

Zourabichvili: Government's Repressive Measures Reflect Weakness, Society Will Not Be Silenced

By Liza Mchedlidze

Georgia's fifth President, Salome Zourabichvili, has condemned recent actions of Georgian Dream aimed at restricting media and public discourse, describing them as a direct reflection of authoritarian tendencies and institutional weakness. Speaking at a briefing, Zourabichvili warned that attempts to control language in the media echo the dystopian vision of George Orwell and represent a broader effort to suppress public resistance.

"The attempt to control every word you say and start banning words is straight out of Orwell's book, a new attempt to further restrict society. Meanwhile, this society is fighting today, the protest continues, and they cannot suppress this protest," Zourabichvili stated.

According to her, the beginning of a new wave of repressions signals desperation on the part of the ruling authorities. She emphasized that state agencies, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs and others, are being shaken by the ongoing civic movement.

Zourabichvili reaffirmed the demands of the Resistance Platform, which she described as clear and unwavering. These include the call for new parliamentary elections and the immediate release of political prisoners.



"I want to reiterate very clearly the joint and agreed-upon position of the Resistance Platform regarding elections. This position remains completely unchanged. Our demand is for parliamentary elections, and if we cannot achieve this by October, if they are not scheduled, then joint parliamentary and local elections. This is the only demand, which will not change,

along with our second demand: the release of political prisoners."

She stressed that these elections must not be conducted under the influence or control of Bidzina Ivanishvili or the State Security Service, which she accused of undermining democratic integrity.

"These elections must not be held under Ivanishvili's rules, under the control of Ivanishvili

and his State Security Service. To this end, we have prepared a comprehensive document that outlines our positions and demands on how these elections should be and how they should be conducted."

Zourabichvili called for national unity, urging the public to resist efforts by the government to create confusion and division. She framed the current political

crisis as a decisive moment in Georgia's democratic struggle.

"They will not succeed unless they manage the only real lever the government has: sowing confusion, disappointment, and division in society. This is what we all must fight against together. In other words, unity in standing firm and continuing this fight to the end, and that end is already in sight," she said.

Khazaradze Addresses Speculation Over Lelo's Election Participation

By Liza Mchedlidze

Mamuka Khazaradze, chairman of Lelo – For a Strong Georgia, responds to comments made by the coalition's secretary general, Irakli Kupradze, regarding participation in the upcoming local elections.

"I would like to respond to the statement made by Lelo – For a Strong Georgia's Secretary General, Irakli Kupradze, during a televised interview, in which he said that opposition coalitions need to agree on a unified strategy around the local elections.

Our demand for snap elections and the release of political prisoners remains firmly on the agenda — it has not been removed, and will not be removed, under any possible scenario. We will fight for this to the end, uncompromisingly.

The dismantling of Bidzina Ivanishvili's Russian-style regime is only possible through a unified strategy and the consolidation of pro-European forces — not as it happened previously, when all coalitions but us abandoned the presidential format. We were the initiators of a unified front and have remained committed to it from the very beginning.

Let me add: no amount of hysteria or



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7321; Euro - 3.1162; GBP - 3.6924; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.4675; Swiss Franc - 3.3343

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Khazaradze Addresses Speculation Over Lelo’s Election Participation

pressure will derail a healthy discussion or the development of a winning strategy,” Khazaradze wrote.

He noted that he is currently outside the country and will provide a more detailed explanation upon his return.

On June 2, Irakli Kupradze stated that “serious deliberation on the local elections

needs to begin.” He also said that “it is possible to take and liberate Tbilisi from the malicious, violent, and pro-Russian rule of Georgian Dream.”

These remarks sparked speculation

that Lelo – For a Strong Georgia may be preparing to take part in the October municipal elections — a move that has drawn criticism from some of the opposition-aligned members of the public.

Roughly a week earlier, Giorgi Gakharia, chairman of the For Georgia party, made a similar comment during his party’s congress, stating that they are preparing “for any upcoming election.”

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

European Parliament Considers Special Resolution in Support of Journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli



The European Parliament may soon adopt a special resolution in support of jailed Georgian journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli, following growing concerns over media freedom and political repres-

sion in the country.

