

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

GEORGIA: APPEAL CASES

19 December 2001¹; AI Index: EUR 56/019/2001; public
Further information on Appeal Case sheet EUR 56/014/2001 (19 September 2001)

Alleged torture and ill-treatment of Bachuki Sharvashidze (a registered invalid), Dato Sokhadze, Zviad Tavkhelidze and Gia Portchkhidze

Around ten police officers from Tbilisi's city police department were reportedly involved in the beating and torture of Bachuki Sharvashidze, Dato Sokhadze, Zviad Tavkhelidze and Gia Portchkhidze in police custody in October and the beginning of November 2000. The torture and ill-treatment was reportedly aimed at forcing the four men to confess to involvement in a group carrying out robberies. On 21 October, Dato Sokhadze and Zviad Tavkhelidze were detained in Tbilisi and brought to the Tbilisi city police department. Bachuki Sharvashidze and Gia Portchkhidze were detained on 30 October - Bachuki Sharvashidze in Kutaisi, from where he was transferred to the Tbilisi city police department the same day.

On the evening of 31 October while in custody, Bachuki Sharvashidze, who is a registered invalid as he is missing his right leg, was reportedly seated on a chair and beaten with fists and truncheons on his back, neck and shoulders by five or six men. The beatings were reportedly so severe that Bachuki Sharvashidze's artificial leg became detached from his body. In addition, wires were reportedly attached to his fingers and he was given electric shocks. The torture and ill-treatment is reported to have lasted from 31 October until 3 November. An independent medical examination conducted on 9 November established that he had sustained massive bruising, caused by a long, blunt, hard object, on the front and back of his torso, on his neck and on his shoulders.

Dato Sokhadze, a 38-year-old artist, is reported to have been beaten with truncheons, given electric shocks, and drugged in the Tbilisi city police department, over the course of seven days, starting on 21 October. His lawyer stated that the traces of where the electric shocks were said to have been administered were visible on his hand when visiting her client in custody on 30 October.

Photo: Dato Sokhadze; © Private

Zviad Tavkhelidze was also reportedly beaten over seven days, from 21 October. Gia Portchkhidze was reportedly beaten in police custody from 31 October until 3 November.

On being transferred to pre-trial detention facilities in Tbilisi (well after the 72-hour limit prescribed by Georgian law), all four renounced their earlier confessions. A special inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is reported to have studied the allegations of torture and ill-treatment in November. However, the investigation was closed within the space of two months, officially due to a lack of evidence. A petition against the head of Tbilisi police regarding the alleged incident has been lodged with the Tbilisi City Procuracy by the four men's lawyer.

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 Bachuki Sharvashidze, Dato Sokhadze, Zviad Tavkheldze and Gia Portchkhidze were tortured and ill-treated by around ten police officers at Tbilisi's city police department between 21 October and 3 November 2000;
 - urging the authorities to open a prompt and impartial investigation into these allegations with the results made public and anyone found responsible brought 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:	City Procurator:
Eduard Shevardnadze	Nugzar Gabrichidze	Koba Narchemashvili	Tengiz Makharadze
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; Gabrichidze, N.; GEORGIA	Gruziya; 380014 g. Tbilisi; ul. Generala Gia Gulua, 10; Ministerstvo vnutrennikh del Gruzii; Narchemashvili, K.; GEORGIA	Gruziya; 380059 g. Tbilisi; Digomsky massiv, 2-oy kvartal; Prokuratura g. Tbilisi; Prokuroru MAKHARADZE T.; GEORGIA
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Send copies of your letters to:

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

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- Human Rights Ombudsperson in Georgia, Nana Devdariani:

Gruziya
380034 g. Tbilisi
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- the Ambassador of Georgia to your country (if there is one)

KEYWORDS: TORTURE/ILL-TREATMENT1 / POLICE / IMPUNITY / PHOTOGRAPHS

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)