

Prime Minister's Anti-Corruption Agenda and Opposition Response

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Parliament of Georgia expressed confidence in Irakli Kobakhidze and the government's composition, with 84 deputies supporting him out of 105 who voted. Notably, Irakli Chikovani replaced Juansher Burchuladze as the Minister of Defense.

Before the Parliament expressed confidence in Kobakhidze, he responded to questions, one of which was from the opposition political party For Georgia regarding corruption during his speech at the plenary session.

Kobakhidze stated that the fight against corruption would be one of his main priorities.

"For me, any form of corruption is categorically unacceptable, including the so-called 'Georgian style' corruption, to which the chairman of your party, Giorgi Gakharia, was loyal.

I'm not loyal to any type of corruption either, and I want to tell you one thing with full responsibility: I have never earned a single penny through corruption, and I intend to continue my work in the future. Therefore, I have no interest in covering someone's corruption. This will be my approach to corruption, and this is the approach of our honorable chairman [Bidzina Ivanishvili], who, moreover, has no interest.



He has spent three billion dollars in charity alone. Accordingly, the fight against corruption will be one of the main priorities of our government," said Kobakhidze.

In response to this, the Chairperson of the United National Movement, Tina Bokuchava, urged Kobakhidze to initiate investigations into elite corrup-

tion. According to Bokuchava, the rhetoric of Irakli Kobakhidze and the Georgian Dream on corruption is 'fake'.

"I believe that people are exhausted by Ivanishvili's government's lies, false promises from officials, manipulation of data and statistics, where the economy only benefits Ivanishvili and his corrupt as-

sociates, leaving the majority of our citizens grappling with unemployment, hopelessness, or forced to leave the country.

I really have no expectation that Ivanishvili's government will face reality and make real changes to the country. I expect that the Georgian people will change the government this year with the same strength and per-

severance as they demonstrated in gaining candidate status.

No, Mr. Irakli, the status of a candidate for EU membership is not primarily the merit of Bidzina Ivanishvili, as you told us today. The status of the candidate is the merit of the Georgian people, who will show their true strength once again in October," said Tina Bokuchava.

Russian Foreign Affairs Representative Responds to State Security Service Statement on Explosives

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE



The official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Maria Zakharova, addressed the statement by the State Security Service of Georgia on February 5. According to the statement, up to 14 kg of explosive substance C-4 was found on Georgian territory. It was allegedly brought to Georgia from the Ukrainian city of Odessa via Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey for export to the Russian city of Voronezh on January 19 of this year.

"This is not the first time that Georgia and its territory have been used by those who want to destabilize the situation in the post-Soviet space and resort to terrorist methods," Zakharova stated.

"I remind you of the recklessness of international terrorism in the South Caucasus, where international terrorists imported or attempted to import (sometimes successfully, sometimes prevented) weapons, ammunition, money, and drugs from the territory of Georgia. Terrorism, then and now, exemplified by the Ukrainian regime, is no longer 'perfect' in its characteristics," Zakharova said.

Zakharova did not clarify whether Moscow collaborates with the Georgian authorities in combating terrorist threats.

"Regarding the existence of Russian-Georgian interaction on anti-terrorist issues, we recommend that you contact the competent agencies of Russia for relevant comments," Zakharova noted.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Kobakhidze Highlights Urgent Need for Environmental Protection and Disaster Risk Reduction



During the presentation of the government program in parliament, newly appointed Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, emphasized that the recent natural disaster in western Georgia highlights the crucial need to reduce the risk of such events.

“The natural disaster that occurred in Western Georgia in the past few days has once again reminded us of the high priority of environmental protection and the reduction of natural disaster risks in the face of global climate change.

For this purpose, the government will

ensure the harmonization of environmental standards with European requirements, improve early warning systems for multiple threats, and expand monitoring and assessment systems for atmospheric air and water quality, the efficiency of environmental assessment pro-

cedures will increase, and regulation of industrial emissions will be aligned with EU processes,” Kobakhidze said.

Georgian Citizen Illegally Detained by Russian Occupation Forces Released

Based on information from the State Security Service, the Georgian citizen



who was unlawfully detained by Russian occupation forces and held in Tskhinvali prison has been released.

“In the process of releasing Petre

Kalashnikov from illegal imprisonment, both the ‘hotline’ mechanism operating with the direct involvement of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia, as well as all the relevant tools at the disposal of the central government, were actively used. The central government of Georgia provided information to international partners on a permanent basis. The issue was raised by

the central government of Georgia within the framework of the Geneva International Discussions and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) formats,” the statement reads.

Borrell in Kyiv: ‘Mobilising additional EU military equipment for Ukraine is my top priority’

During a two-day visit to Kyiv on 6-7 February, EU High Representative Josep Borrell met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on 7 February.

“Ukraine’s future is in the European Union. Ukraine has shown remarkable commitment to reform efforts and will soon start accession negotiations,” Borrell wrote on X after the meeting. “We will continue working hand-in-hand to make it happen.”

Borrell added that Zelenskyy had asked him for additional ammunition, drones and air defence systems. “Mobilising additional EU military equipment for Ukraine is my top priority,” Borrell replied.

Earlier, Borrell also met Ukrainian Foreign Minister

Dmytro Kuleba. Borrell said the European Union was continuing to isolate and sanction Russia.

“So far we adopted 12 packages. Work on the 13th

package is ongoing,” Borrell said on X. “We are continuing our work on the use of revenues from Russian frozen assets. Russia must pay for repairing the damages it

caused in Ukraine and be held accountable.”

The EU High Representative also addressed the members of the Ukrainian Parliament – the Verkhovna Rada.

“I see consensus on your European choice among political forces and civil society. Make sure to preserve it. Unity and consensus are essential to advance on the path to EU membership,” said Borrell.

He added that deputies of the Verkhovna Rada “have to strengthen the invisible infrastructure sustaining democracy: rule of law, plurality, inclusive governance, separation of powers, human rights, social cohesion and equality. The Verkhovna Rada must be the forum to harvest this strength.”

On 7 February, Borrell also visited an apartment block hit that day by Russian missiles and a shelter with Kyiv Mayor Vitaliy Klychko to pay tribute to the civilians killed in Kyiv and in other parts of Ukraine during this latest attack by Russia.



(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Friday, February 9

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 15°C

Night Clear
Low: 4°C

Saturday, February 10

Day Clear
High: 16°C

Night Clear
Low: 4°C

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