



GYLA Voices its Position about the Death of a Prisoner in Penitentiary #8

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association expresses deep sorrow for the death of a prisoner in Gldani #8 penitentiary and calls on the government for rapid, impartial and thorough investigation of the case.

As reported, D.T. born in 1980, allegedly committed suicide in the toilet where he was found by his inmates. He has been placed with 6 inmates in a cell. Further, as the relatives of the deceased state, the fatal accident took place after the prisoner met the investigator. The case has been initiated as per Article 115 of the Criminal Code.

GYLA opines that it is important to carry out impartial and comprehensive investigation over all other similar cases with alleged elements of criminal offence. To this end, to exclude the conflict of interest, it is preferable to carry out investigation by the independent agency (prosecutor's office), rather than by the agency where the offence was committed.

Further, close relative of the deceased should be recognized as the successor in title by the prosecution with a view to allow an interested individual to be thoroughly informed about the case and to monitor the progress of investigation. In addition, relevant state agencies should inform public systematically and proactively about outcomes of investigation.

If an independent and thorough investigation determines that it was a suicide rather than a criminal offence, it is important to analyze and examine the issue and to seek possibility of avoiding the fatal accident.

GYLA opines that suicide prevention program of the penitentiary system is decisive

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and welcomes its operation, though it states that effectiveness of the program needs to be assessed by the Penitentiary Ministry, as well as by external observers.