

Prime Minister Kobakhidze Calls for De-Oligarchization in the EU and USA

By Liza Mchedlidze

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze has expressed the need for de-oligarchization in both the European Union and the United States. His remarks came in response to a question during a plenary session of the Parliament.

Kobakhidze addressed the portrayal of the European Union and the USA by the opposition, which he claims has falsely suggested that Western allies side with the National Movement. "Actually, during these two-three years, we have been doing everything to protect the reputation of our Western partners in this country," he said.

He criticized the opposition for misrepresenting the stance of Western institutions, stating that unfair statements and steps have been taken in the name of European and American societies by certain European parliamentarians, senators, congressmen, and other officials.

Kobakhidze emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive perception of Western institutions among the Georgian public. He once again mentioned the "global war party," which he claims has undue influence on official structures in both the EU and the USA. "In order for the



public not to create the wrong impression that the European Union or the USA were against us, we talked about the global war party," he explained.

The Prime Minister asserted that both the EU and the USA need de-oligarchization to reduce pressure on Georgia. He accused the opposition of engaging in anti-Western disinformation

and attempting to align the EU and the USA with the United National Movement, which he associated with past human rights abuses and corruption.

"Georgian society should not

think for a second that the United States of America and the European Union support the collective National Movement," Kobakhidze stressed. "We are doing everything for this."

International Community Urges Georgia to Revoke "Foreign Agents" Law and Protect Peaceful Protesters

By Liza Mchedlidze



The permanent representation of 36 countries at the UN office in Geneva and other international organizations has issued a joint statement urging the Georgian government to recall the "Foreign Influence Transparency Law" and cease using force against peaceful demonstrators.

The statement responds to concerns raised by the UN High Commissioner in his global report about recent events in Georgia, specifically highlighting the controversial "Foreign Agents" law. According to the signatories, the law poses a serious threat to civil society, human rights, and the rule of law in Georgia.

"This law is intended to have a constraining effect on the activities of the media, human rights defenders, and civil society organizations, with the aim of suppressing their voices," the statement reads. It further criticizes the Georgian government

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8101; Euro - 3.0082; GBP - 3.5539; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.3032; Swiss Franc - 3.1265

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for adopting the law despite widespread public opposition and numerous international calls to halt the legislation, including detailed legal arguments from the Venice Commission.

The international representa-

tives call on the Georgian government to withdraw the law, end intimidation campaigns against its opponents, and uphold freedoms of expression, assembly, and peaceful protest. They emphasize the importance of civil society in maintaining democratic accountability,

transparency, and resilience against harmful influences.

The statement also demands that the Georgian government transparently investigate all incidents of force used against peaceful demonstrators and take appropriate actions to ensure the safety of protesters, civil society

members, opposition activists, journalists, and other media workers. It warns against rhetoric that could exacerbate polarization in the country.

“The orchestrated campaign of defamation, intimidation, and physical violence against civil society leaders and others is unac-

ceptable and must stop,” the statement reads.

Among the 36 signatories are 25 EU countries (excluding Hungary and Slovakia), along with the USA, UK, Ukraine, Switzerland, Norway, Canada, Albania, Montenegro, Monaco, Liechtenstein, and Iceland.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgian Dream to Introduce Amnesty Law, Announces Prime Minister



Georgian Dream plans to adopt an amnesty law to reduce the prison population, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze announced at a parliamentary ses-

sion. The legislative initiative will be introduced soon, with the first reading expected in July.

Kobakhidze highlighted the collaboration with the Ministry of Justice in drafting the law. “A list of relevant articles and clauses from the Criminal Code

of Georgia, which may be related to the release of persons under the amnesty rule, has already been compiled,” he said.

The Prime Minister stressed the need to reduce the current

prison population of nearly 10,000 inmates. “It is important that the number of prisoners is seriously reduced to bring it closer to the optimal European rate. Reducing the number of prisoners by at least one-third would be desirable, and we believe the amnesty law will make a significant contribution.”

The amnesty law is set to be discussed at an extraordinary session in July and adopted in three readings by September.

Georgian Foreign Relations Chairman Urges Stronger International Action at OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

Nikoloz Samkharadze, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and head of the Georgian delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, addressed the Political Affairs and Security Committee during the 31st annual session in Bucharest.

In his speech, Samkharadze

outlined the significant security challenges facing Georgia. He emphasized that 20% of Georgia’s territory remains oc-



cupied by Russia, displacing up to 300,000 people. Samkharadze criticized some OSCE member states for not using the term “occupation” to describe this situation.

“Negotiations have been ongo-

ing for years in the Geneva International Discussions format, including under the co-chairmanship of the OSCE, but the

peace process still cannot be regulated,” Samkharadze stated.

He concluded his address by calling on the international community to intensify its efforts to resolve the issue.

Local Initiatives Help Restore Cultural Heritage and Foster Community Engagement in Conflict-Affected Regions

EU and UNDP Empower Civil Society for Peace and Development in Georgia

ZUGDIDI. 28 June 2024 – The European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) support Georgia’s civil society to promote peaceful conflict transformation. Efforts focus on building confidence among divided communities, assisting internally displaced people, and fostering social and economic progress in conflict-affected regions. Over the past four years,

the EU4Dialogue project has catalysed more than 40 civil society initiatives improving local livelihoods and encouraging community engagement in sustainable and equitable development.

On 27 June, UNDP representatives visited Georgia’s Samegrelo region to review the progress of several civil society initiatives promoting local growth and community engagement.

In Zugdidi, they attended the official opening of newly restored mosaic murals relocated from the village of Rukhi, adding a new tourist landmark to the region. The restored murals, ‘Lady in Red,’ ‘Summer in Samegrelo,’

and ‘Musicians,’ are exemplary pieces of 20th-century public art heritage shared by communities across the conflict divide. Their restoration involved Georgian and French experts from the ‘Mosaica Studio’ Crafts Development Centre and the Ribirabo Foundation, supported by the EU4Dialogue project. Local youth from the conflict-affected regions actively participated in the restoration, assisting the experts and learning the craft.

The visit continued at the consultation centre established by the Charity Humanitarian Centre ‘Abkhazeti’ (CHCA), offering psychological support and counselling on various social services

to people living on both sides of the conflict divide. In its first six months of operation, from January through May 2024, the centre provided over 120 face-to-face consultations and received more than 360 calls on the hotline.

“Civil society inspires cultural, economic, and social initiatives that contribute to the well-being of communities affected by conflict. Since 2020, the EU4Dialogue project supported 44 local initiatives, providing conflict-affected communities with economic aid, educational opportunities, employment prospects, counselling, and other types of assistance,” noted Giorgi Vardishvili, UNDP Crises Pre-

vention and Recovery Team Leader in Georgia.

Background Information:

EU4Dialogue: Support to Conflict Transformation in the South Caucasus and the Republic of Moldova is a joint initiative of the EU and UNDP under the broader EU4Dialogue programme. The project partners with local civil society organizations and grassroots groups to improve socio-economic conditions for people, build livelihoods, drive progress toward gender equality, promote youth engagement and support the peaceful transformation of conflict.

Weather

Monday, July 1

Day Showers
High: 27°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 18°C

Tuesday, July 2

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 27°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 19°C

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