

Mamuka Khazaradze Announces Lelo Party's Establishment of Strategic Partnership with Nika Melia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Mamuka Khazaradze, the leader of the Lelo party, has stated that the party is prepared to establish a strategic partnership with Nika Melia and is ready to 'fight' alongside him. According to Khazaradze, Melia is committed to ending the era of a 'single-ruled, oligarchic, stolen state' in the country.

As stated by Khazaradze on the 'Palitranevs' program, the goal is for the Georgian people to unequivocally reject old politics and politicians once and for all.

"With Nika Melia, we have the comfort of fighting together. Why? Because Nika Melia is fighting to end the era of a single-ruled, oligarchic, and stolen state in this country. This is the 'middle,' no matter what name we call it. The task is for the Georgian people to reject old politics once and for all. It may be an old policy, but it should not be discarded. We have dirty politics and politicians, including some old ones too.

By 'old politics' I mean that this country has been ruled by one party for 30 years, under different names but with the same vertical structure. As long as this vertical structure remains unbroken, the democratic institutions in this country cannot be freed from the pressure that the Georgian Dream exerted, just as the National Movement did during the previous government. Therefore, strategic partnership signifies main-



taining this status quo," Khazaradze said.

When asked if Nika Melia will be on Lelo's list, Khazaradze responded that Lelo will establish a strategic partnership with Melia. He also mentioned that there is a possibility of uniting with Nika Melia's party before the elections and presenting it under a new name.

"As far as I know, Nika Melia is founding his own party, and I want to wish him success. It will be a single strategic partnership where we will agree on basic and important issues for the country. The opposition voter will see that there are two parties — Nika Melia's party and 'Lelo' on the other side — agreeing on the management of the country and

the composition of the government. Subsequently, a decision will be made on whether Nika Melia and 'Lelo' will participate in the elections separately or not. If we find that forming a union is necessary and contemplate a new name, that's a theoretical aspect for now, but discussing it today... I want to emphasize that our visions do align.

We aim for the end of this type of government in our country, aspiring for integration into European structures. This necessitates a new government, reforms, fresh ideas, and new individuals. It is premature to delve into details today, but we will affirm our sympathies and partnerships in due course," Khazaradze said.

Tbilisi City Council Faces Criticism for Supporting Multifunctional Center Project near Heroes' Square

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Tbilisi City Council has supported the project for a multifunctional center to be built near Heroes' Square. The council approved the development regulation plan; however, the opposition did not lend their support to the project.

In their political statements, the opposition voiced criticism against the large-scale construction in the Vere Valley and made allegations of connections between Ivanishvili's interests and Russian involvement in the project.

The presented project has also garnered criticism from specialists. The Urban Studies Center published a document on December 12, stating that the risks

associated with the project have not been adequately investigated. According to the document, the planned development contradicts the principles of sustainable development, the Law of Georgia on cultural heritage, and the objectives outlined in the capital's land-use master plan and transport policy.

As stated in the document, the proposed development is poised to fundamentally change the spatial-planning structure of Tbilisi's historic district. It jeopardizes the potential integration of open and recreational spaces in the Vere Gorge and the Mtkvari river bank, and it is expected to have a negative impact on the traffic situation.

Konstantine Zarnadze, a member of the Tbilisi City Council

from the 'Georgian Dream' party, has responded to the criticism surrounding the 'Laguna Vere' project. According to him, after observing the 'hysteria' from the opposition, he is even more convinced that the 'Laguna Vere' project stands out as one of the most crucial and fitting initiatives to be implemented in the capital.

"As part of the 'Laguna Vere' project, there are plans for the construction of a multi-storied, multi-functional complex, accompanied by the preservation and restoration of the historic silk factory building. A key requirement outlined in the development regulation plan is the restoration of the swimming complex," Zarnadze stated.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6930; Euro - 2.9960; GBP - 3.4460; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9759; Swiss Franc - 2.2167

Tbilisi City Council Faces Criticism for Supporting Multifunctional Center Project near Heroes' Square

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The city council member also emphasized that, with respect

to safety norms and measures, the contractor must submit all necessary research documents to obtain permission to commence

construction during the design phase.

“After the approval of the construction regulation plan, the

company will need to undertake several architectural works, which must be coordinated with the municipality. Only after

completing these steps will the company be eligible to obtain a construction permit,” Zarnadze said.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

French Ambassador Sheraz Gasri Condemns Actions Undermining Georgia's Territorial Integrity

← Post



Sheraz Gasri @Sherzag

France supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. Any decision undermining the territorial integrity of Georgia, such as the attempt to transfer land in Abkhazia to Russia, is illegal, null and void.

The French Ambassador to Georgia, Sheraz Gasri, has criticized and condemned actions that undermine Georgia's territorial integrity. This comes in response to the de facto government of Abkhazia, which ratified an agreement to transfer land in Abkhazia to Russia.

Gasri expressed France's support for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, emphasizing the importance of respecting internationally recognized borders and declared such actions as "illegal, null, and void".

"France supports the territorial integ-

ity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. Any decision undermining the territorial integrity of Georgia, such as the attempt to transfer land in Abkhazia to Russia, is illegal, null and void," Gasri wrote on X.

CEC Chairman Meets with USAID Mission Director and US Embassy Counselor

The Chairman of the Central Election Commission, Giorgi Kalandarishvili, and Deputy Chairman Giorgi Sharabidze met with John A. Pennell, the Mission Director of USAID, and Marc Nordberg, Counselor at the US Embassy.

According to CEC reports, the primary focus of the meeting was the preparation for the 2024 parliamentary elections and

the introduction of electronic technologies in the electoral process.

Giorgi Kalandarishvili spoke about the activities conducted in the direction of modernizing elections in 2023, including the projects implemented in cooperation with USAID. He emphasized that the joint projects and cooperation with USAID hold special importance and acknowledged their crucial support.

ers, existing challenges, and identified needs.

The discussions also revolved around the successful visit of the CEC delegation to the United States of America and its outcomes aimed at enhancing cooperation with international partners. Concluding the session, the parties delved into future cooperation plans and addressed important matters crucial to the successful



Alongside the ongoing activities of the election administration, the meeting addressed issues related to informing vot-

administration of the 2024 elections at a high professional level.

Ukrainian universities win over 2,400 new International Mobility projects with EU's Erasmus+ programme

Ukraine has the biggest number of Erasmus+ mobility projects among 144 partner countries all over the world.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, which manages Erasmus+, has released information about the 2023 winners of Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Actions.



Out of 35,225 mobility projects selected for funding within the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Action, 2,425 projects will be implemented in cooperation with Ukrainian organisations.

This includes 1,140 mobilities for Ukrainian staff to the EU and 273 mobilities from the EU to Ukraine, and 2,423 mobilities for Ukrainian students to the EU with 89 from the

EU to Ukraine.

International Credit Mobility Actions provide opportunities for higher education institutions to send students and staff abroad (in other Programme countries or other Partner countries) to study, teach, or train at participating institutions.

The 238 selected partners from Ukraine represent higher education institutions, research institutions, private organisations and NGOs from different regions of the country, including those internally displaced.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Friday, December 29

Day ☀ Clear
High: 8°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 0°C

Saturday, December 30

Day ☀ Clear
High: 11°C

Night ☁ Partly Cloudy
Low: 1°C

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