

## President Zourabichvili Condemns Psychological Intimidation Amid State Security Plot Warning

By Liza Mchedlidze

The State Security Service of Georgia issued a statement alleging the existence of a criminal plan to escalate protests in Tbilisi into violent efforts to overthrow the government. The statement, released amidst ongoing demonstrations outside the Parliament building, accuses "local actors" and foreign coordination of attempting to incite unrest through violence and propaganda.

The Security Service claims that these alleged organizers aim to disrupt the presidential election scheduled for December 14. According to the statement, the perpetrators plan to intensify protests in the coming days, potentially resulting in casualties to amplify public outrage.

"For this purpose, the organizers of the crime are considering, especially on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the current week, as well as partially on Friday, to intensify the situation as much as possible, which should result in 2-3 victims," the statement reads.

The statement also implicates masked individuals in acts of violence, including assaults on law enforcement and civilians, suggesting these are part of a



broader strategy to destabilize the government. One notable incident cited is the attack on journalists, described as a likely component of the alleged criminal plan.

The Service warns of a "color revolution" scenario involving staged rituals, destruction, and

violence to incite public anger and undermine the authorities. It claims that foreign special services are involved in coordinating these efforts.

In response, President Salome Zourabichvili criticized the Security Service's statement, accusing it of employing

psychological intimidation tactics against citizens.

"This spinning of some scenarios, whatever scenario includes 'corpses,' is psychological terrorizing of people," Zourabichvili said. She argued that the peaceful nature of the protests is evident by the ab-

sence of Titushky or "others" inciting violence against demonstrators.

The president further suggested that the statement might infringe on human rights, as it portrays an alarming narrative without substantial evidence, potentially stoking public fear.

## PACE Rapporteurs Express Concern Over Arrests, Police Brutality, and Impunity in Georgia

By Liza Mchedlidze

The PACE monitoring rapporteurs for Georgia, Claude Kern (France, ALDE) and Edite Estrela (Portugal, SOC), expressed deep concern on December 9 regarding the recent arrests and pretrial detentions of opposition and protest leaders, along with police raids on their offices. These actions, according to the rapporteurs, were carried out on questionable legal grounds, with reference to controversial provisions in Georgia's administrative offences code, which they argue is prone to political abuse.

The rapporteurs condemned the violence and excessive use of force by police during the arrests, raising concerns about the potential for politically motivated prosecutions. "This raises questions about the possibility of politically motivated prosecution and justice, which have no place in a democratic society based on rule of law," said Kern and Estrela.

The rapporteurs also strongly criticized the ongoing police brutality against journalists and peaceful demonstrators, including young people, which has been repeatedly confirmed by the Georgian Public Defender. "There seems to be a sense of impunity for police violence and excessive use of force against protesters and journalists, which is unacceptable," they emphasized.

Kern and Estrela called on the Georgian authorities to respect the rights to freedom of expression and assembly, as required by their obligations as a member of the Council of Europe. They also urged the authorities to conduct full, transparent investigations into all reports of police violence and hold those responsible accountable.



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### PACE monitors express concern at the arrest of opposition leaders and police brutality against journalists and peaceful protesters in Georgia

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The PACE monitoring rapporteurs for Georgia, Claude Kern (France, ALDE) and Edite Estrela (Portugal, SOC) today expressed their deep concern about the arrests and pretrial detentions of opposition and protests leaders as well as the raiding of their offices by the police, reportedly on questionable legal grounds and on the basis of provisions in the controversial code of administrative offences that is vulnerable to political abuse.

"Together with the reported violence and excessive use of force by the police during the arrests, this raises questions about the possibility of politically motivated prosecution and justice, which have no place in a democratic society based on rule of law," they said.

The rapporteurs also condemned the police brutality against journalists and peaceful demonstrators, including youth, that continues unabated, as confirmed by the Georgian Public Defender. "There seems to be a sense of impunity for police violence and excessive use of force against protesters and journalists which is unacceptable," said the rapporteurs who urged the authorities to fully respect the rights of freedom of expression and assembly, in line with their obligations as a member of the Council of Europe.

