

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

## Bill on de-oligarchization to be sent to the Venice Commission before discussion

The working group of the Legal Affairs Committee held a meeting on the issue of de-oligarchization.

According to Anri Okhanashvili, the chairman of the legal affairs committee, an exact analogue of the Ukrainian model will be presented and the opinions and recommendations of the members of the working group will be heard.

According to Okhanashvili, after that, the discussed issues will be sent to the Venice Commission.

The chairman of the committee said that the consideration of the draft law will begin after the conclusion of the Venice Commission. According to him, the consensus around the bill is important.

"Discussions will begin after we have the report of the Venice Commission. The commission should present a conclusion regarding the Ukrainian model, and further work on these issues will continue. Our goal is to achieve change with a broad consensus, and the opinions of all political groups and international partners will be interesting, so we will continue to discuss the issue even after it has been initiated.

If the Ukrainian law is approved by the European structures, it is logical that for us this point can be fulfilled by adopt-

ing this law, however, if we all agree that this law has many flaws and we confirm to you that there are many legal flaws in the Ukrainian law and this project as well, we must discuss together. However, to fulfill this point, we considered the evaluation of the European structures in relation to the Ukrainian model as an objective measure, and therefore we transferred the model one by one", says Okhanashvili.

According to Anri Okhanashvili, the draft law will not take into account specific names and surnames, because, in his estimation, it is nonsense for any law to be based on specific names.

"The draft law defines a person's participation in political and public life; whether it has a significant impact on the mass media; monopolistic activity; It is also determined how much money he should own. Three of these criteria are enough for a person to be considered an oligarch."

"This draft law cannot be applied to Bidzina Ivanishvili either physically or objectively, for the reason that the three proposed criteria cannot ensure that Bidzina Ivanishvili will be in-



cluded in the list of oligarchs." All these three components are performed by Kezerashvili and those other oligarchs who were considered oligarchs by confessions, other facts and statements of the opposition", says Anri Okhanashvili.

According to him, if in Ukraine the office of the president works on the persons to be in-

cluded in this list, because the country is a presidential republic, in Georgia, as a parliamentary republic, this function will be assigned to the parliament.

"The issue should be discussed in the Parliament in a transparent, inclusive manner, with the involvement of political groups, the criteria should be discussed, information should be sought re-

garding the persons at the committee hearing, at the plenary session, and the public should see who these persons are, who should be included in the register," he says.

The chairman of the legal affairs committee also called the opposition to join the working groups.

## Opposition's proposals on Bidzina Ivanishvili's oligarchy and influence on political processes are fake, Mamuka Mdinardze says



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

"There is no evidence that Bidzina Ivanishvili influences political processes or interferes in any way," Mamuka Mdinardze, chairman of the parliamentary faction of "Georgian Dream", told the media.

According to him, all proposals of the opposition regarding Bidzina Ivanishvili's oligarchy and influence on political processes are fake.

"There is no evidence because this reality does not exist, this circumstance does not exist, therefore, there is no evidence

that Bidzina Ivanishvili influences political processes or interferes in any way. There is no such evidence in nature.

There are other criterias, does he fund any political organization? - he does not. Accordingly, there is no evidence, etc. Therefore, if there is no evidence to call

a person, not only by law, even by word of mouth, an oligarch, such a person cannot be an oligarch, and all their propositions about it are "fake" and they fight against a person who has already left politics a long time," said Mamuka Mdinardze.

According to Mamuka Mdinardze, Giorgi Vashadze is the leader in spreading such incorrect statements, although even he could never present any evidence that Bidzina Ivanishvili meets any of the criteria of an oligarch.

"When this situation has arisen, the tongue has no bone, therefore they say what they want. Vashadze is the leader there, he will say whatever he wants. Instruct the filth, he will stand up and say. Even Vashadze could not name any evidence that this person meets any criteria. At that time, a lot of people found themselves in the opposition, and they entered the impasse with years of PR, and found people who meet all the criteria of an oligarch. Now, because of this impasse, they say that this law does not suit us. The good thing about Ukraine is that they don't organize an

opposition with us and we have to follow their footsteps. Let's discuss this topic and if they agree, we'll transfer the Ukrainian legislation and accept it directly, we agree on that," said Mamuka Mdinardze.

