

Lawyers Request to Grant Saakashvili Victim Status

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

The lawyers of the imprisoned former president Mikheil Saakashvili have filed a suit at Prosecutor's Office to recognize Saakashvili as a victim of "inhumane and degrading treatment." According to his lawyer Nika Gvaramia, the recognition as a victim will allow them to have full access to the material of the case of video footage of the former president in prison facilities, released by the Justice Ministry and the Penitentiary Service of Georgia in November.

As the State Inspector's Service determined on December 3, the justice ministry and the Penitentiary Service of Georgia had violated the law on personal data by releasing videos of Saakashvili receiving food and supplements while on hunger strike, as well as another footage which shows Saakashvili being transferred from Rustavi prison to the Gldani Prison hospital on November 8. However, earlier this month Tbilisi City Court annulled the State Inspector's Service decision regarding the two institutions, claiming that footage had been justifiably published due to 'significant public interest' towards Saakashvili's case.

Public Defender Nino Lomjaria announced yesterday that the request to grant Saakashvili a victim's status is fair and substantiated. She noted that to issue the relevant recommendation the Public Defender's office needs to study the case materials and get more information.

Lomjaria and the team of medical experts presented the final report on Wednesday regarding jailed ex-President Mikheil Saakashvili's health condition. Lomjaria said that her team visited Saakashvili three times after he ended the hunger strike and according to her, no significant changes have been revealed in treatment methodology.

The Public Defender noted that Saakashvili is undergoing medical treatment, however, the recommendations of the medical group of experts issued in November are still unfulfilled.

Lomjaria explained that they are not going to arrange an additional visit unless the situation is changed significantly in terms



► According to ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili's lawyer Nika Gvaramia, the victim's status would give the legal team full access to the material that exists in the case.

of both the treatment methodology and the patient's health.

For the full rehabilitation of the patient, the group of experts considers it necessary to provide Saakashvili with the following treatment: Psychotherapy — which is the first-line treatment of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder and is likely to help restore an adequate diet; Physical rehabilitation; MRT examination; Neurological monitoring and electroneuromyographic examination in case of progression.



► Public Defender Nino Lomjaria reports that no significant changes have been revealed in the treatment methodology of Saakashvili.

Threat of Russian Invasion of Ukraine

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Ukrainian military intelligence has spread information that Russia has almost completed the mobilization of troops in the border area and has deployed more than 127,000 troops. According to the military intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, which was shared exclusively with CNN, Russia may launch an attack at any time.

Russia has deployed troops on the western borders from the central and eastern regions with a long-term perspective. The report says the ground forces of the Russian army units in the direction of Ukraine include 106 000 soldiers, not counting the naval and land components.

"Russia is moving arms supplies to the borders, field hospitals, and security services. Russia supports more than 35,000 insurgents in eastern Ukraine and has

about 3,000 of its own military personnel in the rebel territory," the report said, emphasizing that Russia is trying to divide and weaken the EU and NATO, as well as limit US capabilities on the European continent. "The possibility of a mass attack by Russia against Ukraine is not the most likely scenario at this stage. At the same time, the European Union is preparing sanctions in the event of an attack," said EU High Representative for Foreign Af-

fairs and Security Policy Joseph Borrell, addressing a joint sitting of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense.

Borrell believes there may be another cyberattack on Ukraine as of last week, which was an attempt to destabilize the situation in Ukraine. He expressed readiness to help Kiev on behalf of the EU.

Continued to page 2

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.0840 | EURO - 3.5130 | GBP - 4.1992 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.0371 | SWISS FRANC - 3.3720 |

Threat of Russian Invasion of Ukraine

From page 1

Recall that last week the Pentagon and the White House said that Russia is preparing an excuse for intervention in Ukraine. The US has made clear it is committed to helping Ukraine defend its 'sovereign territory'. President Biden has threatened Russia's leader with measures 'like none he's ever seen' if Ukraine is attacked, while stressing that deployment of US troops unilaterally is 'not on the table'.

"Russia has the opportunity to attack Ukraine in a very short time," the US Secretary of State said in Kiev. According to him, the mobilization of Russian troops near the Ukrainian border is taking place without any provocation or reason. Blinken expressed hope that Russia could choose a diplomatic and peaceful path, but also added that it would depend on the decision of Russian President Vladimir Putin. According to the US Secretary of State, he will meet with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Geneva on January 21.

