

TI-Georgia Denounces Legitimacy of December 14 Presidential Election

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Transparency International-Georgia (TI-Georgia) has condemned the December 14 presidential election as "illegitimate," asserting that both the electoral process and the newly elected president lack legitimacy under the current government. In a statement released following the election, the organization criticized the actions of the Georgian Dream party, accusing it of undermining democratic principles and further aggravating the political crisis in the country.

The statement from TI-Georgia asserts that Mikheil Kavelashvili's election as president was the result of a highly undemocratic process. "On December 14, 2024, Bidzina Ivanishvili and his party elected their own president," the statement reads. It highlights that the Georgian Dream party had previously rigged the October 26, 2024, parliamentary elections and seized power. According to Transparency International, this usurpation of power led to the election of Kavelashvili by an illegitimate parliament.

The organization emphasized that the parliamentary session that formally recognized Kavelashvili's election took place in gross violation of Georgia's Constitution. The session, the



statement notes, was convened without the authority of the President, which is required by Georgian law. Furthermore, the legitimacy of the parliament's members was being challenged in the Constitutional Court at the time, further undermining the parliamentary body's ability to appoint a legitimate president.

"Given the Georgian legislation, Georgian society does not recognize the president elected by the Georgian Dream as the legitimate president of Georgia," TI-Georgia stated. The organization warned that by continuing with the election process in disregard of the Constitution, Bidzina Ivanishvili and his party were exacerbating the ongoing political crisis in the country.

TI-Georgia urged Ivanishvili to halt actions that would further destabilize the country. "We once again call on Bidzina Ivanishvili to stop deepening the political crisis in the country and act in accordance with the interests of Georgia and its citizens, to uphold the law and the Constitution," the statement concluded.

TI also called for urgent reforms, including the release of individuals arrested during protests and the cessation of all charges against them. The organization demanded the holding of new elections under a fair and impartial framework, with a new election administration and political neutrality in law enforcement agencies such as the State Security Service, Special Investigation Service, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.



11 December, 2024

To: Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU Member States, Members of the Foreign Affairs Council, European Union

H.E. Kaja Kallas, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission

Urgent Request for Decisive EU Action to Support Democracy in Georgia: A Joint Appeal from Georgian Political Parties and Coalitions

Excellencies,

In light of the upcoming meeting of the EU's Foreign Affairs Council we would like to update you regarding the current situation in our country. Georgia is facing an unprecedented political crisis that demands immediate EU action. Following rigged parliamentary elections in October 2024, the self-proclaimed regime of Bidzina Ivanishvili suspended EU accession negotiations until 2028. This has sparked peaceful protests that are being suppressed with the state-organized terror. The decision of the regime to put on hold the EU membership accession process has come as a shocking betrayal, even to those who voted for the Georgian Dream party.

Georgian Opposition Parties Appeal to EU Leaders for Urgent Action Amid Political Crisis

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

In a letter addressed to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of EU Member States, the Members of the Foreign Affairs Council, and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas, Georgian political parties and coalitions have called for decisive EU intervention to address a severe political crisis in the country. The letter outlines allegations of election fraud, state-sponsored violence, and political repression following the ruling Georgian Dream party's decision to suspend EU accession negotiations until 2028.

The letter begins by describing the crisis as a direct consequence

of the October 2024 parliamentary elections, which it claims were rigged. According to the parties, the regime of Bidzina Ivanishvili unilaterally suspended EU membership negotiations, a decision that sparked widespread protests across the country.

"Following rigged parliamentary elections in October 2024, the self-proclaimed regime of Bidzina Ivanishvili suspended EU accession negotiations until 2028," the letter states. "This has sparked peaceful protests that are being suppressed with state-organized terror."

The letter provides detailed accounts of alleged violence and

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8448; Euro - 2.9842; GBP - 3.5961; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.7304; Swiss Franc - 3.1832

Georgian Opposition Parties Appeal to EU Leaders for Urgent Action Amid Political Crisis

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repression. It claims that as of December 9, over 500 individuals, including minors, have been arrested during protests and house raids. It further alleges that more than 300 people, including 73 journalists, have been subjected to violence by govern-

ment-controlled special forces and masked street gangs.

“Even Georgian Dream-appointed Public Defender, Levan Ioseliani, while assessing the facts, admitted that ‘physical violence is an understatement,’” the letter notes. Despite the documented evidence, the letter claims no investigations have

been initiated, and those responsible remain unaccountable.

The letter also outlines what it describes as systematic political persecution. It claims opposition leaders have faced violent attacks, including during a protest in Tbilisi on December 5, where police allegedly failed to intervene. Two opposition leaders, Nika Gvaramia (Akhali) and Aleko Elisashvili (Strong Georgia), were reportedly arrested, with Elisashvili sustaining severe injuries and facing criminal charges.

