

Human Rights Center Addresses Shovi Disaster, Calls for Accountability and Transparency

ადამიანების სიცოცხლის უფლების დასაცავად!



BY MESSENGER STAFF

According to the organization, the right to human life is protected by Article 10 of the Constitution of Georgia. According to the European Convention on Human Rights, "every person's right to life is protected by law", and the government has a positive obligation to protect life.

The organization states that during one of the similar facts, it was explained in the case that in order to avoid the risk of a landslide, the government is obliged to take appropriate preventive measures and have an effective response to protect people's right to life.

"In the mentioned case, since the government failed to provide an adequate preventive and emergency response, according to the decision of the European Court of Human Rights, the state was ordered to compensate the victim for material and moral damages," the organization said.

The Human Rights Center calls upon the investigative bodies to conduct the investigation objectively, thoroughly and effectively, so that in case of identifying the fault of the relevant state agencies, all persons involved in the crime are held accountable.

The organization considers it important to conduct the investigative process in such a way as to answer all questions of high public interest, including:

1. What preventive works were carried out in order to avoid the tragedy?

According to Article 36 of the Civil Security Law of Georgia, the Emergency Situations Management Service coordinates the functioning of the national system and is responsible for planning and implementing policies in the field of civil security.

Additionally, according to the Law of

Georgia On Environmental Protection, the competence of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia includes the implementation of the state policy in the field of environmental protection and the overall coordination of the environmental monitoring system. Therefore, it is important to analyze whether there was an appropriate policy planned for the protection of civilian security in Shovi.

According to Article 39 of the Law On Civil Security, in order to reduce the risk of an emergency situation, the emergency management service is tasked with the constant identification, analysis, assessment of risk, planning and implementation of preventive measures and projects by the bodies of the state government, autonomous republics and municipalities and public In cooperation with legal entities of law and private law. Accordingly, it should be determined whether the risks in Shove were constantly being controlled and why the relevant agencies failed to take a preventive response when citizens were talking about the mentioned problems as early as 2020.

2. Was the emergency early warning system functioning?

According to Article 4 of the Decree of the Government of Georgia On the Approval of the Regulations of the Emergency Situations Management Service, the function of the Emergency Situations Management Service is to organize the creation and development of an early notification system about an expected or actual emergency situation, to collect and process the necessary data within the framework of the early notification system.

In addition, according to the announcement made by the current Vice Prime Minister of Georgia in 2018, in 2021, for the purpose of taking preventive measures, an early warning system should

be implemented in the entire territory of Georgia, on which the relevant service of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture would work.

Therefore, it should be determined through the emergency early warning system why the landslide could not be predicted in advance, whether the river bed was changed artificially, and whether the water in the Buba River was being lowered and flooded.

3. Were the equipment necessary for rescue operations mobilized too late?

According to Article 23 of the Law on Civil Security of Georgia, the authority

delegated to the municipality in the field of protection of the population and territory from an emergency situation is to ensure the constant readiness of the relevant response forces during an emergency situation. Accordingly, the investigation should assess whether it was possible to save people's lives if rescue operations were conducted promptly.

4. Are the survivors and missing people recorded in the respective lists and the search operations conducted wisely?

The authorities have not made public the list of missing and rescued people, which creates uncertainty, especially in cases where the missing person is a citizen of a foreign country and is not being searched for by family members. Additionally, if the lists were published, citizens would be able to provide accurate information that would be helpful in determining the total number of missing persons, increasing public awareness, and rationally conducting relevant search operations.

5. In order to effectively deal with the consequences of the disaster, would the assistance of other countries be vital?

It is important to find out if additional resources were needed to carry out rescue operations. Among them are equipment from other countries and whether the relevant agencies have conducted negotiations in this regard.

It is important to hold all relevant agencies and officials accountable in the event that the response to a natural disaster was ineffective or if it is established that state agencies had the opportunity to anticipate a natural disaster and implement preventive measures as much as possible, including by informing the population, which would curtail the casualties.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Ministry of Health Announces Comprehensive Financing for All Cancer Patients

According to the Ministry of Health, the treatment of all cancer patients in the country will be financed.

According to the Ministry of Health, hormone therapy, chemotherapy, radiation therapy and medicines will be financed for all cancer patients throughout the country. According to the Ministry, the treatment of oncological diseases within the annual limit of 25,000 GEL will be equally accessible to all beneficiaries, regardless of income, through the universal healthcare program.

Accordingly, the financing will also apply to those patients whose

annual income is more than 40,000 GEL - before the change, these services were not financed for them. The mentioned treatments will also be financed for the insured veterans.

According to the agency, the government of Georgia has already approved the change.

"We think that this change will significantly improve and equalize access to cancer treatments - chemotherapy, radiation therapy, hormone therapy and those that are the most effective and recommended by modern guidelines," said the Deputy Minister of Health, Tamar Gabunia.



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6147; Euro - 2.8709; GBP - 3.3314; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.6900; Swiss Franc - 2.9841

Georgian Dream Faces Challenges with EU Membership Recommendations: Uncertain Path Forward

By MALKHAZ MATSABERIZE

The task of meeting the 12 recommendations required to attain EU membership candidate status has posed a challenge for the Georgian authorities. One year after receiving these recommendations, the Georgian Dream party acknowledges that certain recommendations are unclear and require further clarification.

