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## Coronavirus second wave review from the Prime Minister



► The Prime Minister, Giorgi Gakharia on the Public Broadcaster.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

In an interview with Public Broadcaster, the PM, Giorgi Gakharia discussed the challenges amid pandemic and the difficulties that need to be avoided in case of the second wave.

As the PM stated, the crisis budget 2020 is being discussed at the parliament, which is modeled in a way that will not require re-reviewing even if the second wave breaks out.

Gakharia considers that the health-care system should do its best to prepare for the possible second wave, which means to face the challenge with facilities in proper condition.

According to the Prime Minister, at the beginning of the crisis, Georgia was able to test 75-100 individuals a day, while by now, there are 4000-4500 testings daily, and one of the main purposes is to assure the rate to be 10 000 testings per day, by the time country faces the second wave.

"This is very important because the principle we chose was to deter 'imported



► According to the PM, regardless of the possible second wave, re-joining the regulations should be averted.

cases' (first phase), to adapt (second phase), and to manage the situation (third phase). In the current 'managing' phase, we aim to detect, cure and retrieve individuals back to the economic lifestyle hastily," Gakharia said.

The PM emphasised that it will be extremely hard for the country's social-economical condition to endure similar harsh economical restrictions that had been enjoined earlier.

"The main problem of our country during the pandemic is the limited financial resources and our task is to allot it fairly and in a timely manner to the people who need it the most."

Gakharia highlighted that the present stable situation in Georgia does not mean that the virus is defeated.

"It is just a result of being able to manage the spread of the virus," he noted.

The experts do not have a precise answer on whether the second wave will break out or not, nevertheless, a distinct rise in the case of the Coronavirus is expected to start in Autumn.

# Ambassador of Ukraine clarifies that Saakashvili is not an official in Ukraine

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

The ambassador of Ukraine to Georgia, Igor Dolgov met the representative of the ruling party, Mamuka Mdinardze. The main subjects of the meeting were the constitutional amendments and the upcoming elections, however, they also discussed the announcement made by the former president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, who now is a citizen of Ukraine.

"I am not going to watch quietly Georgia being destroyed, I am getting ready for victory," said Saakashvili in the video published on his Facebook page, adding that the elections of 2020 will decide whether Georgia will survive or demise.

According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, David Zalkaniani, said that the decision has been made to invite the ambassador of Ukraine to Georgia, in order to make an explanation about the announcement made by a high-rank official of Ukraine.



► Mikheil Saakashvili, the 3rd president of Georgia



► The ambassador of Ukraine to Georgia, Igor Dolgov

Zalkaniani thinks that the announcement was an intervention in the domestic affairs of Georgia, in particular "he was involved in electoral campaigns and processes." According to Zalkaniani, even though Georgian side has been informed that the third president of Georgia was designated as the official of Ukraine and Saakashvili himself announced that he was a high-rank representative and the mandate assigned to him considered his engagement in significant processes of reforms, at the meeting the ambassador of Ukraine clarified that Saakashvili is neither a representative of the executive branch nor is he even an official of Ukraine.

"Depending on the mutual challenges such as the occupation of our countries and our European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations, Ukraine is our strategic partner and nothing will hinder the partnership between Georgia and Ukraine. We are united in several regional formats and I want to tell you that I am in

constant communication with my Ukrainian colleagues and frequently discuss all the issues that are relevant for our partnership," Zalkaniani stated.

The ambassador of Ukraine noted that the fact that the citizen of Ukraine interferes in the domestic political affairs of Georgia is the Georgian side's vision, while the Ukrainian side's vision is that Mikheil Saakashvili is not an official in Ukraine.

"Strategic partnership between Ukraine and Georgia is the fundamental principle of our bilateral relationship. Georgian and Ukrainian people want us, politicians to do more to establish an even closer relationship."

According to Dolgov, several other issues related to the fight against COVID-19, the current Ministerial of the Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers, as well as the evacuation of Ukrainian citizens from Georgia and mutual assistance were discussed during the meeting.

## Georgia becoming more gender-sensitive but bias remains, study reveals

More than half of all Georgians – 63% of women and 54% of men – think Georgia has yet to achieve meaningful gender equality. And 60% are confident that greater involvement of women in politics would benefit their country. Whereas 59% of men and 38% of women believe that women's main duty is to take care of their families. Both women and men in Georgia have become more favourable to gender equality over the past seven years, but women are discarding traditional stereotypes much faster than are men.

