

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL GEORGIA: APPEAL CASES

2 April 2001<sup>1</sup>; AI Index: EUR 56/007/2001; public

## Death in custody of Mamuka Rizhamadze

Amnesty International is concerned at reports alleging that Mamuka Rizhamadze died as a result of ill-treatment in detention.

Mamuka Rizhamadze was detained by police on 24 May 2000 in the town of Tkibuli in the west of Georgia, and transferred the following day to preliminary detention facilities in the city of Kutaisi, some 30 kilometres away from Tkibuli. On 31 May he was found hanged in his cell by a noose made from a blanket.

A post mortem carried out by the state forensic service concluded that he had committed suicide. An independent forensic expert carried out a second post mortem at the request of the family on 5 June. She found two wounds to Mamuka Rizhamadze's head, caused in her opinion while he was still alive and by a blunt heavy object. She concluded that these injuries were the cause of death. Investigation of the skin on Mamuka Rizhamadze's neck also indicated to her that he was dead before the noose was applied.

Elene Tevdoradze, the chair of the parliamentary Committee for Human Rights of Georgia, told Amnesty International in February 2001 that she had received a letter from a prisoner who was in detention in Kutaisi at the time of Mamuka Rizhamadze's death stating that he saw Mamuka Rizhamadze being killed and subsequently hanged. The prisoner allegedly reported that the police had forced him to testify that Rizhamadze had committed suicide.

According to unofficial sources, a new investigation has been opened by the procuracy in Kutaisi at the end of last year.

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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 Mamuka Rizhamadze who was found dead in a preliminary detention facility in Kutaisi on 31 May 2000 had not committed suicide, but that he died as a result of ill-treatment in custody and that he had been dead before the noose was applied;
  - urging the authorities to inform you who is responsible of the investigation opened into these allegations and of any results of the investigation;
  - urging the authorities to bring anyone found responsible to justice;
  - 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>	<b>Procurator of Kutaisi:</b>
Eduard Shevardnadze  Gruziya; 380018 g. Tbilisi; pr. Rustaveli, 8; Apparat Prezidenta Gruzii; Prezidentu Shevardnadze, E.A.; GEORGIA  Fax: + 995 32 - 99 96 30 / 99 08 79 / 98 23 54 E-mail: office@presidpress.gov.ge	Gia Meparishvili  Gruziya; 380033 g. Tbilisi; ul. Gorgosali, 24; Prokuratura Gruzii; Generalnomu prokuroru; Meparishvili, G.; GEORGIA  Fax: + 995 32 - 98 21 70	Maj.-Gen. Kakha Targamadze  Gruziya; 380014 g.Tbilisi; ul. Generala Gia Gulua, 10; Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del Gruzii; Ministru Maj.-Gen. Targamadze, K.; GEORGIA  Fax: + 995 32 - 99 95 24 e-mail: jashi@iberiapac.ge	Gruziya; g. Kutaisi; Gorodskaya prokuratura; Prokuroru; GEORGIA

**Send copies of your letters to:**

- the Ambassador of Georgia to your country (if there is one)