

Mtavari Arkhi TV Commissions Polls, Predicting UNM's Victory in the City

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The United National Movement (UNM) held a rally "Fight for Victory, Fight for Misha's Freedom," in the western Georgian town of Zugdidi on the 27th of October, the same day as the Georgian Dream (GD) rally in the capital, Tbilisi. The UNM rally demanded the release of the imprisoned Mikheil Saakashvili, 3rd president of Georgia. Citizens gathered at the City Hall, where a special stage for speakers was located.

Before the rally, one of the videos of Mikheil Saakashvili, which was spread on the social network a few days ago and where he says that he is in his beloved and missed Samegrelo, in his Deduleti, was shown on the stage. Party leaders and members addressed the protesters. Among them was UNM Zugdidi mayoral candidate Anzor Melia, who is the father of UNM chair Nika Melia. He addressed party supporters, saying that he is happy to be running for Zugdidi mayor.

"If elected, I will be everyone's mayor who loves Georgia... I have visited all of the villages twice, met with tens of thousands of people and I am thankful to God", he said.

The rally was announced on October 26 by UNM member, MP Ana Tsitlidze. According to her, the fight for the freedom of Georgia is going on for the freedom of the 3rd president of Georgia, the founder of the modern Georgian state, Saakashvili, who is on a 26-day hunger strike. So as she pointed out, the main demand was his release.

UNM's mayoral candidate for Poti, Gigi Ugulava said that Saakashvili should be the last political prisoner in Georgia. He noted that the opposition does not aim to replace one party with another, but instead offers coalition governance.

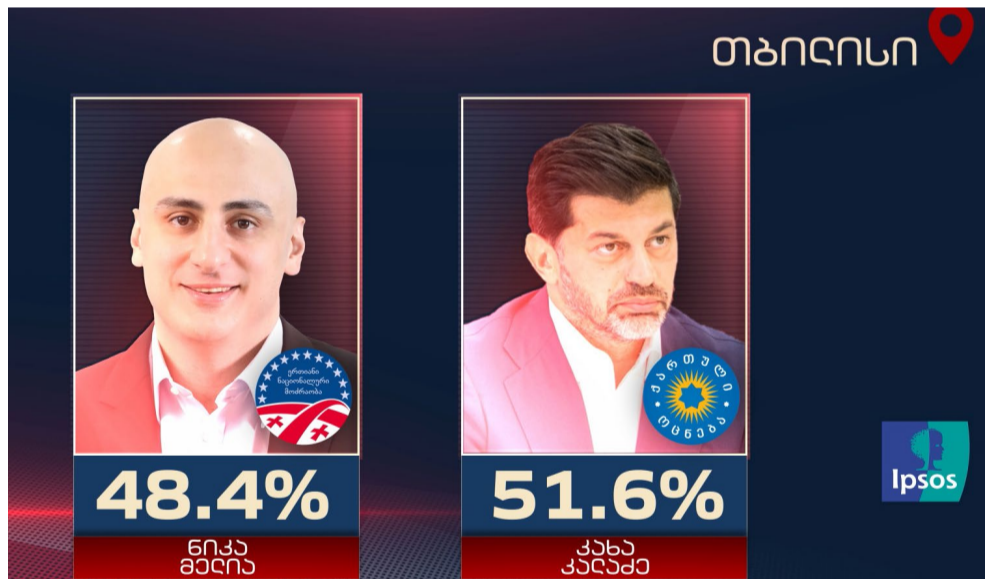
The opposition has been holding rallies since Saakashvili's detention on October 1. Saakashvili who is facing several criminal charges remains on hunger strike at Rustavi # 18 penitentiary facility.

The next morning, the results of the survey, commissioned by the opposition-minded Mtavari Arkhi was released. IPSOS-Global, conducted a survey in large cities (with a population of more than 100 thousand), from 23 to 27 October, using the principle of random sampling, through face-to-face interviews, asking the population 'If the elections were held next Saturday, which mayoral candidate would you vote for?' 2,600 respondents over the age of 18 eligible to vote in these cities were interviewed. The results are based on the opinion of all these respondents. The margin of error in the study is +/- 3%.

According to results, the GD mayoral candidate is leading in 1 of the 5 cities - Tbilisi, while the National Movement is leading in the remaining 4. According to the study, the difference between the candidates is in some cases so small that, given the margin of error, the



► "Fight for Victory, Fight for Misha's Freedom" Photo: RFE/RL



► The margin of error of the survey is 3%.

opposite result may arise. Study findings are as follows: Tbilisi: Nika Melia (National Movement) - 48.4%; Kakha Kaladze ("Georgian Dream") - 51.6%. Zugdidi: Anzor Melia (National Movement) - 54.7%; Mamuka Tsotseria ("Georgian Dream") - 45.3%. Rustavi: Davit Kirkitadze (National Movement) - 53.1%; Nino Latsabidze ("Georgian Dream") - 46.9%. Kutaisi: Khatia Dekanoidze ("National Movement") - 51.7%; Ioseb Khakhaleishvili ("Georgian Dream") - 48.3%. Batumi: Giorgi Kirtadze ("National Movement") - 51.3%; Archil Chikovani ("Georgian Dream") - 48.7%.