Lithuanian MEP Rasa Juknevičienė raised the issue during a session of the Parliament’s Subcommittee on Human Rights, calling the move both urgent and essential—if backed by other political groups.

“We wanted to visit Mzia in prison but were denied access,” Juknevičienė said. “She’s become a symbol of political imprisonment and press freedom under threat. Showing solidarity with her now is more important than ever.”

Juknevičienė recently returned from a visit to Georgia with fellow MEPs, where the delegation assessed the state of democracy and civil liberties. A report on their findings is expected to be published soon, outlining the challenges facing journalists and opposition voices in the country.

If adopted, the resolution would serve as a formal expression of support for Amaghlobeli and a signal to Georgian authorities that the international community is watching closely.

Lawyer Says Nika Melia Unfazed by New Charges, Denounces Investigation as Absurd

Opposition leader and one of the heads of the Coalition for Change, Nika Melia, has once again been charged by authori-

ties, this time for an incident during a court hearing. His lawyer, Beka Kvinikadze, described the charge as absurd and stated that Melia remains unfazed.

“He met the latest absurd charge with a smile. Honestly, he does not care how many absurd accusations the regime brings against him, so we did not even spend much time discussing it. We do not know when they will decide to officially press charges. One of the issues is the lack of access to information. At the moment, he still does not have his card and



after Melia threw water at Judge Irakli Shvangiradze during a court session. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has confirmed that the case is being investigated under Article 366 of the Criminal Code, which relates to contempt of court.

If convicted under this article, Melia could face penalties including a fine, community service, or up to one year of imprisonment.

On 29–30 May 2025, an online networking and capacity building event brought together over 100 civil society organisations (CSOs) to promote gender equality, LGBTQI+ inclusion and support for vulnerable groups from the Eastern Neighbourhood region. Organised by the EU4Gender Equality Helpdesk project and funded by the European Union (EU), the event offered a platform for participants to share their experiences, build alliances, and explore collaborative initiatives aimed at influencing reform processes regionally.

Civil society networking event promotes gender equality and resilience

Participants emphasised the importance of the EU’s support for inclusive reforms, especially considering challenges posed by the decline of democracy, shrinking civic space, rising anti-gender movements and funding cuts.

Highlighting gender aspects of political and security crises in the region, panellists discussed issues such as conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine, wartime domestic violence in Armenia, and systemic political repression of activists in Belarus. They also addressed a legislative amendment in Georgia that discontinues the implementation of gender policy and undermines the rights and freedoms of the LGBTI+ community.

Participants also contributed strategies for policy engagement, feminist advocacy and inclusive governance. This included campaigning in Armenia aimed at reforming labour laws to protect women from workplace harassment, emphasising how data-driven advocacy can drive legal change. Additionally, evidence from Georgia and Ukraine showcased how regional partnerships can translate feminist demands into government accountability. Furthermore, CSOs in Azerbaijan linked gender justice to climate resilience, drawing lessons from the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29).

As political challenges impact

human rights defenders across the region, this networking event underscored the value of collaborative efforts and support. Participants spotlighted the need to: Strengthen the involvement of civil society organisations in policymaking processes. Advocate for legal reforms that protect women and LGBTQI+ communities. Counter anti-gender narratives through coordinated regional advocacy. Promote trauma-informed and gender-sensitive responses in post-conflict situations. Bringing together participants from across the region – including the EU4Gender Equality Reform Helpdesk’s sister

project, ‘EU 4 Gender Equality: Together Against Gender Stereotypes and Gender-Based Violence’ implemented by UN Women and UNFPA, as well as the EaP Civil Society Forum and EU4Youth – the event affirmed that civil society’s collective resilience is key to safeguarding human rights and promoting inclusive reforms across the region.

This event is one of the ways the EU4Gender Equality Reform Helpdesk project advances gender equality and women’s empowerment in the Eastern Neighbourhood countries, particularly by supporting civil society’s engagement in reform processes.

Weather

Wednesday, June 4

Day ☁ Cloudy
High: 25°C

Night ☁ Partly Cloudy
Low: 15°C

Thursday, June 5

Day ☀ Clear
High: 27°C

Night ☁ Partly Cloudy
Low: 16°C

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