

# Badri Japaridze Says Prosecutor and Court Refuse to Question Those Calling for His Criminal Case

By Liza Mchedlidze

Badri Japaridze, one of the leaders of Lelo – Strong Georgia, spoke out after a court session, accusing the prosecutor’s office and the court of refusing to interrogate the people who requested his criminal prosecution. He said that this refusal will once again reveal how the rule of law has been trampled.

Japaridze also criticized the temporary investigative commission created by the parliament, stating that it not only violates the Constitution but is also used for political revenge.

“I am glad that this session is being recorded so the public can see how it unfolded. This is a clear example of how the rule of law can be disregarded. Both the prosecutor’s office and the judiciary are fully controlled by political will,” Japaridze said.

He explained that Article 42 of the Constitution clearly states that at least fifty percent of the members of an inves-



tigative commission must be from opposition parties. However, the current investigative commission violates this requirement and is being used for political revenge against opponents.

“The Constitution included this rule to prevent one party from using the commission to target its opponents politically. We are now witnessing the use of this commission exactly for that purpose. The commission’s formation and decision-making procedures are illegal,” Japaridze said.

He also noted that the prosecutor’s office and the court refused to summon as witnesses the individuals who requested his criminal prosecution. According to Japaridze, interrogating these people is very important because it would reveal how the rule of law is being undermined.

“The prosecutor’s office deliberately avoids calling these witnesses, and the court agreed with this decision. All possible violations have been committed,” he added.



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## European Economic Forecast

### Spring 2025

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## EU Report Predicts Steady Growth Despite Political Concerns

By Liza Mchedlidze

According to the European Commission’s Spring 2025 Economic Forecast, Georgia’s economy is expected to grow by a solid 5 to 6 percent in both 2025 and 2026. The report highlights continued momentum from consumer lending, business credit, and public investment, but also points to political instability and geopolitical tensions as major risks to investor and consumer confidence.

According to the report, Georgia’s economy expanded by 9.4 percent in 2024. This growth was largely driven by increased household and government consumption, rising wages, growing employment, and a surge in consumer loans. On the production side, growth was concentrated in sectors such as information technology, construction, tourism, and transport. These sectors, the report notes, have benefited from redirected trade and services due to the war in Ukraine and migration from Russia.

The report states that unemployment dropped from 16.4 percent in 2023 to 13.9 percent in 2024, and the trend is expected to continue, though at a slower pace. Real wages rose by 15 percent in 2024, which the report attributes to high-skilled migrants entering the labor force, particularly in IT, as well as local companies responding to labor shortages and rising living costs. Wage growth is projected to moderate, but remain higher than productivity growth.

Although inflation decreased during

2024, the report notes that it climbed again to 3.4 percent in April 2025 and is projected to average 4 percent for the year. The increase is linked to higher wages, slight depreciation of the lari, and statistical base effects. The report forecasts that inflation will ease in the coming years and return to the National Bank’s target of 3 percent by 2026.

According to the report, Georgia’s current account deficit narrowed to 4.3 percent of GDP in 2024, down from 5.6 percent the year before. Export growth reached 6 percent, mainly driven by demand for metallurgical goods and re-exported vehicles. Imports also increased due to domestic demand for consumer and investment goods. The report anticipates that the trade deficit will widen slightly in the next two years, although a continued rise in tourism is expected to support a surplus in services.

The report says Georgia’s general government deficit stood at 2.1 percent of GDP in 2024, remaining below the 2.5 percent target. Increased public sector wages helped boost personal income tax revenues, while higher gambling fees and banking sector taxes also contributed. Government spending rose by 20 percent, driven by salaries and interest payments, while capital investment increased by 10 percent. According to the report, public debt was 36.1 percent of GDP at the end of 2024 and is expected to decline further. The deficit is projected to stay near 2 percent of GDP through 2026, within the country’s fiscal rule.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF  
Lawyers Call on Kutaisi Court to Dismiss Case Against Journalist Mzia Amaglobeli, Citing Falsified Evidence



Lawyers representing journalist and civic activist Mzia Amaglobeli are urging the Kutaisi Court of Appeal to dismiss an administrative offense case against her, claiming that police falsified evidence leading to her detention. According to her legal team and human rights advocates, Amaglobeli is being targeted for her journalistic work and activism. They argue that her arrest on January 11, 2025, during a protest out-

side the Adjara Police Department, was unlawful. Initially detained for placing a protest sticker on a wall, Amaglobeli was later accused of verbally insulting police, an allegation the defense claims was fabricated to justify the arrest. “The police did not have the authority

to detain her for placing a sticker,” the lawyers said. “The arrest report was altered to accuse her under Article 173, and the court relied on misleading evidence to uphold the charge.” The Batumi City Court upheld the police version in a March 18 ruling, relying primarily on video footage submitted by law enforcement and the testimony of Deputy Chief of Batumi Police G. Vanadze. However, Amaglobeli’s defense

insists the footage was recorded hours after her detention and pertains to another individual’s arrest. “We have submitted evidence to the Kutaisi Court of Appeal proving the video footage does not show Amaglobeli at the time of her arrest and that the police witness provided false testimony,” the legal team stated. The defense is calling on the court to terminate the case and overturn the Batumi City Court’s decision. They also appealed to Georgia’s Prosecutor General to launch a criminal investigation against police officials involved in the case, citing possible violations under Articles 332 (abuse of authority), 369 (falsifying evidence), and 370 (false testimony) of the Criminal Code. Amaglobeli remains in detention, with her lawyers asserting that the ongoing legal process is based entirely on fabricated grounds.

Special Investigation Service to Merge with Prosecutor’s Office Amid Criticism



Georgia’s Special Investigation Service (SIS) is set to be merged with the Prosecutor’s Office, the agency confirmed to the media, without sharing further

information. Details about the integration will be outlined in a legislative draft to be presented to the ruling party-dominated parliament. Created in 2022 as an autonomous investigative unit under the EU-Georgia Association Agenda from 2017 to 2020, the SIS was meant to conduct independent and prompt investigations into serious crimes and misconduct by officials. Despite this, the agency is widely criticized for its lack of independence and failure to act, with no police officers held accountable for abuses against protesters over the past year. Nona Kurdovanidze, head of the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association, described the move as troubling. She noted that the SIS had already struggled to perform its duties effectively and said this decision indicates a lack of interest in preserving even a minimally independent investigative structure. In April, the UK imposed sanctions on SIS chief Karlo (Koka) Katsitadze, accusing him of neglecting to investigate and prosecute law enforcement officials re-

sponsible for suppressing citizens, opposition members, journalists, and activists since the enactment of the Foreign Agents Law in May 2024.

European Political Community to discuss Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine

On 16 May 2025, the Albanian capital Tirana will host the sixth summit of the European Political Community (EPC),

Weather

Tuesday, May 20  
Day ☀ Clear  
High: 23°C  
Night ☁ Cloudy  
Low: 12°C  
Wednesday, May 21  
Day ☁ Partly Cloudy  
High: 23°C  
Night ☀ Clear  
Low: 10°C



which will bring together 47 heads of state and government, including from the Eastern Partnership countries, and leaders of key European and international institutions. The slogan of this summit is ‘New Europe in a new world: unity – cooperation – joint action’. Leaders will first meet in a plenary session dedicated to security

challenges and a shared vision for the future of Europe. Three high-level roundtables will then take place around the following topics: Europe’s security and democratic resilience, including Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine; competitiveness and economic security; and mobility challenges and youth empowerment. The EU will be represented by the President of the European Council, António Costa, who will co-chair the meeting along with the Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama. (euneighbourseast.eu)

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