

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 21, 2020

His Excellency Giorgi Gakharia
Prime Minister of Georgia
7 Ingorokva St
Tbilisi 0114, Georgia

Dear Prime Minister Gakharia,

We write as Members of Congress that have been longtime supporters of Georgia's path toward democratic reform and Western integration. However, as some of us expressed to you in our letter from December 13, 2019, we are concerned over the decision to forego promised democratic reforms and the associated violence against peaceful protesters. We are also alarmed by the politicization of the Anaklia Deep Sea Port project.

As Georgia moves toward the 2020 parliamentary elections under Georgian Dream's leadership, we continue to encourage you to protect the legitimacy of these elections and ensure they are guarded against both internal and external interference. In your response letter, dated December 17, 2019, you pledged that the 2020 elections would be held to the highest standard. Yet, recent reports indicate that Facebook had to shut down an extensive network of accounts funded by Georgian Dream. The fact that these accounts were apparently spreading anti-democratic, anti-Western sentiments is simply unacceptable.

Additionally, we are troubled by reports that prosecutors appointed by Georgian Dream are reopening old legal cases against the party's opponents. While some of these cases may have merits, others are perceived as targeting leading opposition political figures, news operators, international corporations, and civil society members. Respect for the rule of law and an impartial justice system are key to a healthy democracy and to ensuring free and fair elections, which were guaranteed by your party.

Since Georgia's independence in 1991, we have witnessed the Georgian people stridently march towards democracy and towards deeper partnership with the West. However, despite the promise shown over the past three decades, recent democratic and economic trends are negatively affecting Georgia's image in the United States. Unfortunately, economic indicators show a sharp decline in foreign direct investment in Georgia as American and European companies have suffered harassment, causing many to reconsider their business ventures.

Furthermore, Georgian Dream's perceived political targeting of the U.S.-backed Anaklia Development Consortium has now deterred or prevented investment from American companies in this important project. These developments seem to reflect an increasingly unfavorable business environment and could deter future U.S. investment in Georgia. Decreased foreign investment not only hurts the Georgian people and their hopes for

deeper integration with Western institutions, but it also strengthens Vladimir Putin's hand in the region. Georgia could be a vital hub for goods traversing from the United States and Europe to Central Asia, and vice versa, which would serve as a boon for the Georgian economy.

We raise these concerns with the hopes of strengthening Georgia as a democracy and of preventing the broad bipartisan and bicameral support that Georgia enjoys in the halls of Congress from being negatively impacted. We hope that your government will work with the United States Congress, Ambassador Kelly Degnan, the European Union, and non-governmental organizations to strengthen democratic institutions and enhance economic prosperity for the Georgian people so that Georgia can continue to be a strategic partner of the United States for many years to come. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



ADAM KINZINGER
Georgia Caucus Co-Chair



GERALDINE CONNOLLY
Georgia Caucus Co-Chair



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee



MICHAEL T. MCCAUL
Ranking Member
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