



# Weekly News Digest on Georgia November 8-10, 2021

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## Internal Affairs

### ❖ Local Elections 2021 & Political Developments

#### 1. Garibashvili Pledges Equal Treatment to Tsalenjikha

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili said the central government is ready for constructive cooperation with a newly-elected opposition Mayor of western Tsalenjikha Municipality.

Speaking at a government session on November 8, the Prime Minister said Gia Kharchilava, the only opposition mayor elected in October 2021 local elections, had "won deservedly."

PM Garibashvili asserted that he would do the same treatment for Tsalenjikha Municipality and its population as he would do for other municipalities across the country, where the ruling Georgian Dream candidates claimed victory.

According to the official results, Gia Kharchilava of the United National Movement is the only opposition candidate claiming victory in local election runoffs on October 30. The ruling party candidates won all the remaining 63 municipalities (excluding those in the occupied regions) (*Civil.ge, November 8, 2021*).

#### 2. Public Defender Slams Penitentiary Publishing Inmate Saakashvili's Footage

Public Defender of Georgia on November 6 criticized the release of footage purporting to show former President Mikheil Saakashvili taking in sustenance in the N12 Rustavi prison's medical facility. The footage apparently lent support to the Georgian Dream government's claims that jailed Saakashvili has broken his hunger strike – which Ombudsperson Nino Lomjaria, based on medical and prison records, affirms is not the case.

The Ombudsperson stressed that portraying taking medically advised food supplements as breaking a hunger strike could push hunger-striking inmates to refuse receiving medicines and fluids. Disseminating incorrect information publicly harms the rights of not only Saakashvili, but all inmates, the Public Defender stressed.

The footage was published by the Special Penitentiary Service on November 6. The State Inspector's Service, an agency tasked with overseeing data privacy, said on November 7 that it opened an inquest to examine the lawfulness of obtaining and disseminating the footage. The Inspector also underlined the importance of protecting a hunger-striking inmate's privacy and the dangers of undermining their trust in the institution and medical staff that surround them (*Civil.ge, November 8, 2021*).

#### 3. Saakashvili Transferred to Gldani Prison Hospital

Jailed ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili, on a hunger strike since October 1, has been transferred to the No.18 prison hospital in Gldani, Tbilisi.

The Special Penitentiary Service made the announcement at 18:57, November 8, about an hour after reports emerged that Saakashvili had been helicoptered out of Rustavi prison. The Service said it would provide additional information to the public gradually. Later it was specified by the Ministry of Justice, that Saakashvili

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has been transferred to Gldani Facility with emergency vehicle (*Civil.ge, November 8, 2021*).

#### **4. Opposition Rallies in Tbilisi, Melia says demonstrations will be permanent**

The opposition packed the Freedom Square in downtown Tbilisi, demanding the transfer of ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili to a civilian hospital, his release and to have the "stolen [local] elections returned."

Addressing the rally, United National Movement chair Nika Melia pledged that the protest will not stop until the three demands are met.

The rally was preceded shortly by the authorities transferring hunger-striking Saakashvili to the No.18 prison hospital, despite calls by the opposition and the Public Defender's Office to take the inmate to a multi-profile civilian clinic.

"We will not disband. Tbilisi streets will not be emptied," Melia asserted, calling on the public to join the protest.

But, the UNM leader warned supporters against protesting outside the prison clinic in Gldani, north-eastern outskirts of Tbilisi, warning it could be perceived as a provocation.

Pointing out that the Gldani prison facility, which hosts the prison hospital, accommodates "the most severe criminals," Melia argued a protest outside would allow the Georgian Dream party to "stage a riot" in the prison and threaten Saakashvili's life (*Civil.ge, November 8, 2021*).

#### **5. Ukrainian Foreign Ministry publishes a statement about Saakashvili**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expressed its disappointment with the transfer of Mikheil Saakashvili, a citizen of Ukraine, to the №18 penitentiary in Gldan and the lack of information from the Ukrainian side.

"We call on the Georgian side to immediately transport Mikheil Saakashvili to a civilian medical facility that would have all the necessary facilities to provide proper medical care and emergency care.

Today, the official note of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on this issue was sent to the Foreign Ministry of Georgia." – reads the statement (*mfa.gov.ua, November 8, 2021*).

