

Georgian NGOs Unite Against Recent Attacks, Vow Legal Aid and Justice for Victims

By Liza Mchedlidze

Georgian non-governmental organizations have united in response to recent attacks targeting politicians, activists, and citizens. They have promised legal assistance to all victims and are committed to fully investigating and prosecuting these acts of violence.

The organizations strongly condemned the use of tactics resembling those employed by the Russian regime and assert Georgia's unwavering dedication to its European aspirations and fundamental freedoms. They emphasized the resilience of the Georgian people in defending against such aggression and reiterated their commitment to ensuring that those responsible are held fully accountable for their actions.

"On the night of May 8, the authorities' nerves finally got the best of them, and they prematurely began to demonstrate their intentions for shaping Georgia's future. The shift in foreign policy direction and the announced reprisals by Bidzina Ivanishvili on April 29 have already been visibly implemented. The harassing and threaten-



ing calls made to hundreds of citizens have escalated into physical attacks and organized reprisals against politicians and activists. The oligarch and his associates seem to have forgotten that Georgia is not Russia.

Georgians know the value of freedom. Our pursuit of a European future for our country can-

not be undermined by Russian security service methods.

A Georgian would never approve of attacking someone from behind, chasing them into buildings, or breaking down a door with a small child inside. This behavior is typical of the Russian regime. We are committed to providing legal assistance to all

victims affected by these actions. We will thoroughly pursue every case of targeted attacks on active citizens, whether they occurred in previous weeks or more recently. We will demand and ensure that the culprits are identified and held accountable for their actions.

Freedom is the primary value

of the Georgian people. That is why we stand, and will continue to stand, as guardians of Georgia's European future, protecting our country from Russian methods and violence. The Georgian people will win in this battle, and the perpetrators will undoubtedly face a fitting response," NGOs' statement reads.

Public Defender Urges Immediate Response to Violent Attacks Against Critics of 'Foreign Agents' Law

By Liza Mchedlidze

Public defender Levan Ioseliani has addressed the recent violent attacks on individuals critical of the 'Foreign

Agents' law, emphasizing that the persecution, intimidation, and physical assault against these citizens, their family members, and children constitute criminal acts that demand an immediate response from

law enforcement officers.

Ioseliani emphasized that each instance of such violence must be met with a strict and appropriate response from the state.

In light of these events, the Public Defender once again urged law enforcement bodies to promptly respond and provide transparent information about the measures taken to address these issues to the public.

"The Public Defender of Georgia condemns the attacks against individual citizens that occurred in the evening hours of May 8, 2024, and reiterates the concerns highlighted in our assessment published on the same day.

The Public Defender reminds everyone that, regardless of how unacceptable a different or critical opinion may be, persecuting people, intimidating their family members (including minor children), and physical assaults on citizens are criminal acts that demand an immediate and effective response from relevant law enforcement agencies.

It is important for every instance of such violence to receive a strict and appropriate response from the state. Such cases should not manifest as mass organized persecution and violence, as this is incompatible with the principles of a democratic and legal state founded on human rights.

The Public Defender once again calls on law enforcement bodies to respond immediately and provide information on the measures implemented to the public," the statement reads.



THE
STATEMENT
OF PUBLIC DEFENDER OF
GEORGIA

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.6797; Euro - 2.8812; GBP - 3.3472; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9138; Swiss Franc - 2.9493

Georgian Dream Declares West as Enemy of Georgia

By MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The leaders of Georgian Dream have been criticising and actively distancing themselves from the West for a long time, but everything was finally made clear by Bidzina Ivanishvili's speech at the counter rally organised by the government on April 29. It turned out that the leader of Georgian Dream unequivocally supports anti-Western policy and threatens with repression. It was also said that the current government needs the Law on Foreign Agents to protect itself from threats from the West, represented by the "Global War Party" and non-governmental organisations.

Georgian Dream claims to be the defender of Georgia's sovereignty, but they never mention Russia, which occupies one-fifth of Georgia's territory. According to them, Georgia's sovereignty is threatened by the West. Ivanishvili said that the West is organising the revolution and destabilisation in Georgia. It was the West, through non-governmental organisations funded by it, that brought the "pseudo-elite

raised by a foreign country" to power in 2003 - the United National Movement under the leadership of Mikheil Saakashvili.

According to Ivanishvili, the "Saakashvili regime" supported by the West committed many crimes during its rule, in 2003-2012, but the West didn't stop there - they appointed the UNM as Georgian Dream's main opposing force.

Ivanishvili said that after the victory in the 2024 parliamentary elections, the National Movement will be tried as a criminal organisation. The fact of the matter is that as per the terminology of Georgian Dream, all opposition parties represent "radical opposition", and are referred to as "collective national movement". Therefore, the entire opposition spectrum is threatened with prosecution.

According to Ivanishvili, the Foreign Influence Law is needed in order to stop non-governmental organisations operating with funding from the West. However, according to him, the threat from the West does not end there.

