

## President Zourabichvili Criticizes Foreign Ministry's Handling of Polling Stations Abroad

By Liza Mchedlidze

The President of Georgia met with representatives from the CEC, the Public Defender, NGOs, and the EU Embassy to discuss the possibility of enabling citizens living abroad to vote.

President Zourabichvili opened the meeting with a statement in which she criticized the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for not participating in the meetings held on this issue.

"The first very important shortcoming is that the foreign ministry does not participate in these meetings and refuses to take responsibility, which is quite incomprehensible, because this whole process is closely related to the work of the foreign ministry. Consular registration is carried out in consulates, which is a prerequisite for a request to open a station. Information about the opening of these stations should be transferred from the consulates to foreign ministry, and the foreign ministry should then pass it on to the CEC.

Also, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for conducting the election and registration campaign and for posting this information on the websites of the embassies. We have checked, and nothing has been done in this regard yet. We



all know that registration is important now, not in four months," Zourabichvili stated.

The President also emphasized the legislative regulations regarding the opening of polling stations abroad. She pointed out that there is a law granting citizens living abroad the right to request the opening of a polling station if

more than 50 people are registered in one city. However, according to Zourabichvili, despite the existence of this law, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other officials have officially declared their refusal to comply with it.

Zourabichvili stated that the diaspora is ready to get involved and help the Georgian agencies

to solve this issue. According to her, it is unacceptable to discriminate against citizens of Georgia living abroad.

"I urge you to give the Diaspora the right to vote and not to discriminate against them or use offensive messages. This is completely incomprehensible to me, and I believe to our entire

society as well. It's not enough that we are proud of our diaspora when our football players come from European countries and give us such great pleasure and patriotic feelings. We need to ensure that those who work or live there have the opportunity that belongs to every citizen," Zourabichvili stated.

## Prime Minister Kobakhidze Accuses President Zourabichvili of Sabotaging Elections

By Liza Mchedlidze



The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, responded to President Salome Zourabichvili's criticism of the Foreign Ministry regarding the opening of polling stations abroad and stated that Zourabichvili has no 'moral right' to speak about the elections.

According to Kobakhidze, the issue of immigrants' participation in the elections is a "speculative campaign of the Collective National Movement," which he accused Zourabichvili of also joining.

"Salome Zourabichvili has no moral right to meet with the Chairman of the CEC, Giorgi Kalandarishvili. You may recall that despite the commission's decision, she did not present Kalandarishvili as a candidate because he was not supported by Khabeishvili, Samadashvili, Vashadze, and others.

CONTINUED ON Page 2



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6953; Euro - 2.9063; GBP - 3.4007; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9111; Swiss Franc - 2.9905

# Prime Minister Kobakhidze Accuses President Zourabichvili of Sabotaging Elections

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

Accordingly, Zourabichvili, of course, has no moral right to meet Kalandarishvili - she has no moral right to talk about the elections. Why? She di-

rectly supported the deadlock in the Central Election Commission with his veto," Kobakhidze stated.

Kobakhidze accused Zourabichvili of having the sole goal of sabotaging the elections, to somehow create danger and

problems.

"These speculations regarding emigration, which Salome Zourabichvili has joined, constitute a speculative campaign of the collective national movement, and Salome Zourabichvili has joined this cam-

paign.

This also shows that Salome Zourabichvili's sole goal is to somehow cast a shadow on the elections, which she will certainly not be able to achieve," said Kobakhidze.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Chairman Papuashvili Vows Parliament's Action Against Unjust Attacks on Court and State



შალვა პაპუაშვილი • Shalva Papuashvili • 26K followers • 0 following

The Chairman of Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, expressed respect for Chairman of the Supreme Court Nino Kadagidze and Georgian judges. Papuashvili stated that the Parliament of Georgia will take all necessary actions to put an end to unjust attacks aimed at dam-

aging the court's reputation and harming the state of Georgia.

"In the media, I have acquainted myself with excerpts of the judges' deliberations on the issue of 'Vetting' at the plenary session of the Supreme Court, which further supports the opinion formed during the recent dis-

cussions on this issue with various groups.

Once again, I would like to express my respect for the Chairman of the Supreme Court, Mrs. Nino Kadagidze, and the Georgian judges. It is unfortunate that due to a few NGOs with the goal of gaining political

power, the participation of foreign organizations in justice issues has been equated today with an attack on the judiciary, hostile rhetoric against judges, and moral terror against their family members - essentially everything that is anti-European.

The Parliament of Georgia will do everything to stop these unjust attacks, the purpose of which is to damage the reputation of the court and harm the Georgian state," Papuashvili wrote.

### Georgian Dream Chairman: US-Sanctioned Judges Were Victims of System

Chairman of Georgian Dream, Irakli Gharibashvili stated that judges Levan Murisidze and Mikheil Chinchaladze, who are among the four Georgian judges sanctioned by the United States of America last year, were victims of the system.

"You mentioned Mr.

Murusidze and Mr. Chinchaladze; who would ask these people back then? There was terrible pressure on them; they were victims of the system. I will tell you more: since then,



these people have shown complete independence...I want to thank them and stand by each judge as an ordinary citizen, not as a party representative, for taking this correct, patriotic po-

sition. Some NGO cannot beat 300 judges; these people will decide their own fate," Gharibashvili said.

Murusidze and Chinchaladze were sanctioned by the United

States for misusing their positions as court chairpersons and members of the Supreme Council of Justice, thereby harming the rule of law and public trust in the Georgian judicial system.

## EU4Dialogue helps restore access to drinking water for IDPs in western Georgia

A total of 42 families at the Torsa IDP settlement in Western Georgia have regained access to drinking water thanks to support from the European Union Delegation to Georgia and the United Nations Development Programme in Georgia (UNDP Georgia).

The initiative was implemented in cooperation with the Rural Communities Development Agency (RCDA), as part of the EU4Dialogue project.

Repairs to critical water sup-



ply infrastructure in the village included rehabilitation of water and distribution pumps, installation of water tanks and filters, and

water quality testing. As a result, the work helped to reduce water losses by 27 tonnes per hour.

The project also helped to raise

awareness among local people and authorities about water safety and efficient maintenance of the systems, conducted water

hygiene training and supported the establishment of a village water committee.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

### Weather

Monday, April 1

Day Partly Cloudy High: 20°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 8°C

Tuesday, April 2

Day Partly Cloudy High: 22°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 9°C

published by

The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia  
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze  
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000  
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge  
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli

Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze

Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili

Layout Designer, Photographer

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.