

US Ambassador Encourages Government to Unite with All Stakeholders for EU Membership Bid

By Khatia Bzhalava

US ambassador to Georgia H.E. Kelly Degan told reporters on Tuesday that it is time for the government of Georgia to work with all the stakeholders, including opposition parties and civil society to address the conditions and recommendations given by the European Council. She also noted that the Georgian people 'clearly' expressed their support for Georgia's EU membership on June 20.

"I think the moment is here now for the government of Georgia to work with all the stakeholders, including opposition parties, including civil society to address the conditions and recommendations that the European Council gave that is a clear way forward for Georgia to candidate status. They couldn't have made it clearer," the ambassador noted, adding that Georgia needs to demonstrate its commitment to democracy and reforms to become an EU member. The Ambassador expressed hope to see the government and society come together to unify for the path to European Union membership in the coming future.

The US ambassador also made comments on Ukraine-Georgia relations and the accusations made by Ukrainian high officials regarding the circumvention of sanctions. She noted that such allegations are 'serious' and encouraged the countries to discuss these issues at the governmental level.

"Ukraine is fighting for every city, for every life. And this is not the time when Georgia and Ukraine are against each other. This is the time for these two countries to come together against the occupier of both of their countries," said the



US ambassador to Georgia H.E. Kelly Degan.

US Ambassador.

Yesterday, Ambassador Degan also launched a new USAID Public Defender's Office partnership program, which aims to further strengthen the effectiveness of the Public Defender's Office in its role of

protecting the human rights of Georgian citizens. According to the ambassador, professionals in the Public Defender's Office work very hard to hold their government agencies and officials accountable and to ensure that the human rights

of all of Georgia's citizens are protected. As she noted, the Public Defender's office is 'far too often attacked unfairly' for doing what Georgia's constitution requires and mandates them to do.

"For the United States, strengthening democracy and protecting human rights is at the very center of our foreign policy: here in Georgia and around the world. And that is one reason why we have appreciated the close partnership that we've had with the Public Defender's Office here in Georgia," the US Ambassador to Georgia said.



The US ambassador expressed hope to see the government and society come together to unify for the path to European Union membership in the coming future.

PACE Says Saakashvili's Condition Needs Urgent Attention

By MESSENGER STAFF

In a statement signed by members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, it is said that imprisoned former president Mikheil Saakashvili's condition is worrisome.

They contend that Saakashvili must be urgently transferred to a contemporary

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.9336; Euro - 3.1040; GBP - 3.5954; 100 Russian Ruble - 5.4929; Swiss Franc - 3.0712

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Georgian Government Bans Import of Wheat and Barley Beginning July

The Government of Georgia will ban the export of wheat and barley from the country for one year, from July 4, 2022, to July 4, 2023, due to the delay in the export of grain from Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion.

“Given the situation in the region, in order to ensure food security, it is important to sell locally produced wheat and barley only on the domestic market,” Otar Shamugia, Minister of Environment and Agriculture said.

Despite the fact that Georgia is completely dependent on wheat imports and cannot export due to small production, the current situation poses a risk that a certain amount of wheat will be exported from the country, Minister argued. According to him, Georgia is completely dependent on wheat imports and buys 500K tons every year.

“The Ministry of Environment and Agriculture held a number of meetings with wheat and barley producers and listened to their positions. According to the producers, the local market, due to the existing demand, will fully absorb the harvest produced in the country.”

Georgian barley is exported to Iraq and Iran. The government believes that the food resource barley in the livestock, poultry, and pork sector should, at this stage, only be sold in the local market.

“This year, the forecast barley harvest is around 60K tons. As of today, more than 2.5K tons have already been exported,” said the Minister.

At this stage, restrictions do not apply to corn exports.

Millions of tons of wheat have been blocked in ports since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. There are reports that Russia is stealing Ukrainian wheat illegally. This is denied in Moscow, however, the administrations of Ukrainian regions controlled by Russia have issued ordinances on the ‘nationalization’ of wheat.

The Ministry of Agriculture says that today the country has a sufficient supply of flour and the price of bread is not high. Giorgi Khanishvili, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture stated a few days ago that Georgia imports the cheapest flour and, consequently, “we have the cheapest bread.”



“In this sense, the stocks are not in wheat but in flour. We have stable stocks, especially for this period, when new crops are beginning to arrive both in Georgia and in the world,” he assured the public, saying bread production is not endangered in Georgia.

The issue of rising wheat and flour prices, respectively, and the price of bread, has received special attention not only in Georgia but also internationally af-

ter Russia launched a large-scale war in Ukraine in late February this year.

Ukraine is the 5th largest exporter of wheat in the world. The United Nations has already said that in terms of food, this year will be the least secure in global history.

The US representative to the UN Economic and Social Council, says Russia has violated Ukraine’s leading crop yields by bombing civilian infrastructure,

planting mines in Ukraine, and deliberately and repeatedly damaging Ukraine’s grain depots.

“According to our latest data, Russia’s blockade of Ukrainian ports is stopping food that Ukraine still has and could export to countries with extreme shortages.”

In early June, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that if Ukraine could not acquire anti-ship weapons, 75 million tonnes of grain would no

longer be exported from Ukrainian Black Sea ports by the fall.

The UN World Food Program estimates that if the war in Ukraine continues, 47 million people will be on the brink of starvation worldwide. Consumer basket prices have also risen around the world since Russia invaded Ukraine in February. According to the UN, the global food index reached a peak in recent years in March and increased by 12.6%.

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

PACE Says Saakashvili’s Condition Needs Urgent Attention

medical facility so that he can receive treatment devoid of stress.

“Several independent doctors, after examining Saakashvili in prison, confirmed a number of illnesses and a serious neurological condition. We are also concerned that recommendations made by the Defenders of Georgia and Ombudsman of Ukraine were not fulfilled.

He urgently needs to be taken to a modern clinic to be treated free of stress factors.

Failure to do so may lead to dementia, multiple organ failures and death.

The human rights

organisation Amnesty International also shares concerns about Saakashvili’s health.

We call on the Georgian Government to do everything in its power to ensure that Saakashvili’s health can be stabilised. In addition, treatment in a European specialist clinic that already has experience in such cases makes sense. This is primarily a humanitarian concern.

We are also concerned about

the stability of Georgian democracy and fear a further deepening of the already deep rifts in society. Georgia urgently needs a political reconciliation process. If Saakashvili were seriously ill or even died as a result of his imprisonment, it could threaten this process”, reads the declaration.

Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Weather

Wednesday, June 29

Day Scattered T-storm
High: 29°C

Night Scattered T-storm
Low: 19°C

Thursday, June 30

Day Scattered T-storm
High: 29°C

Night Scattered T-storm
Low: 19°C

published by
The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi,
0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia’s English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.