

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



Georgian Media Legal Defense Center Condemns Facts of Interference with Professional Work of Journalists

The Georgian Media Legal Defense Center (GMLDC) reacts to the recent facts of interference with professional work of journalists.

On July 22, 2012, men dressed in civilian uniforms did not allow journalists of Info 9, who had arrived in the village of Shaumani to report on local problems, to interview local population.

According to media reports, during the visit of President Saakshvili in the village of Kheta, Khobi District, on July 25, 2012, journalists were not allowed to cover the event.

On July 24, 2012, in Ozurgeti, journalists of the newspaper Guria News were not allowed to cover visit of the president in Guria. As men dressed in civilian uniforms explained to journalists, they were on a secured territory, whereas video footage illustrates that movement was not restricted for security reasons. Even if it had been, the restriction clearly did not apply to journalists since other media outlets covered the event. As representatives of Guria News allege, they deleted video materials that journalists had recorded.

According to information published on the website of Guria News, "On July 25, deputy head of the president's administration Irma Nadirashvili contacted publisher of Guria News Ia Mamaladze by phone and expressed her concern about what had happened. Ms. Nadirashvili believes that no one should interfere with journalistic reporting. She also offered to have the security service restore footage on memory card. Afterwards, we were also contacted by the press office of the security service and offered to restore the memory card".

Regrettably, there has been a recent increase of facts of interference in journalistic reporting by different individuals. It is particularly alarming that such actions are perpetrated by civil servants. We call on representatives of corresponding authorities to respond adequately to violations, as prescribed by law, in order to prevent interference in journalistic reporting in the future.

The GMLDC stands ready to protect rights of each and every journalist, and represent their interests before administrative agencies as well as in court.