

## Mtavari Arkhi accuses Georgian Dream of attacking cameraman, latter denies



► Cameraman Ablotia has been discharged from the hospital.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The opposition-minded Mtavari Arkhi reported on September 15 that their cameraman was thrown from the balcony of the second floor of the Georgian Dream office.

Nika Gvaramia, General Director of the television, said that the members of the Dream ousted cameramen from the second floor of the Georgian Dream headquarters.

The fact is being investigated under the Article 124 of the Criminal Code (less severe or severe damage to health through negligence). If convicted, the offense is punishable by a fine or correctional labor for up to 2 years.

According to the Main Channel, cameraman Levan Ablotia, who was preparing a report about Kareli mayoral candidate Zaza Guliashvili together with journalist Beka Korshia, was thrown from the balcony of the second floor of the Kareli office of the Georgian Dream.

Korshia, who accompanied the cameraman, says the ruling party representatives were hostile from the very beginning. He reports that two people threw hands at the cameraman in the office of Dream and threw him.

Guliashvili, Kareli mayoral candidate from the Georgian Dream denies the accusations saying the cameraman of the Main Channel was not thrown out from the second floor balcony of the office, but fell down from the stair railing by himself.



► The organisation says the Kareli incident is the result of the aggressive policy of the ruling party in Kareli is the Coalition for Media Advocacy.

The Georgian Dream party has responded to the incident and accused the opposition United National Movement party and its 'affiliated TV channels' of staging provocations and spreading fake information.

Ruling party MP Mamuka Mdinardze said that journalist Korshia was trying to organize to provoke them. GD head Irakli Kobakhidze stated that Mtavari Arkhi had a recording which showed the incident and that Ablotia 'fell down himself.' However, "the channel deliberately concealed the recording."

Ablotia, who underwent additional examinations after being transferred from the 'Evex' clinic in Kareli to the 'New Hospital' in Tbilisi, was discharged home on September 16. According to the doctor, the patient's condition met the discharge criteria:

"Only superficial traumas have been identified by first-line studies, as well as

high-tech studies. Damage to any internal organs, damage to the brain or bone system was not observed. There is a superficial trauma to the chest and there is stretching of the joints. The recommendation is bed rest," the doctor told the media.

Main Channel previously reported that Ablotia had a broken hip, thigh and rib, injured arm and bruises as a result of an attack on the Georgian Dream headquarters. The cameraman will continue his treatment at his apartment.

Cameraman has dismissed the allegations of the channel head Gvaramia that he was thrown out of the second floor by GD activists. Ablotia has told journalists that there was a confrontation in the office and that GD activists were aggressive to the staff of opposition-minded channels. He stated that 4 or 5 activists tried to grab his camera and that during the fight he was walking backwards and then fell down.

"I remember 4 or 5 people, some trying to grab the camera from behind, some from the front and I avoided myself, as is often the case, and went backwards because I wanted to have a distance, I wanted the distance between the aggressor and me. I've lost my balance and fallen over in this wrestling match. I was just defending myself, but I could not defend myself to the end and what happened - happened," the main channel operator told the media, adding: "I was thrown out, in the full sense of the word."

According to him, journalist Beka Korshia was forcibly removed from the office of the Georgian Dream and then left the office himself, after which the members of the Georgian Dream were locked in the office. According to Levan Ablotia, the situation became tense when "Resign" was written on the building. Coalition for Media Advocacy condemns the violence and believes that the restriction of the film crew of the Main Channel in Kareli on September 15 and the injury of the cameraman include signs of illegal interference in journalistic activities, which is a circumstance to be considered during the investigation.

"The coalition considers the incident in Kareli a result of the aggressive policy of the ruling party. We call on the Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia not to encourage violence against journalists and also to call on its supporters to immediately stop attacking journalists and illegally obstructing their journalistic activities," the statement said.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.1129 | EURO - 3.6822 | GBP - 4.3039 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.2846 | SWISS FRANC - 3.3859 |

# Constitutional amendments, Saakashvili's regular statement on return and 'renewal of political cases' in court

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The constitutional amendments adopted on September 7 showed that the "Georgian Dream" performs separate paragraphs of the April 19 agreement announced by him "Annoon". It is clear what the ruling party doesn't like about the agreement - the court reform and the 43% threshold. Before the upcoming self-government elections, Saakashvili made another statement about returning to Georgia. In the meantime, the trials were resumed against media managers.

According to the Government leaders, this document contains anti-constitutional points. This document was unacceptable for the Georgian Dream from the constitutional amendment. According to the amendment, the

General Prosecutor must be advised by a qualified majority - 3/5 of the full composition (support of 90 members).

