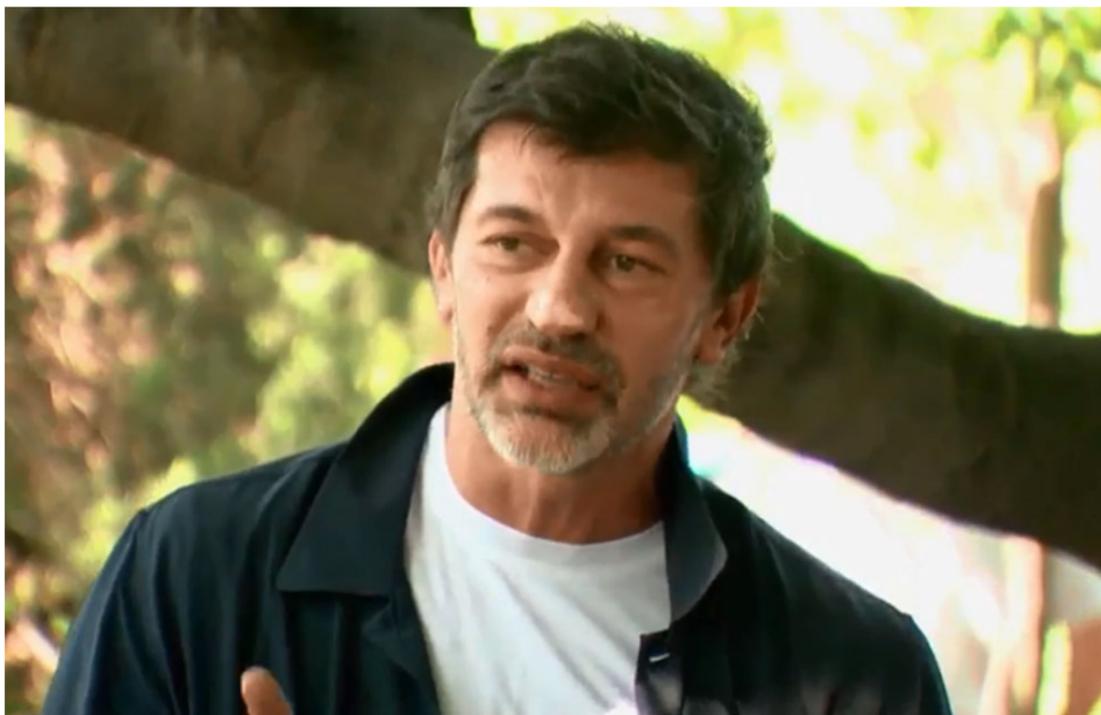
Kaladze expressed concern over the opposition's actions, stating that they were wasting money to falsely portray the country as independent. According to him, there could be no greater trouble or betrayal than spending funds to subject one's own country and homeland to sanctions.

"As for sanctions in general, we saw them once again in the FARA document, and the public saw that it was all a bluff. Throughout this entire process, the opposition was wasting money to portray the country as independent. What could be a greater trouble than this, a bigger betrayal than spending money to subject your own country, your own homeland, to sanc-

tions? This is a very significant issue. We have repeatedly emphasized, and I can reiterate it now, that Georgia consistently collaborates with its partners," stated Kaladze.

Kaladze stated that the notion of joining sanctions is something they cannot consider, as it may pose problems for the country. On the other hand, they are fully prepared and eager to cooperate. If any errors occur, they are ready to address and correct them. Above all, Kaladze emphasized that they will refrain from taking any actions that could harm Georgia.

"Regarding the idea of joining the sanctions, we cannot take such a step that might prove problematic for our country. Right from the outset, we recognize its potential for harm. However, when it comes to cooperation, we are fully prepared and willing. Should any mistakes arise, we are ready to rectify them. Nevertheless, I want to underline that we will not take any actions that could be detrimental to our country," Kaladze said.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgia's Stance on Russia Sanctions Reaffirmed by Mikheil Sarjveladze



Mikheil Sarjveladze, the chairman of the Human Rights Protection Committee of the Parliament, stated that Georgia has

consistently maintained a clear position regarding sanctions on Russia. From the beginning, the country has expressed its inability to unilaterally impose sanctions on Russia. However, it does not stand as an obstacle in relation to international sanctions.

Sarjveladze emphasized that he diligently fulfills individual issues entrusted to him in the context of Georgia's interna-

tional cooperation.

"When our opponents conduct an absolutely unfounded and premeditated campaign to tarnish Georgia, the decision of the Revenue Service angers the opposition, as they attempt to mislead the public by suggesting the presence of some malicious practices. In other words, the government of Georgia remains committed to the position it has chosen, which is connected with the possibility of complying with international sanctions without independently imposing them," Sarjveladze stated.

Georgia's Solid Stance on International Sanctions: Samkharadze Affirms Russia's Compliance

Nikoloz Samkharadze, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament, highlights the end of disinformation campaigns and 'hysteria', particularly evident during the visit of sanctions co-



ordinators from the USA, the European Union, and Great Britain to Georgia, where they praised the country's exemplary cooperation.

