

Ivanishvili Refuses Meeting with U.S. Ambassador, Claims Sanctions and Pressure

By Liza Mchedlidze

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the honorary chairman of Georgia's ruling party Georgian Dream and former Prime Minister, has rejected a request to meet with U.S. Ambassador Robin Dunnigan. In a public statement released on May 28, he accused the United States of targeting him with unofficial sanctions and using financial restrictions as political leverage.

"In a situation where I am subjected to informal sanctions and unprecedented pressure, any direct communication with the U.S. Ambassador would be neither appropriate nor productive," Ivanishvili stated.

He explained that a foreign bank has blocked access to his assets since 2022, allegedly under instructions from the United States. Ivanishvili claimed he attempted to resolve the issue by proposing a full transfer of control over the funds to U.S. authorities, but he received no reply.

"I offered the American side to fully control the use of my frozen funds," he said. "But my proposal was not even answered. This silence clearly demonstrates that the freezing was not about legality but about exerting political pressure."

Ivanishvili described the situation as coercive and warned that it undermines the integrity of any future discussions. "Any conversation would take place in a setting where one side holds the other's financial and political interests hostage," he added.

He also criticized what he sees as the United States bypassing the country's elected leadership. "It is noteworthy that the American side also refuses to meet with the Prime Minister of Georgia, who

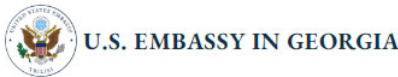


is not subjected to any sanctions. This once again confirms that the goal is to avoid dealing with the legitimate leadership of the country," Ivanishvili said.

Despite his concerns, Ivanishvili expressed hope that relations between Georgia and the United States could improve. "I am ready to support the resto-

ration of healthy relations between Georgia and the United States. But this must happen without pressure, blackmail, or personal revenge," he said.

Ivanishvili Refuses Meeting with U.S. Ambassador Amid Escalating Diplomatic Rift



STATEMENT REGARDING UNITED STATES ENGAGEMENT WITH GEORGIAN DREAM PARTY

By U.S. EMBASSY TBILISI

MAY 28, 2025

Bidzina Ivanishvili has refused to meet with Ambassador Dunnigan to hear a message from the Trump Administration. At Secretary Rubio's request, on May 22 Ambassador Dunnigan asked for a meeting with Bidzina Ivanishvili to communicate a message from the Administration and to again relay specific steps the Georgian government can take to show it is serious about resetting its relationship with the United States. It is our hope that the Georgian government sincerely wishes to return to 33 years of partnership and friendship with America and the American people.

By Liza Mchedlidze

The diplomatic rift between Georgia and the United States deepened further as Bidzina Ivanishvili, founder and honorary chairman of the ruling Georgian Dream party, declined a formal request to meet with U.S. Ambassador Robin Dunnigan. The United States Embassy confirmed on May 28 that Ivanishvili refused the invitation, which was extended at the request of U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

According to the Embassy, the proposed meeting was intended to deliver a message from the U.S. administration, offering specific steps the Georgian government could take to repair and stabilize relations with Washington. These diplomatic efforts

appear to have failed to gain traction.

The U.S. Embassy stated, "Despite this refusal, we continue to hope that the Georgian government sincerely desires to return to the 33-year friendship and partnership between our nations and our people."

Ivanishvili's refusal comes amid a backdrop of increasing political isolation and international criticism directed at the Georgian government. Following disputed elections in October 2024 and a decisive pivot away from European integration in November, Georgia's relations with Western allies have deteriorated significantly.

On November 30, the U.S. government suspended its

CONTINUED FROM Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7349; Euro - 3.0984; GBP - 3.6927; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.4347; Swiss Franc - 3.3050

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CONTINUED FROM Page 1

strategic partnership with Georgia, a decision made shortly after Georgian Dream leadership announced a pause on EU accession efforts. These moves signaled a sharp departure from the foreign policy trajectory Georgia had pursued since its independence.

Later in December, the U.S. Treasury imposed sanctions on

Ivanishvili. The Department cited his role in enabling systemic corruption, facilitating human rights violations, and supporting political shifts that favored the Russian Federation while undermining Georgia's democratic institutions and Euro-Atlantic goals.

The tensions have intensified as the U.S. Congress moves forward with the MEGOBARI Act, legislation aimed at expanding

sanctions against Georgian Dream officials. The bill successfully passed the House of Representatives in early May and remains under consideration in the Senate.

Senator Marco Rubio, who has become one of the leading voices shaping U.S. policy toward Georgia, recently described the Georgian Dream government as "anti-American." His remarks reflect growing frustration in

Washington over Tbilisi's shifting political course and perceived alignment with authoritarian regimes.


