

Lomjaria Visits Saakashvili in Gori Hospital

By THE MESSENGER STAFF

Public Defender Nino Lomjaria enters Gori Hospital to visit Mikheil Saakashvili together with 8 doctors. According to the ombudsman, the doctors will review the medical records and make a conclusion about the treatment carried out for Mikheil Saakashvili.

"The purpose is the same as in the previous case, this is the next visit of a group of medical experts to the ombudsman, who will conduct a medical examination of the patient. Traditionally, there will probably be their conclusion and recommendations regarding the treatment carried out or to be carried out," said Lomjaria.

Mariam Jishkariani, the director of the Center for Empathy, said that a



psychotropic drug was included in the medical care of the third President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili.

Jishkariani does not understand why such a drug appears in the medical care plan of the third president, because he did not have psychosis. According to him, "inadequate use of psychotropic drugs in the prison is assessed as pharmacological torture."

Nino Sharashenidze, a doctor at the government council, said that Mikheil Saakashvili was taking medication prescribed by his Dutch doctor due to post-cochlear complications and was not aware of any drug overdoses.

The former president was transferred from Gldani 18th Medical Institution on November 19 after a 50-day hunger strike at Gori Military Hospital.

Droa: We Condemn Russia's Statement, This is Another Disturbing Revisionist Move

By THE MESSENGER STAFF

Political party Droa condemns the request of the Russian Foreign Ministry to cancel the promise made at the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit regarding Georgia and Ukraine's membership in the North Atlantic Alliance.

According to the party statement, this demand is another disturbing revisionist step by Russia.

To continue the security dialogue with the United States, Russia has 'asked NATO' to renounce the promise made to Ukraine and Georgia at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that they would sooner or later become members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

This is another troubling revisionist move by Russia, showing its true motives in any kind of 'dialogue' with the West. The party's time to condemn this move by Russia, and we firmly believe that right now is the right time for the free world to uphold freedom and democracy, and to immediately offer Georgia and Ukraine membership action plans.

"There is no time to lose," the statement said.

Russia's Foreign Ministry is urging NATO to reverse its decision to allow Georgia and Ukraine to join the North Atlantic Alliance.

"It must be in the fundamental interest of European security to immediately repeal the Bucharest Summit 2008 decision to allow Georgia and Ukraine to join NATO, which contradicts the commitment of OSCE participating States not to increase their security at the expense of the security of others," the Russian Foreign Ministry stated.

The Georgian side also responded to the statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry. Georgian Foreign Minister Zalkaliani says that the decision made at the Bucharest summit will not be re-considered and that the issue of NATO and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration will be decided by the country itself.

At the 2008 Bucharest Summit, NATO supported the declared decision that Georgia and Ukraine would become members of NATO.



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.1004; Euro - 3.4932; GBP - 4.0919; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.2183; Swiss Franc - 3.3529

The following report aims to assess the media environment during the 2021 local regional government elections and the pre-election period (August 3 to October 30). The methodology includes identification of key challenges and the formation of subsequent recommendations. It also highlights critical cases that occurred before the pre-election period that had a significant impact on the media environment formation. The document contains updates on media entities' ongoing election disputes with the Communications Commission and Tbilisi City Court.

The report consists of five thematic chapters as well as relevant recommendations.

The first chapter reviews the major political and legal developments that took place in the run-up to the elections that significantly impacted the media environment. The subsequent chapter offers key data on the results of pre-election media monitoring conducted by various actors. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the assessment of challenges identified during election day (Round I), and Chapter 4 describes the important events that took place between the first and second rounds of the elections. The final chapter provides a detailed overview of the shortcomings identified on election day (Round II) and is followed by a section that outlines recommendations developed by the Coalition in response to the identified challenges.

The document was prepared using various tools. It relies on the study and analysis of existing legislation, publicly available research papers, and open-source materials. Methods include:

- Fact finding: Studying open-source



MEDIA ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT
LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS
IN GEORGIA, 2021
ROUNDS I & II

video, audio, and print materials.

- Evaluation of pre-election media monitoring reports: Analysis and evaluation of the results of media monitoring

conducted by various actors in the first and second rounds of the 2021 local self-government elections.

- Analysis of legislation: Analysis of the

legislative norms regulating the work of the media during the pre-election and election period.

ADB and Bank of Georgia Sign \$100 Million Loan to Support Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises



ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Tbilisi, Georgia (10 December 2021) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$100 million loan with JSC Bank of Georgia (BOG) to support the growth of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), including those owned by women, by enhancing their access to urgently needed finance amid economic difficulties caused by the coronavirus disease

(COVID-19) pandemic.

The total financing is \$200 million (or its lari equivalent) arranged by ADB as mandated lead arranger and bookrunner, comprising \$100 million from ADB's ordinary capital resources and \$100 million from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This is JICA's first project in Georgia under its Private Sector Investment and Finance (PSIF) scheme since its relaunch in 2012.

ADB will also provide BOG with technical assistance resources to support women-owned MSMEs, which are more vulnerable to the economic impacts of COVID-19. Though MSMEs

play a crucial role in Georgia's economy, they have limited access to finance and women-owned businesses in particular face acute difficulties obtaining funds needed to operate and expand.

"ADB always aims to join forces with best-in-class partners whose goals are aligned with those of ADB," said ADB Vice-President for Private Sector Operations and Public-Private Partnerships Ashok Lavasa. "In this case, both institutions share the objectives of achieving greater financial inclusion, gender equality, job creation, and access to affordable financial services. This project contributes to

such goals."

"This project incorporates measures to directly address gender equality and women's empowerment to narrow gender disparities," said ADB Director General for Private Sector Operations Suzanne Gaboury. "We very much look forward to further supporting Bank of Georgia in the implementation of its Women in Business program to ease the impacts of the economic crisis on women-owned MSMEs."

"The facility will promote further sustainable economic growth of MSMEs and women's social success in Georgia by improving their access to financial services," said Director General of JICA's Private Sector Partnership and Finance Department Shohei Hara.

"I am delighted to join forces with ADB and JICA on this successful partnership, which will enable us to continue extending much-needed long-term financing to MSMEs in Georgia," said

Bank of Georgia's Chief Financial Officer Sul Khan Gvalia. "This is our first cooperation with JICA and we are very happy to be the first partner in Georgia under their PSIF scheme since 2012. I would like to thank both ADB and JICA for their cooperation and look forward to further strengthening our collaboration."

Bank of Georgia is a systemically important and leading universal bank in Georgia. BOG is a leader in payments business and financial mobile application with a strong retail, MSME, and corporate banking franchise and focuses on increasing digitalization and data analytics capabilities.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

Weather

Monday, December 13

Day Cloudy

High: 8°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 3°C

Tuesday, December 14

Day Cloudy

High: 7°C

Night Cloudy

Low: 4°C

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