

Jemal Verd zadze were placed under physiological pressure, which was conducted by around ten prosecutors, lead by a high-ranking official of Prosecutor's Office. According to George Surmanidze and Jemal Verd zadze, the pressure included verbal insults towards them and threats towards their family members. As George Surmanidze reports, the Prosecutors demanded aggressively from them a statement that would have incriminated Ivane Merabishvili and David Chkhatarashvili. If the TV Channel owners refused such a statement, the Prosecutors threatened them with an imprisonment.

The owners of TV 25 released a statement in the Georgian media regarding the pressure from the Prosecutors. As Giorgi Surmanidze explained, after the dissemination of the information in media, he was summoned to the head of the investigatory division in the General Prosecutor's Office of Georgia. The head of the investigatory division offered Giorgi Surmanidze immunity, if he refrained from disclosing the above-mentioned facts.

We would like to state the following regarding the developments around TV 25: Initiation of the investigation by the Prosecutor's Office on alienation of the state assets could have had a valid reason. However, the Georgian legislation clearly defines the obligation for law enforcement agencies to conduct the investigation with full observance of the legal requirements. Violation of this obligation by the law enforcement agencies, could, at certain cases, constitute a crime. Therefore, investigation of a crime while, at the same time, committing another crime is unjustifiable. It is important, that the accusations made by the owners of the "TV Chanel 25" are properly investigated and that it is examined whether any type of pressure or threats indeed took place against George Surmanidze and Jemal Verd zadze during the investigation process.

Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA)
Transparency International Georgia (TI)
Article 42 of the Constitution
Coalition for Media Advocacy