

Georgian Government's Stance Contradicts Position of Democratic International Community, Podolyak says

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to the head of the Ukrainian president's office, has told Voice of America that the position of the Georgian government contradicts the position of the democratic international community. He said that Georgia is looking at the war in Ukraine strangely, stressing that Georgia does not take the same 'clear and unequivocal position' as the EU and the United States.

According to him, the Georgian government is directly or indirectly linked to 'Russian oligarch', Bidzina Ivanishvili, who "unfortunately, has long influenced the current Georgian government". Podolyak stressed that Ukrainians feel the support of the Georgian people and he believes that it is 'inconceivable how such people can have an oligarch like Ivanishvili.



► Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to the head of the Ukrainian president's office.



► Levan Davitashvili, the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia.

According to him, Georgia could have taken a 'more understandable position', as it also suffered from direct military intervention by the Russian Federation. He also said that the Ukrainian side has information from foreign intelligence that Russia is engaged in negotiations with various countries, including Georgia, along with Russia and Belarus.

A similar statement has been made by the intelligence service of the Ukrainian Defence Ministry, which claimed that Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan were in talks with Moscow to re-export Russian products to international markets. In response, the Georgian side expressed dissatisfaction with the allegations, highlighting that "such unverified information damages partner relations between the two countries" and urged the Ukrainian side to 'timely' provide evidence for the claims.

Giorgi Amilakhvari, a member of the

parliamentary majority and chairman of the Education Committee, has told the reporters that they advise the Ukrainian authorities to concentrate on resolving the war, stressing that "it is up to the Georgian people to decide whether Bidzina Ivanishvili will be in power or someone else". According to him, the Ukrainian side's statements "stir up anti-Ukrainian sentiments in Georgia and the Georgian population."

"Georgia and its citizens are in the first place in terms of humanitarian aid, against this background, insulting statements should not be made about who will be elected to power," Amilakhvari said.

Levan Davitashvili, the Georgian Economy Minister, announced on Wednesday that the country was part of all international decisions on the sanctions imposed by the international community against Russia, adding that Georgia has had the 'clearest positions' in all international

formats, condemning the Russian aggression and being the "strongest" supporter of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

He also touched upon the issue of individual economic sanctions, which are not explicitly imposed by Georgia unilaterally, pointing out that many countries, including NATO member states, have not imposed them against Russia either. According to Davitashvili, such a decision has been made due to many factors, one of them being the fact that such sanctions from Georgia will be useless to the Russian economy, but will be damaging to the Georgian citizens.

Economy Minister also mentioned the claims made by Ukrainian authorities on Georgia being used to circumventing international sanctions against Russia, calling them "irresponsible and immoral".

"These statements harm Georgia's interests and relations with our international partners. Our partners are fully informed that there is no reason for this. The Ministry of Finance has enhanced monitoring mechanisms and we share information in all formats with our partners," Davitashvili said, adding that it is shame that this issue is being speculated on.

The head of the ruling Georgian Dream Party Irakli Kobakhidze announced yesterday that the Georgian Government maintained trade relations with Russia "just like Ukraine does". He also pointed out that European Union received 80 percent of the Russian gas via Ukraine and thus also maintained the economic relations.

"When Ukraine maintains these relations, it is logical that we also have our interests," he said.

As the head of the ruling party noted, imposing sanctions on Russia would cause more harm to the country itself compared to Russia and added that Georgia's international partners were "aware of this". According to him, the Georgian Government's position regarding the sanctions against Russia is clear.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Government Administration Says, Gharibashvili left for Poland

According to the government administration, Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili has left for Poland.

According to them, Gharibashvili will take part in a high-level international donors' conference "for Ukraine", which will be co-hosted by the Prime Ministers of Poland and Sweden in partnership with the Presidents of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. According to them, Gharibashvili will take part in the charity session planned within the conference.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Ilia Darchiashvili is in the delegation.

Moscow Bans Japan PM 62 Citizens From Entering Russia

Russia has imposed sanctions on Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and 62 other citizens of the country. They were banned from entering Russia.

According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, the administration of the Prime Minister of Japan has launched an unprecedented anti-Russian campaign.

"The Fumio Kishida administration has launched an unprecedented anti-Russian campaign, allowing unacceptable rhetoric, slander and direct threats against Russia," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The foreign ministry said in a statement that Tokyo was taking practical steps to dismantle its good neighborly relations with Russia, as well as to damage Russia's economy and international prestige.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Japan has approved several packages of sanctions against Russia. Japan has suspended visas and frozen assets for those recognizing the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.