These findings were revealed by new research "Men, Women and Gender Relations in Georgia: Public Perceptions and Attitudes" released on 16th of June by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) with support from the Swedish Government. Building on the results of a similar study carried out in 2013, the research unveils lingering disparities in the social perceptions of gender roles in Georgia while showing that traditional gender stereotypes have become less common than they were seven years ago.

### WOMEN'S ATTITUDES TO GENDER ROLES ARE CHANGING FASTER THAN THOSE OF MEN

"Attitudes are changing and it is heartening to see the progress that Georgia has made over a fairly short period," said UNDP Head Louisa Vinton. "But equal rights for women are unfortunately still called into question, particularly by Georgian men. Nearly 40% of men still think that a woman cannot perform professionally as well as a man, even if both are equally qualified. And almost half of the respondents overall also believe that men make better political leaders than women. If Georgia is to derive full benefit from all of its citizens, we need to overcome discrimination and stereotypes."

"The research analysed attitudes and perceptions regarding gender equality from societal, community, relationship and individual levels. Relationships indeed are irrefutable markers to trace changes, thus, it is interesting to observe a stark shift in the perceptions on women's role in the family captured by the research," UNFPA Head Lela Bakradze said. Currently, a significant number of the respondents (50.4%) do not agree with the opinion that women's primary duty is to take care of the family, while the same was reported by only 11% in 2013. Fewer people perceive

women as the sole care-takers of the families, marked by 50.4% of the respondents in comparison to 89% in 2013. Similarly, the percentage of people agreeing that men have the final say in the family decreased by over 28% of the respondents. These figures indicate remarkable change, and it is obvious that much of the decline is due to shifting views among the younger generation. The remarkable percentage of both women and men support that both parents shall be entitled to parental leave (67.3% and 64.6%, respectively); this is yet another evidence indicating the shift happening in social norms.

The comparative study found that traditional views of gender roles are becoming less common and that the understanding of gender equality has significantly changed since 2013, particularly among younger generations.

Currently, the distribution of household work in Georgia is still starkly segregated by gender, with women doing the cooking, cleaning and childcare tasks in overwhelming numbers. Three out of four respondents say that women always perform basic care duties. However, the proportion of both women and men who see caregiv-

ing tasks as the mother's responsibility declined substantially, from 81 to 69% for men, and from 76 to 54% for women. While seven years ago 87% of men and 70% of women agreed that final decisions in households belonged to men, in 2019 this view was shared by 68% of men and only 34% of women.

The perception of women's role in business is also changing. While in 2013, 58% of respondents said they thought men were better leaders in business than women, by 2019 this share had dropped to 39%. At the same time, the recognition of the challenges women face on the job market is substantial, as a staggering 85% of women and 58% of men agree that women have to overcome more obstacles than do men in their careers. Women cited their responsibilities in the household as the biggest barrier to greater engagement in economic activity and public life.

"Georgian society is moving away from gender-biased views and attitudes towards achieving meaningful gender equality," said Lela Akiashvili, the PM's Advisor for Human Rights and Gender Equality. "However, more consistent and specific policies are needed to accelerate that progress

and support greater equality in public life as well as in the distribution of household work."

"Supporting gender equality and women leaders remains a priority for Sweden," said Ulrik Tideström, Ambassador of Sweden to Georgia and Armenia. "This flagship research provides solid evidence for celebrating the successes Georgia has achieved in recent years and pinpointing the challenges that are yet to be addressed."

The study on public perception of gender roles and attitudes was commissioned by UNDP and UNFPA under the Sweden-funded UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality in Georgia.

The research was conducted in 2019 by the organization Promundo – the global leader in advancing gender equality and preventing violence by engaging men and boys, and the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC), based on the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), a comprehensive household questionnaire on men's attitudes and practices, along with women's opinions and reports of men's practices, on a wider variety of topics related to gender equality. The data were collected by face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative sample of around 2,500 citizens and during focus group discussions in five regions.

THURSDAY		JUNE 18	
Day	☁️	Shows	
		High:	30°C
Night	☁️	Shows	
		Low:	19°C
FRIDAY		JUNE 19	
Day	☁️	Partly Cloudy	
		High:	31°C
Night	☁️	Cloudy	
		Low:	19°C

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## About 4000 square meters of booths burnt at Varketili market



► Traders of Varketili Market, who cannot confirm the damage will receive €500 per square meter.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The fire broke out at the Varhe market on the night of June 15th. About 130 firefighters with 25 units of equipment extinguished the fire within a few hours. The cause of the fire is still unknown. As a result of the fire on the territory, warehouses were burnt. Some traders say they have lost thousands of Lari.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has launched an investigation under the second part of Article 187 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, which stipulates damaging or destroying an item by setting it on fire.

