

URGENT ACTION

GEORGIAN JOURNALIST MAY LOSE EYESIGHT IN JAIL

Prominent Georgian journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli is at real risk of going blind due to being denied access to adequate healthcare in detention. She suffers from a degenerative eye condition and her eyesight has drastically deteriorated since her arrest. Her right eye has declined to 10% functionality, and her left eye is almost completely blind. Despite the repeated requests since February 2025 to transfer her to a specialist ophthalmology clinic to avoid irreversible loss of her remaining vision she is not given appropriate treatment or diagnosis.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE MODEL LETTER

Giorgi Gvarakidze
Prosecutor General
Office of the Prosecutor General of Georgia
24 Vakhtang Gorgasali Street
Tbilisi, Georgia

Dear Prosecutor General,

I am writing to express my deep concern for detained journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli, whose health has significantly deteriorated since her arrest in January 2025. She suffers from a degenerative eye condition, and recent medical examinations show a rapid decline in her vision. Before her detention, she had already lost almost all sight in her left eye and had only 30% vision in her right, which could be corrected up to 90% with adequate treatment. However, a medical examination in February showed her right eye had dropped to just 10% functionality, correctable to only 40%. According to the same medical report, Mzia Amaghlobeli has been diagnosed with astigmatism and keratoconus in the left eye – a serious condition that, if left untreated, can lead to blindness.

Despite multiple appeals based on medical diagnosis indicating urgent need for her treatment since 4 February 2025, Mzia Amaghlobeli has not been transferred to specialist clinic for diagnosis or care. She remains in detention without access to necessary treatment and under a serious risk of developing permanent blindness.

While Mzia Amaghlobeli remains in detention since January 2025 following a swift remand hearing followed by unfair trial during which the court refused to admit much of her defence evidence or allow her defence cross-examine the prosecution's key witness. Meanwhile, the authorities have failed to investigate in earnest serious and well-documented allegations against Batumi police chief and other officers who subjected Mzia Amaghlobeli and other protesters to threats, verbal and physical abuse, ill-treatment and arbitrary arrest.

During her 14 July 2025 court hearing, Mzia Amaghlobeli addressed Batumi police chief Irakli Dgebuadze: "...while I was in detention, you barged into the room several times, swore at me, spat on me, and forbade the staff member from giving me water or to even let me go to the toilet... Under which article could this offense be classified?"

I urge you to ensure that Mzia Amaghlobeli is immediately transferred to a specialist medical facility for proper diagnosis and treatment of her eye condition, and to guarantee her right to health and protection from ill-treatment, including access to adequate medical care while in custody. I also call on you to ensure that all police officers involved in the alleged ill-treatment of Mzia Amaghlobeli and other protesters, are immediately suspended in their duties until all allegations against them are promptly, thoroughly, independently, impartially, transparently and effectively investigated, and necessary disciplinary, administrative or criminal proceedings undertaken as appropriate, in full compliance with international fair trial standards.

Authorities must respect Mzia Amaghlobeli's and all Georgian protesters' rights including their rights to a fair trial, to freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and media freedom.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mzia Amaghlobeli, a prominent Georgian journalist and co-founder of media outlets *Batumelebi* and *Netgazeti*, was arrested twice on 11 January 2025 during peaceful protests in the city of Batumi in south-western Georgia. Her first arrest was arbitrary and related to her attempting to post a sticker on a building calling for a nationwide protest. Numerous other peaceful protesters were also arbitrarily arrested alongside Mzia Amaghlobeli. After her release, she returned to the protest venue, where her verbal altercation with Batumi Police Chief Irakli Dgebuadze over arbitrary arrests of peaceful protesters, led to her slapping him on the cheek. She was immediately detained. In publicly available video footage, the police chief and other officers are heard threatening and swearing at her while she is being led away. Mzia Amaghlobeli later told her lawyer that Irakli Dgebuadze and other officers continued verbally abusing her in custody, and that he attempted to assault her physically but was stopped by his colleagues. For three hours, she was denied access to her lawyer, and to water and washroom facilities.

Mzia Amaghlobeli was remanded in custody on the charge of “attacking a police officer” (Article 351(1) of the Criminal Code). On 14 January, in a swift hearing, the judge refused her bail. Mzia Amaghlobeli went on a hunger strike for 38 days in protest against the violation of her human rights.

The Special Investigation Service (SIS, a stand-alone agency responsible for investigating alleged crimes by law enforcement officers) was informed about the incident on 12 January, and on 15 January Mzia Amaghlobeli provided a detailed report of her ill-treatment by police. There are conflicting reports as to when the SIS formally launched an investigation into the 11-12 January events in Batumi. Mzia Amaghlobeli’s defence allege the SIS failed to do so until 17-18 January, when it came under pressure from a local rights watchdog, and backdated its records to 13 January. At least three other protesters arrested in Batumi on 11 January, have reported beatings and other ill-treatment by law enforcement officers while in detention. At the time of writing, the SIS has not reported any progress in its investigation, nor recognized either Mzia Amaghlobeli or any other complainants as victims of the alleged crimes by police.

Mzia Amaghlobeli suffers from keratoconus, a progressive eye disease that causes the cornea to thin and bulge outward into a cone shape, severely affecting vision. Before her detention, she had already lost nearly all sight in her left eye and retained only partial vision in her right. A medical examination conducted in February 2025 revealed a sharp deterioration in her right eye — now only 10% functional, with correction possible to just 40%. Despite her legal team submitting medical documentation and requesting a transfer to an ophthalmology clinic, the penitentiary system has failed to facilitate her transfer or provide her with adequate care, putting her at serious risk of irreversible damage.

At her latest court hearing on 14 July 2025, attended by dozens of supporters and diplomats from several EU countries, Mzia Amaghlobeli gave testimony describing her treatment in detention. She stated that Batumi Police chief repeatedly entered her holding room, shouted insults at her, spat on her, and ordered guards to deny her access to water and toilet facilities.

The details of Mzia Amaghlobeli’s arrest, alleged ill-treatment in detention, and trial, give rise to strong concerns over the likely motivation for her prosecution, and contrasted with the apparent impunity enjoyed by the police, demonstrate her and other protesters’ discriminatory treatment by the criminal justice system in Georgia. Her case also highlights broader concerns about politically motivated prosecutions, suppression of peaceful dissent, and gender-based reprisals against those exercising their right to protest in Georgia. The insults and abuse directed at her by senior police officials demonstrate a clear attempt to degrade and intimidate her as a woman. Her treatment is not an isolated incident but reflects a broader pattern in which women in Georgia who challenge authority, particularly in political and protest contexts, are targeted with additional hostility and abuse.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Georgian, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: October 2025

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Mzia Amaghlobeli (She/her)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

Mr George Saganelidze
Minister Plenipotentiary and Chargé d'Affaires
Embassy of Georgia
20 St George's Square, SW1V 2HP
020 7348 1941
Fax 020 7603 6682
Email: london.emb@mfa.gov.ge
www.uk.mfa.gov.ge
Salutation: Your Excellency