

State Security Service Alleges Foreign-Funded Plot to Overthrow Georgian Government

By Liza Mchedlidze

According to a newly released report by Georgia's State Security Service (SSS), a group of individuals allegedly planned to provoke civil unrest and destabilization in the country with the ultimate goal of forcibly changing the government.

The report claims that these actions were coordinated both inside and outside Georgian territory and were financed by foreign sources. It accuses leaders of certain parliamentary and non-parliamentary political parties, as well as heads of non-governmental organizations, of managing the alleged operation.

The SSS states that the pretexts used to incite unrest included opposition to the controversial "Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence" and allegations of election rigging. The report also asserts that some Georgian citizens abroad, particularly fighters currently in Ukraine, were prepared to return and take part in violent confrontations with law enforcement in Georgia. Plans allegedly included the assassination of officials from the ruling party.

Authorities say the organizers aimed to replicate a scenario similar to Ukraine's 2014 Maidan protests, involving the blockage of key infrastructure in Tbilisi, including transport hubs,



government buildings, and law enforcement bases. The report describes plans to erect tent cities and provoke violent clashes with police using pyrotechnics and Molotov cocktails, particu-

larly by youth groups.

Additionally, the report claims that there were attempts to disrupt the presidential election scheduled for December 14, 2024, by escalating tensions

around the Parliament building in hopes of causing casualties and blaming the government.

The SSS further alleges that protest organizers specifically targeted law enforcement offi-

cials for threats, bribery, and psychological manipulation, strategies the agency links to tactics used during so-called "color revolutions" aimed at undermining state authority.



Georgian Prosecutor's Office Raids Homes of Protest-Linked Public Fund Managers

By Liza Mchedlidze

In the early hours of April 29, officers from the Georgian Prosecutor's Office, and reportedly in some cases from the State Security Service, carried out coordinated searches at the homes of public fund managers associated with the ongoing anti-government protests.

Journalist and media personality Nanuka Zhorzholiani was the first to report the arrival of officers at her home at 8:40 a.m. Searches were also conducted at the apartment of her daughter Mariam Geguchadze, the home of activist Mariam Bajelidze, and the residences of other fund managers. Bajelidze, who is pregnant, said the search began without allowing her legal counsel and that officers confiscated her phone and family members' laptops. Several of the searches reportedly took place in the presence of minors,

and individuals were not permitted to record them.

The Prosecutor's Office later confirmed that the searches were part of an ongoing investigation launched in March. At that time, five public funds that had supported the protests, primarily by covering fines for road blockades, were frozen. Authorities said the investigation involved charges of sabotage, assisting foreign entities in hostile acts, and financing activities against Georgia's constitutional order under Articles 318, 319, and 321¹ of the Criminal Code.

The homes of Nanuka Zhorzholiani, Human Rights Center director Aleko Tskitishvili, Lasha Arveladze, Guga Khelaia, and Mariam Bajelidze were searched. The Human Rights Center has been providing legal aid to protesters.

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A large police force surrounded Zhorzholiani's residence while journalists, activists, and opposition politicians gathered nearby. Police completely blocked access to the building entrance. The search lasted more than six hours.

Georgia's fifth president, Salome Zourabichvili, responded to the raids by calling them another authoritarian attempt to silence dissent and democratic voices. She said that the ruling party may be trying to instill fear, but it would only strengthen public resolve.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Tbilisi Court of Appeals Denies Refugee Status to Temur Katamadze, Clearing Way for Deportation



The Tbilisi Court of Appeals has denied refugee or humanitarian protection to Temur Katamadze (also known as Gaffar Yilmaz), a Turkish citizen of Georgian descent, clearing the path for his imminent deportation to Turkey. Katamadze, 57, has been a visible figure in pro-European Union demonstrations in Georgia and is often referred to as the protests' "flag bearer." He has lived in Georgia since 2012.

