

Majority of Georgians Believe Country is Developing in Wrong Direction, Edison Research Finds

By Liza Mchedlidze

A recent survey by Edison Research reveals that 63% of Georgians think the country is developing in the wrong direction, while 37% believe it is heading in the right direction. The study, commissioned by Formula TV company, highlights a growing dissatisfaction among the Georgian population.

According to the last three surveys, the number of those who think the country is developing in the wrong direction has steadily increased. In December, 57% of respondents held this view, and in April, this figure rose to 59%. The latest data, collected in July, indicates a continued upward trend in public discontent.

The sentiment is particularly strong among younger age groups. In the 25-34 age group, 72% believe the country is on the wrong path, and in the 18-24 age group, the figure is 71%. Even in other age brackets, a majority share the view that the country is not moving in the right direction.

Additionally, the survey provided insights into voter prefer-



ences if parliamentary elections were held tomorrow. The results are as follows:

- Georgian Dream/People's Power: 32.4%
- Unity: National Movement/Strategy Aghmashenebeli: 17.3%
- Strong Georgia: Lelo/For the People/Freedom Square: 12.8%
- For Georgia - Giorgi Gakharia: 11.2%
- Coalition Ahali/Girchi/Droa: 9.9%

Edison Research conducted the survey from July 11-24, interviewing 1,000 eligible voters aged 18 and older through face-to-face interviews nationwide. The margin of error is +/-2.5% for Georgia as a whole and for Tbilisi, with a 95% confidence interval.

These findings come at a critical time for Georgia, as the government faces increasing pressure to address various political, economic, and social challenges. The growing discontent among the population, especially among the youth, signals a potential demand for significant changes in policy and governance.

Finance Minister Lasha Khutsishvili Highlights GeoStat's Crucial Role at 105th Anniversary Event

By Liza Mchedlidze

At the 105th anniversary event of the National Statistics Office (GeoStat), H.E. Lasha Khutsishvili, Minister of Finance of Georgia, emphasized the critical importance of high-quality, reliable, and comprehensive statistical information for effective fiscal policy planning. In his address, Minister Khutsishvili praised GeoStat's role in Georgia's development, noting its adherence to international best practices in data production.

"The national statistics office is an exceptional institution that consistently enhances its work quality and provides valuable information to policymakers and other stakeholders," stated Khutsishvili. He highlighted several milestones, including the successful transition to the SNA2008 methodology in 2019, the review of GDP and national accounts indicators this year under the Harmonized European Revision Policy, and GeoStat's early adoption of the new ILO methodology for labor statistics in 2020. According to World Bank data, Georgia's statistics system ranks 15th globally and 14th among European countries.

Khutsishvili also discussed the collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Finance and GeoStat, emphasizing the importance of task force work and efficient data exchange.

"Our cooperation includes addressing various challenges and advancing reforms in statistics as we pursue EU candidate status," he noted.

Minister Khutsishvili congratulated the staff of GeoStat on their anniversary and extended best wishes for their upcoming significant project - the nationwide population census.



The News in Brief

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Opposition to File Lawsuit Against 'Foreign Agents' law in Constitutional Court of Georgia



Part of Georgia's parliamentary opposition will file a lawsuit against the "Foreign Agents" law in the Constitutional Court on July 29.

According to the United National Movement's press office, the lawsuit will be filed by UNM Chairman Tina Bokuchava and Unity-National Movement

leader Tamar Kordzaia, along with other representatives of the parliamentary opposition. A total of 32 opposition MPs have signed the lawsuit.

The opposition is seeking confirmation from the Constitutional Court that the "Foreign

President Salome Zourabichvili and another by 121 non-governmental organizations. A fourth lawsuit is being prepared independently by Gela Mtvlishvili, the founder and editor of Mtis Ambebi.

Kaladze emphasized the severity of the threat, stating, "We are dealing with radicals who are ready to do anything. You can

nounced it is investigating allegations of a plot to murder Bidzina Ivanishvili, the honorary chairman of the Georgian



Tbilisi Mayor Addresses Investigation into Alleged Coup and Assassination Plot

Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze responded to journalists' questions about an ongoing investigation by the State Security Service concerning a coup plot and terrorist attack preparations.