In addition, they called upon the authorities to investigate fully, effectively, and transparently all reported cases of violence and excessive use of force by the police, and to hold those responsible accountable to the fullest extent of the law. "The impunity for such lamentable behaviour should end," Mr Kern and Ms Estrela concluded.

The rapporteurs will make a fact-finding visit to Tbilisi early January.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

**Hungary Vows to Veto EU Sanctions Against Georgian Officials**



Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjártó announced on December 9 that Hungary would veto any European Union proposal to sanction Georgian government officials, following a proposal to place the Georgian Minister of the Interior and two high-ranking police officers on the EU sanctions list. Speaking at a joint press conference with Georgian Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili, Szijjártó stated, "Hungary is completely against the fact that Georgian government officials should be put on a sanction list."

Szijjártó expressed Hungary's strong opposition to what he described as the EU's undemocratic approach toward Georgia, citing the Georgian

government's recent controversial victory in elections. He claimed that if the opposition had won, Brussels would have lauded the country's democratic progress. However, he argued, "Now that a con-

servative party has won, they are doing everything in their power to dismiss and ignore the will of the people."

The Hungarian foreign minister also criticized the European Parliament's recent resolution, which he said addressed Georgia in a "humiliating manner". He pointed to a broader pattern of actions from the EU's liberal mainstream, which he claimed was undermining Georgia's European integration efforts. "We believe this approach is not only harmful but also dangerously misguided," he added.

Szijjártó reaffirmed Hungary's commitment to supporting Georgia's European aspirations, stating that unlike Brussels, Hungary respects the decision

of the Georgian people and their sovereign right to determine their country's future. He declared that Hungary would veto any EU proposals targeting Georgian officials, calling the sanctions proposal "outrageous and unsupported by any evidence."

**President Zourabichvili Honors 34 Journalists for Their Dedication and Bravery**

On December 9, President Salome Zourabichvili awarded medals to 34 Georgian journalists in recognition of their civic dedication, responsibility, and personal bravery. The ceremony took place at the Orbeliani Palace.

Before presenting the awards, Zourabichvili addressed the media, expressing gratitude for their commitment. She emphasized that journalists are at the forefront of defending the country's

identity, values, language, and beliefs, describing their role as vital to the future of Georgia.

"You stand guard over this country. You are the ones who have not only taken up the camera and microphone but also the future and destiny of this nation. For this, you will be remembered in the history of Georgia as heroes of today's era," said Zourabichvili. She acknowledged the courage required to report from dangerous locations, where journalists often face physical risks and emotional challenges.

The president highlighted the importance of the media as a window through which the public learns about events unfolding in the country. "If it weren't for you, those who cannot be at the protests would not know what's happening. Your presence is crucial to ensuring that the people of Georgia remain informed about the fight against injustice," she noted.



**'Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now' – EU celebrates Human Rights Day**

December 10, on Human Rights Day, the European Union reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the universal respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights for everyone, everywhere, says a press release by the European Commission. This year's theme is "Our Rights, Our Future, Right Now".

"Human rights are legal, moral and actionable guarantees universal to humankind. They



are essential for human dignity, equality, democracy, peace and sustainable development," the European Commission says in its statement.

It also says that now, more than ever, the world is confronted with armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, climate disasters, impunity, growing inequalities, and persistent gender inequality.

"The international rules-based order, with human rights at its core, remains

irreplaceable. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and conflicts in the Middle East, Sudan and elsewhere, have appalling consequences for the enjoyment of human rights of civilian populations, affecting especially women and children," the statement says.

The European Commission also says that peace is not merely the absence of war and it requires daily work and continuous advocating for human rights.

"The EU will continue to promote and protect human rights for everyone, everywhere — Your Rights, Your Future, Right Now and Always," the statement concludes.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, December 11

Day Cloudy  
High: 11°C

Night Mostly Cloudy  
Low: 3°C

Thursday, December 12

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 11°C

Night Mostly Cloudy  
Low: 3°C

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