

Zourabichvili Condemns Tsulukiani's Remarks on War Hero Antsukhelidze; Kobakhidze Defends

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Fifth President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, has sharply criticized Georgian Dream MP Tea Tsulukiani over her recent comments regarding Giorgi Antsukhelidze, a national hero of the 2008 August War. In a social media post, Zourabichvili condemned Tsulukiani's remarks, calling them not only immoral but potentially treasonous.

"When you publicly declare a national hero 'senselessly doomed', isn't this a crime before the law and the constitution? And tantamount to treason? Not to mention morality, conscience, patriotism, or the elementary human respect that we all owe to Antsukhelidze's children," Zourabichvili wrote.

The controversy began after Tsulukiani, speaking on Georgian Public Broadcaster, questioned the hero's death, implying it was politically motivated under the Saakashvili administration:

"To put it simply, why is Giorgi Antsukhelidze not at home today? I have the right to ask this question along with my comrades. Who should forbid me from asking this question? No one. We are asking this question. Every child needs their parents to be at home and not pointlessly doomed for someone's PR, in this case I mean Saakashvili."

Her comments sparked public backlash, as Antsukhelidze is



widely honored in Georgia as a symbol of courage, remembered for enduring torture at the hands of Russian forces during the 2008 war.

Amid the criticism, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze defended Tsulukiani, describing her words as factual and grounded in Georgia's political reality. He claimed that the war could have been avoided alto-

gether, placing blame on the previous government led by Mikheil Saakashvili.

"When Tea Tsulukiani speaks about the fact that this war could have been avoided for the country and that it was possible for our heroes to be alive and take care of their families, this is simply a statement of fact... If it were not for the order that Saakashvili's regime received

and carried out, there would have naturally been neither war nor victims," Kobakhidze stated.

The Prime Minister also dismissed the protests that took place outside Tsulukiani's residence as acts of "liberal fascism" and claimed they reflected the desperation of the opposition.

"This is another manifestation of liberal fascism... Such actions are doomed to failure," he said,

defending Tsulukiani as an effective chair of the parliamentary investigative commission and suggesting that her success had provoked political opponents.

Kobakhidze reiterated the ruling party's position that the 2008 war was triggered by the Saakashvili government, and stood by Tsulukiani's remarks, calling them "absolutely clear and obvious."

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Kobakhidze Attends Antalya Diplomacy Forum



Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze participated in the Antalya Diplomacy Forum held in Turkey from April 11 to 13. During the event, he took part in a panel discussion and held bilateral meetings with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Council of Europe Secretary General Alain Berset. Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili also attended and met with officials from the OSCE and other international representatives.

Speaking at the panel "Search for Partnerships in the Era of Multi-polarization," Kobakhidze described Georgia's foreign policy approach as focused on peace and economic diplomacy. He claimed Georgia's economic growth averaged 9.4% since 2021 a figure he presented as the highest in Europe and said the government is working to position Georgia as a bridge between East and West.

He repeatedly framed Georgia's current strategy as "pragmatic and peaceful," particularly in the context of relations with Russia. Despite ongoing tensions over Russian-occupied territories Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region, Kobakhidze said Georgia continues economic engagement with Moscow while maintaining no formal diplomatic ties.

Kobakhidze reiterated the Georgian Dream (GD) party's longstanding claim that Georgia was pressured to join the war in Ukraine in 2022. He stated that Georgia resisted these alleged calls and instead focused on avoiding involvement, calling it a "political fight" in which diplomacy was ineffective.

He also described diplomacy more broadly as "extremely weak" in the current geopolitical climate. According to him, some Georgian ambassadors are unable to carry out their work in certain countries due to strained relations. He did not name the countries or provide

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7558; Euro - 3.1259; GBP - 3.6016; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2753; Swiss Franc - 3.3620

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CONTINUED FROM Page 1 details. Nonetheless, Kobakhidze said he believes diplomacy will

become more effective once peace is restored globally.

