

Giorgi Gakharia Says For Georgia Preparing for All Elections, Leaves Door Open for October Vote

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

In an interview on TV Pirveli, Giorgi Gakharia, leader of the opposition party For Georgia, said his party is preparing for all upcoming elections and has not ruled out participating in Georgia's municipal elections scheduled for October 4.

The statement comes amid heightened political tension and ongoing nationwide protests over the conduct of the October 2024 parliamentary elections, the government's foreign policy shift, and what opposition leaders have described as increasing authoritarianism.

"For Georgia may or may not participate in the local self-government elections, we are not ready to make that decision yet," Gakharia said during the interview, while emphasizing that political parties should always be prepared for any electoral scenario.

When asked whether the party would participate if early parliamentary elections are not held, Gakharia replied: "Of course, there is a chance," reiterating that their participation



would depend on the political context closer to the date.

"I am saying one thing: we are preparing for any next election, because if you are a political

party, you should always be ready for elections," he added.

The comments come as other opposition groups are openly debating whether to boycott the

municipal elections. On Tuesday, Giorgi Baramidze, political secretary of Unity - National Movement, stated that under what he called the current

"Kadyrovisation" and "Belarusisation" of Georgia, his party, and "any other normal party" would not participate in the October vote.

Chikvaidze Claims Georgian Government Forced Him to Lie About U.S. Embassy

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE



Businessman Giorgi Chikvaidze, who is currently in pre-trial detention on charges of large-scale embezzlement, has released a public statement accusing the Georgian government of coercing him into making false claims against the United States. In a post published on his social media page, Chikvaidze referred to the current Georgian government as the "Russian regime," alleging they forced him to fabricate statements implicating the U.S. Embassy.

"After my illegal arrest on March 11, the Russian regime forced me to make a statement, in which I would lie, saying that the U.S. Embassy forced me, gave me directives to organize pro-European rallies and carry out other illegal actions," Chikvaidze wrote.

He further alleged that the campaign against him was initiated by officials within a "fraudulent government," and that he is willing to cooperate with U.S. investigative authorities to expose them.

"I would like to emphasize once again that this is a crime against the American state," he wrote. "If the issue of an American investigation is put on the agenda, I am ready to cooperate with their investigative bodies and personally expose the representatives of the fraudulent government who initiated all this."

Chikvaidze also raised alarm over his safety while in custody, claiming that "on the instructions of the Russian special services," he is at constant risk of being killed.

"My stay in this institution is not safe and I am at risk every day... they can carry out my kill at any time," he stated.

Georgian authorities have not yet responded to the accusations.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Ministry of Culture Dismisses Davit Doiashvili as Head of Vaso Abashidze Theater



The Ministry of Culture of Georgia has officially dismissed Davit Doiashvili from his position as director of the Vaso Abashidze Music and Drama Theater, citing a prolonged suspension of the theater's creative activities despite ongoing state funding.

In a statement released by the Ministry, officials emphasized that the theater, formally known as the "Vaso Abashidze State Professional Theatre of Musical Comedy and Drama," is a legal entity of public law (LEPL) and, like other state-established entities, is legally obligated to fulfill the goals for which it was founded.

The Ministry noted that the theater had continued to receive funding from the state budget, yet its creative operations

had been inactive for months. "Despite repeated warnings from the Ministry of Culture of Georgia, unfortunately, the leadership of the Vaso Abashidze Professional State Theater of Musical Comedy and Drama did not fulfill this obligation

envisaged by the founding goals," the statement reads.

According to the Ministry, public theaters must ensure that creative activities are conducted on a regular basis, especially when sustained by public funds. The decision to dismiss Doiashvili was framed as a legal and administrative measure necessary to restore the institution's functioning.

"Therefore, the Ministry of Culture, as the founding agency of the LEPL Vaso Abashidze Music and Drama Theater, has made a legal decision to dismiss the person responsible for the continuous and smooth functioning of the LEPL, the theater's director, Davit Doiashvili," the Ministry stated.

Tbilisi Court Sets GEL 20,000 Bail for Opposition Leader Zura Japaridze



ceedings. His lawyer requested the disqualification of Judge Nana Shamatava, citing concerns over potential bias due to her be-

The Tbilisi City Court has imposed a bail of 20,000 GEL on opposition leader Zura Girchi Japaridze as a preventive measure following his refusal to appear before a parliamentary investigative commission established by the Georgian Dream party.

Japaridze, who leads the Coalition for Change, appeared at the court hearing where his defense team contested the pro-

ing sanctioned by Lithuania. The court, however, proceeded with the hearing.

Speaking to journalists after the session, Japaridze criticized the court's decision, saying, "In fact, there was no formal basis for using anything as a preventive measure, because I am not going to run away anywhere."

He also stated that he does not intend to pay the bail.

ADB to Help Establish First Energy Storage Facility in Georgia

MANILA, PHILIPPINES (16 April 2025) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$104 million loan to help enhance Georgia's energy security.

