

By Liza Mchedlidze

## Elene Khoshtaria Speaks Out After Detention: 'It Was Cynical Violence'

Opposition leader Elene Khoshtaria has spoken out about her detention, describing her treatment by police as "cynical violence" and detailing instances of physical and verbal abuse. Speaking on Nodar Meladze's Saturday after her release from a temporary detention facility, Khoshtaria accused law enforcement officers of subjecting her to humiliating searches and unnecessary aggression.

"They ran a metal detector over my bare body; there was explicit aggression and violence from the police. Now, they suddenly told me to leave and didn't even let me call my lawyer," she said.

According to Khoshtaria, her detention was marked by both physical mistreatment and a complete lack of explanation from authorities. "Just as they did not explain anything to me during my arrest, they did not explain anything when they released me either. However, this is not surprising, given how many illegal detainees we have, how much mistreatment and torture there is—it really does not surprise me," she said.

Khoshtaria described being restrained, searched against her will, and subjected to physical force. She named two officers, Nino Chkhartishvili and Davit Bolotashvili, as those involved in her detention.

"They told me they needed to search me. I told them they could check my pockets, but I would not cooperate with them. After that, they bent my arms back and tied them," she recalled. "I had a vape, and when they forcefully took it, there was violence on my face and teeth—cynical violence."

She also detailed a humiliating strip search inside the detention facility. "They restrained me, tied both my hands behind my back, two people held me down, and a third stripped me. When I entered [the facility], I had high blood pressure and vomiting episodes... They didn't let me use the bathroom, and exactly during this time, this violent episode occurred," Khoshtaria said.

The opposition politician insisted that she is speaking out not for personal reasons but to highlight broader systemic issues. "I am fine, I responded appropriately, and I am doing very well. But I considered it necessary to speak about this



because it is a vicious, horrible, inhumane phenomenon. I can only imagine the fear of those who do not have the opportunity to speak on television," she said.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs later stated that a "possibly illegal substance" had been found on Khoshtaria and was undergoing forensic examination. She dismissed the claim as "ridiculous."

"When my information was released, they felt the need to say something. I take a lot of prescribed medication, which is necessary for me. I had some pills with me—one of the tablets, I don't know ex-

actly which one, was probably lying around," she said. "I had no illegal substances, and I never will. These are prescribed medications."

Khoshtaria believes her treatment was politically motivated. "One reason is revenge—they are irritated by the protests, by the fact that people are not backing down. The second reason is that this is a system that lacks public support, so it uses violence as a tool to intimidate others. That is why it is important to speak out publicly and talk to our international partners," she said.

When asked whether she plans to take legal action, she dismissed the idea, citing a lack of judicial independence. "Not in Georgia... So, I will not pursue legal action here. But I guarantee that these people will be held accountable."

She concluded with a message of defiance: "I have no personal vendetta, but this system—where people abuse and overpower detainees in a locked room because they cannot control them on the streets—must be punished."



## Gakharia For Georgia: 'Georgian Dream Harms the Country's Territorial Integrity'

By Liza Mchedlidze

The opposition party Gakharia For Georgia has strongly criticized the ruling Georgian Dream party, accusing it of damaging the country's national interests, sovereignty, and territorial integrity. In a statement released today, the party condemned recent remarks by Georgian Dream officials, calling them a betrayal of Georgia's na-

tional cause.

"Blaming one's own homeland for starting a war, when Georgia has won all international legal disputes against Russia, is the heaviest blow to Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty," the statement reads.

The party outlined specific concerns, stating that Georgian Dream's rhetoric:

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7673; Euro - 2.9818; GBP - 3.5814; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2973; Swiss Franc - 3.1350

# Gakharia For Georgia: ‘Georgian Dream Harms the Country’s Territorial Integrity’

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- Justifies Russian aggression, occupation, and ethnic cleansing, while absolving Moscow of responsibility;

- Undermines efforts for the peaceful restoration of Georgia’s territorial integrity;

- Complicates the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their homes;

- Weakens the international policy of non-recognition of the occupied territories;

- Contradicts the rulings of the Strasbourg Court in Georgia’s favor regarding the August 2008 war;

- Encourages further Russian aggression and increases the risk of future attacks;

- Insults the memory of those who died fighting Russian occupation;

- Demoralizes the Georgian military, weaken-

ing its motivation and combat readiness.

