

Georgian Dream Withdraws from PACE After Resolution Calls for New Elections

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Following the adoption of a resolution by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) urging the Georgian Dream government to organize new elections and release political prisoners, GD Minister of Culture and former Deputy Prime Minister, Thea Tsulukiani, announced that the ruling party's delegation would cease its work in the assembly.

"The document of recognition of authority is accompanied by reservations. A number of reservations are unacceptable to us, as they are unfair and groundless," Tsulukiani stated. "Based on all of the above, we, the members of the Georgian Parliament delegation in Strasbourg and Tbilisi, have deliberated and, by the common decision of the Georgian Dream team, despite the fact that our authority has been approved, we are ceasing work in the Parliamentary Assembly from today."

Tsulukiani emphasized that while Georgia remains a member of the Council of Europe, the parliamentary delegation will not participate in PACE sessions until what she described as an "unfair attitude" towards Georgia changes.

"Georgia, of course, remains a member of the Council of Europe as a state. And the members of our parliamentary delegation will resume participation in the Parliamentary Assembly only after the unfair attitude towards the Georgian



state and the Georgian people changes, the blackmail ends, and every official and unofficial decision-maker, as well as the forces behind them, understand well that such pressure will not force the government elected by Georgia and its population to take any anti-Georgian steps," she stated.

Georgian Dream Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze also weighed in on the PACE resolution and Tsulukiani's announcement, reinforcing the decision to withdraw from the assembly. He criticized European institutions,

suggesting that the resolution was a product of bureaucratic inefficiency rather than substantive policy concerns.

"Such absurd decisions show that the situation in European bureaucracies is dire. Ultimately, this does not substantially change the overall situation for our country," Kobakhidze said.

He further insisted that the decision to leave PACE was inevitable. "What Mrs. Thea Tsulukiani announced was very important. Of course, this decision was absolutely without an alter-

native. Naturally, in such a situation, our delegation does not intend to continue working in the Parliamentary Assembly and this delegation will be challenged."

Kobakhidze also left open the possibility of returning to PACE if attitudes towards Georgia shift. "If the attitude towards the Georgian people and our country changes, in this case, of course, we will return to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, although in such a situation, what we see now, of course, working there makes no sense."

Dismissing the importance of the assembly, Kobakhidze described PACE as a minor institution with limited influence. "This is just a parliamentary assembly, which is a much lower-level body than, say, the European Parliament – you know that the European Parliament also does not have any significant role, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is a body ten times less important than the European Parliament. Naturally, our country remains a member of the Council of Europe," he stated.



PACE Adopts Resolution Calling for New Elections in Georgia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has passed a resolution addressing the political situation in Georgia, calling for an early parliamentary election and the release of political prisoners.

A total of 114 delegates voted in favor of the resolution, while 13 opposed it and 7 abstained.

The resolution highlights ongoing democratic concerns in Georgia, including reported violations during the most recent parliamentary elections. Zanda Kalnina-Lukasevica, the resolution's rapporteur from

Latvia, expressed strong concerns over the country's trajectory.

"Georgia's democratic backsliding is progressing at an unprecedented pace," she stated.

The growing concerns over democratic standards led to the challenge of the credentials of the Georgian delegation at the beginning of PACE's winter session. The delegation, composed entirely of members from the Georgian Dream party, faced scrutiny over governance practices and electoral integrity.

Despite the challenges, PACE ultimately chose to recognize the

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8784; Euro - 2.9941; GBP - 3.5735; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9173; Swiss Franc - 3.1770

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credentials of the Georgian delegation for the current session but imposed certain restrictions. The resolution sets forth a series of conditions that Georgia must meet by the next session in April, including:

- Initiating a transparent

and democratic electoral process

- Releasing all political prisoners
- Returning to a path of European integration
- Investigating police violence against protesters
- Repealing the foreign influence law

These measures are seen as

crucial for ensuring Georgia's continued commitment to democratic principles and its alignment with European values. The resolution has intensified tensions between PACE and the Georgian Dream government, which has repeatedly dismissed criticisms from European institutions.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Kakha Kaladze Defends Police, Criticizes Imprisoned Journalist Mzia Amaglobeli



Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze has commented on the imprisonment of Mzia Amaglobeli, the founder and director of

Batumelebi and Netgazeti, stating that he has "not even heard any regret" from her regarding the incident.

"I would like to wish everyone good health, including Ms. Mzia Amaglobeli

all make mistakes, we are ordinary people and we have all made mistakes," Kaladze said.

He continued by emphasizing that Amaglobeli's actions constitute a crime. "A person committed a crime—isn't it a crime when you hit a police officer? I don't remember, I haven't heard (and I'm sure no one has) in so long, even a hint of regret, even if she came out and said humanely that 'I made a mistake, and please forgive me'."

Kaladze also expressed support for the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) employees and praised Irakli Dgebuadze, the officer involved in Amaglobeli's case. "I thank the MIA employees, and I call Irakli Dgebuadze a dignified police officer," he stated.

However, according to the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), Dgebuadze verbally abused Amaglobeli after her arrest and attempted to physically assault her multiple times while she was in custody.

Media Advocacy Coalition Criticizes Public Broadcaster for Bias

The Media Advocacy Coalition has issued a statement accusing the Public Broadcaster of blatantly violating both Georgian legislation and leading international standards regarding inde-

pendent editorial policy, accountability, and media pluralism.

According to the statement, the broadcaster, "which is clearly under the influence of the Georgian Dream," fails to provide objective and comprehensive coverage of current events in the country.

"The biased activities of the Public Broadcaster are especially alarming today, when the country is undergoing crucial political processes," the statement reads. "Across the country, the population is holding continuous protests against the Georgian Dream's rigged elections, torture, mass violence, including actions against media representatives and political prisoners."

The coalition argues that during this critical period, the broadcaster's information policy "deliberately ignores coverage of events important to society and clearly demonstrates a clear bias towards the Georgian Dream."



and any prisoner, but I have a question: why is she detained? Attacking and hitting a police officer is categorically unacceptable. We are human beings, we can

Blue Haven for Ukraine: EU launches project to support psychosocial support system for police officers

The European Union Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine, with financial and expert support from the Dutch government and in cooperation with the Ministry of

Internal Affairs of Ukraine, has launched the 'Blue Haven for Ukraine' project.

The initiative is focused on creating an effective psychosocial support system for employees of the National Police of Ukraine

(NPU). The project seeks to enhance the psychological resilience of law enforcement officers, whose work brings significant stress and psychological trauma due to the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine and

continuing attacks against civilians and the law enforcement agencies in the liberated territories and in areas close to the front.

"In frontline areas, police officers and personnel of the National Guard work under enormous pressure. They are frequently targeted by Russian artillery, drones, and guided bombs. Beyond the ever-present physical danger, these officers investigate deeply traumatic war crimes involving victims who have endured horrific experiences. Supporting and interviewing these victims inevitably leads to emotional strain for the officers themselves," said EUAM's Head of Mis-

sion Rolf Holmboe. He added that without proper support, unresolved mental trauma experienced by law enforcement officers could affect their families and the communities they serve.

As part of the project, psychosocial support centres will be established in Lviv, Kyiv, Rivne, and Vinnytsia, and 13 mobile offices will be deployed to operate in liberated and adjacent territories.

Police psychologists and social police officers will undergo advanced training programmes on how to address stress, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other psychological issues.

The programme will also involve international experts to boost the integration of best European practices into the mental health support system of the NPU.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Thursday, January 30

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 11°C

Night Clear

Low: -1°C

Friday, January 31

Day Clear

High: 10°C

Night Clear

Low: -1°C

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