

Georgia's European Choice Unshakable, President Says

By Khatia Bzhalava

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili said on Monday that Russia's aggression in Ukraine has created a new reality 'that has already defeated Russia's ambitions and goals in Europe'. In her speech at the conference New Security Architecture in Europe and its Impact on Georgia, the president said that Ukraine's national identity has grown and strengthened, and so has the unity of EU countries and their awareness that Europeans must watch for security and take more responsibility.

As Zourabichvili noted, no matter how this anachronistic war ends, the Ukrainians are already victorious, adding that they 'have paid the highest price for their country's independence and consolidated that independence'.

"It is difficult to predict by what principles will tomorrow's Europe be guided and how it will see the geopolitical significance of different countries – Ukraine as a guarantor of stability in Central Europe, the Caucasus as a strategic bridge to the East, Russia in isolation, or the role of the Eastern Balkans in the Mediterranean.

If it uses somehow mixed criteria, how will it balance the need for expansion and the need for economic or social enhancement? Against the background of this



Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili at the conference "New security architecture in Europe and its impact on Georgia".



"Georgia needs to show the world that the country's choice to take the next steps is unshakable," Zourabichvili said.

impending change, we need to see our place and capabilities," the President said.

According to her, Georgia has great prospects given the country's geopolitical position and flexibility, however, the president does not rule out that Russia's reaction following its moral failure and isolation may lead to renewed aggression toward other neighbors, including Georgia.

According to her, in the face of these new opportunities and threats, Georgia needs to show the world that the country's choice to take the next steps is unshakable.

"it is for us to establish our place in Europe and to return to our roots and the

future that we belong to," Zourabichvili said.

In this regard, she stressed that all forces must unite under this one goal, adding that confrontation driven by political ambitions is not only against the interests of the country, but it ultimately hurts the trust in these parties as well. According to her, any step taken by the government or the opposition must serve this one purpose and must not jeopardize it.

"The purpose must be clear and not raise any doubts about our sincere choices and goals" the President stressed.

Hartzell on the EU Membership: Georgia Could Have Been Better Prepared for this Historic Moment



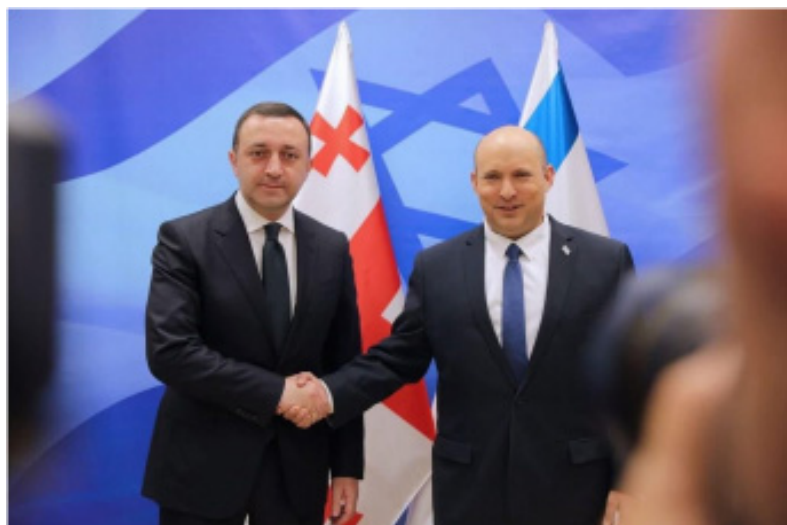
By MESSENGER STAFF

EU Ambassador H.E. Carl Hartzell says Georgia could have been better

prepared to receive EU membership because, he said, "the EU is concerned about the country's current trajectory."

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PM Gharibashvili Visits Israel, Meets Naftali Bennett



By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili paid official visit to Israel. The Prime Minister of Georgia hold the official meeting with the Prime Minister of the State of Israel Naftali Bennett. The Head of Government noted that during the meeting the parties agreed to further develop cooperation in order to fully realize the existing potential.

