

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



GYLA Responds to the Questioning of Underage Beka Gochiashvili and his Brother

On January 14, 2012 media released a statement Georgian Pianist Beka Gochiashvili, according to which he was subjected to physiological pressure while questioned as a witness. According to reports, Beka Gochiashvili and his brother Lasha Gochiashvili were questioned as witnesses in relation to an act of robbery on January 8, 2012, in the fifth division of Vake Saburtalo. Further, a sixteen-year old Beka Gochiashvili was questioned in presence of his parent Valerian Gochiashvili. According to Beka Gochiashvili's statement he and his brother Lasha Gochiashvili were subjected to

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psychological pressure and threats during questioning.

GYLA contacted the father of Beka Gochiashvili who confirmed the acts of pressure cited by Beka Gochiashvili in his statement. He also noted that in the process of questioning Beka was subjected to pressure by threatening to “put him in prison” and “make his life miserable”. Lasha Gochiashvili was subjected to verbal abuse and was threatened with physical abuse.

The Ministry of Interior Affairs released a statement today in response to Beka Gochiashvili’s statement, according to which the MIA’s General Inspection has instituted an internal probe into the allegations . In consideration of high public interest, materials of the probe will be made public. GYLA welcomes response of the MIA and calls for timely and objective proceedings. Additionally, MIA should also provide public with a comprehensive information about the incident.

Lastly, we would like to note that GYLA believes that the existing model of questioning a witness in the process of investigation is flawed. To ensure a healthy process of questioning witnesses, it is important to put into practice new procedures that regulate questioning of a witness in a timely manner. These procedures that stipulate that a witness can only be questioned before judge, do not come into force until December 1, 2013. They will ensure protection of witnesses and will essentially increase degree of supervision on the process.