

US diplomats involved in trafficking of human blood and pathogens for secret military program

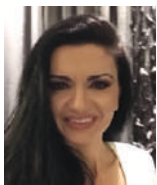
The US Embassy to Tbilisi transports frozen human blood and pathogens as diplomatic cargo for a secret US military program. Internal documents, implicating US diplomats in the transportation of and experimenting on pathogens under diplomatic cover were leaked to me by Georgian insiders.

by Dilyana Gaytandzhieva



Picture above: Pentagon scientists have been deployed in 25 countries and given diplomatic immunity to research deadly viruses, bacteria and toxins at US military offshore biolaboratories under a \$2.1 billion DoD program. (Source: DTRA)

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is a Bulgarian investigative journalist and Middle East correspondent. Over the last two years she has published a series of revealing reports on weapons

supplies to terrorists in Syria and Iraq. Her current work is focused on biological weapons programs. (Photo: © Dilyana Gaytandzhieva, Twitter.com)

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The US Embassy to Tbilisi transports frozen human blood and pathogens as diplomatic cargo for a secret US military program. Internal documents, implicating US diplomats in the transportation of and experimenting on pathogens under diplomatic cover were leaked to me by Georgian insiders. According to these documents, Pentagon scientists have been deployed to the Republic of Georgia and have been given diplomatic immunity to research deadly diseases and biting insects at the Luger Center – the Pentagon biolaboratory in Georgia's capital Tbilisi.

This military facility is just one of the many Pentagon biolaboratories in 25 coun-



Instead of investing in the health of its own citizens the US government has spent \$161 million of US taxpayer money on the Luger Center in Tbilisi for research on deadly diseases and biting insects abroad. The secret facility is located just 17 km from the US Vaziani military airbase in Georgia's capital Tbilisi. [cf. document 3.png] (© Al Mayadeen TV)

tries across the world [1]. They are funded by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) under a \$ 2.1 billion military program – Cooperative Biological Engagement Program (CBEP) [2], and are located in former Soviet Union countries such as Georgia and Ukraine, the Middle East, South East Asia and Africa.

The Pentagon biolaboratory is heavily guarded. All passers-by within a radius of 100 m are filmed although the military biolaboratory is located within a residential area.

I am being filmed while talking to local residents on the street near the Pentagon biolaboratory and I want to know why the security guards are filming me. [cf. document 4.jpg, 5.png]

The security guards warn me that if I do not comply, show my passport and leave this place, I will be arrested [cf. document 6.png]. My official request to the Lugar Center for access to the facility and for interviews has also been rejected.

Secret experiments at night

However, I go back at night when the laboratory is seemingly still working.

A diplomatic car with US Embassy registration plates can be seen in the car park of the Lugar Center at night when the laboratory is seemingly still working [cf. document 7.jpg 8.jpg]. A few hours later, the diplomatic vehicle is still in the

car park of the Lugar Center. There is a strong smell of chemicals in the area [cf. document 9.png, 10.png].

No matter how far the distance the air is laden with the smell of chemicals. This smell coming from the Lugar Center at night is blown by the wind to the residential area. Local residents from the Alexeevka neighbourhood, where the laboratory is located, complain that dangerous chemicals are being secretly burnt at night and that hazardous waste is being emptied into the nearby river through the laboratory's pipes.

Locals complain of constant headaches, nausea, high blood pressure and dizziness when chemicals are being burnt at night in the laboratory which is just a couple of hundred meters from their homes.

“

There is a smoke – black, red, green at night or especially early in the morning at around 3, 4 a.m. Even the hens have died. They put a big pipe underground and connected it to the drains. This smell comes from there. It smells like rotten eggs and decaying hay. The smell is so bad and is spread in different directions by the wind.”

Eteri Gogitidze

says Eteri Gogitidze who lives in a block of flats next to the laboratory.

