

Speakers & Moderators

“POLARISATION TRAP: GEORGIA'S DEMOCRACY ON THE EDGE OF TRUST CRISIS AND THE RISE OF POPULISM” #GEODEM2019



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LAURA THORNTON

Laura Thornton is NDI's resident director in Georgia, having previously served in the same capacity for the Institute in Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia. She also designed and directed the Institute's regional program on political party reform in eight Asian countries from 2001 to 2005, during which time she co-edited and authored several chapters in *Political Parties in Asia: Promoting Reform and Combating Corruption*. In addition, she managed and evaluated Institute programs in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste.



RAYHAN DEMYTRIE

Rayhan Demytrie has been working as freelance foreign correspondent for BBC News for more than 10 years, producing and reporting for radio, television and online from Central Asia, Russia and the South Caucasus. Her most recent work include a short digital film *Georgia's Rave Revolution* which was viewed over 1 million times on Facebook. She reported extensively on the Armenian Velvet Revolution in 2018. Previous highlights include reporting on an ethnic war in Kyrgyzstan, an investigation into drug trafficking through Central Asia and the use of torture in Kazakhstan's prison.



FELIX HETT

Felix Hett has been the director of the FES South Caucasus Office since January 2017. He has been with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung since 2009, working first in the Moscow Office, and then - since 2011 - as desk officer for Belarus, Russia and Ukraine in the Berlin Head Office. Felix Hett studied Politics, Business and Economics in Leipzig, Vilnius and Minsk.



PROF. DAVID APRASIDZE

David Aprasidze is the Head of Administration and professor at Ilia State University. During 2008-2010 he served at Ilia State University as the Dean of School of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences and Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Previously he held the position of the Rector of the Police Academy and Director of the Archive at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. In 2009 David Aprasidze was a Fullbright Scholar at Duke University, USA. In earlier years he headed the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development and Regional Bureau of Konrad-Adenauer Foundation to Georgia and South Caucasus.



H.E. CARL HARTZELL

Carl Hartzell was appointed Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia in September 2018. As the EU's top diplomat in the country, Ambassador Hartzell oversees the bilateral relationship between the European Union Georgia, and the work of the Delegation including political and economic affairs as well as cooperation. He represents the Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission and supports the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in implementing the EU's foreign policy.



DR. ALESSANDRO NAI

Alessandro Nai is Assistant Professor of Political Communication and Journalism at the Department of Communication Science, University of Amsterdam. Prior to this he was Senior Research Associate at the Electoral Integrity Project (University of Sydney) and Assistant Professor / Lecturer at the University of Geneva, where he obtained his PhD in political science. His research broadly focuses on political communication, voting behaviour, political psychology, and campaigning effects, and he is currently directing a research project that maps the use of negative campaigning in elections across the world.



GIORGI BARAMIDZE

Giorgi Baramidze is a Georgian politician who served as the Vice-Prime Minister of Georgia and the State Minister for Euro-Atlantic Integration from 2004 to 2012. He was the Deputy Chairperson of the 8th Term of the Parliament of Georgia.

In 2004 Mr. Baramidze served as the Minister of Defense of Georgia and from 2003 to 2004 was the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

In 1995, he graduated from George C. Marshall Center for European Security Studies and Defense Economics in Garmisch, Germany.



ARCHIL TALAKVADZE

Archil Talakvadze is a Georgian politician serving as a member of the 9th Term of the Parliament of Georgia and as Majority Leader.

A member of the Georgian Dream Party, Talakvadze was elected to the Parliament in 2016 through the majoritarian vote from the Western District, Ozurgeti. During the 2012 and 2016 election cycles, Talakvadze served two different positions in the Government - the Vice-Minister of Corrections (Justice) and the Vice-Minister of Interior. Archil Talakvadze also worked on constitutional reform and amendments in Georgia (2018).



KHATUNA SAMNIDZE

Khatuna Samnidze is a chairperson of the Republican Party of Georgia since November 2013. She graduated Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg, Germany and obtained a degree of B. Sc. in Management.

