

MIA names drug overdose as cause of Lashkarava's death in 'interim report'

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The Ministry of Internal Affairs held the third briefing on the case of TV Pirveli cameraman Lekso Lashkarava's death on the night of July 12. The MIA says that according to an intermediate chemical examination, a drug was found in his blood and the cause of death may have been an overdose.

The MIA also talked about the route of Lexo Lashkarava before his death. It was said that he bought drugs in Ponichala - one of the well-known districts of drug dealing in the outskirts of Tbilisi, which was confirmed by witnesses. According to the agency, Lashkarava and his drunken friend consumed the purchased drug in Ortachala, in a forest, where Lashkarava felt unwell and this can be proved by the video footage obtained from the nearby surveillance cameras.

According to Mamuka Chelidze, Director of the Central Criminal Police Department, more than 200 investigative and procedural actions were carried out within the framework of the investigation into the death of Lashkarava. 110 people were interrogated and 65 video surveillance cameras were viewed.

Chelidze informed that the forensic medical examination was conducted to determine the immediate cause of death, involving an independent expert hired by the family. According to the conclusion of the chemical expertise, the samples taken from the corpse contained drugs, "morphine", "codeine", "tetrahydrocannabinol", "pentin" and "monoacetylmorphine". The Head of Criminal Police Department said, the family called an ambulance on July 11,



A cordon of cameramen in honor of the memory of Aleksandre Lashkarava.

at 6 am, the doctors found Lekso Lashkarava already dead and then the police came to his house.

The cameraman, who was found dead in his home by family members on the morning of July 11, fell victim to brutal physical retaliation by right-wing hate gangs on July 5 while filming at the office of Shame Movement. According to journalist Miranda Baghaturia, they were beaten by about 20 violators. Only 5 people accused of violence against him have been arrested - one has been arrested after death, 4 have been sentenced to imprisonment. Meanwhile, on the July 5 events, 21 orcs have been charged. 36 people are declared as affected, including 30 journalists and cameramen.

After the death of Lekso Lashkarava,



The broken parts of his camera were brought to his house.

Lashkarava, who was severely beaten by violent groups on July 5, was buried on July 13. Media managers, journalists and a lot of people walked from his house to the cemetery.

the demand for the resignation of the government was on the agenda. The government says it is not going to resign, the public is trying to put pressure through rallies.

Lashkarava had his facial bones crushed after being attacked by hate groups, which led to surgery.

The MIA indicated his connection to drugs before receiving the answer to the examination of the cause of death, and to discredit the deceased, a special category of personal information about him was spread on the Internet. The investigation has not said anything about the fact that he was severely beaten by violent groups a few days before his death, the police did not protect the cameraman. It should be

noted that before the MIA raised the issue of a drug overdose, this version was spread in the pro-Russian media.

Family members say Lekso Lashkarava was in severe pain after the beating and surgery. On the 11th of July the mother of the deceased cameraman then said he was treated with a strong painkiller at the hospital for at least 3 days and if interested, the investigation could take a look at the medical history. The family demands severe punishment for the accused in beating the cameraman.

"Punish the people who caused physical damage and brought him to this state. We will not tolerate this story to go that way," said Lashkarava's wife, Irine Lomsadze.



The investigation into Lashkarava's death has started under Article 115 of the Criminal Code of Georgia - 'incitement to suicide'.

Two different Georgia's seen by the government and the opposition

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

At the plenary session of the Parliament at the end of last month, Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili presented the report on the activities of the government and the additional 10-year development plan of the country.

Representatives of opposition parties in parliament criticized Gharibashvili's report, while the Georgian Dream parliamentary faction considered the opposition's criticism unfounded.

The debate was very heated and in fact it turned out that the government and the opposition see two completely different Georgias - everything is good or will be good in Georgia, while the opposition saw a lot of problems in Georgia, the solution of which was not said by the government.

It should be noted that Irakli Gharibashvili took over the post of Prime Minister after the resignation of Giorgi Gakharia. Gharibashvili ran for office for the second time, ending his first term as prime minister due to Bidzina Ivanishvili. Gharibashvili's 115-page report was distributed to the deputies, and the Prime Minister spoke at length about its main provisions- Economic Development,

Post-Pandemic Recovery and Vaccination, Euro-Atlantic Integration, Occupation and Nagorno-Karabakh. Most importantly, Gharibashvili presented a 10-year plan for the future development of the country - what Georgia will be like in 2030, according to the Georgian Dream.

The Prime Minister was asked many questions by both the government and the opposition. Gharibashvili answered in detail the questions of the Georgian Dream MPs, most of which were probably planned in advance. Gharibashvili neglected some of the opposition's questions and did not answer them - he kept being cynical. In principle, no small part of the opposition's questions were more an assessment of the Georgian Dream policy than a question.

The opposition considered the report of the Prime Minister to be extremely weak. Gharibashvili's speech was about specific numbers and they did not see the systemic reforms necessary for the country to move forward.

Part of such reforms is discussed in a document reached on April 19 mediated by Charles Michel. The opposition was left with a strange impression on the Prime Minister's report - the Prime Minister spoke about the

9-year rule of the previous government and once again criticized Saakashvili, whom he called a 'beggar' and also about the plans for the next 10 years. There was less talk about the 9-year rule of the Georgian Dream between these two chronological frameworks. "We made mistakes, we did not commit a crime," was the essence of one of Gharibashvili's answers.