#### **6. Ukrainian MPs Address Georgian President, PM Over Saakashvili**

89 lawmakers of the Ukrainian Rada have addressed Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili and Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili over former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, now a citizen of Ukraine, Ukrainian media outlet Gordon reported on November 8.

The news comes as hunger-striking Saakashvili has been transferred to Gldani prison hospital in northeast Tbilisi in the evening of November 8, despite Saakashvili himself, his doctor's and lawyers' vocal opposition to the move, citing multiple risks and demanding his treatment in a civilian clinic instead.

In the letter, Ukrainian lawmakers are calling on Georgian leaders to urgently provide the former President with a high-level medical care, to ensure Saakashvili has unhindered access to consular and legal protection, as well as the immediate return of Saakashvili to Ukraine.

Expressing concerns over Saakashvili's deteriorating health, the Ukrainian MPs have also called for his transfer to a civilian hospital (*Civil.ge, November 8, 2021*).

#### **7. Justice minister claims Saakashvili physically insulted prison staff following his transfer**

Georgian justice minister Rati Bregadze has stated that former Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili physically insulted prison staff in Gldani No. 18 facility, where allegedly he was forcibly brought.

In an interview with Imedi TV, Bregadze noted that the incident took place while he was admitted to Gldani No.18 prison hospital, noting that the general inspection of the ministry has started the investigation.

"[Saakashvili] physically and verbally abused staff at the penitentiary and damaged expensive medical equipment," the statement of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia reports.

Bregadze explained that the risk of his health condition's deterioration increased due to his refusal to receive hunger-related treatment, noting that it resulted in Saakashvili's transfer to the prison hospital.

Additionally, he said that per the Georgian State Security Service (SSS) there was a threat of road blocking and some other destructive actions while Saakashvili's transfer to the hospital.

This decision [Saakashvili's transfer to prison hospital] was made to minimise and prevent health risks. His supervision will be better [in Gldani prison] than in the Rustavi prison facility. The decision was made for his safety," Bregadze said (November 8, 2021).

#### **8. Penitentiary service: Saakashvili didn't leave Rustavi prison against his will**

The Special Penitentiary Service of Georgia has released [the video footage](#) of the former Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili leaving the Rustavi Prison No.12, which refutes the speculation that Saakashvili was transferred to Gldani prison clinic by force. The service said it posted the footage due to 'high public interest.' Ombudswoman Nino Lomjaria, who visited Saakashvili in Gldani prison clinic this evening, said that the former president was told that he was being transferred to a civil hospital instead of a prison clinic, which he agreed to. Lomjaria added that Saakashvili does not have any visual injuries (*Agenda.ge*, November 8, 2021).

#### **9. Ombudswoman: medical equipment recommended by doctors' council not available in hospital where Saakashvili was transferred**

Georgian Public Defender Nino Lomjaria has stated that the Gldani No.18 prison hospital, where ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili was transferred earlier today, is not provided with two medical devices - MRT and catheterisation equipment - that were recommended by the medical council.

"I talked to resuscitators, including the chief physician, and visited the surgical and intensive care unit...There is some equipment on the ground," Lomjaria said.

Lomjaria also noted that Saakashvili thought he would be transferred to civil hospital as the medical council concluded in the document which was compiled by the doctors without actually seeing Saakashvili based on the information provided by his personal doctor.

"[Saakashvili] wanted to meet with the medical council and was waiting for a meeting at 3 pm, but was refused," Lomjaria says.

Representative of the Georgian Public Defender's office Mikheil Gogadze has also visited Saakashvili in prison, stating that he was transferred to the facility under protest.

"As far as I could see [Saakashvili] had no injuries. He himself does not talk about injuries," Lomjaria says.

Lomjaria also noted that one of the devices, that was brought to the prison hospital on November 8, is still located in the corridor, noting that hospital staff say they will install it (*Agenda.ge, November 8, 2021*).

#### **10. Saakashvili: purpose of my transfer is my physical destruction under Putin's order**

Ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili who was transferred to Gldani prison hospital today, has released the letter from the facility stating that the purpose of the recent activities is his physical destruction under Russian president Vladimir Putin's order.

