

MAY 15, 2024

# Chair Cardin Leads Trans-Atlantic Foreign Affairs Committee Chairs in Joint Statement on Georgian Parliament's Passage of Russian-Style 'Foreign Agent' Law



**WASHINGTON** – Today, **U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee**, led the chairs of foreign affairs committees in the parliaments of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the European Union, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom in issuing a statement following the Georgian parliament's adoption of a Russian-style foreign agent law, which requires organizations that receive more than 20 percent of their funding from international sources to register as an "organization serving the interests of a foreign power."

"Despite repeated expressions of concern from friends and allies, the Georgian parliament has taken an alarming and repressive step that undermines democracy and contradicts its stated goal of Western integration. As Euro-Atlantic legislators, we understand that a parliament's role is to reflect the will of its people, and Georgians have unequivocally rejected this Kremlin-inspired law as incompatible with their identity, European values, and democratic principles. Simply put, this so-called 'foreign agent' law mirrors the policies of Vladimir Putin, who continues to illegally occupy 20 percent of Georgia's territory.

"Respected Georgian organizations such as Transparency International (TI Georgia), the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), and the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), are playing pivotal roles in Georgia's path towards Euro-Atlantic integration. This law flies in the face of such worthy efforts and serves as a direct assault on civil society and independent media— elements fundamental to any democracy. The United States and Europe will continue to support them as their leadership and vision for Georgia exemplify true patriotism, in stark contrast to the 84 members of Parliament who aligned themselves with Russia in yesterday's vote.

"We will never abandon the Georgian people who have bravely displayed their steadfast commitment to democratic values through peaceful resistance, nor will we hesitate to hold accountable those responsible for enacting this Russian-style law and for the brutal targeting of nonviolent demonstrators, including by Bidzina Ivanishvili and his cronies. To the Georgian people, we declare: You are not alone."

## **Benjamin L. Cardin**

Chair, Committee on Foreign Relations

Senate

United States of America

## **Mark Demesmaeker**

Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Senate

Kingdom of Belgium

## **Pavel Fischer**

Chair, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Committee

Senate

Czech Republic

## **Marek Ženíšek**

Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Chamber of Deputies,

Czech Republic

**Marko Mihkelson**

Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Riigikogu

Republic of Estonia

**Jukka Kopra**

Chair, Defence Committee

Parliament

Republic of Finland

**Michael Roth**

Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Bundestag

Federal Republic of Germany

**Diljá Mist Einarsdóttir**

Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Alþingi

Iceland

**Charlie Flanagan**

Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Dáil Éireann

Republic of Ireland

**Lia Quartapelle**

Deputy Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Chamber of Deputies

Italian Republic

**Andrius Kubilius**

Member, Foreign Affairs Committee

Parliament

European Union

**Rihards Kols**

Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Saeima

Republic of Latvia

**Žygimantas Pavilionis**

Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Seimas

Republic of Lithuania

**Ine Eriksen Søreide**

Chair, Foreign and Defence Committee

Stortinget

Kingdom of Norway

**Bogdan Klich**

Chair, Foreign and European Affairs Committee

Senate

Republic of Poland

**Oleksandr Merezhko**

Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee

Verkhovna Rada

Ukraine

**Alicia Kearns**

Chair, Foreign Affairs Select Committee

House of Commons

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

###