

State Inspector's Office fines Justice Ministry, Penitentiary Service for unlawfully Releasing Saakashvili's Footage



► Saakashvili stressed that he has no desire to hold a high position in the government.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

The State Inspector's Office has fined the country's Justice Ministry €500 and the Special Penitentiary Service €2,000 for the release of videos of former president Mikheil Saakashvili in prison. According to the State Inspector's Office, the Justice Ministry and the Special Penitentiary Service of Georgia violated the law on personal data when they disclosed the footage of Saakashvili being transferred to Gldani Prison last month as well as videos showing the ex-president receiving food supplements while on hunger strike. The agency claims that the release of the footage 'insulted the dignity of the former president' and urged the ministry and the Special Penitentiary Service to ensure that videos are deleted from the internet.

Ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili, who is currently undergoing treatment in Gori military hospital after ending the hunger strike, announced on Tuesday that following the release of the State Inspector's report, two employees of the 18th prison entered his cell and informed him that disciplinary proceedings had resulted in a decision that he would not be able to receive visitors and that his right to use

the TV would be restricted. As a form of protest, Saakashvili refused to take any medication recommended by doctors as long as the restrictions remained in force.

"This incident was the reaction of the Penitentiary Service to the decision of the State Inspector's Office. Naturally, the Ministry of Justice was angry because the State Inspector's Office found 8 violations against Mikheil Saakashvili," said Saakashvili's lawyer Dimitri Sadzaglishvili.

According to the ex-president's lawyer,

an hour and a half after the employees of the 18th penitentiary facility left the ward, the TV of the third president of Georgia was turned off. As Sadzaglishvili noted Saakashvili expressed a very strong protest over this fact and as a result the TV signal was recovered. "The penitentiary service backed off only after Mikheil Saakashvili made a very strong protest," He noted.

Sadzaglishvili said that the ex-president's doctor was also allowed to visit

Saakashvili. According to him, after the penitentiary service 'backed off', Saakashvili terminated the protest and continued his medical treatment.

The Penitentiary Service has stated that Saakashvili's accusations are false and that he was not being denied the right to meet with his family members and personal doctor. "There have been no restrictions on the exercise of any of the convict's rights by the Special Penitentiary Service," reads the official statement. They called on the ex-president to refrain from making false allegations against the service and its employees.

The Opposition United National Movement (UNM) party held a rally near the residence of the president of Georgia yesterday, demanding a meeting with Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili. According to the UNM, the President has 'a historic chance' to end the crisis in the country by pardoning ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili.

Saakashvili stated yesterday that Georgia needs 'universal political amnesty' and redistribution of power. He also stressed that he has no desire to hold a high position in the government. "A whole new generation of leaders must come," the ex-president noted.



სახელმწიფო ინსპექციის სამსახური
STATE INSPECTOR'S SERVICE

► One of the footage shows penitentiary employees dragging Saakashvili against his will into the Gldani prison.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.0991 | EURO - 3.4898 | GBP - 4.0911 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.2050 | SWISS FRANC - 3.3551 |

Saakashvili Not to Attend his Trial Today Due to Worsened Health Condition

BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

Mikheil Saakashvili says that he will not be able to attend today's trial due to his health condition, and he wanted to attend because of the people who were arrested because of him. The ex-president said they should be released and returned to their families.

"I will not be able to attend the trial tomorrow due to my health condition. The only reason I wanted to come was to encourage and support the people who have been suffering for me for several months. These people should be released immediately and returned to their families!" is said in Saakashvili's post published on Facebook.



Tomorrow, December 9, the trial of Mikheil Saakashvili will be held in the case of an illegal border crossing.

Mikheil Saakashvili, who was prosecuted by the Georgian Dream government, said on October 1 that he was in Georgia. He was arrested the same evening. Charges for illegally crossing the border were filed within 20 days of arrest.

Saakashvili entered Georgia with Elguja Tsomaia's trailer. Tsomaia is accused of crossing the border illegally together with Saakashvili under the same article. Three more people are also accused of helping Saakashvili in crossing the border. Saakashvili's case was separated from other cases.

Georgia joins Creative Europe 2021-2027 Program

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Tea Tsulukiani, the Minister of Culture, Sport and Youth of Georgia, and Mariya Gabriel, the European Commission's Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, remotely signed an

agreement on Georgia's participation in the Creative Europe 2021-2027 program. The EU will support the cultural, creative, and audio-visual sectors of the program's member countries with a budget of €2.44 billion.

The two main objectives of the program are to protect, develop

and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as to increase the competitiveness and economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors. The program also aims to support the news media sector and use of technologies, as well as strengthen the resilience of me-



Creative Europe

► Georgia was the first country in the Eastern Partnership to officially join the Creative Europe program in 2015.



► Tea Tsulukiani, the Minister of Culture, Sport and Youth of Georgia, and Mariya Gabriel, the European Commission's Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, signed the agreement remotely.

dia and audiovisual industries.

It is noteworthy that Georgia was the first country in the Eastern Partnership to officially join the Creative Europe program in 2015 with 33 projects from the country gaining €1.5 million in financing from the program until 2020. Cinematic, literary, museums, and other sectors were supported through Georgia's participation in the initiative.

According to the Ministry of Culture, Georgia is participating in the program for the second time as an associated country and will be able to once again partake in competitions in the field of culture, media, and audiovisual areas and also gain funding which will contribute to the integration of Georgian culture with the European space.

The ministry notes that the signing of the agreement is an important step in further developing the existing partnership between Georgia and the EU, promoting and strengthening Georgian culture, as well as popularizing European culture in Georgia.

THURSDAY DECEMBER 9

Day Cloudy
High: 14°C

Night A few clouds
Low: 6°C

FRIDAY DECEMBER 10

Day Sunny
High: 14°C

Night Clear
Low: 2°C

published by **The Messenger**

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia

Founded by Prof. **Zaza Gachechiladze**

Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Phone: +995 99 56 56 21; +995 77 76 00 00
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Natalia Kochiashvili
Executive Editor

Nino Kavelashvili
Design and Layout

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact. All contributions should be submitted by e-mail. The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper,

and, therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements. The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.