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**GEORGIA: PRESIDENT PROVOKES ARMENIAN IRE WITH PERCEIVED  
COMMENTS**

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Georgian President Salome Zourabichvilis fiery rhetoric in denouncing the incumbent Georgian Dream party for rigging the recent parliamentary vote has had unintended consequences, igniting a brushfire in neighboring Armenia. Social media in Armenia is ablaze with criticism of Zourabichvili for perceived xenophobic comments relating to the October 26 elections.

Zourabichvili has led the opposition challenge to the official election results, which showed Georgian Dream won 54 percent of the votes, good for 89 of the 150 seats in the next parliament. She has repeatedly insisted the election was stolen by Georgian Dream. On October 29, in an interview with the Associated Press, Zourabichvili described one of the allegedly improper practices employed by Georgian Dream as an Armenian carousel, in which one individual votes several times using fraudulent identification.

The comment caused a storm among Armenian social media users, who saw the term as a general characterization that belittles Armenian democratic practices as inferior to Georgias. Some called the presidents comments xenophobic or Armenophobic.

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