

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

## President of Georgia explains the veto over Eavesdropping draft bill

The President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, at a briefing held in the administration, explained why she vetoed the so-called Eavesdropping draft bill. According to her, there are issues when the veto carries a very high political mark because it concerns the system. The president explains that the eavesdroppings "concern our system today and tomorrow."

"There is a dividing line here, are we still in the Soviet heritage, or are we moving into a truly European system? Are our private lives protected from eavesdropping or not?! We know that we still live in a country where if we go somewhere and want to talk, we think about whether we should take out the phone or leave it? Then we overcome it and say 'to hell with it', let there be a phone and let them listen - this is not European life, it is not the protection of human rights, this is another system and we have to get out of this system. That's what I wanted to say with this veto" President Zourabichvili said.

According to her, in the form in which the changes were adopted, unreasonably



and in a hasty manner, etc., all these raise new doubts that "these are the changes adopted to consolidate power".

"This is not possible at the moment when we announce that in these few months we are going to get the candidate status. If we are going towards Europe, we have to go. If we are not going, then

we have to say. The veto was telling us to decide once and for all where we are going. I am very happy I know that the Venice Commission shared the grounds of this veto, and if it can be said about me that I am incompetent, I think that it is not a little embarrassing for some people to accuse the Venice Commission

of incompetence, especially those who at other times and in other situations used the conclusions of this commission. So, we have to be a little more serious", Zourabichvili says.

On June 7, the draft law initiated by Georgian Dream deputies was adopted by the Parliament in the third reading. 78 deputies supported the project of changes in the Criminal Procedure Code. The amendments were subsequently vetoed by the President of Georgia, whose administration requested an urgent conclusion from the Venice Commission on July 1.

With the adopted draft law, the deadlines related to the conduct of secret investigative actions were extended and the crimes for which the conduct of secret investigative actions will be permitted increased.

The draft law and its hasty adoption were negatively evaluated by the ambassadors of the European Union and the United States of America in Georgia.

## Ruling party to withdraw lawsuit after President appoints Davit Bakradze as UN ambassador

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili has signed the appointment of Davit Bakradze as ambassador to the UN so that there would be no delay because of her.

Zourabichvili also said that before the official presentation of the ambassadors, the legal texts take into account a confidential consultation with the president, where, according to her, she expressed "a professional position about the activities of Davit Bakradze during 5 years".

"I signed not because someone forced me, or was afraid of something, but because until now, while this consultation form was going and it was completed with submissions, I signed all the submissions so that there would be no delay because of me. My opinions were not heard, there should not be any delay, and what's more,

in this case, which concerns - the UN General Assembly is held in three weeks, and it is definitely not in the interests of our country that the full-fledged ambassador of Georgia would not be there, at the moment when very important issues will be discussed". - he said.

According to the President of Georgia, her decision was not perceived by the government as a step taken for depolarization, and today she accepted the presentation of 7 ambassadors without consultation.

"However, I must also point out that this decision of mine, which on the one hand was supposed to contribute to depolarization, was not taken that way, because today - oh, surprisingly, I received 7 submissions, so that not one of those secret parts of the consultation was carried out and put on my table, these 7 submissions, which are a kind of response

from the government to my decision and I think it is necessary, can no longer tolerate the situation for the Constitutional Court to consider this issue, to consider the texts, to consider the current practice and the confidential documents that we have and which prove that they have always been Confidential consultations, because the President's signature cannot be just a facsimile, especially in this field, so the Constitutional Council has its say and I am looking forward to it," Zourabichvili said.

On August 31, the President of Georgia signed the appointment of Davit Bakradze as ambassador to the United Nations. However, before that, Zourabichvili said that she signed the appointment of 36 of the 37 ambassadors nominated during his presidency and refused to appoint Davit Bakradze.

On June 6, the government applied to the Constitutional Court for the separation of powers between the president and the government regarding the appointment and dismissal of ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions. The Constitutional Court accepted the lawsuit on June 25.

The Georgian Dream disputes Salome Zourabichvili's lack of action in the process of approving the candidates presented, i.e. the denial of approval. According to Irakli Kobakhidze, the government proposed the candidacy of Davit Bakradze as permanent representative to the United Nations, and Kakha Imnadze to Canada, but the president refused, and the constitutional lawsuit will concern these persons. According to the definition of Georgian Dream, the rejection of ambassador candidates submitted by the government during the past year is against the Constitution of Georgia.

The Chairman of the party Georgian Dream Irakli Kobakhidze spoke to the media regarding the President appoint-

ing Davit Bakradze as ambassador to the UN, saying that "It is good that the president has returned to the constitutional framework".

