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ZVIAD RATIANI STORY

Zviad Ratiani, a renowned poet and translator, has been accused of petty hooliganism, disobeying a lawful order from a police officer, and insulting law enforcement personnel. He was arrested on November 28, 2024, on Chichinadze Street. Ratiani arrived at the rally with his wife and child at approximately 11:30 a.m. on November 28 to protest the government's anti-Western policies. Shortly after their arrival, he separated from his family and moved around the parliament building. A short time later, he found himself near the beginning of Chichinadze Street, on the Rustaveli Avenue side. At that point, the police had not yet commenced the dispersal of rally participants. Protesters were chanting slogans and expressing opposition to government policies. Meanwhile, police officers were swearing and verbally insulting the demonstrators. Ratiani was standing near the front rows of the protesters with his back to the police and riot officers. Upon hearing the verbal insults, he reportedly turned around and asked, "What are you doing?" then turned his back to them again. Moments later, riot police grabbed him and forcibly dragged him into their ranks.

Hundreds of riot police officers surrounded Zviad Ratiani. The first three rows consisted of regular police officers, followed by riot police, and then a row of heavily armored officers (RoboCops) equipped with batons and shields. Ratiani was led through a so-called cordon, where shouting and cries such as "Let me Beat him up!" could be heard. During this process, he was subjected to merciless beating and kicking as he lay on the ground. At some point, Ratiani managed to send a short text message to his wife: "They beat me, I am under arrest." Shortly thereafter, a police officer confiscated his mobile phone and placed him in handcuffs. During this unlawful arrest, Ratiani was forcibly placed in a police minivan, where the physical abuse allegedly continued. He was thrown into the legroom area of the back seat of the vehicle while police officers continued to curse at him. At one point, Ratiani reportedly asked a police officer, "How can you face your children?" In response, an officer struck him on the head and shoulders. The verbal abuse and cursing reportedly persisted throughout the entire journey. Ratiani remained in this condition for approximately 30-40 minutes before being transported to the police station.

The affected person was transferred from the police station to the Zahesi temporary detention center.

Zviad Ratiani required emergency medical care on December 1 due to his deteriorating health condition. On that day, an ambulance was called, and he was transported to a clinic for examination. Following the assessment, it was determined that hospitalization was necessary. The patient urgently required nasal surgery to address a fractured bone. The operation was scheduled for December 2; however, due to a court hearing on the same day, Zviad Ratiani insisted on being discharged from the clinic, submitting a handwritten note to that effect. According to the medical report issued by the “American Hospital Tbilisi,” the victim sustained the following injuries: a fractured nasal bone, a fractured thoracic vertebra, and a fractured thoracic spine.

An administrative penalty was filed against Zviad Ratiani, citing violations under Articles 166 and 173, Part 1 of the Code of Administrative Offences. His case was heard by Judge Zviad Tsekvava, who found Ratiani guilty based solely on the testimony of a single police officer. As a result, Ratiani was sentenced to an 8-day administrative detention as a penalty. It is important to note that the police officer who provided testimony in court was not the officer responsible for the detention of Mr. Ratiani. Furthermore, no video footage, documentary evidence, or other objective materials corroborating the alleged violation were submitted during the proceedings.

The judge also denied the defense’s petition to include video footage in the case, which could have served as the only objective evidence against Zviad Ratiani’s alleged unlawful detention and the police officer’s disputed testimony. Instead, the case included a health certificate the American Hospital Tbilisi issued on December 2, 2024. The certificate documented Zviad Ratiani’s injuries, including a fractured nasal bone, a fractured thoracic vertebra, and a fractured thoracic spine (which are not otherwise outlined).

Despite the severity of his documented injuries, the court did not consider Ratiani’s health condition, which rendered imprisonment as a punishment medically inadvisable.

The court’s decision to impose administrative detention was subsequently appealed to the Tbilisi Court of Appeal. However, the appellate court declined to accept the case for further proceedings.

The Special Investigation Service has initiated an investigation into the incident, focusing on the potential abuse of official authority. The actions of the police officer involved may also constitute torture as well as degrading or inhuman treatment.

Although the investigative service has questioned Zviad Ratiani, he has not yet been granted victim status. Furthermore, the police officers responsible for the alleged misconduct have not been identified or held criminally accountable.