

## Special Investigation Service Issues Statement Following Search at Sports Commentator's Home

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Special Investigation Service (SIS) has released a statement following a search conducted at the home of sports commentator Sandro Tsnobiladze. The search took place while Tsnobiladze was at home with his mother and children. His lawyer, Lasha Tkesheladze, arrived shortly after the search began. Tsnobiladze has connected the search to his ongoing participation in protests, suggesting that this may be a factor behind the investigation.

According to the SIS, the investigation centers on a case involving the illegal acquisition of personal information. The investigation reveals that since 2022, an unknown individual has been using a fake social media profile to communicate with a victim, convincing her that they were an acquaintance from the past. The individual coerced the victim into sending intimate content and later attempted to extort her by offering to delete the material in exchange for meeting in person.

Based on evidence gathered, including data from META and the victim's testimony, investigators identified the addresses linked to the fake profile, which matched Tsnobiladze's residence



and workplace. A court-approved search was conducted at his home and workplace, where mobile phones and computer equipment were seized as evidence.

The investigation is ongoing under Part One of Article 157 of

the Criminal Code of Georgia, which relates to violations of personal privacy.

After the search, Tsnobiladze addressed the media, stating that the authorities took several items, including laptops, disks, and his phone, during the

search.

"I have no information about [the investigation into the invasion of privacy], it's a bit of a funny story for me. The maximum that they took from me and that they can see is the successes of the Argentina national team

and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's goals. The rest, according to my observations and opinion, is simply a method of blackmail. Everyone knows well, and I will state it here again, I will protest every day. I don't see any other reason," he said.

## Drug-Crime Accused Artem Gribul Speaks Out About Prison Abuse

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Artem Gribul, one of the defendants in an ongoing

drug-related trial, has spoken out about the physical abuse he allegedly faced in prison, during a hearing held today.

Gribul, along with Anastasia Zinovkina, is facing charges of possessing 16 grams of Alpha-PVP for distribution. The ac-

cused deny the charges, claiming that the drugs were planted on them in retaliation for their involvement in Tbilisi protests.

Gribul's lawyer, Shota Tutberidze, revealed that Gribul was transferred to a new cell without his consent, where he was placed with long-term inmates known for violent behavior. According to Tutberidze, these convicts had been physically abused the previous day in front of cameras. "I am sure the prison administration knew exactly where they were sending him and why they were sending him there," said Tutberidze.

After the assault, Gribul was removed from the cell, and another defendant, Anton Chechin — arrested during the protests — was transferred into the same cell. Lawyer Giorgi Chkheidze, representing Chechin, confirmed the abuse his client experienced. "After he was beaten, he was moved to another cell.

He also mentioned that a political prisoner arrested on a false charge was placed in one of these 'beating' cells," said Tutberidze.

The Special Penitentiary Service confirmed that an investigation is underway and the relevant results will be determined.

The next trial session is scheduled for March 13, during which both parties will present their introductory speeches. Chkheidze, meanwhile, has filed complaints with both the Penitentiary Service and the Public Defender of Georgia regarding the treatment of his clients.

Gribul and Zinovkina, both Russian citizens, have been detained on drug charges related to the possession of 16 grams of Alpha-PVP with intent to distribute. They maintain their innocence, asserting that the drugs were planted on them by the police as part of a crackdown on their political activities during the protests.





The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

**Georgian Dream Moves to Erase Gender and Gender Identity from Legislation**



The Georgian Dream has introduced draft legislation aiming to remove all references to gender and gender identity from the country's laws. The proposal seeks to replace terms like "gender intolerance" with "intolerance to the equality of women and men" and rename the Law on Gender Equality as the Law on Equality between Women and Men.

The explanatory note accompanying the draft law claims that the concept of gender was "artificially introduced" into

Georgian legislation under foreign influence. It states that the country's legal framework should align with "family values based on the union of a man and a woman."

The document argues that gender-related policies reflect global trends that Georgia has struggled to oppose. It cites U.S. President Joe Biden's administration as an example, accusing it of enforcing gender-neutral language and erasing traditional terms such as "mother" and "father." The note further claims that since Donald Trump's resurgence in U.S. politics, there has been increased scrutiny over the "true motives" behind promoting gender identity, framing it as a

foreign tool for political influence rather than a human rights effort.

**Georgian Translation of U.S. FARA Law Registered, Adjustments Needed**

At the February 24 Bureau session in



Parliament, the Georgian translation of the American Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) was officially registered. Members of the Georgian Dream party defended the translation, claiming it is an accurate reflection of U.S. law.

However, Aleksandre Tabatadze, Head of the Legal Department, stated that the draft law, titled Georgia's Foreign Agents Registration Act, is not fully aligned with

Georgia's legal framework and requires amendments.

He explained that the law contains some legal and substantive inaccuracies that will need to be addressed. Specifically, several U.S.-specific institutions mentioned in the bill, such as Congress, the Library of Congress, the State De-

partment, the Department of Justice, and the President of the United States, are not compatible with Georgia's legal system and need to be adjusted accordingly.

Tabatadze also noted that the package currently includes only the Criminal Code bill, with other necessary legislative acts not yet attached. He emphasized that amendments will be needed to ensure the bill aligns with Georgia's realities.

**EU leadership on Russia's war against Ukraine: 'peace, security and justice will prevail'**

On the three-year anniversary of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the presidents of the EU institutions today released a joint statement saying that Russia bears sole responsibility for the war.

The President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Parliament also insisted on the need for the international community's continued support for Ukraine, and called for accountability for all war crimes and crimes against humanity committed.



"Russia and its people are paying a price for their leader's actions. Together with partners, we have imposed unprecedented sanctions against Russia and those complicit in the war and remain ready to increase the pressure on Russia to limit its ability to wage war," the statement says.

The latest – 16th package of sanctions – was adopted today.

The presidents of the EU institutions also paid tribute to all those who have sacrificed their lives and have lost loved ones for Ukraine's independence and freedom.

They concluded their statement saying that "Ukraine is part of our European family" and that the future of Ukraine and its citizens lies within the European Union.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Tuesday, February 25

Day Cloudy  
High: 2°C

Night Overcast  
Low: -5°C

Wednesday, February 26

Day Cloudy  
High: 2°C

Night Overcast  
Low: -6°C

published by

**The Messenger**

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia

Founded by Prof.

**Zaza Gachechiladze**

**Tamar Gachechiladze**  
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000  
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge  
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

**Nino Metreveli**  
Commercial Director

**Mariam Mchedlidze**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Khatuna Gogichaishvili**  
Layout Designer, Photographer

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.