

Georgian Dream's youth branch joins Azerbaijani ruling party conference in Nagorno-Karabakh

Mikheil Gvadzabia · OC Media · 2026-06-15

Members of the ruling Georgian Dream party's youth organisation have travelled to the city of Shusha (Shushi) in Nagorno-Karabakh to participate in a conference organised by Azerbaijan's ruling New Azerbaijan party. During the conference, the organisation's head, a judoka-turned-MP Varlam Liparteliani, gave a speech in a panel discussion.

Referring to Monday's event as an international conference, the Azerbaijani state news agency Azertac reported that it was titled 'Regional Contribution to Global Security: Peacebuilding in the South Caucasus'. Aydin Karimov, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's representative in Shusha, noted during the opening that life is returning to the 'liberated territories' and that 'children's laughter can be heard in schools and kindergartens'.

The panel discussion in which Liparteliani participated focused on 'Post-conflict Reconstruction: Modern Challenges in Urban Planning'.

'Georgia's objective remains unchanged: the peaceful de-occupation of our territories and the creation of a safe, inclusive, and sustainable living environment for all citizens, including those who lost their homes and native communities as a result of the conflicts', Liparteliani said, as quoted by the Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB).

According to Azertac, other speakers at the session included representatives of Tajikistan's ruling People's Democratic Party, Serbia's ruling Serbian Progressive Party, Belarus's major pro-government party Belaya Rus, and the Democratic Party of Turks of Macedonia — a small, Turkish minority-oriented party in North Macedonia.

Liparteliani, 37, retired from judo in 2021 and entered parliament on behalf of Georgian Dream following the disputed parliamentary elections of October 2024.

In February 2025, amidst the opposition's boycott of parliament, he was one of three ruling-party MPs who formally left Georgian Dream and announced plans to form a 'healthy opposition' within the legislature. However, he returned to Georgian Dream in June of the same year and, in December, was appointed chair of the party's youth organisation.

Georgian Dream's youth organisation and actions of its members has been the subject of controversy on several occasions, with its members accused of engaging in violence against government critics.

In one of the most recent incidents, in September 2025, Giorgi Shukvani, a youth leader of the ruling party, was filmed spitting at female protesters, as well as a female journalist, during an anti-government rally in central Tbilisi.

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