The second round of mayoral elections will be held on October 30 in 20 cities of Georgia. The 2nd round is held in all 5 self-governing cities.

"This is another weak attempt, a sinful attempt to cover up yesterday's a triumphant event and the public will see all this in 2 days, which will end with our victory," Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili responded to the IPSOS survey results.

PM also assessed this study as not credible, alleging that IPSOS is only used as a name by the opposition-minded TV channel, in reality, the studies are falsified by Levan Tarkhnishvili, therefore, the results can't be the subject of interest.

Head of the GD party Irakli Kobakh-

idze also commented on the study: "As for the IPSOS surveys, they had a 12% error in the case of the first survey, and in the previous parliamentary elections, they had at least 9% error. You can add 9-9% to our candidate rates and you will get around the lower limit of our candidates. That is, this study confirmed that our candidates are winning in all 20 municipalities. It was practically self-lustration, which the desperate Gvaramia carried out yesterday by demonstrating his dreams," Kobakhidze said.

Based on the final results of the October 2nd local self-government race, the GD received 46.74% of the vote and won the majority of mayoral constituencies, while the UNM received 30.68%, and former PM Giorgi Gakharia's party For Georgia garnered 7.79%.

Mayoral election run-offs will be held in 20 of 64 constituencies of Georgia, as none of the candidates received at least 51% of the vote. In 17 of the 20 election constituencies, the candidates of the GD and the UNM opposition will compete, while in the remaining three constituencies, the ruling party will face the For Georgia party.

A total of 2,088,722 voters are eligible to participate in the municipal run-offs nationwide on October 30.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Mikheil Saakashvili says Ivanishvili's Desperate Measures Show that His Rule is Almost Over

"Yesterday's infamous, forced rally and the contrast we saw in Zugdidi made it clear that Ivanishvili's rule is over," Saakashvili wrote on Facebook.

"Now all this needs to be officially signed on October 30. The few experienced Ukrainian MPs I contacted yesterday and today have the same impression. They think the Georgian Dream is in Yanukovich's last stage, and now, with the help of the Georgian people, a whole new era will begin in Georgia. The feudalism, one-man rule will end and we will quickly move towards European democracy, development and prosperity," the statement read.

Kobakhidze States 'Artificial Crisis' in Georgia is Over, Adds no Elections in 2024 to be Expected

Chairman of the Georgian Dream Irakli Kobakhidze stated the so-called artificial crisis is over in the country.

"The so-called artificial crisis is over. Once we win the so-called referendum, this country will be allowed to develop peacefully for 3 years. There will be no elections until 2024 and no negotiations. If anyone wants to talk, they should talk in the parliament of Georgia, which is a place for political debate," Kobakhidze said.

Public Defender's Office Concerned About Ukrainian Ombudsman's Obstacles at the Georgian Border

Public Defender of Georgia Nino Lomjaria released a statement where she expressed her concern about the fact of creating obstacles for the Ukrainian Ombudsman Ludmila Denisova while entering Georgia on October 27, 2021.

"According to Ludmila Denisova, despite the fact that she provided the representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with full information about her identity and travel purpose, and that she also presented a diplomatic travel document, she was stopped at the border for about 40 minutes and allowed entry only after making certain calls.

The Ombudsman of Ukraine also points to the unfriendly and cynical attitude of the law enforcement officials. The Public Defender of Georgia is deeply concerned about the obstacle created for her colleague, human rights activist and official of a friendly country while entering Georgia. Such facts are categorically unacceptable for a democratic state and tarnish the country's reputation.

The media also reported on the refusal of a number of foreigners, including a citizen of the Republic of Ukraine, journalist Dmitry Gordon, and the lawyer of Mikheil Saakashvili, a citizen of the same country, to enter Georgia. Both of them state that they did not explain to them the reasons for the refusal.

The Public Defender of Georgia plans to study the mentioned cases and respond within the scope of its authority," Public Defender's statement reads.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.1557 | EURO - 3.6581 | GBP - 4.3299 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.4915 | SWISS FRANC - 3.4305 |

Ombudsperson of Ukraine visits Georgia, Meets Saakashvili

SAAKASHVILI WAS ARRESTED ON OCTOBER 1



► Ombudsperson of Ukraine visited Saakashvili in prison.



► Saakashvili has been on a hunger strike since his arrest on October 1.

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

Ombudsperson of Ukraine Lyudmyla Denisova visited Georgia and met Mikheil Saakashvili, Georgia's third president, in prison. While talking with reporters, Denisova said that she had problems entering the country. She said that she was questioned for 40 minutes on the border about the reasons for her entering the country.

