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**GEORGIAN DREAM AND IVANISHVILI MOST POPULAR POLITICAL FORCE WHILE
UNM SEEN AS STRONGEST OPPOSITION PARTY**

TBILISI – Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili continues to be the most popular political leader in Georgia, and 60 percent rate the Georgian Dream Coalition as the “party” closest to them, according to the findings of a public opinion survey released here today by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). Fifty-six percent named the United National Movement (UNM) as the strongest opposition party in the country.

Ivanishvili scored a 75 percent favorable rating, with Speaker Davit Usupashvili increasing his favorable rating to 66 percent, followed by Members of Parliament Tina Khidasheli, Eka Beselia and Zviad Dzidziguri. Minority Leader Davit Bakradze is the most popular opposition leader, whose favorable rating increased to 48 percent.

The Georgian Dream Coalition was identified by 60 percent of Georgian speakers as the party closest to them, giving it a 6-1 lead over UNM, which had 10 percent. The combined response of those who answered “no party,” “refuse to answer” or “don’t know” to the same question was 26 percent.

Seventy-eight percent of those surveyed think it is important for Georgia to have a strong opposition. Fifty-six percent name UNM as the strongest opposition party with another 6 percent identifying the Georgian Dream as the strongest opposition party. A combined 31 percent said “no party,” “don’t know” or “refuse to answer.”

Luis Navarro, NDI’s country director in Georgia, said, “Prime Minister Ivanishvili and the Georgian Dream Coalition continue to be the dominant political players in Georgia. While most politicians’ favorability ratings stayed statistically the same or decreased, Speaker Usupashvili and Minority Leader Bakradze both saw increased favorability beyond the margin of error. Furthermore, Georgians believe that having a strong opposition is important to the country and identify UNM as the strongest opposition party.”

These findings were part of a broader survey that found that voters care most about jobs, territorial integrity and health care.

The results reflect data collected from March 13-27 in face-to-face interviews with a nationwide representative sample of Georgian speakers that included 3,103 completed interviews. The survey looks at issues of public importance, perceptions of democracy and attitudes toward reforms, as well as various domestic and foreign policy issues. The survey has an average margin of error of +/-2.5 percent.

NDI’s survey work is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and carried out by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC).

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