

Ex-president Saakashvili Denied the Right to Attend Trial Hearing

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Former president of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili has been denied the right to attend his trial hearing which was held yesterday at Tbilisi City Court. The Special Penitentiary Service of Georgia refused the transfer of the ex-President to the court, citing the risk of Saakashvili's supporters hindering his transportation back to the penitentiary.

The Special Penitentiary Service also claimed that transportation and attendance of the ex-president at the trial posed an additional risk to his health as he had stopped a substantial part of his treatment.

Saakashvili's lawyers have addressed three judges in the case, Nino Eleishvili, Lia Orkodashvili and Maia Kokiashvili, to ensure the former president's presence at the trial, which was dismissed by the judges. In response, the lawyers demanded the change of the judges, accusing them of making an unfair decision.

As Saakashvili's lawyer Beka Basilaia noted, the ex-president has the desire and ability to attend the trial.

Former Tbilisi Mayor Gigi Ugulava was expelled from the courtroom as he insulted the judge while demanding Saakashvili's attendance at the trial.

According to the ombudsman of Ukraine, Lyudmila Denisova, the Georgian justice system has violated Article 6 of the Convention for the Protection



► Former Tbilisi Mayor Gigi Ugulava was expelled from the courtroom as he was demanding Saakashvili's attendance at the trial.



► The next hearing in the November 7 case is scheduled for November 29.

of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms against Mikheil Saakashvili, which guarantees the right to a fair and public hearing. The ombudsman of Ukraine called on foreign states and international human rights organizations to respond to this violation per the law.

The trial hearing of the former president concerned the exceeding of official authority in various events, including the opposition rally dispersal in November 2007 and illegal raid in Imedi TV. Per the decision of the judges, the detention measure imposed on the former Georgian president on this case has been lifted. The next hearing in the November 7 case is scheduled for November 29. Saakashvili has also been charged with five other offences.

Yesterday, Georgian law enforcement arrested 46 individuals at rallies organized by the United National Movement in support of Saakashvili. According to the Georgian Interior Ministry, the activists violated the law of assembly and demonstration by attempting to block state buildings and disobeying police officers. The opposition is demanding the transfer of Saakashvili to a public clinic from a prison hospital, his release from prison, and the annulment of recent municipal election results. According to them, the rallies will be held regularly until all their demands are fulfilled by the government.

Pre-trial Detention of Saakashvili in the November 7 Case Has Been Canceled



► Lawyer Beka Basilaia: The court is waiting for Mikheil Saakashvili's physical condition to worsen to make sure he's not able to attend hearings.



► Saakashvili's doctor says the former president has injuries on his body.

BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

The measure of restraint imposed on Mikheil Saakashvili was canceled regarding the 'November 7 case'. The decision was made by judges - Lia Orkodashvili, Nino Eleishvili and Maia Kokiashvili. The hearing will continue on November 29. Lawyer Beka Basilaia said that the court is waiting for Mikheil Saakashvili's physical condition to worsen to make sure he's not able to go to court.

At today's trial, which lasted 4 hours, the judge refused to involve Mikheil

Saakashvili in the trial remotely or by telephone. According to Nino Eleishvili, the ex-president will be allowed to do so at the next trial. The Ministry of Justice refused to transfer Mikheil Saakashvili to the courtroom. According to them, during the transfer "there may have been destructive actions involving 500-600 cars."

Mikheil Saakashvili's doctor Nikoloz Kipshidze says that the external examination showed that Mikheil Saakashvili has injuries on his body. "Medical examination is underway now, it is not over yet, I left earlier because my part was

finished," Kipshidze said. Kipshidze says that Mikheil Saakashvili was morally strengthened for the court hearing, and is dissatisfied with the fact that he was not allowed to speak there. United National Movement Chairman Nika Melia says it will not hold protests near the hospital where former President Mikheil Saakashvili will be taken. According to the party, all kinds of provocations will be avoided. Amnesty International said that how the government is treating Saakashvili is not just selective justice, but clearly political revenge.

The Second Round of Self-Government Elections Has Taken Political Polarization to a New Level

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The second round of self-government elections on October 30 yielded the results announced by the ruling National Movement. Authorities won the planned victory everywhere except Tsalenjikha. However, according to the opposition, fair and just elections were not held in Georgia again and the Georgian Dream did not win, rather rigged the elections.

The advantage of the winning Georgian Dream in numbers and percentages does not look very impressive - a few hundred or a thousand votes, which may be less than the number of canceled ballots in the respective constituency. The government and the opposition are trying to present two different pictures of the elections.

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According to the Georgian Dream, the elections were held following all the rules and there can be no doubt about another victory of the ruling party. No elections will be held in the country until 2024, the country must calm down and start rebuilding. The United National Movement and its affiliated opposition parties are talking about total election fraud and a stolen victory. The issue of holding early parliamentary elections has not been removed from the agenda of the opposition. On the contrary, the issue of electoral administration reform has become more active and attached, as election commissions no longer deserve the trust of the opposition and are considered to be falsifiers of the election results.

According to the opposition, it is necessary to open the precinct voter lists first and it will become clear that "election carousels" have been turned in the name of many people in emigration or persons. Name a lot of facts about pressure and bribery on voters.

