

President Zourabichvili: Georgia's Foreign Policy Unsettled Under Current Government

By Liza Mchedlidze

President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili has stated that the country's foreign policy remains unresolved as long as the ruling party, Georgian Dream, is in power. In a recent interview with Formula, she emphasized the need for a change in leadership to achieve any meaningful settlement in foreign relations.

Zourabichvili declared, "It will be settled when the new government comes, the representatives of the European Union from Brussels or here say very clearly that there will be no settlement under the conditions of this government and against the background of the rhetoric and decisions of this government." She highlighted the challenges posed by a backdrop of "Russian law, offshore law, and discriminatory policy."

The President also commented on recent statements by Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of Georgian Dream, who suggested he does not anticipate additional sanctions and plans to meet with the U.S. ambassador following the elections. Zourabichvili interpreted Ivanishvili's remarks as an attempt to reassure his party members concerned about potential sanctions. She argued, "I think this calming down is vain,



because nothing depends on him."

Criticizing Ivanishvili's relationship with Russia, Zourabichvili stated that he has "done everything" for Moscow without receiving anything in return. She noted, "Yes, he

obeyed in all directions, the Russian law and some things that were asked and when they asked, he did everything, but in reality, they did nothing for him."

She mentioned that Moscow had effectively shut down discus-

sions on the issues of Abkhazia and South Ossetia for Ivanishvili. According to her, "Every regime that is ending in Georgia, which has a problem, tries to survive using this topic, which is wrong."

Zourabichvili concluded by

emphasizing that the future of Georgia should be determined by its people, free from the fears of the current leadership. She urged for a rational and peaceful approach, stating, "We should decide our future in a sane, calm, peaceful manner."

Ten More Senators Join Shaheen and Risch's Georgian People's Act

By Liza Mchedlidze

U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Jim Risch

are rallying bipartisan support for their Georgian People's Act, aimed at holding Georgian officials accountable for corruption,

human rights abuses, and anti-democratic actions. With the announcement of ten additional Senate cosponsors, the legisla-

tion underscores growing concern over Georgia's shift toward pro-Russian policies.

Senator Shaheen expressed her satisfaction, stating, "I'm pleased that a number of my Senate colleagues recognize the urgency of the situation in Georgia and have agreed to cosponsor the Georgian People's Act in the U.S. Senate. Together, we're sending a strong message that there is robust bipartisan support for our legislation."

Senator Risch echoed this sentiment, noting, "This bill sends a strong message from Congress that the U.S. is united behind the Georgian people as they pursue a future in the transatlantic community."

Other Senators voiced their concerns regarding Georgia's increasing alignment with Russia. Senator Tillis remarked, "The Georgian government's embrace of pro-Russian policies and departure from a Euro-Atlantic future is concerning. I am proud to co-sponsor this bill to hold Georgian government officials accountable."

Senator Cornyn added, "This legislation would hold Georgia's corrupt leaders accountable and signal to the Georgian people that the U.S. stands with them

in their pursuit of a Euro-Atlantic future."

Senator Murphy emphasized the broader implications of Russia's influence, stating, "Russia's use of corruption, propaganda, and violence doesn't just threaten Georgia's future as a strong, independent nation—it puts the entire international order at risk of collapse." He affirmed that the bipartisan legislation underscores U.S. solidarity with the Georgian people.

Senator Romney noted the strong desire among Georgians for a democratic future, saying, "While the Georgian people have demonstrated overwhelming support for a democratic future, their government has become increasingly under Russia's influence."

Senator Sullivan reiterated the importance of Georgia's alignment with the West, stating, "A free, secure, sovereign Georgia, aligned with the U.S. and its allies is in the national interest of both Georgia and the United States." He pointed out polling that shows 90% of Georgians want to be part of the Western, free world rather than the Russian world.

JEANNE SHAHEEN
U.S. SENATOR for NEW HAMPSHIRE

10.22.2024

Bipartisan Support Grows for Shaheen, Risch Legislation That Would Hold Georgian Officials Accountable for Corruption, Human Rights Abuses and Anti-Democratic Efforts

(Washington, DC) – U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), a senior member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) and Chair of the Europe and Regional Security Cooperation Subcommittee, and Jim Risch (R-ID), Ranking Member of SFRC, today announced that 10 additional Senators intend to cosponsor their bipartisan [Georgian People's Act](#). Shaheen and Risch's bipartisan bill would hold Georgian government officials and individuals responsible for corruption, human rights abuses and efforts to advance the foreign influence law or facilitate its passage.

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7157; Euro - 2.9273; GBP - 3.5225; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8101; Swiss Franc - 3.1334

Ten More Senators Join Shaheen and Risch's Georgian People's Act

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Senator Young emphasized that the U.S. stands firmly with the Georgian people in their pursuit of Euro-Atlantic integra-

tion, remarking, "The Georgian government's recent efforts to align with Russia reject the desires of Georgians and pose a significant threat."

