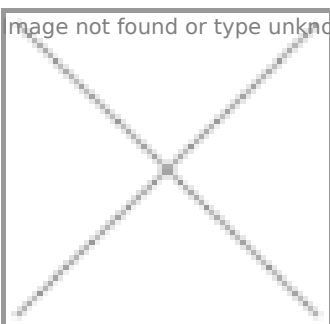


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GYLA and ISFED Demand Objective Probe into the Alleged Violence against Mamuka Kardava

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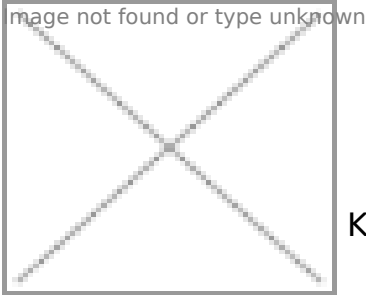


GYLA and ISFED respond to the reports of violence against the

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head of the Khobi District Office of the political coalition Georgian Dream, Mamuka



Kardava and demand an objective, thorough and timely probe into the alleged fact.

According to media reports, Mamuka Kardava was assaulted by four unidentified individuals near a railroad crossing in the village of Nojikhevi, Khobi District on May 20, at around 00:45, when he was driving back home. Mamuka Kardava alleges that one of the assailants managed to get into his stopped car and tried to strangle him. Mamuka Kardava tried to back up but the assailant interfered with the steering wheel and the vehicle crashed into a metal post. He also states that the three assailants forced him out of the crashed car and beat him with a truncheon. The very same night Mamuka Kardava checked in the Khobi District Hospital with multiple injuries.

It is noteworthy that the incident was preceded by a physical and verbal abuse of Mamuka Kardava by an employee of Khobi Gamgeoba, Vladimir Chitanava during a meeting of the Georgian Dream's representatives with population of the village Chaladidi in Khobi Municipality, which was witnessed by ISFED observers.

In an interview with ISFED's representative, head of the Khobi office of the Georgian Dream alleged that the assault was connected with his political activities and state that officers of law enforcement agencies were involved in it.

According to MIA, Mamuka Kardava crashed into a metal post by the railroad crossing while driving in his Ford. As a result, he suffered injuries and the vehicle his automobile was damaged. Consequently, a case was initiated under paragraph 1 of Article 276 of the Criminal Code of Georgia – "violation of traffic safety or exploitation rules by an individual driving the means of transportation that has caused a less serious damage to health".

The video footage released by Presage.TV on May 20 clearly illustrates that Mamuka Kardava sustained surface injuries on his back, which is also confirmed by a doctor who informs the journalist that the patient sustained 13 blunt force injuries on his

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back. It means that Kardava sustained the injuries by a physical violence, as opposed to a road accident, which could be the evidence of third party culpability. Therefore, the NGOs believe that the crime was wrongfully qualified. We believe that the footage released and Mamuka Kardava's statement are sufficient evidence for due evaluation of the criminal case, so that individuals who perpetrated physical violence against Kardava are identified by investigation.

For restoration of the rule of law and promotion of free election environment, the state must immediately launch an objective and thorough probe into the case. GYLA also calls on the interagency commission for free and fair elections to examine and respond to the incident within the frames of its competence.