

Olympic champion, former MP Zviadauri sentenced to prison for murder charges



► Zviadauri won the Olympic gold medal in Judo back in 2004. He served as an MP of the ruling Georgian Dream party between 2014 and 2016.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Telavi District Court Judge Tamar Kapanadze sentenced Olympic champion Zurab Zviadauri to imprisonment as a measure of restraint.

At yesterday's trial, Zviadauri's defenders petitioned for bail (€50,000). The prosecutor's office did not agree with the motion to release him on bail, arguing that if he were released, there was a danger of committing a new crime, hiding and influencing witnesses. The athletes Varlam Liparteliani, Avtandil Chrikishvili and former MP Zakaria Kutsnashvili stood the bail for Zviadauri, Olympic champions Lasha Talakhadze and Lasha Bekauri also offered to serve as guarantors that Zviadauri would not skip bail. However, the judge dismissed the proposal and did not grant the motion of the defense.

The process was planned to be held later, however, the side demanded the speeding up of the process. According to the lawyers, the reason for this was the funeral of Zviadauri's brother, which was planned for August 19 and the former MP wanted to attend. For this it was neces-

sary to discuss the issue of imposing a measure of restraint on the court. He was taken to the funeral, accompanied by an escort. Prior to the trial, his status did not allow him to attend the funeral. The brother of Olympic champion Zurab Zviadauri, who was killed on August 16 in the forest of the village of Tsinandali, will be buried in Akhmeta.

Olympic champion and former member of the Georgian Parliament Zurab Zviadauri was charged on August 18 under Article 108 of the Criminal Code, which stipulates premeditated murder. The investigation charges Zviadauri with the murder of 27-year-old Nika Kenchoshvili.

The Georgian Interior Ministry reported that a verbal dispute on an ordinary

issue led to the physical confrontation in Tsinandali. According to the law enforcement agency, on August 16 in the village of Tsinandali in Telavi Municipality, the quarrel between several people turned into a physical confrontation, which was followed by a shootout.

Akhmeta resident Vasil Tsotskhalashvili shot Nika Kenchoshvili with a firearm belonging to Jaba Jangirashvili, who retaliated.

Vasil Tsotskhalashvili and Zviad Zviadauri were killed on the spot as a result of gunfire by Kenchoshvili, while Zviad Maisuradze and Anzor Shamrelashvili were wounded.

According to the prosecutor's office, Zurab Zviadauri, who took part in the conflict, fatally wounded Nika Kenchoshvili with a weapon registered with his name.

Zviadauri's lawyers do not agree with the accusation and say that the former MP acted within the necessary repulsion. Zviadauri himself does not plead guilty either, he says that he was forced to shoot and that it was not a premeditated murder. The trial is set to resume on October 8. If found guilty, Zviadauri may be sentenced up to 15 years in prison.



► Zviadauri was brought to his brother's funeral accompanied by escort.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.1283 | EURO - 3.6648 | GBP - 4.3033 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.2461 | SWISS FRANC - 3.4193 |

Covid-19 cases continue to increase, first field hospital ready to receive patients

THERE ARE 57,312 ACTIVE COVID-19 CASES IN THE COUNTRY



► The first field hospital in Digomi is already able to receive patients, but the Health Minister says it is not yet planned to be used



► According to Tamar Gabunia, Deputy Health Minister, it is very likely for the number of deaths to increase in the country

BY NIKA GAMTSEMLIDZE

4,921 new cases of Covid-19 were reported in Georgia yesterday, on August 19. Out of the confirmed cases, the majority was registered in Tbilisi - 1948. According to official data, the country now has 57,704 active cases, more than ever before.

As for the number of people who received the vaccine, it was 26,363 on Thursday. Starting from March 15, 883,570 vaccines have been administered, 258,303 people have received both doses of vaccine. Yesterday, 58 people died of coronavirus. This is the highest daily number during the pandemic in the country. Only this month, 770 people died in Georgia. In total, Covid-19 killed as many as 6590 people in the country.

