



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

GEORGIA: APPEAL CASES

19 September 2001¹; AI Index: AI Index: EUR 56/012/2001; public

Further information on Appeal Case sheet EUR 56/007/2001 (2 April 2001)

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 2000 he was found hanged in his cell by a noose made from a blanket.

A post-mortem examination carried out by the state forensic service concluded that he had committed suicide. Maia Nikoleishvili, an independent forensic expert, carried out a second post-mortem examination 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. An examination of the skin on Mamuka Rizhamadze's neck also indicated to her that he was dead before the noose was applied. In autumn 2000, Kutaisi procuracy reportedly set up a commission consisting of forensic experts to reconsider the case. Reportedly, the commission concluded that Mamuka Rizhamadze had committed suicide. In March 2001, Maia Nikoleishvili told an AI delegate that the commission had not examined all the evidence, in particular a piece of skin that had been sealed by Kutaisi procuracy after her post-mortem examination carried out in June, and that had not been opened since.

In December 2000, Elene Tevdoradze, Chair of the parliamentary Human Rights Committee, reportedly stated that she had received a letter from a prisoner who claimed to have seen how Mamuka Rizhamadze died, and that he was forced to testify that the death was suicide. She made these statements in an edition of the "60 minutes" program which featured the case of Mamuka Rizhamadze on the independent television channel Rustavi-2. Mr Tavgeshivili (first name not known), reportedly wrote to Elene Tevdoradze, claiming "I can tell you how they killed him and how they hanged him", and stated that the police had threatened him, after which he agreed to become their 'agent'.

Following the broadcast, the procurator of Kutaisi reportedly contacted Elene Tevdoradze and stated he would open a new investigation into the death of Mamuka Rizhamadze. However, no new investigation had in fact been opened by the end of June 2001, and nor had a fourth post mortem been carried out, which had reportedly been requested by the Kutaisi procuracy.

¹ Please use this Appeal Case sheet as the basis for your letter-writing until further notice.

Recommended action:

Please send politely worded letters in English, Georgian, Russian 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 whether a fourth post-mortem examination that had reportedly been requested by Kutaisi procuracy has been carried out and, if so, what the outcome was;
 - urging the authorities to bring anyone found responsible to justice;
 - stating that impunity for law enforcement officers who are responsible for torture and ill-treatment gives a wrong signal to society;
 - To stress your point remind the authorities of their obligations to prohibit torture and ill-treatment 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

President of Georgia:	Procurator General:	Minister of the Interior:	Procurator of Kutaisi:
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	Gruziya; g. Kutaisii; Gorodskaya Prokuratura; Prokuroru; GEORGIA
Fax: + 995 32 - 99 96 30 / 99 08 79 / 98 23 54 E-mail: office@presidpress.gov.ge	Fax: + 995 32 - 98 21 70	Fax: + 995 32 - 99 95 24 e-mail: jashi@iberiapac.ge	

Send copies of your letters to:

- Chair of the parliamentary Committee for Human Rights in Georgia, Elene Tevdoradze:

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Komitet parlamenta Gruzii po pravam
cheloveka, grazhdanskim petitsiyam i
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Predsedatelyu TEVDORADZE E.
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E-mail: hremcmt@parliament.ge

- Human Rights Ombudsperson in Georgia, Nana Devdariani:

Gruziya
380034 g. Tbilisi
ul. Machabeli, 11
Narodnomu zashchitniku
DEVDAIANI N.
GEORGIA

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

PLEASE SEND ANY REPLIES FROM THE GEORGIAN AUTHORITIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. (South Caucasus and Central Asia Research and Campaign Team; Amnesty International; 1 Easton Street; London WC1X ODW; United Kingdom)