

## 'Tsulukiani can not and will not be responsible for the problems from 2008 to March 2021', says Tsulukiani regarding Gelati Monastery Complex

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Minister of Culture and Sports of Georgia Tea Tsulukiani, during the speech at the plenary session of the Parliament in the format of "Minister's Hour" when asked regarding the Gelati monastery complex, said that she refuses to answer what happened before March 2021:

"I refuse to answer what happened before March 2021. The Minister of Culture Tsulukiani can not and will not be responsible for the problems from 2008 to March 2021," said Tsulukiani.

According to her, she only takes responsibility for what is carried out in the monastery complex under the conditions of his ministry.

"The threat was not to the complex, but to one part of the main temple named after the Mother of God, namely the western and northern arms. These problems started in 2008 and continued until December 2020.

For years it posed a serious threat to the western and northern wings of the main temple. Our ministry was formed in March 2021, so I refuse to answer what happened before March 2021. From 2008 to March 2021, the Minister of Culture, Tsulukiani can not and will not be responsible for this," said Tea Tsulukiani.

Tea Tsulukiani, during her speech at the plenary session also talked about the reforms that were carried out. She said that a serious reform has been carried out in the monument protection system. To quote Minister Tsulukiani, "some people call it 'repression,' both start with "R" and that's okay,".

According to her, the reform carried out means that the people who remained in the system despite nepotism and ignorance will say goodbye to the ministry.

"Court proceedings are underway. The decision on 4 cases has already been made



and all 4 decisions are in favor of the Ministry - the reinstatement has been refused.

I have no criteria, except for a few important criterias - these are professionalism, hardworking. No wonder when we've told some people to go where there's a tree growing on the monument, they

were just too lazy to go.

I am very ashamed to have to talk about this, but I cannot work like this and I will not apologize for it, when I am not lazy at work, but I have an employee who is lazy at work and at the interview, they tell me that the state is obliged to finance. Such a system cannot be the one

that takes care of Gelati and other monuments.

The criteria, in addition to professionalism and determination, is that a person must have professional and other skills in order to perform the work for which they are employed," said Tsulukiani.

## Some regulations may be used to restrict media and freedom of expression, says TI on changes in broadcasting law

By Liza Mchedlidze

"Transparency International - Georgia" (TI) published an assessment of the changes to be made in the Law on "Broadcasting".

According to the organization, some of the regulations presented in the amendments may be used by the authorities to limit the freedom of the media and critical expression.

"This is not the first time when the government presents a legislative package with the motive of fulfilling the EU directive. As a rule, these initiatives are followed by legitimate criticisms and questions directed not

directly at the directive, but at the authorities and especially at the Communications Commission. Unfortunately, there were many attempts by the authorities to implement changes under the guise of fulfilling international obligations, which would limit the freedom of critical expression and create additional obstacles.

The new draft law aims to bring the Law on Broadcasting into line with the European Directive 2010/13/EU on Audiovisual Media Services, including the changes made in 2018 (DIRECTIVE (EU) 2018/1808).

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# Some regulations may be used to restrict media and freedom of expression, says TI on changes in broadcasting law

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Unlike the previous initiative, in the current package, there is no longer a rule to appeal the decision made by the self-regulatory organizations to the commission or to the court. However, some innovations are still problematic and it is important that these norms are not adopted without consultation and reconciliation of the positions of the interested parties.

### - Norms related to the prohibition of hate speech and incitement to terrorism

First of all, it should be noted the risks associated with the definition of hate speech in the country, especially on the part of the

government and the regulator, which may result in the limitation of critical opinion.

### - Right of response

According to the amendment, the interested person, whose legal interests were harmed by the transmission of incorrect facts in the broadcaster's program, has the right to reply. In particular, to request the broadcaster to correct or deny the spread of false fact by commensurate means and form. According to the directive, the broadcaster's refusal of the right to answer should be subject to a court judgment, while according to the current draft law, the broadcaster's refusal can be appealed to the commission together with the court.

### The nature of EU directives and the inclusive process

First of all, the nature of the EU directive itself and the conditions of implementation should be explained. In particular, a directive is a legislative act, the addressee of which is the state. For the directive, the most important thing is for the country to fulfill the goal mentioned in it, and what way, form and means it chooses to achieve the set goal is up to the state itself. Consequently, when implementing the directive, states are more flexible and have more opportunities to cooperate with the media sector and share their positions.

Also significant is the difficult

media environment in the country, which is openly discussed by local and international organizations, including the European Union. Unfortunately, the risks are quite high in the background when there are legitimate doubts about the bias towards the government of independent state institutions, including the regulatory commission.

Given the existing experience, there is an expectation in society that these changes may be used to limit the freedom of media and critical expression. This doubt is also strengthened by the fact that there are a number of cases when government officials start talking about the limitations of critical media activities precisely in response to legiti-

mate questions posed to them.

It would be desirable if interested persons were actively involved in the process of preparing the presented draft law. We hope that the promise made by the representatives of the ruling party at the meeting of the committees held on September 19, that a working meeting will be held in the near future, in which the positions of all interested parties will be heard, will be fulfilled.

We call on the Parliament of Georgia to take into account the positions of the interested parties as much as possible during the working meeting and to reflect them in the draft law", Transparency International's assessment reads.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### PM Garibashvili's speech at the UN General Assembly, will focus on the peaceful neighborhood policy, Ilia Darchiashvili says

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilia Darchiashvili stated that The Prime Minister of Georgia during his speech at the UN General Assembly, will make one of the main emphasis on the peaceful neighborhood policy.

According to him, the topic of the Prime Minister's speech will

important emphasis will be placed on all challenges. As last year, the prime minister of Georgia will focus on the peaceful neighborhood policy. As you know, it is most important for us to have peace and stability in our region. The main focus of the Prime Minister's speech will be

### Grigol Narsia, was sentenced to prison for breaking into a Bank of Georgia in Kutaisi

According to the decision of the Kutaisi City Court, Grigol Narsia, who was arrested for breaking into the Bank of Georgia, was imprisoned as a preven-

ing his young son.

The prosecutor says that Grigol Narsia has not been in contact with his wife and children for 4 years, and the defense's claim is untrue.

The lawyer stated at the session that Grigol Narsia was injured during the arrest. According to the prosecutor, the investigation will examine these in-



## Weather

Friday, September 23

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 14°C

Saturday, September 24

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 28°C

Night Rain  
Low: 12°C

be all the issues that Georgia has on the international agenda.

"As you know, the Prime Minister of Georgia addresses the UN General Assembly. Very

in this direction, as well as all the issues that Georgia has on the international agenda," said Ilia Darchiashvili.

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juries.

Grigol Narsia noted at the session that he did not intend to commit a terrorist act.

"It never occurred to me to commit a terrorist act. It wasn't just... I committed a crime, I didn't even aim for terrorism," he said.

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