He claims that the prison staff verbally and physically abused him, noting that he was 'cursed and dragged to the ground.'

Saakashvili also says that the 'criminals' in the prison were amused when he approached the building.

"The officers started dragging me, without warning, despite my categorical refusal, dragged me out of the car, [while inmates were swearing], dragged me to the ground and hit me several times in the neck, dragging me with my hair and of course I resisted," the letter of Mikheil Saakashvili reads (*Agenda.ge, November 8, 2021*).

#### **11. Kyiv Demands Saakashvili's Transfer to Civilian Hospital**

The Foreign Ministry of Ukraine has expressed its "disappointment" over the transfer of Mikheil Saakashvili to the prison hospital in Gldani, northeast Tbilisi and the lack of relevant information from the Georgian side.

In a November 8 statement, the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine called on the Georgian authorities to "immediately transport" Mikheil Saakashvili to a civilian hospital that would have "all the necessary facilities to provide proper medical care and emergency care."

The Ministry said it sent an official note to the Foreign Ministry of Georgia.

"The further stay of Mikheil Saakashvili, a citizen of Ukraine, in a penitentiary medical institution creates additional risks and tensions, which can be avoided due to humanitarian considerations," the statement said (*Civil.ge, November 9, 2021*).

#### **12. Saakashvili Says Deceived, Abused when Taken to Prison Hospital**

In his first missive from the Gldani #18 prison hospital, hunger striking former President Mikheil Saakashvili said the prison administration had lied to him that he was being transferred to a civilian clinic. He also said he was physically abused after having refused to leave the ambulance and enter the prison hospital.

Saakashvili said that upon entering the Gldani penitentiary facility — "a section of criminals", as he put it — he became victim of physical and verbal abuse.

In the letter, the former President complained that the staff dragged him out of the ambulance while being insulted by the inmates from the nearby prison wards. Saakashvili said he "was dragged on the ground and hit several times in the neck" by the penitentiary officials.

"I was dragged by my hair and of course I resisted, just like in the [hospital] ward, where some vaguely criminal-looking medical staff approached me" with syringes Saakashvili went on: "This time I really bumped the analyzer because they started injecting something into me without my permission." He explained "my reaction was caused by the stress after all this violence and abuse."

The former President said upon the forced arrival to the penitentiary facility

premises, one of the prison workers addressed him: "Look, birdie, now you are in our hands," and started insulting him (*Civil.ge, November 9, 2021*).

### **13. State Fails to Respect Saakashvili's Dignity, Public Defender Says**

The Public Defender's Office said today placing Mikheil Saakashvili in Gldani #18 prison hospital "clearly violates the state's obligation to respect human dignity," calling on the Justice Minister Rati Bregadze and the Special Penitentiary Service to immediately transfer the hunger-striking ex-President to an alternative medical facility.

The statement came after Public Defender Nino Lomjaria visited Mikheil Saakashvili in the prison clinic late last night.

Lomjaria cited Mikheil Saakashvili as saying he was not informed about his transfer to the prison hospital and was instead told that he would be admitted to a civilian hospital following a medical council's decision, to which he reportedly agreed.

The Public Defender's office said that in N12 prison in Rustavi, where Saakashvili was held before his transfer yesterday, they could not find any documents that would show the ex-President was informed about the decision and that he consented to the transfer.

Saakashvili reportedly told Lomjaria that he was forcibly taken into the prison hospital building. The Public Defender's Office said they provided information about the incident to the State Inspector's Service, an agency with the authority to probe allegations of abuse of power. Today, the State Inspector's Service said it launched an investigation into "the possible inhumane treatment" of the former President (*Civil.ge, November 9, 2021*).

### **14. U.S. Ambassador Urges Saakashvili's Immediate Transfer to 'Fully Equipped Medical Facility'**

U.S. Ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan has urged the Government of Georgia to ensure that Mikheil Saakashvili is immediately provided with "medical care that he needs in a fully equipped medical facility." She added, "in any country, the government has responsibility to protect inmates from mental abuse as well as providing medical well-being and safety".

In her remarks to reporters in Batumi today, Ambassador Degnan cited the report by the Public Defender's Office, according to which #18 prison hospital in Gldani is not sufficiently well-equipped to provide hunger-striking ex-President a proper treatment. The Ambassador also cited the assessment by Saakashvili's medical team, that says ex-President is a high-risk patient.

