

Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia Resigns over Melia's Detention - February 18, 2021

Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia resigned citing disagreement with his party colleagues over the detention of Nika Melia, leader of the UNM. This follows the Tbilisi City Court's decision to send United National Movement's Nika Melia, Chairperson of the largest opposition party, to pretrial detention. Gakharia's statement said that while Melia had "never respected the law" and called "for the storming of the Parliament" on June 20, 2019, the decision to detain him poses unacceptable risks, and unduly complicates the task of economic recovery and the management of pandemic.

The resignation comes as the post-election crisis after October polls continues to plague Georgian politics. Most of the opposition, including the UNM, is rejecting the official results and refusing to enter the new Parliament. Foreign facilitated talks to overcome the crisis have been stalled since December.