

Zourabichvili Condemns Kobakhidze's April 9 Tragedy Statement

By Liza Mchedlidze

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze has faced strong criticism over his statement marking the 36th anniversary of the April 9 tragedy. In his speech, he referred to the 1989 crackdown as the work of a "foreign power," but did not mention Russia by name, leading to criticism from Georgia's 5th President Salome Zourabichvili.

"April 9 is the day when a foreign power committed violence against our fellow citizens. At the same time, April 9 is the day that united Georgia, the day when love triumphed over hatred among Georgians. April 9 is also the day when the idea of freedom triumphed over slavery. That is why today, more than ever, we must distance ourselves from all violence, defeat hatred, and protect the idea of freedom," the Prime Minister said.

He claimed that even now, Georgia faces interference from abroad:

"Today, 36 years after the tragedy of April 9, a foreign power is still committing violence on Rustaveli Avenue. Today, on Rustaveli Avenue, a foreign power is stirring up hatred, trying to artificially disrupt the unity among Georgians, and fighting against the idea of freedom. However, the experience of April 9 has taught us that the 'existence of foreign powers is short-lived' and that love and freedom will inevitably triumph over hatred and slavery.

Today, a foreign power attempted to provoke violence on Rustaveli Avenue, and when it failed, it resorted to violence itself. We will not give hatred additional energy and will protect our country from any provocations, even small ones, planned by foreign forces.

I believe this is exactly what the souls of the heroes of April 9, who sacrificed



their lives for the idea of love and freedom, are waiting for from us. Today, we honor their memory with the proper respect. In Georgia, love and freedom will triumph over hatred and slavery!"

The lack of a direct reference to Russia drew immediate criticism from Salome Zourabichvili, who called out the Prime Minister and his government for avoiding the truth.

"Only Russians and their servants bring war and violence! Shame on you – so-called Government of Georgia! Those ruthless soldiers were Russians, not some 'foreign force,' and you don't even dare say it!" she wrote on social media.

Zourabichvili emphasized that April 9 was both a tragedy and a moment of victory for Georgia's peaceful resistance:

"April 9 is the day of a brutal and ruthless crackdown carried out by Russian troops.

April 9 is the day of victory for Georgia's peaceful struggle.

Only Russians and their servants bring war and violence!

No to the Russian war! No to Russian violence!

Peace, faith in the future, freedom, and independence will prevail!

Glory to the heroes!

Shame on you – so-called Government of Georgia!

Those ruthless soldiers were Russians, not some 'foreign force,' and you don't even dare to say it!"

The April 9, 1989 tragedy remains one of the most defining moments in Georgia's recent history, when Soviet troops violently dispersed peaceful protesters in Tbilisi, killing 21 and injuring hundreds. The day is commemorated annually in honor of those who lost their lives fighting for Georgia's freedom.

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For Georgia Party Accuses Gov't of Provoking Civil Conflict and Betraying National Interests

By Liza Mchedlidze

Opposition party For Georgia has released a statement accusing the ruling Georgian Dream party of provoking civil confrontation and betraying the country's national interests.

According to the statement, "The current actions of Georgian Dream are aimed at provoking civil confrontation – the declared government of Georgian Dream and its honorary chairman will not escape responsibility for inciting division among the population and for the hybrid war being waged against their own citizens!"

The party claims Georgian Dream is trying to blur the lines between allies and enemies by softening its language toward

Russia. It criticizes the ruling party for referring to Russia merely as a "foreign state."

"Georgian Dream declares Russia a foreign state and draws an equal sign between Georgia's enemies and friends."

For Georgia says this approach amounts to rewriting the country's history and ignoring the reality of Russian occupation.

"It is alarming to witness the attempt to rewrite Georgian history and distort reality, which has now been revived with new force under the leadership of the declared government of Georgian Dream."

The statement also accuses Georgian

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7563; Euro - 3.0143; GBP - 3.5179; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2162; Swiss Franc - 3.2237

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Dream of disrespecting the sacrifices

made in the fight for independence. "Georgian Dream is essentially rejecting the history of Georgia's struggle for

freedom and independence, the bravery and sacrifice of the Georgian people, and the price paid by generations to preserve our national identity."

It adds that the ruling party is trying to hide Russia's role as an occupying power.

