

UN in Georgia Expresses Concerns Over Draft Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence

By Liza Mchedlidze

The United Nations in Georgia expressed deep concerns about the reintroduction of the draft Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence in the Parliament of Georgia. The UN warned that this move could seriously hinder the crucial work of civil society and media, thus obstructing Georgian democracy and societal progress.

Emphasizing the vital role of civil society organizations in Georgia, the UN highlighted their significant contributions in providing essential services to vulnerable populations and safeguarding their human rights. The UN cautioned that stigmatizing their activities could deprive marginalized groups – including persons with disabilities, internally displaced individuals, minorities, women, youth, survivors of domestic violence, and others – of much-needed assistance and support.

With a partnership spanning over three decades, the UN underscored its close collaboration with Georgia to support its de-



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velopment in line with national priorities, working alongside local partners, including civil society and media.

Referring to an analysis conducted by OSCE/ODIHR in consultation with the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, at the request of the Public Defender of Georgia, the UN highlighted findings indicat-

ing that the draft law falls short of several of Georgia's international obligations.

Given Georgia's current membership in the UN Human Rights Council, the UN urged the Parliament of Georgia to withdraw the draft law and engage in comprehensive consultations with a diverse range of stakeholders to address concerns regarding the relationship between the state and civil society.

Furthermore, the UN ex-

pressed regret over the Parliament's decision to expedite the abolition of mandatory gender quotas in parliamentary election lists. These quotas, recommended by the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women as a temporary measure, aimed to counteract women's systemic exclusion from political decision-making. The UN noted that the removal of quotas represents a setback

for gender equality efforts.

The United Nations in Georgia called upon the Georgian authorities to refrain from actions that contravene the country's international obligations and pose a threat to Georgian democracy. It emphasized the importance of upholding human rights, fostering inclusivity, and advancing gender equality to ensure the progress and prosperity of the nation.

By Liza Mchedlidze

European Court of Human Rights Finds Multiple Violations in Georgia v. Russia Case



In a recent Chamber judgment, the European Court of Human Rights ruled unanimously in the case of Georgia v. Russia (IV) (application no. 39611/18), identifying violations of various articles of the European Convention on Human Rights. The violations include breaches of the right to life, prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment, right to liberty and security, right to respect for private and family life, as well as protocols concerning protection of property, right to education, and freedom of movement.

The background to the case stems from the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia in August 2008, which initiated a process known as 'borderisation'. This process, which started in 2009, resulted in administrative boundary lines between Georgian-controlled territory and the Russian-backed breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Described as one of the most painful legacies of the conflict, borderisation restricted the movement of people, separated families, and disrupted access to education and property.

The Georgian Government claimed various human rights abuses, including killings, arrests, detentions, and ill-treatment of individuals attempting to cross these administrative

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6777; Euro - 2.9005; GBP - 3.3825; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8950; Swiss Franc - 2.9568

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boundary lines. Additionally, they cited instances of land deprivation, family separation, and educational challenges, all attributed to the borderisation process.

The Court examined extensive evidence, including victim lists, testimonies, media reports, and international material. It concluded that the incidents were

not isolated but formed a pattern or system of violations. Furthermore, the lack of effective investigations and the general application of measures indicated official tolerance by Russian authorities.

While Russia had the opportunity to present written observations, it failed to dispute the allegations adequately. The Court found numerous instances of human rights violations, including deaths, ill-treatment,

arrests, and restrictions on freedom of movement and education.

This judgment adds to a series of applications between Georgia and Russia before the Court, reflecting ongoing tensions and unresolved issues

stemming from the 2008 conflict and subsequent developments. It underscores the importance of upholding human rights standards in conflict-affected regions and the need for accountability for violations.

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The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

President Salome Zourabichvili: Russian Flags Won't Prevail in Georgia



Salome Zourabichvili, the President of Georgia, in her address to protesters in front of the Parliament at the April 9 memorial, stated that introducing 'Russian Law' is the biggest sign

of defeat. According to her, Georgia now faces a choice between independence and slavery.

