

President Zourabichvili Urges Vigilance Against Electoral Challenges and Pro-Russian Influence

By Liza Mchedlidze

On the occasion of the anniversary of the Soviet occupation, various commemorative events took place at the Orbeliani Palace. Addressing a gathering of young people and students invited to the event, President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili delivered a speech honoring the memory of the heroes who sacrificed their lives in the fight for Georgia's statehood and independence.

In her speech, Zourabichvili emphasized the critical nature of the upcoming elections, highlighting their importance in determining the next steps for Georgia, particularly in terms of opening negotiations for EU accession.

The President of Georgia warned of the challenges ahead, noting the presence of opposition forces opposed to Georgia's independence, sovereignty, and European integration.

Zourabichvili stated that the forthcoming election is a pivotal moment for Georgia's European identity. She expressed the need for preparedness in the face of potential Russian propaganda and the mobilization of pro-Russian groups. She urged the youth of Georgia to be vigilant and committed, emphasizing the significance of their mobilization.

"We are now entering a very difficult period as we prepare for the elections, which, as everyone tells us and we know very well, will be decisive for us to take the



next step. This step, even more important, involves the opening of negotiations. Therefore, around these elections, there will be a fierce battle involving all those dark forces who do not want the independence, sovereignty, or European integration of Georgia.

Therefore, this election will be akin to a 'Europe, or no Europe' type of election, and we should be prepared for everything—from the activation of Russian propaganda, which we are already witnessing, to the mobilization of pro-Russian groups, which is also evident. While they

may not explicitly identify themselves as such, it seems apparent that they are, and there will likely be many of them. Financing them will probably not be difficult.

You must be mobilized. This is your country, your future, and your state. You have to be mobi-

lized, alert, and most importantly, you have to do your job. But the mobilization of the people, the mobilization of the youth, is something that can really defeat all other efforts that can be made. We must be ready, but we must fear nothing," Zourabichvili said.

Georgian Government Halts Republican Hospital Reorganization Process After Meeting with Doctors

By Liza Mchedlidze



At a briefing on the developments at the Republican Hospital, Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Kobakhidze announced that the Georgian government has decided to halt the reorganization process of the hospital. Kobakhidze met with the doctors alongside the Minister of Health, Zurab Azarashvili.

According to the Prime Minister, in the coming months, the government and the Ministry of Health will work on an alternative project related to the Republican Hospital.

"An alternative option was proposed by the doctors, which meant that a hospital could be built in the back area, and the front area could be used for future investment purposes. This proposal corresponds to the plan from, if I'm not mistaken, 2007.

At that time, Mr. Bidzina Ivanishvili had planned the construction of a new building. However, due to political reasons and considering the ongoing processes, unfortunately, this project could no longer be implemented. It was planned to construct the new hospital in the back area.

We will proceed with the same project. Once again, design work will be conducted, and the relevant process will be planned. Proposals will be prepared in this direction to ensure the construction of a hospital in the rear area. Additionally, the previous area will be utilized for investment purposes, aligning perfectly with the proposal put forward by the doctors of the Republican Hospital.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6530; Euro - 2.8708; GBP - 3.3600; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.7962; Swiss Franc - 3.0110

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Accordingly, we have decided to halt the ongoing process, which involved doctors and staff drafting statements for reorganization. We will prepare pro-

posals in the coming months, and thereafter determine the course of action for the process," Kobakhidze stated.

The decision was announced the next day after Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze and the

leader of the parliamentary majority, Mamuka Mdivaradze, met with the medical staff of the Republican Hospital. According to the press service of the government, the situation related to the clinic was discussed in de-

tail at the meeting.

"The head of the government heard information, arguments, and opinions from the doctors about possible ways to solve the problem. It was emphasized that making a reasonable decision is

important to ensure that the process is not disrupted and that the interests of both the public and the medical personnel are taken into account," read the government press release.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgian Parliament Chair Reaffirms Commitment to End Occupation on 103rd Annexation Anniversary



On February 25, 2024, commemorating 103 years since the annexation of the First Republic of Georgia, Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, reaffirmed the government's determination to end the occupation and reunify the country.

"This day is one of the most difficult and tragic in the history of Georgia—the defeat of the First Republic of Georgia against the Soviet regime and the occu-

pation of the Georgian state. Despite the great efforts of the Georgian patriots, the then newly created republic was not able to deal with the evil force that destroyed the prospect of development and freedom for our country.

The occupation continues today. After

the restoration of independence, Georgia again had to enter into its oldest and unequal battle. Even today, an indigenous part of our state remains under occupation.

In contrast to the 20s of the last century, today we are much stronger, sovereign, and self-confident. We will have the strength, and we have a goal to end the occupation, unify the country, and further strengthen the sovereignty of the

Georgian state," Papuashvili stated.

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze Meets with Turkish Ambassador Ali Kaan Orbay



The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Georgia, Ali Kaan Orbay.

According to the administration of the Government of Georgia, the meeting focused on discussing the strategic partnership between the two countries and prospects for the development of cooperation.

"The focus was on economic cooperation, particularly discussing the active collaboration between Georgia and Turkey in regional-geostrategic projects. It was noted that the existing regional projects serve as a clear example of the effective and reliable partnership between

the two countries.

They also discussed the situation in the region, emphasizing the importance of peace and stability for ensuring further development and long-term prosperity. It was noted that Georgia appreciates Turkey's strong support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as its non-recognition policy," the statement reads.

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum calls on EU to be bold in its support to Ukrainian society

Ahead of the second commemoration of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) Steering Committee and all six EaP CSF National Platforms have strongly



condemned Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine in their latest joint statement released today.

The EaP CSF National Platforms represent more than 1,200 CSOs in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic

of Moldova, and Ukraine.

"Two years have passed since Russia's full-scale invasion of our country which, in reality, started ten years ago with the occupation and illegal annexation of Crimea. Russia must be stopped with all possible means," said Ruslan Havryliuk, EaP CSF Steering Committee member and EaP CSF National Facilitator, Ukraine. "We, the Ukrainian nation, are currently paying the highest price possible for our future as an independent, democratic, and European state, trying to stop the Russian beast that wants to destroy order (peace) in the whole of Europe."

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum calls on the Eu-

ropean institutions, EU member states and the international community to step up and be bold in their support to Ukrainian society, including civil society organisations, and to provide all necessary support on the way to EU membership.

The Forum also calls on the International Criminal Court, the European Union and the Member States, the Eastern Partnership countries, where applicable, to investigate and prosecute, and assist in investigations of Russian war crimes, international crimes committed on the territory of Ukraine against its people.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Monday, February 26

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 2°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: -4°C

Tuesday, February 27

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 2°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: -4°C

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In Celebration of The Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, the Ambassador of Japan to Georgia H.E. Mr. Ishizuka Hideki and Mrs. Ishizuka Chieko held the National Day Reception on February 22.