“Sometimes the wind spreads a smell of rotten eggs. Once I woke up early in the morning and noticed violet smoke coming from the laboratory. At night time they let the smoke out so that people don't see. Why at night, what are they hiding

from us?, he asks and then provides another worrying fact: “There are big blue plastic pipes along this street (from the laboratory) and from where everything goes to the river which is 3-4 km away. Not only do they pollute our air, but they also poison our water.” [cf. document 11.png, 12.png]



“I have a thyroid disease. There are families of three people in the neighborhood and all three of them have a thyroid disease. They say it is because of the laboratory”, explains Eteri Gogitidze from the Alexeevka Neighbourhood where the laboratory is located. (document 11.png, © Al Mayadeen TV)

Locals: Poisonous gas killed two Filipinos

Neighbours recall a tragic incident involving four Filipinos who worked at the Lugar Center. Two of the foreigners died of an alleged gas poisoning in their rented flat in block 44 of the Alexeevka Settlement.



(Fotos: Dokument 7.jpg, 8.jpg, 9.png, © Al Mayadeen TV)



Albert Nurbekyan shows the secured apartment of the Filipino workers. (Photos: Document 13.png, 14.png, © Al Mayadeen TV)

“The first time when they called the Emergency service we were told that they had food poisoning from fish. But the second time when the ambulance came there was foam coming out of their mouths. They were shouting: “Help, Help!” When they passed away, they took them away and covered it all up.”

Albert Nurbekyan

It all happened here”, Albert Nurbekyan shows the sealed off flat where the foreign scientists died [cf. document 13.png, 14.png].

Another witness, Elvira Ratiani who lived next door witnessed the foreigners die before her eyes. “They were my neighbors, we lived on the same floor, and once they were poisoned, and asked us to call the Emergency service. We phoned and the Emergency service saved them. They said it was probably fish poisoning. The second time, they knocked on the door and again asked for help. There were four Filipinos, two of them were saved, but the other two died”, recalls Elvira Ratiani who lives in the fatal block 44 of the Alexeevka Settlement right next to the laboratory.

Human blood and pathogens as diplomatic cargo to the US Embassy – leaked documents

Internal documents and correspondence between the Ministry of Health of Georgia and the US Embassy to Tbilisi show what experiments have been conducted

at the Lugar Center. Leaked documents reveal that the US Embassy to Tbilisi transports pathogens, as well as frozen human blood, as diplomatic cargo.

The US Embassy to Tbilisi is the address to which pathogens and blood samples are being shipped as diplomatic cargo. The Embassy’s press office declined to comment [cf. document 15.jpg]

A letter from the Ministry of Health of Georgia to the US Embassy in Tbilisi exempts the importation from registration as the American diplomats claim the frozen human blood is needed for research purposes in connection with an American program on Hepatitis C in Georgia. [cf. document 16.jpg, 17.jpg, 18.jpg, 19-1.jpg, 20-1.jpg].

Diplomatic cargo shipments are exempt from inspection and taxes. According to instructions from The Pentagon’s Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) [3], which oversees and funds the laboratories, biological material for the needs of the program must be shipped as hand-carrying items to the US embassies. [cf. document 21.jpg] In cases of importing to Russia, this biological material must be carried by diplomats in a diplomatic pouch and sealed as diplomatic cargo [cf. document 22.jpg].

The Pentagon: Prostitutes strictly prohibited, no sex abroad

Other instructions to US personnel working under the military program prohibit the use of prostitutes, and any interaction with individuals who may reasonably be assumed to be working as prostitutes. Romantic, intimate or sexual relations with local citizens or among team members are strongly discouraged as “foreign security services are known to use the

enticement of such relations to exploit foreign officials”. As such, a relationship with foreign nationals must be reported to DTRA as soon as possible, the document reads [cf. document 23.jpg, 24.jpg].

US scientists test viruses under diplomatic immunity

Tasked with the program at the Lugar Center are biologists from the US Army Medical Research Unit-Georgia (USAMRU-G) along with private American contractors and the US Center for Disease Control (CDC). Certain zones of the laboratory are classified zones and are accessible only to American citizens with security clearance [4]. They are accorded diplomatic immunity under the 2002 US-Georgia Agreement on defense cooperation [cf. document 25.png, 26.png].

Joshua Bast is the deputy director of the US Army Medical Research Unit-Georgia (USAMRU-G). The American military scientist drives a diplomatic car and enjoys diplomatic immunity, without being a diplomat.

He has been deployed to Georgia since 2015 by the Pentagon Walter Reeds Army Institute of Research. His military unit also operates a separate laboratory inside the Lugar Center – the Walter Reeds Army Institute of research laboratory. However, when I confront him at the entrance of the laboratory, he flatly denies that he works at the Lugar Center [cf. document 27.jpg -34.jpg].