Opposition members are already demanding that the government show the public the situation of Mikheil Saakashvili in any way, even by taking him to court, which the former president wasn't allowed to do yesterday. Some thought that after the October 30 elections, the government would take Saakashvili to the hospital or send him abroad for treatment, say after the pardon of President Salome Zourabichvili. But on November 3, the 34th day of Saakashvili's hunger strike, Zourabichvili said for the second time that she would 'never pardon' Saakashvili. The statements of the leaders of the Georgian Dream do not help to ease the situation either.

The Prime Minister announced that according to the law, "a person has the right to commit suicide." According to

Irakli Kobakhidze, Saakashvili's hunger is a simulation. But what will happen and how will things develop if Saakashvili's body can no longer withstand hunger?

Saakashvili has many supporters and sympathizers who are concerned about the health of the third president and are resorting to various forms of protest, including the start of a hunger strike.

Saakashvili himself, despite the aggravation of the situation, is staying motivated and goal-oriented, sending messages through his teammates. According to Saakashvili, on October 30, the people won and an election revolution took place, and the government falsified the election results.

Now there is a post-election revolution in Georgia, which must determine the results of the electoral revolution. Saakashvili, if he manages to get out of prison, promises to "achieve snap elections within 10 days." In

another letter, Saakashvili called on Georgian emigrants to return to their homeland for one day and "this one day will come soon." Such statements by the starving president are likely to cause concern among the authorities.

Some opposition lawmakers are refusing to run for parliament in protest. Not all oppositionists will do so, but if 37 MPs resign, then constitutional changes will not be possible. The amendments were adopted in the first reading on September 7. According to the draft, the next two elections, which will be held under the proportional system, will be won by the parties that receive 2% of the vote. This is in the interests of small opposition parties. According to Mikheil Saakashvili, the opposition should leave the parliament only after the adoption of these changes.

After the second round of elections, the word 'revolution' is heard more and more often. According to one of the leaders

of the opposition in this country, "the election has lost its meaning, because its results are not written by the voters." According to the second opposition leader, if extraordinary elections are not held by 2024, Bidzina Ivanishvili will be able to stifle all the real opposition parties and only puppet opposition will remain on the political scene.

Opposition groups called for a change of government on social media and social media, prompting SUS to announce on November 3 that it had issued public statements calling for "revolution and the violent overthrow of the government, including through violence." The statement said that a person could be imprisoned for 3 years because of this. According to the coalition, the government has announced a wave of repression, which will make Georgia even more like Belarus. In response, many oppositionists stated the need for a revolution.

EU, France and Czech Republic Launch Project to Improve Georgia's Social Protection System

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The signing ceremony of the project on strengthening the social protection system was marked on November 11 at the Embassy of the Czech Republic. The project is implemented with the financial support of the European Union, Expertise France (AFD Group) and the Czech Development Agency (CzDA), in cooperation with the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.

The event was attended by the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Georgia Petr Mikiska, the Ambassador of the French Republic to Georgia Diego Kolas and the Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Georgia Catalin German. Tamila Barkalaia, Deputy Minister, spoke about the position of the Ministry, and the



► "This will be a big step forward for Georgia towards European and international standards," the Deputy Health Minister said.

project team held a brief presentation for the audience.

"Social protection is part of the core values of the EU. In a democratic society, it is the responsibility of each of us to care for vulnerable members of society and to ensure that all citizens can participate in social life and democratic processes. This is especially important given the reality of Covid-19, as many people need extra support. With this in mind, we are pleased to launch

a new project with our Team Europe partners, which we hope will have a positive impact in the coming years," German said.

According to the French Ambassador to Georgia there is already a global alliance between the development agencies of France and the Czech Republic, and he is pleased that this cooperation has developed in Georgia.

"We support the choice of the Georgian people and their respective governments to de-

velop a strong, dynamic European model democratic system in Georgia, which would logically be achieved in cooperation with such a successful and dynamic Eastern European democratic system as the Czech Republic. The implementation of this joint project is an important part of the broader institutional and democratic development agenda," Colas said.

According to the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Georgia, the development of the Social Code is a key reform aimed at establishing an effective social welfare system in Georgia, which also provides for the decentralization of social protection services. The project "Strengthening the Social Security System in Georgia" aims to support the Georgian government and state institutions in developing social services, developing evidence-based policies and strengthening social rights. The duration of the project is 24 months, and the main implementing partners are

Expertise France and the Czech Development Agency.

The project will be implemented in 3 main directions. The 1st component provides for the improvement of remittances of social services and social assistance (allowance) available locally to the Social Services Agency. The 2nd component provides improved analysis of information on social rights and social services and large-scale communication. Under the 3rd component, it is planned to support the Ministry in the process of drafting a social code that will facilitate the expansion of social rights. The process of drafting the Code will be inclusive and collaborative, resulting in the development of evidence-based policies and the legislative process.

The first phase of the project has already started, within which it is planned to align the policy on the key directions and strategies that are necessary to improve the development of social protection services.

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 11

Day

Cloudy

Night

Rain

High: 10°C

Low: 5°C

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 12

Day

Cloudy

Night

Clear sky

High: 9°C

Low: 1°C

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