

# The Messenger

"Impartial, Informative, Insightful"

GEL 3.00

#161 (5221)

MONDAY, AUGUST 22, 2022

WWW.MESSENGER.COM.GE

## ISFED can join working group if they withdraw their gov't resignation demand, Parliament Chairman says

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, said that the Fair Elections (ISFED) did not withdraw from the demand for the resignation of the government and creation of the technical government, and this was the reason why the ruling party did not invite the organization to the meeting of the working group created on the issue of revision of the election code.

Civil society demanded the creation of a technical government on June 24, 2022, after the European Council did not grant Georgia the status of a candidate for the European Union.

"They could not bring this ultimatum to the end, because people turned their backs on this radical demand, however, they did not withdraw this ultimatum.

When ISFED expressed interest in participating in the parliamentary working group, we communicated with the civil society platform. Our question to ISFED was whether they still demand this requirement or not.

We suggested that if they are not making this request, they could participate in the working group.



Shalva Papuashvili



We have not heard any position from ISFED on this matter. They refuse to budge on this demand. Therefore, they were not invited to the working group," Papuashvili said.

After the refusal of fair elections, other non-governmental organizations also left the working group as a sign of protest. "If they do not share this position and remove this requirement, of course they can fully participate in the working groups," added the Speaker of the Parliament.

According to him, it will be difficult to talk about constructive cooperation under the conditions of the ultimatum by ISFED.

"For several days we have seen an attempt to manipulate

perception instead of facts. The facts are actually quite simple. Regarding the non-governmental organization "Fair Elections", you remember that on June 24, the second day after the decision was made by the European Commission, a protest was held, organized by ISFED, where ISFED and several non-governmental organizations presented a one-week ultimatum to the parliament, that the parliament should dismiss the government and choose the so-called technical government, in the process of formation of which ISFED and other organizations, who were the organizers of this protest, would have the right of veto.

After ISFED expressed interest in working on the parliamentary working group, our question

to ISFED was, do they still share this ultimatum, do they still support this demand? It is about an ultimatum to participate in the formation of the government by several non-governmental organizations, including ISFED, which does not have any democratic legitimacy, and therefore, this process is beyond any democratic scope.

Regarding our offer to take a position, if they do not share this demand, they could participate in the working group, if they continue to speak in the language of an ultimatum, that the parliament dissolve the government, appoint a "technical government," of course, in this case, it will be difficult to talk about constructive cooperation," Papuashvili said.

## Laura Thornton says campaign against Kelly Degnan is 'outrageous' and 'damaging' for Georgia

By Liza Mchedlidze

The former director of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Georgia, Laura Thornton, in an interview with Voice of America said that the campaign directed against US Ambassador Kelly Degnan by the Georgian government is outrageous and damaging.

According to Thornton, it is not clear to her "why you should criticize those with whom you

are going to be with". She also added that thanks to such actions the impression is already created that the Georgian government does not want NATO and EU membership.

"To put it bluntly, this [campaign against Ambassador Degnan] is outrageous. I think that this is outrageous and damaging for Georgia. America will be fine, but Georgia - not. It's not just members of a particular parliament, it's been going

on for a long time. Criticism was addressed to the EU ambassador, European parliamentarians, America, from [Irakli] Kobakhidze and others.

I don't understand why you should criticize those you are going to be with. If in theory your foreign policy goal is to be a member of NATO and the European Union, why are they biting the same hand that feeds you? It

CONTINUED ON Page 2



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

State Security Service releases statement regarding recent 'borderization' case in Gremiskhevi village



According to the State Security Service of Georgia, the illegal 'borderization' carried out in the occupied territory near the village of Gremishkevi is a continuation of the illegal processes that started in 2021.

The agency states the facts of illegal 'borderization' are discussed at the meet-

ings of the incident prevention and response mechanism (IPRM), as well as at international discussions in Geneva.

"A hotline has been activated for the mentioned cases of Illegal 'borderization' and the monitoring mission of the European Union has been informed. Informa-

tion has been shared with the co-chairs of the Geneva International Discussions. All facts of illegal border crossing are discussed at the meetings of the incident prevention and response mechanism, as well as at international discussions in Geneva.

The illegal process of 'borderization' complicates the daily life of the locals and

damages the security environment. The occupation regime bears full responsibility for this," State Security Service statement reads.

Ukrainian students to be enrolled in Georgian schools in a simplified manner

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, in close cooperation with the Embassy of Ukraine in Georgia and the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, Ukrainian students who continued their studies in Ukrainian schools in remote mode and completed the 11th grade, the certificate exam was provided in an online format.

The exam was held in the Georgian

National University SEU. The exam lasted for 2 hours and included mathematics, history and Ukrainian language. 64 Ukrainian students took the exam.

"Ukrainian students, if they wish, will have the opportunity, without taking the national exams, to continue their studies in the higher educational institutions of Georgia on the academic programs of their choice," the statement reads.

Ukrainian students will enroll in Georgian universities in a simplified manner. As for now, more than 1,500 Ukrainian students are receiving education in various public and private schools throughout the country. More than 900 students continue their studies in Ukrainian-speaking sectors.



Laura Thornton says campaign against Kelly Degnan is 'outrageous' and 'damaging' for Georgia

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

doesn't fit into anything, I don't understand why they do it. That's why people come to the conclusion that maybe they [the Georgian government] don't want to be members of NATO, the European Union," says Thornton.

Thornton also responded to recent statements made by four deputies who allegedly formally left the Georgian Dream. According to her, this kind of campaign of voicing "critical, acute views" is absurd to her.

"They do it to themselves. Creating a campaign where there are 4 members of the parliament who are not officially members of the Georgian Dream and, so to speak, are allowed to express such [critical, acute] views is completely absurd for me," says Laura Thornton.

According to the former head

of NDI in Georgia, the Georgian government is now standing at a crossroads and must choose between protection of Bidzina Ivanishvili and western orientation. Thornton said that now the government has to decide whether to comply with the EU's call for de-oligarchization or not.

"I think that the government is standing at a crossroads, where they have to decide what is more important to them -

maintaining power and protecting Bidzina Ivanishvili, or their goals of Western orientation and democracy. I don't think they could do both.

When the European Union called [Georgia] for de-oligarchization, it sorted everything out and now is the time to make a decision. However, I don't know what the government will decide," Thornton told the interviewer.

According to Laura Thornton, the USA is Georgia's closest ally, and the ruling party's criticism of a partner that has been supporting Georgia for 30 years creates the impression that the country has changed its course.

"...I'm confused. You criticize [Western partners], saying that the United States of America has abandoned Georgia for the past 30 years, when in fact, America is one of Georgia's closest allies and has given resources, attention and support to this country. So when we hear that kind of criticism, then we think, "Well, they've changed the course."

When you publicly criticize such an ally like this, I begin to think that changes in foreign policy are beginning. If there is any other explanation, any other reason why they are doing this, then I cannot understand it," he said.

Laura Thornton says she wants to believe that "the country still has pro-Western values" but thinks that everything that the Georgian government is doing proves the opposite.



Weather

Monday, August 22

Day Partly Cloudy High: 32°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 19°C

Tuesday, August 23

Day Partly Cloudy High: 32°C

Night Clear 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.