

Chairman Papuashvili Condemns MEP Auštrevičius' Call for Sanctions on Police Officials as Attack on Georgian State

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Chairman of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, has requested clarification from the Embassy of Lithuania regarding Petras Auštrevičius' statement urging the European Union to impose sanctions on individuals "who undermine democratic processes in Georgia". Auštrevičius specifically named Tbilisi police chief Vazha Siradze and Zviad Kharazishvili, director of the special tasks department, as targets for sanctions. Papuashvili characterized this as an "attack on the Georgian state."

According to Papuashvili, "attacks" by foreigners on the Georgian police and the Georgian state serve as ideological incitements to the violence occasionally witnessed against law enforcement officers.

"We saw a direct attack on the Georgian police from one of the members of the European Parliament, Petras Auštrevičius. This MEP is a member of the representative parliament of Lithuania. An attack on the police is an attack on the Georgian state. It is important because he is a representative of the Lithuanian government party. It would be good if we would hear relevant explanations from the Lithuanian embassy as well, regarding what this attack on the Georgian police means," said Shalva Papuashvili.

Papuashvili said that a rally became violent, with attacks on journalists and police, objects



thrown, and verbal abuse.

"We saw a rally that turned into violence. Among them, there were attacks on journalists and police officers; stones or other objects were thrown at the police. There was verbal abuse. It will remind you of what a cer-

tain group chanted and whose sentence was coined at the time. We remember all this from November 7.

There is a special investigation service that investigates such matters, but we saw different groups characterized by ag-

gression. There was violence against the police, obstruction of journalists. We saw attempts, calls, including by representatives of NGOs, to picket the parliament while the work process was going on in the parliament. I will return to the statement of

the European parliamentarians, the attacks by foreigners on the Georgian police, and on the Georgian state, are an ideological incitement to the violence that we later see against the police," Parliament Chairman said.

Georgian Dream MP Mamuka Mdinardze Clarifies 'Black Money' in 'Foreign Agents' Law

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Georgian Dream MP Mamuka Mdinardze has clarified that discussions concerning "black money" from donors do not refer to funds classified under criminal law. Rather, they pertain to officially deposited funds whose amounts and purposes remain undisclosed.

Mdinardze made this statement in response to a journalist's question, inquiring why relevant authorities weren't conducting investigations into the alleged influx of 'black money' and why state institutions appear inactive in addressing the issue.

MP emphasized that "black

money" does not necessarily imply funds obtained unlawfully but refers to officially registered funds with undisclosed origins, amounts, and purposes. Mdinardze stressed the opacity surrounding the expenditure of such funds, highlighting the lack of transparency in their use. He distinguished this definition from the conventional understanding of "black money" as illegally acquired funds.

"Black money – you're referring to black money under criminal law, and I've already explained it four times – either you're unaware, or you're intentionally disregarding it. If it's

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Georgian Dream MP Mamuka Mdinaradze Clarifies 'Black Money' in 'Foreign Agents' Law

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intentional, don't lie to people. If you're unaware, let me clarify once again. In this context, do you understand what we mean by black money?

The money that is received is officially registered, but we are unaware of the sender, the amount, and, more importantly, its intended use. This is the element and characteristic of the blackness of this money in this

case. I am not talking about that black money which is not visible and is called black money. In this case, we are talking about the black money that is being spent somewhere and we do not know

how much it is and for what purpose. Shall we not call it black money? Is this also black money or not? Do you agree with me? If, for example, some money is spent by you, which no one has

any idea about, where is it spent, should we call it black money or not? Do we have the right? You call it black money, you call it non-transparent. We are talking about non-transparent black money," Mdinaradze said.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Presidents of Georgia and Lithuania Discuss Recent Developments and European Aspirations



President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili discussed recent developments in the country during a phone call with Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda. The government administration has shared details of the conversation, highlighting President Zourabichvili's emphasis on the importance of preserving stability in Georgia.

The administration reported that Zourabichvili expressed gratitude to her Lithuanian counterpart for Lithuania's steadfast support of Georgia's European aspirations. She emphasized the significant role of partners and friends in endorsing the European path chosen by the Georgian people.

As noted by the administration, President Zourabichvili underscored the criti-

cal need for the country to uphold stability leading up to the elections and safeguard Georgia's European future through the electoral process.

"I am sure that the Georgian people will definitely vote for our European fu-

ture," said Salome Zourabichvili.

In a statement, the President of Lithuania said that during a conversation with the Georgian President, he expressed concern about the "Law On Foreign Agents" and its potential impact on Georgia's integration into the European Union.

Latvia Revokes Honorary Consul Title of MP Beka Odisharia Following Verbal Attack on Female MPs

Latvia revoked the title of honorary consul from Georgian Dream MP Beka Odisharia following an incident on April 3, where Odisharia verbally insulted female opposition MPs in Parliament, di-

recting curses and making misogynistic remarks towards them.

On April 4, Rihards Kols, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Latvian Saeima, strongly condemned Odisharia's use of derogatory language towards female deputies in parliament. He urged the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia to revoke his honorary status.

Georgian Dream leader Mamuka

Mdinaradze addressed the situation, asserting that Latvia's official bodies aimed to pressure the Georgian MP and interfere in Georgia's internal affairs. He claimed that this pressure was designed to influence the decisions of Beka Odisharia and other MPs, preventing them from making independent choices and instead compelling them to act under international pressure.



EU and UNDP launch Academy for Financial and Investment Readiness for Georgian municipalities



On 23 April, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) held the first workshop of the joint 'Academy for Financial and Investment Readiness' in Tbilisi.

Launched through the EU-funded 'Mayors For Economic Growth' (M4EG) Facility, the Academy aims to empower Georgian municipalities with the training and support they need to leverage funding and investment tools available in the EU.

Training and coaching will help municipalities to assess their existing financial mechanisms and align them with the relevant instruments of the EU.

The programme will also assist them in crafting effective positioning strategies and to develop competitive investment ideas and project proposals.

Currently, 11 Georgian municipalities, selected through a competitive process, are taking part in the Academy.

The M4EG Facility draws on the Mayors for Economic Growth Initiative, launched and funded by the European Union (EU) in 2017. Since 2021, the EU-funded M4EG Facility has been managed by UNDP in close cooperation with the EU, local authorities and a range of diverse partners.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, April 25

Day Partly Cloudy High: 29°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 14°C

Friday, April 26

Day Partly Cloudy High: 29°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 14°C

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Red Bench, Symbol of Fight Against Femicide

As a sign of the efforts of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in the fight against violence against women and any form of discrimination, a red bench was

placed on the territory of the Italian Embassy in Georgia on April 24. On the initiative of Minister Antonio Tajani, similar red benches were installed at Italian diplomatic missions in different coun-

tries as a symbol of “the void in society which femicide victims leave behind.”

Italian Ambassador to Georgia H.E. Massimiliano D'Antuono and Kaori Ishikawa, representative of the UN

Women's Organization in Georgia, attended the unveiling of the bench, recognized as a symbol of solidarity and the fight against violence against women.

