

US Vice President Harris and President Biden Express Concern Over Georgian 'Foreign Agents' Law, Praise Veto Decision

By Liza Mchedlidze

US Vice President Kamala Harris and President Joe Biden expressed deep concerns to Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili in a recent letter. They highlighted worries about Georgia's parliament passing a 'Foreign Agents' law, fearing it could harm democracy and relationships with the US and Europe. However, they praised the President's veto decision, commending her commitment to safeguarding civil society amid growing threats.

Vice President Harris emphasized the enduring partnership between the US and Georgia, stating that since Russia's invasion in 2008, the US has remained a steadfast ally, supporting Georgia's sovereignty. According to Harris, this strong bond, built on shared values and respect, has led to significant collaboration, including joint efforts in Afghanistan and substantial aid to strengthen Georgia's infrastructure and democratic institutions.

Harris also acknowledged the Georgian people's aspirations to join the EU and NATO, recognizing their strong desire for a Euro-Atlantic future. However, she expressed concerns that the passage of the foreign agents bill could jeopardize this aspiration. The Vice President reiterated the importance of upholding democratic principles, stressing the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.



"President Biden and I have been following events in Georgia with great concern. We worry about developments, such as the Georgian parliament's recent passage of the foreign agents bill, that could threaten Georgia's democracy and undermine Georgia's relationship with the United States and Europe. We applaud your recent actions to veto that anti-democratic measure and your commitment to protect civil society as it

comes under threat in Georgia. The United States has supported Georgia's democracy and Euro-Atlantic aspirations for more than three decades. Since Russia's invasion in 2008, the United States has been steadfast in our support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our partnership is grounded in shared values, common interests, and mutual respect. We fought shoulder to shoulder in Afghanistan, and the

United States is the largest supplier of foreign assistance to Georgia to help build critical infrastructure, strengthen democratic institutions, and modernize your military forces. The Georgian people have been clear that they want a future in the European Union and NATO. They recognize that the foreign agents bill puts that future at risk, which is why they have strongly opposed it. They have every right to pursue that

future, and force must not be used to prevent peaceful assembly and the exercise of the right to freedom of expression. We appreciate your leadership and efforts to protect civil society in Georgia. These efforts will continue to be essential as the Georgian people look to you to defend democracy and champion Georgia's Euro-Atlantic future. The United States stands with you and all Georgians in pursuit of a better future," the letter reads.



German Foreign Minister Condemns Georgian Government's Obstruction of EU Aspirations

By Liza Mchedlidze

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock has voiced strong disapproval of Georgia's actions hindering its citizens' will of joining the European Union. Baerbock's comments come amid ongoing protests in Georgia over 'Foreign Agents' law.

Baerbock expressed deep concern that Georgia's government is using a law incompatible with European values, as recognized by the European Council, creating a rift between the government and its people, who continue to protest.

According to Baerbock, Georgia's stance is undermining its own aspirations to join the EU. She stressed the need for both the government and the people to be aligned for Georgia to progress towards EU membership.

Baerbock highlighted the Georgian President's rejection of the law and the widespread calls from protesters for its repeal. She also noted the European Council's support for Georgia's European path.

Baerbock urged all parties to work together to secure Georgia's European future. She cautioned that failure to do so would only serve the interests of external actors, like Russian President Putin, to the detriment of Georgia's goals.

"It is incredibly painful that the government of Georgia is blocking its people's great dream, especially the youth, of joining the European Union.

To achieve this, the authorities are using a law that the European Council has deemed incompatible with European

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7680; Euro - 3.0058; GBP - 3.5298; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.1241; Swiss Franc - 3.0288

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values. With such actions, the Georgian government pits itself against its own population, which, as we see, takes to the streets time and time again.

Thus, the government is acting against Georgia's European perspective.

We, the member states of the European Union, have affirmed the European perspective for Georgia, extending a hand to this country. However, it is clear that

the European path can be taken only when not only the population but also the government desires it.

The president of Georgia has stated that she cannot accept this law. People protesting in the streets say that the law must be repealed. The same is echoed by the European Council. All parties involved want to do everything possible to ensure that Georgia can follow the European path, because otherwise, only Putin will be satisfied," Annalena Baerbock said.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Legal Committee Rejects President's Comments on 'Foreign Agents' Law and Supports Veto Override



The Legal Committee rejected President Zourabichvili's comments on the 'Foreign Agents' law and supported overriding the veto. The committee also reaffirmed its support for the original version of the law.

The veto issue will be discussed and voted on during the plenary sessions on May 28. If the parliament overrides the veto, the "Foreign Agents" law must be voted on again. It will be considered passed if it receives majority support from the

members of parliament.

If passed, the law will be sent to the President for signature. If Salome Zourabichvili does not sign it, the Chairman of the Parliament will. After that, the law will enter into force and be implemented within the specified timeframe.

The Georgian President wrote in her remarks that the 'Foreign Agents' law violates four articles of the Constitution. "This law meticulously repeats the spirit of the Russian law," the document reads.

EU Discusses Response to Georgia's 'Foreign Agents' Law, Says Borrell

EU High Representative Josep Borrell announced that the Council of Foreign

Affairs discussed potential responses to Georgia's proposed 'Foreign Agents' law. Borrell highlighted differing views among member states on the law's significance, with some questioning its compatibility with EU norms. Referring to the Venice Commission's conclusion urging the withdrawal of the law, Borrell emphasized

this law contradicts the norms and values of the European Union. They also referenced the conclusion of the Venice Commission, which calls on the [Georgian] authorities to withdraw this law.

We started considering the appropriate response if this law is enacted. We will make a decision on this in June.



ongoing deliberations on an appropriate response, slated for June. He underscored the importance of upholding EU values globally and emphasized the significance of the upcoming elections in Georgia for the country's trajectory.

"We exchanged opinions regarding the 'Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence' and the developments in Georgia. Some member states consider this issue unimportant, while others believe that

Member states are prepared to make decisions when our values, international law, and the European way are not upheld, not only in Georgia, but everywhere in the world. We also discussed the upcoming elections. Georgian people should vote for the trajectory of their country. The government's actions may affect the benefits they enjoy as a result of EU integration, but we have not yet made a decision," Borell stated.

EUAM conducts training for Ukrainian police officers and prosecutors on effective interviewing techniques



The European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) in Ukraine has conducted a series of trainings on effective interviewing tech-

niques for various partners, including the Council of Prosecutors and the National Police of Ukraine (NPU).

The training focused on a structured recruitment process that assesses staff efficiency, tackles biases, and strengthens transparency and integrity, ultimately enhancing public trust. Over two days, participants learned about the phases of the selection process and best practices through practical exercises and case studies.

The course aimed to enhance knowledge of the selection process and share EU best practices

on the matter.

Kirsten Joppe, the Head of the EUAM Governance Component, said the training was especially relevant for Ukraine due to wartime challenges, reconstruction efforts and European integration.

"The ongoing war has increased the level of pressure on the law enforcement agencies' staff. Our task is to support you in developing new skills and knowledge to deal with the enormous challenges that Ukraine faces now," she added.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Tuesday, May 28

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 24°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 16°C

Wednesday, May 29

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 28°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 17°C

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