

Georgian Dream Accuses UK of Falling Under 'Deep State' Influence in Ivanishvili Sanctions Debate

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Georgian Dream party has issued a statement accusing the United Kingdom of falling under the influence of a "Deep State" conspiracy as the UK House of Commons considers sanctions against Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of the party. This initiative follows the UK's decision to sanction Vaktang Gomelauri, Georgia's Minister of Internal Affairs, and other high-ranking officials.

The statement sharply criticized the UK government, alleging it has abandoned its historic commitment to justice and the rule of law. It also accused the UK of aligning with forces they described as the "Global War Party" in an effort to undermine Georgia's sovereignty.

The Georgian Dream statement underscored the United Kingdom's historical contributions to the development of human rights and procedural fairness, particularly the right to a fair trial. However, it claimed that these principles are being disregarded in the current context.

"It is surprising that what was understood in England back in the 13th and 17th centuries was completely forgotten and trampled underfoot by the Brit-



ish government in the 21st century," the statement declared.

The party condemned the sanctions initiative as politically motivated, claiming it lacks any factual basis or due process. It framed the potential sanctions against Ivanishvili as emblematic of a broader trend of unjust actions by Western nations.

The statement likened the UK's potential actions to what it described as "five unjust and shameful anti-Georgian resolutions" passed by the European Parliament. It also referenced sanctions imposed by Ukraine, Lithuania, and Estonia, accusing them of similarly acting without evidence.

"We all remember the unfair and shameful Ukrainian sanctions against Georgian politicians, civil servants, and their family members, which were not supported by any facts or evidence," the party wrote. It claimed these measures are part of a coordinated effort by the "Deep State" to undermine Georgia's independence.

The statement defended Ivanishvili's legacy, asserting that his role in Georgian politics was pivotal to the country's democratic transition and economic growth.

"Today, without any basis, sanctions are being threatened against the leader of the ruling party of Georgia, who saved Georgia from authoritarian rule, brought a democratic transition to the country, ended the systematic practice of murdering and torturing people, business racketeering, kidnapping the media, and rigging elections, maintained the country for 12 years of continuous peace, and tripled the economy," the statement reads.

The statement issued a dire warning about the potential consequences for the UK's global standing if sanctions against Ivanishvili are imposed.

"If Great Britain imposes

sanctions against Bidzina Ivanishvili, it will be clearly seen that the 'Deep State' has brought Great Britain to the level of Ukraine, Lithuania, Estonia, and the European Parliament, which should be considered an exceptionally tragic event considering the historical past of this state," it read.

The party further claimed that such actions would tarnish Britain's reputation as a nation rooted in justice and human rights. "Britain's authority as a nation based on the rule of law and basic human rights will finally be a thing of the past," the statement said.

Georgian Dream alleged that the UK is being manipulated by a "Deep State" or "Global War Party," which it accuses of orchestrating a campaign to destabilize sovereign nations.

"It is extremely disturbing that a country like Great Britain has today been turned into another plaything by the Deep State, a.k.a. the Global War Party, just like Ukraine, Lithuania, Estonia, and the European Parliament," the statement declared.

This statement is the latest in a series of confrontations between Georgian Dream and Western nations.

Press release

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MEPs Condemn Political Violence and Call for Action in Georgia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have issued a joint statement expressing deep concern over the worsening political climate in Georgia, following allegations of violence and democratic backsliding under the ruling Georgian Dream party.

The statement, released on Thursday, highlights the recent violent assault on former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia in a Batumi hotel, describing it as symptomatic of a broader trend of escalating violence against opposition figures and peaceful protesters.

"We express our profound concern regarding the further deterioration of the political situation in Georgia. We are shocked by the news that former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia was violently assaulted in a Batumi

hotel and afterwards treated in hospital. This is yet another example of the escalating violence orchestrated by the Georgian Dream and its allies against peaceful protesters and dissidents," the MEPs said.

The MEPs voiced solidarity with the ongoing protests in Georgia, where citizens have demonstrated for 50 consecutive days in support of democratic and Euro-Atlantic integration.

"We stand with the peaceful protesters who for 50 days have been demonstrating every evening in the streets of Georgia for a democratic and Euro-Atlantic future of their country. Georgia was for many years a champion of Euro-Atlantic aspirations with an overwhelming support of the people for this choice. That has not changed. What has changed is that the

Georgia: Leading MEPs condemn the violence against political opponents

In a statement issued on Thursday, leading MEPs express their profound concern regarding the further deterioration of the political situation in Georgia.

The Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs David McAllister, the Chair of the Delegation to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly Sergey Lagodinsky, the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus Nils Ušakovs, the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur for Georgia Rasa Juknevičienė and the Chair of the European Parliament's Election Observation Mission for the 2024 parliamentary elections in Georgia Antonio López-Istúriz White issued the following statement on Thursday.

"We express our profound concern regarding the further deterioration of the political situation in Georgia. We are shocked by the news that former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia was violently assaulted in a Batumi hotel and afterwards treated in hospital. This is yet another example of the escalating violence orchestrated by the Georgian Dream and its allies against peaceful protesters and dissidents.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8412; Euro - 2.9236; GBP - 3.4677; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.7747; Swiss Franc - 3.1171

MEPs Condemn Political Violence and Call for Action in Georgia

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Georgian Dream has denied Georgians their future and does not even pretend anymore that they want a European democracy for Georgia.”

Citing irregularities, the

MEPs rejected the results of Georgia’s October 26, 2024, parliamentary elections, describing them as fraudulent and failing to meet international democratic standards.

