

Salome Zourabichvili Responds to Public Broadcaster Board Controversy

By Liza Mchedlidze



Georgia's fifth President, Salome Zourabichvili, has commented on recent developments within the Board of Trustees of the Public Broadcaster, expressing concerns over the discussions regarding certain journalists.

In a social media post, Zourabichvili criticized the willingness of individuals to involve law enforcement in disputes with colleagues, drawing a historical parallel to Soviet-era political practices.

"Today, people are so shamelessly adapting to this situation and are ready to send their colleagues to prison. It shows what this regime has turned into! This conversation was recorded and will never be erased from the pages of our history, we should all know this!

We understand that you are not going to Europe, but do you understand that you are not going anywhere at all?

Today, this is the main question: 'To be or not to be?' Are we ready, like them, to hand over another person to the 'competent authorities'? And for what? For expressing a different opinion and position?"

The discussion within the Board of Trustees centered on journalists Vasil Ivanon-Chikovani, Nino Zautashvili, Kakha Melikidze, and Gia Imnashvili, who had previously voiced critical opinions about the broadcaster's management. Some board members argued that these journalists had accused the leadership of slander without providing sufficient evidence.

As a result, certain members suggested referring the matter to the Prosecutor's Office for further investigation, believing that the accusations might have been made with specific intentions.

By Liza Mchedlidze

First Vice Speaker of Parliament, Gia Volski, responded to the Venice Commission's conclusions and recommendations on the amendments to Georgia's Election Code regarding local self-government elections. Volski stated that the commission did not provide a legal assessment in this case and emphasized that the amendments aim to increase public representation in decision-making structures.

"The Venice Commission does not have a legal assessment in this case. Given the reality in Georgia, we believe that the greater the representation of the people in local elected structures, the greater the influence of the people on executive structures."

According to Volski, the amendments were introduced to prevent one of the "revolutionary" paths rather than limit political opposition. He argued that local communities seek greater representation to ensure their interests are reflected in governance.

"In cities and villages, people naturally demand as many resources as possible to have their representatives in the structures formed after local elections. This is the reality. If they [critics] face this reality and believe that the Georgian people are simply those who take to the streets, seek the country's defeat, and aim for the irreversible development of

negative processes, then they should participate in elections. On the contrary, they have an even greater chance of winning if they believe that their views on destabilization are more popular. If they do not believe that, then they have no prospects for success, and of course, in that case, they accept the Venice Commission's political statement."

One of the recommendations from the Venice Commission was that decisions within the Central Election Commission (CEC) should be made by a two-thirds majority. Volski defended the government's decision to remove this requirement, arguing that it was necessary to prevent political gridlock.

"A political statement that has nothing to do with the legal aspect—especially the part where the Venice Commission recommends that decisions in the Central Election Commission (CEC) be made by a two-thirds majority. We changed this because sabotage was evident, and CEC decisions cannot be dependent on the opinions of a minority engaged in sabotage. Otherwise, the CEC's work would come to a standstill, protocols would not be adopted, and elections could not be confirmed."

Volski stated that the government does not intend to restrict political participation, and he encouraged all political actors to participate in elections.

Volski Responds to Venice Commission's Conclusions on Election Code Amendments

"These amendments were precisely a preventive measure against one of the revolutionary paths. We have never had, and will never have, any interest in restricting political participation or the involvement of our opponents in the electoral process.

The elections are free, and anyone who believes they have the resources to win should come forward, fight, and win."

He concluded by highlighting that the desire for greater representation in elected bodies is a reflection of public demand.

"The fact that society wants greater representation in elected bodies to have more leverage over executive structures is, of course, acceptable, should be taken into account, and will only bring improvements."



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER
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Kobakhidze Hosts
Armenian Counterpart
Nikol Pashinyan
in Tbilisi



Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze welcomed Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Tbilisi during Pashinyan's visit to attend the Georgia-Armenia UEFA Nations League play-off match.

