

## MEPs Demand Mikheil Saakashvili be Transferred Abroad for Medical Treatment at Debate



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Member of European Parliament Anna Fotyga's requested immediate debate regarding Mikheil Saakashvili's health condition, supported by fellow Members of EU Parliament was held and the MEPs talked about the health condition

of the former president of Georgia.

The European Parliament members demand that the government of Georgia immediately take measures to make it possible to transfer Mikheil Saakashvili abroad for medical treatment and stated that Georgian authorities are fully respon-

sible for his well-being.

MEP Miriam Lexmann said that Mikheil Saakashvili's life is in danger and called out Georgian officials on 'shameful' behavior, adding that Saakashvili's situation will affect Georgia's European future:

"The life of the former president, Mr. Saakashvili, is in dan-

ger. This shameful behavior of the Georgian government is directly related to the country's European future. I once again ask the Georgian government to allow him to receive medical assistance abroad. The Government of Georgia is fully responsible for his life and health and will also be responsible if anything happens to him." Miriam Lexmann said.

Lithuanian MEP Petras Auštrevičius questioned Georgia's alignment with the West and said that there is a political struggle and polarized society in Georgia.

"The current government of Georgia claims to be pro-European and aligns itself with the West, at the same time the society is very polarized and there is a political struggle that shows us a certain political culture. Mikheil Saakashvili, the former president who transformed Georgia, has now been imprisoned for 16 months. I demand that Mikheil Saakashvili be allowed to go abroad for medical assistance. The chances that the country will lose its European face are very high." Petras Auštrevičius said.

MEP Anna Fotyga, who initiated this debate, said that the death of former President of Georgia will deeply affect Georgia's future, she also emphasized Vladimir Putin's intentions citing his past statements about Saakashvili:

"Several years ago, Putin personally described the treatment he wanted for Mikheil Saakashvili. Like any other person, Saakashvili had the right to return to his homeland, so he returned... I call on the Georgian government to release him so that he can receive medical care abroad. He is dying in prison and this will greatly affect the future of Georgia." Anna Fotyga said.

Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Budget and Administration said that Georgian government has a legal obligation to ensure that prisoners' fundamental rights are protected and said that European Union is ready to help Georgian partners with independent evaluation of Saakashvili's situation:

"In the previous case, we repeated that it is the responsibility of the Georgian government to take all measures to protect the health of Mr. Saakashvili. They have a legal obligation to ensure that all prisoners have access to health care and that their fundamental rights are protected. ... The EU's position is clear that the Georgian government has a responsibility to act if Mr. Saakashvili's health is in critical condition. ... I think it is in everyone's interest that Mr. Saakashvili's situation be evaluated by an independent institution. The European Union is fully ready to help Georgian

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## US Gov't Concerned Over Mikheil Saakashvili's Health condition, Kelly Degnan says

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan in response to a question about Mikheil Saakashvili's health condition, told reporters that the US government is concerned over Saakashvili's situation which she assessed as 'serious'.

According to Kelly Degnan, it is the Georgian government's responsibility to ensure that Mikheil Saakashvili receives the medical services he needs.

"It is a serious situation, as we saw yesterday. My government and the governments of many other countries are watching closely and we are concerned. It is the government's responsibility to ensure that Mikheil Saakashvili receives the medical care he needs. That's what all of us are focusing on - first, to understand what his diagnosis is and what he needs, and then that the government is providing him with those services. We

continue to monitor this matter," Degnan said.

US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan was also asked about the leaked recordings of conversation between Abashidze and Karasin about the construction of a new highway. In response, Degnan said that this is not the time for Georgia to get closer to Russia, especially when Russia still controls 20% of Georgia's territory and is attacking peaceful cities in Ukraine.

"I think the majority of Georgians are not interested in Russia right now, when Russia continues to occupy 20% of Georgia's territory, while Russia continues to brutally attack Ukrainian citizens, schools, hospitals and cities. It is trying to violate the sovereignty, territory and identity of Ukraine in the same way as it was tried in Georgia. This is not the time when Georgians are trying to get closer to Russia," said Kelly Degnan.





# MEPs demand Mikheil Saakashvili to be transferred abroad for medical treatment at the debate

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partners in this situation". Johannes Hahn said.

MEP Markéta Gregorová asked Georgian authorities to

not think about political gains but the losses for Georgia's EU candidacy status by leaving Mikheil Saakashvili in prison to die.

"There is no conspiracy, for

example, that we are paid by the "United National Movement" or that Mikheil Saakashvili recruited us, I have heard such things. We are concerned about this, because we should be. This

is a deeply politicized case, a person dies in prison. I am asking the government of Georgia not to think only about the political points that can be gained by leaving him in prison, but also about

the points that can be lost because today we have to talk about a political prisoner instead of the status of a candidate". Markéta Gregorová said.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### MFA of Ukraine Demands Mikheil Saakashvili's Transfer to Ukraine

the agency, according to the Russian and Soviet traditions, the Georgian authorities resort to psychological and physical violence against Saakashvili, denying the need for emergency medical assistance and intentionally endangering his life.

thorities to immediately stop mocking Mikheil Saakashvili and hand him over to Ukraine.

