

Prisoner Swallows Metal Objects, Starts Hunger Strike Over Inmates Moved After Backing His Rape Allegation



BY MESSENGER STAFF

Convict Giorgi Davitadze, who accuses a guard at Penitentiary Facility No. 6 of raping him, has swallowed three metal objects in protest, refused to be transferred to a medical facility, and started a hunger strike, his mother, Irma Davitadze, stated.

Davitadze says the rape took place in the facility's de-escalation room, that several people were involved, and that every-

thing is visible on the cameras. The Special Penitentiary Service dismisses the claim as disinformation and says no violence of any kind, let alone sexual violence, was committed against him.

According to his mother, other inmates expressed support for him after he made the accusation, and the prison administration moved them to the de-escalation room in response. She says the entire prison population stood in solidarity with him over

what they had learned about conditions in the prisons. A representative of the Public Defender reported the transfers from the prison, she says.

Davitadze says her son swallowed the objects in protest and will not move to a medical facility until the supporting inmates are returned to their cells. She says the authorities could not obtain his consent for a hospital transfer, that she considers the swallowing dangerous, and that his lawyer is on the way to see

him. She hopes his condition does not worsen.

She says she does not know his current state of health. The Public Defender's representative told her the previous night that it was satisfactory, but "no one knows" how the situation will develop, she says. In her words, the inmates learned nothing new, and her son was the one who dared to say it publicly because it affects every prisoner. She calls it an act requiring great courage.

The Service rejects her account, calling it false. It says the inmates were placed in de-escalation cells under legal requirements to protect both inmates and staff, and that the move had no connection to solidarity with Davitadze. It accuses his family of promoting a misleading narrative.

According to the agency, an inmate identified as B. Ch. kicked Deputy Director Davit Nikolashvili in the stomach on October 2 at 22:14 as he tried to enter a cell. On October 4 at 20:22, inmates J.J. and V.T. allegedly assaulted staff after returning from their exercise period. The Service says attacks on its employees are serious criminal offenses that will not be overlooked, and that each case will be legally assessed. It says every decision at the facility follows the Penitentiary Code, internal regulations, and the daily schedule, and that linking them to Davitadze's case is unjustified. It has released footage it says shows inmates assaulting staff, including the deputy director.

The Service issued its statement in response to Irma Davitadze's comments after her meeting with a Public Defender's representative at the facility. It says she claimed her son would not move to the civilian Vivamed clinic until the inmates who allegedly backed him were removed from de-escalation cells.

Saba Skhvitardze Reports Tensions, Beatings and Hunger Strikes at Prison No. 6

BY MESSENGER STAFF

Saba Skhvitardze, a member of the *Coalition for Change* serving a prison sentence, has reported tensions and unrest at Rustavi Penitentiary No. 6, alleging that prisoners have been beaten, transferred to other facilities or de-escalation rooms, and gone on hunger strike.

In a letter sent from prison and shared on social media, Skhvitardze said he heard a prisoner being beaten near his cell and claimed that another prisoner had slit his wrists. He also said some prisoners had been transferred to another prison, while others were moved to de-escalation rooms and their whereabouts were unknown.

Skhvitardze said prisoners on hunger strike were demanding the immediate dismissal of prison staff members shown in widely circulated footage and that the Public Defender visit each prisoner taking part in the hunger strike.

"We want this story to go public and for people to stand by us," Skhvitardze wrote.

The Special Penitentiary Service categorically denied Skhvitardze's claims, saying there had been no self-harm, hunger strike or other incidents described in his letter and that the situation at the facility was calm.

"The facts cited in his post are completely false, and there is complete calm in the facility," the Service said.

