

Regarding alert No. 235/2024 about Georgia, published on the Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists

On November 19, 2024, the Special Investigation Service launched an investigation into allegations of excessive official powers used with violence by employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia against participants of the protest rally and the unlawful interference in a journalist's professional activities committed by various individuals through threats of violence and abuse of official power, under Article 333(3b) and Article 154(1,2) of the Criminal Code of Georgia.

Since the initiation of the investigation, the following investigative and procedural actions were carried out in this criminal case:

Three individuals were interviewed, including the operator of Mtavari Arkhi, Sergi Baramidze, the journalist Nino Kekelia, and Mariam Nikuradze, the director/journalist of the online publication "OC Media." In addition, telephone communication was established with Mindia Gabadze, the journalist of the online publication "Publica," and Gigi Avaliani, the journalist of "Netgazeti," who have refrained from visiting the investigation service and providing information.

Various media websites/television reports and the social network "Facebook" pages were reviewed. The case scene was examined and surveillance video cameras of interest for the investigation were identified.

Based on the court's decision, surveillance video recordings of the incident were requested from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 3 private properties located near the case scene, and Mariam Nikuradze.

A medical examination was appointed for Sergi Baramidze, but still, the examination result has not been received. Information about the medical care provided to Sergi Baramidze was requested from the private medical clinic.

Information regarding the police officers involved in the case against Sergi Baramidze, as well as the recordings made by their body cameras and car video recorders was requested from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, however, we are informed that the requested information was not stored. The administrative case materials against S. Baramidze are being obtained.

At this stage, no one has been granted the status of victim or accused within the framework of the criminal case.

The case investigation continues and all necessary investigative and procedural actions are being taken to ensure an objective, complete and comprehensive investigation.