

Press Release, September 22, 2025, Prague

Imprisoned Georgian Journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli to Receive the International Forum 2000 Award for Courage and Responsibility

The 29th Forum 2000 Conference, which will take place this year from October 12 to 14 in Prague, will once again host several hundred guests from more than a hundred countries around the world.

Significant part of the conference's opening will be Sunday evening's ceremonial presentation of the fifth [Forum 2000 International Award for Courage and Responsibility](#). Established by the Forum 2000 Foundation in 2021, the award honors extraordinary civic courage in defending democracy and promoting human rights. It also recognizes actions that prioritize responsibility toward the wider society over personal interests.

This year, the award will be presented to the Georgian movement of resistance to the graduated autocratization of the country and one of its symbols **Mzia Amaghlobeli**, a respected journalist and director of the independent Georgian media platforms *Batumelebi* and *Netgazeti*. She was arrested on January 11, 2025, during peaceful protests in the city of Batumi against government policies. Initially charged with assaulting a police officer, she spent seven months in pretrial detention before being sentenced on August 6 to two years in prison. The court reclassified the charge at the last minute to "resistance, threats, or violence against a public official."

"The regime is paralyzed – too cowardly to free Mzia Amaghlobeli, too weak to convict her," Salome Zourabichvili, the fifth president of Georgia, wrote on X following the verdict. "It hides behind delays, hoping to survive. But her strength exposed their fear. This isn't justice. It's a dying authoritarian system." Zourabichvili attended the trial in person and will also be among the guests at this year's Forum 2000 Conference.

Mzia Amaghlobeli, whose work focuses on human rights, corruption, and social justice, has been recognized as Georgia's first female political prisoner and prisoner of conscience. She suffers from a severe degenerative eye disease, and her health has deteriorated in prison. Since February 2025, she has repeatedly requested to be transferred to a specialized ophthalmological clinic. Medical examinations confirmed that the function of her right eye has declined to just 10 percent, and she can hardly see with the left. Despite expert recommendations, she has not received adequate care, putting her at risk of permanent vision loss.

"Mzia Amaghlobeli has long stood against authoritarianism, censorship, and political intimidation," says Jakub Klepal, executive director of the Forum 2000 Foundation. "She has become a symbol of integrity and resistance to oppression that threatens the country's democratic direction. Her recent act of defiance – speaking out against police brutality during a peaceful protest and undertaking a 38-day hunger strike during unjust imprisonment – is a testament to her commitment to truth, justice, and human dignity."

Due to her imprisonment, she will not be able to accept the International Forum 2000 Award for Courage and Responsibility in person – just as Venezuelan lawyer **Rocío San Miguel** and Chinese



journalist **Zhang Zhan** were unable to do in previous years. Russian opposition leader **Vladimir Kara-Murza** did not receive the 2023 award until last year, two and a half months after his release.

“Unfortunately, there are still many prisoners of conscience, not only within the Forum 2000 community. Through our activities, we join the international call for their release,” says Klepal.

“Joshua Wong, Anar Mammadli, Ales Bialiatski, José Daniel Ferrer, Aung San Suu Kyi, Loujain al-Hathloul, and Gubad Ibadoghlu are among the unjustly imprisoned individuals whose courage continues to inspire and guide our work.”

Focusing on the growing need for global cooperation among democracies and democratic actors in today’s complex international environment, this year’s Forum 2000 Conference will welcome more than 700 leading politicians, diplomats, writers, activists, civil society representatives, dissidents, experts, and entrepreneurs. Among them will be Czech President **Petr Pavel**, Georgia’s fifth president **Salome Zourabichvili**, Europe’s first Chief Prosecutor **Laura Kövesi**, renowned intellectual and Stanford University professor **Larry Diamond**, and Rwandan human rights activist **Anaïse Kanimba**.

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