

President of Iceland Guðni Th. Jóhannesson Visits Occupation Line with Georgian State Minister Thea Akhvlediani



"It is essential and extremely important to inform international partners about the severe consequences of the ongoing illegal occupation in Georgia, as well as to actively involve them and maintain their continued support in the process of peacefully resolving the conflict. Consequently, significant emphasis is placed on the visit of the President of Iceland to the occupation line, where he had the opportunity to familiarize himself with the security situation, gross violations of fundamental human rights, and humanitarian challenges. He also received information about the illegal barriers erected along the dividing lines, the prohibitions imposed on free movement, and the illegal detentions, including violations of the lives of our citizens. Additionally, we introduced the President of Iceland to the efforts of the Georgian government in terms of de-occupation, as well as the implementation of reconciliation and peace initiatives," Akhvlediani stated.

"This is a beautiful part of this beautiful country, and people here should be able to move freely and live together peacefully. This should be everyone's wish. My visit today may be somewhat symbolic, and what I can say is that we should not tolerate such a situation. A solution needs to be found, and the international community must understand its obligations," said President of Iceland, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson.

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

President of Iceland, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, visited the village of Odzi near the occupation line during his official visit to Georgia, along with Minister of State of Georgia, Thea

Akhvlediani.

The Office of the Minister of State reported that President Jóhannesson learned about the security situation at the occupation line in Odzi. He received detailed information from the Minister of State and represen-

tatives of Georgia's State Security Service about the situation in the occupied regions and efforts made by the Georgian government for peace.

Thea Akhvlediani stressed the importance of maintaining collaborative efforts with interna-

tional partners, crucial for safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of the conflict-affected population. This includes ensuring free movement and the unconditional, immediate release of illegally detained Georgian citizens.

Shalva Papuashvili Condemns President's Veto as an Attack and Interference in Elections

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, has stated that the President's veto on the Election Code is preparation for the United National Movement to not recognize the results of the 2024 parliamentary elections. Shalva Papuashvili accused the opposition, President Salome Zourabichvili, several non-governmental organizations, and some foreign actors of being involved in a direct attack and interference in the election process.

"The veto is part of the attack that is carried out not only on the CEC chairman or the CEC; it is an attack on the parliamentary elections. This is the preparation of the ground so that, tra-

ditionally, the United National Movement and its clones do not recognize the elections... We see that the opposition, Salome Zourabichvili, several non-governmental organizations, and among them, some foreign actors are involved in this. This is a direct attack and interference in the election process," Papuashvili stated.

Also, according to Papuashvili, in her motivational remarks, the President suggested not sharing some of the recommendations.

"From here, the conclusion is drawn that these recommendations were not something from which deviation could not occur," Papuashvili said.



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6581; Euro - 2.8904; GBP - 3.3803; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9453; Swiss Franc - 3.0028

Shalva Papuashvili Condemns President's Veto as an Attack and Interference in Elections

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Parliament Chairman addressed concerns about the continuation of what he perceives as an ineffective or dysfunctional system in the context of elections. He criticized some foreign actors for advocating to maintain this system, arguing that it undermines the credibility of the electoral process. Papuashvili believes that such discussions not

only perpetuate the current problems but also provide a justification for the radical opposition to refuse to accept electoral defeat.

“Regarding this absurdity, unfortunately, some foreign actors insist that such an absurd situation, in which we have been living for 2 years and which does not work, everyone has seen that it does not work, should be left in force. Those who advise us to

retain the old system in force, avoid changing the qualified majority, and refrain from canceling the possibility of an opposition deputy assuming the duties of the chairman, whether they are Georgians or foreigners, are essentially pushing us towards discrediting the elections. I urge all actors—Georgian and foreign—to consider that such conversations serve as encouragement to the radical opposi-

tion, providing them with an excuse not to admit defeat in the elections,” Papuashvili stated.

As he claims, the representatives of the opposition also agree that during the discussion on the April 19 agreement, the regulations concerning the ‘qualified majority’ and the “oppositional deputy of the CEC chairman” were written by the mediator.

Papuashvili stated that they are called upon to fulfill the rec-

ommendation of the Venice Commission, which points to the fulfillment of the annulled agreement of April 19.

