

President Zourabichvili Condemns Georgian Government for Severing Ties with US Over Lugar Laboratory

By Liza Mchedlidze

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili has strongly criticized the Georgian government following the suspension of US funding for the Lugar Laboratory. The laboratory, supported by American agencies such as the CDC and NIH, has been crucial in protecting public health in Georgia.

"The contribution of the Lugar Laboratory and American experts to the safety and security of our citizens cannot be measured. We can be nothing but thankful," Zourabichvili said.

She condemned the government's decision as a betrayal at a time when Georgia faces significant demographic challenges. "At a time when the country's demographic indicators are at a catastrophic level, when hundreds of thousands of people are leaving the country, breaking such an important link with America is a direct betrayal of the country."

The Lugar Laboratory has been vital in combating diseases like hepatitis, AIDS, swine influenza, and COVID-19. Zourabichvili warned that the government's decision puts Georgia at risk of being unprepared for future pandemics.

"Against the background of the increased threat of infectious epidemics in the world, the Georgian government dares and deliberately puts all those laboratories and programs in an extreme situ-



ation, without which we remain completely defenseless."

The President also highlighted the broader consequences of this decision, including reputational damage and the loss of decades-long ties between Georgia and the US. "It is not only about

money, but also about reputational damage, severing decades of professional ties, and turning the back on the trust and cooperation established between the two countries."

She stressed the importance of continued collaboration for

Georgia's future professionals. "Here we are also talking about the exchange of knowledge, training without which we cannot raise tomorrow's high-level professionals. Isolation is the enemy of science!"

Zourabichvili condemned the

government's actions, warning they endanger Georgia's hard-won reputation as a reliable international partner. "It is unacceptable when your government deliberately and persistently destroys all areas of our success," Zourabichvili stated.

Public Defender Levan Ioseliani Addresses Issues in Russian-Occupied Territories

By Liza Mchedlidze



On the 16th anniversary of the August War, Georgia's Public Defender, Levan Ioseliani, issued a statement addressing the situation of residents in occupied territories and internally displaced persons.

"The illegal violations of the right to life are particularly alarming," Ioseliani said. He cited the recent murder of Tamaz Ginturi by the occupation regime in 2023 as a recent example. He also noted that those responsible for earlier killings—Davit Basharuli in 2014, Giga Otkhozoria in 2016, Archil Tatunashvili in 2018, and Irakli Kvaratskhelia in 2019—have not been held accountable, with responsibility resting on the Russian Federation.

Ioseliani highlighted the ongoing challenge of accessing education in the native Georgian language in the occupied regions, which has led to a decline in student numbers each year. Many parents are forced to relocate to government-controlled areas to ensure their children can continue their education in Georgian.

"The occupation regime still practices the illegal arrest and imprisonment of people for 'illegal' border crossings in both Abkhazia and Tskhinvali. This creates difficulties for locals on both sides of the occupation line," Ioseliani said.

He also pointed out that property rights violations due to border changes continue to be a daily challenge for those living near the occupation line.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Foreign Ministry of Georgia Condemns Russia's Continued Occupation of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Regions



The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemns the Russian Federation's ongoing occupation of Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions, which has persisted for 16 years.

firmed by multiple rulings from the International Criminal Court and the European Court of Human Rights between 2021 and 2024.

"Even after 16 years, the Russian Federation continues to occupy the indivisible Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Geor-

gia, in violation of the ceasefire agreement of August 12, 2008, brokered by the European Union, and in complete disregard of the fundamental norms of international law," the Ministry stated.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also highlighted the "unwavering and unconditional support of the international community for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia."

The Ministry called on the Russian Federation to "respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia" and to fulfill its obligations under the 2008 ceasefire agreement.

Georgian Dream to Launch Legal Process on August War After Elections

Georgian Dream has announced its plan to initiate a public legal process concerning the August 2008 war once elections are concluded.

all available legal avenues would be explored, including appeals to the prosecutor's office, establishing a parliamentary investiga-



tive commission, or approaching the Constitutional Court.

Kobakhidze stated, "The legal form can vary; it could involve appealing to the prosecutor's office, establishing a parliamentary investigative commission, or even approaching the Constitutional Court. We are open to utilizing all instruments.

crime committed in 2008 by the Saakashvili-led United National Movement regime."

Georgian Dream previously

vowed to hold the United National Movement accountable for their "role in the August war". The party described the legal process as essential for providing a proper legal assessment of the events.

Advertisement for the festival 'Night Serenades' with dates and locations: 21 August Borjomi, 23, 25 August Batumi, 15, 17, 18, 20 September Tbilisi.

Weather forecast for Friday, August 9: Partly Cloudy, High: 31°C, Low: 23°C.

Published by The Messenger, Commercial Director Nino Metreveli, Editor-in-Chief Mariam Mchedlidze, Publisher Tamar Gachechiladze.

Layout Designer, Photographer Khatuna Gogichaishvili.

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.