

## Parliament Chairman Shalva Papuashvili Defends 'Foreign Agents' Law

By Liza Mchedlidze

Georgian Parliament Chairman Shalva Papuashvili tried to defend a newly adopted "Foreign Agents" law, stating that any foreigner questioning the law is questioning Georgian democracy. He compared such actions to Russian tactics in Ukraine.

According to Papuashvili, only the Georgian government, elected by its citizens, has the right to speak for the people. He criticized foreign officials for making statements about the will of the Georgian people, suggesting that such statements lack legitimacy.

"I have seen many statements where foreign politicians talk about what the Georgian people want, what the will of the Georgian people is. Do not believe any foreigner who speaks to you on behalf of the Georgian people. Because it is the most dishonest act to speak for the people of another country



that has not given you legitimacy. On the contrary,

ask a question of what is the intention of such a per-

son who speaks on your behalf without legitimacy.

They know neither the language, nor the culture,

nor the history. By what right and legitimacy do they speak on behalf of the Georgian people, when on the other side stands the government elected by the Georgian people, which has the legitimacy granted by the people to speak precisely on behalf of the Georgian people?

This law was adopted on behalf of the Georgian people. Any foreigner who questions this, he questions democracy, and this is a Russian style, Russia is doing this to Ukraine when it says that the government does not actually represent the Ukrainian people. This is a Russian style. We have seen this kind of attitude towards our country when the Russian authorities spoke to us on behalf of the Georgian people and told us that the people were good and the government was bad. I call on everyone to think that it is not right to talk to the Georgian people in the Russian style," Papuashvili said.

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Minister of Economy Levan Davitashvili has announced that the Chinese consortium company China Communications Construction Company Ltd, in partnership with China Harbour Investment, has been selected as the private investor for the construction of the new deep-sea port of Anaklia. According to Davitashvili, the Chinese company was the only entity to present an offer for the project.

Notably, China Communications Construction Company Ltd has been sanctioned by the United States on August 26, 2020, for engaging in corruption, predatory financing, environmental destruction, and other abuses across the world.

"On May 20, a proposal was submitted to the Anaklia Development Agency by a Chinese consortium, consisting of two important subcontractors, CRBC and Qingdao Port International. It's worth noting that Qingdao Port International ranks sixth-seventh in the world by port cargo turnover. In the near future, the commission will evaluate the proposals and reveal the winner.

According to the initial assessment, the proposal is complete, and there is a great chance that the Commission will declare it the winner. However, several

clarifications are needed for this. I believe that in a few days, we will announce the Chinese consortium as the winner," said Davitashvili.

According to the minister, the initial phase of Anaklia port development involves constructing a berth capable of handling 7 million tons of cargo and a 600,000-container terminal, with a total investment value of \$600 million.

The government will hold a controlling stake of 51% in the port.

The leader of 'Lelo', Mamuka Khazaradze, considers the "capture of the port of Anaklia by China" as part of the Russian government's plans.

"What does the Black Sea need Americans for and what does Georgia need from the European Union? The plans of the Russian government were openly announced to us for the first time by stopping the Anaklia project. Today, everything is clear to everyone - Russian law, visits to Iran, standing by Hezbollah, and ultimately transferring the Anaklia project into the hands of China, rejecting American and European investments!" Khazaradze wrote on social media.

Lelo leader Mamuka Khazaradze claims that during the meeting in 2017, while discussing the Anaklia port, Ivanishvili told him there is no place for "Americans in the Black Sea".

## US-Sanctioned Chinese Company Selected as Private Partner for Anaklia Deep-Sea Port Construction



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Parliament of Georgia Overrides President's Veto on 'Offshore Law'



The Parliament of Georgia has overridden the President's veto on the "Offshore Law" by re-voting and finally adopting the original version of the law. The law received support from 83 deputies.

The law will now be sent back to the President for signature. If Salome Zourabichvili does not sign it again, the

Chairman of the Parliament will have the authority to sign the law. Once Shalva Papuashvili signs and publishes it, the law will come into force.

According to the law, assets registered in offshore countries should be exempt

from profit/income, or import taxes when transferred to a company registered in Georgia.

The President vetoed the "Offshore Law" on May 3. Zourabichvili stated that legislative changes involving serious political and economic risks cannot be adopted in an accelerated manner, with-

out adequate time for consideration and without any provision for public involvement.

Additionally, the President believes that the changes create an unequal and discriminatory environment for investors.

Israeli Ambassador Surprised by Georgian Officials Attendance at Funeral in Iran



In an interview with IPN, Israeli Ambassador to Georgia Hadas Meitzad voiced her surprise at the presence of Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze and Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili in

Tehran. They were attending the funeral ceremony of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

Meitzad further stated, "These two individuals, the President and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, were the ones who shaped, worked out the policies and founded, created, financed, equipped, trained brutal terrorist organizations throughout the Middle East. As patrons of Hamas, they bear direct responsibility for the genocidal acts committed by

Hamas on October 7".

The Government of Georgia has condemned the terrorist attacks on the State of Israel and its citizens on October 7 of last year.

EU 'considering all options' after passing of Georgian law

The EU and its Member States are considering "all options" after the final adoption of the law on transparency of foreign influence in Georgia today, EU High Representative Josep Borrell said in a statement together with the European Commission this evening.

"The European Union deeply regrets that the Georgian Parliament decided to override the President's veto on the law on transparency of foreign influence, and to disregard the Venice Commission's detailed legal arguments leading to a clear recommendation to repeal this law," the statement said, adding: "The EU and its Member States are



considering all options to react to these developments."

The statement pointed out that the EU had repeatedly

warned that the law was against EU core principles and values.

"Its enactment leads to a backsliding on at least three out of

the nine steps (on disinformation; on polarisation; on fundamental rights and involvement of Civil Society Organisations) set out in

the Commission's recommendation for candidate status endorsed by EU leaders and will negatively impact Georgia's EU path."

The statement added that beyond the law on transparency of foreign influence, "there has been so far insufficient political attention mobilised to progress substantially on the nine steps".

The EU urged the Georgian authorities to reverse this trend and to return firmly on the EU path. "There is still time to change the dynamics – but a strong commitment by the governing authorities is needed."

"We continue to stand with the Georgian people and recognise the choice of overwhelming majority of them for a European future for their country," the statement by Borrell and the Commission concluded.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, May 30

Day Partly Cloudy High: 29°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 17°C

Friday, May 31

Day Clear High: 30°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 18°C

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