The Georgian government has responded by attempting to minimize the significance of these statements. Officials accused Congressman Joe Wilson of mischaracterizing the party's stance when he echoed Rubio's warning, calling the current leadership "anti-American."

Despite these diplomatic exchanges, Georgian Dream has signaled a desire to reset relations with the United States, particularly under the renewed presidency of Donald Trump. The party has claimed that its political philosophy shares values with the Trump administration, especially its campaign against what it calls the "deep state."

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgian Dream Signals Intent to Revoke 'For Georgia' Party Mandates Amid Parliamentary Boycott



Mamuka Mdinardze, Executive Secretary of the ruling Georgian Dream party, announced on May 28 that the parliamentary mandates of members from the opposition For Georgia party, led by former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, will be revoked due to their continued boycott of parliamentary sessions.

In an interview with Rustavi 2, Mdinardze stated, "We will revoke their mandates. I will tell you directly. It's in the regulations. They haven't withdrawn their list; the first 12 people definitely won't enter [parliament], we will terminate their authority, more precisely. The next 12 will enter, if they wish, of course."

The For Georgia party has refused to participate in parliamentary activities following the disputed October 2024 elections, which they, along with other opposition parties, have declared illegitimate. Despite this stance, they have not formally renounced their parliamentary mandates.

On February 18, 2025, Giorgi Gakharia explained that retaining the mandates was a strategic decision to maintain political independence and to access state funding allocated based on electoral results. He emphasized that this approach was intended to preserve the party's autonomy and to utilize the financial support granted by voters through the electoral process.

Gela Geladze Appointed as Georgia's New Minister of Internal Affairs


Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze announced the appointment of Gela Geladze as Georgia's new Minister of Internal Affairs, following the resignation of Vakhtang Gomelauri earlier that day.

Geladze has served in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, the Prosecutor's Office, and the Probation Agency. Most recently, since April 2025, he held the position of Deputy Head of the State Security Service.

Upon his appointment, Geladze expressed his gratitude, stating, "It is a great honor for me to lead this agency, to serve our country and people alongside the dignified and proud police officers and employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs."

Prime Minister Kobakhidze praised Geladze's qualifications, noting his extensive experience in various public agencies and expressing confidence in his ability to lead the ministry effectively.

Vakhtang Gomelauri, who has been



sanctioned by several Western countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, and the Baltic states, has been one of Georgian Dream's longest-serving officials, holding senior positions over the past decade, including Interior Minister, head of the State Security Service, and Vice Prime Minister.

Gomelauri cited personal reasons for his resignation, expressing a desire to spend more time with his family.

EU announces new strategy for secure, prosperous and resilient Black Sea region

Yesterday, the EU announced a new strategy for a stable and secure Black Sea region, including Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Türkiye, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The strategy aims to boost connections and growth, by linking Europe with the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and beyond. Amidst Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the strategy will also reinforce the EU's geopolitical role as a reliable actor in the Black Sea region.

The EU will forge closer cooperation with the region and take forward regional cooperation on connectivity. Future cooperation with the Black Sea region is structured under three pillars:

- Enhancing security, stability, and resilience;
- Fostering sustainable growth and prosperity;
- Promoting environmental protection, climate change resilience and preparedness, and civil protection.

Together with its partners in the region, the EU will implement three flagship initiatives under each of these pillars to unlock the

region's potential for growth, while also addressing the immediate challenges of conflict and security:

Black Sea Maritime Security, and the establishment of a Black Sea Maritime Security Hub, will strengthen maritime safety and security, protect critical maritime infrastructure and the marine environment. It will also

strengthen regional cooperation on demining and address risks to the environment and maritime safety.

A dedicated Connectivity Agenda – aligned with the extended Trans-European Networks – will develop transport, energy and digital networks to leverage the potential of the Black Sea region as a vital corridor linking Europe with Central Asia through the South Caucasus, boosting economic growth and competitiveness.

Preparedness of coastal communities and blue economy sectors will be reinforced to enable Black Sea countries to tackle war-related environmental damage, respond to climate-change related risks and seize opportunities for sustainable growth.

The strategy will bring all relevant EU instruments and policies together, mobilising investments in line with the Global Gateway Strategy and in a Team Europe spirit (the EU institutions in cooperation with the Member States, as well as the European financial institutions).

"An active role of the European Union is crucial in advancing security and peace in the Black Sea region especially with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine," President Ursula von der Leyen said. "We will closely work with our neighbours to foster security and stability in the region. Together we can build a stronger and more prosperous future for all."

The European Commission has proposed a dedicated EU ministerial meeting with partner countries to advance cooperation under the EU strategic approach.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Thursday, May 29

Day Overcast
High: 27°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 16°C

Friday, May 30

Day Overcast
High: 26°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 14°C

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof. **Zaza Gachechiladze**
Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

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