As Kobakhidze mentioned, now it is even logical for the government to withdraw the constitutional lawsuit related to the non-appointment of Davit Bakradze.

"According to the constitution, the president plays only a formal role in the appointment and dismissal of the ambassador. Actually, this principle was respected when Davit Bakradze was appointed to the position of ambassador, which is very good for us. Our task was to protect the constitution and all institutions to operate within the constitutional framework. As for the filing of the lawsuit, which the government has submitted to the Constitutional Court, it is up to the government of Georgia to decide. Based on the fact that the lawsuit is related only to the non-appointment of Davit Bakradze, it may be logical to challenge it, however, the Georgian government is discussing this. If necessary, naturally, I will also be involved in consultations. The main thing for us is that everything has returned to the constitutional framework and in the future the ambassadors will be appointed according to the rules established by the Constitution of Georgia" said Kobakhidze.

Davit Bakradze, who was the ambassador of Georgia to the USA until recently, will replace Kakha Imnadze as the head of the diplomatic mission in the United Nations.

The President of Georgia accepted the nomination of Davit Barkadze as ambassador to the United Nations on July 15, however, Zourabichvili did not sign it. As the president stated in one of the interviews, Bakradze "was the ambassador for 5 years and did nothing".





Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.9036; Euro - 2.9074; GBP - 3.3574; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.7976; Swiss Franc - 2.9644

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

# With autumn around the corner, opposition to set this year's agenda

Autumn has arrived, the time when the opposition is supposed to start the announced protests. However, it is not yet known when these rallies will start, and what will be the main demand that should bring ordinary people to the streets.

Official propaganda, in the form of media and official experts, claims that the opposition is discredited and there will be no mass protests.

The government divides the opposition into two parts - one is the "constructive" opposition, which actively cooperates with the "Georgian Dream" and does not pose any threat to its presence in power, on the contrary, its existence is important for creating a "democratic facade". The government calls the second part of the opposition "destructive", because the mentioned part of the opposition puts the issue of changing the government on the agenda, and considers it an urgent task.

All the aggression of the "Georgian Dream" is considered to discredit the "destructive" opposition. Who falls into the "destructive" opposition? The government often lists these forces right next to them, - these are the most influential forces of the opposition today - "National Movement", "Strategy Agmashenebeli" and "Lelo". Sev-

eral other small parties, most of which are not represented in the parliament, can be attributed to this group.

It is this group of opposition parties that is going to start protests to change the government. The reason for calling for protests is the fulfillment of the 12 demands of the European Union. On June 24, 2022, unlike Ukraine and Moldova, Georgia could not receive the status of a candidate for the European Union, and for this, it must fulfill the above-mentioned requirements.

The "radical" opposition claims that the Georgian Dream, which is in power, will not fulfill these demands and only pretends that it is working to fulfill the demands. But, obviously, no matter how much you delay the process, there will still be a limit on when the European Union will have to answer the question of whether to grant Georgia candidate status.

Willingly or not, the European Commission has again taken a step in favor of the "Georgian Dream". At first, it was known that the deadline for fulfilling the 12 priorities was only 6 months - December 2022,

but then this deadline was extended and in Brussels, they will prepare the progress of Georgia in fulfilling the requirements by October 2023. That is, the work on the implementation of the 12 points of the European Union may continue for a long time.

The opposition, which announces the protests, is not united, and a lot will depend on how much they will be able to reach an agreement. The government continuously accuses the "radical" opposition of wanting to "arrange a revolution" and change the government in this way, that is, to repeat the "Rose Revolution" in its own way, and after that they promise to "draw Georgia into the war". This is the main message of official propaganda to discredit the "radical" opposition and the USA. The organizers of the protest claim that no one is planning to involve Georgia in the war, nor are they planning a revolution.

Therefore, the demand for extraordinary elections remains, on the grounds that the "Georgian Dream" has rigged the 2020 elections and now is not going to fulfill the 12 points of the European Union and is depriving the country of its European perspective.

Several issues appear here: one, which is often used by official experts, is that the opposition does not have a high rating and does not have popular leaders to bring people to the streets; Second, the fact that the government has never openly said that it is renouncing Western orientation and has moved into Russia's orbit, on the contrary, it claims that it is actively working to fulfill the 12 points, and it is the "radical" opposition that is preventing it; Thirdly, it should be taken into account that the period of "fulfillment of obligations" has been extended by the EU itself, and the authorities can claim that they are working on fulfilling the requirements or have actually fulfilled them for a whole year. Even more so, there are no real steps from the West to impose sanctions on Ivanishvili and his entourage.

