



Georgian Centre for Psychosocial & Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims

წამების მსხვერპლთა ფსიქოსოციალური და სამედიცინო რეაბილიტაციის საქართველოს ცენტრის (GCRT)

23/10/2012

Georgian Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims

Statement

To chairman of the Parliament of Georgia Mr. Davit Usupashvili;

Chairwoman of the Human Rights Committee of the Parliament, Ms Eka Beselia;

Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of Legal Issues, Mr. Vakhtang Khmaladze

We would like to draw your attention to pre-conditions of the so-called “riot” in Avchala special juvenile prison # 11, which occurred on August 8, 2012, and to several problems related with the investigation into its outcomes. We would like to inform you that 11 juveniles were charged for organizing the riot in prison who are now placed in Gldani Prison # 8. Two of them reached age of 18 during the ongoing investigation process and they continue to serve their term and participate in the investigative procedures in the Gldani Prison # 8.

During the riot the Avchala Prison # 11 was significantly damaged; so it stopped functioning and rest of contingent (90 inmates) continue to serve their imprisonment terms in the isolated building of single cells of the Rustavi Prison # 17.

Our organization worked on psychosocial rehabilitation of the inmates of this prison in 2006-2011. Social service was opened in our institution in November of 2010 which was staffed with professional psychologists and social workers. On that ground, in April of 2011 our organization stopped rehabilitation activities and focused only on supervision of social service. After the August 8, 2012 incident – so-called riot – we tried to study the situation at the place and renew psycho-social rehabilitation process there. Despite our request, the penitentiary ministry refused us to renew our work with juvenile prisoners in Gldani Prison # 8, who participated in the riot and who were taken to Rustavi Prison # 17 after the riot. We were allowed to carry out psycho-social rehabilitation process in the custodies after video-footage of prisoners’ torture and inhuman treatment was depicted by Georgian TV-Companies and Giorgi Tugushi occupied the position of the Minister of Corrections on September 24, 2012.



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Process of crisis involvement and conduct of rehabilitation activities revealed that juveniles were subjects of systemic torture and inhuman treatment in the custody. They said some of prison personnel beat them either in group or individually with their hands, feet, truncheons, ventilators (in some cases) in the room of regime's senior officer and in the workshops located in the basement of the prison... there were facts when juvenile prisoners were tortured by so-called "basketball" method. These facts occurred after juveniles were taken to prison; almost every day group of prisoners was beaten for any reasons – resistance, laughing or shouting during lessons, dropping a sheet of paper on the floor, etc.

Juveniles allege, they were often punished for absurd reasons. Parents were often degraded in front of juveniles when they came to personal meetings.

Torture and inhuman treatment was getting more and more cruel and unbearable. Torture duration prolonged and methods were "smartened". We think the abovementioned riot was result of this fact. Organizers of the so-called riot were charged under several grave crimes, including destroy of prison property and assault on public servants that might add several years to their imprisonment term.

Due to current situation, we believe the rebel in the prison was caused by systemic, illegal activities and abuse of power by several employees of Avchala juvenile prison # 11. We think all eleven juveniles organized the "riot" to defense their security and despite received result (damage of premise and equipment of Avchala prison) their guiltiness in this fact shall be revised. They had no other chance to inform society about their situation. Despite many attempts, that time senior officials blocked their complaints and petitions; moreover, these complaints became grounds of their new and stricter punishments. When public defender's representatives intended to visit the prison, the inmates were strictly warned against speaking about torture facts- "you will not change situation", "it is useless" – the prison personnel used to tell them. They also warned them to hide these facts from the employees of social service.

Nevertheless, the young people could not attract public attention even after the riot. Unless the events of September 18, they would have been judged again and all eleven juveniles would have had their imprisonment terms significantly increased. According to our information, lawyers did not attend the interrogation process; senior officials of the prosecutor's office oppressed them; moreover, after juvenile prisoners were taken to Gldani Prison # 8, they were systematically tortured and compelled to write confession testimonies.



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Based on aforementioned circumstances, we kindly request you:

1. to ensure repeated, impartial investigation into the incident of August 8, 2012 in Avchala special juvenile prison # 11;
2. to remove imposed charges from the organizers of the so-called riot;
3. to punish employees of Avchala and Gldani prisons accused of torture and inhuman treatment of juveniles;
4. we believe it is important to timely renovate Avchala Prison # 11 because juveniles are placed in inadequate conditions in Rustavi Prison # 17 and in Gldani Prison # 8 where their right to education is restricted; where they cannot enjoy services guaranteed for juvenile prisoners under Georgian law and international standards.

Sincerely

Lela Tsiskarishvili

Executive Director

Georgian Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims