

Kobakhidze talks letters issued by former deputies and responds to Marina Kaljurand's statement regarding working groups



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The chairman of the "Georgian Dream" party, Irakli Kobakhidze, was asked about recent statements made by former ruling party deputies by journalists. To the question of whether he separates himself from the opinion that American funding is spent not to strengthen the democratic system in Georgia, but to undermine it or not, he responded that the four former deputies' questions are 'legitimate':

"The four's questions are legitimate, the embassy can answer - I don't know what the funding provided by the USA is spent on," Irakli Kobakhidze,

According to Kobakhidze, the embassy itself can prove what the American funds are spent on.

"We are talking about 4 parliamentarians who are elected by the people and they ask questions, which is part of democracy. These questions are legitimate and the embassy can answer these questions, it is their prerogative. What answer should I have? I don't know, do

you know what (US government funding) is spent on? - I don't know what exactly this money is spent on, and neither do you.

As for their specific question, it is being asked in public, we were not in favor of it and we are not even today. The question was raised publicly, and the embassy can provide detailed information on what these funds are spent on, will that be the end of it all? This is the main thing - a question was asked, there are 4 deputies, we may like or not to ask a question in public, it is their democratic right.

If the answers to these questions are given, the embassy can prove what these funds are for," said Kobakhidze.

Irakli Kobakhidze also responded to the statement issued by Marina Kaljurand, European Parliament member, who said that the working process needs to be inclusive and the Georgian government should listen to everyone. To which Kobakhidze said they can not be responsible for the parallel process:

"We cannot be responsible for the parallel process, we are re-

sponsible for the process that will take place officially in the parliamentary formats - in the parliamentary working groups," he said.

According to Kobakhidze, the MEPs were informed at the meeting about how the process of working on 12 recommendations is going.

According to his statement, the MEPs were told that participation in the working groups was offered to all parties, however, some are involved.

"The work has been started and in many places, it has even been completed. We are responsible for it, and most importantly, together with the opposition parties that are represented in the working groups, as well as non-governmental organizations, we not only discuss the issues but also listen to their opinions.

In terms of electoral reform, and parliamentary supervision, a lot of their proposals are outlined. Accordingly, the process is not only formally inclusive but also from a practical point of view," said Kobakhidze.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Bank attacker arrested, hostages released, Ministry of Internal Affairs says

the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ketvi Kovziashvili released the information regarding the special operation in Kutaisi:

"The special operation has ended, all the hostages are free, and one person has been arrested."



The Director of the Strategic Communications Department of

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The News in Brief

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An armed masked man broke into the Kutaisi “Bank of Georgia” branch on September 20 and took 12 people hostage. He demanded 2 million dollars, a Russian flag, a trailer, and a car. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, an investigation has been launched into the attack on one of the branches of “Bank of Georgia”, the act of terrorism, the taking of hostages for terrorist purposes, and the illegal acquisition, storage, and carrying of ammunition.

Quality, equity, and good governance - this is what our education policy is based on, PM Garibashvili says

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Garibashvili, in his speech at the education transformation summit held within the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, said that the govern-



ment has undertaken to increase the state funding of education to 6% of the gross domestic product by 2030.

According to Irakli Garibashvili, the long-term education policy of the Georgian government is based on three main pillars - quality, equality, and good governance.

“The Government of Georgia plans to redouble its efforts to improve curricula, provide modern and diverse educational resources, and invest in the professional development of teach-

ers and educators.

Because they represent the backbone of our efforts in equipping the next generation with adequate skills and knowledge,” said the Prime Minister.

Marina Kaljurand asks opposition to join working groups

“Georgian Dream” should be inclusive, it should listen to all interested parties, civil society, opposition so that they feel that

they are being listened to,” European Parliamentarian Marina Kaljurand said.

“Opposition, please join the working groups, please participate in the work of the parliament, because you have the mandate of your people and it is your obligation to represent your people in the best way of democracy,” said Kaljurand.

He also cited the example of Estonia and noted that the “secret weapon” for Estonia to join

the European Union and NATO was the work of politicians together for this purpose.

“Nobody wanted us there, no one was waiting for us there [in the EU and NATO] in the early 90s, but I will say that the “secret weapon” was to unite politicians around one goal and work to achieve this goal. Therefore, I hope that little Estonia can be an inspiration for Georgia in your European and transatlantic cooperation”, added the MEP.



The ombudsman responds to the discrediting campaign against human rights defenders

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Public Defender of Georgia Nino Lomjaria issued a statement and responded to the discrediting campaign against human rights defenders.

The Public Defender’s statement states that in August 2022, the ruling party did not include the “International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy” (ISFED), which has many years of experience in this direction, in the group working on election issues created in the Parliament to implement the recommendations of the European Union, due to the loss of political neutrality.

“Such an approach contradicts one of the conditions defined for Georgia to receive the status of a candidate for EU membership, which implies the involvement of civil society in the decision-making process and damages the process of effective

and in-depth implementation of changes.

This is evidenced by the fact that, as a result of this fact, other non-governmental organizations, whose expert knowledge is very important in the process of implementing reforms in the

country, stopped their participation in the groups created in the parliament.

It is significant that the decision was followed by an attempt by high political officials to discredit non-governmental organizations and reduce their credibil-

ity in society.

A clear expression of the problem is one of the last statements of the chairman of the party “Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia” Irakli Kobakhidze, in which he pointed to the non-transparent and risky nature of

the expenses of non-governmental organizations.

In the background, when the data about the funding sources and implemented projects of non-governmental organizations are publicly available on their websites, the public defender believes that presenting information in a similar form aims only to create negative attitudes towards the civil sector in the society”, the statement reads.

The statement also said that the objects of attack by government representatives are mainly non-governmental organizations critical of its activities, which the Public Defender has repeatedly assessed as an unacceptable practice in the past.

The Public Defender called on the officials to refrain from engaging in the discrediting campaign of organizations working on the most important issues for democratic development;

“In the future, ensure the essential involvement of civil society in the decision-making process and prevent the admission of relevant organizations based on how acceptable their positions are,” said the ombudsman Nino Lomjaria.



Weather

Wednesday, September 21

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 31°C

Night 🌧️ Motly Cloudy
Low: 18°C

Thursday, September 22

Day 🌧️ Showers
High: 28°C

Night 🌧️ T-storm
Low: 16°C

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