For his part, the US Secretary of State noted that resolving the conflict through diplomatic channels is a priority, but if the aggression resumes, it will have serious consequences for Moscow.

According to the Secretary of Defense of the United Kingdom, Ben Wallace, Britain has begun supplying anti-tank weapons to Ukraine to help the country defend itself in the event of an intervention. The first batch of



► "US assistance expresses our support for our strategic plans for Ukraine's membership in NATO," Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky said during a meeting with Blinken.



► President Biden has threatened Russia's leader with measures 'like none he's ever seen' if Ukraine is attacked, while stressing that deploying US troops unilaterally is 'not on the table'.

Ukraine stalled last week and Russian forces remained on the Ukrainian border. The Canadian Foreign Minister is on a one-week visit to Ukraine to reaffirm Canada's support for the country's sovereignty.

Still, the West's biggest tools appear to be sanctions and supporting the Ukrainian military - options could include disconnecting Russia's banking system from the international Swift payment system, preventing the opening of Russia's Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline in Germany - approval for that is currently being decided by Germany's energy regulator, and measures targeting Russia's RDIF sovereign wealth fund or restrictions on banks converting roubles into foreign currency.

Recall that conflict between rebels and Ukraine's military has continued to this day, although a shaky ceasefire is in place. Russia has offered no proof that it will not invade - or any explanation for the 100,000 troops it has deployed, however after providing Russian passports for 500,000 people, if it does not get what it wants then it could justify any action as protecting its own citizens.

After talks with his US counterpart in Geneva, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister insisted there were 'no plans, no intentions to attack Ukraine'. However, President Putin has spoken of 'appropriate retaliatory military-technical measures' if what he calls the West's aggressive approach continues.

systems has already arrived in Ukraine. In addition, a small group of British servicemen will conduct short-term training in Ukraine as well.

The Secretary of Defense did not specify the amount of the weapon supply, but noted that it is not a strategic weapon and does not pose a threat to Russia. He said the systems supplied are defensive.

Amid growing tensions between NATO and Russia, Canada has also sent a small contingent of special forces to Ukraine. The Canadian government decided to send a special task force to Ukraine after diplomatic talks to prevent an armed conflict in

Ombudsman's Council Concludes on Saakashvili: Balance, Weakness, Depression

BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

The Council of Physicians created by the Ombudsman has published the third report on Mikheil Saakashvili's health condition. It is signed by 8 medical experts.

According to the Public Defender, Nino Lomjaria, since the last visit on December 12, there has been no change in treatment approaches and no recommenda-

tions on Saakashvili's psychological and physical rehabilitation have been implemented.

According to the report, Saakashvili's condition is still unsatisfactory, adding he has an imbalance, weakness, anemia, and post-traumatic disorder.

The patient's condition remains unsatisfactory, the neurological symptoms remain, and have not improved since December 12. Symptoms of polyneuropathy,

imbalance, weakness, as well as anemia, remain. According to the conclusion of the council, it is important to include psychological and physical rehabilitation in Saakashvili's medical treatment. According to Tsuladze, the rehabilitation will also help restore the former president's diet.

However, Consilium believes that in terms of additional studies, Saakashvili should undergo magnetic resonance imaging and

in case of disease progression should continue treatment with appropriate studies.

"Our conclusion is that in addition to medical treatment, which is more or less satisfactory, I think that psychological and physical rehabilitation should be involved in the treatment. It is less realistic in prison, but it should not be impossible and should be tried, we have no other recommendations at this stage.

Psychotherapy and physical rehabilitation will also help to restore his adequate nutritional regime, in terms of additional research, we believe that magnetic resonance imaging should be performed.

"Neurological point of view needs to be monitored and in case the disease progresses, appropriate studies should be conducted according to the symptoms," the council concluded.

THURSDAY JANUARY 20

Day Windy
High: 3°C

Night Mainly clear
Low: -3°C

FRIDAY JANUARY 21

Day Partly cloudy
High: 5°C

Night Clear skies
Low: -5°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

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.