The opposition criticized the results of the Georgian Dream's many years of rule, saying the population is hungry and the country - in debt.

Georgian Dream MPs were satisfied with the Prime Minister's report. "The country has a strong prime minister, a strong government, a strong parliamentary team that takes responsibility for the development of the country," said Irakli Kobakhidze, chairman of the Georgian Dream party.

The opposition was very irritated by the presentation of the 10-year development plan for the period up to 2030 and considered it a pre-election rally. While the opposition Georgian Dream accused of rigging parliamentary elections and hopes to hold snap elections in 2022 and oust the Georgian Dream from power, the Georgian Dream Prime Minister speaks of a convincing vic-

tory in the next parliamentary elections in 2024 and another 2030. The opposition recalled that such long-term development plans to the previous prime ministers- Gakharia and Kvirikashvili were also represented, but after their departure from the government no one remembered these plans.

Describing what Georgia will be like in 2030 owes much to the current government. For example, whether teachers' salaries will become € 2200 after ten years, no one knows, and even if they do raise, what the GEL exchange rate will be at that time is hard to say.

It may also be that it does not actually exceed much of today's salary. But for an ordinary person running in the local government elections in the fall, the named figures, which will be in ten years, may prove to be impressive.

The opposition demanded a short-term forecast from the government, the fulfillment of which will be the responsibility of the current government. "The

10-year program presented by you has little to do with today's needs and problems ... In order for the case to be resolved, it would probably be desirable and good to have short-term, at least 3-year programs," said Fridon Injia, a member of the European Socialists.

The main task of the government and the opposition is to implement the April 19 agreement, the fulfillment of the terms of which will cause some problems for the government. Local elections are approaching, which was assigned the function of a referendum under the April 19 agreement.

One of the questions now is whether the Georgian Dream will be able to get 43% of the vote. According to the polls conducted last week, Georgian Dream does not manage to do that. However, the current government will do everything to achieve this, and the opposition claims that the Georgian Dream can achieve this only by rigging the elections.

News in Brief

Prepared by
The Messenger Staff

Gejadze on Lashkarava: Expertise has no grounds to draw any conclusions about the cause of death

Independent expert Alexander Gejadze, who is involved in the case of the deceased cameraman, Lekso Lashkarava, says that there is no reason to talk about the cause of death yet. He spoke about it on Palitranius.

Gejadze says that

Samkharauli experts found 5 substances in Lashkarava's body, but he is waiting for the results of histopathomorphological examination.

TV First cameraman Lekso Lashkarava and journalist Miranda Baghaturia were attacked on July 5 by violent participants in a march of honor. Lashkarava was severely beaten and his facial bones were broken, which necessitated an urgent operation. A few days after the attack, on July 11, Lashkarava was found dead in her home by her mother. He was buried today.

The media blames the authorities for the death of Lekso Lashkarava because he could not ensure their safety during the contract. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is trying to develop a version that Lashkarava died of an overdose, which is not shared by family members and colleagues.

Photographer beaten on July 5: the condition is stable but serious

Interpresnews photo correspondent Giorgi Nikolishvili, who was beaten on July 5, remains in hospital. As he said in the show 360 Degrees, his condition is serious.

"The situation is stable, stably severe. I have pain in my head, hematoma in the brain and this is the situation," Nikolishvili said.

According to him, he does not remember the beating episode. He does not yet know when he will fully recover:

"I have information that three people have been arrested in this case. It is impossible for me to identify them, but I very much hope that not only in my part, but in any part, each of my colleagues will be severely punished under the law."

On July 5, violent groups opposed to the March of Dignity attacked journalists, cameramen and photographers. Police were unable to ensure the safety of media representatives.

101st Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism meeting takes place in Ergneti

ERGNETI, 13 July 2021 — The 101st meeting of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) convened today in Ergneti, co-facilitated by the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all necessary sanitary precautions continued to be followed at the meeting venue.

During the meeting, participants exchanged views and had constructive discussions on the impact of the prolonged closure of crossing points and other restrictions affecting the livelihoods of the conflict-affected population, on the most recent security developments at the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL), on current detention cases, and on the consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Participants agreed to follow up on the technical meeting on irrigation issues, on 8 July 2021.

The Head of the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM), Ambassador Marek Szczygiel welcomed the participants' engagement in the IPRM format as a key factor for stabilisation and normalisation on the ground. The co-facilitators also stressed the importance of continued dialogue and called for mutually acceptable solutions that uphold humanitarian principles and respond positively to the needs and human rights of the conflict-affected population. They reiterated that they stand ready to support all such efforts, which would pave the way for resuming freedom of movement and resolution of other issues such as irrigation water management. During the meeting, attention also focused on steps that could be taken by participants to address Women, Peace and Security issues in the IPRM format.

The participants agreed to plan for a subsequent meeting on 27 September 2021.

Weather

Wednesday, July 14

Day Rain
High: 32°C
Night Showers
Low: 21°C

Thursday, July 15

Day Showers
High: 26°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 19°C

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