

U.S. Expresses Deep Concern Over Georgia's Political Situation Ahead of Elections

By Liza Mchedlidze

Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter, Special Advisor to President Joe Biden and Senior Director for Europe at the U.S. National Security Council, expressed deep concern about political developments in Georgia during an interview with the Voice of America on September 12. Carpenter highlighted the upcoming parliamentary elections as a critical moment for Georgia's democratic future, warning that the misuse of administrative resources and pressure on civil society and opposition figures could severely impede the country's democratic progress. He also confirmed that the U.S. will be closely monitoring the pre-election environment and election day itself.

Carpenter stated that the U.S. is worried about Georgia's current trajectory, noting that these concerns have been present for a long time. He pointed to the Foreign Agents Law as a symptom of the broader issues within the country. He also criticized statements made by Georgia's ruling party but emphasized that mere concern is insufficient to address the challenges.

When asked about possible U.S. actions before the elections, Carpenter declined to announce any sanctions but stated that the U.S. would hold individuals accountable for corruption, anti-Western activities, and abuse of power. He stressed that Wash-



ington has the necessary tools to take action if required.

Regarding the upcoming elections, Carpenter expressed hope for a free and fair process but raised concerns about the ruling party's recent moves, including the misuse of government resources and a pledge to ban opposition parties post-election. He stressed that the U.S. would continue to monitor developments,

particularly in the lead-up to election day.

On the issue of Russian interference, Carpenter acknowledged Russia's malign influence across Europe and Georgia, but emphasized that it is the behavior of Georgian officials that remains under scrutiny. He noted that while Russia's involvement remains unclear, the focus should be on the actions of Georgia's

government.

Carpenter also addressed the question of U.S.-Georgian relations, stressing that Georgia has benefited from bipartisan support in the U.S. for many years, a trend he expects will continue, regardless of the outcome of the U.S. elections.

Ambassador Carpenter underscored the importance of free and fair elections, stating that

every election provides an opportunity to renew a country's democratic institutions. He warned that Georgia's democratic development could be hindered if the elections are not conducted properly, and called on the government to end pressure on civil society and opposition politicians, and to refrain from using administrative resources to influence the outcome.

Russia Accuses U.S. of Election Interference in Georgia

By Liza Mchedlidze

On September 12, Russian Foreign Ministry spokes-

woman Maria Zakharova accused the U.S. of plotting to interfere in Georgia's upcoming elections by using the OSCE Of-

fice for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). In her response to media inquiries, Zakharova claimed that the

ODIHR is preparing to "heat up the situation in Georgia" before the elections. She warned that if the election results are unfavorable to the West, ODIHR's findings might be used to provoke protests or challenge the results, potentially leading to another "color revolution."

Zakharova denounced ODIHR as a tool of the "collective West," asserting that it fulfills political orders and delivers conclusions tailored to its sponsors' expectations. "ODIHR is fulfilling the political orders given to it and provides the conclusions and findings that its sponsors expect," she stated. She criticized the ODIHR's interim reports, which are often released shortly before elections, alleging they are produced by "a small group of hired persons who bear no responsibility for their actions." According to Zakharova, these reports do not accurately reflect the situation but rather align with a predetermined narrative: "The result is not a reflection of

the real state of affairs but an essay on a theme set by the customer."

Zakharova advised disregarding ODIHR's findings, suggesting, "International observer obligations can be fulfilled without involving ODIHR." She argued that elections can proceed effectively without the organization's involvement and that "the legitimacy of elections is determined by the will of the voters and nothing else, not by ODIHR's assessments."

Additionally, Zakharova mentioned that Russia sometimes sends its experts to ODIHR missions upon request from friendly countries. These experts are meant to "monitor the voting process directly, counteract the excesses of the West, and obtain an adequate picture of what is happening," she said. This, she argued, helps to "significantly mitigate the potential for pressure on local authorities and prevent manipulations with statistical data."



The News in Brief

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OSCE/ODIHR Launches Election Observation Mission for Georgia's Parliamentary Elections

On September 12, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) announced the opening of an election observation mission for Georgia's upcoming parliamentary elections.



The OSCE/ODIHR mission aims to assess the elections' compliance with OSCE commitments, international democratic standards, and national legislation.

On election day, October 26, the mission will collaborate with delegations from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly to oversee polling stations, voting, ballot counting, and result tabulation.

The ODIHR emphasized that interactions with state authorities, political parties, civil society, media, and the international community are crucial components of their observation process.

Public Defender Levan Ioseliani Meets with U.S. Ambassador

On September 11, Public Defender of Georgia Levan Ioseliani and First Deputy Public De-

confrontations adhere to ethical norms.

Ambassador Dunnigan reiterated the U.S. government's commitment to supporting the Office of the Public Defender. The meeting also included the intro-



fender Tamar Gvaramadze met with U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Robin Dunnigan. The discussion focused on the Public Defender's role in human rights protection and the importance of observing the electoral process.

duction of Jamie Shufflebarger, the new director of the International Bureau of Anti-Narcotics and Law Enforcement Programs (INL) at the U.S. Embassy in Georgia.

Both parties expressed their willingness to strengthen partnership relations.

M4EG in Georgia: EU-supported contest sends its winner to Startup World Cup



Twelve Georgian startups showcased their innovations at the Georgian Startup Summit and Startup World Cup Regional Competition that took place in Batumi at the end of August.

This year's winner is TelAgri, a startup that connects farmers and specialists to share experiences. The company will be heading to Silicon Valley, USA, in October to represent Georgia in the Startup World Cup.

The summit aims to enhance the startup ecosystem in Georgia. With events like these, local startups are getting the exposure and support they need to succeed.

The event was organized by Startup Connect, with support from the European Union in Georgia and UNDP Georgia as part of the 'Mayors for Economic Growth' (M4EG) initiative.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Friday, September 13

Day Partly Cloudy High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 18°C

Saturday, September 14

Day Partly Cloudy High: 28°C

Night Clear Low: 16°C

on the OSCE website, the mission will be led by Eoghan Murphy and will include 12 international experts based in Tbilisi, along with 30 long-term observers to be deployed across Georgia starting September 19. Additionally, the mission plans to request 350 short-term observers to arrive before October 26, the election day.

Advertisement for the festival 'Night Serenades' (ღამის სერენადები) with dates 21 August (Borjomi), 23, 25 August (Batumi), and 15, 17, 18, 20 September (Tbilisi). Includes logos for sponsors and organizers.

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