

# საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



## GYLA Reacts to the Developments in the Village of Nigvziani

GYLA expresses its concern over the recent developments in the village of Nigvziani, Lanchkhuti Municipality and in particular, tension between the Muslim and the Christian population on religious grounds. Christian population opposes full exercising of rights by religious minority; clash between the two sides ensued.

The Constitution of Georgia recognizes freedom of religious, which implies not only the right to faith but also the right to expression of faith, including practice of religion. This right implies not only a negative obligation of the state not to interfere with

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exercising of the right but also its duty to ensure realization of the right even when it is curtailed by private individuals. It is noteworthy that interference in religious activities is punishable under the Criminal Code of Georgia.

GYLA believes that the authorities must resort to all adequate measures for preventing any threats to realization of freedom of religion in compliance to the foregoing standards. We also believe that official responsibility of Irakli Gujbidze, trustee of the village of Nigvziani, must be raised, as in an interview with INFO 9 he stated that in the process of tackling the problem, the local self-government will support the opinion of majority (which in its turn questions the right of religious minorities to religious expression).

We believe that during the developments in the village of Nigvziani, rights of religious minorities were curtailed; therefore, comments that the chairperson of the Human Rights Committee of the Parliament of Georgia made on air on Channel 9, alleging that no violations of human rights occurred during the incident, is beyond our comprehension.

GYLA remains hopeful that the tensions will be discharged in the nearest future with the involvement of the government, and that all religious confessions will have the opportunity to fully exercise their rights.