

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია
GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



GYLA Calls on the Law Enforcement Authorities to Immediately Investigate Alleged Vote-Buying by Zurab Otiashvili

On August 27, 2012, [information center of Mtskheta-Mtianeti](#) released information about alleged vote-buying by Zurab Otiashvili. According to media reports as well as [the information published on the website of Dusheti Municipality](#), on August 25, 2012, a public celebration Vazhaoba was facilitated by Dusheti Municipality Sakrebulo,

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Gameoba and the administration of the State Representative – Governor. During the event, one of the UNM’s representatives, Zurab Otiashvili, assisted a local resident with GEL 500. The fact is confirmed by a number of pieces of evidence, specifically:

- [in audio recording published on icmm.ge](#), Giorgi Basilashvili confirms that Zurab Otiashvili helped him out;
- when commenting to a journalist, [Zurab Otiashvili himself confirmed the information](#), saying that “he was in need and helped him humanely. If you had seen him, you would have helped him as well”;
- [in a report prepared by Maestro TV](#), Giorgi Basilashvili and his friend reiterate that Zurab Otiashvili helped the voter out. Specifically, they note that the money was handed to Basilashvili by an MC who declared that the money was from Zurab Otiashvili.

It is noteworthy that on August 18, one week before the celebratory event, Zurab Otiashvili [was presented as a majoritarian candidate by the Speaker of the Parliament and one of the leaders of the UNM, Davit Bakradze](#). Mr. Otiashvili was holding meetings with public in his capacity as a majoritarian candidate, which is confirmed by a number of video footage. For example, video [footage released on August 23](#) shows local official Tskaruashvili with Zurab Otiashvili, meeting with population and holding an agitation meeting where he highlights merits of the candidate. These facts altogether confirm that Zurab Otiashvili is acting in favor of the political union the United National Movement and has electoral goals. According to the August 31 reports, [“Nino Khutsishvili will be replacing Zurab Otiashvili as a majoritarian candidate of the United National Movement in Dusheti electoral district”](#). However, the change does not influence qualification of the offence committed on August 25.

Under Article 1641 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, transferring money directly or indirectly to an individual for electoral purpose amounts to vote buying and is punishable by up to three years of imprisonment or a fine. The action of the political union United National Movement’s representative, Zurab Otiashvili, shows signs of vote-buying. Therefore, we call the law enforcement authorities to investigate the fact in a timely manner and undertake measures envisaged by the law.