Additionally, the letter warns against the election of Mikheil Kavelashvili as Georgia’s president on December 14, describing him as a pro-government figure involved in anti-Western propaganda. “If elected by Ivanishvili’s self-proclaimed and illegitimate

parliament, [Kavelashvili] will have neither independence nor legitimacy,” it asserts.

The letter calls for new elections under an improved electoral framework, free from political influence. It urges the EU to take several immediate actions to support the Georgian people, including:

- Demanding the release of all detained politicians, activists, and demonstrators.

- Imposing targeted sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili and other officials involved in political repression.

- Suspending visa-free access for Georgian officials associated with the current regime.

- Declaring the regime of Bidzina Ivanishvili illegitimate in official EU statements.

- Suspending diplomatic engagement with the Georgian government until it agrees to hold free and fair elections.

The letter concludes by emphasizing the courage of the Georgian people in resisting what it describes as Russian-backed authoritarianism. It urges the EU to stand with Georgia in its fight for democracy and a European future, stating, “Your clear and resolute voice, coupled with decisive actions, will play a pivotal role in de-escalating the alarming situation in Georgia and restoring the country’s constitutional framework.”

The letter is signed by Nika Melia (Coalition for Changes), Tina Bokuchava (Unity National Movement), Mamuka Khazaradze (Lelo for People), Zaza Tavadze (Gakharia for Georgia).

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Estonia Imposes Additional Sanctions on Georgian Officials



Margus Tsahkna
5.9K followers • 73 following

Estonia’s Foreign Minister, Margus Tsahkna, announced new sanctions against 14 Georgian officials and judges, including PM Irakli Kobakhidze. The move targets what Estonia describes as a “brutal and repressive regime” aimed at peaceful citizens.

The decision precedes the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting on December 16, where Union-wide sanctions against

Georgian Dream officials are set to be discussed.

“The violence the Georgian authorities are using against protesters, journalists, and opposition leaders is unacceptable,

criminal, and against human rights,” Tsahkna stated. He urged EU nations to take similar measures against those undermining democracy in Georgia.

With these latest sanctions, Estonia has now targeted 25 Georgian officials. The measures follow international backlash over the Georgian government’s handling of protests. Demonstrations erupted after Kobakhidze announced a suspension of Georgia’s EU integration process until 2028.

Lithuania Expands Sanctions on Georgian Officials

Lithuania has imposed sanctions on 17 Georgian politicians, including Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, over violent

nia, we have expanded the list of sanctioned Georgian politicians by adding 17 more individuals, including Prime Minister Kobakhidze. We will not tolerate violence and oppression against peaceful



crackdowns on peaceful protesters. Foreign Minister Kęstutis Budrys announced the decision, highlighting Lithuania’s support for the Georgian people and their European aspirations.

“Lithuania stands with the people of Georgia and their European dream,” Budrys said. “In coordination with Esto-

protesters, journalists, and the opposition. It’s time for joint EU-level action now.”

The announcement comes ahead of the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting on December 16, where Union-wide sanctions against Georgian Dream officials will be discussed.

Two Georgian films honored with EU Special Prize for Human Rights

Two Georgians films have received the ‘EU Human Rights in Film Award’ at the closing ceremony of the 25th Tbilisi Inter-

national Film Festival.

This year, the EU Delegation presented the Special Prize in partnership with World Vision



Georgia.

The EU Special Prize celebrates achievements in two distinct categories: fiction and documentary. The award for Best Documentary went to Blueberry Dreams, directed by Elene Mikaberidze, while Holy Electricity, directed by Tato Kotetishvili, won the Best Fiction award. The winners were se-

lected by a jury of professional film critics and experts in the field of human rights protection.

Speaking at the ceremony at the Amirani Cinema, EU Head of Cooperation Nicholas Cendrowicz said that the ‘EU Human Rights in Film’ Award is now “more important than ever”.

“We deplore the excessive use of force against the people who are gathering in the streets to say loud and clear that they aspire for democracy and that Georgia belongs in the EU. That includes a Georgia where human

rights are protected,” Cendrowicz said.

This year, 14 films were nominated in the EU special prize categories, each addressing vital human rights issues through the power of storytelling.

The Special Award of the European Union Delegation to Georgia – ‘EU Human Rights in Film Award’ – was established to mark Human Rights Day, celebrated on 10 December. The special award was presented for the sixth time this year.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Monday, December 16

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 7°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 1°C

Tuesday, December 17

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 7°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 1°C

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