"We also urge Mr. Saakashvili to accept the recommendation of his doctors to accept medical care he needs," the U.S. Ambassador said, adding: "this is obviously very sensitive and emotional situation." (*Civil.ge, November 10, 2021*)

### **15. EU Ambassador, MEPs, React to Saakashvili Detention Developments**

EU Ambassador to Georgia, Carl Hartzell said upholding ex-president Saakashvili's "rights and due legal process are key and under the full responsibility of the Georgian authorities."

He stated that these "include the right to stand trial in transparent, fair, and due judicial proceedings and the right to adequate healthcare as well as privacy and dignity whilst in prison." He commended the "trusted local partners" that are helping the EU monitor the developments, highlighting the role of the Public

Defender.

Ambassador Hartzell was speaking at the online panel dedicated to the impact of the local elections on EU-Georgia relations, which was hosted by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), one of Georgia's key legal aid CSOs.

MEP Marina Kaljurand seconded Ambassador Hartzell's statement, adding that the European Parliament "follows very closely" the developing situation with the former Georgian president, and expects that "all his rights are respected...and all the legal decisions will be taken by the principle of the rule of law." (*Civil.ge, November 10, 2021*)

#### **16. U.S. State Department: Treat Saakashvili Fairly, with Dignity**

Responding to question during his daily press briefing on November 9, U.S. State Department Spokesperson Ned Price urged the Government of Georgia "to immediately take steps to ensure that Mr. Saakashvili's urgent mental health and medical needs are addressed. We continue to urge the Government of Georgia to treat Mr. Saakashvili fairly and with dignity in accordance with international standards and Georgian law."

He reminded the Government of Georgia of its "responsibility" to "protect inmates from abuse, including mental abuse; to provide adequate medical care, and to protect their private health information in accordance with Georgian law." Spokesperson Price said that he was basing his intervention on the previous statement of the Public Defender of Georgia (*Civil.ge, November 10, 2021*).

#### **17. Amnesty Int'l, HRW Decry Saakashvili's Treatment**

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, reputed international human rights organizations, voiced concerns regarding the treatment of the jailed Georgian ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili, who has been on hunger strike since October 1.

In a tweet dated November 9, Amnesty International said Saakashvili's treatment by Georgian authorities was "not just selective justice but apparent political revenge." It noted that the ex-President was "violently transferred to the prison hospital, allegedly threatened; denied dignity, privacy, and adequate healthcare." (*Civil.ge, November 10, 2021*)

#### **18. Saakashvili Denied the Right to Attend Trial**

The Special Penitentiary Service of Georgia refused the transfer of ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili to his ongoing trial hearing at Tbilisi City Court, citing the risks of a conspiracy by his supporters to obstruct the convoy, as well as health concerns due to his weeks-long hunger strike.

Saakashvili, currently at a prison hospital where he was allegedly taken against his will on November 8, is standing trial on exceeding official authority in a series of events, including disbanding the 2007 anti-government protests and a raid on and "seizure" of Imedi TV station, then opposition channel.

Referring to the earlier charges by the State Security Service of Georgia regarding the conspiracy to commit the coup by Saakashvili's supporters, the Penitentiary said "destructive actions," such as blocking the path to the prison hospital to "cause chaos and uncontrollable situation" may have taken place during ex-President's transfer to the City Court (*Civil.ge, November 10, 2021*).

#### **19. CSOs Call for Saakashvili's Transfer to Civilian Hospital**

Eight Georgian civil society outfits issued a joint statement yesterday, calling the authorities to immediately transfer former President Mikheil Saakashvili "to an

alternative medical facility.”

“It is vital that the third President of Georgia would be immediately transferred to an alternative medical institution, where his dignity, life, health, and safety could be adequately ensured,” CSOs noted.

The statement asserted that public statements by the Georgian Dream government officials “clearly indicate” that the decision to transfer the former President to a prison hospital instead of the civilian one “was taken with their involvement and according to their desire.”

Noting that “the full responsibility for the current events rests with the government,” CSOs noted that the decisions taken regarding the treatment of Saakashvili have neither been aimed at defusing the severe political crisis in the country nor have they been conditioned by the best health and safety interests of the prisoner (*Civil.ge*, November 10, 2021).

