

The Messenger

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#052 (5112)

MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

GEL 3.00

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Three Georgian Volunteer Fighters Killed In Ukraine



The Foreign Ministry said the Georgian Government would ensure the bringing back of the bodies of Georgian citizens Davit Ratiani, Gia Beriashvili and Bakhva Chikobava.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Three Georgian volunteers, Davit Ratiani, Gia Beriashvili, and Bakhva Chikobava, were killed during a military confrontation against the Russian army in Ukraine. The information has been officially confirmed by the Georgian Foreign Ministry.

Georgian Parliament Speaker Shalva Papuashvili expressed condolence to the family members and relatives of the fighters.

"Our support for the Ukrainian people is unwavering. Our friendship is centuries old, and I believe, it will strengthen further. Unfortunately, the war continues and the casualties increase. Russian aggression killed three Georgian fighters in Ukraine," he noted.

At the initiative of the Droa party, civil activists, civilians and representatives of different political parties gathered in six cities of Georgia (Tbilisi, Batumi, Zugdidi, Telavi, Samtredia, and Poti) to honor the memory of Georgian volunteer fighters.

"These people gave their lives for us, for our freedom,

and for our peace. They sacrificed themselves in the name of freedom," the leader of the Droa party, Elene Khoshtaria said.

The Ambassador of Ukraine to Georgia Igor Dolgov arrived near the Parliament of Georgia, where a solidarity rally

was held. The Ambassador paid tribute to the memory of killed Georgian volunteers and laid a wreath at their photos.

Giorgi Zakarashvili, the Ambassador of Georgia to Ukraine, said the Georgian side was 'actively cooperating' with the relevant

structures in Ukraine to ensure the transportation of the bodies of the three Georgian volunteers.



Solidarity rallies were held in six cities of Georgia.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.2096; Euro - 3.5431; GBP - 4.2145; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.1295; Swiss Franc - 3.4324

Zourabichbvili's Annual Speech in Parliament Showed Disagreement Between GD Officials and President

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

President Salome Zourabichbvili's annual speech to the parliament on March 14 came under both harsh and constructive criticism. The Georgian Dream-backed president has been in disagreement with the ruling party over a number of issues today, with their dividing line being mainly Ukraine's support and EU integration.

Unlike the Georgian Dream, whose leaders often criticize Ukrainian officials, Salome Zourabichbvili openly expresses her support for Ukraine and condemns Russia's aggression. She arrived at the parliament together with the acting ambassador of Ukraine, which the Georgian Dream considered a violation of the protocol, and provided photos depicting the war. Zourabichbvili called him a friend of President Zelensky and asked him to return the invited ambassador to Georgia.

Salome Zourabichbvili called for serious work on EU integration and suggested that the parliament immediately set up the post of State Minister for EU Integration, which could be selected from the opposition.

This structure, the president said, should coordinate to ensure that membership requirements are met immediately, as is the case with other candidate countries. So she offered everyone to sign a document, which would be the epitome of the unanimity of Georgia's political spectrum on EU membership, and send it to the EU in a single package on behalf of Georgia.

A certain response to this call



of the President can be considered the resolution unanimously adopted by the Parliament of Georgia on March 15 on Georgia's integration into the European Union. However, this part of the President's speech did not become the subject of a detailed discussion.

However, the part of the president's speech where he spoke about the sanctions imposed by the government on his international activities, which he called incomprehensible, caused a great stir. As she noted on 26 February, she was refused working visits to Paris, Berlin, Warsaw, and Brussels.

She, however, held these meetings regardless through contacts and turned working meetings into personal ones. Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of the

Georgian Dream, said that if the president's visits abroad took place without the approval of the government, it turns out that the president had violated the constitution.

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili, for his part, cited the motive for Salome Zourabichbvili's refusal to pay official visits to Europe - in the wake of Russia's war against Ukraine, "Georgia's president should have been and should be in the country." However, it was also noted that the function of the President's Commander-in-Chief is purely ceremonial.