The party also condemned the ruling party’s actions for emboldening separatist rhetoric. “The shameful statements made by the deputies of the so-called Dream before the conclusion of the investigative commission have already been followed by a response from the so-called Foreign Ministry of occupied Tskhinvali, which demands the punishment of those ‘guilty’ of unleashing the ‘military aggression,’” the statement said, referring to the de facto authorities

in South Ossetia.

It also pointed to the Russian Foreign Ministry’s response, which welcomed Georgian Dream’s remarks during the Geneva discussions—a diplomatic format established after the 2008 war to address issues related to Georgia’s occupied territories.

“It has been proved once again how much Dream harms Georgia’s national interests, primarily the country’s territorial integrity and sovereignty,” the statement concluded.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Georgia’s Public Defender Raises Concerns Over Elene Khoshtaria’s Arrest and Alleged Mistreatment

Khoshtaria allegedly faced contradictory official regulations. “Article 5 of the Internal Regulations of the Temporary Detention Centers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs stipulates that during a personal search, it is not permissible to completely undress a person being

office after her release.

“It should be noted that on March 29, in the pre-trial detention center, Elene Khoshtaria refused to meet with a representative of the Office. The Public Defender’s representative contacted Elene Khoshtaria even after her release from the center, and she again refused to cooperate with the Office,” the statement said.

Nevertheless, the Public Defender’s Office has announced that it will conduct its own independent investigation into the case. “The Public Defender’s Office will study the case on its own initiative and will contact all relevant agencies for further action,” the statement concluded.

### Georgia and China Sign Agreement to Boost Financial Cooperation

Georgia and China are set to deepen their financial ties after the National Bank of Georgia (NBG) and the People’s Bank of China signed a memorandum of understanding to expand cooperation. The agreement, signed by NBG President Natia Turnava and Governor of the People’s Bank of China, aims to



strengthen trade, improve financial stability, and encourage collaboration in key banking sectors.

According to the NBG, the memorandum lays the groundwork for joint efforts to tackle global financial challenges, reduce risks, and promote business relations between the two countries. “Our joint task is to make the banking sectors of the two countries more efficient and closer,” Turnava said. “We plan to make the Georgian financial market more attractive for Chinese banks and representatives of the Chinese financial sector. It is welcome that the Chinese side has expressed great interest and desire for close coopera-

tion with us.”

The agreement includes provisions for cooperation in monetary policy, financial technology, and payment systems. It also focuses on modernizing Georgia’s financial infrastructure, particularly by improving the interconnection of payment systems to ensure faster and more secure international transactions.

“In addition, within the framework of cooperation, the NBG and the People’s Bank of China will implement joint projects and promote the development of banking services between the two countries,” the NBG said in a statement.



Georgia’s Public Defender has expressed serious concerns over the arrest of opposition leader Elene Khoshtaria, citing allegations of mistreatment during her detention. The statement from the Public Defender’s Office condemned the manner in which Khoshtaria was subjected to a full body search, describing it as “humiliating and degrading treatment.”

“During a full search by law enforcement officers, a person should not be required to undress different parts of the body at the same time - such a practice is humiliating and degrading treatment of a person,” the statement reads.

The Public Defender also highlighted that the treatment

sought. Such treatment of women is particularly noteworthy,” the statement emphasized.

Despite these concerns, Khoshtaria refused to meet with a representative from the Public Defender’s Office while in pre-trial detention on March 29. She also declined to engage with the

### EU4Youth in Georgia: Empowering youth in Imereti through inclusion and civic engagement

Supported by the ‘EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment’ project, the organisation ‘Coalition for Independent Living’ held introductory meetings with young people in the Imereti region of Georgia from 24 to 26 March, as part of the project ‘Supporting the Inclusion of Disadvantaged Youth in the Imereti Region’.

The meetings aimed to introduce participants to the project’s planned activities, raise aware-

ness about the importance of civil society engagement, and identify young people interested in future participation. Facilitated by Giorgi Dzeneladze and Davit Bibileishvili, the meetings were conducted in collaboration with the International Education and Development Academy.

The project seeks to mobilise young people in the Imereti re-



gion and strengthen their participation in democratic and social life. Expected outcomes include empowering youth to en-

gage in decision-making processes, enhancing their skills in civic participation, and supporting the development of initiatives related to local budget programmes.

The Coalition for Independent Living is a beneficiary of the grant programme under the ‘EU4Youth: Youth Engagement and Empowerment’ project, co-financed by the European Union and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

(euneighbourseast.eu)

## Weather

Monday, March 31

Day Mostly Cloudy  
High: 21°C

Night Mostly Cloudy  
Low: 9°C

Tuesday, April 1

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 24°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 11°C

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