Recently, the Georgian Dream confidently announced that almost all of the recommendations given for obtaining candidate status for EU membership have been fulfilled. For example, on May 30, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili, during his speech in the Parliament of Georgia, stated that 11 of the 12 recommendations of the European Commission have already been implemented, and only one recommendation - reduction of polarization - cannot be implemented, as he said, because of the "irresponsible opposition."

The European Commission's assessment of the situation is different. In the interim report published in June, it is noted that Georgia has fully implemented only three of the 12 recommendations: 1. Recommendation related to gender equality, fight against violence against women 2. Appointment of a public defender and 3. Pro-active consideration of the decisions of the European Court of Human

Rights during consideration by Georgian courts. In addition, according to the European Commissioner's assessment, Georgia has made partial progress in fulfilling 7 recommendations. Two more recommendations are unfulfilled.

After the assessment made by the European Commission, the Georgian Dream no longer talks about the "11 implemented recommendations." According to Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of the Georgian Dream, everything that could be done by the end of June was done, and the three recommendations are unclear as to what the European Union requires and 'more specifics' are needed from the EU side. In particular, the Georgian authorities consider it unclear what is meant by the demand for court reform and what is meant by de-oligarchization. "When they tell us that de-oligarchization is necessary, they should specify who the oligarchs are. We are interested in what the European Union thinks," said Kobakhidze.

One of the European parliamentarians specified earlier that de-oligarchization means freeing the government from the influence of Bidzina Ivanishvili and explained that 'de-oligarchization' means 'debidzination'. Such an explanation is categorically unacceptable for the ruling Georgian Dream. The representatives of

the ruling party claim that Bidzina Ivanishvili is only a patron and in no case falls under the law of de-oligarchization, which was prepared according to the Ukrainian model and was rejected by the Venice Commission.

Such an explanation is categorically unacceptable for the ruling Georgian Dream. The government representatives claim that Bidzina Ivanishvili is only a patron and in no case falls under the law of de-oligarchization, which was prepared according to the Ukrainian model and was rejected by the Venice Commission.

What Kobakhidze says about "not understanding the direction for de-oligarchization" essentially means the following - the European Commission will either remove the demand for de-oligarchization altogether, or they will implement a law developed according to the Ukrainian model and start looking for oligarchs behind unwanted opposition parties, and this will happen before the upcoming elections.

The situation with regard to judicial reform is similar. The essence of the court reform is to have a court that is actually independent of the government, otherwise, Stalin also claimed that the court is independent and no one interferes in its decisions. The EU request will probably be reduced to the staffing of the

Council of Justice.

The statement about "unclear recommendations" made one year after the adoption of the recommendations of the European Commission is strange. It is not yet known what the EU's response will be, or if there will be one at all. In fact, as experts point out, there is nothing incomprehensible in the recommendations of the European Union and, most importantly, if there is a corresponding political will, they can be implemented in a short time.

For example, the implementation of the recommendation on depolarization will actually be ensured by the restoration of the agreement reached between the government and the opposition, brokered by Charles Michel. Implementation of 12 recommendations of the European Union in the remaining time until October is quite possible, but their implementation essentially means the end of the Georgian Dream's ruling. That is why the actual implementation of recommendations is delayed and we see partial implementation and imitation of implementation.

Despite the unfulfilled recommendations, some of the experts and politicians still hope that taking into account the geopolitical situation, Georgia will still be given candidate status, subject to certain conditions and a list of recommendations to be

implemented, to which the demand for the 2024 parliamentary elections to be held democratically and fairly can be added.

The Georgian Dream is ready both to be rejected by the European Union and to receive the status of a candidate and will use both scenarios for electoral purposes. In case of refusal, they will talk about the "injustice of the West", which oppresses Georgia for "maintaining peace" and "not opening a second front" to Russia. The Anti-Western rhetoric will intensify, further distancing the country from the West.

If Georgia does receive the status, the government will speak about their achievements, the 'injustice' shown earlier by the West, continuing the anti-Western policy, given that they have been making it work in their favor.

Determining the preferable outcome for the opposition is a complex task. The scenario where Georgia achieves the status seems more favorable, as it would necessitate the Georgian government being accountable to the West. This accountability would extend to aspects like the conduct of the impending parliamentary elections. The outcome of the 2024 parliamentary elections holds significant weight in this matter.

EBRD invests US\$25 million in sustainability-linked bond in Georgia

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is continuing to support capital market development in Georgia by participating in the first sustainability-linked bond (SLB) in the Caucasus. The Bank is investing US\$25 million in Georgia Capital's (GCAP) US\$150 million corporate bond, which is also the country's largest ever corporate offering.

GCAP will primarily use the proceeds to refinance its existing Eurobonds, to enhance the robustness of its capital management and to boost its investment capabilities. As set out in the



underlying SLB framework, the issue is also in line with GCAP's net-zero ambitions; the company has committed to reducing CO2 emissions across its businesses by 20 per cent by end 2027.

The EBRD has a long-standing relationship with GCAP and has engaged with it and its subsidiaries on a number of occasions. GCAP is a holding company for a diversified group of businesses operating in sectors including healthcare services, retail pharmacies, insurance and renewable energy.

The EBRD has invested almost 5 billion in Georgia to date through 286 projects, with 82 per cent of those in the private sector. The Bank's key areas of investment include the financial sector, sustainable infrastructure and small and medium-sized enterprises.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, August 10

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 38°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 24°C

Friday, August 11

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 38°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 24°C

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