The Minister of Health of Georgia, Ekaterine Tikaradze said yesterday that the field hospital that was set up in Digomi is ready to receive patients. The Health Minister also said that this will be used only if it's necessary, and as long as the actual hospitals are able to receive patients, the field hospital will not be used. There are 500 beds in the field hospital of Digomi.

According to Tikaradze, the doctors who will work in the field hospital are fully trained and have all the skills needed

to provide safe care to patients. According to the minister, the field hospital will be able to accept both moderate and severe patients, as it is equipped with both intensive and resuscitation-type beds.

It is currently the worst wave of the coronavirus epidemic in Georgia. The death rate and infection rate have increased dramatically compared to the previous, severe stages of the epidemic. At least 90% of patients have a more con-

tagious and complex delta strain. Deputy Health Minister Tamar Gabunia talked about the Covid-19 statistic in Georgia, saying that a huge majority of the people who ended up in the hospitals were not vaccinated. The research done between March and August 17 shows that 98 percent of people who needed hospitalization were not vaccinated.

As for treatment in the intensive care unit - about 3,500 people have been treated in ICUs so far,

including about 1% who received one dose of vaccine and 0.3% who have been vaccinated fully.

"In other words, ICUs were needed for a very small number of vaccinated patients, which means that the vaccine actually works and protects against the development of hospitalization and severe cases," said Gabunia.

Tamar Gabunia also said that it is very likely for the number of deaths to increase. As she said, according to the experience, at least

1 percent of people who contract the virus die, which means that "every 5,000 people infected with the virus can mean 50 deaths". According to health experts, the only way out of this situation is vaccination. There are four vaccines available in Georgia, Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Sinopharm, and Sinovac. Additional vaccination centers are also being opened very frequently. At some of these centers, people can receive vaccines without prior registration.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

PM: The National Movement offers destabilization, chaos, revolution and wars, we offer development, development, development, peace and stability

For a few minutes, I want to assess the political situation. I know who I am addressing – the people of Guria will not forgive me for making a wrong assessment. My team and I talk about real plans, things done, and the specific plans we have developed. Let us listen once again to what our opponents offer - the National Movement, whose was famous for its terror, torture and oppression of our citizens and our people, and fake projects. They offer destabilization, chaos, revolution and wars to the citizens. We, the Georgian Dream, offer development, development, development, peace and stability. The ruling team did everything to make our state even stronger. In recent years, we have been able to achieve tangible progress in a very short period of time, by concluding an association agreement with the European Union, enacting a visa-free regime that was truly unthinkable, signing a free trade agreement with both the EU and China, and opening markets with Russia.

I know very well that it is very important for our farmers to access as many markets as possible. We must seize the potential of every market and every country and use it to benefit our farm-

ers. These should be the main directions of our pragmatic prudent policy. We have made progress with regard to NATO. We have made real, tangible progress, practically in all directions, be it domestic or foreign policy. We, the Georgian Dream, have serious achievements, but we are not satisfied with these achievements. We want more progress and development. Development for all regions, cities and municipalities. We have also started implementing urban renewal projects in all the municipalities and cities, which means arranging European-type centers in all municipalities", Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili said at the presentation of Ozurgeti mayoral candidate Avtandil Talakvadze.

Gigi Ugulava to be the mayoral candidate of the united opposition in Poti

Darejan Tskhvitaria, Chairwoman of the Poti organization of the United National Movement, stated that Gigi Ugulava will be the mayoral candidate of the united opposition in Poti. According to her, Gigi Ugulava is a politician with great experience.

The official presentation of Gigi Ugulava in Poti is scheduled for August 21 at 18:00.

The Chairwoman of the Poti branch of the United National Movement announced a few days ago that Tina Bokuchava would be Poti mayoral candidate from the United Opposition, however, this decision was changed.

FRIDAY		AUGUST 20	
Day		Mostly sunny	High: 34°C
Night		A few clouds	Low: 20°C
SATURDAY		AUGUST 21	
Day		Sunny	High: 35°C
Night		A few clouds	Low: 20°C

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