

Irakli Gharibashvili to Take Over as Chairman of Georgian Dream After Resigning as Prime Minister

By Liza Mchedlidze

Irakli Gharibashvili has resigned from the post of Prime Minister and will now serve as the chairman of the Georgian Dream party; he announced the decision at a briefing at the administration of the Government of Georgia.

"I assumed the role of Prime Minister for a second term during one of the most challenging periods, marked by domestic and international political, economic, and social crises. I wholeheartedly dedicated myself to serving our country, unwaveringly defending its interests. I take pride in the results we achieved together with my team.

I have had the privilege of holding this esteemed position twice with the Georgian Dream team. In total, I served as the Prime Minister for five years, making it the longest tenure.

One of the main factors of the strength of our political team is internal democracy, the most obvious manifestation of which is the principle of rotation. We have many successful leaders in the team, and it's important to provide others with opportunities, especially considering the new tasks ahead, such as the upcoming election of a new parliament in the fall.

Georgian Dream should prepare to secure a convincing victory in the elections to continue advancing towards other, bigger goals," Gharibashvili stated.

Irakli Gharibashvili mentioned that the Political Council considered the option of him remaining in the role of Prime Minister until the summer, before the start of the election campaign, but he declined.

"It is crucial for the next prime minister to introduce their team promptly and establish a new government. I extend my best wishes for success to the new prime minister," Gharibashvili said.



The prime minister's authority will cease upon resignation, and the government will continue to perform its duties until a new prime minister is appointed.

The parliament must approve the new government proposed by the Prime Minister candidate nominated by the Georgian Dream within 2 weeks. The government program, along with the composition of the

government, will be presented to the parliament. To secure a vote of confidence, the support of a majority in the full composition of the Parliament is required—specifically, the endorsement of 76 MPs.

The election of Irakli Gharibashvili as the chairman of the Georgian Dream party is scheduled for February 1.

Mamuka Mdinardze, the executive

secretary of Georgian Dream, has confirmed that the candidacy of Irakli Kobakhidze for the post of Prime Minister is under consideration. Currently, Kobakhidze serves as the chairman of the Georgian Dream party.

Mdinardze mentioned that Irakli Gharibashvili's resignation was his own decision.

Leaders of Lelo and UNM Address Irakli Gharibashvili's Resignation

By Liza Mchedlidze

After Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili announced his resignation, Mamuka Khazaradze, opposition leader of the Lelo party, responded by stat-

ing that no matter who Bidzina appoints as Prime Minister, they will not be able to save the 'sunken ship' of the Georgian Dream government.

According to Khazaradze, Gharibashvili should sit on the

defendant's bench, not as the chairman of the party, due to 'corrupt deals'.

"Bidzina has proven to be the main figure in corruption, nepotism, and failed management. He's been making decisions both

in the past and currently. Dream knows its days are numbered. Society demands real changes. The Georgian people will soon let go of a government serving Russian interests. Lelo serves Georgia. 39 weeks left until victory!" Khazaradze stated.

Governmental changes, according to the chairman of the United National Movement, Levan Khabeishvili, are not connected to the well-being of citizens but rather to the influence of Bidzina Ivanishvili.

"Government changes are not linked to the well-being of our citizens. Clearly, this is not related to the expectation that prices will decrease starting tomorrow; this won't resolve the issue of price increases. Obviously, the problem of jobs will not be solved.

Obviously, it will not address the issue of people not having a decent income. Of course, these changes will not bring relief to

immigrants, and hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens will not return to the country simply because some concrete movement has occurred in the Georgian Dream," Khabeishvili said.

According to Khabeishvili, the current government does not serve the people; instead, they are motivated to enrich Bidzina Ivanishvili, enrich themselves, and build new houses and villas, rather than prioritizing service to the people.

"Hence, this year presents an opportunity for our citizens. The specific decisions made are tied to the serious problems they face. If challenges arise, we must leverage them for the benefit of our people, aiming for a future with decent income, a robust economy, and job opportunities.

Our emigrants should also have the opportunity to return to their families, work in Georgia, and support their families that way," Khabeishvili stated.



მამუკა ხაზარაძე Mamuka Khazaradze
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The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Republican Hospital Doctors to File Lawsuit Against Government's Decree for Reorganization and Demolition



The doctors of the Central Republican Hospital are planning to file a lawsuit in the city court, seeking the annulment of the government's decree for the reorganization and demolition of the hospital.

Doctors are collecting signatures, asserting that the government's order/decree on reorganization amounts to mass dismissal of doctors and should be canceled.

"We will not discuss compensation; the reorganization should be stopped. While we are not op-

posed to the construction of a new building and the renovation of the clinic, using ultimatums and blackmail is unacceptable to us. Our request is to suspend the order," the doctors stated.

The doctors claim that the

Cartu Foundation had planned years ago to rehabilitate the hospital without demolishing the existing building. They assert that the foundation intended to construct a new clinic in the yard of the Republican Hospital.

In response to this statement by the doctors, the Cartu Foundation issued a response:

"Within the scope of the conducted research, we uncovered the unfavorable condition of the existing building and identified structural defects. The old building presented multiple problems that couldn't be eliminated by maintaining its current state. It did not meet modern medical standards qualitatively. Consequently, the need for new buildings was identified," the statement reads.

Chairman Shalva Papuashvili Delivers a Speech at Event Commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day

The Chairman of the Georgian Parliament, Shalva



Papuashvili, delivered a speech at an event commemorating Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Papuashvili underscored that it is the responsibility of each individual and the global community to remember the atrocities of the Holocaust. According to him, the Holocaust serves as a crucial warning about the consequences of hatred and discrimination.

"We need to create a society

where diversity is not only allowed but also welcomed. Education stands as the most powerful tool in preventing Holocaust-related crimes. Raising awareness about the Holocaust will contribute to the development of a generation based on mutual understanding, unity, and compassion—a generation that will spare no effort to protect human rights," stated Papuashvili.

Speeding Toward Safety: How To Lower Road Travel Speed and Save Lives



Managing traffic speed is critical to lower fatalities on roads in Asia and the Pacific. Photo: ADB

BY RITU MISHRA AND SOAMES JOB

Managing travel speeds on the roads of the Asia and the Pacific will save lives and avoid economically costly, often debilitating, injuries. Recent studies show that each 1% drop in average speed will deliver a 4% decrease in

crash deaths and 3.5% fewer casualties.

This could help lower the staggering annual toll of 1.19 million lives lost to road traffic accidents worldwide. In Asia and the Pacific, more than 2,000 people lose their lives in road crashes every day and many more sustain serious life-changing injuries, according to Asian Development Bank estimates.

Policies designed to reduce road travel speeds are usually focused on education and enforcement. To bring about sustained change, road design and features as well as ve-

hicle technology are also important.

Here are some of the most effective ways that policymakers can use to lower road traffic speeds in their countries:

Enforcement and behavior change. Enforcement can be effective if drivers believe that they will be caught for speeding and believe that they cannot avoid the penalty. Three proven enhancements increase these beliefs and reduce speeding (driving at speeds above the speed limit).

First, the use of speed cameras, including mobile speed cameras, if the country is ready for them, enhances the driver's belief that the penalty cannot be avoided. The introduction of speed cameras should be prominently publicized to the community weeks before they are deployed.

Second, public education and campaign messages should focus on the risk of being caught for speeding and the significant penalties, not on crash risk.

Third, minimal 'enforcement tolerance' should be adopted, so that drivers are penalized for speeding at 3 km/h or 4 km/h above the limit, rather than setting the tolerance at 8 km/h or even 10 km/h above the limit. This change should also be strongly publicized weeks in advance of implementing it. Given that these changes might be unexpected for many, it is important to clearly communicate the supporting evidence and the psychological rationale behind these adjustments.

Road design and speed-manag-

ing infrastructure. Many road design features are proven to manage speed, including speed humps or bumps, chicanes, raised platform crossings, lane narrowing, gateway treatments, and well-designed roundabouts. These are all shown to reduce speeds and reduce numbers of serious crashes.

Lower speed limits are also needed, as reflected in global trends to best practice with urban speed limits being lowered in many countries from 50 km/h or 60 km/h to 40 km/h and now 30km/h and even 20km/h in areas with pedestrians. Asia-Pacific countries are making increasing use of 30km/h speed limits, though much wider application is urgently needed.

Speed-managing infrastructure such as speed bumps, roundabouts or traffic circles are more powerful and sustainable than enforcement. Such traffic calming measures are more effective in reducing speeds than relying on drivers to believe they will be caught and to slow down. Traffic calming interventions work all day, every day and cannot be avoided or disputed by the driver, giving them a direct role without relying on a compliant driver.

Vehicle technology. Speed managing vehicle technology is becoming more common, with the increasing availability of GPS (Global Positioning System) in vehicles which can let drivers know the speed limits at its current location.

This can take various forms: speed governing which prevents a vehicle from exceeding a particular maximum speed; GPS-based

speed limiting to the actual speed limit; and GPS-based warnings to the driver when exceeding the limit. Technologies that limit speeds, rather than just warn the driver, are the most powerful.

Reducing speed through modal shifts and city planning. Speeds can also be reduced through sound city planning policies combined with incentivizing shifts to transport modes other than personal vehicles. Opportunities include focusing development of commercial areas around public transport nodes, bus rapid transit systems replacing some lanes on multi-lane roads, and city planning to reduce the travel required to access services.

Lower speeds deliver multiple benefits including to the economy. These can be achieved through road design and infrastructure, vehicle technologies, urban planning, modal shifts, and effective deterrence.

Benefit to cost ratios for many speed reducing interventions show that they are excellent investments for governments. Given the benefits of lower speeds, and their cost-effectiveness, implementing stronger speed management is not a question of 'Can we afford to do this?' but 'Can we afford not to do this?'

Ritu Mishra is a transport specialist at the Asian Development Bank. Soames Job is CEO and Principal of Global Road Safety Solutions Pty. Ltd. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of ADB, its management, its Board of Directors, or its members.

Weather

Tuesday, January 30

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 5°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: -2°C

Wednesday, January 31

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 5°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: -2°C

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