However, leaked e-mails between the Pentagon and the Georgian Ministry of Health (below) proves him wrong. Joshua Bast does work at the Lugar Center.



Joshua Bast leaves the Lugar Center in a diplomatic car of the US Embassy to Tbilisi. (©Al Mayadeen TV)

Joshua Bast is the deputy director of USAMRU-Georgia, according to leaked correspondence between the Pentagon medical research unit in Georgia and the Georgian Health Ministry. The address of USAMRU-Georgia indicated in this official e-mail (above) is the address of the Lugar Center (16 Kakheti Highway, Tbilisi) [cf. document 35.jpg, 36.jpg].

Why does a Pentagon employee lie about his workplace? I have not received any answer. Joshua Bast drives off immediately after being challenged. He is not the only US non-diplomat working on the Pentagon program, who has been accorded diplomatic immunity. There are six diplomatic cars in the car park of the laboratory, all of them with registration plates of the US Embassy.

Six diplomatic vehicles of the US Embassy are parked in the car park of the Lugar Center. [cf. document 37.png, 38.jpg, 39.jpg, 40.jpg, 41.png, 42.png].

The Lugar Center security guard warns me to stay where I am and not to move. However, I run away. [cf. document 43.png].

After I refuse to comply the security guards jump into an unmarked car. But I manage to escape.

Security guards are patrolling the area around the laboratory while I am hiding on the nearby bridge. [cf. document 44.jpg, 45.jpg, 46.png (©Asya Ivanova)].

These security guards patrolling the area around the laboratory in an unmarked car are paid for by the Pentagon and not by the government of Georgia, according to information obtained from the US Federal Contract registry [5]. Hence, Georgia

has no control over the activities of its foreign sponsor. Furthermore, the Pentagon scientists can work in direct violation of international law.

International law is not applicable

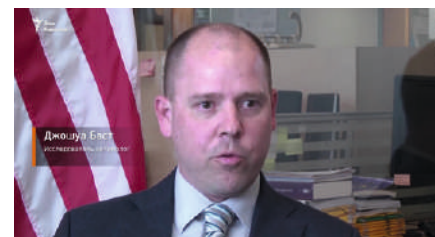
Under a 3 year-long agreement between the Walter Reeds Army Institute and the Georgian National Center for Disease Control (NCDC), the Pentagon has been given full access to the local collection of deadly bio agents in order to study them. These are agents which can cause Anthrax, Tularemia, Brucella and plague.

According to the agreement's provisions, "international law is not applicable to this Agreement, the parties agree that no court, tribunal or international entity has jurisdiction or authority to consider or provide judgement in case of disputes arising between the parties of this agreement" [cf. document 47.jpg, 48.jpg].

Drone for releasing of toxic mosquitoes

The work that US diplomats perform at the Lugar Center has nothing to do with diplomacy and does not fall under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Joshua Bast, for instance, is an entomologist and researches insects, according to a video released by the US Embassy to promote the peaceful purposes of the otherwise military program of the US in Georgia.

Why does an entomologist work for the US Army and why is he accorded diplomatic immunity? Entomological warfare is a type of biological warfare that uses insects to transmit diseases. Georgia borders on the US main rival – Russia. Moscow has repeatedly voiced its concerns about the potential development of biological weapons near the Russian borders, including the spread of diseases through insects.



A screen grab from a video promoting the peaceful intentions of the Pentagon program. Joshua Bast is presented as entomologist. [document 49.jpg, Pentagon, CC-0]

Such fears are not groundless, considering a recent US patent for a Toxic Mosquito Aerial release system [6], granted by The United States Patent and Trademark Office in 2014. The invention includes a drone which can release infected mosquitoes.

According to the patent documents, the drone is capable of delivering lethal and non-lethal toxins, including any agent that can be carried and administered by a mosquito [cf. document 50.jpg, 51.jpg, 52.jpg].

The inventor of the drone for the releasing of toxic mosquitoes S. Mill Calvert has patented 42 similar military inventions for the US Army and Special forces, including stroke-inducing bullets [7], in a span of just two years from 2013 to 2015. A person with such a name however does not exist in the US citizens registry. The US patent Lawyer, Louis Ventre, who filed the application, declined to comment if this name was a pseudonym and who his client actually was [cf. document 53.jpg, 54.jpg, 55.jpg].