#### **20. Saakashvili Treatment: UNM Says No Demo Outside Civilian Clinic**

The United National Movement, party of Mikheil Saakashvili, said it assumes full responsibility there will be no protest rally outside or in the vicinity of any hospital that jailed former President is transferred to.

The statement comes as the Georgian Dream government denies transferring Saakashvil, who is 41 days into his hunger strike, to a civilian hospital, citing fears over UNM supporters storming a civilian clinic to release the ex-President.

Currently Saakashvili is held in Gldani prison hospital, where he was taken on November 8, allegedly against his will. The former President is now rejecting any treatment in the prison hospital, demanding to be transferred to a civilian clinic (*Civil.ge*, November 10, 2021).

#### **21. Kobakhidze Hits Out on Public Defender**

The ruling Georgian Dream party chair Irakli Kobakhidze slammed Public Defender, Nino Lomjaria saying she pursues “the same agenda” as the United National Movement (UNM), the largest opposition party. This comes after series of critical statements that the ombudsperson’s office has issued concerning the treatment of the incarcerated president, Mikheil Saakashvili.

“[The case of] Nino Lomjaria shows why UNM should not be given even a single official position, they use everything for deceit,” MP Kobakhidze claimed.

Lomjaria, former civil activist and a deputy head of State Audit Office, was nominated to the Ombudsperson’s Office by the Georgian Dream in 2017, out of four candidates named by civil socety organizations. At the time, the UNM faction voted for Lomjaria after initial hesitation in supporting the ruling party pick, while the European Georgia parliamentary minority group – a splinter faction of UNM – voted against.

Responding to journalists on November 9, MP Irakli Kobakhidze said both Lomjaria and the UNM continue “baseless” demands to transfer ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili to a civilian hospital to “execute radical plans that we saw in action yesterday” – apparently referring to protests in downtown Tbilisi yesterday evening, which demanded Saakashvili to be treated in a civil hospital and his release from imprisonment (*Civil.ge*, November 9, 2021).

#### **22. GD Chair Alleges “Radicals” in Opposition Plan Poisoning MP Khoshtaria**

The ruling Georgian Dream Chair Irakli Kobakhidze alleged today that unnamed “radicals” among opposition had been discussing the poisoning of MP Elene

Khoshtaria, Droa party leader, at one of their yesterday's meetings. He did not specify whether this information came from the law enforcement sources.

Khoshtaria, who formally remains an MP albeit never entered the legislature after rejecting October 2020 parliamentary elections, has been on a hunger strike since November 3, demanding the transfer of jailed ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili, also on hunger strike, to a civilian hospital.

Referring to the November 6 statement of the State Security Service, where they claimed the government opponents were "actively considering" killing of one of the opposition leaders, Kobakhidze stressed, "the cornered radicals have not stopped talking about extreme steps, including murders of their teammates." MP Kobakhidze warned these "radicals" that "any attempt to commit any crime will be severely punished according to the law." (*Civil.ge, November 9, 2021*)

### **23. 46 Detained at Opposition Rallies**

Police have detained 46 people gathered for opposition rallies at various government buildings across the capital, Tbilisi.

The protesters at the Security Service, Health and Justice Ministries have gathered to protest the government's treatment of the imprisoned ex-president, Mikheil Saakashvili and to demand his transfer to a civilian hospital for monitoring his deteriorating state of health. Saakashvili has been on a hunger strike for over 40 days. He was transferred to a prison hospital on November 9, allegedly against his will.

The Ministry of Interior said on November 10 that protesters "exceeded the limits allowed by the law on freedom of assembly and expression and made attempts to block the entrances of the administrative bodies." Chief of the Patrol Police Vazha Siradze, said protesters were detained for administrative offenses, including disobeying a lawful request from the police, insulting police officers, petty hooliganism, and blocking administrative buildings.

Most of the protesters were detained on the morning of November 10 outside the so-called "Moduli" building of the State Security Service in Tbilisi's Saburtalo neighborhood. The protesters have called for transferring Saakashvili to a civilian hospital and for the end of the political influence on the security agency.