According to the Georgian government's press service, the two leaders held a face-to-face meeting, reaffirming the strategic partnership between their nations and discussing the positive trajectory of bilateral relations. They emphasized the importance of cooperation in both bilateral and multilateral formats, particularly in ensuring regional peace and stability.

Following their discussions, Prime Minister Kobakhidze took to X to highlight the shared commitment to fostering sports diplomacy and people-to-people ties between Georgia and Armenia.

"I am delighted to host the Prime Minister of Armenia, H.E. Nikol Pashinyan, in Georgia. I am looking forward to attending, together with my Armenian colleague, the upcoming football match between our na-

tional teams, demonstrating our countries' commitment to promoting sports and people-to-people bonds between our nations," Kobakhidze wrote.

Tina Bokuchava: "The
MEGOBARI Act is a
Sign of Support for the
Georgian People"

Tina Bokuchava, leader of the Unity - National Movement, spoke at a protest rally on Rustaveli Avenue, emphasizing the significance of the MEOBARI Act and its implications for Georgia.

According to Bokuchava, under a different government, the act could bring economic and diplomatic benefits to the country. However, she argued that in the current political context, it primarily serves as a show of

support for the Georgian people and a tool for sanctions against



Bidzina Ivanishvili and his government.

"The MEOBARI Act, which is now to be discussed in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, is a very important act. On the one hand, it provides for large-scale actions against Ivanishvili and his entourage,

and at the same time, it provides for many encouraging norms, for example, visa-free travel, attracting investments, increasing aid. Therefore, under normal government conditions, we could have used the MEOBARI Act to obtain many benefits, but under Ivanishvili's 'Russian regime,' this is an act of support for the Georgian people and deepening the sanctions policy on Ivanishvili's regime."

Bokuchava also stressed the importance of demonstrating public support for U.S. lawmakers, emphasizing that the rally was an opportunity for Georgian society to express gratitude for American backing.

"This rally is also important for American lawmakers to see how much we, as a society, appreciate the support of the US Congress."

Gender Equality in Georgia: What Do Women and Men Really Think?

A study supported by UNDP, UNFPA, and Sweden uncovers mixed perspectives on the roles of women and men in family and society

Tbilisi. 20 March 2025 – A new study, Men, Women, and Gender Relations in Georgia: Public Perceptions and Attitudes, revealed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with support from Sweden, highlights a complex gender equality landscape. The findings show a decline in awareness of gender equality principles between 2013 and 2019, underscoring shifting public attitudes and generational divides. Compared to earlier surveys, both women and men now show greater ambivalence towards gender equality, although younger generations are more likely to challenge 'traditional' gender roles in domestic and public life.

While 57.5 percent of the population think that a woman's primary responsibility is to care for the family, a significant 62 percent of citizens acknowledge the benefits of greater women's participation in politics and decision-making.

"We have been studying gender perceptions in Georgia since 2013, through three rounds of this research. This provides a twelve-year perspective to assess social dynamics in key areas of gender equality and women's rights. Even though our research captures uncertainty about gender roles, one finding stands out through all three surveys: almost half of the respondents believe that real equality between men and women has yet to be achieved, while more than 60 percent believe that Georgia would benefit from greater involvement of women in politics. Even in this complex landscape, Georgians see a future of their country that includes advancing equality, participation, and social inclusion," said Douglas Webb, UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia.

Mariam Bandzeladze, UNFPA Georgia Head of Office, highlighted key research findings,



stating that "the study examines gender perceptions at multiple levels — societal, communal, relational, and individual — providing a nuanced understanding of evolving trends. One particularly striking finding is the shift in attitudes towards women's roles in the family. In 2024, 57.5 percent of respondents agreed that a woman's primary duty is to care for the family, up from 48 percent in 2019. Additionally, the belief that the final say in family matters should rest with men has increased by seven percentage points. These trends indicate a growing resistance to the evolving understanding of women's roles in society. However, despite this pushback, there is still significant progress in how younger generations perceive and acknowledge women's contributions and equality in various aspects of life."

Elisabet Brandberg, Head of the Development Cooperation Section and Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Sweden in Georgia, stressed that equal rights and opportunities are the foundation of a thriving society.

