

## Zourabichvili Files Complaint After Egg Attack at Tbilisi Airport

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Salome Zourabichvili, the 5<sup>th</sup> President of Georgia, has filed a complaint and called for an investigation after she was pelted with eggs upon her arrival at Tbilisi International Airport. Speaking at a press briefing, Zourabichvili condemned the act, describing it as a "pre-organized" act of violence and referring to it as "the little spite of little men." She also criticized members of the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party for justifying the attack.

Zourabichvili emphasized that the incident reflected a lack of respect for the state. "This means that the state is not being respected," she stated, adding that in this situation, she had become a symbol of what the Georgian Dream party is fighting against – "the Georgian state, Georgian traditions, Georgian courtesy... the image of Georgia in the world."

She labeled the attack as an act of weakness by the Georgian Dream party. "All they can do is take repressive measures and throw eggs... If that's not a sign of weakness, I don't know what is," Zourabichvili said. She also expressed criticism of the government's leadership, stating, "They can't govern Georgia anymore. They don't know how to govern the country anymore."



Zourabichvili raised concerns about the broader implications of the attack, particularly regarding the state's failure to ensure security and order. She pointed out that such incidents, including an earlier attack on former GD Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, were occurring in central locations like the air-

port, questioning how authorities allowed politically motivated violence to take place in such a public space.

She also mentioned that she had received threats on social media prior to the attack and stated that the police should have been aware of the situation and taken preventative action.

"They did not do that," she noted.

Underlining the importance of security for all citizens, Zourabichvili concluded, "A functioning state provides security for everyone, even those with different political views. The state is when order is maintained, when security is maintained for everyone, even for

those people you don't like because of their political views. That is the state, and they are making us lose the state day by day."

She also expressed her gratitude to Georgian society and international partners for their support following the incident.

## Georgian Dream to Adopt Treason Law, Mdinardze Announces

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Mamuka Mdinardze, Executive Secretary of the Georgian Dream party, announced that a new article on treason will be added to Georgia's Criminal Code. Speaking after a session of the parliamentary majority, Mdinardze stated that the article was removed by the United National Movement in 2007, and would be reinstated as part of ongoing legislative reforms.

"By our decision, the article on treason will be added to the Criminal Code of Georgia, and it would be more correct to say that it will be restored to the Criminal Code, which was removed by the National Movement at one time," Mdinardze said, emphasizing that the removal had occurred before the August war in April 2007.

Additionally, Mdinardze outlined several other legislative initiatives the Georgian Dream party plans to introduce this week, including the American Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) law, a "Media Law" targeting fake news, and laws restricting the receipt of benefits from foreign sources for public servants. He noted that initial versions of these laws would be registered soon.

"The 'Media Law' will mainly concern 'Fake News' and will be adopted in accordance with the principles of the British model," Mdinardze explained. Other proposed changes include tightening anti-drug legislation, modifying juvenile justice policies, adjusting migration legislation, and simplifying the appointment of leaders of Special Investigation Prosecutors (SIP).

Mdinardze stated that with only a month and a half remaining before the final adoption of these laws, further detailed discussions and processing would take place in Georgia's Parliament.





The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

**Imprisoned Journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli Ends Hunger Strike After 38 Days**



Mzia Amaghlobeli, the imprisoned journalist and director of Batumelebi / Netgazeti, has ended her hunger strike after 38 days, as confirmed by her colleague Eter Turadze on February 18. Turadze read out Amaghlobeli's letter, which was sent from the Vivamedi clinic

where she has been receiving medical care.

In her letter, Amaghlobeli expressed the difficulty of hearing concerns about her health amidst the tragedy in Batumi's Dream Town, where two minor children tragically fell into a

ditch and died. "Against the backdrop of this tragedy, it is incredibly difficult for me to hear society's concerns about my health and life," Amaghlobeli wrote.

She went on to announce her intention to gradually restore her nutrition with the help of doctors in the coming days.

Amaghlobeli also expressed gratitude to fellow prisoners Temur Katamadze and Nikoloz Javakhishvili for their solidarity through their own hunger strikes, urging them to end theirs as well. "I feel a special responsibility to my associates, colleagues, friends, and family. I do not want my hunger strike to weaken you – you must continue to fight on my behalf as well," she wrote.

**Giorgi Gakharia Retains Parliamentary Mandates for Political Independence**



Former Prime Minister of Georgia and leader of the For Georgia party, Giorgi Gakharia, has announced that he will retain his parliamentary mandates to maintain his political

independence. Speaking on TV Company Pirveli, Gakharia emphasized that his decision is aimed at avoiding dependence on private financial groups and ensuring that his party remains accountable to its supporters.

"We are not legitimizing this parliament. I am retaining these mandates in order to have independence in political life. So that we can receive at least part of

what our citizens have given us in the form of funding," Gakharia explained. He stressed the importance of being free from the influence of bankers, financial groups, and their affiliated media outlets.

