

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Georgian President Addresses Rally, Refuses to Accept Election Results

President Salome Zourabichvili addressed a massive rally at Rustaveli Avenue on October 28, following her call to action in response to Georgia's controversial parliamentary elections. Speaking to a crowd gathered in front of the Georgian Parliament, she rejected the official election results, stating that "nothing can make them legitimate" and vowing to support Georgians "until we reach Europe's doors."

"You have not lost the elections! Your vote was stolen," Zourabichvili told the rally, urging citizens to protect their constitutional right to free and fair elections. She emphasized that the Georgian people's future lies within the European Union and that their votes for this future had been unjustly taken.

In her speech, she detailed a day of diplomatic outreach, reporting that she had spoken to multiple European leaders, six presidents, and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, all of whom supported the call for an investigation into alleged electoral fraud. Without naming him directly, she criticized Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who is visiting Tbilisi, stating that "no one" recognizes



these election results except "the one who just passed by."

Zourabichvili urged for a thorough investigation, noting involvement from local observer

missions, civil society organizations, and international partners. She described the election process as a pre-planned operation that "stole our votes, our Parliament,

and our Constitution."

"We have nothing else but our votes," she told the crowd, adding that political parties will soon present a plan of action.

Zourabichvili concluded by rallying the people to stand united for Georgia's European future, saying, "Give your vote to Europe, to the future, to Georgia!"

European Ministers Condemn Election Violations in Georgia, Demand Accountability

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

In a unified response to recent elections in Georgia, a coalition of European ministers has expressed deep concerns over violations reported by international observers during both the campaign period and election day itself. The group of European leaders emphasized the importance of adhering to international norms for free and fair elections, demanding that Georgian authorities conduct an impartial inquiry into the reported irregularities and ensure appropriate remedies are implemented.

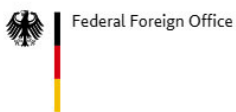
The ministers condemned any infringement on electoral integrity, describing it as incompatible with Georgia's aspirations toward European Union membership. They highlighted that maintaining rule of law and upholding electoral standards are essential for Georgia's EU pathway, stressing that deviations from these principles betray the legitimate European aspirations of the Georgian people.

Additionally, the coalition called for peaceful protests and government responses, underscoring the need for restraint to avoid any escalation of tensions. They also voiced criticism of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's recent visit to Georgia, stressing that his ac-

tions did not represent the broader EU stance on the situation.

"We are deeply concerned about the current situation in Georgia. International observers reported violations during the election campaign as well as on election day. We condemn all violation of international norms for free and fair elections. We share their concerns and demand an impartial inquiry of complaints and remedy of the violations established. We stand in this difficult time at the side of Georgians. It is important that protests and in particular government reaction to them remain peaceful. The violations of electoral integrity are incompatible with the standards expected from a candidate to the European Union. They are a betrayal of the Georgian people's legitimate European aspiration. Upholding the rule of law and free and fair elections is integral to any progress on Georgia's EU path. We criticize Prime Minister Orbán's premature visit to Georgia. He does not speak on behalf of the EU," the statement reads.

The statement was jointly issued by a coalition of ministers from Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden.



Federal Foreign Office > News > Newsroom > Joint Statement of EU ministers on the elections in Georgia

Joint Statement of EU ministers on the elections in Georgia

28.10.2024 - Press release

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The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Gakharia Rejects Legitimacy of Parliament, Citing Systemic Election Fraud and Government Involvement



Giorgi Gakharia, leader of the For Georgia party, announced that his party will not enter the Georgian Parliament, describing it as "illegitimate" under the control of the Georgian Dream party. "Our party will not give legitimacy to the illegitimate parliament of Georgian

Dream," Gakharia said at a recent press conference.

Gakharia provided specifics on the alleged manipulation schemes, claiming they were orchestrated in a "systemic" manner, and asserted that his party is working with election observation mis-

sions to build a case. "Today, the most important thing is to reveal which fraud schemes had a systemic character. For this purpose, we cooperate with observation missions and today we have enough evidence," Gakharia stated.

He alleged that various government bodies were involved in the scheme, in-

cluding the Central Election Commission (CEC), the Ministry of Justice, and the State Security Service. He pointed out their suspected roles in what he described as targeted ID card tampering, adding: "The heaviest of the listed violations – manipulation of ID cards – would have been impossible without the coordinated work of the State Security Service, CEC, and the Ministry of Justice."

In addition to ID manipulation, Gakharia listed tactics like "staffing election commissions with people related to the party, their relatives, and related persons" and exerting "systemic pressure on public officials and socially vulnerable groups." He also highlighted "systematic bribery and distribution of money" as prevalent strategies.

"We have more than enough evidence to refer to the prosecutor's office tomorrow or at the latest the day after this most serious manipulation scheme," Gakharia said.

Opposition Claims Evidence of Election Interference, Calls for Re-Election

Ana Natsvlishvili, a representative of Strong Georgia party, claims the opposition has a detailed plan to challenge the recent election results, accusing the government of election manipulation. She stated that the opposition has "deciphered the scheme by which they hijacked the elections" on October 26, and they are now demanding the immediate release of specific electoral lists that they believe contain "irrefutable evidence" of fraud. If the authorities do not release these lists within 24 hours, Natsvlishvili warned, it would further validate the opposition's accusations.

Natsvlishvili also emphasized that the opposition will leverage international platforms to substantiate these claims, underscoring the call for the elections to be re-conducted under an International Election Administration. The opposition, in response to these alleged irregularities, has refused to join parliament, focusing instead on consolidating evidence and pressing for electoral accountability on an international level.



EU and UNDP provide five vehicles for psychologists of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine

According to the Recovery Window network, a media partner of the EU NEIGHBOURS

east programme, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP) delivered five new Peugeot Traveller vehicles to the State Emergency Service of

Ukraine on 23 October.

Thanks to these vehicles, psychologists of the State Emergency

Service

will be able to work in frontline areas, arriving promptly at the sites of shelling and other emergencies.

The vehicles were donated as part of the EU-funded 'EU4Recovery – Community Empowerment in Ukraine' project, implemented by UNDP.

The Ukraine Recovery Window media network brings together 80 independent regional and national media and analytical platforms to monitor and report on all aspects of reconstruction in Ukraine, highlighting EU and international donor support for recovery. The Recovery Window network is a partner of the EU NEIGHBOURS east programme.

(eunighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Tuesday, October 29

Day ☀ Clear High: 18°C

Night 🌙 Clear Low: 4°C

Wednesday, October 30

Day ☀ Clear High: 17°C

Night 🌙 Clear Low: 5°C

published by **The Messenger**

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