It has been a matter of great debate whether the Georgian Dream would start the impeachment process against the president for violating the constitution. However, some also pointed

out that Zourabichbvili, who paid a private visit, did not violate any constitution.

It was also said that even if the Georgian Dream wants to impeach the president, the Georgian Dream does not have the required 100 votes in parliament. We must assume that the threat of impeachment will remain just words and the "Georgian Dream" will not do anything in this direction.

President Zourabichbvili has clearly irritated the Georgian Dream. The media has noticed that the authorities didn't applaud Zourabichbvili for her speech.

For the opposition, the president's statements about Ukraine and the EU were acceptable, but insufficient for many. For example, Mikheil

Saakashvili publicly offered Zourabichbvili the title of Hero of Georgia for President Zelensky.

Zourabichbvili was once again asked to pardon Saakashvili, to which he again categorically refused. Her comments on how "Georgia started the war" in 2008 were remembered by her avid critics once again.

According to Labor leader Shalva Natelashvili, they were talking about "female Ivanishvili", while Giga Bokeria considered her speech as "coming from another planet." Mikheil Saakashvili called on Zourabichbvili to pay a visit to Ukraine.

The President's critical statements towards the government and the opposition, as well as the President's criticism from the current government and the opposition, raised a significant question — in which political camp is the President today?

Her distancing from the Georgian Dream has already increased significantly and it is difficult to imagine getting closer again. President Zourabichbvili is unacceptable to the United National Movement and a number of opposition parties. However, to the part of the opposition spectrum that's trying to form a "third political force", Zourabichbvili may be a subject of attention if she decided to stay in politics after 2024 when her term ends. For example, the speech of Salome Zourabichbvili, was completely acceptable to the former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, who is the leader of one of the opposition parties today.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY
THE MESSENGER STAFF

MFA Says the State Ensured Return of up to 2,000 Citizens From Ukraine

The state continues the organized return of Georgian citizens from Ukraine and their assistance.

Weather

Monday, March 21

Day Snow Showers
High: 2°C
Night Snow Showers
Low: -4°C

Tuesday, March 22

Day Snow Showers
High: 4°C
Night Light Snow
Low: 1°C

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the state has ensured the return of up to 2,000 citizens in an organized manner.

In the last 24 hours, with the help of the Georgian Embassy in Poland, about 80 Georgian citizens returned to their homeland. In addition, 75 Georgian citizens returned from Romania this week with the help of the Georgian Embassy.

"Organized evacuation of Georgian citizens from the territory of Ukraine to the neighboring states continues. In particular, the Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Lviv continues to

send Georgian citizens in the direction of Warsaw by special buses. An organized evacuation of Georgian citizens is carried out by the Honorary Consulate of Georgia in Odessa as well, from where citizens travel to Moldova and then return to their homeland via Romania.

As soon as the hostilities in Ukraine began, the Georgian diplomatic missions, both on the territory of Ukraine and in the neighboring countries, switched to the emergency mode. According to the decree of the Prime Minister of Georgia, they were instructed to provide first aid to

the citizens of Georgia evacuated from Ukraine and send them back to their homeland," reads the statement.

Polish President Duda Pays Visit to Georgia

Polish President Andrzej Duda paid a transit visit to Georgia to hold a joint briefing with President Zourabishvili.

The two presidents addressed the public and media at the Tbilisi International Airport. The joint briefing specifically focused on the Russian aggressive rhetoric and military build-up along the Ukrainian border.

In her speech, Zourabishvili accused Moscow of imperial intentions and noted that such pursuits do not belong to the 21st century. According to Zurabishvili, aggressive actions, threats, intensification of military forces in the Black Sea show how provocative Russia's current policy is.

For his part, President Duda thanked Zurabishvili for the opportunity to arrive in Tbilisi and share information on the current situation regarding Ukraine. Duda added that the issue doesn't only concern Europe, but the whole world.

published by

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