

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



GYLA's statement about Zugdidi incident

We are deeply concerned about physical confrontation that took place in Zugdidi on June 6 and call on all individuals to refrain from violence.

According to information released by media yesterday, on June 6, members of Paata Kardava's Family, disappeared military intelligence operative of the Defense Ministry and some other individuals held a rally. Participants demanded investigation of the case and punishment of Tengiz Gunava, candidate of the United National Movement to the post of local governor in Zugdidi and other former high officials. Furthermore, participants disapproved of Tengiz Gunava's participation in local elections. The rally

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turned into physical confrontation. Participants started to throw stones to the UNM office and attempted to attack it. Salome Makatsaria, majority candidate from the United National Movement received injuries. As reported, police detained two members of the rally.

It should be noted that on June 5, Ministry of Interior released a statement and declared that case of Military Intelligence Operative, Paata Kardava had been investigated. The Prime Minister reported that Tengiz Gunava also participated in Paata Kardava's case.

On June 6 political parties submitted to GYLA diverse information about the conflict. Representatives of the United National reported to GYLA's observers that Georgian Dream representatives, as well as employees of the municipality and Zugdidi Post office participated in the rally. The Election Headquarter declared that Georgian Dream representatives attempted to attack office of the United National Movement, that was followed with physical confrontation. In addition, they stated that the police tried to resolve the conflict only when international observers visited the scene.

In communication with GYLA's observers "Georgian Dream" representatives declined participation of their representatives in the incident and stated that if such fact happened, the party would carry out adequate measures against them. Though Georgian Dream representatives did not exclude participation of their representatives in the incident who are Kardava's relatives.

Free pre-election environment exempted from all type of violence should be the primary goal of state authority. Government, in particular law enforcement agencies are not only obliged to respond to the deficiencies, but also to carry out effective preventive measures for elimination of physical violence or any other offence. Unfortunately, in pre-election period, the state fell short to prevent incidents including violence.

In view of this, we call on:

Law enforcement agencies - to investigate happened fact timely and effectively and to bring to justice initiators of the confrontation and those involved in the conflict. We opine that the Ministry of Interior should ensure public security and carry out all

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possible legislative measures for prevention of violence.

All individuals involved in political activities - to refrain from violence and physical confrontation of opponent candidates. Such facts make adverse impact on pre-election environment and prejudice public order and security.