"This independence is important to me, and I am preparing for further battles with this," Gakharia added.

**Georgian Citizens Released from Russian Occupation Forces**

On February 18, the Georgian State Security Service (SSSG) confirmed the release of Kakha Tsevelidze and Giorgi Chitadze, who had been illegally detained by Russian occupation forces. The two men, detained near the village of Dirbi in Kareli Municipality on February 16, are now in Tbilisi-controlled territory.

The SSSG stated that their release was facilitated through the operational hotline mechanism of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM), alongside other relevant diplomatic tools at the disposal of the central government.

"The central government continues to work actively to release all Georgian citizens illegally detained in the occupied territories," the SSSG said in a statement.



**ADB Capital Utilization Plan Expands Operations by 50% Over Next Decade**

For its Capital Utilization Plan, ADB considered different pathways to allocate and utilize capital, aiming to boost development impact.

MANILA, PHILIPPINES (18 February 2025) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a plan to scale up its operations by 50% over the next decade, leveraging its existing capital base to enhance its development impact across Asia and the Pacific.

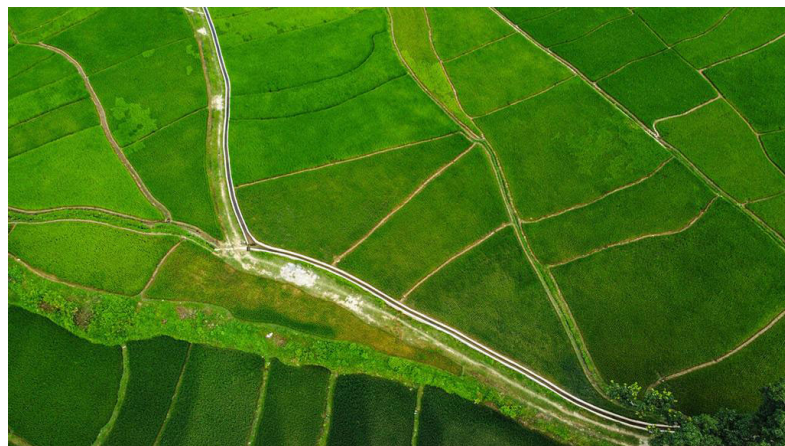
The Capital Utilization Plan (CUP) outlines a pathway for increasing ADB's annual financing commitments from \$24 billion in 2024 to exceed \$36 billion by 2034.

This expanded financing will bolster ADB's developing member countries' (DMCs) efforts to address critical development priorities in the region.

"This dynamic plan responds to the changing needs of our region and strengthens the transformative impact of ADB's work, improving the lives of people and safeguarding our planet," said ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa.

"By utilizing our enhanced lending capacity, the CUP enables us to make strategic investments to address complex challenges while raising the quality and effectiveness of our operations across the region."

The CUP represents the next step in ADB's ongoing evolution. It builds on capital management reforms in 2023 that significantly increased ADB's financing capac-



For its Capital Utilization Plan, ADB considered different pathways to allocate and utilize capital, aiming to boost development impact.

ity, and on last year's update of its corporate strategy that set ambitious targets in five focus areas. ADB also strengthened concessional lending and bolstered the Asian Development Fund, the largest source of grants for its poorest and most vulnerable member countries, in its most recent replenishment.

The CUP envisions a sharp increase in ADB's lending commitments over the next two to three years, supported by an expansion in staff and technical assistance resources, followed by a period of steady and sustained growth. Nonsovereign operations are expected to grow at an accelerated pace, rising from 20% to 27% of commitments over the decade, while sovereign operations will expand at a moderate pace with a more balanced and diverse portfolio.

Over the next decade, ADB's net income is projected to grow steadily. ADB intends to strategically invest part of this income to help DMCs develop high-quality, bankable projects and mobilize sustainable finance through capi-

tal markets. New intended initiatives include a borrowing facility with financial and non-financial incentives to drive investments in resilience and sustainability, and more flexible instruments to enhance project preparation.

ADB will develop operational approaches to guide its future work on private sector development, digital transformation, and regional cooperation and public goods. These initiatives are designed to ensure that ADB meets its corporate targets for 2030. This includes increasing the share of climate finance to 50% of total commitments and reaching total private sector financing of \$13 billion, from both ADB's own financing and direct mobilization, for the year 2030. Progress against the CUP will be reviewed each year to ensure alignment with the region's evolving needs and priorities.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 69 members—49 from the region.

Weather

Wednesday, February 19

Day Overcast  
High: 4°C

Night Rain / Snow  
Low: 1°C

Thursday, February 20

Day Overcast  
High: 3°C

Night Rain / Snow  
Low: -2°C

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