In addition, Japan banned exports and imports from Donetsk and Luhansk, the issuance of Russian bonds, and circulation in Japan.

In addition, Japan froze the property of 398 Russian citizens. The list of sanctioned children includes two children of Russian President Vladimir Putin, as well as the wife and son of Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.0331 | EURO - 3.1869 | GBP - 3.7950 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.3595 | SWISS FRANC - 3.1042 |

“For Life” - Rally in Support of Saakashvili Held Near the Presidential Palace

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Supporters of imprisoned ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili as well as civic activists and politicians gathered near Orbeliani Palace in the capital to voice their demand of his transfer to a multi-profile clinic due to his health condition. They hold the government responsible for Mikheil Saakashvili's health condition.

The United National Movement party and family of the imprisoned ex-President have requested Saakashvili be allowed to leave for treatment abroad.

“We do not demand neither release, nor return to power. We demand that person is given medical treatment in order to survive,” ex-president's brother, Davit Saakashvili said. He also informed of upcoming rally on 5th of May, which will be organized by the family.

Mikheil Saakashvili, himself addressed the Vice-Speaker of the Parliament, Davit Sergeenko, and the Chairman of the Health Committee, Dimitri Khundadze on 4th of May.

“I appeal to Davit Sergeenko, Dimitri Khundadze and all other MPs from any party who have taken the Hippocratic oath. Visit me, not as a politician, but



as a patient, and make a conclusion as a patient... I hope for your humane approach, professional integrity and your professional commitment to the Hippo-

cratic oath!” read the letter published on his Facebook page.

On Wednesday, Public Defender Nino Lomjaria announced of her readiness to

discuss the matter of the health condition of the imprisoned former President ‘competent medical representatives’ of the Justice Ministry and Penitentiary Service, and called on the state institutions to avoid ‘delaying’ a review of the matter.

According to the Council of Doctors created by the Public Defender, Saakashvili's health condition has ‘significantly deteriorated’. The members of the council visited the third president in prison on April 22, after a break of almost 4 months. A report published on April 27 states that Saakashvili's body consumes proteins released as a result of the breakdown of the organs.

Saakashvili, a citizen of Ukraine, who was sentenced to 6 years in prison in two cases, clandestinely returned to Georgia at the end of September 2021. He was arrested on October 1, the day before the local elections.

On the day of his arrest, he went on a hunger strike. Due to the aggravation of the situation, on the 50th day of the hunger strike, he agreed to stop the protest if he was taken to Gori Military Hospital for treatment. His lawyers say the treatment has failed and it is necessary to take Saakashvili abroad.

33,556 Russian Citizens Enter Georgia in April, Increase of 294%

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Ministry of Economy has released the information, according to which in April 2022 and the first 4 months of 2022, compared to 2019 data, an average of 52% recovery of international tourist visits to Georgia was observed. As for the growth compared to 2021, in April this figure was 140.5%, and in January-April it was 233.9%.

Mariam Kvrivishvili, the Deputy Minister of Economy, evaluated the tourism statistics in April 2022 and said that the cooperation between the Ministry and the private sector will further increase the expected flows.

“The rapid recovery of international tourism flows is the result of the right action plan and effective marketing campaigns conducted and ongoing in the target markets. We are also actively cooperating with the private sector, implementing joint projects with them, which will ultimately contribute to the



growth of tourism flows in Georgia more than expected, which means additional revenues in the economy and more employees in the sector.”

According to the Deputy Minister, the

increase in tourist flows will be positively reflected in the successful negotiations with international airlines, through which direct flights to Europe, as well as to other strategic target countries will

increase. 214,644 international visitors were registered in Georgia in April, which is an increase of 160% compared to the previous year. Overall, the flow of visitors has restored to 39% of the 2019 level.

Turkey ranks first in the number of visitors, almost 36,000 citizens arrived from Southern neighbor in April. The second position is occupied by the Russian Federation with 33,556 visitors, 294% more than the previous year.

The flow from Belarus has also increased sharply, with 7,507 citizens arriving in Georgia in April, which is 413% more than the previous year.

During April, 13,018 citizens of Ukraine arrived in Georgia, which is also an increase of 113%.

Most visitors came to Georgia by land in April, the flow is distributed as follows: by land - 127,068 visitors, increase 162.2%, by air - 85,469 visitors, increase 157.5%, by rail - 1,041 visitors, increase 339.2%, by sea - 1,066 visitors, increase 66.8%.

THURSDAY		MAY 5	
Day		Rain	High: 16°C
Night		Rain	Low: 9°C
FRIDAY		MAY 6	
Day		Showers	High: 20°C
Night		Rain	Low: 11°C

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