

Georgian Dream Opts Not to Support PACE Resolution Calling for Putin's Illegitimacy Recognition

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has called on European countries to recognize Russian President Vladimir Putin as illegitimate if he remains in power after the 2024 elections. PACE adopted a corresponding resolution in which it recommends that Europe should cease all relations with Russia, except for humanitarian ones.

The resolution from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe highlights that the attack on Ukraine and internal repressions provide them with reasons to conclude that the power of the Russian president is absolute and uncontrolled.

The Georgian Dream government did not join the resolution adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of Europe.

Irakli Chikovani, the head of the Georgian Dream delegation to PACE, explained that he and his team had other higher-priority matters, which is why they were unable to attend the session in Strasbourg.

"We had various commitments, including the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the Polish elections, where our representatives are currently engaged. I also had other obligations here. I'm not going



to debate our priorities with you," said Irakli Chikovani.

When asked whether Russia is a dictatorship, Chikovani said that Russia

"has problems related to the full functioning of democracy."

Bulgarian National Assembly Adopts Resolution in Support of Granting Candidate Status to Georgia



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted a resolution supporting

the granting of candidate status to Georgia during the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Iliia Darchiashvili, to Sofia.

According to the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs, the declaration was initiated by two former prime ministers and was supported by both parties in the coalition.

"The declaration firmly supports the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia, which is based on the historical choice of the Georgian people and which will be an additional guarantee of the country's security. The document states that broad public support for Georgia's geopolitical choices makes the country's European integration an alternative.

In addition, the declaration condemns the occupation of Georgian territories by Russia.

In the document, the Bulgarian side once again expresses its unwavering support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia and emphasizes the role of Georgia as an important partner country in the South Caucasus and the Black Sea region.

The declaration mentions that Bulgaria attaches special importance to stable and successful neighbors, especially given the current security environment in the Black Sea region.

At the same time, Bulgaria expresses its readiness to support Georgia in the way of the implementation of democratic reforms," the statement reads.

Maria Gabriel, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria acknowledged the significant progress that Georgia has made in its efforts to integrate into the European Union and stated that she expects that this progress would be recognized in the European Commission's upcoming report.

Furthermore, she emphasized the importance of maintaining open and intensive dialogue and of sharing Bulgaria's stance with other European Union member states concerning Georgia's European perspective:

"I would like to confirm the decision made by the European Union in June 2022 regarding granting a European perspective to Georgia. Georgia has made significant progress on the path of integration into the European Union. We expect that this progress will soon be reflected in the European Commission's report. It is important to maintain the level of intensive dialogue and share Bulgaria's position with other EU member states regarding Georgia's European perspective," stated Maria Gabriel.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6984; Euro - 2.8393; GBP - 3.2872; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.7741; Swiss Franc - 2.9731

Georgia's Political Tensions Escalate Amid Ongoing Disputes

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

Last month, the State Security Service of Georgia issued a statement that certain forces inside and outside the country would try to destabilize Georgia in October-December of this year. Some considered this as an attempt to cover up other heated topics of discussion.

October-December 2023, mentioned in the statement of the Council of Europe, is a critical period as Georgia is to receive an answer from the European Union regarding the acceptance of the status of a candidate for membership. For this, the European Union asks the Georgian authorities to fulfill 12 requirements. The Georgian government claims that it has actually fulfilled all the conditions, while the European Union considers only three requirements fulfilled. Therefore, there is a high probability that the government of the Georgian Dream will not be granted the status of a candidate, which will result in dissatisfaction and protest in the society.

The statement of SSS is designed for this kind of development of events and announces a possible protest "as an attempt to organize a revolution" by the radical opposition in advance. According to the statement,

some groups operating inside the country will try to overthrow the government, but they benefit from "the coordination and support of foreign countries."

Among these foreign countries are Ukraine and those Georgians fighting against Russia including Giorgi Lortkipanidze, the deputy head of the military intelligence of Ukraine, Mikheil Baturin, a former member of Saakashvili's bodyguard in Ukraine, and Mamuka Mamulashvili, the commander of the Georgian Legion operating in Ukraine, who were named as the "coup organizers".

According to the announcement, Georgia is planning to implement a scenario similar to the Euromaidan held in Ukraine in 2014. A "tent city" will be erected near central avenues and strategic objects, government buildings will be tried to be occupied, explosive devices will be placed in a pre-selected tent, the explosion of which will be used to incite anti-government protests, as per the SSS statement. On the one hand, the said statement is an accusation against the "radical opposition" if it calls on citizens to protest actions, and on the other hand, it is an intimidation of citizens to make sure they refrain from

participating in protests.

