

Georgian PM Kobakhidze Responds to President Trump's Letter and Senator Daines' Visit

By Liza Mchedlidze

PM Irakli Kobakhidze commented on a recent letter sent by the U.S. President Donald Trump to Mikheil Kavelashvili on May 26. According to Kobakhidze, the letter reflects shared values between the Georgian government and President Trump's administration. However, he noted that the U.S. Embassy in Georgia has not yet posted the letter on its official website.

Kobakhidze contrasted this letter with an earlier letter published by the U.S. State Department, which he believes was intended to mobilize opposition protests on May 26. According to him, despite extensive efforts, the rally attracted no more than 3,000 people, showing limited impact.

Regarding the visit of U.S. Senator Steve Daines, who met with both the Georgian government and opposition representatives, Kobakhidze described the opposition as "in a funny state." He said the opposition lied about the nature of the senator's visit, as they were aware that meetings with the government were planned.

Kobakhidze explained that the meeting with Senator Daines differed significantly from previous encounters and focused on "resetting relations from an absolutely healthy angle." He reiterated that the Georgian government remains open to consultations and publicly expressed a desire to renew the strategic partnership with the United States from a clean slate with a clear roadmap.

He also addressed "deep state," which he said is bogged down in bureaucracy and attempting to obstruct the restoration of Georgian-American relations. Despite these challenges, Kobakhidze expressed confidence that President Trump would overcome these internal obstacles and ensure that nothing impedes the renewal of the bilateral partnership.



Georgia's Foreign Agents Registration Act Comes Into Force

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) officially came into effect in Georgia on May 31, 2025.

The law requires individuals and organizations deemed to be acting on behalf of a foreign principal to register with the Anti-Corruption Bureau within ten days. The Bureau has launched a dedicated website with an online portal for registration and accepting related documents.

Those who fail to register face penalties including fines up to 10,000 Georgian Lari, imprisonment for up to five years, and possible deportation for foreign nationals. Citizens are also encouraged to report suspected violations through the portal.

The law has specific registration criteria and obligations but does not clarify all details about who qualifies as a foreign agent.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau is responsible for monitoring compliance and enforcement.

International reactions to the new law have been overwhelmingly negative. EU High Representative Kaja Kallas and Commissioner Marta Kos called the act a "serious setback for the country's democracy," warning it suppresses dissent and shrinks the space for civil society and independent media.

The Swedish Foreign Ministry echoed these concerns, stating the law seeks to suppress independent voices in Georgia and expressed support for civil society's human rights work.

Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna condemned the law as part of a broader crackdown on democracy by the ruling Georgian Dream party, saying it violates democratic principles and derails Georgia's path toward European integration.

Despite the criticism, the Georgian government maintains that the law will promote transparency and accountability regarding foreign influence.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Court Sentences Students to 12 Days for Allegedly Insulting MP



On May 30, Tbilisi City Court sentenced students Lika Lortkipanidze and Tatia Apriamashvili to 12 days of administrative detention following a complaint by Georgian Dream MP Mariam Lashkhi. The lawmaker accused them of publicly insulting her during a May 17 incident at a café where she was accompanied by her children. The students reportedly shouted slogans such as “Freedom for regime prisoners” and “No to the Russian regime” at Lashkhi. The Interior Ministry supported the complaint and sought a 45-day detention for the two students. In February, the Georgian Dream-led parliament amended legisla-

tion to classify insulting a public official as an administrative offense.

Activist Magda Mamukashvili, also involved in the incident, received a fine of 4,000 GEL but was not detained due to being the mother of a minor.



The sentencing sparked protests, with students marching from Ilia State University to Parliament, chanting against oppression. Fellow students announced plans to boycott classes on June 2 in solidarity, labeling the detentions as unjust.

In a separate case on the same day, the court sentenced Tornike Skhvitardze to five days of detention for allegedly insulting a police officer, while Ani Kavtaradze was fined 5,000 GEL.

Irakli Kobakhidze ‘Wishes Peace to Every Child’ on International Children’s Day

On June 1, PM Irakli Kobakhidze

shared a message marking International Children’s Day. He expressed his wish for peace for every child in the world, emphasizing that peace is essential for development.

“I wish peace to every child in the world, as it is the essential prerequisite without which there can be no development,” Kobakhidze said.

He also stressed the Georgian Dream’s

commitment to ensuring children’s rights, focusing on access to quality education, improving living conditions, and providing equal opportunities for safe development across Georgia.

“Our goal is for every child throughout Georgia to have equal opportunities for development and a safe environment,” the Prime Minister added.



Ursula von der Leyen receives Charlemagne Prize: ‘Europe from the Western Balkans to Ukraine and Moldova’

On 29 May, in the German city of Aachen, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen received the Charlemagne Prize, in honour of “an outstanding leader who is guiding the EU through a period of profound transformation with vision, courage, strength and foresight”, as the Prize’s board explained.

In her acceptance speech, Ursula von der Leyen described what she sees as the next great

European project: building an independent Europe.

She said that Europe must take things in its own hands and build its own future, free from

coercion and aggression: “A Union that stands up for its values and interests on the global stage... A Union that provides stability across Europe.”

She added that Europe does not only mean the EU: “When I say Europe, I of course mean our Union. But I also mean doing this together with our friends and partners across the continent. From the Western Balkans to Ukraine and Moldova. From Greenland to the United Kingdom and beyond. We have a duty to provide that stability on our continent and a perspective for the future together.”

President von der Leyen outlined four “key imperatives” to build an independent Europe. One of them is working on the “next historical reunification” of the European continent.

“A larger, reunified European Union will strengthen our voice in the world. It will help reduce our dependencies. It will ensure

that democracy, prosperity and stability are strengthened across Europe. Of course, accession will always be a merit-based process,” von der Leyen said.

She also compared the current situation with a historic turning point for Europe in 1989, “when the winds of change swept across Europe”.

“We see every day in Ukraine what fighting for freedom means. We have seen the sacrifices people are willing to make for the last three and a half years,” von der Leyen said. “So yes, this is a historic moment. And we must not let it pass us by. We must answer that call. For Ukraine. For the Western Balkans. For Moldova. Hopefully for Georgia. For all those who have made their choice. For a free and peaceful future inside our Union. For a stronger and independent Europe.”

(euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Monday, June 2

Day Clear
High: 27°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 16°C

Tuesday, June 3

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 23°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 16°C

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