
Georgians plan mass disobedience

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Georgia's opposition has announced a "national disobedience campaign", warning it will block major roads.

About 20,000 opponents of President Mikhail Saakashvili have gathered outside Georgia's parliament.

One of their leaders, Kakha Kukava, said that "as of 6pm today (1400 GMT) the protesters will block main streets throughout Tbilisi", the capital.

Earlier, Mr Saakashvili rejected their call for him to quit, but said he was ready for a dialogue with them.

Opposition parties say his main error was to lead the country into war with Russia last year and plunge Georgians into what they call a crisis.

But he hit back on Friday, vowing to stay in office until his term ends in 2013.

Offer of dialogue

Up to 60,000 people attended Thursday's opposition rally in the capital. Hundreds remained in the city centre overnight.

Opposition leader Levan Gachechiladze said they had "no other choice but to stay here until our demand is met".

Mr Saakashvili appealed for "dialogue and sharing responsibility" on Friday. He urged "unity across the political spectrum".

"I want to again reiterate our offer of a dialogue on strengthening our democratic institutions and I want to say that we mean it, this offer is real," the AP news agency quoted him as saying.

Referring to the opposition's ultimatum for him to step down, he said: "The answer is no and it has always been no, because that is how it is under the constitution."

Opposition leaders have appealed to the government not to use violence to break up mass protests.

Police used rubber bullets and tear gas to break up the last mass protests in Tbilisi in November 2007.

An opposition supporter, Zaza Adeishvili, said Mr Saakashvili "was brought peacefully to his position and we want him to be taken away the same way, peacefully."

"We do not want any violence, we want him to get out of Georgia," he said.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/europe/7993844.stm>