In 2004 - 2008 Mrs. Samnidze was a Member of the Supreme Council of Autonomous Republic of Adjara, member of the Committee of Financial and Budgetary Matters. In 2010 - 2013 as a program coordinator at the Heinrich Boell Foundation South Caucasus Regional Office, she worked on projects on conflict transformation, gender democracy and women's empowerment.



PROF. IAGO KACHKACHISHVILI

Iago Kachkachishvili is Professor of Sociology and Head of the Direction of Sociology and Social Work at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences. As a scientist, he undertakes academic and empirical studies. At Tbilisi State University Iago Kachkachishvili leads the courses on Contemporary and Post-Modern Social Theories, as well as the course on Methods of Social Research. Within the Institute of Social Studies and Analysis, he undertakes various projects – both research and educational projects. The research projects are related to numerous fields: problems of democracy and politics, educational policy and ethnicity, social protection and inclusion, deviation and social order, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and reproductive health, etc.



DR. MARINA VASHAKMADZE

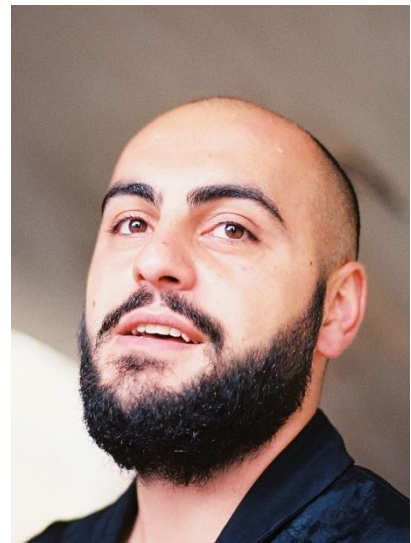
Marina Vashakmadze is 30 years practicing Journalism. Since 2018 she is Chief Advisor of Ajara TV. From 2006, till 2018 she was Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty Tbilisi Bureau Chief. From 2002, till 2006 she was Director of International Centre for Journalists – Caucasus (CCFJ). Earlier (2000 – 2002) she was Associate Director of International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ) ProMedia II – project. ICFJ is the Washington DC-based International Centre for Journalists. Head of Journalism Division, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Visiting professor of Louisiana State University, Manship School of Mass Communication. Professor at the Caucasus School of Journalism and Media Management, at Georgian Institute of Public Affairs.



LASHA KAVTARADZE

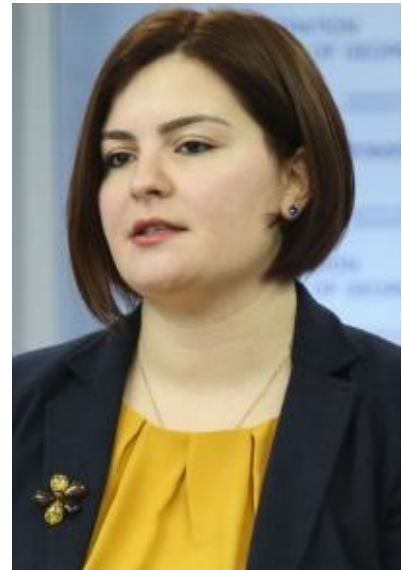
Lasha Kavtaradze is a freelance writer and a Media Analyst at Mediachecker.ge, a watchdog project founded by The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics. He has an experience of working as a reporter and a producer for various media organizations, including Liberali magazine, Radio Tskheli Shokoladi, Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe, etc. In 2013-2016 he was a communication manager at Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC).

In 2018, Lasha Kavtaradze graduated Uppsala University (Sweden), MA in Social Sciences, Digital Media and Society. He holds a bachelors diploma from Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University in Media and Mass communications.