Documents show a number of Pentagon projects involving insects as possible vectors of diseases in Georgia. In 2014 The Lugar Center was equipped with an insect facility and launched a project on

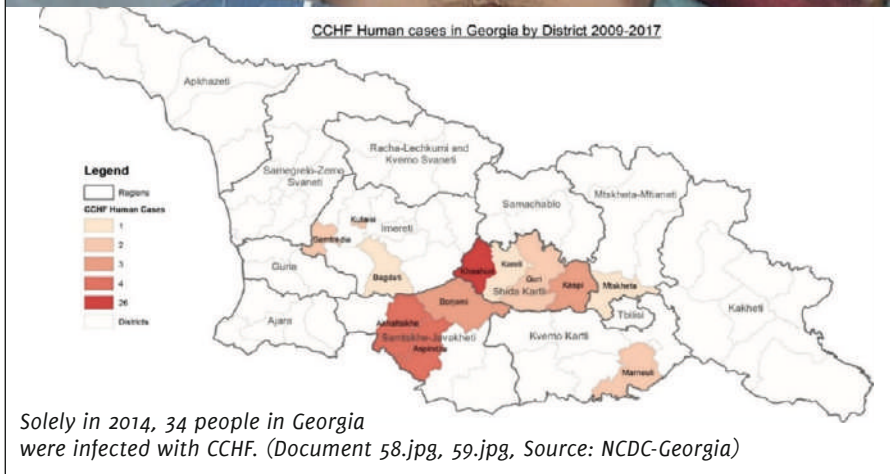


Photo: Document 42.png, © Al Mayadeen TV)

The Pentagon scientists have also performed experiments involving tropical mosquitos and ticks in Georgia. In 2016, 21 590 ticks were collected for a DNA database for future studies at The Lugar Center under the Pentagon project “Assessing the Seroprevalence and Genetic Diversity of Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever Virus (CCHFV) and Hantaviruses in Georgia” [10].

In 2014 34 people became infected (amongst which a 4-year old child) [11]. A total of 60 cases with 9 fatalities have been registered in Georgia since 2009, according to a leaked e-mail sent by the Lugar Center director Amiran Gamkrelidze to the Minister of Health of Georgia David Sergeenko.

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), which runs the US military program at the Lugar Center in Georgia, is alleged to have already performed field tests with an unknown substance in Chechnya, Russia. In June 2017 local citizens reported on a drone disseminating



Besides having various military capabilities to disperse bio agents, DTRA has also full access to the Russian borders, granted under a military program called Georgia Land Border Security Project [15]. The activities, related to this project have been outsourced to a private American company – Parsons Government Services International. Parsons has been

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awarded a \$17.7 million contract under the Pentagon border security project in Georgia [16]. DTRA has previously contracted Parsons for similar border security projects in Lebanon, Jordan, Libya and Syria [17]. Interestingly, a subcontractor working on this border security project – TMC Global Professional Services, also happens to be contracted by DTRA for scientific support at the Lugar Center [18]. The same American company – TMC, which works at the Lugar Center also carries out surveillance for WMD on the Georgian borders [19]. The project coincides with the incident involving powder dissemination which was reported and filmed in neighbouring Chechnya close to the Georgian border.

Private contractors

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) has outsourced much of the work under the military program to private companies, which are not accountable to Congress, and which can operate more freely and move around the rule of law [cf. document 67.jpg].

TMC was awarded a \$3.8 million contract in 2016 running until 2021 for support services at the Lugar Center [20]. In-



1. Liquid Dissemination, 2. Powder Dissemination, 3. Dissemination on the test grid at the Dugway Proving Ground in Utah/USA (Source: Capabilities Report 2012, West Desert Test Center, ©Dugway Proving Ground) [Document 64.png, 65.png, 66.png].

terestingly, the same year the same private company was awarded another \$975 million counter narcoterrorism contract by the Pentagon [21]. Why has a company, which works for the Pentagon on a program to counter narcotics, been concurrently given work at a military laboratory which burns chemicals at night?

Leaked documents reveal another company involved in the program in Georgia – Booz Allen Hamilton.

