

Georgian president refuses to recognize election results, appeals for Western backing

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Political turmoil has seized the south Caucasus country of Georgia, after President Salome Zourabichvili declared Sunday that she would not recognize the results of parliamentary elections held the day before. The vote delivered a victory to the ruling Georgian Dream party, which won 53.92 percent of the ballots cast, securing it 89 seats in the legislature and renewing its mandate to form a government. The leading opposition parties, which the president backs, collectively won 37.78 percent of the vote, giving them a total of 61 representatives.

Zourabichvili, who was born in France and worked in its diplomatic service for 30 years, including as the country's ambassador to Georgia, described Saturday's elections as a "Russian special operation" and a "constitutional coup." The head of state, who, while occupying a ceremonial position is also commander-in-chief of the military, called for mass protests on Monday night and appealed for "the firm support of our European partners, of our American partners."

Press reports indicate that tens of thousands took to the streets, with many draped in Georgian and EU flags, similar to mass pro-Western demonstrations that occurred in the early summer when the Georgian Dream government passed a "foreign agents" law. Zourabichvili, who told the crowd yesterday night "They stole your vote," found time between addressing the demonstrations and working to overturn to the election results to give an interview to CNN. Speaking to Christiane Amanpour on Monday, she described the October 26 vote as a "complete falsification."

The country's president is laying the groundwork for overthrowing the re-elected ruling party. As Brian Whitmore, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, noted Monday in a comment on the organization's website, "Georgia's 2024 parliamentary election has entered its 'Maidan' phase." Drawing a comparison between what is unfolding in Tbilisi now and the right-wing coup that

brought to power the current regime in Kiev, he observed, "This weekend's deeply flawed election was just the opening bell."

The Georgian opposition, which is ferociously anti-Russian and has extremely close ties to Washington and Brussels, insists that vote buying, physical violence and other "irregularities" marred Saturday's vote. Several opposition political parties have said they will refuse to take their seats.

Irakli Kobakhidze, the leader of GD and head of the country's parliament, has denied that his party was involved in any efforts to manipulate the election. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitri Peskov also rejected accusations of Russian involvement, which he described as having become standard fare.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), whose 529 poll watchers observed the balloting, is playing a leading role in bolstering the opposition's claims, as is the White House and the EU as a whole, all of which are demanding an investigation into the outcome.

The grounds for their demands are shaky. According to French Senator and Special Coordinator for the OSCE Pascal Alliard, the Georgian parliamentary election was flawed because of "imbalances in financial resources" and a "divisive campaign atmosphere"—in other words, the party that won had more money. It used its domination of the media to promote itself, and there are sharp political divisions in the population. He could not indicate, however, why any of these things—features of every modern election in every capitalist society—would make the outcome questionable.

Similarly, Antonio López-Istúriz White, the head of the European Parliament delegation that monitored the Georgian election, criticized the outcome because "during the electoral campaign, the ruling party used anti-Western and hostile rhetoric, targeting Georgia's democratic

partners, in particular the European Union, its politicians and diplomats, promoted Russian disinformation, manipulation and conspiracy theories.”

In essence, according to him, if the United States, the EU or NATO are criticized in any political process in any country, it makes that process—whether it be an election, media coverage or anything else—illegitimate.

Despite what is clearly a gathering campaign on the part of the Western-backed opposition to seize power in Tbilisi on the basis of accusations of election fraud, little evidence has been presented to substantiate the claims. There have been only statements of foreign election observers hostile to the ruling party and videos circulating on social media that show people forcefully shoving ballots into boxes in some unspecified location on an unidentified date in support of an unnamed candidate.

And even if these incidents and other alleged reports of people being pressured into voting one way or another, paid to cast a ballot, or otherwise intimidated turn out to be true, there is no reason to assume that vote rigging was solely, or even primarily, carried out on behalf of the ruling party. The opposition’s backers in Washington are masters at overturning democratic elections and have worked systematically over the years to create in Georgia an extensive network of pro-Western, non-governmental organizations, democratic-advocacy networks, press outlets and the like with the sole purpose of securing American and European interests in the south Caucasus.

Thus far the OSCE has held back from declaring that Georgia’s election results are completely invalid, a step that the White House has also yet to take. The latter, in particular, may be to some extent hemmed in at the moment by the obvious contradiction between the Biden administration’s support for the opposition in Tbilisi and the fact that Donald Trump—whom Harris and Biden, albeit meekly, have described as a would-be dictator—has also made clear that he will not recognize any vote that does not hand him victory.

However, neither this nor the veracity of the claims about election fraud in Georgia will stop the efforts of the NATO powers, with the aid of the local opposition, to secure what they want on the ground in the south Caucasus. Due to its geographic location, Georgia, as well as neighboring Armenia, is at the center of the United States and Europe’s war plans, both with regards to Russia and Iran.

Washington has been involved in the country for decades, pouring money into “civil society” organizations, working to establish closer military ties

with the state, and helping to orchestrate the overthrow of administrations it identifies as too close to Russia, such as during the 2004 Rose Revolution.

Georgian Dream won the election because it presented itself as an anti-war party, the only means by which to prevent the nation from being ruled by the “global party of war” and transformed into NATO’s “second front.” It won support among those sections of the population that fear what will happen to them if they become the next launching pad for NATO, are sympathetic to the plight of the Russian people on the basis of the countries’ shared cultural and political history, and are not terribly convinced, after decades of miseries being visited upon themselves and others around the world, of the West’s promises of prosperity and democracy.

GD, however, has no real ability to stop the tiny nation of less than 4 million from being dragged into World War Three. It represents that section of the Georgian ruling class that aims to balance between Russia and the West and is constantly seeking some sort of negotiated solution. Although the opposition presents GD as fanatical Putinists who hate Europe and all its values, it has long made clear its desire to bring Georgia into the EU.

Prime Minister Kobakhidze reiterated this just one day prior to the parliamentary elections. Speaking in an interview with Euronews on October 25, he described his government as “pro-European” and stated, “We will continue to do everything to promote Georgia’s EU accession in the future.”

Kobakhidze’s efforts to appease his critics, however, have failed. Georgia’s ruling party is targeted for removal, drawn into a maelstrom enveloping all the former Soviet countries ringing the Black Sea. In nearby Moldova, pro-EU forces, taking the opposite tactic to that of their counterparts in Georgia, just claimed victory in a highly questionable vote. According to their version of events, they managed to win the contest despite the evil of “Russian disinformation.” Which elections are “legitimate” and which are not has nothing to do with the integrity of the voting but the degree to which the outcome comports with what Washington and Brussels want.



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