"The significance of this day is that no one can threaten Georgia's independence, and no one can harm us. The fact that on April 8, some dared to rein-

slavement, will ever win!

I don't know what the reaction of the West will be; maybe there will be one. But the main point here is that we know what we want. Do we want what happened on April 9, 1989, or what happened on April 9, 1991? The choice for Georgia is either independence or slavery, either Europe or Russia," Zourabichvili said.

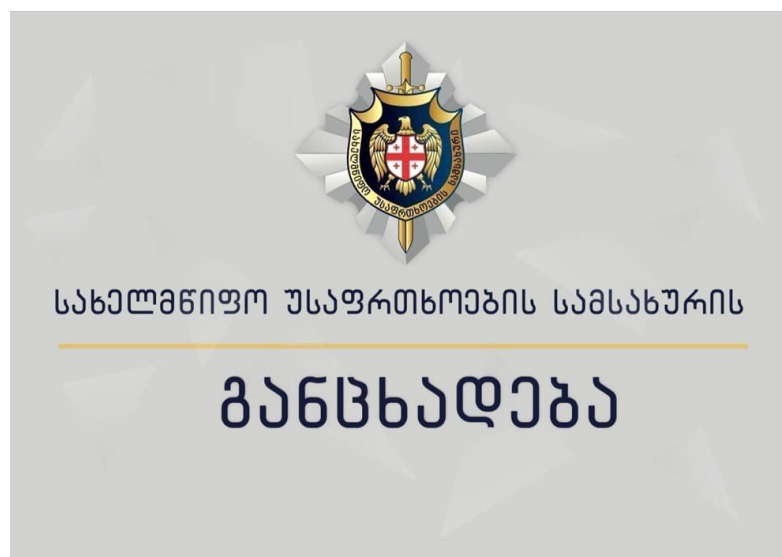
State Security Service Rejects Havana Syndrome Findings

The State Security Service has addressed the journalistic investigation into the Havana Syndrome. Their statement indicated that the agency had verified the facts and was awaiting an official statement from the partner's side. Additionally, the agency noted that both US intelligence and the State Department had questioned the journalistic investigation and had not confirmed the mentioned facts, neither in Georgia nor in other countries.

"The State Security Service of

Georgia considers the aforementioned response to be entirely exhaustive, thus fully satisfying

lets in Georgia who attempted to use this issue for speculation and to discredit the State Security



the public interest, and believes that it is unnecessary to prove the baselessness of the current version again.

It is regrettable that despite the comprehensive explanation from the American partners, there were still politically motivated individuals and media out-

Service, as they often do.

We also want to assure the public that, in light of the increasing challenges in the region, the country's security is being maintained at the highest level, as evidenced by the peaceful coexistence of recent years," the statement reads.

New Head of EU Monitoring Mission assumes her duties in Georgia

Tbilisi, 6 April 2024 – The new Head of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM) Bettina Patricia Boughani arrived in Tbilisi today to assume her duties.

"I am delighted and humbled to start my work as the Head of EUMM. Over the 35 years of my professional career, I have been driven by the commitment to promote security, peace and stability. It will be an honour to lead the dedicated team of more than 300 staff who contribute 24/7 with their hard work to stability and security in Georgia. I hope my leadership will support them in

such an important mission, which helps improve the daily lives of the conflict-affected population and build trust among communities," said the Head of Mission upon her arrival to Georgia.

Head of Mission Bettina Patricia Boughani was appointed to the leadership position by the Council of the European Union on 26 March 2024, and she started her mandate on 1 April 2024.

She is a commissioned officer of the French National Gendarmerie and has extensive experience in leadership and international relations. She held various senior positions within the United Nations and the French Ministry of the Interior/French Gendarmerie.

Previously she was involved in peacekeeping in sensitive political and security contexts, having been, among other, police Commissioner in MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali).

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, April 10

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 14°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 9°C

Thursday, April 11

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 16°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 8°C

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