

Ilia Darchiashvili Condemns Ukraine's 'Incomprehensible' and 'Baseless' Decision, Asserts Friends Deserve Better Treatment

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Ilia Darchiashvili, affirmed that Georgia's commitment to supporting Ukraine remains steadfast. They will continue to offer humanitarian aid, political support, and diplomatic efforts to assist Ukraine. Darchiashvili emphasized that regardless of any irresponsible behavior or decisions directed towards Georgia, the government's unwavering stance in supporting Ukraine will remain unchanged.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs clarified that the decision made by Ukraine regarding the former president, Mikheil Saakashvili, is baseless. He highlighted past instances of unfair treatment from certain Ukrainian politicians towards Georgia. According to Darchiashvili, despite this, Georgia has traditionally remained calm and maintains a friendly attitude.

Darchiashvili stated that they will not react to the decision and confirmed that the ambassador will return to Georgia in the near future. Darchiashvili emphasized the importance of clarifying the basis of the decision, asserting that it lacks foundation. They reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Ukraine in various aspects and stated that no irresponsible attitude or decision can change their stance.

"The decision we heard from Ukraine was incomprehensible and baseless. Friends do not deserve such an attitude. Traditionally, we have encountered many cases where we heard an incomprehensible and unfair attitude towards Georgia from some Ukrainian politicians. We have traditionally remained calm. This is our attitude towards friendly people and the country. We will certainly have time in the future to discuss these issues in bilateral formats, but today, traditionally, we choose the position that we have ex-



pressed. We will not react to this. Accordingly, as we discussed, the ambassador will return to Georgia in the near future. Also, the basis that became the determinant of this incomprehensible decision is very important. We believe that everything is clear regarding the former president and all issues concerning how responsibly the state treats the rights of all prisoners, including Saakashvili. Accordingly, this issue itself is without foundation. As we heard, the decision was

determined by this very issue.

Accordingly, we will continue to support the Ukrainian people and Ukraine to the best of our ability, as we have done so far. We have been actively helping Ukraine from a humanitarian, political, and diplomatic standpoint. This is our responsibility, our attitude, a dignified attitude toward our partner, and we will continue to do so. No irresponsible attitude or decision towards us can change this stance," Darchiashvili said.

On July 3, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky made an announcement stating that he will request the Georgian ambassador to depart from Ukraine within 48 hours. The purpose of this decision is to hold consultations in Tbilisi regarding the return of Mikheil Saakashvili to Ukraine. Zelensky expressed concerns that the Russian government is responsible for the alleged mistreatment and harm inflicted upon Mikheil Saakashvili by the Georgian authorities.

Kakha Kaladze Reiterates Damaging Effects of Georgia Imposing Sanctions on Russia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE



Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze has stated that the Georgian government has repeatedly clarified its reasons for not participating in sanctions against Russia. According to Kaladze, imposing sanctions would ultimately harm Georgia itself.

Kaladze responded to a journalist's question regarding the purpose of an interview with Michael McFall, the coordinator of the Russian sanctions group established by the President of Ukraine. He emphasized that despite external pressure and calls to join sanctions, Georgia has prioritized the interests of its own country and its people. Kaladze expressed that making a decision that is known to be

harmful would not be in Georgia's best interest.

He further explained that the purpose of imposing sanctions is typically to inflict harm on another party, but in Georgia's case, it would only result in self-inflicted damage. For instance, if Georgian products were prevented from entering the Russian market, it would negatively impact the Georgian economy rather than the Russian economy. Kaladze questioned the rationale behind making such a decision when the outcome is already known to be detrimental.

"One thing is clear: there is a lot of pressure and calls to join the second front of sanctions. Despite this pressure, we have repeatedly explained our reasons

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6019; Euro - 2.8316; GBP - 3.3057; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8710; Swiss Franc - 2.8955

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for not joining the sanctions. It is explicitly stated that our primary consideration is the interests of our country and our people. We will not make a decision that we know from the outset will be harmful.

When imposing and participating in sanctions, the intention is to cause harm to someone else. I believe we all understand this. For instance, if Georgian products are barred from entering the Russian market, it will not affect the Russian economy; instead, it will harm our own economy and the citizens of our country. Why should we make such a harmful decision?" Kaladze noted.

Additionally, Kaladze highlighted that despite claims that Georgia is being used to circumvent sanctions, no concrete evidence or examples were provided. On the contrary, the sanctions group expressed gratitude to the Georgian government for its cooperation and efforts in this regard. Kaladze reiterated that Georgia will not take any action that would harm the country from various perspectives, including economically and in terms of public relations.