"It is attempting to defend and disguise the true identity of Georgia's historical enemy—Russia, which has occupied Georgian territory and has blood on its hands from the lives of our parents, children, brothers, and sisters."

The opposition party warns that these

actions are dividing the country and fueling unrest.

"To describe a friend as an enemy and an enemy as a friend is a treacherous act, and history in Georgia never forgives such betrayal."

The statement ends by holding the Georgian Dream leadership responsible for the current tensions.

"The declared government of Georgian Dream and its honorary chairman will not escape responsibility for the division of the population and the hybrid war being waged against their own citizens."

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgia Marks 36th Anniversary of 1989 Soviet Crackdown



April 9 marks the 36th anniversary of the 1989 crackdown by Soviet troops on pro-independence, peaceful demonstrators in Tbilisi. On April 9, 1989, Soviet forces violently dispersed a peaceful rally outside the government building, killing 21 people and injuring hundreds more. The troops used toxic gas and beat protesters with spades, leaving a lasting scar on the nation's col-

lective memory. The brutal crackdown became a defining moment in Georgia's struggle for independence from the Soviet Union. On the same day in 1991, fol-

Polish Embassy Tbilisi: "On 9 April 1989, peaceful demonstrators in Tbilisi were killed by the Soviet regime. With our Georgian friends, we commemorate those who fought &

Lithuania MFA: "On Georgia's Day of National Unity, together with the Georgian people, we remember the tragic events of the Soviet military crackdown of 9 April 1989 and the restoration of independence on 9 April 1991. Lithuania stands with the Georgian people as they continue the struggle for a European future!"

Swedish Embassy in Georgia:

"36 years ago, on 9 April 1989, Soviet troops massacred peaceful Georgians demonstrating for freedom. On this Day of National Unity, we honor all those who gave their lives for a free Georgia. We continue our support for a united, strong, European Georgia!"

U.S. Embassy Tbilisi:

"Today marks 36 years since the tragedy of April 9. We remember the 21 innocent victims of freedom fighting and the hundreds injured, as Georgians bravely stood side by side in the fight for Georgia's freedom and independence."

German Embassy in Tbilisi:

"To pay tribute to the victims and injured of April 9, 1989, German Ambassador Peter Fischer laid a wreath in front of the Parliament today. At that time, Georgians demanded freedom and independence from the Soviet Union, for which they sacrificed their lives and health. Today, we remember their courage and strength. Their dedication should be a motivation for us to always defend freedom and the rule of law. On April 9, 1989, the Soviet army violently dispersed a peaceful demonstration in front of the Parliament in Tbilisi, during which many people were killed, most of them women. The youngest were 16 years old."

Georgian Dream Seeks to Ban Foreign In-Kind Support for Political Parties



The Georgian Dream party is pushing for a change in the law to stop political parties from receiving in-kind support, such as free venues, services, or materials, from foreign entities for events like seminars and public gatherings. The proposed amendments to the Law on Political Associations of Citizens will be fast-tracked through parliament and will take effect as soon as the President signs them.

Currently, while foreign funding is banned for political parties, the law allows in-kind contributions from international organizations that support party development, as long as it doesn't directly favor any particular party. The new amendments would remove these exceptions.

Alongside this, Georgian Dream has also introduced changes to the Law on Grants, which would require international donors to get approval from the government before providing grants to local organizations.

lowing the pro-independence coalition's victory over the Communist Party in the 1990 elections and a March 1991 referendum, the Georgian parliament declared the restoration of the country's independence.

Georgia's international partners expressed solidarity with the Georgian people on the occasion:

EU Delegation Georgia:

"We join Georgia in honouring the legacy of 9 April 1989 – the symbolic end of Soviet rule. Today we commemorate those who gave their lives for Georgia's independence. Generations of Georgian citizens continue to protect that independence resolutely."

suffered for a free, independent and democratic Georgia. Standing against Soviet oppression, Poland and Georgia shared a common struggle then. We continue to be united with Georgian society aiming for a free, democratic, and European future."

French Embassy in Georgia:

"On the eve of National Unity Day, France will pay tribute to the memory of the Georgian women and men who were killed by the Soviet army on April 9, 1989, fighting for freedom and independence. France continues to stand by the Georgian people in their quest for independence, democracy, and Europe."

Weather

Thursday, April 10

Day Rain Showers

High: 11°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 4°C

Friday, April 11

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 15°C

Night Cloudy

Low: 5°C

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