

Zourabichvili Criticizes Georgian Dream's Election Campaign in Paris



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

During her speech at the French National Assembly, President Salome Zourabichvili strongly criticized the ruling

party, Georgian Dream, and its founder, Bidzina Ivanishvili. She accused the party of exploiting the ongoing war in Ukraine for its electoral gain, emphasizing that such tactics damage Georgia's

relationships with its allies and go against the country's values.

"The government, which is in power today in Georgia, considered that it was a good idea for the election campaign to

put up banners in the streets of Tbilisi, on which the theater of Mariupol can be seen side by side, where we know how many children died, and the restored theater in Georgia," Zourabichvili stated.

The President expressed her dismay at this comparison, which also included images of the destroyed cathedral in Ukraine next to the Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi. This tactic sparked widespread outrage among the Georgian population. "This caused the indignation of the entire population of Georgia," she remarked, indicating that the public's reaction showed that they are on the right path and can be optimistic about their values.

She pointed out that even supporters of Georgian Dream were upset by the campaign, stating, "Georgian Dream, which I will say once again—turned into a Georgian nightmare." Zourabichvili criticized this approach as being against Georgia's traditions, culture, and humanity, which makes it evident that Georgia shares values with Europe. "It makes us think that we have common values with Europe, and it is because of these values that we have a European destiny," she asserted.

The President went on to accuse Ivanishvili of "practically declaring war on our 30-year-old partners and friends in order to stand by Moscow." She expressed concern over Ivanishvili blaming Georgia's allies—who have played a crucial role in the country's development—for supposedly seeking to create conflict. "As if they wanted to open a second front in Georgia. It was as if Europe and the USA were looking for a new theater of crisis," she stated.

Zourabichvili concluded by pointing out the real aggressor in the region, saying, "The only country in our region that opens new fronts against all its neighbors is and has always been Russia."

Kaladze Responds Positively to Lavrov's Statement on 'Normalizing' Relations

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Kakha Kaladze, General Secretary of the Georgian Dream party, has stated that the government views Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's recent comments on "normalizing" relations between Georgia, Abkhazia, and Tskhinvali positively.

At a press conference, Lavrov stated that Russia is prepared to assist these regions in establishing better relations, provided there is mutual interest from the involved parties. In his statement, Lavrov referred to the occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali as "neighbors" of Georgia.

Kaladze's comments were disseminated by his press service. He emphasized that the Georgian government appreciates Lavrov's remarks, stating, "Our government positively evaluates this statement. It's encouraging that Russia welcomes and supports reconciliation." However, he stressed the importance of translating these statements into concrete actions.

He elaborated, "With these statements, it would be good to take some actionable steps already. For example, it would be beneficial to develop a plan to withdraw Russian military forces from our occupied territories."

Kaladze highlighted the Georgian government's commitment to reconciliation with the Ossetian people, emphasizing that peace and mutual forgiveness are essential for restoring territorial integrity. "Only through peace and mutual forgiveness can we restore our territorial integrity and live together," Kaladze said.



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7297; Euro - 3.0480; GBP - 3.6551; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9399; Swiss Franc - 3.2346

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Lavrov: Russia Ready to Assist in 'Normalizing' Relations Between Georgia, Abkhazia, and Tskhinvali

He praised the Georgian government for its "honesty about the past," referencing GD founder Bidzina Ivanishvili's recent suggestion of apologizing to Ossetians for the 2008 war, which he attributed to the previous UNM government rather than Russia.



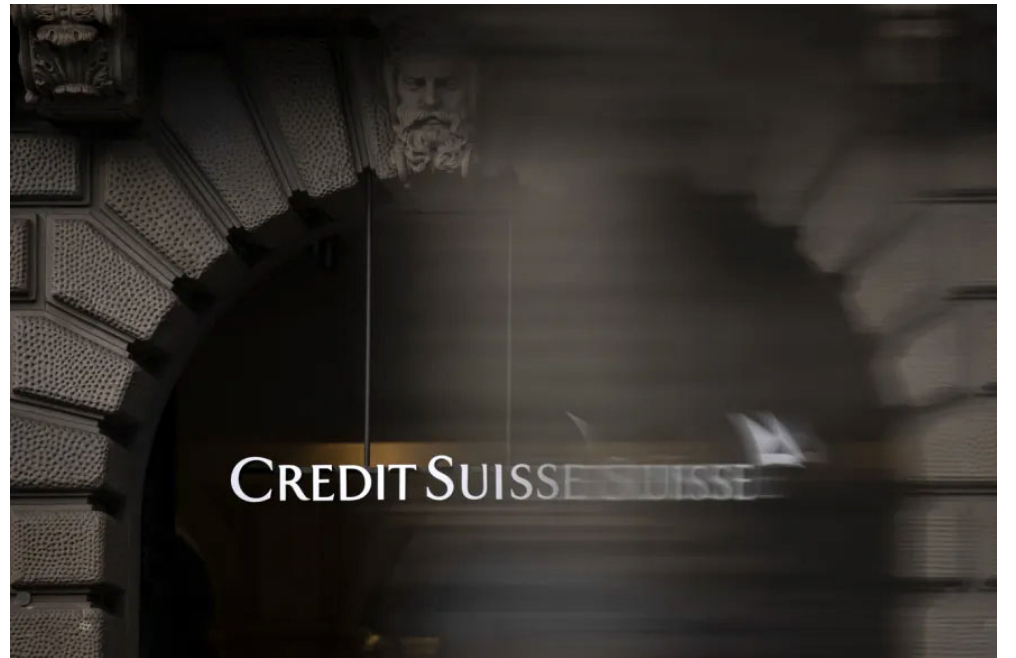
Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated that Moscow is ready to assist Georgia, Abkhazia, and Tskhinvali in "normalizing relations" if there is mutual interest. Lavrov made this remark during a press conference after the 79th session of the UN General Assembly.