"A Ukrainian lawyer was not allowed an entry in Georgia. I have to say, I didn't want to say anything before meeting with Saakashvili so that I would not have problems meeting him — yesterday, for 40 minutes, I was being questioned about why I was coming to Georgia. I was only granted an entry after a few calls. Everything is not as simple as it seems," said Denisova.

According to Denisova, Saakashvili declares himself a personal prisoner of Putin and refuses to be transferred to a

prison medical facility where there are questions about his safety.

"He said he was getting weaker every day, had four crises, two of them - hypertensive. Resuscitation crews are on duty at the prison gates to perform cardiac massages if necessary. But we are well aware that on the 27th day of the hunger there is a danger that any organ will cease to function, and the ambulance brigade may not be able to help it in this case, the transfer to the clinic may be too late," said Denisova.

Denisova believes that

Mikheil Saakashvili's right to a fair trial is being violated in Georgia, as, despite the lawyers' request, no hearings are scheduled in the cases against which Saakashvili has been charged and no verdict has been handed down.

The Public Defender of Ukraine plans to provide information about Mikheil Saakashvili to the President of Ukraine after her return.

The Public Defender of Georgia is concerned about the obstacles created for the Public Defender of Ukraine at the Georgian border. Nino Lomja-

ria believes that such facts are categorically unacceptable in a democratic state and damages the country's reputation.

Lombardia also responded to the deportation of a Ukrainian lawyer and journalist from the Georgian border and plans to investigate them.

Recently, the Ambassador of the United States to Georgia, Kelly C. Degnan said that she is glad that a multidisciplinary team is monitoring Saakashvili's health in prison. She also said that the US is also closely observing Saakashvili's condition.

Saakashvili has been on a

hunger strike since his arrest in Tbilisi on October 1. He refused to receive all types of hunger-related treatment except for the non-starvation-related medicines.

It was also said that he refuses to be taken into the prison hospital as there are serious safety concerns for him and demands to be granted the right to get treatment in a civil hospital. On the other hand, Justice Minister Rati Bregadze said that the prison hospital is fully equipped and ready to treat Saakashvili and there is no need to transfer him anywhere else.

EFSE and TBC Bank bolster financial support for entrepreneurship in Georgia

The European Fund for Southeast Europe (EFSE) will provide a loan equivalent to 10 million US dollars in Georgian lari to TBC Bank, its longstanding partner lending institution. This funding will

support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and finance traditionally underserved groups such as rural businesses, as well as female and young entrepreneurs in Georgia.

"Facilitating access to underserved groups is core to EFSE, and TBC Bank is a perfect example for what can be achieved at the most micro level while positively impacting the whole economy,"

said Klaus Müller, the EFSE Board's Chairperson.

TBC Bank is Georgia's largest financial institution, with a 39% market share by assets. The Bank became an EFSE partner in December 2015.

FRIDAY **OCTOBER 29**

Day ☁️ Mostly cloudy
High: **16°C**

Night ☁️ Cloudy
Low: **9°C**

SATURDAY **OCTOBER 30**

Day ☁️ Rain
High: **12°C**

Night ☁️ Rain
Low: **9°C**

published by **The Messenger**

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia

Founded by Prof. **Zaza Gachechiladze**

Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Phone: +995 99 56 56 21; +995 77 76 00 00
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Natalia Kochiashvili
Executive Editor

Nino Kavelashvili
Design and Layout

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The Silk Road - Contemporary Art and Artists from Italy

Exhibition at Tbilisi History Museum

Contemporary Italian Art in Tbilisi, The Embassy of Italy in Georgia and the Georgian National Museum present the exhibition Silk Road: Contemporary Art and Artists from Italy which will be open to visitors from 28 October to 22 November at the Ioseb Grishashvili Tbilisi History Museum (8 Sioni St.).

The 38 works on display (8 of

which are preserved in the Farnesina collection) present a panorama of contemporary Italian art from the 1960s to present days and combine different visions of different generations of Italian artists and works created with different expressive languages and techniques (painting, photography or installation). The three main themes of the

exposition are related to travel, meeting newness and discovery.

This exhibition is a continuation of the result of the close cooperation between Georgia and Italian Institutions and is part of a large-scale cultural project that connects Europe and Asia along the Silk Road. In 2017-2019, the Embassy of the Italian Republic in Georgia and the

Georgian National Museum organized exhibitions of international importance in 2 main exhibition spaces in Tbilisi. The main cultural event of 2021 was the exhibition of Pompeii treasures, first at the Archaeological Museum of Vani, and now at the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia in Tbilisi.

The exhibition was initiated

and put together by the Garuzzo Institute for Visual Arts (IGAV) with the contribution of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, with the patronage of the Ministry of Culture.

After the capital of Georgia, the exhibition will take the road to the east and finally, in 2022, will end in China.



