

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST SUBJECTED TO TORTURE OR OTHER ILLTREATMENT FOR PROTESTING

Activist, Davit Katsarava, was detained for protesting peacefully on May 14. Police subjected him to beating, strangulation, and other degrading treatment, which they filmed on their phones. He was hospitalized with broken facial bones, severe head concussion, and an eye injury.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 54.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

**Mr. Irakli Kobakhidze,
Prime Minister**

Administration of the Government of Georgia Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/GeorgianGovernment>

Phone: (995 32) 299 09 00

**Georgian Embassy in the United States
Ambassador David Zalkaliani**

1824 R Street,

NW, Washington DC 20009

Email: embgeo.usa@mfa.gov.ge

Dear Prime Minister, or Dear Ambassador,

I am writing to you in connection with the arbitrary arrest, beating, and abuse of activist, **Davit Katsarava**.

Davit Katsarava was apprehended by special police forces on May 14 in front of the Parliament while protesting peacefully against the law "On Transparency of Foreign Influence." Several masked men without identification numbers from special police forces started beating him in his face and head while hurling insults. He was then taken to a police minivan, where they continued beating him with special knuckle-duster gloves, aiming sustained blows at his face and head. One of the officers also attempted to strangle him with his scarf several times. After several hours of violence and humiliation, officers filmed him before ostensibly waiting for confirmation to hand him over to patrol police. After signing administrative proceedings for "petty hooliganism" patrol police transferred him to a hospital, where he was diagnosed with a severe brain concussion, multiple facial bone fractures, including a broken eye socket and jaw, and had to undergo urgent surgery. He continues to suffer from loss of eyesight and heavy concussion.

I urge you to ensure a prompt, impartial, and effective investigation into all allegations of torture or other ill-treatment of protesters during or after protests, or while in detention, including that of Davit Katsarava, and to bring those responsible to account in fair trial proceedings, including any officials who gave orders for the unlawful use of force.

Additionally, I ask you to take urgent and effective measures to prevent torture and other ill-treatment of protesters and ensure that people can protest peacefully without fear of being arbitrarily arrested, physically assaulted, or otherwise abused for peacefully protesting or expressing dissenting opinions.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Davit Katsarava is a leader of the Georgian anti-occupation movement, "Strength in Unity," which conducts monitoring of the Russian occupation line (the border between Georgian-controlled territory and Russian-occupied regions of the country) since 2017. Alongside members of the movement, Katsarava regularly visits to document complaints from local population and observe Russian military movements. He has also been actively involved in the widespread protests against the bill "On transparency of foreign influence" that obliges civil society organizations that receive funding from foreign sources to register as "conductors of foreign influence." The bill, which has since been signed into law, violates the rights to freedom of association and expression.

Davit Katsarava was apprehended by special police forces on May 14 in front of the Parliament while protesting peacefully against the parliament's approval of the bill. In the video footage depicting his arrest, Davit Katsarava is standing among other participants of the rally and addressing the police in a peaceful manner, when several police officers broke off from the ranks and dragged him away.

In a video interview given to Amnesty International on May 28, he recounted in detail how he was detained, beaten, and abused for more than an hour by members of special police:

"The beating and physical abuse started immediately, as soon as they captured me and dragged me outside the protest area. They took my bag, phone, personal belongings and started beating me mercilessly as they were yelling de-humanizing insults. At some point, I heard someone giving an order to make a circle, and around 10 members of the special forces started beating me simultaneously while I was on the ground, handcuffed. After this they put me in the minivan where the insults, abuse and beatings continued. They were wearing special gloves with knuckledusters and aimed the blows at my face and head. At the third beating, they beat me with special cruelty, since one of them yelled: "ill him, kill him". Then they started to choke me with the scarf I was wearing. I was sure I was going to be either killed or maimed. When they saw that my whole face and head were bleeding and I couldn't open my left eye, they took out a phone and started filming me. Only after filming, they handed me to the police, who made me sign a notification of facing administrative proceedings, and called an emergency ambulance after."

Davit had to undergo an urgent surgery for his broken facial bones and eye surgery and continues to suffer from the results of head concussion that prevent him from performing even nominal activities. He also has impaired vision and permanent eye injuries.

The Special Investigation Service, a body charged with investigating abuses by police, started an investigation into the beating of Davit Katsarava that they qualified as "exceeding official authority with the use of violence" (Article 333(3)(b) of the Criminal Code).

Police reportedly arrested 13 people during the May 14 protest, all of them are accused of petty hooliganism or disobedience to the police.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Georgian, English, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: August 5, 2024

NAME AND PRONOUN: Davit Katsarava (He/Him)