Available video footage shows police detained protesters on pavement the opposite side of the road outside the State Security Service building, where demonstrators were neither blocking the entrance to the facility, nor disrupting the traffic. According to media reports detainees include several politicians, including Murman Dumbadze, Saakashvili's foe-turned-ally (*Civil.ge, November 10, 2021*).

### **❖ COVID-19**

#### **24. Georgia Lets Teens Get COVID Jabs, Approves Booster Shots**

The National Center for Disease Control and Public Health announced today that Immunization Council decided to allow vaccination of adolescents aged 12-15 with two doses of Pfizer vaccine. Youngsters will be able to receive the jab with parental consent.

NCDC also said "booster doses" will be available after November 10 to all those who were fully vaccinated. Those adults who were first vaccinated with Chinese-made Sinopharm or Sinovac vaccines may choose to from either Sinopharm, Sinovac or Pfizer-made vaccines for their booster dose.

Senior citizens of 60 years and older vaccinated with Sinopharm and Sinovac can



get the booster dose at an interval of 3 to 6 months after their second jab. Fully vaccinated people with AstraZeneca or Pfizer, could get the the Pfizer booster dose after six months (*Civil.ge*, November 10, 2021).

#### ❖ **Occupied Territories**

##### **25. Bzhania in Favor of Russians Buying Real Estate in Abkhazia**

Kremlin-backed Abkhaz leader Aslan Bzhania said on November 8 that Sokhumi “needs to get to the point” where Russian citizens are allowed to buy real estate in Abkhazia.

Speaking at a meeting in Tkvarcheli, Bzhania stressed that the right to buy real estate “is the economic aspect” and “should not be related to acquiring political rights or citizenship.”

“We need people here, we need specialists working, coming, and going. People for whom our manufacturer will work, and for whom he will grow products,” he said.

Foreigners have been banned from buying real estate in Abkhazia, an issue that has led to long-time controversies in the occupied region, primarily over the prevalent fears among many of the Abkhaz of being

#### **Foreign Affairs**

##### **26. Two U.S. Navy Ships Make Port Call in Batumi**

Two U.S. Navy vessels, the Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) entered the Batumi port on November 8.

The two vessels are ships of the U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa 6th Fleet, which stated the visit highlights “an important relationship between NATO allies and vital Black Sea partner Georgia.”

USS Porter is on its fourth trip to Georgia, while USS Mount Whitney, the flagship of the U.S. Sixth Fleet, is on its fifth. The latter was one of the vessels to carry U.S. humanitarian assistance to Georgia following the 2008 Russo-Georgian war.

According to the statement, an integrated team of the U.S. Sixth Fleet and Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO are operating onboard the USS Mount Whitney (*Civil.ge*, November 8, 2021).

##### **27. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary Continues Tbilisi Visit**

Erika Olson, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State overseeing policy for Southern Europe and the Caucasus, who arrived in Tbilisi on November 4, continues meetings in the Georgian capital. Today, she held meetings with Georgian Dream lawmakers, Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani, as well as CSO representatives.

##### **Meeting with GD MPs**

The meeting with ruling party MPs focused on developments taking place in Georgia in the aftermath of local elections held in October, judicial reform, security, the situation in the wider region and strategic issues, as per GD lawmakers.

**Georgian Dream chairperson Irakli Kobakhidze** told reporters after the meeting that “we have discussed all of the topics, and we have talked the importance of peace in Georgia. Our main message is that we need a different agenda, that is oriented on the development.”

**Nikoloz Samkharadze, Chair of Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee**, told reporters that “the United States is ready to continue supporting judicial

reform in Georgia. On our part, we expressed readiness to continue judicial reform based on... facts and needs identified through the analysis of the third and fourth reform of judiciary."

**Meeting in the Foreign Ministry**

At the meeting in the Foreign Ministry, the Deputy Assistant Secretary has met Georgian top diplomat David Zalkaliani and First Deputy Foreign Minister Lasha Darsalia.

The parties discussed, among others, U.S.-Georgia strategic partnership, Georgia's occupied regions and the security environment in the Black Sea and the South Caucasus regions.

"The parties expressed readiness to continue deepening U.S.-Georgia partnership in all priority directions," according to the press release by the Georgian Foreign Ministry (*Civil.ge*, November 8, 2021).