

Ivanishvili Pledges Greater Constitutional Role for Orthodox Christianity, Reaffirms Commitment to Church-State Independence

By MESSENGER STAFF

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the Honorary Chairman of the Georgian Dream (GD) party, addressed supporters in the town of Ozurgeti as part of the party's election campaign, emphasising the importance of Orthodox Christianity in the Georgian state identity. Ivanishvili stated that, should the GD secure a constitutional majority in the upcoming elections, the role of Orthodox Christianity would be more clearly reflected in the Georgian Constitution. However, he did not specify whether this would include designating Orthodox Christianity as the state religion.

Earlier in the week, the Georgian Patriarchate disclosed that the ruling party had suggested declaring Orthodox Christianity the state religion. However, the Patriarchate declined the proposal, citing concerns over potential state influence on the Church. During his speech in Ozurgeti, Ivanishvili did not confirm any plans to officially establish Orthodox Christianity as the state religion but mentioned that an agreement had been reached



with the Patriarchate to enhance the Church's role. The specifics of this agreement were not elaborated upon.

Ivanishvili expressed that the constitutional status of Orthodox Christianity and the Orthodox Church would be further strengthened, and that the Georgian Constitution would more accurately reflect the Church's mission as a key component of Georgian state identity. He also highlighted the Church's significant historical role and its relevance in contemporary Georgian life, while reaffirming the principles of the Church's independence and freedom of faith within the Constitution.

Additionally, Ivanishvili reiterated themes from previous campaign speeches, including the intention to ban what he referred to as the "collective UNM" — a term he uses to describe the opposition — and to take measures against the LGBT community in the name of protecting family values.

Ivanishvili delivered his speech from behind bulletproof glass, alongside other prominent GD figures, amidst a heavy police presence in the city.

Linguist Marina Beridze Criticises Negative Connotations in Foreign Influence Transparency Law

By MESSENGER STAFF

Linguist Marina Beridze, speaking at the Constitutional Court where she was invited as an expert, criticised the terminology used in the Foreign Influence Transparency Law, stating that the key terms and phrases employed in the legislation carry "unequivocally" negative connotations. Beridze was invited to testify on the terminology by the non-governmental organisations that are challenging the law.

Beridze explained that a study was conducted using three different methods to analyse words and phrases such as "foreign", "foreign power", "influence", "interest", and "foreign power's interests." According to the linguist, the study revealed that:

"The key terms and phrases used in the law are unequivocally negative in connotation. It is only possible to use these words with a positive or neutral connotation when additional modifiers are specifically crafted for this purpose. For example, if we use the word 'envy', it inherently has a negative connotation, and we would have to add a specific modifier to turn it into a word with a positive meaning."

During the session on August 30, where the law's terminology was also discussed, Parliament representative Kristine Kuprava argued that the word "foreign" is neutral in its connotation.

The three-day hearing at the Georgian Constitutional Court regarding the controversial Russian law has concluded, with judges now in deliberation over the decision.

The court's ruling on whether to accept the lawsuits challenging the Russian law for formal consideration, and whether subsequent hearings will proceed, is expected to be announced in the coming days.

It is worth noting that a total of four lawsuits were filed against the Russian law in the Constitutional Court, with the hearings commencing on August 29.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

HR/VP Borrell Says EU Extremely Concerned About Georgia's Trajectory



EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, expressed the EU's "deep" and "growing" concern about Georgia's current trajectory during remarks at a

press conference following the informal meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers on August 29, 2024, in Brussels.

"We briefly discussed the situation in Georgia. We are extremely, increasingly concerned about the trajectory of this coun-

try moving away from the European Union," stressed Josep Borrell.

The European Union has actively criticised the ruling Georgian Dream party for its adoption of the Foreign Agents Law,

increased anti-Western rhetoric, and anti-democratic actions. The EU has stated on several occasions that it is keeping all options open to respond to GD's decisions. Due to the government's anti-democratic actions, the EU has halted Georgia's accession process. It has also frozen EUR 30 million from the European Peace Facility (EPF) earmarked for the Georgian Ministry of Defense."

MEP Anna Fotyga Visits Georgia, Pays Tribute to Lech Kaczyński

MEP Anna Fotyga arrived in Georgia, where she honoured the memory of Lech Kaczyński, the late President of Poland who died in an air crash. Speaking with journalists, Fotyga emphasised that the main purpose of her visit is to show support for the Georgian people and demonstrate that they are not alone.

Addressing the current political situation in Georgia, Fotyga stressed the importance of political parties as vital guarantees of democracy. She stated that any restrictions on their activities are unacceptable and hinder

the democratic development of the country.

"People outside of Georgia are concerned about the events unfolding here. On one hand, we are trying to assist the Georgian people, and on the other, we aim to guide Georgia towards a West-

ern direction.

It is very difficult for us to make this decision, but we will closely monitor the situation in the country both before and after the elections. If nothing changes, sanctions will be imposed," she said.



EU military support to Ukraine now exceeds Euro43 billion and rising

EU military support to Ukraine now exceeds Euro43 bil-

He added that the EU had now reached 65% of its original



lion, and is rising every day, EU High Representative Josep Borrell told a press conference today after an informal meeting of EU Defence Ministers in Brussels.

"Altogether, civilian and military [support]... is about Euro100 billion. But the military alone is Euro43 [billion], Euro44 [billion], it changes every day," he said.

goal to deliver 1 million ammunition shells to Ukraine. "There has been an acceleration during the summer. The industry is working at full pace."

"From the point of view of financing, we have mobilised the first tranche of windfall profits from Russian frozen assets," he added. "These Euro1.4 billion have gone through the European Peace Facility (EPF) to support more military assistance for Ukraine. The big news is that now part of it is going directly to Ukraine in order to boost the Ukrainian defence industry."

Borrell said the EU Military Assistance Mission to Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine) had been a great success: "It is the most

successful training mission that the European Union has ever performed. It has trained [some] 60,000 soldiers. And today, the Ministers agreed on raising the target to 75,000 [soldiers] – adding 15,000 more by the end of the year."

Reiterating his position that

there should be no restrictions on the use of long-range military equipment supplied by EU partners to respond to Russia's aggression inside Russian territory, the EU High Representative said Member States had decided this was a decision that belongs to each Member State providing

the equipment to Ukraine. "There has been a strategic discussion about [this], but it remains a national policy and Member States want it to be a national decision through bilateral [arrangements] with Ukraine."

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Monday, September 2

Day Clear
High: 33°C

Night Clear
Low: 20°C

Tuesday, September 3

Day Clear
High: 34°C

Night Clear
Low: 19°C

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21 AUGUST
BORJOMI | Borjomi Likani Hotel

23, 25 AUGUST
BATUMI | Batumi Drama Theater

15, 17, 18, 20
SEPTEMBER
TBILISI | Tbilisi State Conservatoire

Founder of the Festival: LIANA ISSAKADZE | Artistic Director: GIORGI ISSAKADZE

ლიანის სერენადები
NIGHT SERENADES

ART
არტ აკადემია

On the occasion of the Victory and Turkish Armed Forces Day, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye H.E. Mr. Ali Kaan ORBAY and Military Attaché Col. İlhan ÖKTENDURAL held a Reception on August 30.







