

Special Forces Arrive on Rustaveli Avenue, Violent Groups Shoot Explosives

By THE MESSENGER STAFF

Representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs arrived at the Parliament by minibusses, with special equipment.

Representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are removing some of the contract participants from the territory.

The situation became tense several times during the solidarity rally.

Violent and homophobic groups broke through a police cordon and threw stones and batons at protesters.

Ordinary citizens, politicians, civil activists, and members of Tbilisi Pride gathered at the solidarity rally.

The silent rally was planned after violent and homophobic groups opposed to the March of Dignity physically assaulted journalists and cameramen.

The Patriarchate has issued a statement on the ongoing events on Rustaveli Avenue and called on the participants of the violent contraction to remain calm.

"We appeal to the citizens of our country, to all members of society - it is inadmissible to escalate further confrontation with swearing and verbal abuse against an already tense background.

Turning the confrontation into physical abuse will be detrimental to our country. Violence can never be good, it will hurt not only individuals but our entire society and state. I urge everyone to calm down!" - their statement reads.



News in Brief

PREPARED BY
THE MESSENGER STAFF

Tbilisi Pride and its supporters hold a silent protest rally

Tbilisi Pride members waved the

LGBT flag and colored smoke at the rally on Rustaveli Avenue. They performed at a silent rally. The rally for "Freedom" is being held against the background of a violent contraction.

The situation has escalated several times as members of the violent group threw stones and eggs in the direction of the silent protest. They tried to break through the police cordon, but the police arrested several people.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has not yet commented on the number of de-

tainees.

Contract participants, members of violent and homophobic groups are trying to break through the police cordon and cross into the area where the rally for Freedom is taking place.

MIA: We warn the organizers of both rallies, political leaders, not to allow violence

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has

issued a statement regarding the current events in front of the Parliament and called on the citizens gathered on Rustaveli Avenue to obey the demands of the police during the gathering and expression.

In a statement, the agency warned both sides, protesters and violent groups not to allow calls for violence.

"Employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are mobilized in connection with the ongoing rallies on Rustaveli Avenue in Tbilisi and are maintaining public order."

Politics

GYLA protects the rights of journalists affected on July 5

FULL STORY ON Page 2



Politics/Economics

Georgia's Minister of Economy presents the country's 10 year development plan

FULL STORY ON Page 2

GYLA protects the rights of journalists affected on July 5

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has launched an investigation into the cases of office raids and obstruction of journalistic activities. A total of 11 people have been arrested so far, 8 of whom are charged with administrative offenses and 3 with criminal offenses. At the same time, yesterday the Ministry advised Tbilisi Pride organizers not to hold the March 'in an open public area' due to the 'size' of the ongoing counter-rally.

Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) has already been involved in the case of 11 journalists injured on July 5, 2021. At this time, an investigation has been launched into the incidents of violence against them and obstruction of journalistic activities. At this stage, 2 of them have been granted the status of victims. It is noteworthy that the investigative bodies are actively contacting the affected journalists to summon them for questioning, however, according to GYLA, this process is unorganized, the inquiry process does not start at the agreed time. At first, the victims were called to the police station on Tabukashvili Street, however, the place of interrogation was later changed.

"It is important that the investigative body investigates all episodes of violence and obstruction in a timely, effective and organized manner, including in identifying discriminatory motives. At the same time, the investigation should be interested in and give a legal assessment of how effectively the mobilization and actions of the police force were planned and executed to prevent the violent development



Several Western embassies in Georgia and international partners issued statements condemning the attack and calling on authorities to ensure freedom of expression and assembly.

of events."

The Tbilisi Pride March was supposed to take place on July 5, but it was canceled when violent counter-protesters gathered in the city center. On July 5 they carried out violent attacks on activists' offices and media outlets in various parts of Tbilisi. Of the 55 people injured, 52 are media representatives.

Before ransacking the premises, members of a violent homophobic mob rushed onto the balcony of Tbilisi Pride's office, tearing a rainbow flag apart and shattering the windows.

The Shame Movement members, who were hosting the Tbilisi Pride organizers, were forced to flee. According to allegations in the media, police were present in modest numbers and were unable to properly intervene.

According to MP Khatuna Samnidze, the violent hate street rally in Tbilisi on July 5 was organized by the authorities together with the Patriarchate, and that is why the Minister of Internal Affairs did not come to the Parliament when opposition summoned him to ask what he was going to do to defend Tbilisi Pride. Samnidze claims that Gonelaury was also directly helped by the chairman of the Human Rights Committee to avoid coming to the parliament, but this issue is on the agenda. "Vakhtang Gomelaury is obliged to come to any newly appointed committee, but since he does not do so, we demanded that he come to the parliament again today," she said, adding that the Minister of Internal Affairs must also resign.



"The authorities must put things right this time. They should publicly condemn attacks against LGBTI people and Pride organizers," said Denis Krivosheev, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.1478; Euro - 3.7289; GBP - 4.3597; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.2874; Swiss Franc - 3.4122

Georgia's Minister of Economy presents the country's 10 year development plan

BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

Minister of Economy of Georgia Natia Turnava has presented a new 10-year plan of

the country's economic development, covering 12 major fields and setting goals and indicators that Georgia should achieve by 2025 and 2030.

According to Minister Turnava, Georgia's economy is expected to grow by 8% this year, based off the economic indicators of April and May:

"Unprecedented economic growth witnessed in April and May allows us to predict that by



the end of this year we will witness at least 8% growth. In 2025 and 2030 we will continue to maintain an average economic growth of 5-5.2% and further

strengthen our status as a regional leader in economic growth," Georgia's Minister of Economy said.

Turnava also noted that before the pandemic broke out, the country used to be the region's leader in economic development which is why it will now be necessary to double the country's efforts to reclaim this status:

"In recent years, including 2019, we have gained the status of the region's leader in terms of economic growth and we will remain one, however, it will be necessary to double our efforts to achieve that

– though, judging by what we have witnessed in the recent months, we can say that it is quite possible".

As part of the new plan, Turnava announced that the government will subsidize mortgage loans from 6-8% to families with newborns. 6% of the loans will be covered for the families with the first or the second newborn, while 8% will be covered for the families with the third or subsequent infant, given that the loan ranges between 60,000 - 300,000 lari. This program has first been announced earlier, by the country's Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili, who noted that over 300 million lari will be allocated between 2021-2022 to implement such initiatives.

Weather

Wednesday, July 7

Day T-storm
High: 29°C
Night T-storm
Low: 19°C

Thursday, July 8

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 32°C
Night T-storm
Low: 21°C

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