“There is no April 19 agreement; it’s the same as if you quit your job and your employer points you to an old agreement that no longer exists. Referring to it is an expert error, and clinging to this agreement is grist to the mill of radicals,” Papuashvili stated.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Parliament Chairman Papuashvili Meets President of Iceland Guðni Jóhannesson



Shalva Papuashvili emphasized the importance of the first high-level visit from the Republic of Iceland to Georgia. He thanked the Icelandic side for supporting Georgia’s territorial integrity and Euro-Atlantic goals.

The Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, met with the President of the Republic of Iceland, Guðni Jóhannesson.

According to Guðni Jóhannesson, it is important that small states cooperate at the international level to achieve common goals.

The press service of the Parliament stated that the parties discussed potential areas of cooperation between Georgia and Iceland, including renewable energy, the fight against climate change, innovation, and cultural and educational exchanges. Guðni Jóhannesson noted that Iceland has achieved great success in the utilization of hydro-power and geothermal energy.

The Icelandic side stated that Georgia possesses a unique geographical location and significant potential for utilizing water energy. Guðni Jóhannesson expressed his readiness to share Iceland’s best practices and experiences with Georgia.

Ambassador Pawel Herczyński Urges Collaboration for European Integration

The Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, Pawel Herczyński, emphasized the significance of consensus and highlighted the necessity for political parties to collaborate in or-

der to complete the 9 recommendations, despite the considerable



energy and attention demanded by elections.

“Although there is an election in October, which requires a lot of energy and attention, it is important that, in parallel, all political parties do their best to implement all nine recommendations. This means ensuring an inclusive process on the part of the government and giving the

opposition the opportunity to participate in the process.

It requires a constructive approach from the side of the opposition. The involvement of civil society is also important for us. Therefore, we hope that, despite the election campaign, there will be consensus, and everyone will work together in the direction of European integration,” Herczyński said.

Civil servants in Georgia generally hold positive attitudes towards human rights and gender equality, says EU-supported survey

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in cooperation with the EU and the Civil Service Bureau of Georgia, on 29 February presented a new study shedding light on prevail-

ing attitudes towards human rights and gender equality in public service.

It analyses the attitudes of

civil servants from 103 public institutions towards workplace equality practices within the public service, exploring percep-

tions of the fundamental values of human rights, equality and inclusion.

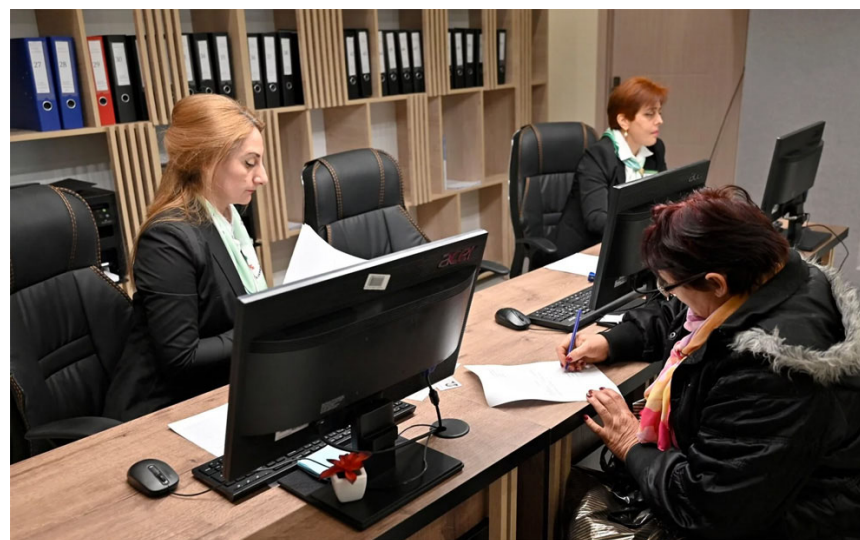
Findings show that Georgian civil servants express strong support for human rights and equality principles, advocating for robust state responses to violations and discrimination. However, the research also uncovers persistent stereotypes and prejudice influencing perceptions, particularly regarding gender roles, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, and LGBTQI+ communities.

The research spotlights several human rights that

civil servants consider most frequently violated in Georgia. These include the right to equality (40%), living in a healthy environment (32%), the right to life (31%), inviolability of personal and family life (25%), and inviolability of honour and dignity (25%).

Notably, sex-disaggregated data shows that female civil servants are better informed and more sensitive to issues faced by vulnerable groups. They demonstrate a better understanding of the legal needs of ethnic and religious minorities, LGBTQI+ persons and persons with disabilities.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Thursday, March 7

Day Few Showers
High: 11°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 5°C

Friday, March 8

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 13°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 4°C

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