

Georgia's President Discusses Impeachment and Candidate Status with Opposition

By MESSENGER STAFF

The President of Georgia Salome Zourabishvili has been meeting with the representatives of the opposition in the Orbelian Palace.

After the meeting with the president, the leader of the Citizens party, deputy Aleko Elisashvili, said that Zourabishvili does not rule out her impeachment.

"Of course, we talked about the expected impeachment of the president. I would like to tell you that the president herself does not rule it out and considers it absolutely realistic that it might happen. She has clearly thought about what to do next and it was nice to hear it. She has a fairly systematic vision of what to do in case of impeachment," said the politician.

"Even if they torture me, I will still not support impeachment, but based on my experience, I am sure that Fridon Injia will support it, and if anyone does, it will be the National Movement."

Ana Tsitlidze, a member of the United National Movement - Strength in Unity faction, said after meeting with Zourabishvili that the president is not worried about the issue of impeachment. According to Tsitlidze, the National Movement will not support the impeachment of Salome Zurabishvili.

"First of all, the conversation with the president was about the status of the candidate, this is



the first and most important issue that worries the president of Georgia more than impeachment (which was revealed in the

conversation). "I can say one thing - our position on impeachment is this: we do not support it. Moreover,

to ensure the issue of impeachment, we can do something very simple - when the issue of impeachment is put on the voting

agenda, no member of the opposition should enter the session hall and thus exclude all speculations," Tsitlidze stated.

Case of Formula TV Company Owner's Assault Closed by Special Investigation Service

By MESSENGER STAFF

The Special Investigation Service announced the case of Misha Mshvildadze, one of the owners of Formula TV Company, as closed.

Mshvildadze's lawyer Eduard Marikashvili says that the SIS ended the investigation with no result, adding that the victim was not shown the fundamentally important footage for the case, the investigation also did not take into account the evidence that the media obtained as part of the journalistic investigation. Mshvildadze may continue the dispute in the Strasbourg court.

Msvildadze himself notes that the involvement of the State Security Service in the case was established within the framework of the journalistic investigation, but despite this, the investigation was still not con-

ducted properly.

Other government agencies cooperating with the investigation were very selective in trying to obtain evidence during this time - that is, they had to obtain everything except what was important. It seemed that they would find something, but none of the cameras showed the time or the car.

"The fact that the State Security Service was involved in this case was so clear, they were seen walking on the tapes. All the structures are lying right now. Unfortunately, what was easily predicted in autocratic rule, happened," said Mshvildadze.

Misha Mshvildadze, one of the founders of Formula TV, was attacked and physically assaulted by an unknown person on June 27. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is conducting an investigation under Article 126 of the Criminal Code, which refers to violence.

On July 5, Formula published a piece, stating that Giorgi Mumladze, an investigator of the State Security Service, was one of the organizers of the attack on Mshvildadze.



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6238; Euro - 2.8109; GBP - 3.2706; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.7690; Swiss Franc - 2.9405

Impeachment Unveiled: Georgia's Political Turmoil Amid Western Diplomacy

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

For the first time in the history of Georgia, the ruling political force Georgian Dream has started the process of impeachment of President Salome Zourabishvili, accusing her of violating the constitution, although the representatives of the ruling power themselves admit that they will not be able to achieve this goal.

Now experts and politicians are trying to find out why the Georgian Dream took this step and what political consequences the started process will have.

The Georgian Dream, after collecting more than 50 signatures required for impeachment, will challenge the decision of the Constitutional Court on whether the Constitution has been violated or not. Constitutionalists and politicians could not agree on who violated the Constitution. According to Article 51, Clause 'A' of the Constitution of Georgia, the President can make official visits and make agreements only with the permission of the Government, and the Government did not give the President the right to travel to EU countries. Zourabishvili's team's answer to this is simple - Salome Zourabishvili is on a private visit to EU countries, and the government's permission is not required for this.

According to Article 78 of the Constitution, the governmental structures of Georgia are obliged to do everything for the integration of Georgia into the Euro-Atlantic structures. The purpose of Salome Zourabishvili's European tour was to lobby for granting Georgia a candidate for EU membership. That is, Salome Zourabishvili acted in accordance with Article 78 of the Constitution.

