

## Inter-Agency coordination council discusses the epidemiological situation



The Inter-Agency coordination council

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BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

On October 26<sup>th</sup>, after the Inter-Agency coordination council meeting, which was conducted by Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, a decision about involving the senior medical students in the process of managing Coronavirus was announced. At the meeting, the council members focused on the steps taken in terms of safety for the upcoming Parliamentary Election and discussed the general epidemiological situation in the country.

According to the decision of the council, senior medical students will take a special training course to create a reserve for medical staff. Training of medical students will end in the following days and in about a week they will be ready to assist doctors if necessary. Cases of infecting medical staff have increased, therefore, it is crucial to have the so-called backup base to avoid shortcomings in the provision of services, including phone consultations.

The council members talked about the growing dynamic of the number of infected people worldwide. They discussed the country's strategy, which is to adapt and manage the virus with local and targeted restrictions where necessary.

The coordination council strictly recommends wearing masks in outdoor spaces as well, especially where it is im-

possible to observe the social distance, such as bus stops and in queues. The recommendation applies to Tbilisi, Kutaisi, and Batumi.

It was noted that the elections will be conducted following all the regulations and rules issued by epidemiologists. According to the decision of the council, since some polling stations are located in schools, due to preparation and further works for the elections, those schools will temporarily shift to online lessons from

October 28<sup>th</sup>. The mentioned decision will also apply to universities and kindergartens.

There are a total of 30 303 confirmed coronavirus cases in Georgia. 11 370 patients have recovered, and 215 have passed away. Epidemiologists state that the trend of growing the number of COVID-infected people will continue. The peak of the second wave of Coronavirus is expected in the second and third weeks of November.



Georgia reported 1 872 new coronavirus cases, 14 deaths, and 603 recoveries on October 26<sup>th</sup>.



# ISFED published the second interim report on pre-election monitoring of social media



International Society For Fair Elections And Democracy

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

International Society For Fair Elections And Democracy (ISFED) presented the second interim report on pre-election monitoring of social media in the context of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections of Georgia. Within the frame of monitoring, which includes the period from September 1, 2020, to October 10, 2020, ISFED analyzed more than 900 Facebook pages and 11 469 Facebook posts. ISFED observed 354 Facebook pages of political parties, 195 pages of majoritarian candidates, and 170 official pages of local self-governments.

ISFED identified pages operating for the following purposes:

- Encouraging public polarization on value issues (69

pages)

- Discrediting the opposition (36 pages)
- Discrediting the ruling party (30 pages)
- False media operating in favor of the government (9pages)
- Supporting opposition parties (18 pages)
- Supporting the government (9 pages)

According to a press release published by ISFED, pages, which promote public polarization on value issues, are actively involved in the pre-election campaign in favor of pro-Russian political actors.

The press release reads that political discredit campaigns are conducted intensively by unofficial, anonymous, and fake media pages on Facebook. Within the reporting period, ISFED detected 66 Facebook pages with such characteristics, and 36 of them were directed against opposition parties (except Alliance

of Patriots of Georgia), critical media outlets, civil society activists, and non-governmental organizations. The rest, “30 pages worked on discrediting the Georgian Dream,” but some cases, their posts served the purpose to discredit opposition parties as well, except for the member parties of Power in Unity ( a political movement in Georgia consisted of 10 opposition parties).

According to the report, mostly, the targets of anti-media Facebook posts are TV channels critically-minded to the government, such as Main Channel, TV Pirveli, and Formula. The Main Channel was discredited mainly for covering the events related to the case of Davit Gareji. The press release reads that accusations were made towards Main Channel for politically motivated selective coverage of the issues.

During the reporting period, ISFED found 9 false media pages on Facebook with pro-govern-

ment and anti-opposition posts. ISFED detected 7 sponsored posts out of 403 posts published by these media pages.

The report reveals that, during the pre-election period, political actors spent more than \$ 320 000 on ads posted by political parties and candidates on Facebook and Instagram.

ISFED’s monitoring of social media mainly includes three basic areas:

- Monitoring the official social media pages of political parties, their leaders, candidates, various public institutes, and municipality bodies.
- Monitoring the anonymous pages/groups/actors operating for political purposes, including the monitoring of political discrediting campaigns, anonymous and fake support, fake media.
- Monitoring of pages/groups which spread misinformation and promote public polarization on community values.



