

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

On May 6, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the bipartisan MEGOBARI Act with overwhelming support 349 votes in favor (168 Republicans, 181 Democrats) and 42 against. The bill now moves to the Senate for debate and a vote before reaching the President for potential enactment.

Named after the Georgian word for “friend,” the Mobilizing and Enhancing Georgia’s Options for Building Accountability, Resilience, and Independence (MEGOBARI) Act authorizes the U.S. president to impose sanctions on Georgian Dream (GD) officials and affiliates, along with their immediate family members who are found to have engaged in corruption or used violence and intimidation to hinder Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration.

Lawmakers across party lines voiced support during deliberations. Rep. Brian Mast (R-FL) condemned GD’s “Russia-style authoritarian tactics,” while Rep. Johnny Olszewski (D-MD) called the bill a response to Georgia’s deteriorating democracy. Reps. Joe Wilson (R-SC) and Steve Cohen (D-TN) said the GD government is illegitimate, accusing it of anti-Western propaganda, election rigging, and violent repression of protests. Only Rep. Warren Davidson (R-OH) opposed the bill during debate, calling it “wrongheaded” and urging an “America First” foreign policy.

Georgia’s 5<sup>th</sup> President Salome Zourabichvili said the

## U.S. House Passes MEGOBARI Act Targeting Georgia’s Ruling Party



adoption of the MEGOBARI Act signals a serious step by the U.S., targeting individuals behind Georgia’s current political crisis, with calls for regime

change. The ruling Georgian Dream party described the act as hostile. MP Vladimer Bozhadze repeated the narrative about the

“deep state” and portrayed the bill as part of a smear campaign by foreign-funded opposition. GD Deputy Speaker Levan Machavariani and MP Givi

Mikanadze dismissed the legislation as an insult and “radical,” while accusing sponsors like Rep. Wilson of lobbying for Georgia’s opposition.

## Georgian Dream Introduces Bill to Amend Diplomatic Service Law Amid MFA Reorganization Concerns

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Georgian Dream has introduced a bill in parliament to amend the Law on Diplomatic Service, which would allow for the early recall of diplomats who breach ethical standards or act against the government’s foreign policy. The bill, prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), comes shortly after reports of a potential restructuring within the MFA, sparking concerns from opposition parties about politically motivated layoffs targeting pro-EU diplomats.

The proposed amendments to Article 4 of the law would require diplomats to “strictly adhere to general rules of ethics and conduct.” Additionally, the bill outlines plans for the Ministry to establish these rules through an administrative legal act.

The changes also introduce provisions for the early recall of diplomats who violate the Ministry’s ethical standards or take actions that could harm Georgia’s

interests or contradict its foreign policy. The explanatory note clarifies that such violations, particularly those conflicting with policies defined by the Georgian Parliament, would be grounds for an early recall.

Under the proposed amendments, diplomatic officials and staff would undergo performance evaluations twice a year instead of once. Furthermore, the maximum rotation period for heads of mission and other staff would be extended from six months to up to one year.

The party argues that the amendments are necessary to address “current challenges” and reflect the evolving institutional landscape.

The timing of the bill has raised questions, especially given recent reports about a potential reorganization of the MFA. On May 1, media outlets reported plans to dismantle the Directorate General for European Integration, sparking concern from opposition groups. Grigol

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საქართველოს კანონი

„დიპლომატიური სამსახურის შესახებ“ საქართველოს კანონში ცვლილების

შეტანის თაობაზე

მუხლი 1. „დიპლომატიური სამსახურის შესახებ“ საქართველოს კანონში (საქართველოს საკანონმდებლო მაცნე, №45, 21.12.2007, მუხ. 392) შეტანილ იქნეს შემდეგი ცვლილება:

1. მე-2 მუხლის:

ა) „თ“ ქვეპუნქტი ჩამოყალიბდეს შემდეგი რედაქციით:

თ) დიპლომატიური თანამდებობის პირი - დიპლომატიურ სამსახურში დიპლომატიურ თანამდებობაზე დანიშნული სახელმწიფო-პოლიტიკური თანამდებობის პირი, პროფესიული საჯარო მოხელე, აგრეთვე დიპლომატიური სამსახურის გავლის წესით განსაზღვრული თანამდებობის პირი, რომელსაც მინიჭებული აქვს ან უნდა მიენიჭოს დიპლომატიური რანგი“;

ბ) „ი.გ“ ქვეპუნქტი ჩამოყალიბდეს შემდეგი რედაქციით:

„ი.გ) ადმინისტრაციული ხელშეკრულებით დასაქმებული პირი - დიპლომატიური სამსახურის გავლის წესით განსაზღვრული თანამდებობის პირი, აგრეთვე პირი, რომელიც სახელმწიფო-პოლიტიკური თანამდებობის პირს ხელს უწყობს თავისი უფლებამოსილებების განხორციელებაში დარგობრივი/სექტორული რჩევების მიცემით, ინტელექტუალურ-ტექნიკური დახმარების გაწევით ან/და ორგანიზაციულ-მენეჯერული ფუნქციების შესრულებით, სამსახურში მიიღება შესაბამისი სახელმწიფო-პოლიტიკური თანამდებობის პირის უფლებამოსილების ვადით და რომელსაც არ უკავია ამ კანონით დიპლომატიური თანამდებობის პირისთვის,



# Georgian Dream Introduces Bill to Amend Diplomatic Service Law Amid MFA Reorganization Concerns

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Gegelia of the opposition coalition Strong Georgia alleged that around 250 people could be laid off, many of whom had sup-

ported Georgia's EU integration and criticized Georgian Dream's decision to pause the EU accession process in late 2024. The MFA has denied these allegations,

stating that the Directorate General for European Integration will not be abolished but rather merged into a new Political Directorate for European Affairs.