If Georgia does not receive the status of a candidate for EU membership, the Georgian Dream has prepared a version that the Global War Party "treats the Georgian authorities unfairly" and punishes them for not opening a "second front" to Russia.

The self-defense plan has been prepared by the government long in advance and is being spread along with permanent anti-Western propaganda. However, the propaganda has not worked since a large majority of the population of Georgia still supports Georgia's accession to European structures. That is why the current government of Georgia is careful and tries to blame the possible refusal on "evil forces" inside and outside the country. How convincing this will be for the public is another matter.

The Georgian Dream immediately picked up on the statement of SSS and made relevant statements. According to the Speaker of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, "These are the results of the investigation, which is based on relevant evidence." However, no evidence has been presented and therefore it is expected that some records will be released by the SSS.

The representatives of the opposition considered the statement of the SSS as a weak attempt to cover up the existing scandals, which all the post-Soviet authorities of Georgia applied to, and, in the end, did not bring the desired results for the authorities.

A lot has happened recently that could lead to sparking the protest movement. There were noisy scandals in which high-ranking officials of the government appeared, overshadowed by the scandal of Partskhaladze, who was included in the list of persons sanctioned by the USA as a "Russian-Georgian oligarch" and a person connected to the Russian "FSB". About ten years ago, Partskhaladze was also the general prosecutor for a while, he gained wealth promptly and as a person close to Bidzina Ivanishvili, he enjoyed great influence on the Georgian Dream government. It was also found out that this person received Russian citizenship about a year ago.

The Georgian Dream first separated from sanctioned Partskhaladze, but then started to protect him and tried to avoid sanctions as a "citizen of Georgia", thereby putting the country's banking system at risk of collapse. The protest was soon followed by the deprivation of Georgian citizenship for

Partskhaladze, but it was preceded by a physical confrontation in the parliament between the representatives of the government and the opposition.

The opposition demanded that the SSS expose the many Russian agents hiding in the government instead of a mythical conspiracy. However, according to their own statement, the SSS itself is full of Russian agents. According to the head of the United National Movement Levan Khabeishvili, "In order to save Partskhaladze, Russian spies were put into action and confirmed that the State Security Service is also under the influence of Russian Facebook... The statement of the Security Council on the coup d'état is proof of Russian influence in state institutions."

One of the 12 recommendations of the European Union, "overcoming polarization", has not been resolved but increased. For the opposition, the current government is not simply "pro-Russian", but is considered controlled by the Russian security forces, and the opposition has long declared the current government to be an agent of the "Global War Party". There is a concern that the 2024 parliamentary elections in Georgia may not unfold in a peaceful manner.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

State Security Service Confirms Release of Georgian Citizen Illegally Detained in Russian-Occupied Tskhinvali

The State Security Service stated that Archil Basanidze, who was illegally detained near Russian-occupied Tskhinvali, is now free and on the territory controlled by the Georgian government.

"For the immediate release of Archil Basanidze, the central government actively employed both the 'hotline' mechanism and all available tools.



The Russian Federation bears responsibility for all destructive actions conducted in the occupied regions of Georgia and along the occupation line," the State Security Service stated.

According to the Security Service, the Georgian government, along with international partners, actively works to secure the release of all illegally imprisoned Georgian citizens in the Russian-occupied territories.

Russian President Vladimir Putin Says Georgia-Russia Relationship Is Currently 'Peaceful'

Russian President Vladimir Putin, responding to media inquiries after the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) summit in Bishkek, stated that the relationship between Georgia and Russia is currently 'peace-

ful', and Georgia shows a strong interest in collaborating with its neighboring countries.

The journalist inquired about the future of the CIS, given that Georgia has left the organization, Ukraine is not cooperating, Moldova is in the process of withdrawing, and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan was absent from the last meeting.

"As for Georgia, you know that all this happened after the provocation of the former leadership of Georgia towards South Ossetia. This was followed by events, about which it is probably out of place to talk now, but

it led to the deterioration of relations with the CIS. It is not clear what the CIS has to do with it. In my opinion, they themselves are to blame, although it is their choice. However, our relations with Georgia are currently peaceful. They also have a strong interest in cooperating with their neighbors. It is difficult to imagine, but perhaps everything can be imagined. Despite this, within the framework of good-neighborly relations, they have more economic benefits than outside of these boundaries, that's all," stated Vladimir Putin.



Weather

Monday, October 16

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 21°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 14°C

Tuesday, October 17

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 17°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 9°C

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On the occasion of celebrate the Spanish National Day, the Chargé d’Affairs of Spain to Georgia, Mr. Marcos Granados Gómez, held a Reception on October 12.