In addition, when asked whether the electoral reforms will ensure that the elections are held properly and democratically, Mamuka Mdinardze answers that there is no such point where anyone can say that "Georgian Dream" has backed away from doing something.

"There is no point, not only the changes related to the electoral reform, that does not follow the pathos of the obligation to fulfill the recommendations, not only point by point, and there is no point where anyone can say that we have backed away from doing something."

Even if the theoretical assumption is excluded, we are talking about certain manipulations, regulations of this level, and this is crowned by conducting elections electronically, which also allows to exclude any speculation", said Mamuka Mdinardze.



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8228; Euro - 2.7590; GBP - 3.1618; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.8212; Swiss Franc - 2.8528

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

## Why do voters in Georgia have trouble finding a party that supports their interests?

The opposition threatened the government with a “hot autumn” full of mass demonstrations, but the autumn has already arrived and there are no announced protests. Although there is a lot of dissatisfaction in society, most of them do not trust the existing political parties. In such conditions, either a new party must appear, or a wave of protests, uncontrolled by political forces, erupts in the society for some reason.

Public opinion surveys conducted by the CRRC commissioned by NDI are often not well received by the government, but the results of the survey conducted in August 2022 were clearly met with approval in the party rating section. 25% of respondents said that they support the ruling political force “Georgian Dream”. This indicator is not high for a party that is single-handedly ruling the country, but 25% is catastrophically low against the background of the opposition.

The support of the United National Movement is 8%. This party is traditionally considered the “main opposition force”, but no outstanding activity of this party has been seen for quite some time now. Some blame it on its current leader Nika Melia, and others on the imprisonment of the real leader of the party, Mikheil Saakashvili. The indi-

cators of other parties are even more catastrophic:

Strategy Aghmashenebeli” to 1% and the party “For Georgia” to 1%. The support of all other parties is 10% in total. As the authors of the study note, the individual rate of support for the parties is so low that it cannot be used to predict the results of the elections.

When commenting on the results of the said survey, government representatives and pro-government experts talk about the complete bankruptcy of the “radical opposition”, which has completely lost the support of the people. According to a number of experts, the opposition’s traditional demand for early elections is more favorable to the current government than to the opposition. But we should not expect that the government will go to extraordinary elections easily. No one really knows how the electorate dissatisfied with the government will behave and how the “election machine” built over the years will work, which sometimes provides the desired results for the government.

The poll mentioned above once again showed that the majority of voters are politically undecided. The majority of the popu-

lation does not know or does not name the party that is closest to its views. 56% of respondents say that there is no party in Georgia that expresses their interests. Among young people, this figure is 65%. In addition, no matter how strange it is, the majority of respondents - 66% are ready to go to the elections. In Tbilisi, this indicator reaches 71%. That is, some people do not know who to vote for, but are ready to go to the elections.

The majority of the population believes that neither the ruling party nor the elected opposition parties (in parliament or self-government) act in the interests of the country. 51% of respondents in December 2021 and 59% in August 2022 had such an assessment of the ruling party. The similar assessment of the opposition increased from 53% to 67%. Ethnic minorities and rural settlements have the most positive attitude towards the ruling party.

The survey showed that most of the supporters of the opposition parties (80%) believe that the opposition does not act in their interests. The situation along with the growth of dissatisfaction with the government, and dissatisfaction with the op-

position has been fixed for quite some time, and the opposition should have drawn serious conclusions from this, but as we can see, the situation has only worsened for them.