ANA NATSVLISHVILI

Ana Natsvlishvili is a professor of law at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs. In recent past she served as a Parliamentary Secretary of the 4th President of Georgia (2018), a head of the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (2014-2017) and a chair of the Coalition for Transparent and Independent Judiciary, the largest coalition of NGOs in Georgia working on judicial reforms. She was a member of the State Constitutional Commission (2017) where she actively advocated for inclusion of a number of important human rights and judicial independence guarantees, including the substantial equality clause for men and women (now enshrined in the article 11 of the acting Constitution), and a member of the State Commission for the Selection of Judicial Candidates from Georgia for the ECtHR (2016 and 2017).



PROF. FERNANDO CASAL BERTO A

Fernando Casal Bértoa is an Associate Professor in the School of Politics and International Relations at the University of Nottingham (United Kingdom). He is co-director of REPRESENT: Research Centre for the Study of Parties and Democracy as well as member of the OSCE/ODIHR "Core Group of Political Party Experts", International IDEA collaborator and Venice Commission expert. His work has been published in Journal of Politics, European Journal of Political Research, Sociological Methods and Research, Electoral Studies, West European Politics, Party Politics, Democratization, European Constitutional Law Review, Political Studies Review, Government and Opposition, International Political Science Review, South European Society and Politics, East European Politics and Societies or East European Politics.



NINO ROBAKIDZE

Nino Robakidze manages the Eurasia Center, which is an initiative of IREX's SAFE program. She coordinates and facilitates center activities to enable media practitioners and human rights defenders to work as safely as possible in Eurasia.

Currently, as the SAFE Eurasia Center Manager, Nino is actively working with the SAFE global team to develop and foster solidarity and partnership between Eurasian journalists, social communicators, and other stakeholders for building strong, collegial, and lasting relationships for a more safe and free media environment in the region.



DR. DAVID SICHINAVA

Dr. David Sichinava is Research Director at the Caucasus Research Resource Centre (CRRC-Georgia) and serves as Assistant Professor at Tbilisi State University. Currently, his work focuses on the development of evidence-based policy documents as well as on statistical modeling of survey and spatial data.

David holds a PhD in Human Geography and was a Fulbright visiting scholar at the Institute of Behavioral Sciences of the University of Colorado Boulder. Dr. Sichinava studies elections, social movements, displacement, and politics of urban development.



DR. LASHA BAKRADZE

Dr. Lasha Bakradze is the director of Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Literature since 2010 and a professor at the Ilia State University of Tbilisi since 2009.

He studied German literature and linguistics at the Tbilisi State University. Later on he pursued scientific activities in German studies in Jena (Federal Republic of Germany), Theology in Bern University (Switzerland), and Political Science at the Potsdam University (Federal Republic of Germany). Lasha worked on his dissertation in modern and contemporary history at the Humboldt University of Berlin (Federal Republic of Germany), and received his doctoral degree from the Tbilisi State University in 2002. His working experience includes wide range of institutions with variety of profiles.



GRIGOL GEGELIA

Grigol Gegelia is an Assistant Professor at the Caucasus University and a Guest Lecturer at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA), the Ilia State University and the University of Georgia.

His key academic interests include political theory, nationalism, republicanism and populism. Among his research interests is the history of the democratic republic of Georgia.

Grigol Gegelia is enrolled at the PhD programme in history and civilization at the European University Institute (EUI).



EKATERINE CHITANAVA

Ekaterine Chitanava is a human rights activist, researcher and the director of a non-governmental organization, Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI), based in Tbilisi, Georgia. Her work is focused on freedom of religion and belief, minority rights, fostering cultural tolerance and equality, promotion of civic integration; research and analysis of the state policy with regards to religious freedom, minority rights and the prohibition of discrimination.

From 2009 to 2011 Ms. Chitanava, as a journalist was regularly writing for Georgian analytical magazines and international outlets.



ZAZA PIRALISHVILI

Zaza Piralishvili is a philosopher, professor at the Tbilisi State University and the author of numerous scientific, publicistic and philosophical articles as well as books for which he was nominated for Literary Award "Saba".

His work is focused on topics such as religion, philosophy and art.

As an invited scholar, Zaza Piralishvili has worked at various universities in the US and Japan.

