Court found beneficiary of GYLA's legal aid not guilty

Lawyer from GYLA's office in Tbilisi was providing legal aid to defendants Giorgi and Lasha Sozashvili in criminal proceedings concluded on July 12, 2013, by the verdict of not guilty delivered by Tbilisi City Court.

The defendants were charged with crime envisaged by para.2, Article 353 of the Criminal Code of Georgia – resisting a police officer or any other government representative to impede the protection of public order or terminate or change his/her activity, as well as coercing thereof into an explicitly unlawful action, perpetrated under violence or threat of violence, perpetrated by a group.

As reported by the investigating authorities, on December 2, 2012, at around

02:50am, Lasha Sozashvili and his brother, Giorgi, both under the influence of alcohol, were sitting in a car at the junction of Trialeti and Kalaubani streets, talking loudly and aggressively to each other and swearing. Police officers urged them to observe public order but they resisted lawful order of the police and allegedly resorted to physical violence and threatened police officers with a knife.

The prosecution's case was based solely on statements of the police officers (victims). Statements of local residents and other evidence obtained by the defence, submitted and examined in court during main hearing, did not explicitly incriminate the defendants. In this light, the court ruled that the evidence submitted by the prosecution failed to meet the standard of proof beyond a reasonable doubt, and was insufficient to deliver a verdict of guilty. Therefore, Tbilisi City Court's board of criminal cases found Giorgi and Lasha Sozashvili not guilty.