Earlier this summer, Senator Shaheen led a bipartisan delegation to Georgia, where she and

U.S. Congressman Michael Turner met with top Georgian officials to address concerns about democratic backsliding. Their visit reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to supporting Georgia, including facilitating a free and fair election in October.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Personal Data Protection Service Not Addressing Voter ID Confiscation Due to Jurisdiction Limits



The Personal Data Protection Service has responded to reports regarding the confiscation of identity documents from voters

during the election period. Following information disseminated by the media outlet Batumelebi, the agency has begun investigating the claims about the handling of voters' personal data.

On October 15, Batumelebi reported based on information provided by a whistleblower, that

the ruling party, Georgian Dream, was processing special category personal data of tens of thousands of individuals at its

party offices in the lead-up to the elections.

The Personal Data Protection Service clarified that while the confiscation of identity documents is likely a violation covered under the Criminal Code, addressing such actions falls outside the agency's jurisdiction. Instead, it is the responsibility of law enforcement authorities to respond to these incidents.

According to the agency, it is examining several alleged violations of the personal data protection laws in relation to the reported practices.

Helsinki Commission Urges Support for Georgian Democracy as MEGOBARI Act Awaits House Vote

The U.S. Helsinki Commission recently emphasized the strong friendship between the U.S. and Georgia on X, highlighting their bipartisan efforts

to support democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Georgia. They stressed the need to continue backing the Georgian people's efforts toward Euro-Atlantic integration while the MEGOBARI Act awaits a final vote.

"In Georgian, megobari means friend. In May, recognizing the friendship between the United States and the Georgian people, Helsinki Commissioners intro-

duced the MEGOBARI Act, a bipartisan bill to bolster democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Georgia.

While the bill awaits a final vote on the House floor, we must continue to support the Georgian people's efforts to defend their democracy and pursue their chosen path towards Euro-Atlantic integration," reads the statement.



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8:21 PM · Oct 23, 2024 · 7,765 Views

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Chair Cardin Condemns Georgian Parliament's Adoption of So-Called 'Family Values' Law



WASHINGTON – On October 23, U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, released a statement condemning the Georgian Parliament's adoption of a Russian-style 'Family Values' law, following its recent anti-democratic foreign agent legislation. The so-called 'Family Values' law empowers authorities to ban public events, symbols, and media content deemed contrary to what it de-

fines as "traditional moral standards," effectively allowing broad censorship and restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly.

"This latest Russian-inspired law passed by Georgia's government marks another troubling step backward for Georgia's commitment to human rights and its alignment with Euro-Atlantic democratic values. The so-called 'Family Values' law represents an attack on freedom of assembly and freedom of speech. The United States will continue to closely monitor these government crackdowns on basic freedoms, and those responsible will be held accountable. The people of Georgia – with their proud history of resilience and a deep desire for freedom – deserve the same basic rights that we hold dear in America, and our country stands with them in their ongoing pursuit of a future that embraces democratic values and fundamental rights for all."

Russian war against Ukraine: there will be no impunity for abuses against journalists, Borrell says

"Journalists are considered civilians under international humanitarian law and should be actively protected in all conflict situations," EU High Representative Josep Borrell said in connection with Russia's aggressive actions against journalists covering the war in Ukraine. His speech was delivered yesterday at the European Parliament by European Commissioner for Climate Action, Wopke Hoekstra.

According to Reporters without Borders, more than 100 journalists have been victims of Russian crimes since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. This includes at least 35 wounded, 12 detained, as well as 233 media outlets closed in the territories temporarily occupied by Russia.

Borrell reminded about the recent death of Ukrainian freelance journalist Victoria Roshchyna while in illegal arbitrary Russian detention that "is yet another example of Russian disregard for media freedom and

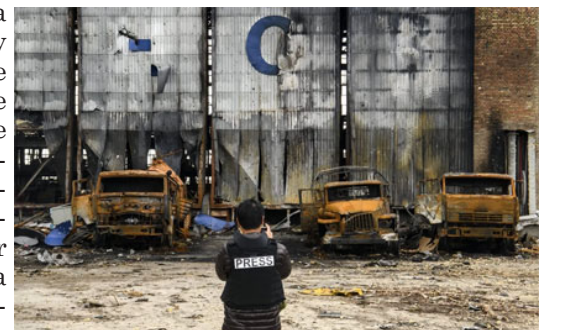
international commitments".

He also said that the Russian Federal Security Service lately decided to initiate criminal cases against journalists covering Ukraine's counter-offensive operation in Kursk. Now, already 14 foreign journalists are subject to such "utterly ridiculous" charges. "It is again, a clear attempt to intimidate journalists and discourage them from performing their professional duties. We cannot allow that," Wopke Hoekstra said on behalf of Borrell.

He also said journalists and media workers alike play "an indispensable role in providing accurate and timely coverage from war zones, ensuring that information about the realities and impact of war can actually reach a global audience, including us".

He concluded the speech, saying that the European Union has, and will, condemn any form of Russia's ongoing harassment, intimidation and violence against journalists and media workers covering war zones and frontlines. "For them, safety and protection must be ensured at all times. There can be no impunity, and I say it again, there can and will be no impunity, for human rights violations and abuses against journalists," the High Representative said.

(eunighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Thursday, October 24

Day Partly Cloudy High: 18°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 9°C

Friday, October 25

Day Partly Cloudy High: 17°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 9°C

published by

The Messenger

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