The explanation of the leaders of the Georgian Dream is also interesting. On the question of why they didn't allow Zourabishvili to go on an official visit to the EU countries, they claim the goal of the President of Georgia was to prevent Georgia from getting candidate status.

This is how they explained

their actions to the citizens of Georgia, but how convincing it is for Georgia's Western partners, whom Zourabishvili is talking to, is another matter. On the contrary, after the Russian attack on Ukraine, the leaders of the ruling team made various anti-Western statements, unlike Salome Zourabishvili. Therefore, in the West, Salome Zourabishvili is a more acceptable representative of the Georgian government than the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Parliament, or any party leader of the Georgian Dream party.

Moreover, unlike all these people, Salome Zourabishvili has a high degree of legitimacy, because she was elected by popular vote.

The open conflict between the representatives of the government reminded everyone of the 2018 presidential elections when Bidzina Ivanishvili and the leaders of Georgian Dream personally did everything to elect Zourabishvili as the president. Prior to the second round, Zourabishvili's billboards already featured Bidzina

Ivanishvili and the ruling party team who have started the process of the president's impeachment.

Disagreement between the president and Georgian Dream emerged after the start of the war in Ukraine. The president has made and continues to make statements in support of Ukraine, he has never criticized Western partners, and in the current government of Georgia, she is the only one who embodies the orientation towards the West, which is also declared by the country's constitution.

The part of the opposition, that remembers Salome Zourabishvili's earlier pro-Russian statements, for example, about how "Georgia started the 2008 war", still does not believe in her oppositionist appearances.

Zourabishvili never criticized Bidzina Ivanishvili after his switching to behind-the-scenes. That's why they believe that the president's pro-Western statements are approved by Ivanishvili and that their purpose is to prevent the Georgian billionaire from possible sanctions from the West.

However, in Georgian politics, they do not like to be reminded of the past. What holds significance is the present persona of the politician. Today, Salome Zourabishvili enjoys great authority in the West, and the discussion on the impeachment of the Georgian Dream increased her support.

Before the parliamentary elections of 2024, the Georgian pro-Western opposition may welcome a unifying leader, who can hardly be blamed by anyone for their connection with the United National Movement.

Saakashvili's party has a solid electorate in the pro-Western part of society, but, as noted, Saakashvili and his party are not acceptable to the entire pro-Western segment, which constitutes a large majority of the electorate.

Today, many are discussing whether the Georgian Dream will be able to bring the impeachment process to an end. 100 votes are needed in the parliament to remove the president from office. The Georgian Dream together with its open allies col-

lects 84 votes. They might have to try for 16 votes in the opposition part of the parliament. The Georgian Dream claims that it does not intend to do this, but past experience shows that the Georgian Dream can make a deal with the opposition, and they do not rule out this possibility.

For the first time in the German media appeared the version that the United National Movement is asking Zourabishvili to pardon Saakashvili, in exchange for not supporting her impeachment. The United National Movement rejects such trade with Zourabishvili while reiterating that President Saakashvili must be pardoned. Zourabishvili has stated several times that she would never do this.

The further development of events will significantly depend on whether Georgia receives the candidate status or not. Receiving this status, according to a number of experts, will actually allow the Georgian Dream to declare it as an achievement and use it for election purposes.

In case the country isn't granted the candidate status, the government will blame the opposition and the West, explaining that Georgia refused to open a 'second front' and will continue to move towards Russia and China more actively.

XV საერთაშორისო ფესტივალი XV INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

ღამის სერენადები NIGHT SERENADES

AUGUST 22, BORJOMI
Hotel BORJOMI LIKANI **19:00**

AUGUST 24-25, BATUMI
Iliia Chavchavadze Professional State DRAMA THEATER

SEPTEMBER 22-23-24, TBILISI
Tbilisi State CONSERVATOIRE, GRAND HALL **20:00**

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Weather

Wednesday, September 13

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 23°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 12°C

Thursday, September 14

Day Clear

High: 24°C

Night Clear

Low: 13°C

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