

## UNM to Vote on Leadership Overhaul, Membership Fees at August 5 Congress

By MESSENGER STAFF

The United National Movement (UNM) will vote on sweeping internal reforms at its party congress on August 5<sup>th</sup>, including replacing its chairperson and secretary general with a collective governing council, Political Secretary Giorgi Baramidze said on Monday.

Baramidze said the changes were proposed by jailed former President Mikheil Saakashvili and had been under preparation for months. According to him, the reforms are intended to make the party "more democratic, transparent" and broaden participation in decision making.

The proposed changes also introduce membership fees, which party members would pay as monthly donations. Baramidze said the measure is intended to reduce the party's reliance on wealthy donors and strengthen its financial independence.

He said the party also plans to launch a secure mobile application that would allow members to vote directly on major political decisions, including whether the party should enter parliament.

Baramidze also responded to



acting UNM Chair Tina Bokuchava's criticism of a Political Council meeting held last week, which she described as unauthorized.

"I was very surprised by Tina's statement because there

was nothing illegitimate at this session. If there was no quorum, the session would not have been held," Baramidze said.

He suggested Bokuchava's criticism could be linked to the proposed leadership changes.

"Tina may have some resentment because, at the congress, we will no longer elect a chairperson in the form in which it exists today, nor a secretary general. We want to have a governing council that will perform

these functions," he said.

Baramidze added that minutes from the meeting would be made available to party members and said regional representatives from across the country had attended the session.

## Deutsche Welle Launches Georgian-Language News Service With EU Funding

By MESSENGER STAFF

Deutsche Welle (DW), Germany's international broadcaster, launched a Georgian-language news service on Instagram on Aug. 3 as part of a European Union-funded project to support independent media in the South Caucasus.

The service will cover news from Georgia, Europe and around the world. DW said it aims to provide "reliable, objective, and timely" reporting. The broadcaster said it plans to expand the service to additional platforms.

The Georgian-language outlet is part of the European Information Shield Initiative, a joint project led by DW with Fact-Checking and Media Literacy (FMM) and Polish broadcaster TVP World. DW said the initiative is designed to "strengthen independent journalism and counter disinformation" in the South Caucasus.

The project also includes an Armenian-language service operated by FMM and an Azerbaijani-language service run by TVP World. The three editorial teams will cooperate and share content, according to DW.

The initiative is funded for an initial 18 months and builds on previous DW and FMM partnerships, including ENTR and InfoMigrants.

German newspaper *Taz* reported that the Georgian-language newsroom will employ five to seven journalists, most of them based in Germany, with one journalist joining from Georgia. The newspaper identified Zura Karaulashvili as the head of the editorial team.

The launch comes after Polish public broadcaster TVP introduced its Georgian-language news service, VT Sakartvelo, in late April.

