

Volodymyr Zelenskyy appeals to Georgian gov't to transfer Saakashvili for treatment, Chairman of 'Georgian Dream' Irakli Kobakhidze responds

By Liza Mcheldidze

The President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, appealed to the authorities of Georgia and asked to transfer Mikheil Saakashvili for treatment in a released video addressing the government.

In the video address, Zelenskyy talked about the health condition of the former president of Georgia and assessed ex-president Saakashvili's situation as 'cruel'.

"I would like to appeal to friends and just honest people in Georgia. You probably all see Mikheil Saakashvili's health condition. Therefore, I appeal to the Georgian people and the Georgian government - it is necessary to show mercy, especially on Christmas Eve.

What is happening to Mikheil [Saakashvili] now is cruelty. This does not suit Georgia. This has to stop. Please make a decision that can save his life. Transfer Mikheil Saakashvili to one of the clinics in Ukraine, any other European country or America. Now is the time to make a good move. Glory to Ukraine!" said Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Mykhailo Podolyak, the adviser of the Office of the President of Ukraine said that Ukraine is ready to receive Mikheil Saakashvili.

"It's impossible to watch someone you know die live. It is impossible to watch the history of Georgia and the death of its president in front of the eyes of the



civilized world. Ukraine is ready to receive Mikheil Saakashvili, to guarantee his safety and proper treatment. Georgia, make the right choice," he wrote on Twitter.

In response to Volodymyr Zelenskyy's statement regarding Mikheil Saakashvili, The Chairman of the ruling party Georgian Dream Irakli

Kobakhidze told Imedi TV that the reason Ukrainian government feels responsible for Saakashvili's health is that they were 'directly involved' in sending Saakashvili to Georgia:

"We used to say that the people who brought Mikheil Saakashvili to Georgia are active for his release, they have a kind of responsibility towards Saakashvili.

This statement by Zelensky only confirmed everything that we have been saying all this time, the Ukrainian government was directly involved in the special operation to send Saakashvili to Georgia, which fortunately failed, and he also has its share of responsibility towards Saakashvili," said Irakli Kobakhidze.

Sending Saakashvili to Georgia was a special operation: Mamuka Mdinardze's response to Zelenskyy

By Liza Mcheldidze



Mamuka Mdinardze, the chairman of the Georgian Dream party, responded to the statement of the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy regarding Mikheil Saakashvili's transfer for treatment and called Saakashvili's return to Georgia a 'special operation' orchestrated by Ukrainian government:

"Sending Saakashvili to Georgia was a special operation. Today, the authors of the special operation even secured a statement from the President of Ukraine in favor of the special operation performer. This is a simple assessment," said Mamuka Mdinardze.

According to Mdinardze, the ruling team talks about the issue of Georgia's involvement in the war based on 'facts'.

"This is a simple assessment. When we talk about the fact that involvement in the war was one of the main goals of this special operation, we do not say it by chance, we base it on facts. It is not accidental, and in agreement with this statement, we can consider the statement of a

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6667; Euro - 2.8368; GBP - 3.2443; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.8635; Swiss Franc - 2.8789

Sending Saakashvili to Georgia was a special operation: Mamuka Mdinardze's response to Zelenskyy

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number of high-ranking officials of Ukraine that today there are no people of war in the government of Georgia, and Mikheil Saakashvili would do it.

Yes, they have this expectation, and the planners of the special operation also ensured that even the President of

Ukraine responded to the story and called on the Georgian authorities to do what he called on. We should consider these in correlation with each other, in synthesis. Such things do not happen by chance.

It was a special operation to involve Georgia in the war and to disrupt Georgia, which failed, and today, because we have no other choice, we consider all state-

ments in this context," Mdinardze said.

He also spoke about the research conducted by GORBI and noted that this study reflects reality, although the opposition does not trust it, but observes it with great interest.

According to Mamuka Mdinardze, the rating of Georgian Dream is record high in the non-election period.

"You know that the increase in ratings during the election period is not unusual because the campaign and other factors are of great importance, but in the non-election period this rate is really a record, which means that the policy of "Georgian Dream" is supported by a very large part of the population of Georgia," said Mdinardze.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Special Penitentiary Service issues statement regarding Mikheil Saakashvili



The Special Penitentiary Service issued a statement on ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili and noted that artificially aggravating the situation is another additional attempt to create a tense background before the court hearings.

According to them, this is "a visible example of pressure on the court."

Penitentiary urged interested parties to refrain from disseminating fragments of the confidential expert report conducted by Empathy Center and to "respect society and the constitutional order."

"On December 2, 2022, TV Pierveli

aired a small and incomplete excerpt from the expert report conducted by Empathy Center, which, at their request, is confidential, which aimed to present the situation as if the convicted M. Saakashvili was poisoned.

This type of deliberate, destructive action serves to create a wrong public perception of the convict's condition and is aimed at harming the interests of the state. We explain once again that at this stage the confidential report, some parts of which were orchestrated and made public by TV Formula, should be discussed by the court," the statement reads.

Minister Zurab Azarashvili meets with EU Ambassador Pawel Herczynski

Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia Zurab Azarashvili held an introductory meeting with the EU Ambassador Pawel Herczynski. Zurab Azarashvili introduced ongoing reforms and novelties to the EU Ambassador, The Ministry of Health reports.

According to the Ministry, the conversation touched on the reforms initiated for the maximum availability of high-quality healthcare services and medicines. Also, they discussed the program of employment of socially vulnerable people in public works and the resettlement project of IDPs, which means providing housing for 13,000 families in the

next three years.

The topic of reforms launched with the purpose of ensuring maximal accessibil-

and support of the EU was highlighted at the meeting.

National Health Strategy 2022-2030



ity to high quality healthcare was touched upon. Public Employment Program for Socially Unprotected People and IDPs resettlement project, envisaging housing provision for 13, 000 families during the coming three years were discussed.

The participants of introductory meeting dwelt upon importance of cooperation between Georgia and the EU, which also includes introduction of telemedicine in primary healthcare facilities. This project, representing important prerequisite for development of the Health System is being implemented with financial support of the EU.

Importance of the Labour Inspection Service, established with involvement

developed with technical assistance of the EU was reflected on. As stated by Zurab Azarashvili, the Ministry implements series of reforms based on this document.

The Minister of Health presented planned reform in hospital sector to the EU Ambassador.

According to the reform, starting from 2025, compliance with international standard for quality will be mandatory for the clinics enrolled in Universal Healthcare Program.

Future plans and aspects of cooperation were discussed at the meeting," the statement reads.

Kutaisi wins national best practice award for smart eco-city portfolio

Weather

Wednesday, December 21

Day Light Snow
High: 3°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: -2°C

Thursday, December 22

Day Clear
High: 5°C

Night Clear
Low: -1°C



The National Association of Georgia Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) announced the winners of its annual best local government and municipal practices competition.

The initiative was supported by the European Union, UNDP and Denmark, under their broader assistance for regional and local development in Georgia, including through the EU-funded programme Mayors for Economic Growth Facility (M4EG). Fourteen municipalities were awarded this year,

with Kutaisi winning the national award for the smart eco-city portfolio.

Earlier this year, Kutaisi was selected by the EU and UNDP for a two-year-long journey to explore a smart eco-city model and nature-based urban innovation and facilitate the transition towards green and sustainable life. This municipal transformation portfolio received •225,000 in funding from the EU under the M4EG Facility.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

published by **The Messenger**

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