“Political actors spent more than \$ 320 000 on ads posted by political parties and candidates on Facebook and Instagram during the pre-election period.”

## Weather

Tuesday, October 27

Day ☀ Clear  
High: 23°C  
Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 11°C

Wednesday, October 28

Day ☁ Partly Cloudy  
High: 19°C  
Night 🌙 Partly Cloudy  
Low: 10°C

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# Controversy over Axis Homes - People are demanding the interference of the City Hall



Axis homeowners held a press conference on suspended constructions early this October.



StopAxis campaign is underway on virtual platforms as well as in the form of street protests.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The construction company Axis has been in charge of three unfinished projects in Saburtalo over several years.

Over 300 families have invested money in the Axis Development complexes and have been waiting for their apartments to finish for more than ten years. They have held multiple protests outside Axis buildings, demanding from the company to complete projects, but, according to those waiting for their flats, the answer is always the same- the company postpones the process of handing over the apartments

for next year.

These people say that they are victims of the Axis scheme, claiming that the company took advantage of its good reputation and people's patience. They have created a Facebook page Axis' Victims / Defrauded by AXIS real estate developers, where they voice their demands to bring these stories to the public.

"You all know that the company Axis is building a tower on Chavchavadze. But you do not know that this company has many victims. The company says that 350 families are affected, but there seems to be more," reads one of

the posts on the Facebook page.

Some of the victims took their claim to court using legal means to protect their interests and won the case. However, the decision of the court is still not enforced.

According to Giorgi Pridonishvili, he bought an apartment in 2006, which was supposed to finish in 2008, but the construction company blamed it on the 2008 war and never finished the apartment.

"We are asking the City Hall and the Mayor to involve us in the unfinished construction support program and complete our constructions," he

said, adding that victims demand the process to be transparent.

They are also asking Mayor Kakha Kaladze to become the mediator with Aleksandre Mezhevidze, one of the founders of the company. They demand from the state to create a plan to solve the issue.

According to the campaign, the judiciary must conduct an impartial investigation into the company's activities as well.

The three projects that people are waiting for are Sairme, Bakhtrioni Palace 1, and Bakhtrioni Palace 2. The living complexes are supposed to be finally finished by 2021.

## EU4Youth event in Georgia aims to foster youth dialogue and discuss opportunities for youth employment

A two-day EU4Youth conference took place in Tbilisi on 21-22 October. The event discussed new opportunities to strengthen youth employment, entrepreneurship and participation in Georgia.

In the format of a round-table discussion, the event brought together more than a hundred local, national and international stakeholders in youth policy, to focus on youth dialogue and youth social entrepreneurship initiatives that support employment opportunities for young people in Georgia.

The first day of the meeting aimed to inform and raise awareness about the future Eastern Partnership structured dialogue with youth, and to introduce the main provisions of the EU Youth Guarantee scheme.

The second day focused on the theme of Youth Social Entrepreneurship (YSE), and provided an

opportunity for discussion about YSE needs and challenges in Georgia. Participants heard from local NGOs dealing with Social Entrepreneurship projects, who provided insights about social entrepreneurship support mechanisms and the engagement of local actors in the field. The Youth Agency also presented its latest agenda to support Georgian youth and foster their participation in the community.

The event has also hosted local CSOs working in the field of social entrepreneurship, who highlighted the importance of national governments recognising social enterprises and adopting legislation to support them.

Finally, the panel discussion highlighted how social entrepreneurs and local universities could work to strengthen youth entrepreneurship, and future government plans for developing

a sustainable ecosystem for green and social businesses in the country.

The event was organised by

the EU-funded EU4Youth Programme, in partnership with the EU Delegation to Georgia, the Youth Agency in Georgia, as well as EU4Youth implementing partners in Georgia, CENN and Mercy Corps.

The EU4Youth programme was launched by the European Union in 2017 to empower young people in the Eastern partner countries. As part of the Eastern

Partnership, the EU4Youth fosters the active participation of young people in society and their employability, by developing youth leadership and entrepreneurship through a variety of actions, including capacity building, fellowships, and support to policy dialogue, as well as by providing grants to organisations active in these areas.

([euneighbours.eu](http://euneighbours.eu))



Photo: European Union