

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

In response to the question of how can the dichotomy of the Georgian Dream and the United National Movement be ended, the Speaker of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili said that in reality, this is not polarization, but 'radicalization'.

According to him, the main way to solve the problem of depolarization is to recognize that it is radicalization and it is not acceptable, because the radical agenda involves the non-recognition of democratic institutions and elections, and after this recognition, a clear separation from radicalization.

"Radicalization implies that there is one center, democratic institutions, democracy as such, and there is a group that is out of this center, out of orbit, out of the democratic framework.

Here, if we have an expectation that the democratic institutions should move for the radical groups outside the framework, this is damage to democracy.

That's why I said that the only solution to de-radicalization, if we agree that radicalization is a problem, is for radical groups to embrace radical agendas, and the second is to acknowledge the problem, that's half the solution.

The first thing a group that does not consider itself radical must do is recognize the problem of radicalism. Give your name to those groups who are radical and then this solution will appear by itself.

I don't know if you have expectations, because the population of Georgia has no expectations that democracy will retreat from radicalism. On the contrary, radicalism must retreat,

and this feeling and assessment, I observe the processes from month to month, from week to week, and I am increasingly convinced that there is an attempt to present radicalization as polarization, thereby forcing de-

mocracy to retreat before the radicals - this cannot be the case. The solution is that radicals have to embrace radical agendas.

Even today we see empty chairs and in private conversations, we point out how irrational, illogical,

and confrontational this step is," he addressed the deputies.

Shalva Papuashvili cited the process of selecting an ombudsman in the parliament as an example of radicalization. According to him, the parliament

turned out to be a hostage of a radical agenda, when some non-governmental organizations selected some candidates from their 'circle behind closed doors' and presented them as an ultimatum to the parliament.

Shalva Papuashvili Speaks on 'De-Radicalization' in Parliament



Bidzina Ivanishvili's Lawyers Accuse European Media Outlets of Being 'Monopolized' Amid Credit Suisse Dispute

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The legal company, which protects the interests of Bidzina Ivanishvili, criticized the European media outlets for 'censoring' articles after they began criticizing Credit Suisse's management, arguing that the European media has also been 'monopolized'.

They mentioned the case of last year when, according to them, the Swiss media refused to publish an article criticizing the bank's management.

"As of today, we can say that we received another sad signal, this time already outside of Switzerland, from the European/British media, which published articles without any delay when the content was about heavy criticism of Credit Suisse, and when it came to information specifically from the bank's management, the deliberate destruction of the reputation of the banking system of the Swiss bank, the



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6558; Euro - 2.8537; GBP - 3.2106; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.7055; Swiss Franc - 2.8886

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events developed as follows: First, and from the letter we sent, the messages that specifically related to the bank's management were completely removed, and as a result of the next communication, the media changed, faded all the accents that were related to the same thing, the criticism of Credit Suisse's management," the lawyer's letter states. In addition, the letter reads that Bidzina Ivanishvili intends

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to 'give a chance' to the media to publish the next information. "It is understood that the information we provided was not pulled out of thin air and was based on facts and reports from the Swiss banking regulator. To say the

least, a denialist media outlet could have easily verified the information, even with the bank. Instead, we refused to publish the information in its initial form, which only leads to surprise and disappointment. It is

really disappointing that the European media has also been monopolized. Nevertheless, Mr. Ivanishvili intends to continue to give the relevant media outlets a chance to publish further information and letters that are

already planned to be made public, only with the reservation that if the same media outlets will also publish information that has been blocked until now in an unedited format," the statement reads.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Irakli Kobakhidze Responds to Salome Zourabichvili's Statements



Chairman of the Georgian Dream party, Irakli Kobakhidze, responded to recent statements of President Salome Zourabichvili on Mikheil Saakashvili's case. Salome Zourabichvili published two statements. In the first statement, she said that

Mikheil Saakashvili cannot be freed by the president's pardon, because he is accused of three more cases. In the second statement, Zourabichvili evaluated the statements of Irakli Kobakhidze and noted that

threats to the discretionary powers of the President are not admissible. Irakli Kobakhidze called the statement of the president 'a little joke' and said that at first he thought this statement was fake. "It was a small joke, which

the president can be forgiven for once a year. In general, if we look seriously, when the president puts [such a statement] on her official website, at first I thought it was fake. It was really unbelievable, I said, it will probably be fake. But then it turned out that he wanted to joke like that and what can we do", said Kobakhidze.

According to him, Zourabichvili took a position corresponding to the interests of the Georgian people in pardoning Saakashvili.

"At this stage, it is important that Salome Zourabichvili made an appropriate decision. It seems that she understood public opinion on this topic well. Society does not want disorder and does not want to stir up radicalism. The public knows that the purpose of Saakashvili's release is to create a source of this disarray. It seems that the president took this into account and it is very good that she made the decision that corresponds to the interests of the Georgian people," said Kobakhidze.

The West is 'Twisting Georgia's Hands' due to the calm relations with Russia, Grigory Karasin says



Chair of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the former deputy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Grigory Karasin wrote that the West has started 'twisting Georgia's hands' because of its 'calm' relations with Russia. "As expected, the West has

now started twisting its hands for Georgia due to its very calm relationship with Russia. Such are the new rules of the game in international relations,

regardless of history, geography, and personal preferences of the state. Washington decided - then do it! There's no point in commenting!" Karasin wrote. Karasin recently told the Russian media that Moscow is ready to restore air traffic, but it needs the consent of the Georgian side.

With the support of the European Union and the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Georgian authorities have launched a joint campaign - 'Better and safer roads for Georgia' - to raise awareness on road safety issues.

The campaign focuses on several concrete issues to raise awareness of the importance of road safety. It will show real stories of people affected by road accidents. Outdoor banners with road safety messages will be spread throughout five cities of Georgia - Tbilisi, Khashuri, Kutaisi, Zestafoni, and Batumi. This will be complemented by outreach through television, online media and social

'Better and Safer Roads for Georgia': Georgia launches nationwide road safety campaign with EU support



media. The goal is to reach as many drivers as possible and help them become aware of safety risks on the roads.

According to the EU Delegation to Georgia, car accidents are one of the main causes of fatalities and injuries in the country. Failure to maintain one lane, speeding and driving under the influence of alcohol are all significant causes of traffic accidents in Georgia. Over the past two years, 15,222 people have been injured in car accidents and 879 people have been killed, including 22 children.

"Systematically preventing

deaths and serious injuries linked to road crashes is a priority of the EIB, the EU's bank," said Maciej Czura, the Head of the EIB Regional Representation for the South Caucasus. "Improving road infrastructure safety in Georgia has been one of our key priorities since 2007 when the bank began operating in the country. In order to achieve that, the EIB is supporting the Georgian East-West highway project with 1 billion financing guaranteed by the European Union, supplemented with up to 40 million of EU grants to Georgia."

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, February 9

Day Cloudy High: 6°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 0°C

Friday, February 10

Day Light Snow High: 3°C

Night Cloudy Low: -2°C

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