If the Parliament failed to do it with two votes, then the General Prosecutor would choose a simple majority - 76 votes, but for 1 year. The idea of this change was that the General Prosecutor was elected by the government and the opposition, as a result of consensus and more confidence.

This paragraph did not get into the April 19 agreement, - such a recommendation has long been a Venice Commission. According to "Georgian Dream", it was unacceptable, according to their arguments, it was a constitutional scarcity, because "there is no model of choosing the General Prosecutor in Democratic Countries" and selecting a short

term "undermines the independence of the institute".

Reference to European democratic countries is not convincing to the opposition. The thing is that Georgia is far from the Prosecutor's Office and the Court's European standards.

According to the Georgian Dream, this constitutional amendment was followed by a negative reaction from the West. According to the US Embassy, Georgia has missed another opportunity for an "independent, transparent and impartial justice system", which is important for Georgia's European integration. The concerns were expressed by the EU that "Georgian Dream" does not fulfil its obligations regarding the court reform.

The opposition claims that Georgia will actually shift the West in the absence of the terms

of the April 19 agreement. However, more than the failure of the obligations, can be made by the tone of "Georgian Dream" leaders from the West. According to these statements, the Venice Commission is mistaken, I did not have any promise, the April 19 agreement was annulled, Ambassadors ask us and explain.

The annulment of the April 19 agreement did not lead the Georgian Dream to forgetting the Gavrilo Night amnesty law, which was initiated in the name of the agreement and which provoked the biggest protests in the opposition. The reason for initiating the amnesty law was the release of Nika Melia.

During the tense pre-election period, Mikheil Saakashvili said that he was going to return to Georgia before the elections. It would be a sensation to say

this for the first time, but he is making his return statement for the eighth or eleventh time (journalists were confused in counting such previous statements). "Georgian Dream" met this statement with ridicule - it will not dare to come, and if it arrives, it will release itself in prison. Saakashvili's statement was not welcomed by a large part of the opposition. "He will not dare to come, and if does, he'll be sent to prison."

Saakashvili's statement was not welcomed by a large part of the opposition spectrum either - Saakashvili with his statement returns us to bipolarity and pours water on the mill of the Georgian Dream, if the opposition is multipolar, it will gain more votes and defeat the Georgian Dream. Such is the essence of this reaction. The main pre-election battles are still ahead.

# Gakharia on leaked records: I didn't have information about it

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

A few days back, it was announced by several Georgian media outlets that they had received files that were allegedly leaked from the State Security Services, SSS, of Georgia. As it was noted, the files contained personal information about many people in the country, especially priests.

Titled "Georgian State Security Service's compromising materials against Patriarchate", the files were received by media outlets from "Hakim Pasha". The unidentified sender wrote in the mail that he worked in the agency for several years, which he called the "biggest threat to the country", saying that they listen to everyone.

Allegedly, the data contains information since 2014. According to the information of Georgian media representatives, the files include information about alleged crimes like sexual relations with minors, taking bribes for mediation to pardon inmates, spying for Russia, as well as many other crimes.

## ALLEGED SSS RECORDS LEAKED IN THE COUNTRY SEVERAL DAYS AGO



Gakharia says he did not have information about the recordings.



The files were sent to media outlets by someone nicknamed "Hakim Pasha".

While no official statement was made by the Patriarchate of the country, the ruling party blamed the United National Movement for the files. Gia Volski, MP of GD said that it is UNM that has always been deeply engaged with illegal surveillance and collecting personal data. On the other hand, some of the journalists in the country said that the conversations that were included in the files about them were accurate.

Recently, former Prime Minis-

ter of the country, Giorgi Gakharia was asked about the files by Formula TV, to which he answered that he did not have any information about the recordings.

"I, as the Prime Minister, received some briefings from the Security Service regarding the internal and external security of the country. But I did not have information of this scale [of files], of course," said the former PM.

He also added that the first thing that needs to be done is to confirm the authenticity of

the leaked files. In addition, he believes that it should also be investigated how the files leaked.

Irakli Kobakhidze, the chairman of the Georgian Dream, said that it was a shame for Gakharia to say that he did not know what the State Security Service was doing, because, as he said, the deputy head of SSS was Gakharia's appointee. The day after the recordings were released, the State Security Service issued a statement stating that reproducing such information would

violate the honor and dignity of individuals, security officers, and the agency as a whole. The agency called on the media and political stakeholders to refrain from disseminating inaccurate and unverified information until the investigation is completed. Numerous NGOs in the country call on a swift and accurate investigation of the ongoing events in the country. Some of the NGOs also offered legal assistance to individuals who found information about themselves in the files.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 17

Day Rain High: 23°C

Night Light rain Low: 16°C

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 18

Day A few clouds High: 27°C

Night Mostly clear Low: 18°C

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