

Cinematographers Unite with Writers and Publishers to Protest Appointment of Georgian Dream MP as Head of House of Writers

By MESSENGER STAFF

The movement of cinematographers joined the protest of writers and publishers regarding the appointment of Georgian Dream MP Ketevan Dumbadze as the head of the House of Writers.

Together with writers and publishers, they disobey the "repressive, anti-democratic and anti-state policy of the Ministry of Culture" and say that the appointment of Dumbadze as the head of the House of Writers is another attempt to deliberately disrupt the cultural institution.

We have once again witnessed the deliberate attempt to destroy all remaining institutions of culture and the sole ordination of rulers.

We will not allow the hijacking of culture, the normalization of censorship and the return of Soviet-style repression in our country.

We are in this fight and we will be united and uncompromising!

Art is lively, independent and political," the filmmakers' statement reads.



According to the decision of the Minister of Culture, Tea Tsulukiani, Ketevan Dumbadze will head the House of Writers of Georgia from September 4.

At the beginning of August, the head of the House of Writers, Nata Lomour, said that the Ministry of Culture called and told her that the term of directorship will expire in 5

days. Lomouri wrote on Facebook that he had already informed the Ministry in writing that he was interested in extending the deadline.

Writers and publishers have

released a joint statement, stating that they disobey the policy of the Ministry of Culture, which is undemocratic, anti-Soviet, and anti-state.

Motorway Department Director States Information about Rikoti's Danger is Dangerous

By MESSENGER STAFF



Giorgi Tsereteli, the director of the Department of Motorways, states that misinformation has been spreading recently, "as if Rikoti is very dangerous". According to him, the construction of the Rikoti Pass will be completed in 2024 and "will be safe for everyone".

"Recently, the spread of misinformation about the Ricoti pass has become very frequent, as if Ricoti is very dangerous. It is impossible to talk about corrupt deals and, as it were, adjusting these tender conditions for these companies.

By 2024, Rikoti will be fully completed, and I would like to point out that after completion, Ricoti will be safe for everyone," said Tsereteli.

Party Lelo for Georgia Chairman Mamuka Khazaradze demands an international audit on the construction of Rikoti. According to Khazaradze, it is necessary to check security, landslide-prone zones and finances.

On April 11, the Department of Motor Vehicles prohibited traffic on the Rikoti Pass as it was "carrying out road cleaning works due to minor rock fall."

On April 13, road traffic on the Ricoti Pass was launched under a special regime for all types of transport.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6315; Euro - 2.9015; GBP - 3.3610; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.6984; Swiss Franc - 3.0140

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

15 Years Pass After August 2008 War

15 years have passed since the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia. Today it is already clear that this date was a turning point in international relations. Putin's Russia has embarked on the path of open aggression against the neighboring post-Soviet countries.

At that time, Georgia defended its independence, but could not escape the influence of Russia, which directly occupied a fifth of Georgia's territory. The August War is still a subject of controversy between the Georgian government and the pro-Western opposition.

The years that have passed since the August war have made many things clear, and no one believes Russian propaganda anymore, as if it had conducted a "coercive operation for peace" against Georgia and "protected the Ossetian people from genocide."

This version was voiced by the representatives of the Kremlin even today, but today the real face of the Kremlin is clearly visible, and it is also clear that the Russian-Georgian war was a turning point for the security of Europe. It was a direct act of military aggression by post-communist Russia against an independent state.

However, 15 years ago, not many people in the West thought in this way. It was much more comfortable to believe that

Saakashvili "did something wrong" and "irritated Russia". The then President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, as well as the then Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, later admitted that the invasion of Georgia in 2008 was not 'impromptu' and that the Russian government planned the invasion of Georgia at the end of 2006 in order to prevent Georgia's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

The restrained reaction of the West to the aggression against Georgia only encouraged Russia. Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Ruslan Stefanchuk, responded to the 15th year after the August War, saying that 15 years ago, if the world had behaved more firmly and strictly, Russia would hardly have dared to encroach on the independent territories that do not belong to it."

Ukraine was another victim of Russian aggression. Moscow easily annexed Crimea and created separatist regimes in the two eastern regions of Ukraine. In February 2022, a 'special military operation' was launched against Ukraine, which dispelled any illusions without possible 'intimidation' of the aggressor.

