

Papuashvili Advocates for Banning UNM and Urges Non-Interference from Foreign Partners

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Shalva Papuashvili, Chairman of the Georgian Parliament, has called for the banning of the United National Movement (UNM) in a recent press briefing. He criticized both the party and international support for it, emphasizing the need for legal action.

Papuashvili referred to the Strasbourg court case *Ochigava v Georgia*, which he claims found evidence of systemic torture in Georgian prisons attributed to the UNM.

"The Strasbourg Court directly stated that a system of torture was created in prisons in Georgia. It was systemic torture!" he asserted.

He expressed surprise that some foreign representatives continue to support the UNM despite these findings. "I am a little surprised when representatives of different countries justify the United National Movement," he said, calling for adherence to democratic and legal mecha-

nisms.

Papuashvili stated that other countries, including Ukraine and Moldova, have taken legal measures against certain parties and suggested that Georgia should do the same with the UNM. "The main goal is that the United National Movement as a party and an ideology is punished by law in Georgia," he stated.

He urged foreign partners to avoid interfering in Georgia's legal and democratic processes.

"I would like especially the foreign partners to be careful here, not to be perceived as an interference in the legal procedures, in the democratic process," he added.

According to Papuashvili, criminals should not have a place in politics.

"We do not pick and choose our opponents. It is up to the public to decide who should be whose opponent. We say that criminals have no place in politics. This is the case in all democratic states," he said.



Giorgi Burjanadze to Represent President in Constitutional Case Against 'Foreign Agents' Law

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Former Deputy Public Defender Giorgi Burjanadze will represent the President of Georgia in an upcoming constitutional lawsuit regarding the controversial "Foreign Agents" law. The Constitutional Court will review the potential suspension of the law, often referred to as the "Russian law" during its session on August 29-30.

Burjanadze announced his involvement in the case, emphasizing the significance of this lawsuit as the first of its kind initiated by a current president in Georgia.

"Next week, I will represent the President of Georgia in the Constitutional Court in the case against the unconstitutionality of the Russian law," Burjanadze stated. "I am honored to be part of the first lawsuit from the President in the history of Georgia."

Burjanadze expressed deep concern over the law, equating its adoption with a severe threat to Georgia's statehood. "The adoption of the Russian law is equivalent to the abolition of

statehood," he said, describing the case as a symbolic clash between Georgia and Russian influence.

Burjanadze emphasized that his involvement in the public defender competition was driven by principle, not personal ambition. "When I participated in the public defender competition, it wasn't to secure a job. I believe in human rights, and in the current environment, where the Public Defender of Georgia is completely dysfunctional, I feel a double responsibility to challenge this issue," he explained.

Burjanadze mentioned a similar situation in Russia, where a public defender appealed against a similar law. However, he noted that in Georgia, the public defender has not dared to take such action.

"I often get asked what I hope for in this dispute. I don't have an exact answer—maybe a miracle. But I will try everything. If the Constitutional Court upholds our request, it could create history, protect the country from sanctions, and uphold the responsibilities of our constitutional bodies," he wrote.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili Congratulates Ukraine on Independence Day



Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili extended heartfelt congratulations to the Ukrainians in a video address on the occasion of Ukraine Independence Day on August 24.

In her message, President Zourabichvili expressed her solidarity with Ukraine, emphasizing the shared aspirations of both nations in striving for liberation, peace, and sovereignty.

"Dear Ukrainian friends, on behalf of the Georgian people and from the bottom of my heart, I extend my warmest con-

gratulations on this Independence Day," she stated.

The Georgian leader highlighted the common challenges faced by Ukraine and Georgia, both of which are dealing with territorial conflicts and aspirations for

full sovereignty. Zourabichvili emphasized that the goal of liberating occupied territories and restoring peace is not just a national endeavor for Ukraine but also a shared aspiration for Georgia.

"I wish you continued progress toward your ultimate goal, which we share—a goal of liberating your country from occupation, restoring peace, and achieving full sovereignty and territorial integrity," she continued.

The President also expressed hope for a European future for both countries, reinforcing the shared desire to align more closely

with European values and institutions.

"This is my wish for Ukraine, for Georgia, and for the European future of both our nations," she concluded.

Bidzina Ivanishvili Calls for United National Movement Ban



In a campaign speech, Bidzina Ivanishvili, founder of the Georgian Dream party, urged the ban of the United National Movement (UNM) from Georgian politics.

"It is vitally important for Georgia to improve its political system, which will be impossible without removing the United National Movement from Georgian politics," Ivanishvili said.

He also pledged that if the Georgian Dream party gains a constitutional majority, they will seek legal action against those responsible for crimes during the August 2008 war. "When we get the constitutional majority, it will be our public duty to give a legal assessment to the criminal actions of our country's enemies, especially the worst crimes committed

during the August 2008 war," he added.

Ivanishvili promised that after the elections, the Georgian Dream party would work to convict and punish the responsible individuals. "We take responsibility that after the elections are over and receiving a high level of legitimacy from Georgian people, a process will begin, which will end with the conviction and severe punishment of the criminals," he said.

The European Union said yesterday it has taken note of the release of several political prisoners in Belarus, convicted for taking part in peaceful protests after the 2020 fraudulent presidential elections. "We share the relief and joy of the released

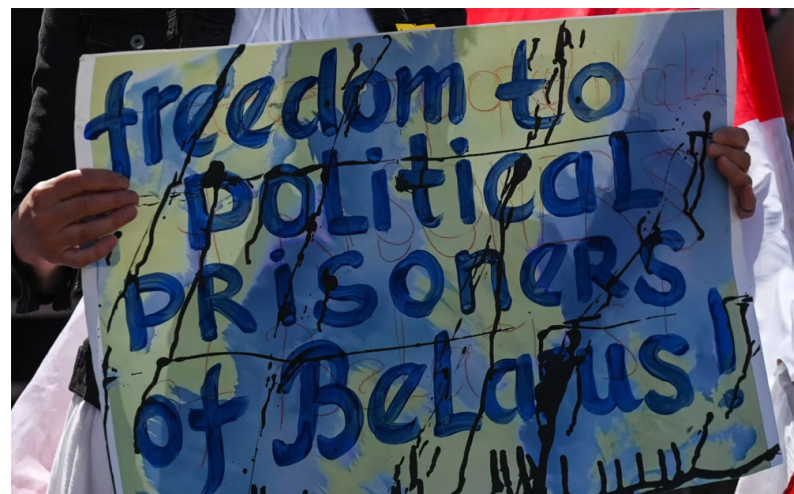
Belarus: EU notes release of some political prisoners, and urges authorities to free all political detainees

"We also take note of the fact that some of those released were prisoners requiring urgent medical

Tsikhanouski, Ihar Losik, Maria Kalesnikava, Mikalai Statkevich, Maksim Znak and

Viktar Babaryka who have been denied any possibility to communicate with the outside world for

over 18 months." (euneighbourseast.eu)



individuals and their families." In a statement, the EU said:

assistance and call on the authorities to provide all prisoners with adequate medical care."

"The EU continues to urge Belarusian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners, often held in life-threatening conditions. There remain more than 1,300 political prisoners in Belarus, including Sergei

Weather

Monday, June 26

Day Partly Cloudy High: 31°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 20°C

Tuesday, June 27

Day Partly Cloudy High: 34°C

Night Clear Low: 21°C

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