

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Georgian Prime Minister Calls for Reversal of Anti-Corruption Bureau's Decision on Transparency International

On October 1, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze urged the Anti-Corruption Bureau to reverse its decision to classify Transparency International (TI) Georgia as an organization with "declared election objectives." This request followed the watchdog's announcement that it would no longer be able to observe the upcoming elections under its current status.

The Prime Minister warned that assigning such a designation to civil society organizations (CSOs) could invite "external manipulation." He also stated that TI Georgia's "radical and polarizing political agenda" had been apparent for some time, asserting that the public had already drawn its own conclusions about the group's electoral motives.

Kobakhidze defended the Anti-Corruption Bureau's ruling as "legally correct" and in line with the Law on Citizens' Political Association. However, he suggested that, in the interest of preventing foreign interference in the electoral process, the Bureau should reconsider its decision for TI Georgia and similar organizations. Although TI Georgia was the only organization to contest the Bureau's ruling, the Prime Minister called for discretion to be used in dealing with other CSOs as well.

The Prime Minister also accused TI Georgia of past errors, such as miscalculating votes in the 2020 elections and calling for



the government's resignation in 2022. Despite these claims, he stressed that the organization's current status was not neces-

sary for the public to be cautious of its actions.

Kobakhidze called on the Anti-Corruption Bureau to re-

frain from taking similar actions against other organizations ahead of the October 26 parliamentary elections, adding that

TI Georgia's activities would not have a practical impact on the outcome due to its damaged reputation.



Bidzina Ivanishvili Denies Accusations of Targeting U.S. and EU, Issues Warning on Reputational Damage

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Georgian Dream leader Bidzina Ivanishvili published a detailed letter on October 1, denying accusations that he had targeted the U.S. or the EU during his party's campaign. The letter follows comments he made about the "global war party," which were interpreted by some as critical of Western allies. Ivanishvili clarified that his remarks were not aimed at

the U.S. or the EU, but rather at a group he claimed holds significant influence over political figures in both regions.

Ivanishvili's letter appeared to be a direct response to a social media post shared earlier by the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, which stated, "Bidzina Ivanishvili knows his money linked to Credit Suisse is in the hands of the courts of Bermuda and Singapore, not the U.S. Why is

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7314; Euro - 3.0280; GBP - 3.6380; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9193; Swiss Franc - 3.2248

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he telling Georgians a different

story?" In his response, Ivanishvili refuted these claims, asserting, "The [U.S.] Embassy

cannot cite any statement by me personally or any other leader of Georgian Dream, in which we accuse the U.S. or the EU of financial blackmail against us."

The Georgian Dream leader emphasized that his references to the "Global War Party" were not directed at Western nations but at a faction that he believes wields undue influence over politicians and bureaucrats in the U.S. and the EU. He said that this group is manipulating the situation to make it seem as if Georgia is in conflict with the U.S. and the EU, when in fact,

his party seeks to protect the reputations of these allies.

Ivanishvili further invoked themes from U.S. political discourse, citing the "deep state" and mentioning U.S. presidential candidates Donald Trump and Robert Kennedy Jr. as figures who have raised similar concerns about oligarchic influence and the "war party." He stated that the "Global War Party" is attempting to shield itself by falsely portraying Georgia's situation as a confrontation with the U.S. and EU.

Ivanishvili suggested that

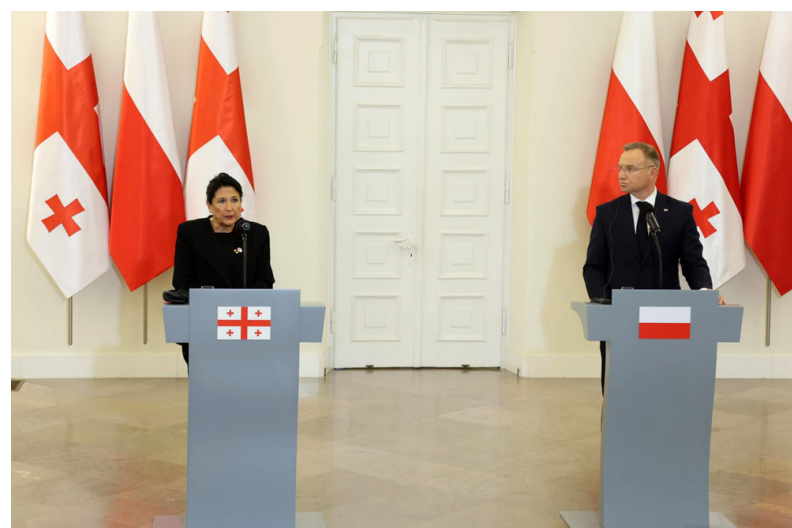
continued Western support for the opposition, specifically the National Movement, could damage the reputation of the U.S. and the EU in Georgia. He argued that if Georgians came to believe that a change in government, contrary to their will, was being driven by the U.S. and EU, it would lead to "irreversible" harm to the image of both Western powers in the country.

