



FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
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Human Rights Hub

LAZARE MAGHLAKELIDZE STORY

Lazare Maghlakelidze is pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Applied Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence at Sapienza University.

Lazare Maghlakelidze was charged with petty hooliganism, disobeying a lawful order from a police officer, and insulting a police officer. He was arrested on Rustaveli Avenue in Tbilisi on December 2, 2024. Like other protesters at the rally, Lazare was demonstrating against the government's anti-Western statements and illegal detentions.

"When they caught me, the first thing I did was lie down and cover my head with my hands. They kicked me several times while I was on the ground. They took everything I had in my pockets—my wallet, phone... everything. I was also carrying a bag, which they struggled to remove before finally ripping it from me. I'd be lying if I told you there was anything valuable in that bag. It contained pants, a raincoat, a jacket, water, snacks, a charger, and a phone battery," the victim recalls.

After the arrest and physical assault, Lazare was taken to the so-called 'torture' minibus. While transporting him, the officers instructed each other not to strike him yet, citing the presence of cameras, and proceeded to search for minibusses designated explicitly for the physical assault of detainees.

"You must know that most of the benches were removed to make room for people to be physically assaulted inside. This is not a spontaneous decision by any special forces unit or an on-the-spot invention; every special forces unit knows that whoever is arrested must be taken there, beaten, and, so to speak, 'processed.' They would ask, 'Well, where is he?' while others pointed to each other and said, 'Take him there and wait.' Everyone knew what to do. When the special forces unit hears the story of the detainees, the fun begins: 'Now we will bring you into shape, we will put a "truncheon" in your *ss, we will rape you with it,' and so on. I'm not even talking about insults and swearing. When they took me, I didn't understand if the car was busy or what, but they started beating me even before they put me in that car. They couldn't wait any longer. They looked around, saw there were no TV cameras, and first hit me in the legs. Then they covered me with their raincoat and started hitting me everywhere. Two men held me by the hands and punched me in the face. I can't tell you how much or for how long they beat me. At some point, I even lost consciousness. Later, I met a guy in the clinic who had been there and in the car with me. He told me that at one point, they were just holding my body while all the special forces passing by kicked, punched, and hit me in the face. What I remember is that when I woke up and tried to take off the raincoat, they said, 'Wow, it came back to life,' and started beating me again. Finally, they put me in a minibus with two other people. First, they beat us again, then lectured us about humanity: 'What kind of men are you? If you want to go to war, go fight in Ukraine. You say you are patriots? You like take it in *ss - now look what we will do to you.' All night long, someone kept talking to us about horrible things. I'm not even talking about the constant swearing. Then they handed us over to the police. The patrol officers took photos of us, probably to show their superiors that we had already been beaten thoroughly. One officer handcuffed me again and said, 'If it were up to me, I'd hold you so tightly I'd break your hands,' and then decided to fill out the arrest report himself."

Lazar's health condition was so severe that, following his arrest, he was taken directly from the department to the Ingorokva University Clinic. At the clinic, he was diagnosed with a concussion, underwent nose surgery, and had a CAT scan. He also underwent an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan as prescribed by a neurologist.

An administrative offense report was filed against Lazare under Articles 166 and 173, Part 1, of the Code of Administrative Offenses. Judge Manuchar Tsatsua heard his case. Two police officers testified although neither was the officer who detained Lazare. No neutral evidence was presented to confirm the alleged offense. On the contrary, the defense submitted a video recording that contradicted the testimonies of the police officers. The judge dismissed the charge under Article 166 of the Code of Administrative Offenses against Lazare Maghlakelidze but found him in violation of Article 173, Part 1, and imposed a verbal reprimand as the penalty measure.

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

Lazare provided testimony to the Special Investigation Service. Despite the inclusion of eyewitnesses in the minibus and capable of identifying the commander of the special forces allegedly involved in the offense against Lazare, the Special Investigation Service has not yet identified or detained the police officers in question. Currently, Lazare has been granted official victim status in the proceedings.