The idea has been popular in the opposition for a long time. Regarding the creation of the “third political force”. Many on the opposition side argued that the “National Movement” would never again gain the support of the majority of the disaffected electorate, and all political forces associated with it would be doomed to defeat. Despite such efforts, the “third political force” is not visible. Shortly after the publication of the mentioned rating, an announcement was made about the creation of a bloc by three opposition forces - “Strategy Aghmashenebeli”, “Lelo” and “Girchi - more freedom”. However, this was immediately denied by “Lelo” representatives. The government again declared the mentioned parties as divisions of the “National Movement” and doomed to failure.

The ruling party’s reaction to the created reality is also strange. From “Georgian dreams” E. year The four who are busy cursing the West remain members of the

majority. The mentioned four announced that they intend to turn into a political entity called “People’s Power” and are waiting for the addition of new deputies from “Georgian Dream”. In the West, they are already directly demanding that the four be separated from the “Georgian Dream” if they do not say what the “Dream” actually thinks. The purpose of “Otkheuli” is to stir up anti-Western sentiment in Georgia, and anti-Western propaganda became extremely large-scale after Russia’s attack on Ukraine.

Despite the open anti-Western campaign, the vast majority of society still supports Western orientation. 75% support EU membership, and 69% support NATO membership. Supporters of the pro-Western course have increased significantly: 47% of the interviewees are unequivocally in this position, 31% support maintaining good relations with Russia along with orientation towards the West. Russian orientation is only 2%. Based on the mood of the majority of the population, it is clear what these people demand from the opposition first of all. The most important issue is the fulfillment of the 12 requirements of the European Union.

### The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

**UNM is working on a legislative initiative on de-oligarchization against Bidzina Ivanishvili, says Khatia Dekanoidze**



Khatia Dekanoidze, chairman of the “National Movement” faction, told reporters that the “United National Movement” faction is working on a legislative initiative on de-oligarchization, which will be discussed and directed against Bidzina Ivanishvili.

According to her, by adopting Ukrainian law, the ruling team is trying to evade Ivanishvili’s responsibility and use the law as a means of repression against the opponents.

“We never asked for the transfer of the Ukrainian model to Georgia, for us it was always a starting point to prohibit the intervention of Bidzina Ivanishvili as an oligarch in the public, political and economic life of Georgia.

Now what the ruling team is working on is that they want to

avoid Bidzina Ivanishvili from any responsibility, they do not consider him an oligarch, unlike the entire international community, and they have decided to choose the best version in order to start new repressions against the opposition.

As for the de-oligarchization law, our faction is working on a legislative initiative that will concern Bidzina Ivanishvili. There are many political issues that must be agreed upon with international partners and the parliamentary opposition,” said Dekanoidze.

#### Opposition is driven with revenge, Archil Talakvadze says

Vice-Speaker Archil Talakvadze responded to the opposition’s criticism of drafting Ukraine’s analogue law on de-oligarchization into Georgian legislation.

“The opposition demands that a single-word law be adopted and

only the name and surname of those who they are motivated by political revenge against being written there, which is connected with the historic defeat in the 2012 elections, the one “National Movement” suffered with,”

According to Archil Talakvadze, based on the Ukrainian version, several people in the ranks of the opposition meet the criteria of an oligarch, one of which according to the Vice Speaker is Davit Kezerashvili, and this is the reason the opposition does not like this model.

“The “National Movement” and the radical opposition received a very serious political trauma in 2012 and are driven by the only thing - political revenge against Ivanishvili, that is where their statements come from. They are deceiving the public - the European Union did not actually say that such a law should be adopted, which directly



states only the name and surname of the person who made the most important contribution to the country’s democratic reforms.

The European Union has said that a regulation should be drawn up that will set out the criteria for who can be affected by the law on the regulation of oligarchy, and to tell you directly, if we take the model that the “National Movement” liked at the time, there are 4 criteria and the first to be affected by these criteria are the financiers of the radical opposition and the oligarchs in his team, first of all it is Kezerashvili, who meets 3 out of 4 criteria,” said Talakvadze.

### Weather

Tuesday, October 4

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 25°C

Night Clear  
Low: 14°C

Wednesday, October 5

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 30°C

Night Mostly Cloudy  
Low: 17°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.