Ivanishvili reaffirmed that Georgian Dream is working to prevent any such reputational damage to the U.S. and EU in the eyes of the Georgian public.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Polish President Duda Expresses Support for Georgia's EU Aspirations Ahead of Parliamentary Elections



At a joint press conference with Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili, Polish President

Andrzej Duda emphasized Poland's support for Georgia's aspirations to join the European Union, as the country approaches its parliamentary elections on October 26, 2024.

"Everyone is impatiently waiting for the decision of the population of Georgia," Duda

said, expressing the importance of the upcoming vote. He reiterated that Poland fully backs

Georgia's desire to join the EU, but stressed that the country must have a government committed to meeting the necessary conditions for membership. "Georgia itself must have such a government that really wants and does everything to become a member of the European Union... state agencies of Georgia must be democratic," he added.

Duda also touched on concerns regarding the controversial "foreign agents" law, stating that EU politicians see such laws as limiting the role of NGOs and their democratic work. "It is obvious and perceived that political forces limit non-governmental organizations and their aspiration towards democracy," he said.

"I hope that the population of Georgia will express their opinion and confirm their vote in the upcoming elections," he concluded, thanking Zourabichvili for her visit to Warsaw and highlighting the importance of their ongoing cooperation.

PACE Expresses Concern Over Transparency International Georgia's Forced Halt in Election Monitoring



On October 1, PACE observers and the head of the observer mission expressed "deep concern" over Transparency International Georgia being forced to cease its election monitoring activities. This came after the Anti-Corruption Bureau labeled the organization and its Executive Director, Eka Gigauri, as entities with declared election

objectives.

PACE co-rapporteurs said, "We are deeply concerned by the fact that Transparency International Georgia has been forced to close its election observation operations

because of the deplorable decision by the Anti-Corruption Bureau."

The PACE representatives called on authorities to ensure the integrity of the election process and urged them to allow Transparency International Georgia, along with other respected election observation CSOs, to continue their work without interference.

Response to conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine: EU-funded project presents its achievements

On 25 September, the EU-funded 'Resilient Together' project presented the results of

two years of activities aimed to improve the system of response to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in Ukraine, provide targeted support to survivors, and develop interaction mechanisms

based on international standards and best practices.

The project was launched in October 2022, with the main task of training those who would further provide assistance to

survivors of violence. Thus, the educational component was combined with the communication and information campaign.

Through trainings, study tours, and thematic training programmes, experts in the field developed new knowledge and skills to further use them in practical work with CRSV survivors. Among them are representatives of the police, health sector, social services, and regional NGOs.

Based on international experience, the training course on CRSV issues was developed for judges, and 45 judges-trainers were trained during Training of Trainers sessions to further conduct trainings for colleagues and inform them on the peculiarities of work with CRSV survivors.

"CRSV is Russia's weapon in

this war. We must do everything to ensure that the criminals are punished and brought to justice, while CRSV survivors can receive justice and reparations. Now Ukraine is actively working at the international arena so that Russia's crimes do not go unpunished," said Kateryna Levchenko, Government Commissioner for Gender Policy of Ukraine.

The 'Resilient Together' project was funded by the European Union and implemented by the Ukrainian Women's Fund in partnership with the NGO 'La Strada-Ukraine' and the Ukrainian Women Lawyers Association 'JurFem', and the Government Commissioner on Gender Equality Policy.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Wednesday, October 2

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 21°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 13°C

Thursday, October 3

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 24°C

Night Clear
Low: 11°C

published by

The Messenger

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