“The deteriorating situation in Georgia should not stay without

a response. We stand by the position that currently President Salome Zourabichvili is the only clearly legitimate representative of the will of the Georgian people. We do not recognise the results of the parliamentary elections on 26 October 2024, as they were fraudulent and did not respect international standards for democratic elections. We do not recognise any decisions taken by this body,” the statement read.

The MEPs urged the EU and Member States to impose personal sanctions on individuals deemed responsible for Georgia’s democratic decline, specifically naming Bidzina Ivanishvili and Irakli Kobakhidze.

“We strongly encourage the EU and its Member States to introduce personal sanctions against all those who are responsible for the democratic backsliding, in particular Bidzina Ivanishvili and Irakli Kobakhidze,” they stated.

Additionally, the statement called for suspending the EU-Georgia Association Council and avoiding any legitimization of the Georgian Dream government.

“We encourage individual Member States and relevant regional organisations to avoid actively legitimising the self-appointed Georgian Dream authorities and call in this regard

for suspending the EU Georgia Association Council,” the MEPs urged.

The MEPs called for early elections under an independent and impartial election administration, with extensive international observation to ensure transparency and fairness.

“We urgently call for early elections, conducted in an improved election environment, managed by an independent and impartial election administration with widespread international observation, to ensure a genuinely free, fair and transparent process that would represent the will of the people of Georgia.”

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

ECtHR Blocks Extradition of Azerbaijani Journalist Afgan Sadigov



The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) issued an interim ruling on January 14, 2025, instructing Georgian authorities to halt the extradition of critical Azerbaijani journalist Afgan Sadigov to Azerbaijan for seven days. Sadigov, who fled his home country and has resided in Georgia since December 2023, faced extradition after the Tbilisi City Court ruled against him on November 28, 2024.

On January 15, 2025, the Tbilisi Court of Appeal rejected Sadigov’s appeal against Georgia’s refusal to grant him refugee or humanitarian status. With this decision, Sadigov has exhausted all domestic legal avenues in Georgia, leaving the ECtHR’s interim measure as his only immediate protection from extradition.

Anticipating the Court of Appeal’s decision, the Social Justice Centre (SJC), a local human rights organization, preemptively applied to the ECtHR on January 10 for an interim measure under Rule 39 of the Rules of Court. The ECtHR granted

the request, urging Georgia to suspend Sadigov’s extradition until January 21, while prioritizing the case under Rule 41.

The SJC has since announced its intention to seek an extension of the interim measure, pending a substantive ruling by the ECtHR.

The SJC has urged Georgian authorities, including Georgian Dream’s Justice Minister Anri Okhanashvili, to respect the ECtHR’s decision and prevent

Sadigov’s extradition, citing the risk of severe human rights violations if he is returned to Azerbaijan.

PACE Delegation Meets Jailed Georgian Actor Andro Chichinadze in Gldani Prison

Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) visited Gldani prison during their official trip to Georgia, where they met with imprisoned actor and activist Andro Chichinadze. The meeting focused on Chichinadze’s circumstances, broader issues of political imprisonment, protest movements, and alleged abuses by law enforcement.

Chichinadze’s lawyer, Tornike Migineishvili, described the meeting as a critical moment, stating, “They asked about Andro’s condition, how is the actor today, when he is locked in four walls, and then they heard directly the details regarding the case, as well as the protest... They also heard his assumptions, expectations, and explanation of why, in his opinion, he is in prison, because in reality, there is no legal leverage or factual circumstances for this.”



Migineishvili added that the delegation appeared to understand the gravity of the political and human rights situation in Georgia, noting, “The impression was left that the members of the delegation correctly assess the events developed in Georgia and the gravest picture that we have.”

According to Chichinadze, the actor’s imprisonment is emblematic of the challenges faced by

those advocating for democratic reforms and alignment with European values.

Migineishvili concluded with optimism, expressing hope for Georgia’s future: “This is a wave of protest that protects the European future... We expressed the assumption and expectation that we will meet these people again, but in Europe that the Georgian people are striving for.”

Ukrainian railways opens modernised train inspection point on Polish border

In January, Ukrzaliznytsia, the Ukrainian railway operator, completed a project to relocate a border train inspection point to the Mostyska II station near the Ukrainian-Polish border in the Lviv region. The project was implemented with the funding of the Connecting Europe Facility and the European Investment Bank.

The reconstruction of the border

crossing point included the construction of four towers for the inspection of rolling stock by the Ukrainian Border Guard Service officers, two modules for border control officers, four kennels for detector dogs, installation of a video surveillance system (30 cameras) and Wi-Fi coverage. The overhead contact line segmentation system was also upgraded.

Previously, the process of checking a train travelling from Ukraine to Poland at the border took almost two hours on average.

“We continue to accelerate Ukraine’s progress towards the EU. This is why we are building and improving our border infrastructure,” said Oleksandr Pertsovskiy, Chairman of the Board of JSC Ukrzaliznytsia. “By relocating the border train inspection point to Mostyska II station, we will be able to double the crossing capacity of this area. Previously, 15 trains per day could be checked here, but now it will be up to 30. This means new opportunities to increase freight traffic and speed up passenger trains.”

“The modernisation of Mostyska II is another step forward in improving rail connectivity, strengthening Ukraine’s ties with the EU and increasing passenger and freight traffic,” said Katarina Mathernova, EU Ambassador to Ukraine.

As part of the EU’s Connecting Europe Facility programme, the company is also currently working to modernise intermodal terminals and upgrade rail infrastructure on key routes connecting Ukraine with EU countries. *(euneighbourseast.eu)*

Weather

Friday, January 17

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 8°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 3°C

Saturday, January 18

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 8°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 3°C

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