According to Otar Kereselidze, the head of the Tbilisi Fire and Rescue Division, about 4,000

square meters of warehouses were burnt as a result of the fire on the territory of Varketili market.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs says that according to the preliminary information, clothes and various items were burnt but no one was injured in the fire.

Nanna Tsuladze, a lawyer of Varketili 96 Ltd., says that the victims of the mixed market fire will be reimbursed for the destruction of the goods as long as they provide necessary documents:

“There is insurance of third parties, their goods will be reimbursed, but I would like to note that all these goods must have a document of purchase and people who do not have this document will be given €500 per square

meter,” Tsuladze announced at the press conference.

As for the demand of traders that the amount is small and the counters should be repaired by the market administration, Tsuladze answered that it will be discussed after the expert's answers are given and the causes of the fire are determined.

“What happened to us was shocking. Ltd. also suffered material damage. We did not have the insurance of the market building itself, so the ltd will not receive anything from the insurance company,” the lawyer explained,

adding that there's no delay in communication between the traders and the market administration.

According to the Business Registry, the total market space is 9,399 square meters and it is fully owned by Varketili-96 Ltd., which leases commercial space to traders.

The property of the traders employed at the Varketili market was insured by the insurance company Irao. Note that since 2018, third party insurance is mandatory for public gathering facilities. Thus, the owner of the

mass collection facility, including the market, is obliged to purchase compulsory liability insurance, and the insurance company is obliged to compensate the damage caused to the third party as a result of the insurance accident. The business unit buys insurance in two directions. These include property and health liability insurance. For example: in case of a shopping center/market, the damage caused to one victim's life will be reimbursed by €30,000, and the damage caused to health - by €15,000 GEL; In case of damage to property, one person will receive an amount of not more than €15 000; The maximum amount of compensation for one business object from the insurance company is €15 million.

According to Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze, the insurance company will compensate the victims of the fire in the mixed market of Varketili.

Before the meeting of the government of the capital, Kaladze stated that the insurance company was ready to do so.

“In addition, the subject of each victim is considered individually. Tbilisi City Hall is also ready to meet, get involved, discuss the current situation and help within our capabilities.” Kaladze explained, adding that he talked with the PM about this issue and there will be meetings and consultations in the coming days.



► Kakha Kaladze: “The issue of fire victims in Varketili is being considered individually, we are ready to get involved and help as much as possible.”

## Patriarchate finds it unacceptable for Georgian parish to be established by Russian counterpart in Paris



► The Georgian Orthodox Church called reported plans by its Russian counterpart body for opening a Georgian parish in Paris 'completely unacceptable.'

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

According to the Patriarchate of the Georgian Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris plans to establish a Georgian parish in Paris, which is unacceptable to and considers it to be the result of the lack of proper communication. In connection with this fact, the

Chairman of the Foreign Affairs of the Georgian Patriarchate, Metropolitan Gerasim of Zugdidi and Tsaishi addressed the Metropolitan of Dubnin, Ioane, Archbishop of Western Europe and the Slavic Diaspora of the Russian Church.

The letter states that the opening of the Georgian parish in Paris became known through the infor-

mation published on the Internet. According to this information, the first service in the Georgian parish of Paris will be held on June 20, and Archimandrite Ieretheos (Margvelashvili), a priest of Georgian origin, who is under the jurisdiction of the Russian Church, will be appointed its leader.

In a letter sent on behalf of the Georgian Patriarchate, Met-

ropolitan Ioane wrote to Metropolitan Gerasim that the Georgian Orthodox Church is providing spiritual care for Georgians living outside Georgia, including Paris, where Queen Tamar's Georgian Church has been located since 2009. Thus, in the official correspondence, the Georgian Church's bishop notifies the head of the Russian organisation's head about a functioning Georgian church and parish in Paris, in operation since 2009 and led by archimandrite Anton.

“That is why the desire to es-

tablish a Georgian parish under the leadership of Archimandrite Hierotheos is completely unacceptable to us and we consider it as a result of lack of proper communication with you,” Metropolitan Gerasim wrote.

The letter expresses hope about a “timely” resolution of the “misunderstanding” between the two official bodies.

Reports about the Russian Orthodox Church's plans for launching a Georgian parish in Paris appeared on social media earlier in the week.



► St. Queen Tamar Church in Paris. Photo: Facebook