

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Zourabichvili Addresses Protesters on Rustaveli Avenue

President Salome Zourabichvili addressed a crowd of protesters on Rustaveli Avenue, stating that she would continue what she called an "unequal struggle" until a legitimate government is formed.

"We continue this unequal struggle — until the legitimately elected parliament forms a legitimate government and elects the next legitimate president, I remain faithful to my oath to serve the country, defend the Constitution, and the will and interests of the Georgian people," she said.

According to Zourabichvili, citizens are confronted with "a small group in the service of one man and foreign forces, who serve only their own money and narrow interests." She claimed that many in the government "not only cannot admit that they are doing Russia's work, but also do not dare to state their own position and are hiding behind the slogan of Russian propaganda: 'Do you want a war?'"

She argued that the current authorities stand on three main pillars but that "this regime is shaking." She described these pillars as "the financial interests of the oligarch's entourage, and they feed the regime," "Russian propaganda and propagandists who are trying to deceive and subjugate people," and "the violent system of Russian rule."

"The main question of how long it will last and how we will defeat this Russian regime and authoritarianism, how to return the country to the path we have chosen, lies in the weakening and collapse of these pil-



lars," she said.

Emphasizing the importance of non-violent resistance, she added, "This is a non-violent, difficult, perhaps long, but ultimately successful path that will lead Georgia to peace. Our power

is a peaceful path. The ruling power really wants to divert us from this path, to drag us into a violent struggle and thereby defeat us. We will not allow this! In a constitutional way, by respecting the rule of law, we, not

they, continue this unequal struggle, I am with you."

She concluded by reiterating her commitment to serving until a new government is formed. "Until the legitimately elected parliament does not form a le-

gitimate government and elects the next legitimate president, I remain faithful to my oath to serve the country, protect the Constitution, and the will and interests of the Georgian people."

Mdinardze: No Pressure Will Stop Georgian Dream from Defending Sovereignty

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Mamuka Mdinardze, Executive Secretary of Georgian Dream and Majority Leader in Parliament, stated that no external pressure or criticism would deter the ruling party from protecting Georgia's sovereignty.

"No pressure, no instructions from outside, no baseless criticism, no punitive mechanisms will prevent us from strengthening Georgia's sovereignty," Mdinardze said.

According to him, Georgia has reached a level of independence it has never had before, and the ruling party takes pride in rejecting external influence.

"Our team is proud that we have firmly rejected instructions imposed from the outside and governing the country at the behest of others."

Marking the 33rd anniversary of Georgia's independence referendum, Mdinardze recalled the March 31, 1991 vote, in which Georgians, including those in the now-occupied terri-

tories, overwhelmingly supported restoring independence.

"This very date became the first step on the path to fulfilling our nation's long-standing dream — the Georgian people decided to build a free and sovereign state on their own, without any external instructions."

He emphasized that March 31 is also the birthday of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, Georgia's first president, calling him a key figure in the independence movement.

"From the emergence of the idea to the declaration of independence, this man fought tirelessly and made a major contribution to this national movement."

Mdinardze described March 31 as a symbol of unity and victory, stressing that Georgia's independence must be protected and strengthened.

Mdinardze also addressed the Prime Minister's recent decision to establish a Department of Government Efficiency, calling



CONTINUED ON Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7648; Euro - 2.9890; GBP - 3.5757; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2460; Swiss Franc - 3.1358

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CONTINUED FROM Page 1

it one of the most significant decisions in recent times. “The newly created department will monitor the effectiveness of decisions made by ministries, various branches of the executive branch, and state agencies.”

He confirmed that the ruling party fully supports the Prime Minister’s initiative. “Today we also had a discussion on this topic with our teammates in the majority format, and you will not be surprised if we say that this decision of the Prime Minister has full support from the team.”

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgian Citizen Released After Over Four Years in Illegal Detention in Occupied Abkhazia



The State Security Service of Georgia (SSSG) has announced the release of Irakli Bebuia, a Georgian citizen who had been illegally imprisoned in Russian-occupied Abkhazia for over four years. Bebuia is now safe in territory controlled by the central government.

Bebuia, an ethnic Georgian resident of the occupied Gali district, was arrested on September 30, 2020, by Russian-backed Abkhaz authorities after burning a banner depicting Abkhaz flag symbols. Despite the maximum penalty for flag desecration in occupied Abkhazia being one year, Bebuia was sentenced to nine years in prison in December 2020. The so-called court also convicted him of “deliberate destruction of property by arson”

and “illegal acquisition and storage of ammunition.” However, under an occupied Abkhazia law that reduces sentences for certain detainees, Bebuia’s time was halved, leading to his release after four years and six months.

The State Security Service of Georgia

emphasized that “all available diplomatic and negotiation channels, including the ‘hotline’ mechanism operated by the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM), were actively utilized” to secure Bebuia’s release.

“The central government continues to work actively for the release of all citizens of Georgia illegally detained in the occupied territories,” the SSSG statement reads.

Government to Establish a Government Efficiency Department

The Georgian government, led by the ruling Georgian Dream party, has de-

cidated to introduce a bill that will significantly expand the authority of the government administration, according to Levan Zhorzholiani, head of the administration.

At a cabinet session, initiated by Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, the govern-

ment approved the creation of a Govern-



ment approved the creation of a Government Efficiency Department, aimed at strengthening control over the implementation of executive decisions across all levels of government.

As part of this restructuring, the existing Internal Audit Service will be transformed into the Government Efficiency Department. According to Zhorzholiani, the move is designed to improve oversight, transparency, and

accountability in public administration. “We also discussed this with the State Audit Service, where real-time auditing will be introduced,” Zhorzholiani explained. “Previously, audits focused on past years, but now the State Audit Service will be able to assess ongoing projects

in real-time.” Zhorzholiani emphasized that this reform will help ensure more effective budget spending and improve governance across key sectors, including energy and property management.

“One of the main principles of our governance is transparency and accountability, and the creation of this new mechanism serves to strengthen these two core values,” he stated.

Free scholarships for 2025/27 at Eastern Partnership European School in Tbilisi – deadline extended until 15 April

Weather

Tuesday, April 1

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 24°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 12°C

Wednesday, April 2

Day ☁️ Mostly Cloudy
High: 18°C

Night ☁️ Mostly Cloudy
Low: 11°C

The call for applications for the European School for Eastern Partnership Scholarship Programme for the academic years 2025/2027 is extended until 15 April. The competition was launched by the Eastern Partnership European School in Georgia project and the New School in Tbilisi, Georgia, with the support of the European Union and the International Baccalaureate.

Students from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia,

Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, aged 16-17, as of September 1, 2025, are eligible to apply.

Up to 25 students will be selected as a result of the competition to receive a full scholarship for the European Diploma Programme of the International Baccalaureate (IB), with previous graduates of the programme going on to study in a wide range of areas such as Economics, Biochemical Engineering, Physics, Social Sciences, Arts and Cul-

ture, Communications and Media, International Relations and Global Affairs, Medicine, Law, Liberal Arts and Computer Sciences.

The scholarship includes tuition fees, boarding and meals in Tbilisi, round trips between Tbilisi and family residence during school breaks, allowance for local transportation, medical insurance, study materials and tours.

The deadline for submitting applications is now 15 April.

Funded by the European Union (EU), the Eastern Partnership European School Programme aims at promoting secondary education opportunities for students from the six EU Eastern Partnership countries. The programme was successfully launched in 2018 and is now in its sixth year.

The list of scholarship recipients for the academic year 2025-2027 will be announced in the second half of June 2025.

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