

Coalition with Georgian Dream or United National Movement Impossible, Says Giorgi Gakharia

By Liza Mchedlidze

Giorgi Gakharia, leader of the party For Georgia, stated that it is impossible for them to form a political coalition with Georgian Dream. In an interview on Formula TV, he clarified that they are also not considering a coalition with the United National Movement, which is why they signed the President's initiative for a technical government.

"As soon as we get to this parliament, we have two main lines—our political coalition with Georgian Dream is impossible, because they simply changed the country's foreign policy, with unclear motives and reasons, and did harm, especially when we have the resources to negotiate with Europe next year and a half," Gakharia explained.

He further expressed that aligning with the United National Movement is out of the question, stating, "For me and our political force, this is not a whim; it is a worldview choice. This choice lies in the fact that, despite anything that happens, we will not be in the government of the United National Movement or with them in any form." He emphasized that their last-minute support for the



President's charter was driven by the realization that other parties might align differently after the elections.

Gakharia asserted that if For Georgia's votes are decisive, they will set their own proposals and conditions: "Our compromise will be that our proposals will not be a party-bought off government... the most important thing is that these are not political figures, but technical civil servants of different administrations and bureaucracy."

He highlighted the importance of opening negotiations with the European Union as a determining factor for his party. "These blocking factors will be determined by the next year and a half, when the country has the resources to catch up with Moldova in the process of opening negotiations with the European Union," he said. Gakharia emphasized that if these negotiations were not at stake, he would not focus on a technical government.

Gakharia concluded by stating that while friction between parties is inevitable, the technical government initiative is a means to postpone political conflicts, ensuring they do not miss the opportunity to move toward European integration.

Finance Ministry Targets Atlantic Council Employees in Alleged Tax Evasion Probe Ahead of Elections

By Liza Mchedlidze

In the early hours of October 24, just three days before Georgia's parliamentary elections, the Investigative Service of the Ministry of Finance conducted several searches targeting employees of the Atlantic Council, an American think tank focused on Russian information operations in Georgia.

Giorgi Noniashvili, a politician and co-founder of the Federalist Party, which is not running for the upcoming elections, reported on Facebook that his home was searched by the Ministry of Finance. Officials seized electronic devices belonging to him, his wife Sopo Gelava, and even their minor child. Gelava, an employee of the Atlantic Council, expressed skepticism about the timing of the search, suggesting it was linked to her work on disinformation and Russian influence in Georgia.

Another Atlantic Council employee, Eto Buziashvili, experienced a similar search. Speaking to Formula TV, Buziashvili stated that ministry officials misled her by posing as gas company representatives addressing technical issues. The search lasted nearly two hours, during

which she was denied the opportunity to contact her lawyer. Buziashvili emphasized that officials confiscated her work laptop, which is vital for her research on Russian interference in Georgia's elections.

In addition to the searches of individual homes, the Investigative Service also searched the American company Concentrix Georgia, located in Vake Plaza, Tbilisi. Concentrix is a technology and services firm that consults for major brands in over 70 countries.

The investigative service also conducted searches at the home of businessman Valeri Tkeshelashvili in Kutaisi, accusing him of connections to "call centers."

The Ministry of Finance stated that the searches are part of an investigation into alleged tax evasion, fraud, and money laundering involving a company contracted by the Atlantic Council. However, the timing and targets of the searches have sparked concerns over potential political motivations, especially given the Council's focus on Russian disinformation.

The Investigative Service claims to have searched three



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7174; Euro - 2.9356; GBP - 3.5253; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8086; Swiss Franc - 3.1401

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alleged “call centers.” “According to operational information related to the criminal case, searches were conducted based on a judge’s decision. The activities of these call centers are connected to the same type of crime under investigation, and we are dealing with finances of a much

larger scale,” the statement read. The investigative service reported that its personnel discovered various types of equipment, devices, and documentation containing electronic information during the searches. They indicated that they would periodically update the public on the progress and results of the investigation.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

U.S. National Security Advisor Raises Concerns Over Georgia’s Election Process



On October 23, U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan voiced concerns about Georgia’s electoral integrity during an event at the Brookings Institution in Washington. Addressing a question from Globalnews.ge, Sullivan highlighted ongoing issues with democratic institutions and election transparency in Georgia.

“We’ve made our concerns very clear about the trajectory of democratic institutions and the electoral process in Georgia, and we remain very concerned about it,” Sullivan stated. He emphasized the importance of a free and fair process, adding, “I don’t think anyone in Georgia

wants to mortgage their country to any other country, including the PRC.”

His remarks came as part of a broader discussion on President Biden’s international economic strategy but spotlighted the U.S.’s stance on the state of democ-

racy in Georgia.

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze quickly responded, dismissing Sullivan’s concerns and defending Georgia’s independence. “Georgia has a 3,000-year history in which no one has dared to mortgage Georgia, let alone use such terminology,” he remarked. Kobakhidze further suggested that relations between Georgia and the U.S. will reset after the upcoming elections and the conclusion of the war in Ukraine, stating, “No one will dare to tell Georgia that it must go into the forest like a partisan and fight for global interests from there.” Kobakhidze’s comment was a reference

to a claim made by Georgian Dream Honorary Chairman Bidzina Ivanishvili on October 22, where he alleged that a high-ranking official from an unnamed country suggested that former Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili lead Georgians into war against Russia, fighting ‘like partisans’ in exchange for support.

Former Ministry of Internal Affairs Employee Claims Dismissal Over Criticism of Protest Crackdown



Ramin Siradze, a former employee of Georgia’s Ministry of Internal Affairs, has alleged that he was dismissed from his position due to his outspoken criticism of the police’s violent actions against protestors. According to Siradze, he worked in the General Inspection of the Ministry and was let go after he and a co-worker

expressed opposition to the brutal treatment of demonstrators during protests against a controversial “Russian law”.

Siradze recalled a specific incident where he intervened to save an elderly protestor from being severely beaten by special forces. “During the protests, I and some colleagues barely managed to pull a 60-65-year-old man from the hands of the angered special forces near the first school,” he recounted. He added that after voicing his objection to the excessive force used against protestors, he and a colleague

were called in and pressured to resign.

“They told us that we condemn the police and stand on the other side, and we had to write a resignation letter and leave the job,” Siradze explained, emphasizing that he was dismissed for speaking out against the excessive violence during the demonstrations.

EU: Russia must immediately stop atrocious treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war

“Russia’s atrocious treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war is inexcusable and it must stop

immediately,” EU High Representative Josep Borrell said in a speech, delivered at the Euro-

pean Parliament on his behalf by Commissioner for Justice, Didier Reynders, on 23 October.

Borrell reminded that last week reports had said that nine Ukrainian prisoners of war had been shot by Russian troops in Kursk. On 1 October, the Office of the Prosecutor-General also opened an investigation into the reported execution of another 16 prisoners having surrendered to Russian troops in Donetsk. So far, at least 177 Ukrainian prisoners have been reported to have died in Russian captivity. “This is unacceptable,” Borrell said.

Borrell also cited a report of the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights

published on 1 October. It says that the use of torture against prisoners is “systematic”. “Prisoners of war are subjected to different types of torture, from severe beatings to sexual violence, humiliation and starvation at all stages of captivity,” Borrell said.

Borrell demanded that independent monitors also be granted access to the prisoners, and called on Russia to uphold its commitments to international humanitarian law and ensure that the brutal executions and torture of Ukrainian prisoners should cease.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Friday, October 25

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 17°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 8°C

Saturday, October 26

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 12°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 5°C

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