Under ADB's Energy Storage and Green Hydrogen Development Project, the bank will help Georgia create its first-ever energy storage facility and explore green hydrogen development possibilities in the country.

The project will enhance the country's electricity grid's ability to integrate a higher level of renewable energy by adding a

200MW/200MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) to its transmission network at the Ksani Substation near Tbilisi. The facility will improve energy security, reduce Georgia's reliance on grid stability support from neighboring countries, and pave the way for greater private sector participation.

"ADB has been a long-standing partner in supporting Georgia's efforts to strengthen its energy sector," said ADB Country Director for Georgia Lesley Bearman Lahm. "This new project marks another significant step toward enhancing the country's energy independence. With abundant clean energy potential and ambitious development goals, Georgia is well positioned to unlock greater economic benefits from its renewable resources."

Increasing electricity consumption, changing precipitation patterns, and water availability pose substantial risks to hydro-

electric power, which the Georgian energy sector heavily relies on. Advanced technologies like BESS and green hydrogen are critical to addressing climate change risks and providing sustainable energy to the population.

ADB also approved a grant-based Technical Assistance (TA) of \$400,000 to support Georgia's efforts toward development of green hydrogen. The TA will assist the government in identifying the hydrogen potential and necessary requirements for encouraging private sector participation.

"We see strong potential for developing green hydrogen in Georgia," said ADB Principal Energy Specialist Adnan Tareen. "Surplus energy generated during peak seasons can be converted to green hydrogen and traded on EU energy markets, strengthening Georgia's energy system and creating new economic opportunities."

The project will introduce

improvements in the legal and regulatory framework necessary for the inclusion of storage technologies like BESS and green hydrogen into the network. This will facilitate private sector investments in renewable energy penetration and the development of larger BESS facilities and green hydrogen.

The project supports the Georgian government's goals of reforming the energy sector, emerging as a regional platform for trading clean energy, and improving the efficiency of the transmission network, as reflected in ADB's Country Partnership Strategy for Georgia, 2024-2028.

The Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development will oversee the project execution and implementation of policy reforms envisaged under the project, while the Georgian State Electrosystem will act as the Implementing Agency.

ADB has supported Georgia

since 2007 and is one of the country's largest multilateral development partners. ADB's loans, grants, and technical assistance to Georgia total \$5 billion. ADB's five-year country partnership strategy with Georgia aims to help the nation develop into a green and inclusive regional gateway while supporting sovereign and private sector investments, policy reforms, capacity building, climate-resilient infrastructure, and regional integration.

ADB is a leading multilateral development bank supporting sustainable, inclusive, and resilient growth across Asia and the Pacific. Working with its members and partners to solve complex challenges together, ADB harnesses innovative financial tools and strategic partnerships to transform lives, build quality infrastructure, and safeguard our planet. Founded in 1966, ADB is owned by 69 members—49 from the region.

Weather

Thursday, April 17

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 20°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 9°C

Friday, April 18

Day Cloudy
High: 17°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 7°C

published by

The Messenger

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On April 15, the Embassy of Japan in Georgia held “*Furoshiki* Demonstration and Lecture, and *Yukata* Wearing Class” at the Georgian

Furoshiki Demonstration & Lecture and *Yukata* Wearing Class Held at Georgian School Tbilisi (Japan Weeks 2025 in Georgia)



School Tbilisi. This special cultural event was held in the scope of **Japan Weeks 2025 in Georgia**. Ms. Ohner Toshiko (Tea Master name “SOHO”) gave *Furoshiki* Demonstration and Lecture, and Ms. Komaki Yuu held *Yukata* Wearing Class (both residing in Stockholm).

At the beginning of the event, principal of the school, Ms. Eteri Svanidze expressed her gratitude towards the Embassy of Japan for their continuous support and spoke about the significance of cultural events at their school, which has been teaching Japanese language for 30 years. In recognition of its longstanding efforts in promoting Japanese culture and language education, in 2023 the school was awarded the **Japanese Foreign Minister’s Commendation**. *Furoshiki* is a tradi-

tional Japanese wrapping cloth, which is used to transport and wrap various items, such as gifts or lunch boxes. *Furoshiki* folding techniques range from simple knots to intricate wraps, allowing to elegantly package items of various shapes and sizes. A *yukata* is a casual summer *kimono* typically made of lightweight cotton, traditionally worn during festivals and other informal occasions. Unlike the more

formal *kimono*, which is often made of silk and worn with multiple layers and accessories, the *yukata* is simpler to wear and more comfortable, especially in warmer seasons. After the *Furoshiki* demonstration students had a chance to participate in the lecture and to experience folding techniques of *furoshiki* firsthand. Following the event, students also attended *Yukata* Wearing class, where they were dressed in Japanese traditional clothing. This event provided an opportunity for students to deepen their appreciation of Japanese attire and aesthetics.

