



# The leaders of Lelo For Georgia speak up about legal system malfunctions

LELO LEADERS SPOKE AT A BRIEFING TODAY ABOUT THE UNINVESTIGATED CASE OF TORNIKE MEREBASHVILI AND THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE AFOREMENTIONED CASE AND THE CASE OF GIORGI SHAKARASHVILI.

BY ANASTASIA SOKHADZE

The leaders of the political party recalled Tornike Merebashvili, who was killed on July 6th, 2018, and once again informed the public that the investigative bodies are taking the case in the wrong direction. According to Lelo, Merebashvili's real killer is free, and the person whose guilt has not been confirmed has been sentenced.

According to Ana Natsvlishvili, one of the leaders of Lelo, the same prosecutor is involved in the cases of Merebashvili and Shakarashvili.

"Today we are talking about a very serious case related to the murder of an 18-year-old boy, which is still uninvestigated. His parents have been asking for one thing for two years now - to find out who killed their son and, unfortunately, instead of the investigators answering this question, the investigation has been busy falsifying the case and claiming a false version. This case is also distinguished by the fact that a person who is known to be guilty and is currently in prison is not proven to have committed this crime and, consequently, on the one hand, due to a wrong investigation by



► Nana Gugutishvili, the prosecutor of the case.

the state, the parents cannot get justice and on the other hand, an innocent person is sitting behind the bars. Investigative agencies did not conduct any investigative actions aimed at establishing the truth," stated Natsvlishvili.

"Despite the numerous pieces of evidence in Tornike Merebashvili's case, the investigation is going in the wrong direction,

the case is being deliberately falsified," added Kakha Kozhoridze, one of the leaders of Lelo. The leaders have two Samkharauli conclusions issued in 2018-2019. Both conclusions contradict each other as they are independent. The expert's report refutes Samkharauli's conclusion. The family and their lawyer have filed a number of complaints, but



the case is still uninvestigated. According to Kozhoridze, it is noteworthy that the prosecutor in this case, Nana Gugutishvili, is also the prosecutor in the case of Giorgi Shakarashvili.

18-year-old Tornike Merebashvili was found dead on July 6th, 2018, on the Gori-Mejvriskhevi road. According to the MIA, an investigation started

under the Article 115 of the Criminal Code of Georgia – bringing a person to suicide. In the course of investigation, the qualification of the charge changed into Article 117 Part 1 and Article 276 Part V of the CCG – intentional grave injury of another's body and violation of security or exploitation rules of the vehicle which caused the death of a person.

## Over 30,000 to Join the Freedom Chain for Belarus

August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020. On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1989, around 2 million Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians held each other's hands to form a 600 km long peaceful human chain called the Baltic Way - an act of bravery that foreshadowed the collapse of the Soviet Union two years later. Now, Lithuanian activists are organizing a similar initiative to express the country's solidarity with neighboring Belarus in the fight against the authoritarian regime.

Laisvės TV - Lithuania's largest online channel - has announced a campaign called the



**FREEDOM WAY  
INTERNATIONAL**

Freedom Chain for Belarus - a human chain that will extend from the Cathedral Square in the capital Vilnius all the way to the border with Belarus. The initiative has attracted tremendous interest with more than 30,000 people signing up over one weekend.

Anyone willing to support Belarus is invited to join the Freedom Chain at 7 PM on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, on the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Baltic Way.

Andrius Tapinas, a Lithuanian public figure and the man behind the initiative, said that Lithuanians understand today's struggle for freedom in Belarus

very well—which is why the country must help to achieve it. "It is wonderful to see such support and unity among the people. Volunteer organizations, Vilnius City Municipality, the police, the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, the Lithuanian National Radio and Television joined us on the first day. When there is such a strong support, everything is possible. And together, we have proven more than once that impossible is just a mindset."

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda and the former President Dalia Grybauskaitė will also join the chain. Other

Lithuanian cities are inviting people for local solidarity chains and organizing buses to the main event. Lithuanians in London will also hold hands in a symbolic Freedom Chain in Hyde Park, and Latvians, Estonians and Ukrainians have too expressed their interest in joining the campaign.

Laisvės TV will broadcast the event and invite political experts for discussion. An ad hoc app Walk15, available in Lithuanian, English and Belarusian, will mark the routes of the Freedom Chain in all countries.

The historical uprising in Belarus started in early August, when Alexander Lukashenko, who has ruled for 26 years, rigged the presidential election and claimed a landslide victory against the opposition leader Svetlana Tikhonovskaya. The massive protests brought violence to the streets as the riot

police used rubber bullets, flash grenades and teargas to maintain control, and many people ended up being beaten or kidnapped in broad daylight. The situation has captured international attention, with the majority of political leaders denouncing the authoritarian regime and asking for a fair election.

*About Laisvės TV*  
Laisvės TV is an independent online TV channel founded by the journalist and public figure Andrius Tapinas. Supported solely by donations from viewers, Laisvės TV has created more than a thousand shows in various formats and genres since its inception in 2016. In 2020, Laisvės TV became part of the Laisvės Media Group family, which combines two online TV channels, a coworking space, technical filming services and a plethora of meaningful activities and campaigns outside the studio.

| FRIDAY   | AUGUST 21   |
|----------|-------------|
| Day      | Sunny       |
|          | High: 32°C  |
| Night    | Clear skies |
|          | Low: 19°C   |
| SATURDAY | AUGUST 22   |
| Day      | Thunderstor |
|          | High: 24°C  |
| Night    | Thunderstor |
|          | Low: 18°C   |

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# European Council confirms EU intention to impose sanction against those responsible for post-election violence in Belarus

On 19 August, the EU heads of state or government discussed the situation in Belarus, following the presidential elections on 9 August.

President of the European Council Charles Michel said that the EU had been following the developments in Belarus very closely and with increasing concern.

"The 9 August elections were neither free nor fair, therefore we do not recognise the results," he stressed.

"The members of the European Council condemn the disproportionate and unacceptable violence displayed by the state authorities against peaceful protesters," added Mr Michel, reiterating that "violence must be avoided and all those unlawfully detained must be immediately and unconditionally released".

Charles Michel added that the EU will soon impose sanctions against a substantial number of individuals responsible for violence, repression and the falsification of election results.

"Progress made in the past years in the relationship between the EU and Belarus is at risk," he said. "Any further deterioration of the situation will impact on our relationship and have negative consequences".

The European Council called on the Belarusian authorities to find a way out of the crisis through de-escalation and inclusive national dialogue.

In conclusion to the meeting, the European Council President said that the EU would continue to follow the situation closely and stand ready to contribute to ending the crisis peacefully.



## Coronavirus: European Commission continues expanding future vaccines portfolio with new talks

The European Commission has concluded exploratory talks with CureVac to purchase a potential vaccine against COVID-19 on 20 August.

This is following the positive steps with Sanofi-GSK on 31 July and Johnson & Johnson on 13 August and the signature of an Advance Purchase Agreement with AstraZeneca on 14 August.

The envisaged contract with CureVac would provide for the possibility for all EU Member States to purchase the vaccine, as well as to donate to lower and middle income countries or re-direct to European countries.

It is anticipated that the Commission will have a contractual framework in place for the initial purchase of 225 million doses on behalf of all EU Member States, to be supplied once a vaccine has proven to be safe and effective against COVID-19. The Commission pursues intensive discussions with other vaccine manufacturers.

On 6 July, the European Investment Bank and CureVac signed a €75 million loan agreement for the development and large-scale production of vaccines, including CureVac's vaccine candidate against COVID-19.

**ღამის სერენადები / NIGHT SERENADES**

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