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Human Rights Hub

SABA KEVKHISHVILI STORY

Financier Saba Kevkhishvili has been charged with failure to comply with a lawful police order. He was taken into custody on December 1, 2024, at 06:22.

Saba Kevkhishvili was present at a pro-European rally on Rustaveli Avenue. Following the arbitrary dispersal of the demonstration by special forces, protesters erected an artificial barricade. At a certain point, Kevkhishvili separated from the group and, in an effort to demonstrate the peaceful nature of the rally, proceeded toward the riot police carrying the flags of Georgia and the European Union. By that time, the riot police had already deployed a significant amount of tear gas. The distance between the riot police and the protesters was approximately 150 to 200 meters.

Video footage released by the media clearly depicts Saba Kevkhishvili being confronted by a masked individual as he advanced toward the riot police cordon. The individual questioned Kevkhishvili about his presence at the rally and the purpose of his protest. In response, Kevkhishvili retrieved his mobile phone and displayed a video showing the brutal beating of Zviad Maisashvili by riot police. He further remarked that reaching a mutual understanding would be impossible. This statement appeared to provoke the officer, who subsequently proceeded to detain Kevkhishvili in an arbitrary manner.

Saba Kevkhishvili was transported to a mini bus parked near the Kashueti Church, where multiple members of the special forces subjected him to severe physical assault, kicking and hitting him repeatedly in the face, nape, and body. In addition to the physical abuse, he was verbally harassed, insulted, and pressured with questions regarding whether he intended to return to the rally. Before starting the assault, Kevkhishvili was forcibly deprived of his mobile phone and other personal belongings, which have not been returned to him to date.

Kevkhishvili was subsequently transported to Republic Square in the same mini bus, where he was handed over to the police for formal arrest. By that time, he had sustained a fractured nose, jaw, and eye socket, in addition to suffering a concussion.

The police officers who assumed custody of the injured individual from the special forces were officially recorded as Saba Kevkhishvili's detainees. He was transported to the Tbilisi Central Police Department to prepare procedural documents. However, due to the severity of his medical condition, an ambulance was called, and he was transferred to Ingorokva Clinic for urgent medical care. After receiving medical treatment, Kevkhishvili was admitted to the clinic for further observation.



Judge Manuchar Tsatsua presided over the detainee's case on December 23, 2024. As previously mentioned, Saba Kevkhishvili was charged with failing to comply with a lawful order from a police officer to leave the rally area. Two police officers, neither of whom had detained Kevkhishvili, testified in support of the charges. Furthermore, neither officer had been present as a witness to the incident in question.

The defense presented neutral video evidence clearly demonstrating that a masked individuals arbitrarily detained Kevkhishvili. Despite this, Judge Manuchar Tsatsua ruled that Kevkhishvili had violated the law. However, he was released from administrative liability and was only issued a verbal reprimand.

On December 17, 2024, Saba Kevkhishvili was questioned by the Special Investigation Service. According to available information, the actions of the police officer, in addition to constituting an abuse of authority, may qualify as torture and/or inhuman or degrading treatment. The Special Investigation Service accordingly granted Kevkhishvili the status of a victim.

Unfortunately, the Special Investigation Service has yet to identify the masked individuals who were directly involved in Kevkhishvili's detention and subsequent torture. Furthermore, the detention report does not reflect the confiscation of Saba's mobile phone and other personal belongings, which have not been returned to the victim to this day.