Edward Snowden's [cf document 68.jpg] former employer – Booz Allen Hamilton, has been awarded five lucrative contracts by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) since 2010 running until 2022 [22], totaling at least \$ 358 million for intelligence support and chemical weapons agents support services [23]. According to the company's website it has developed a web-based platform for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and the US intelligence community [24]. The system currently holds more than 9 terabytes of intelligence data and grows by about 1.5 million records every week.

The Pentagon has spent at least \$161 million on the Lugar Center in Tbilisi under a contract with the private American contractor – CH2M Hill [25]. This is half of the total sum of \$ 361.4 million that the company had been awarded to operate Pentagon bio-laboratories in Georgia, Uganda, Tanzania, Iraq, Afghanistan and South East Asia [26].

According to CH2M Hill, the US company has secured biological agents and employed former bio warfare scientists at The Lugar Center. These are scientists who are working for another American company involved in the military program in Georgia – Battelle Memorial Institute.

Battelle as a \$59 million subcontractor at the Lugar Center has extensive experience in research on bio-agents, as the company has already worked on the US Bio-weapons Program under 11 previous contracts with the US Army in the past. [27] [cf. document 69.png].

The same company also worked for the CIA under the Project Clear Vision (1997-2000) [28]. Its stated goal was to reconstruct a Soviet-era anthrax bomb-let in order to test its dissemination cha-

characteristics. The clandestine CIA-Battelle operation was omitted from the US Biological Weapons Convention declarations submitted to the UN.

The US Company Metabiota Inc. has been awarded \$23.9 million in federal contracts under the Pentagon's DTRA program in Georgia and Ukraine for scientific and technical consulting services [29].

Andrew C. Weber, then US Assistant Secretary of Defense (2009-2014), US DoD Deputy Coordinator for Ebola Response (2014-2015), is currently a Metabiota (the US contractor) employee [document 71.jpg: Andrew C. Weber (on the right) at the inauguration of the Lugar Center in Tbilisi in 2011].

Metabiota had been contracted to perform work for DTRA before and during the Ebola crisis in West Africa and was awarded \$3.2 million (2012-2015) for work in Sierra Leone at the epicenter of the Ebola outbreak [30], [cf. document 70.png].

I asked US Assistant Secretary of Health Robert Kadlec for a comment during a conference on biological weapons at the European Parliament in Brussels and was immediately expelled from the conference..

Ethnic Bioweapons

Documents reveal some of the projects funded by the Pentagon. Among them projects related to Russia. The US Air Force has been specifically collecting Russian RNA and synovial tissue samples [31],



Metabiota worked on a Pentagon's project at the epicenter of the Ebola crisis, where three US biolabs are located. (Graphic: Document 70.png, source: WHO Ebola Response Roadmap, September 26, 2014)



Dilyana Gaytandzhieva at the European Parliament. (Video updated March 8, 2018, Photo: Screenshot_Video.png, Source: <https://www.facebook.com/dilyana.gaytandzhieva/videos/10215417002600829/>)

raising fears in Moscow of a covert US ethnic bio-weapons program [cf. document 72.jpg, 73-1.png].

According to the genome study, the Russian "DNA is available from Dr. Mikeljon Nikolich". He is one of the Pentagon scientists at the Lugar Center and is tasked with genome research on strains in pathogen collections from former Soviet Union countries, as a leaked document (below) reveals [cf. Document 74.jpg].

The Pentagon has also studied the Russian Anthrax Strain at the Lugar Center for which Russia has a vaccine [32], a Russian Yersinia pestis Strain (which causes plague) [33], as well as the Genome sequence of the Russian Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus strain [34].

In 2017 Pentagon scientists sequenced the genome of a Russian strain of Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) [cf. document 75.jpg, 76.jpg].

Leaked e-mails, between the director of the Lugar Center Amiran Gamkrelidze and the Minister of Health of Georgia David Sergeenko, also reveal an ongoing Pentagon project on Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic fever in the country [cf. document 77.jpg, 78.jpg].