“My official visit to Israel has begun. Today I had the honor of meeting with the Prime Minister of the State of Israel Naftali Bennett. The 26-century friendship between our countries is proud of the common history of our brotherly nations. We agreed

that we will further develop the growing cooperation in order to make full use of the untapped potential,” Gharibashvili said.

Georgian PM also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel Yair Lapid as well as the Speaker of the Knesset of the State of Israel Mickey Levy.

During the meeting, it was emphasized that the friendship between the two countries is exemplary and the 30-year diplomatic relations are a clear confirmation of this. Mutual readiness was expressed for further deepening of successful cooperation in various fields.

Leaders also talked about the security challenges and further intensification of cooperation in

various formats.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel reaffirmed to Gharibashvili the steadfast position of the State of Israel in support of Georgia’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.

“During the meeting we emphasized the framework of cooperation between the parliaments of our countries. The legislature has a key and extremely important role to play in maintaining and continuously improving the functioning of the state,”

Gharibashvili said.

The importance of further deepening the partnership in both bilateral and multilateral formats, as well as security challenges, was emphasized.

It was noted that 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations, which is celebrated on the first of June, is an important basis for further strengthening of bilateral ties.

Before the meeting of the State of Israel in the Knesset, the head of government laid a wreath at

the memorial to the fallen soldiers, as well as made a memorable entry in the guest book.

Among Georgian delegation were the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Iliia Darchiashvili, the Minister of Defense Juansher Burchuladze, the Head of the State Security Service Grigol Liluashvili, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to Israel Lasha Zhvania and the Head of the Government Revaz Javelidze.

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As he points out, the built pace of reforms in the country is linked to the ongoing political crises.

“I can not be naive about the challenges that come with building political culture, it is listening to each other and not referring to each other as slaves, warlords, Putinists, and traitors. This challenge must be overcome somehow.

Now is not the time to prepare for blaming each other for the game. Now is the time to get

ready for a long game. Based on the values that unite us - respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights - this is the investment that stands at stake here.

That is why any new member is not only expected to have full respect for values and standards, but also to contribute to further strengthening the EU. Georgia could have been better prepared for this historic moment.

This coincides with a time when the EU is increasingly concerned about the country’s current trajectory. The pace of reforms has slowed in recent years, in part due to ongoing political crises, and the responsibility lies on both sides. “It also has to do with the pandemic,” he said.

According to Hartzell, the recent events raise questions

about where Georgia is heading.

He spoke about the democratic nature of the elections, the violence of July 5, the rights of minorities, and noted that some actions and the dismantling of the State Inspector’s Office had called into question the democratic institutions in Georgia.

“In recent months, the question has arisen, ‘Where is Georgia heading?’ I will not reveal any secrets here, because everyone has seen the public reaction to the events that have taken place in the last year - question marks on the trend when it comes to democratic elections, July 5 violence, protection of minority rights, and journalists. There were actions that went against the rule of law.

These actions and the dissolution of the State Inspector’s Office have called into question respect for democratic institu-

tions and the overall democratic mechanism. These are not events of marginal significance, but they are all directly related to EU values.

“Perception is important, trends are important and Georgia must regain the name of the best actor and the best reformer in the region, for which it has all the opportunities and even experience“. Diplomat said that EU is a close friend and partner of Georgia, in fact it is one of the countries in the world that received the largest assistance per capita.

“We help you modernize your economy, create new jobs, strengthen trade and connections, raise educational standards, increase energy efficiency, address environmental and health challenges, and harmonize your legislation with that of the EU,” He said, explaining that EU is ready to help you

fulfill European agenda, regardless of what decisions will be made in the coming weeks.

“We believe in our friendship and partnership and are ready to do more in this regard. We want Georgia to find its worthy place in Europe and the world”, said EU Ambassador adding “so just help us to help you!”

The diplomat also said that decisions taken by the EU member states, consequences of Russia’s war against Ukraine and other future developments in Europe and in the world will also have an impact on Georgia’s membership bid. “But as history has shown, this process begins and ends with your determination and your actions,” he added.

The summit, which will decide on granting EU candidate status to Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova, will be held in Brussels on June 23-24.

Weather

Tuesday, May 31

Day Clear
High: 33°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 18°C

Wednesday, June 1

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 32°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 18°C

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