"Our research comes at an important time when we celebrate progress towards achieving meaningful gender equality while acknowledging challenges and charting ways forward. The recognition

of persistent barriers to women's economic and political participation is crucial, as is ensuring their full and active role in shaping the country's future," she said.

Key research highlights include:
Domestic Roles:

The study confirms that household chores in Georgia remain largely divided by gender. Women continue to shoulder the primary responsibility for tasks like childcare, cooking, and cleaning. Six out of ten women report that childcare is primarily their duty, a view shared by half of male respondents. However, around 40 percent of both women and men say that childcare responsibilities are equally shared between partners.

Despite these divisions, 77 percent of women and 85 percent of men express satisfaction with how household duties are distributed, a slight increase since 2019 when 73 percent of women and 78 percent of men shared this view.

Additionally, 47 percent of women and 69 percent of men believe that men should have ultimate decision-making authority in the household and that a wife should not challenge this role. This marks a significant shift in women's attitudes, rising from 34 percent in 2019. Meanwhile, men's views have remained largely unchanged, with 68 percent expressing the same belief in 2019.

Inheritance Rights:

Compared to 2019, more women and fewer men support equal inheritance rights. Notably, approval for women and men having an equal right to inherit the family home has decreased among male respondents, from 60.6 percent in 2019 to 51.5 percent in 2024.

Business & Leadership:

While half of the population believes that women and men can be equally successful business lead-

ers, a significant gender gap remains, with 20 percent more women than men supporting this view. Women's confidence in their leadership abilities has grown, with 62 percent now affirming that women can successfully manage businesses, up from 56 percent in 2019. In contrast, men's confidence in female leadership has declined, dropping from 54 percent in 2019 to 44 percent in 2024. Moreover, a growing number of men now believe that men are inherently better 'suited' for business leadership.

Despite these perceptions, 60 percent of women and 50 percent of men agree that men and women face equal career advancement challenges—while still maintaining that women's responsibilities should prioritise traditional domestic roles, even when employed.

Political Participation:

The 2024 study reveals a growing shift in attitudes toward women in political leadership, with increasing support for electoral gender quotas. This trend is particularly noticeable among men, whose support has risen from 44.4 percent in 2019 to 54.1 percent in 2024—an increase of nearly 10 percentage points.

Sixty-two percent of respondents—71.6 percent of women and 51.8 percent of men—believe that greater female participation in politics would benefit the country. While women's views have remained unchanged since 2019, men's support has risen by nearly seven percentage points. In 2013, only 50 percent of respondents—56 percent of women and 43 percent of men—held this belief, highlighting a gradual shift in public attitudes over the past decade.

Generational Divide:

Attitudes towards gender roles vary across generations. Among young adults (18-29), only 28.6% of women and 49% of men agree

that a woman's primary duty is to care for her family rather than pursue professional development. This belief is more prevalent in the 30-54 age group, rising to 47.7% among women and 65.2% among men. The highest levels of agreement are found among those aged 55 and older, with 67.2% of women and 76.7% of men supporting this view.

Background Information:

The study 'Men, Women, and Gender Relations in Georgia: Public Perceptions and Attitudes' was commissioned by UNDP and UNFPA, with support from Sweden. Conducted by the Institute of Social Studies and Analysis, this research follows the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) model offering a comprehensive framework for analysing men's and women's attitudes and behaviours on a wide range of gender equality issues. The study surveyed 2,408 respondents and held focus group discussions across five regions of Georgia. Its full study report is available on the UNDP and UNFPA websites.

UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality:

The study is part of the UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality, a collaborative initiative between the United Nations and Sweden, to advance gender equality in Georgia. Implemented by the three UN agencies – UNDP, UNFPA, and UN Women, the programme drives progress in key areas such as women's political and economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive rights, and eliminating violence against women and girls. Launched in 2022, the third phase of this extensive programme will run until 2026, supported by a US\$7.3 million contribution from Sweden.

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Day Clear
High: 16°C
Night Clear
Low: 3°C

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