Agents" law does not comply with Articles 22 and 78 of the Georgian Constitution. Additionally, they are requesting that the court adopts a temporary mechanism to suspend the implementation of the law until a final decision is made.

In addition to the opposition's lawsuit, two other lawsuits have already been submitted to the Constitutional Court: one by

see what is happening in the world, not only inside the country but also outside. Look at the presidential candidate Trump; he was shot to death but survived - a rare outcome."

Kaladze further claimed that the "dirty power" in Georgia is funded and supported by foreign patrons. "This is the power that controls everything," he added.

The Security Service an-

Dream party. The alleged plot is said to be organized and financed by former high-ranking officials of the Georgian government and ex-law enforcement officers in Ukraine.

The SS statement indicates that the alleged criminal actions aim to "violently overthrow the state government by creating disturbances in the country and weakening the government."

ADB Invests \$40 Million in Green Bonds for a Climate-Resilient Water Supply in Georgia

TBILISI, GEORGIA (26 July 2024) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has invested \$40 million in a bond issuance by Georgia Global Utilities JSC (GGU). The certified green bond—the largest ever issued from a Georgian private corporate entity—aims to enhance the water system in Tbilisi and neighboring municipalities, building resilience against climate change on surface and groundwater resources.

The financing includes debt investments of \$20 million from ADB's ordinary capital resources and \$20 million from Leading Asia's Private Sector Infrastructure Fund 2, administered by ADB, on behalf of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The investment forms a part of a \$300 million, 5-year issuance by GGU. The funds will



be used to modernize the supply network in and around Tbilisi, ensuring a potable water supply for about 1.4 million residents. The German development finance institution DEG, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the International Finance Corporation are also participating in the bond issuance.

"ADB's anchor investment in GGU's green bond will boost international confidence in Georgia's capital market and enhance the country's climate resilience," said ADB Director

General for Private Sector Operations Suzanne Gaboury. "This investment marks the beginning of a new partnership with FCC Aqualia and strengthens our relationship with Georgia Capital. ADB is committed to supporting developing member countries in mobilizing domestic and foreign private capital for bankable and impactful development projects."

Since 2019, ADB has pioneered environmental, social, and governance (ESG) thematic-bond market development in Georgia. ADB has played a cata-

lyzing role in landmark transactions including the first and largest green, gender, and sustainability-linked bonds in US dollar and local currency. GGU's green bond is certified by Det Norske Veritas and complies with the International Capital Markets Association's Green Bond Principles. Green bonds are used to finance projects that help to achieve climate goals.

"GGU's green bond issuance aims to finance important investments that will improve Georgians' access to safe and reliable water supply while supporting the country's adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change," said FCC Aqualia S.A. Chief Financial Officer Isidoro Marbán. "This landmark transaction promotes sustainable financial instruments and standards in Georgia and the Caucasus region. We are thankful for ADB's support and look forward to further collaboration on climate investments."

Since 2011, ADB has invested over \$800 million in Georgia's water sector contributing to the country's resilience to climate

change. GGU is owned by Aqualia Georgia LLC and Georgia Capital JSC (GCAP), one of Georgia's largest and most diversified investment companies. Aqualia Georgia LLC is a subsidiary of a leading Spanish water company, FCC Aqualia S.A., which operates in 18 countries.

LEAP 2 is an ADB-managed fund with a \$1.5 billion commitment from JICA. It focuses on sustainable private sector infrastructure projects that reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, and provide affordable health care, education, and communication services to ADB's developing member countries. The LEAP 2 investment in the bond issuance by GGU is its second transaction since the fund's replenishment in December 2023.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

Weather

Monday, July 29

Day Partly Cloudy High: 27°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 18°C

Tuesday, July 30

Day Partly Cloudy High: 29°C

Night Clear Low: 20°C

published by The Messenger

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