

Opposition: First Rurua, then voting



Opposition says that they won't participate in the voting unless Rurua is released from prison.

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

As the Elections of 2020 are coming closer, the government of Georgia is trying to adopt the electoral amendments, which will decide the fate of this year's

elections. Initially, the ruling party had promised the people of the country and its international partners that the 2020 elections would have been held in a proportional manner, with no threshold.

However, the amendments were not supported by the ruling party representatives, after which, the members of the

ruling party and representatives of the opposition have been meeting for several months to come up with ideas and plans for this election.

Finally, with the help of the country's international partners, the decision was made. Now, the parliament needs to vote for the amendments for the third time to

finally decide the way the elections should be held.

However, the opposition says that not all parts of the agreement have been fulfilled and that Rurua still is in jail. The Parliament of Georgia will vote on the

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A regional organization of the party, Lelo for Georgia, has been established in Khashuri



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AA officially came into force in 2014

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Giorgi Rurua's trial is scheduled for June 29th, at 11:00 p.m.

A regional organization of the party, Lelo for Georgia, has been established in Khashuri



The opening was attended by the leaders of the party.

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

Yesterday, Lelo for Georgia established a regional organization. The party leaders and members met with the population and introduced Kakha Kozhoridze, the head of the office.

Lelo leader Mamuka Khazaradze addressed the locals at the meeting and thanked them for the positive welcome. According to him, the people of Khashuri have high hopes that changes will start in this country together with Lelo.

Khazaradze spoke about the problems created in the district and discussed the ways to solve them together with the locals.

"I have known you since the dark days of the 1990s, when we started an enter-

prise with you. Unfortunately, this enterprise has stopped because of that wrong policy and wrong economic planning. I came here today to make a serious try with you and the youth of this region to win Georgia! This victory will be the victory of every Georgian. I know how the people of Khashuri know how to work and stand by your side and I believe in you," Khazaradze said in his speech.

The party leader also spoke about emigration and the problems that he said exist not only in Khashuri but around the country as well, he talked about the wrong economic policies throughout the country.

"I do not want these young people who live here to communicate remotely with family members who have emigrated. I

do not want people from Georgia to go to other countries to escape the hardships. Because we have the ability to have a successful economy in this country. Where each person will have a sense of security, justice and stability," said Khazaradze.

At the end of his speech, the leader of Lelo appealed to the people of Khashuri to mobilize their forces to make all the opportunities in the country a reality, which, according to him, will be the beginning of life in the worthy homeland of the next generation.

Lelo for Georgia is a political party in Georgia that was created at the end of

2019 by businessmen Mamuka Khazaradze and Badri Japaridze. The party has attracted a number of prominent political figures, including David Usupashvili's Development Movement, the New Rights Party and Pikria Chikhradze

Prior to setting up the party, Khazaradze and some of his partners had set up a public movement, in September 2019. Khazaradze is a co-founder of TBC Bank and of the Anaklia Development Consortium. Mamuka Khazaradze presented the public movement Lelo in early September on the Anaklia coast.



The political party was established in 2019, in hopes to fight against the bipolar system in Georgia.

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constitutional amendments in the third reading at the June 29th sitting.

Davit Matikashvili, a member of the parliamentary majority, said that on June 29th, the Georgian Dream will thoroughly implement the March 8th agreement with the support of independent MPs in a multifunctional way, and in the third reading it will definitely adopt the amendments to the constitution.

Davit Matikashvili calls the part of the opposition that demands the release of Giorgi Rurua from imprisonment radical, criminal and lost. "This part of the opposition has been degraded and turned into a criminal force," said a member of the majority.

However, members of the main opposition parties in par-

liament, the United National Movement and European Georgia, say they are not going to change their position and vote on the June 29 constitutional amendment in the third reading if they do not release Giorgi Rurua, whose trial is scheduled for June 29, at 11:00 p.m.

"The Georgian Dream is the successor to the Communists and their spiritual successor. We are the opposition to change this government, which is really criminal because it steals budget money," said the MP of UNM, Roman Gotsiridze.

Sergi Kapanadze, a member of the European Georgia party, also said that European Georgia would take part in the discussion of the constitutional amendments if both parts of the March 8th agreement were fully implemented by the government:

"If Giorgi Rurua is released and both parts of the March 8 agreement are fully implemented, then, as we have said, we will participate. If this agreement is not implemented, then naturally we will not participate," noted Kapanadze.

According to the constitu-

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According to the new amendments, 120 members elected by the proportional system and 30 members elected by the majoritarian system.

tional amendment, which will be put to a vote in the third reading on June 29, the parliament of the new convocation will consist of 120 members elected by

the proportional system and 30 members elected by the majoritarian system. Under the changes, the proportional system will allow the mandates of

members of parliament to be distributed to political parties that receive at least one percent of the actual votes cast.

Weather

Monday, June 29

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 30°C

Night Clear

Low: 18°C

Tuesday, June 30

Day Clear

High: 32°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 19°C

published by
The Messenger

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6-year anniversary of EU-Georgia Association Agreement



H.E. Carl Hartzell talked about the importance of the Agreement

By NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

6 years have passed since the negotiating of the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement between Georgia and the EU. In November 2012, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy Stefan Fuel stated that the AA negotiations could be finalized by November 2013.

A ceremony on the initialing of the AA by the Georgian Foreign Minister Maia Panjikidze and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton was held at the East-

ern Partnership summit on 29 November 2013. It was formally signed on 27 June 2014 and had to be ratified by the EU, Euratom, member states, and Georgia. A second agreement, governing the country's involvement in EU crisis management operations, was also signed.

The Association Agreement, much of which provisionally came into force in September, has been fully ratified by Georgia and all EU member states. On 18 December 2014, the European Parliament approved the Association Agreement. Members backed the treaty by 490 votes in favor to 76 against, with 57 abstentions. The agreement entered into

force on 1 July 2016.

The agreement was a very big step towards closer relations between Georgia and the EU and has helped the country to develop rapidly with EU standards.

In celebration of the past 6 years, a statement of Carl Hartzell, Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, was published. In his statement, Ambassador talks about the importance of the agreement, calling it a backbone of the strong and growing relations between Georgia and the EU.

“To me, the Association Agreement is a bit like a cookbook, that we took home 6 years ago and have been cooking together from ever since. Some of the dishes we have cooked up together have been truly tasty such as Visa liberalization or the Erasmus + student exchange program, which is enjoyed by so many people

here. Other dishes are more like vegetables, not something you truly look forward to, but in the end, you realize – they are healthy, and they are good for you. So, I very much looking forward to cooking together in the coming year as well,” noted H.E. Ambassador Hartzell.

The Association Agreement, which came into power in 2014, mainly is a guarantee of is a “deep and comprehensive free trade agreement” (DCFTA). It provides for the full liberalization of trade in industrial products and a substantial reduction of barriers in agricultural trade. A significant part of the AA is devoted to the elimination of regulatory barriers to trade (e.g. technical standards). The Agreement provides for progressive and partial liberalization of trade in services as well as for fast and deep elimination of barriers to capital flows.



The agreement has helped Georgia in its development

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