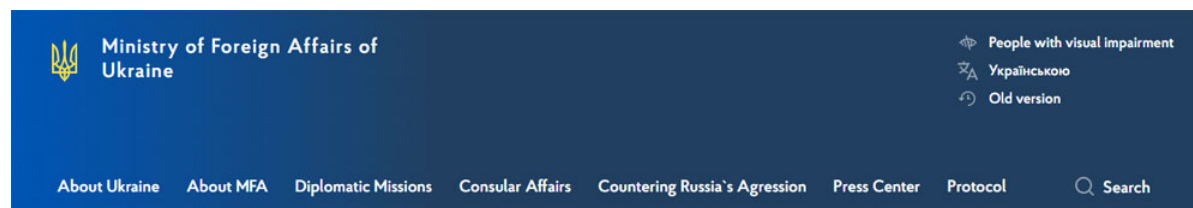
Don't play with human life for political payback.

We also appeal to foreign authorities and international organizations to publicly protect the

### Kakha Kaladze says Mikheil Saakashvili is deliberately harming himself, calls his situation PR campaign

ensure the safety of the health of any prisoner.

"The government has been doing this since 2012. I won't emphasize what happened before 2012, the public knows every-



All News → Statement of the MFA of Ukraine regarding the threats to life of Ukrainian citizen Mik...

### Statement of the MFA of Ukraine regarding the threats to life of Ukrainian citizen Mikheil Saakashvili

02 February 2023 14:00

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expresses a strong protest in connection with the inhumane treatment of Ukrainian citizen Mikheil Saakashvili, who is being held behind bars in Georgia.

In the worst traditions of the NKVD USSR the Georgian authorities apply psychological and physical violence to Mikheil Saakashvili, refuse to provide him with urgently needed medical assistance, deliberately creating a

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine released a statement regarding Mikheil Saakashvili and demanded Georgian authorities hand the former president of Georgia to Ukraine.

According to the statement of

"The gross violation of human rights against the citizen of Ukraine contradicts the declared course of Tbilisi joining the European Union and indicates the collapse of democracy in Georgia.

We call on the Georgian au-

thorities to immediately stop mocking Mikheil Saakashvili and hand him over to Ukraine. Don't play with human life for political payback. We also appeal to foreign authorities and international organizations to publicly protect the



Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze told reporters that Mikheil Saakashvili is deliberately in self-harm mode and the purpose of this is to somehow release him from prison with his own 'PR campaign' and the involvement of foreigners.

He added that the former president's release from prison is 'impossible' and asked to not 'lie' to Saakashvili and help him 'to eat normally'.

As Kaladze explained, the government of Georgia and the relevant agencies do everything to

thing. We have the fact that the person {Mikheil Saakashvili} has been deliberately self-harming all this time. The purpose of this is that with his own PR campaign, with the involvement of foreigners, it is somehow possible to release him from prison. This is impossible. A person has a specific crime, he has been sentenced for specific cases. Do not lie to the prisoner, on the contrary, help him to get out of the mode of self-harm, to eat normally," Kaladze pointed out.

### Personal data of LGBT+ people in Georgia often risks being disclosed by journalists, says EU and UNDP study

Personal data of LGBT+ people in Georgia is often illegally disclosed by journalists

and occasionally by health workers, law enforcement agencies and lawyers. This is the conclusion of a study conducted by a Georgian non-governmental organisation 'Rule of Law Centre' supported by the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme.

The research, 'The State of Personal Data Protection of the LGBT+ Community Members in Georgia', examines widespread practices related to the personal data protection of LGBTQI+ people and provides recommendations for public agencies and the civil and private sectors to raise existing standards and fill in the gaps.

For example, the study found that media and journalists often disclose information about



sexual orientation and gender identity of LGBT+ persons, including without their consent, in an improper volume and form.

Sometimes data of the LGBT+ community members are processed by the healthcare sector, without a legal basis, including for non-official (personal) purposes. The data is gathered

from the community members in a degrading manner, the report says.

Similar problems exist with how employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs process the data of the

LGBT+ community members. Sometimes information provided by a LGBT+ person during an interview and/or information available in a criminal case is disclosed to unauthorised third parties.

In some cases, lawyers giving interviews to the media and/or through a social network have

disclosed personal information, including sexual orientation of a participant in a court process in an unethical, degrading manner, and without proper legal grounds.

Another problem is the processing of personal data in the workplace, as employers often dismiss LGBT+ people from their jobs when they learn about the gender identity or sexual orientation of employees.

The study concludes that LGBT+ persons have little information about the protection and confidentiality of personal data and data protection mechanisms and, fearing retribution, do not contact data protection authorities and investigative bodies.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

### Weather

Friday, February 3

Day Cloudy High: 7°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: -3°C

Saturday, February 4

Day Partly Cloudy High: 7°C

Night Cloudy Low: -1°C

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