Lavrov emphasized the inevitability of contact between Georgia, Abkhazia, and Tskhinvali due to their proximity, stating: "They [Abkhazia and Tskhinvali] are neighbors of Georgia, some kind of contacts there are inevitable anyway. If there is interest on all sides to normalize these relations, to ensure non-aggression agree-

ments... we will be ready to help if the parties are interested."

Singapore Court Orders Credit Suisse Unit to Pay \$742.7 Million to Bidzina Ivanishvili

avoid double compensation. This case stems from the actions of Patrice Lescaudron, a private banker who was convicted in 2018 for operating a fraudulent scheme. Lescaudron had diverted funds from Ivanishvili's accounts to cover significant losses in the portfolios of Russian clients.



A Singapore court has ordered a unit of Credit Suisse to pay \$742.7 million to Bidzina Ivanishvili, according to a report by Bloomberg on September 19. This follows a previous May 2023 ruling in which the court initially awarded Ivanishvili \$926 million, later reducing the sum to

In a related ruling, a Bermuda court last year ordered Credit Suisse to pay Ivanishvili \$600 million in damages. Credit Suisse has stated that the Singapore court's decision is not final and plans to continue appealing the case.

Culture & Lifestyle

Beka Sikharulidze's Films *From Life to Life* premieres in Kutaisi

BY MESSENGER STAFF

Beka Sikharulidze's latest film *From Life to Life* had its Kutaisi premiere at the Sakartvelo cinema, marking a significant event in the city's cultural calendar. Organised by Miranda Khetsuriani, the evening featured a red-carpet reception and a symbolic award — an infinity sculpture crafted by Irakli Tsuladze — presented to the director.

The film, which has already secured 12 awards and 8 nominations internationally, is set in post-Soviet Georgia during the 1990s. It depicts the struggles of a country grappling with the af-



Beka Sikharulidze and Miranda Khetsuriani

his responsibilities to both his profession and family.

Reflecting on the film's subject matter, Sikharulidze commented: "The 1990s were a difficult period for Georgia, affecting every aspect of life, including healthcare. Luka, the main character, is an honourable and devoted surgeon who faces constant challenges in a corrupt system while trying to maintain his integrity."

The film also touches on the longstanding ties between Georgians and Georgian Jews, highlighting the support Luka receives from his neighbours, a Georgian-Jewish family, who offer help with care and discretion. This theme of solidarity underscores the historical relationship between the two communities.

Sikharulidze, who has spent years abroad, expressed his appreciation for the premiere in Kutaisi. "It's an honour to present the film in this beautiful and historically significant city. I want to thank the people of Kutaisi for their warmth and support."



Georgian actor Givi Sikharulidze also addressed the audience, noting the city's rich cultural heritage. "Kutaisi, and

Imereti as a whole, is a place of poetry, home to figures like Akaki Tsereteli and Galaktion Tabidze. I'm grateful to the people of Kutaisi for their warm reception of Beka's film, which has achieved success on the international stage."

Miranda Khetsuriani, who organised the event, noted the significance of the screening. "Though Mr. Sikharulidze resides in the U.S., he returned to Georgia specifically for this premiere. The past two months have been dedicated to ensuring this was a memorable experience for the Kutaisi audience, and we are grateful for his commitment to sharing the film with us."

Weather

Monday, September 30

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 22°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 11°C

Tuesday, October 1

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 22°C

Night 🌧️ Mostly Cloudy
Low: 13°C

termath of the Soviet Union's collapse. The protagonist, Luka, a surgeon, navigates a corrupt system while striving to uphold

published by

The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze

Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli

Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze

Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili

Layout Designer, Photographer

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

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

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.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.

Award Ceremony to honor former komusubi KOKKAI with the 2024 Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation was held

On September 27, 2024, Ambassador Ishizuka Hideki presented a certificate of commendation to former komusubi Mr. Levan Tsaguria (KOKKAI), at the 2024 Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation Ceremony held at the Ambassador's official residence.

Kokkai, who stepped into the Sumo ring for the first time in 2001 and remained active as a Sumo wrestler until 2012, was promoted to

the *komusubi* rank in March 2006, making him the first European-born Sumo wrestler in history. Even after finishing his career as a Sumo wrestler, he has been working hard to promote Sumo in Georgia as the president of Georgian Sumo Federation and has contributed to the development of many young Sumo wrestlers. On 8 August 2024, he was awarded with the Foreign Minister's Commendation in recognition of his

longstanding contribution to the promotion of understanding between Japan and Georgia through Sumo.

On September 27, Ambassador Ishizuka presented Mr. Tsaguria with a certificate of Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation in recognition of his achievements in promoting friendship between Japan and Georgia through Sumo. Additionally, Mr. Alexander Khvtisiashvili, Deputy Minister of For-

eign Affairs of Georgia, was a guest of honor at the ceremony. Ambassador Ishizuka also exchanged views with officials from Georgian Sumo Federation, who were attending the ceremony.

Foreign Minister's Commendation is presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan to individuals and organizations that have worked over many years to promote friendly relations with Japan.

