

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## GEORGIA: APPEAL CASES

2 April 2001<sup>1</sup>; AI Index: EUR 56/005/2001; public

### **Paata Skhirtladze: Ill-treated by fellow prisoners with alleged tacit consent of prison guards**

Paata Skhirtladze, who is said to be connected with the Osho Community, a spiritual group focussed on Eastern philosophies and meditation, was detained in the city of Rustavi on 20 June 2000 after he had allegedly exposed himself.

After being brought to Ortachala investigation-isolation prison in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, some prisoners are said to have become suspicious about his non-orthodox spiritual beliefs, and to have assumed from these that Paata Skhirtladze was linked with a series of child murders (two of which are said to have been of a "ritual" nature).

Allegedly, one or more prisoners physically assaulted him, and cut off a part of one of his ears.

Photo: Paata Skhirtladze before his arrest; © Private

The exact circumstances of the assault are unclear. According to some reports, a prisoner or prisoners gained access to Paata Skhirtladze, even though he was reportedly in solitary confinement at the time, and physically assaulted him, including by cutting off a part of one of his ears. Other reports, however, indicate that Paata Skhirtladze was in a cell with other prisoners when the assault took place. The Georgian Public Defender (ombudsperson), Nana Devdariani, told Amnesty International in September 2000 that her office had raised the case with prison officials when the allegations of abuse emerged, and that Paata Skhirtladze had been transferred to a communal cell after the assault, at his own request, where his relations with the other prisoners were said to be normal.

Amnesty International has no details of any charge or charges instituted in connection with the assault on Paata Skhirtladze.

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<sup>1</sup> Please use this "Appeal Case" sheet as the basis for your letter-writing until further notice.

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**Recommended action:**

Please send politely worded letters in English, Russian, Georgian or your own language,

- expressing concern at allegations that prison guards tacitly consented to the physical assault of Paata Skhirtladze by a prisoner or prisoners;
  - urging the authorities to open prompt and impartial investigations into the following allegations with the results made public and those found responsible brought to justice: a) that prison guards tacitly consented to the physical assault of Paata Skhirtladze by a prisoner or prisoners; b) that a prisoner or prisoners physically assaulted Paata Skhirtladze including cutting off a part of his ear;
  - To stress your point remind the authorities of their obligations to prohibit torture under international human rights treaties such as the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
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**Whom to write**

<b>President of Georgia:</b>	<b>Procurator General:</b>	<b>Minister of the Interior:</b>
Eduard Shevardnadze	Gia Meparishvili	Maj.-Gen. Kakha Targamadze
Gruziya; 380018 g. Tbilisi; pr. Rustaveli, 8; Apparat Prezidenta Gruzii; Prezidentu Shevardnadze, E.A.; GEORGIA	Gruziya; 380033 g. Tbilisi; ul. Gorgosali, 24; Prokuratura Gruzii; Generalnomu prokuroru; Meparishvili, G.; GEORGIA	Gruziya; 380014 g. Tbilisi; ul. Generala Gia Gulua, 10; Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del Gruzii; Ministru Maj.-Gen. Targamadze, K.; GEORGIA
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Send copies of your letters to the Ambassador of Georgia to your country (if there is one)