The Ministry has not commented on the reported layoffs but emphasized that the reform aims to strengthen Georgia's relations with European countries.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

NATO Clarifies Absence of Georgia and Ukraine in 2024 Annual Report

Georgia Expels 96 Foreign Nationals in April, Interior Ministry Confirms

re-entering the country," the ministry's statement said. Those expelled included citizens from a wide range of countries, including



NATO has addressed why Georgia and Ukraine were not mentioned in the 2024 Secretary General's annual report, stating that the omission does not reflect a change in policy. According to NATO's response to *Interpressnews*, the latest report under Secretary General Mark Rutte has been intentionally shortened and made more focused, omitting many topics and details for clarity and accessibility. "This does not imply any change to NATO policies or the status of any NATO partner," the alliance said.

NATO reaffirmed Georgia's status as one of its closest partners and reiterated support for its territorial integrity and aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration. However, the alliance expressed serious concerns over Georgia's democratic backsliding, citing the controversial "foreign influence" and "family values" laws, political polarization around the 2024 elections, and the government's handling of peaceful protests.

As a result, NATO has paused five out of 17 initiatives under the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP), including cooperation on cybersecurity, crisis management, and strategic communications. Two initiatives will continue with modifications, while ten remain unaffected. Three prior initiatives have already been completed and closed.

The alliance encouraged Georgia to prioritize democratic and rule-of-law reforms, stating that "the Georgian people have made clear that they want a democratic, prosperous future within the European and Euro-Atlantic family."

NATO also reaffirmed its position on Russia, calling on Moscow to reverse its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, to cease militarization and human rights violations in the occupied regions, and to fully implement the 2008 EU-mediated ceasefire.



06-05-2025  
MIGRATION DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES DEPORTED 96 FOREIGN CITIZENS FROM GEORGIA IN APRIL OF THE CURRENT YEAR

The Migration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in close coordination with other units of the Ministry, effectively ensures the fight against illegal migration within the country. In particular, over the past month, 96 citizens of various countries were deported from the country.

Some of the foreign citizens left Georgia voluntarily, while others were forcibly deported as a result of measures taken by the Migration Department employees. The deported persons were banned from entering the country in accordance with the acting legislation.

Georgia's Ministry of Internal Affairs announced on May 6 that 96 foreign nationals were expelled from the country during the month of April. According to the ministry, the removals were carried out in accordance with the law, with some individuals departing voluntarily, while others were deported following enforcement measures by the Migration Department.

"In accordance with the law, the deported individuals have been banned from

China, Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Israel, Tajikistan, Nigeria, Nepal, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Egypt, South Korea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Slovakia, and Kazakhstan.

While the ministry provided no further detail on the reasons behind the expulsions, it emphasized that the removals were carried out "in line with national legislation and migration policy."

## Over 21,000 Ukrainian children return to renovated schools thanks to EU and UNDP

The European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Ukraine have completed a comprehensive initiative to restore educational infrastructure — the



'EU4USchools: Build Back Better' project. The project was implemented in partnership with the Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories of

Ukraine. The project covered 66 schools across 11 oblasts affected by war: Zhytomyr, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, Rivne, Odesa, Zakarpattia, Khmelnytskyi,

Cherkasy, Lviv, Kirovohrad and Poltava. Thanks to renovated premises, upgraded shelters and newly supplied equipment, more than 21,600 students and teachers have been able to return to safe and conducive learning conditions.

Oleksii Kuleba, Deputy Prime Minister for Restoration of Ukraine – Minister for Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine, said that restoring critical infrastructure, including schools, is key to ensuring stable communities and confidence in the future. "Recovery of the country starts in communities — when parents can work, when children return to school safely, when life begins to flow again," Kuleba said.

According to the latest Rapid

Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA4), 3,373 educational institutions across Ukraine have been partially or fully damaged since the onset of the full-scale invasion.

The schools, restored and re-equipped as part of the 'EU4USchools: Build Back Better' project, received new roofs, windows, heating systems, furniture, and safe shelters. In nine schools across Mykolaiv and Zhytomyr oblasts, upgraded shelters enabled 1,979 students and 300 teachers to return to face-to-face learning. In 112 schools, the learning environment was improved with new desks, chairs, bookcases, and blackboards.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

## Weather

Wednesday, May 7

Day ☀️ Clear  
High: 26°C

Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 12°C

Thursday, May 8

Day ☀️ Clear  
High: 24°C

Night 🌙 Clear  
Low: 13°C

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