Samkharadze firmly asserts that Russia cannot bypass international sanctions within Georgia's borders. He emphasizes that their policy, declared since the first day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, is clear and purposeful. While Georgia refrains from imposing sanctions, it ensures that Russia cannot

evade international sanctions on its territory. The recent decision by the Revenue Service aligns with this policy.

"We quite logically and purposefully implement the policy that we announced on the very first day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We do not impose sanctions, but in our country, Russia cannot bypass international sanctions. The decision of the Revenue Service is also a part of this policy," stated Samkharadze.

Opinion

Russia must stop using food as a weapon

By Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission



On 17 July, nearly one year after it was signed in Istanbul, Russia decided to not renew the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) that allows Ukraine to export agricultural goods to global markets. As underlined by the Secretary General of the UN, this initiative has been 'a beacon of hope in a world that desperately needs it'.

Before Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, a critical global food supplier, a fifth of the world's barley came from Ukraine, as well as a sixth of the maize and an eighth of wheat. After Russia invaded Ukraine, attacking grain fields and silos and blocking Ukrainian ports, global food prices spiked to record levels and endangered much needed food supply for many importer countries. The BSGI aimed to re-establish a vital route

for agricultural exports from Ukraine and to lower global food prices.

Despite many challenges, it achieved its key purpose. Since August 2022, the export of almost 33 million tonnes of grains and food from Ukraine to 45 different countries played an instrumental role in reducing global food prices by some 25% since the record high reached shortly after Russia's attack. As public trade data shows, over half of the grain, including two thirds of the wheat, went to developing countries.

In addition, the BSGI ensured continued access to grain for the World Food Programme (WFP). In 2023, Ukraine supplied 80% of the wheat procured to support humanitarian operations in the most food insecure countries like Afghanistan, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. Without the Black Sea route, the WFP has to get its grain elsewhere at higher prices and with a longer lead-time at a time when the world is facing an unprecedented food crisis.

Russia's decision was taken despite the UN Secretary General's renewed proposals to work to address its concerns. In order to shift blame, Russia

claims that its own agricultural exports were not sufficiently facilitated. This is not borne out by publicly available trade data, which shows that Russia's agricultural exports are thriving. Russia gained also important benefits from the Memorandum of Understanding with the UN on fertiliser exports, which had been brokered in parallel to the BSGI. The UN has worked relentlessly to clarify regulatory frameworks and engage with the private sector to find dedicated solutions across banking and insurance sectors. These efforts have been conducted in close collaboration with the EU and its partners.

Contrary to the lies spread by Russia, the EU has indeed ensured that our sanctions have no impact on global food security. There are no sanctions on Russian export of food and fertiliser to third countries and the EU has provided extensive guidance to economic operators, clarifying that these transfers to third countries are permitted. We have also worked with the UN to allow related payments.

Despite these well-known and verifiable facts, Russia decided to pull out of the BSGI, using food as a weapon and endanger-

ing the global food supply. Hours after withdrawing from the initiative, Russia started also to destroy Ukraine's grain storage facilities and port infrastructure with daily targeted attacks, not only in the Black Sea itself but also in the Danube. As an immediate reaction, wholesale wheat and maize prices saw their biggest increase since the start of Russia's war of aggression. The increased food price volatility is likely to persist as long as Russia puts global food supply under deliberate stress, aggravating the global cost-of-living crisis and most acutely for food-insecure people in import-dependent countries. This is unacceptable and should be resolutely condemned.

As the world deals with disrupted supplies and higher prices, Russia is now approaching vulnerable countries, notably in Africa, with bilateral offers of limited grain shipments, pretending to solve a problem it created itself. This is a cynical policy of deliberately using food as a weapon.

In response to Russia's irresponsible actions, the EU is active along three main lines. First, we will continue to sup-

port the tireless efforts of the United Nations and Türkiye to resume the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Second, we continue to strengthen our "Solidarity Lanes" as alternative routes for Ukrainian agricultural exports to reach global markets through the EU. These lanes have allowed the export of more than 41 million tonnes of Ukraine's agricultural goods so far, and we are increasing this as much as possible to mitigate the consequences of Russia's termination of the BSGI. Third, we increased our financial support to countries and people most in need, providing 18 billion to address food security until 2024.

We call on the international community and all countries to step up their own assistance in support of global food security. We ask all our partners to urge Russia to return to negotiations as the African Union already did, as well as to refrain from targeting Ukraine's agricultural infrastructure. With a clear and unified voice, we can get Russia to resume its participation to the BSGI. The world has a shared interest in responsible stewardship of global food security. We owe it to the people most in need.

Weather

Friday, August 4

Day T-storm High: 30°C

Night T-storm Low: 20°C

Saturday, August 5

Day Partly Cloudy High: 32°C

Night T-storm Low: 22°C

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