Despite increasing tensions between the GD government and the European Union, including stalled accession talks, Kobakhidze claimed EU mem-

bership remains a top foreign policy goal. He acknowledged "challenges" in the relationship but expressed hope that regional stability could help move Georgia's EU integration forward.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Kobakhidze Comments on Council of Europe Relations, Criticizes Opposition



Following his meeting with Council of Europe Secretary General Alain Berset at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze addressed the state of Georgia's cooperation with the institution. He stated that while overall engagement with the

Council of Europe remains important and active, there are specific areas of friction particularly with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the Venice Commission.

Kobakhidze criticized both

Georgia's democratic development.

He also expressed appreciation for Berset's role and past visits to Georgia, reaffirming the government's openness to dialogue on all issues concerning democracy and governance.

In a separate comment, Kobakhidze sharply criticized members of the domestic opposition, accusing them of acting as "foreign agents" and working against Georgia's national interests. He likened their actions and rhetoric to those of historical figures from the Soviet era, drawing comparisons to Bolshevik methods and labeling them as hostile to the country's sovereignty.

Social Justice Center Slams Public Broadcaster Over Journalist Dismissals

The Social Justice Center (SJC) has condemned the recent dismissal of journalists Nino Zautashvili and Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani from Georgia's Public Broadcaster, calling it a case of political persecution and a serious violation of labor and human rights.

According to the organization, the firings reflect an alarming trend of punishing employees for expressing critical views. SJC argues that the dismissals are part of a broader effort to assert political control over an institution that is supposed to operate independently under the Constitution.

The group also pointed to the

ongoing public protests outside the broadcaster's headquarters as a sign of widespread concern, contrasting this with what they

public interest in Georgia. The organization called the dismissals a stain on the broadcaster's legacy and said they raise seri-



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საზოგადოებრივ მაუწყებელში: ნინო
ჯაუჭავიანი და ვასილ ივანოვ-ჩიკოვანი
მენეჯმენტმა უპაემოდ გაათავისუფლა

სოციალური
საპროტესტო
ცენტრი

described as the management's failure to uphold neutrality, objectivity, and legal obligations.

SJC warned that the broadcaster's loss of independence, especially during a time of political tension, is a direct threat to media freedom and

ous concerns about accountability.

Expressing solidarity with the dismissed journalists, SJC pledged to use all available tools to defend their rights and seek justice.

EU-Ukraine Business Summit: Commissioner Kos and Prime Minister Shmyhal launch new business partnership

From 10 to 11 April, Brussels hosted the EU-Ukraine Business Summit.

Co-organised by the European Commission, the Government of

Ukraine, the Polish Presidency of the EU Council, and Italy – as host of the 2025 Ukraine Recovery Conference – the Summit brought together over 700 key stakeholders.

Discussions focused on Ukraine's reconstruction and the vital reforms needed to unlock investment and to strengthen the country's business cli-



mate, within the broader context of Europe's reindustrialisation agenda.

Held under the motto 'EU support and accession driving

Ukraine's economic recovery', the Summit discussed the role of the EU's Ukraine Facility in supporting recovery efforts, including rebuilding infrastructure and industry, de-risking wartime investment, and boosting access to finance for SMEs and war-affected communities.

On this occasion, European Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos and Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal launched a new EU-Ukraine Business Partnership. This strategic initiative aims to deepen economic and investment ties between the EU and Ukraine, accelerate Ukraine's recovery,

and support its path towards EU accession and integration into the EU Single Market. It focuses on three key areas: advancing business environment reforms, mobilising large-scale investment, and promoting Ukraine as an attractive investment destination.

The European Commission also announced a second call, encouraging EU companies to invest in Ukraine's reconstruction. This call will remain open for proposals from EU businesses, including joint ventures with Ukrainian partners, until 10 October 2025.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Monday, April 14

Day Rain
High: 11°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 9°C

Tuesday, April 15

Day Rain
High: 11°C

Night Showers
Low: 6°C

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