Georgian Dream and Ivanishvili speak about the "Glo-

bal War Party", which is trying to drag Georgia into the war, and declare the avoidance of war to be the merit of Georgian Dream. By "global war party", of course, the ruling party means our Western partners.

After blaming the West for all the misfortunes of the Georgian lama and announcing repressions, Bidzina Ivanishvili promised the public that Georgia will become a member of the European Union in 2030. The promise is strange given that if the "Russian Law" is adopted and Georgian Dream remains in power with the current policy, the European Union will not only not start negotiations with Georgia regarding the accession, but also the candidate status may be suspended.

Ivanishvili also stated that he has always made and continues to make correct political calculations. Therefore, he is confident in the success of his future plans and cannot be defeated, adding he is "neither Shevardnadze nor Yanukovych".

Shevardnadze resigned and as he said, "went home". We already know that Ivanishvili is not planning on this. As for Yanukovych,

he shed blood. There is a bit of uncertainty here as to what it means to "not be Yanukovych" - will Ivanishvili not shed blood or go further than Yanukovych. Ultimately, however, even if the order is given to shed blood, the rest will depend on law enforcement and riot police - are they ready for it?

The conflict continues, and both sides hope that they are more durable than the other. Georgian Dream hopes to extinguish the protest charge with strict repression, and the participants of the protest hope that the security forces will finally give up protecting Ivanishvili's regime.

It is clear that Ivanishvili and the Georgian Dream bet unequivocally on Putin's Russia and expect his victory in the war with Ukraine. It is another matter whether they did it on their own or they are acting on the instructions received from Moscow. They can only hope for support from the North in their confrontation with the West or civil society.

According to Ivanishvili, it is better to exhaust the protest movement in the same way and break it, which will make it pos-

sible to hold the elections in a "peaceful situation" in the fall. However, nobody is talking about the elections anymore and it is difficult to say how the country will reach the elections in such a situation.

The situation can be relieved momentarily by recalling the "Russian Law", which was adopted by the parliamentary majority in the second reading on May 1. 83 people decide the fate of the country and in fact refuse the western orientation of the country fixed in the constitution.

In such a situation, the solution may be to hold a plebiscite on the need for a Russian law. However, during his 12-year stay in power, Georgian Dream has never addressed the people to understand his will.

The government tried to create a surrogate of the "people's will" by conducting a contraction on April 29, when people employed in state structures were brought from the regions en masse. The opposition perceives the majority of the populace as sympathetic to their cause, a sentiment evidently reflected in the continuous surge of protests gaining momentum.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

EU Ambassador Urges Georgia to Demonstrate Commitment to Membership



Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, Pawel Herczyński, delivered a video address in celebration of Europe Day. Herczyński stressed the importance of Georgia demonstrating commitment to EU values and reforms, with the EU deciding later this year on Georgia's path towards membership.

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tion, and evolved into the most successful and prosperous Union of 27 countries, each with a different history and culture but all bound by shared values and aspirations. For the first time, Georgia celebrates this day as an EU candidate country. This is a truly historic occasion in our shared European story.

The goal is for Georgia to become a full member of the European Union, with all privileges and responsibilities of membership. For this, Georgia needs to demonstrate a strong commitment to EU values and deliver necessary reforms. Later this year, the European Union will decide whether Georgia will take the next step towards membership. This opportunity exists right now; do not miss it. The doors of our Union have been finally wide open. We are waiting for you. We want Georgia, with its unique culture and traditions, to become part of our European Union family. Stay on the EU path and rest assured we are by your side on this journey.

So let's celebrate this Europe Day and join hands to bring Georgia closer to EU membership," Herczyński said.

ship. The EU Ambassador encouraged Georgia not to miss this opportunity and expressed the EU's readiness to welcome Georgia into the European Union family.

"Today is Europe Day. Every year on this very day, we reflect on the journey that began with a vision for peace and coopera-

Georgian Ambassador to France Resigns Due to Impact of 'Foreign Agents' Law



Ambassador of Georgia to France, Gocha Javakhishvili, has announced his decision to step down from his position. He shared this news on social media, mentioning that he has already submitted a request to terminate his tenure before the scheduled deadline.

In his statement, he expressed concern about the challenging environment and strained relations with foreign partners due to 'Foreign Agents' law, which he feels greatly complicates the duties of the Ambassador of Georgia to the French Republic and Monaco. "I no longer see my role and resources in this direction: moving towards Europe and defending against Europe," he explained.

pressed concern about the challenging environment and strained relations with foreign partners due to 'Foreign Agents' law, which he feels greatly complicates the duties of the Ambassador of Georgia to the French Republic and Monaco. "I no longer see my role and resources in this direction: moving towards Europe and defending against Europe," he explained.

"The atmosphere and mood created by the reincarnated bill in relations with our friends and foreign partners make my personal mission as the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Georgia to the French Republic and Monaco extremely difficult. Accordingly, I have already applied to my immediate management with a request to terminate my authority in the position I hold before the deadline," Javakhishvili stated.

Weather

Friday, May 10

Day Showers
High: 21°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 13°C

Saturday, May 11

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 20°C

Night Showers
Low: 13°C

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

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