Mariam Gabroshvili, a lawyer from the

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association who is representing Katamadze, confirmed to RFE/RL's Georgian Service that both the Tbilisi City Court and the Court of Appeals have dismissed his application for protected status. With no further legal safeguards in place, deportation now

appears inevitable. Gabroshvili stated that Katamadze believes the arrest warrant issued against him is politically motivated and linked to his decades-long advocacy for the rights of the Georgian diaspora in Turkey. His activism, he claims, has made him a "target of the Turkish state." On March 18, Tbilisi City Court Judge Diana Parkosadze rejected Katamadze's initial request for asylum. The Social Justice Center, which submitted an am-

icus curiae brief in his defense, has warned that deporting Katamadze could subject him to "torture and discrimination" upon arrival in Turkey. Katamadze was detained on January 16 and is currently being held in a temporary detention facility under the Migration Department of Georgia's Ministry of Internal Affairs. He launched a hunger strike during his detention, which lasted for 48 days and caused serious health complications.

Parliament Passes Amendments to Fast-Track Party Bans



The Georgian Parliament has adopted a package of legislative amendments aimed at tightening rules on banning political parties, passing the bill in its sec-

ond reading with unanimous support from 79 MPs. The changes affect the laws On Political Unions of Citizens and On the Constitutional Court and target so-called "successor parties" that mirror previously banned parties in purpose, activity, and personnel. One key amendment shortens the Constitutional Court's deadline for ruling on such cases to 14 days — applying this timeframe to both election and non-election periods. Previously, non-election cases could take up to nine months. Presenting the bill, Georgian Dream MP Tornike Cheishvili said the shorter

deadline was justified, as the court would already have ruled on the original party's constitutionality, making it quicker to assess successor cases.

Principal of Georgian School Tbilisi, Dr. Eter Svanidze was awarded with the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette

On April 29, 2025, the Government of Japan announced the conferment of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette upon Dr. Eter Svanidze, in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the development of Japanese language education in Georgia and to the promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and Georgia. The Order is awarded



by His Majesty, the Emperor of Japan. Since the establishment of the Georgian School Tbilisi in 1995, Dr. Eter Svanidze, as a principal, has been dedicated to Japanese language teaching and Japanese culture promotion

among her pupils and students, which helped to deepen the mutual understanding between Japan and Georgia. In 2022, in recognition of its contribution to Japanese language education in Georgia, the school was awarded the Foreign Minister's Commem-

dation. This year marks the 30th year anniversary of the Japanese language education at the school. On April 29, Ambassador of Japan to Georgia, H.E. Mr. Ishizuka Hideki delivered his congratulations on Dr. Eter Svanidze through a video call,

praising her longstanding dedication to cultural exchange and education. The Orders of the Rising Sun was established in 1875 as the Japan's first national decoration awarded by the Government of Japan. It features rays of sunlight radiating from the rising sun with an attachment that is fashioned in the shape of a paulownia flower and leaf. The Order of the Rising Sun is conferred on the persons who have rendered outstanding service to the nation or the public, including foreign nationals who achieved significant contributions to advancing relations between Japan and its partners.

Weather

Wednesday, April 30
Day Overcast High: 17°C
Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 9°C
Thursday, May 1
Day Partly Cloudy High: 22°C
Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 12°C

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Georgian-Hungarian Business Forum Held in Tbilisi

The Georgian-Hungarian Business Forum took place in Tbilisi on April 28, 2025, bringing together representatives from various business and economic sectors of both countries.

The Forum was officially opened by Mr. Tamás Vargha, Deputy Minister and State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of Hungary, and Ms. Anna Maria Sikó, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Hungary to Georgia.

The event aimed to promote exports and support the further development of the local economies of Georgia and Hungary. During the Forum, the Hungarian-Georgian Chamber of Commerce, based in Georgia, was officially established. Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between MeOut and the Georgian Skills Agency to strengthen

bilateral cooperation.

On April 29, 2025, the 6th Session of the Hungarian-Georgian Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation was held in Tbilisi. Discussions focused on deepening collaboration in areas such as the economy, energy, agriculture, tourism, and education.

The session concluded with the signing of an official protocol by the Co-Chairs of the Intergovernmental Commission: Mr. Genadi Arveladze, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, and Mr. Tamás Vargha, Deputy Minister of Defence of Hungary. The signing ceremony took place at the Biltmore Hotel Tbilisi.