Currently, the "Georgian Dream" categorically excludes the holding of early parliamentary elections, but according to a number of experts, the opposition is not ready for early elections either, and early elections, if the government maintains the existing mechanism for conduct-

ing elections, it will not have a problem winning in early elections either. If the events developed like this, "Georgian Dream" will strengthen its position for a long time. It is already clear that the "Georgian Dream". They are determined to maintain the government and will do everything for it. An anti-Western campaign is actively underway, which today is primarily directed against the US ambassador, recently the report of the Venice Commission was dismissed as nothing, and so on.

However, the reason for the protests may turn out to be many other things that we can consider today. For example, the request to establish a visa regime for Russian citizens who have entered Georgia in large numbers and completely uncontrolled; Changing the procedure for the election of the Public Defender, which will be proposed by "Georgian Dream" at the autumn session of the Parliament; Parliament also has to discuss the issue of making changes to the constitution to reduce the electoral threshold. However, to what extent these issues will prove to be sufficient for mass actions is another matter.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Prosecutor General elections to be held in a manner agreed with the opposition, Irakli Kobakhidze says



According to Irakli Kobakhidze, chairman of the Georgian Dream, they are ready to elect the general prosecutor in a manner agreed with the opposition.

According to Kobakhidze, according to the draft law, the Par-

liament of the next two convocations will elect the Prosecutor General of Georgia with a majority of 3/5, for a term of 6 years, and in case the candidate does not receive 3/5 of the votes, the Prosecutor General will be elected with a majority of votes, but for a term of one year.

"As you know, against the background of sabotage by the radical opposition, the Georgian Dream is actively working to fulfill the 12 points established by the European Union.

Part of the mentioned 12 points is the revision of the procedure for electing the Prosecutor General of Georgia. In order to fulfill this reservation, yesterday the parliamentary majority officially initiated the draft of the constitutional law with exactly the content that was agreed upon last year based on the consultations held between the majority and the parliamentary opposition," said Kobakhidze.

According to him, this draft law has no analogues, although they will "turn a blind eye" to legal principles, because the fulfillment of 12 points is a priority

for them.

"This draft law reconciled with the parliamentary opposition has no analogues in any country in the world. There is a simple reason for this - its content contradicts the logic of the governance system and elementary legal principles, which we will not dwell on for a long time today. We will only recall that for the mentioned reason, according to our decision, the corresponding constitutional amendments last year Reception stopped.

However, due to the fact that the fulfillment of the 12 points established by the European Union is a special priority for us, as an exception, we will turn a blind eye to legal principles and accept the new rule for electing the Prosecutor General without any preconditions," said Kobakhidze.

### Mayor Kakha Kaladze filing lawsuit against channel 'TV Pirveli' and its journalist

Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze

is suing "TV Pirveli" and journalist Maia Mamulashvili in court. The mayor demands 100,000 GEL for moral damages.

As lawyer Dimitri Gabunia said, Kaladze applied to the court with a lawsuit on June 20 for the rejection of defamatory reports and compensation for moral damages. On August 24, the lawsuit was handed over to 'TV Pirveli' and journalist Maia Mamulashvili. According to his explanation, there are 3 days left to present the argument.

There is a dispute over the statement made by Maia Mamulashvili against Tbilisi mayor Kakha Kaladze.

"Maya Mamulashvili's author's program Day's News

was broadcasted on the air of the broadcasting company TV Pirveli, where the journalist made the following statement:

"Kakha Kaladze received 60 million from only one tender. This is official information, I'm not making it up. Kakha Kaladze pocketed 60 million. How did Kakha Kaladze put 60 million in his pocket, whose documents were waved in front of your nose. We did not write the documents.

You can see that there is information spread based on the source, which is what a journalist has the right to do. Maia Mamulashvili said several times in a convincing form that he "put it in his pocket" and there is concrete documentation on this.

[...] We are interested in the documentation that journalist Maia Mamulashvili was talking about, the concrete fact that Kakha Kaladze "put 60 million in his pocket". This was aimed only at discrediting Kaladze and spreading wrong information in society," said the lawyer.

According to the lawyer, not a single "such fact will remain without a response" from Kakha Kaladze personally, and the filing of lawsuits will have a systemic character.



## Weather

### Friday, September 2

Day ☀ Clear  
High: 38°C

Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 23°C

### Saturday, September 3

Day ☀ Clear  
High: 38°C

Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 22°C

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