The government and the opposition marked the 15th year after the war in Georgia separately. On August 7, the oppo-

sition visited the graves of the soldiers who died in the 2008 war at the Mukhatgadi cemetery.

Only President Salome Zurbashvili appeared from the government. The government of Georgia and the leaders of the Georgian Dream appeared in Mukhatgadi on August 8. They are categorically against considering August 7 as the date of the start of the war and consider it as "propaganda of the nationalists".

According to experts, the issue is of fundamental importance. It is recorded that the Russian military forces, which did not have the mandate of 'peacekeepers', entered the Georgian-Russian border on August 7, which, according to international law, means the start of the war.

According to official information, the President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, ordered a military operation on August 7, 2008, at 23:35, when the Russian army had already invaded Georgia.

The Russians need to bring up August 8 to claim that they only 'retaliated' and crossed the border on August 8. Whoever claims that the war started on August 8, knowingly or unknowingly follows Russian propaganda and does Russia's work. As for the international community, according to the official assessment of a number of politicians and

countries, August 7 is the date of the start of the war and occupation.

The Georgian Dream since its creation and coming to power in 2012 insisted that "Saakashvili started the war", none of the government representatives tried to say this on the 15th anniversary of the war.

The investigation of the August War case both at the International Criminal Court in The Hague and at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg revealed the responsibility of the Ossetian side and Russia as the force exercising effective control on the ground, and in no case - Georgia.

Instead, Georgian government officials unanimously declared that Saakashvili's government could have prevented the war and not doing so was a crime. Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili claimed that "the previous government committed treason during the war", but he could not answer the question of why Saakashvili has not been charged with such a crime.

Mikheil Saakashvili is arrested on various charges, and the Georgian Dream does not think of releasing him for medical treatment, which many people inside and outside the country call for.

The war of August 2008 and the stopping of Russian aggression

cost Georgia dearly. In addition to the dead and wounded military and civilian people, the occupiers in the Tskhinvali region organized ethnic cleansing with the help of their puppets, and more than 30,000 people were expelled from their homes, which were burned and razed to the ground.

Moscow did not fulfill the agreement of August 12, 2008, which was reached through the mediation of the European Union and provided for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Georgia. Moscow 'recognized' the 'independence' of the occupied territories - Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region. Since then, it continues the policy of 'borderization' and gradually expands the occupied territories. In the Tskhinvali region, the Russian occupiers laid barbed wire on a length of 56 kilometers.

Despite the fact that the Georgian Dream has been pursuing a policy of "not provoking Russia" for years, Moscow is not going to give up anything, although Russian propaganda tries to create an illusion as if Georgia will achieve the restoration of territorial integrity by pursuing a pro-Russian policy.

It seems that this will be one of the main messages of the government in the 2024 parliamentary elections. How convincing it will be to the public is another matter.

Georgia: EU condemns continued Russian military presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia on 15th anniversary of war

The EU has marked the 15th anniversary of the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, with a statement condemning Russia's continued military presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia in violation of international law and commitments undertaken by Russia under the 12 August 2008 agreement, mediated by the European Union.

"The European Union's commitment to peaceful resolution of the conflict in Georgia is as strong as ever," said the statement by High Representative Josep Borrell.

"Local communities continue to suffer from humanitarian challenges and human rights violations, including through restric-



tions to the freedom of movement and illegal detentions. Obstacles for internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their place of origin, are persisting," the statement said.

The European Union has been fully engaged in conflict resolution efforts, including as co-chair in the Geneva International Discussions and the efforts of the EU Special Representative. The

statement called on all participants to engage constructively in the discussions to achieve the full implementation of the 12 August 2008 six-point agreement, and underlined the right of refugees

and internally displaced persons to choose a sustainable solution, including a voluntary, safe and dignified return.

The continued presence of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM Georgia) with over 200 civilian monitors has also contributed to the stabilisation of the security situation. With a mandate renewed for again until December 2024, the EUMM remains the only international mission on the ground to facilitate a safe and normal life for the local communities living on both sides of the Administrative Boundary Lines with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

"The European Union reaffirms its commitment to staying engaged in stabilisation and conflict resolution efforts in Georgia and reiterates its firm support to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders," the statement concluded.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Friday, August 11

Day ☀ Clear
High: 37°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 24°C

Saturday, August 12

Day ☀ Clear
High: 38°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 23°C

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