

Papuashvili Accuses Council of Europe of Bypassing Georgia's Grant Law

By Messenger Staff

Georgian Dream Parliament Speaker Shalva Papuashvili accused the Council of Europe's Georgia office of potentially bypassing the country's grant law by directly paying for a political meeting in Bakhmaro linked to the Tbilisi School of Political Studies, led by opposition politician Armaz Akhvlediani.

The State Audit Office is investigating the arrangements.

Papuashvili said the government had confirmed that no grant application was submitted, while the Council of Europe said the event was not funded through a grant. Instead, its local office reportedly paid directly for the hotel, transport, catering, experts and speakers.

"If it turns out that the Council of Europe was violating the law in a member state and attempting to circumvent it, this would be a catastrophic scandal for the Council of Europe's local office," Papuashvili said.

He said Georgian law permits foreign organizations to make certain direct expenditures without government approval, but argued that this exemption cannot be used to disguise a grant



as a service contract.

"If an agreement is labeled as a service contract rather than a grant, yet is essentially a grant, it constitutes a sham transaction and will be classified as a grant," he said.

Papuashvili also accused the Council of Europe of effectively directing Georgian taxpayers' money toward the opposition.

"We do not want Georgians' money spent on the radical projects of the National Movement," he said, referring to Akhvlediani as a "radical politician."

The Council of Europe has not publicly characterized the Bakhmaro event as a grant. The Audit Office investigation will determine whether the arrangements complied with Georgian law.

Georgian Dream Adds Gakharia Party to Constitutional Ban Case

By Messenger Staff



Georgia's ruling Georgian Dream party has signed an updated constitutional lawsuit seeking to ban Gakharia for Georgia, with the filing set to be submitted to the Constitutional Court that day, Georgian Dream Parliament Speaker Shalva Papuashvili said.

The updated lawsuit adds Gakharia for Georgia to an existing case filed by Georgian Dream against four opposition parties: the United National Movement, Coalition for Change, Strong Georgia-Lelo and the Federalists. The ruling party is asking the court to declare the parties' activities unconstitutional and ban them.

Papuashvili said Georgian Dream considers Gakharia for Georgia unconstitutional, pointing to its decision to boycott parliament after the 2024 parliamentary election and its return to parliament after the October 4, 2025 protests.

"It was evident from the start that Gakharia was part of the National Movement's united front," Papuashvili said.

He also cited the party's conduct following the 2024 election as part of the grounds for the lawsuit, including what he described as its refusal to recognize the constitutional order and its parliamentary boycott.

The Constitutional Court can take up to nine months to rule on the case, although Papuashvili said it could consider the lawsuit sooner.

The court had not yet ruled on Georgian Dream's original case against the four opposition parties when Papuashvili announced the addition of Gakharia for Georgia.