"Despite numerous statements suggesting that Georgia is frequently used to bypass sanctions, no concrete evidence, details, or specific examples were provided to support these claims. On the contrary, the sanctions group that visited us expressed gratitude to the Government of Georgia for its cooperation and the measures taken in this regard. I want to reiterate that we will not undertake any actions that would be detrimental to our country from various perspectives, including economic and public relations," emphasized Kaladze.

In an interview with Radio Liberty, Michael McFall, the coordinator of the Russian sanctions group established by the President of Ukraine, stated, "I believe that Prigozhin's rebellion and Putin's reaction to it are important lessons for countries that support Ukraine but fear escalation." He suggested considering the possibility that Putin might choose negotiation rather than escalation or capitulation, especially if he sees the risk of losing the war becoming a reality.

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The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

First Georgian-German Legal Forum Opens in Tbilisi, Enhancing Integration with European Union



The Ministry of Justice of Georgia has announced the opening of the inaugural Georgian-German legal forum in Tbilisi. The idea for this collaborative event originated during a meeting between the Ministers of Justice of Georgia and Germany in September of the previous year.

The forum serves as an essential support mechanism in Georgia's journey towards European Union integration, aiming to strengthen legal professionals and foster closer alignment between the legal systems of both countries.

Addressing the forum's participants, Minister of Justice Rati Bregadze highlighted that this new platform provides an additional avenue for bringing Georgia's legal landscape closer to European standards, ultimately contributing to the country's goal of joining the European Union.

Titled "Sharing the Best Experience on the Path of Georgia's Integration with the European Union," the two-day legal forum is scheduled to conclude on July 6th.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Ilia Darchiashvili Holds Meeting with Hungary's Minister of Justice Judit Varga

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilia Darchiashvili, conducted a meeting with Hungary's Minister of Justice, Judit Varga, during her working visit to Georgia.

As per the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, the meeting centered around the ongoing issues in the bilateral relations between the two countries and explored possibilities for further enhancing cooperation in both bilateral and multilateral contexts. The positive trend of high-level visits between Georgia and Hungary was acknowledged with satisfaction.

The main focus of the discussions, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was Georgia's integration process into the European Union. Ilia Darchiashvili provided detailed information to the Minister of Justice regarding

Georgia's progress in implementing the 12 priorities set by the European Commission.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs conveyed optimism that Georgia would be granted candidate status by the end of the year.

Darchiashvili expressed gratitude to the Minister of Justice for Hungary's unwavering support concerning Georgia's aspiration to attain EU candidate country status.



EU4Youth programme launches nine projects to enhance youth employment and entrepreneurship in the Eastern Partnership

From 4-6 July, the implementation of nine projects selected by the EU4Youth programme under the grant scheme is being launched in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The grant scheme, initiated by the EU co-funded programme EU4Youth, aims to provide support for young people with career development and employment in six Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine.



The grants are awarded to the nine projects with a total budget of Euro6 million for activities aimed at empowering young people, especially disadvantaged young people.

The programme offers a wide range of activities, including mentoring and training programmes, apprenticeships, the creation of centres and youth fairs, the development of innovative tools, etc. to help them

acquire the necessary skills and take advantage of new opportunities.

According to the European Training Foundation, ageing populations, high mobility, relatively high employment rates, emerging job creation and high educational attainment characterise the countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region. As of 2021, youth unemployment is highest in Georgia and Armenia, reaching 30.76% and 36.09% respectively. In Azerbaijan more than 16.49% of young people aged 15-24 are unemployed, in Belarus – 10.4% and in Moldova – 9.13%. In Ukraine the unemployment rate in 2021 was 19.11%, but this number has increased significantly

due to the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine.

According to EU4Youth, the grant projects being launched this summer will help tackle youth unemployment in the region by promoting social entrepreneurship and providing broad support for young people's career development and employment.

The programme will support the creation of networks and partnerships between youth-focused organisations and the creation of innovative tools that offer flexible learning opportunities for young people, helping them to acquire new skills and knowledge at their own pace. This could be particularly useful for those who may face geographical or financial constraints.

straints.

The projects will also support the necessary infrastructure and resources for young people to start entrepreneurial activities.

Implemented by the Central Project Management Agency (CPMA), the EU4Youth Phase III Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship programme, financed by the European Union and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, is being carried out in the EaP countries. The initiative is primarily aimed at providing technical support to governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in youth employment and entrepreneurship issues.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, July 6

Day ☀ Clear
High: 33°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 21°C

Friday, July 7

Day ☀ Clear
High: 34°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 22°C

published by

The Messenger

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