Georgians used as laboratory rabbits

The minister's e-mails also reveal another American project on Hepatitis C in Georgia including cases of death. The pilot stu-

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- [37] US-funded site in Georgia may have conducted illegal experiments on humans - ex-minister, article by unknown author on rt.com at Sep. 11, 2018 on <https://www.rt.com/news/438214-us-human-experiments-georgia/>.
- [38] Video screenshot on 29.7.018 on Facebook.com with the URL <https://www.facebook.com/dilyana.gaytandzhieva/videos/10216510705222711/?list=1717224640%3A1310207864%3A1569693380>

dy of the US Center for Disease Control in Georgia is called “Simplified Diagnostics and Monitoring of Hepatitis C Infected Patients in Rural Primary Care Settings Using Newly Approved Pan-Genotypic Antiviral Therapy”. It is designated as confidential information.

The Ministry of Health of Georgia has signed an Agreement with the US Center for Disease Control and the private American pharmaceutical company Gilead. According to this agreement, the American side provides free medicines for Hepatitis C treatment. In exchange, the private American company cannot be held accountable for any damage (intentional or not) which may result from the program. The agreement is signed by David Sergeenko from the Georgian side [cf. document 80.jpg, 82.jpg, 81.jpg].

From Paris with love

Leaked e-mails between minister Sergeenko and the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) which supports the program on Hepatitis C in Georgia reveal private meetings in Paris between the government officials and Gilead [cf. document 83.jpg].

Confidential reports: At least 100 death cases in Georgia

Leaked confidential documents show at least 100 deaths reported to Gilead, over the last 3 years, of patients under treatment with the Gilead drugs Sovaldi and Harvoni which had been provided to them for free.



Minister of Health of Georgia David Sergeenko in a Gilead drugs advertisement promoting the success of the program. (Photo: Document 79.jpg, ©Gilead)

Georgians have been used as laboratory rabbits for a new Hepatitis C experimental treatment by the private American company along with the US Center for Disease Control. Moreover, in some of the death cases reports sent to Gilead from the Georgian Ministry of Health the cause of death is indicated as unknown or not related to the treatment. 30 Georgians died during the drug clinical trials in December 2015 alone. Another 30 death cases were reported in April 2016, also in the span of only a month. It is worth noting that the drugs are neither emergency resuscitation drugs for patients in clinical death condition, nor cancer palliative drugs. Most causes of death remain obscure and some diagnoses do not correlate with the International Classification of Diseases by WHO. A discrepancy in a 2017 death case report from the Georgian Ministry of Health [cf. document 84.jpg, 85.jpg] to Gilead raises questions – how can a dead patient continue his treatment after his death?

30 cases of death were reported in April 2016 alone. According to the reports, however, the cause of death was not linked to the treatment or was unknown [cf. document 86.png].

To make things worse, the US government agency has launched the ostensibly altruistic project on free medicines for the poor Georgian people in partnership with the private American company Gilead thus being in direct conflict of interest. A financial report for 2017 reveals that the same company Gilead is among the main sponsors of the Center for Disease Control Foundation [35].

The biggest shareholder in Gilead is the former US Minister of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

On 5 September 2018, the Anticorruption Department of the Georgian National Security Agency announced that it had launched an investigation into the Hepatitis C program [36].

The US-funded Lugar Center in Tbilisi may have been involved in illegal experiments on Georgian citizens, the country's former security minister Igor Giorgadze has claimed, citing leaked documents he obtained. He said he managed to acquire over 100,000 pages of documents about

the research done at the Richard Lugar Center [37].

The minister of Health of Georgia David Sergeenko did not respond to my questions. The leaked e-mails though show the minister's reaction. [cf. document 87.jpg]. He has forwarded the e-mail to his press center swearing at me in Georgian: “Who the hell is she and where did she get my e-mail from?”



The emergency team break open my bedroom door from the inside [38]. (Photo: Screenshot_Video2.png, Facebook.com, © Dilyana Gaytandzhieva)

Coincidentally I was inexplicably locked up in the bedroom of my rented flat in Tbilisi while sleeping and was freed by Emergency services who accessed the locked room through the roof.

The police have no answer as to who had broken into the flat, locked me up and why, given that nothing had been stolen. Probably someone does not want journalists to investigate what chemicals are secretly burnt at night in the Pentagon funded laboratory and why a private contractor on a Pentagon program to counter narcotics also happens to work at the same laboratory.

**This report is part of an upcoming documentary for Al Mayadeen TV to be broadcast on 20 September 2018.*

All documents which are mentioned in this article you will find as download.zip at the end of the online article on Free21.org with the URL:

<<http://www.free21.org/?p=32543>>

