

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Georgian Dream Extends Investigative Commission's Mandate Beyond 2012

The ruling Georgian Dream party has announced an expansion of the mandate of its parliamentary investigative commission, extending its scope beyond 2012 to examine alleged anti-constitutional actions committed after that period. This decision, according to the party's Executive Secretary Mamuka Mdinardze, aims to ensure that the commission's work is not restricted solely to events before 2012.

"During the work of the parliamentary investigative commission, the need to investigate actions related to the events after 2012 was clearly identified," said Mdinardze. He emphasized that opposition parties "have committed numerous anti-state actions even after 2012 that require appropriate legal assessment and response."

The investigative commission, officially named the "Commission to Study the Activities of the Regime and Political Officials of the Regime in 2003-2012," is headed by Tea Tsulukiani. Following consultations with its current members, the Georgian Dream leadership decided to expand its mandate to cover the period from 2003 to the present day.

"We had consultations with the current composition of the investigative commission, and in order for the scope of the commission's activities not to be limited only to the scope of anti-constitutional actions committed before 2012, we decided to expand the mandate of the inves-



tigative commission and extend it beyond 2012, that is, in total, to the period from 2003 to the present," Mdinardze said.

According to Mdinardze, the commission's final conclusions will provide Georgian Dream with a "solid basis" to appeal to the Constitutional Court and push for the classification of the Unity - National Movement

(UNM) and other opposition parties as unconstitutional.

"In addition, we have already initiated a draft law that concerns the declaration of the successor parties of the aforementioned parties as unconstitutional if the essence of the party's activities, the personal composition of the decision-makers, or the statutory goals are identical

to the essence of the activities of the collective National Movement, the personal composition, or the statutory goals," Mdinardze stated.

He further suggested that the opposition parties may not be able to participate in the 2025 local government elections. "They will not, they will not," he declared. "This is ensured by the

Georgian state and its constitutional order. [...] They will be declared unconstitutional parties and their activities will be suspended."

Should the investigative commission's conclusions support Georgian Dream's claims, opposition parties deemed unconstitutional could face suspension of their activities.

Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili Visits Austria for High-Level Talks



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili visited Austria on March 26, where she met with Austrian Foreign Minister Beate Meinl-Reisinger and OSCE Secretary General Feridun Sinirliođlu.

During a joint press conference, Austrian Foreign Minister Meinl-Reisinger strongly condemned violence against peaceful demonstrators and criticized Georgia's stalled EU accession process. She cited setbacks in judicial reform, human rights, and electoral integrity as key concerns.

"A change of course is urgently needed here! Dialogue with the political opposition and civil society is essential – we call on political leaders to overcome divisions and polarisation," Meinl-Reisinger stated. She urged the Georgian authorities to respect freedom of assembly and expression.

The Austrian Foreign Ministry's press release reiterated these concerns, highlighting the EU's support for Georgian civil society despite the sus-

pension of financial aid to the Georgian Dream government. It also emphasized the need to counter Russian destabilization efforts and maintain a rules-based international order.

Meinl-Reisinger further described Georgia as having "shifted into reverse gear" regarding the EU accession process, stating that Austria would not close the door on Georgia but expected greater commitment from Tbilisi toward European integration.

The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) provided a different perspective on the meeting. According to its statement, Austria reaffirmed its support for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The Georgian side emphasized the importance of regional stability for sustainable development and reiterated its commitment to EU integration.

"The Georgian side reiterated its commitment to joining the European Union and expressed its readiness to take further steps in this direction, including fulfilling obligations under the Association Agreement," the statement read.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7712; Euro - 2.9865; GBP - 3.5818; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2976; Swiss Franc - 3.1338

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At the press conference, Mein-Reisinger criticized irregularities in Georgia's October 26 parliamentary elections, citing concerns documented by OSCE/ODIHR. She also expressed

strong disapproval of legislation targeting civil society and urged the Georgian government to uphold democratic principles.

In response, Botchorishvili defended the elections, denying allegations of fraud. "There was no evidence of election fraud,"

she claimed, noting that over 1,200 international observers monitored the vote. She asserted that "the Georgian population made their choice in a free environment" and stressed the need to respect the democratic will of the people.

Botchorishvili also emphasized that Georgia's European integration remains a top priority. "It is Georgia's sovereign choice to be part of the EU, and soon we will have the possibility to engage in an open dialogue on Georgia's membership," she said.

Botchorishvili also held talks with OSCE Secretary General Feridun Sinirliodlu, focusing on security challenges and the situation in Georgia's occupied regions. According to the MFA, Sinirliodlu expressed keen interest in developments in these ter-

ritories.

"Particular attention was given to the security challenges in the region and the necessary measures to address them," the MFA statement said.

Botchorishvili underscored the role of the Geneva International Discussions and the OSCE's importance in conflict resolution, emphasizing the need for a peaceful settlement based on international legal principles. She reiterated Georgia's commitment to working closely with the OSCE to advance democratic development and human rights.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

UN Resident Coordinator Meets with Georgian Parliament Leadership



On March 27, UN Resident Coordinator Didier Trebucq and representatives from OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, and UN Women met with Parliament Speaker Shalva Papuashvili and Deputy Speaker Nino Tsilosani to discuss cooperation under the new UN Cooperation Framework.

According to the UN Office in Georgia, discussions focused on supporting sustainable development and advancing the rights of women and children to foster prosperity in Georgia. The UN Country Team reaffirmed its commitment to promoting an equitable and inclusive society.

Following the meeting,

Speaker Papuashvili described the talks as "valuable," highlighting ongoing and planned legislative work and Georgia's commitment to collaboration with the UN for the country's prosperity.

Khazaradze Interrogated at Tbilisi City Court, Expects Further Summons



Mamuka Khazaradze, leader of the Strong Georgia coalition, was questioned at Tbilisi City Court in the presence of a magistrate judge on March 27. The interrogation was related to his refusal to appear before the parliamentary commission investigating alleged crimes committed under the Unity - National Movement (UNM) government.

Following the session, Khazaradze told reporters that he expects to be summoned again. He reiterated his party's stance that the parliament is illegitimate, citing international assessments and sanctions against GD officials. "The main question was why I did not attend the so-called commission's session, which I have called a circus and a Bidzina show," he said.

Khazaradze stated that he brought documents referencing international decisions and a list of sanctioned officials to support his claim, but the judge did not

allow him to present them. He defended his party's decision to abandon parliamentary mandates, emphasizing that it was a response to what he views as a lack of democratic legitimacy.

Georgia Appoints New Ambassadors to Turkey, Switzerland, and Cuba

თურქეთის რესპუბლიკაში, შვეიცარიის კონფედერაციაში და კუბის რესპუბლიკაში საქართველოს ახალი ელჩები ჰყავს

არჩილ კალანდია შოთა ბარამიძე გრიგოლ ბარამიძე

Georgia appointed new ambassadors to Turkey, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Cuba, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Archil Kalandaria was named Ambassador to Turkey. A diplomat since 2005, he previously served as Georgia's Ambassador to China from 2018

Switzerland since June 2023.

Grigol Baramidze was appointed Ambassador to Cuba. He previously served as Georgia's Ambassador to Armenia and was Secretary General of Nino Burjanadze's Democratic Movement - United Georgia party until 2021.

Weather

Friday, March 28

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 20°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 9°C

Saturday, March 29

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 22°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 11°C

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