

Violent Incident at Tbilisi Airport: Gakharia and Khokrishvili Targeted Upon Return from Munich Security Conference

By Liza Mchedlidze

Giorgi Gakharia, leader of the Gakharia for Georgia party, and former Ambassador to Germany Elguja Khokrishvili were confronted by a violent group upon returning to Georgia from the Munich Security Conference early this morning. The pair, arriving at Tbilisi International Airport, were met by what the party describes as a "pre-organized, pre-prepared party Sondergroup".

Footage from several media outlets shows a crowd surrounding the two politicians, with individuals filming the incident on their mobile phones. Shouts could be heard, including insults directed at the men: "Are you no longer funded by USAID?" and "Are you no longer a traitor, an unprincipled agent?" The situation escalated when eggs were thrown at Gakharia and Khokrishvili within the airport.

The Gakharia for Georgia party issued a statement on social media, condemning the attack and accusing the government of orchestrating it: "Today, at dawn, upon returning to Georgia from the Munich Security Conference, Giorgi Gakharia and Elguja Khokrishvili were met at Tbilisi International Airport by Ivanishvili's pre-organized Sondergroup, aided by the inaction of police who were also warned in advance," the party wrote.



They went on to criticize the incident, calling it a sign of an "uncontrollable" and "violent" regime. The statement continued, "It is understandable that Ivanishvili

is frightened by the results of the Munich Security Conference, and this hysteria is also caused by this. Our political force will do everything to make Ivanishvili

what is most precious to him – money and power, so that he can never again use violence against the Georgian people."

Georgian Labor Groups Demand ILO Response to Mass Public Sector Layoffs

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Social Justice Center and the Independent Trade Union of Public Servants "Article 78 of the Constitution" have called on the International Labor Organization (ILO) to address ongoing mass layoffs in Georgia's public sector, citing discriminatory motives. The organizations are urging the ILO to consider forming an investigative commission to examine the issue.

According to their statement, mass dismissals of public employees have been occurring since late December, primarily targeting individuals who have publicly opposed the government's decision to suspend the European integration process. The statement claims these layoffs were facilitated by recent amendments to Georgia's Law on Public Service, which weakened protections for civil servants by simplifying dismissals and restricting avenues for legal recourse, such as fair compensation and reinstatement.

Some dismissed employees have already begun legal proceedings to challenge their terminations, with multiple non-governmental organizations providing legal assistance. The Independent Trade Union "Article 78 of the Constitution" is currently aiding over 100 affected individuals, with the number growing daily.

The organizations highlight that one of the most frequent methods of dismissal is the non-renewal of employment contracts upon expiration. They argue that when such decisions are made on discriminatory grounds, they violate international human rights standards and should be deemed unlawful.

"The current situation meets the criteria for an investigative commission by the International Labor Organization," the statement reads. "This mass purge of personnel undermines the labor rights of civil servants, aims to establish full party control over the civil service, and constitutes an attack on Georgia's public institutions. An urgent response from the ILO and the establishment of an investigative commission could serve as a critical mechanism to halt the repression of civil servants in Georgia."



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Administrative Case of Imprisoned Journalist Mzia Amaglobeli Postponed



The administrative case of imprisoned journalist Mzia Amaglobeli has been postponed due to issues with remote participation for both Amaglobeli and his lawyer. The delay was reported by Jaba Ananidze, a journalist for *Batumelebi*, who stated that the court was unable to facilitate the remote involvement of Amaglobeli and the defense team in the process.

Ananidze also noted that the administrative offense report and related materials have not yet been provided to

Amaglobeli, nor legal representatives. "The Ministry of Internal Affairs confirmed this at today's session before it was postponed," Ananidze reported. "The court failed to explain why it was not possible to remotely involve Mzia Amaglobeli or

why the report and materials were not handed over. The representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs did not provide a clear answer. As for the detention report, this report is falsified."

Second Round of Unrecognized Abkhazia Elections Set for March 1

A second round of the so-called presidential elections in Russian-occupied Abkhazia will take place on March 1, with

Badra Gunba and Adgur Ardzinba competing for the de facto leadership.

Gunba and Ardzinba secured the most votes in the February 15 election but failed to surpass the 50 percent threshold required to win outright. According to the region's so-called Central Election Commission, Gunba received 46.38% of votes, while Ardzinba garnered 36.92%.

The Georgian Foreign Ministry has condemned the elections, urging the international community not to recognize them. Several countries, including Ukraine and the United Kingdom, echoed this stance.

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry denounced the vote as a Russian attempt to legitimize the pro-Moscow separatist regime

in occupied Georgian territory. Similarly, the British Embassy in Georgia reaffirmed the U.K.'s support for Georgia's territorial integrity, stating that it does not recognize the legitimacy of the elections.

The European Union also rejected the elections, emphasizing its continued policy of non-recognition and engagement. An EU spokesperson reiterated the bloc's support for Georgia's sovereignty, stating that the elections took place outside a recognized constitutional and legal framework.

Abkhazia's de facto parliament called for early elections after former leader Aslan Bzhania resigned in November following protests in the occupied region.



Georgia: EU does not recognise so-called presidential elections in Abkhazia



Following the so-called presidential elections held in the Georgian breakaway region of Abkhazia on 15 February, the European Union has reiterated that it does not recognise the

constitutional and legal framework in which they took place.

"The European Union supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia, as recognised by international law," the European External Action Service said in a statement released on 15 February.

The statement added that the EU would continue to pursue its policy of non-recognition and engagement.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

EU strengthens Ukraine's customs control with advanced technology

As part of the EU4IBM-Resilience project, the European Union has equipped Ukraine's State Customs Service (SCS) with ten advanced Automated Weighing Wireless Systems. The systems have been installed at five key border crossing points – Mohyliv-Podilskyi, Diakove, Krakivets, Shehyni, and Rava-Ruska.

The investment, valued at

over Euro300,000, includes modern 'WWS-D Dini Argeo' dynamic weighing scales with integrated number plate recognition. The scales, specifically engineered for heavy-duty use, weigh vehicles in motion, improving inspection times and reducing traffic congestion at border checkpoints.

Equipped with wireless connectivity, the scales transmit real-time data to a centralised hub at the data centre in Kyiv, enabling customs officers to access up-to-the-minute weight data and vehicle identification records.

To ensure the effective use of

this equipment, the EU4IBM-Resilience project organised comprehensive on-the-job training at each installation site. More than 30 customs officers participated in sessions covering equipment operation, data integration, and maintenance procedures.

"By enhancing efficiency at Ukraine's borders and reducing opportunities for illegal trade, this deployment contributes to safer, more transparent trade practices between Ukraine and the EU," said Vyacheslav Toporov, EU4IBM-Resilience Senior Project Manager.

The 'EU Support to Strengthening Integrated Border Management in Ukraine – Resilience' (EU4IBM-Resilience) project is funded by the EU and implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). The project aims at building the resilience of Ukrainian border management agencies during wartime and supporting further reforms to approximate Ukraine's border management system to EU standards and best practices.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Tuesday, February 18

Day Overcast
High: 9°C

Night Overcast
Low: 1°C

Wednesday, February 19

Day Overcast
High: 5°C

Night Rain / Snow
Low: 1°C

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