

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



Statement of NGOs about the Video Footage Released on February 19, 2012

Rustavi 2 TV and other TV companies afterwards, released video footage of the so-called special operation on November 24, 2004.

We believe that by releasing the report Rustavi 2 violated stipulations of the Code of Broadcasters. In particular, it promotes positions of an interested party by not taking into account possible interest of the source or trying to verify the facts and obtain

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additional materials.

In the report journalist stated: “this is the footage taken the minute the car was stopped. I would like to remind to the audience that these are continuous shots, meaning that camera was not turned off not even once while shooting. The footage shows how the patrol crew arrests the men in the car who accompanied Buta Robakidze and then how they retrieve weapons from the car – a pistol and an autpmated firearm.”

With this text, the TV company suggested that evidence provided by an interested party, which needs to be examined additionally, was a fact.

The report leveled gravest accusations against a member of the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, Vakhtang Komakhidze; however, the journalist did not cite his response or indicate in any way that the TV company tried or would try to contact him and provide his opinion. By releasing the information this way, the TV company attacked the person who did not participate in the program.

Further, the TV company that released the footage violated para.20, 23 and 24 of Article 35 of the Code of Conduct of Broadcasters. In particular, para.23 stipulates that “When using archive material portraying suffering and distress (including crime) broadcasters shall try to reduce the distress it may cause to individuals featured in it and their families”.

Although the footage released is related to an infamous case, revealing identity of persons recorded on the video in a degrading circumstances, amounted to a gross violation.

We call on media outlets against releasing unverified, degrading materials that violate the right to privacy and may promote positions of interested parties.

Signatories:

1. *The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics*
2. *Georgian Media Monitoring Center*
3. *Public Defender*
4. *Youth for Justice*
5. *International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy*

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6. *Transparency International - Georgia*
7. *Media Club*
8. *Network of Information Centers*
9. *Georgian Young Lawyers' Association*