



## **GYLA RESPONDS TO THE INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN BATUMI AND TELAVI**

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association continues the monitoring of the election

# საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



campaigns for the Georgian Parliament election to be held on 8 October 2016. This time we would like to focus the attention of the public on the incidents occurred in two cities of Georgia, Batumi and Telavi, on 4 August, and call on the the parties involved in the electoral processes to be more responsible, to duly fulfil the obligations assigned to them under the legislation of Georgia and to contribute to the conduct of elections in a peaceful, stable and conducive environment.

## **For political parties, their representatives and supporters:**

- to respect and comply with the legislation of Georgia, including the requirements under the Freedom Charter;
- not to present such election programmes as to propagate violence and incite national strife and enmity;
- to elect not to use a language of hate, and not to make xenophobic and homophobic statements;
- to abstain from any aggressive actions, provocation and involvement of party activists in similar actions;
- to take with more responsibility the importance of conducting elections in the country in a peaceful environment, in order for the developed events not to prejudice the course of elections and election campaigns.

## **For law enforcement bodies:**

- to effectively keep the peace;
- to ensure the implementation of measures to prevent possible violations of law;
- to ensure a timely and effective response in the case of violations of law and/or in the case of crime signs;
- to apply measures provided for by law to relevant persons.

**We would like to present additional information on incidents occurred in Batumi and Telavi on 4 August 2016. At the time of the above incidents, the GYLA observers were on site and were monitoring the events.**

## Information on the incident occurred in Batumi

On 3 August 2016, from about 22:00, a group of citizens started to move in Batumi appealing the society to participate in the protest action to be held near the office of the political alliance “United National Movement”. The main content of the appeal was a protest against the actions performed during the stay in power of the “United National Movement”.

On the following day, on 4 August, according to information spread by media, the political union of citizens “Chveni Samshoblo” conducted a protest action in Batumi. The participants of the action gathered on the Square of Europe and later, at about 13:00, moved to the office of the political alliance “United National Movement”. The participants of the action required to prohibit the activities of the “United National Movement” and punish its representatives. They repeatedly used phrases insulting this political party and its supporters. Near the party's office, there also were the supporters of the “United National Movement” who were also using insulting phrases towards the participants of the action. The participants of the actions burnt the stuffed dummies of the former president of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili and of the citizen of the Republic of Turkey Fethullah Gülen. Verbal confrontation started between the participants of the action and the supporters of the “United National Movement” turned into an attempt of physical confrontation. However, the law enforcement officers did not allow physical confrontation between the protesters and the supporters of the party, as the police was deployed between them.

Notably, although the action was preliminarily announced, the insufficient number of police, only 1 crew, had been mobilised at the place of the incident. The number of law enforcement officers increased only after the number of citizens had considerably grown. Media spread information that one of the members of the political union “Chveni Samshoblo” was detained under Articles 166-173 of the Administrative Offences Code of Georgia, which includes disorderly conduct and non-compliance with the lawful order or demand of police.

GYLA's observers, who were on site, provided us with video material depicting the

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protest action

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzKJbf0WSkP8OXBvUThRNHlyZm8/view>

## Information on the incident occurred in Telavi

On 4 August, at 12:00, it was planned to conduct a founding congress of the Kakheti regional organisation “People’s Movement Socialist Georgia”. The participants of the congress brought flags to the event, on which totalitarian communistic symbols were illustrated. The use of these symbols is prohibited by the legislation of Georgia, namely the Freedom Charter. The representatives of the law enforcement bodies were mobilised on site and did not allow them to use flags with totalitarian communistic symbols.

[According to information spread in media](#), citizens and supporters of the political alliances “New Political Center - Girchi”, “United National Movement” and “Civil Platform - New Georgia” started a protest action in the building in which the congress was supposed to be conducted. According to information spread by the TV Company “Pirveli”, the members of the “Socialist Georgia” made xenophobic statements and said that “the country must be ruled by a Georgian, rather than an Armenian and a Jew.”

One of the participants of the congress Temur Pipia hit with his hand one of the participants of the action Roman Kevkhishvili in his face, after which Kevkhishvili cast eggs at him in response. Temur Pipia was detained by police and brought charges for battery. The investigation is being conducted under Article 125(1) of the Criminal Code of Georgia. According to information spread by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, [the accused admitted the crime committed](#).

At the court session held on 6 August, the judge did not grant the petition of the prosecution to use as a measure of restraint a bail in the amount of GEL 5000 and determined for Temur Pipia a minimum bail of GEL 1000 as a measure of restraint.

GYLA will continue the monitoring of the court proceedings of the above cases and provide the public with information on their course and results.

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