

# საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



## **Instances of pressure exerted on individuals detained on the Case of the Ministry of Agriculture need to be investigated**

GYLA representative visited seven imprisoned individuals on the Case of the Ministry of Agriculture in Gldani penitentiary. Following detailed communication with them, some topical issues were identified that require attention from investigative agencies and public.

Four from the seven detainees report that while being questioned in “Moduli” building, Shota Rizhamadze, the prosecutor and an investigator exerted psychological pressure on them and abused them verbally. Generally, the process of examination started in the evening and sometimes lasted even eight hours. As the detainees allege, the examination process lasted only for an hour or an hour and a half, however, they had to stay in “Moduli” building for a long period. Moreover, all individuals were questioned with witness status and without lawyers’ participation. Imprisoned individuals also reported on facts of pressure from Rizhamadze’s side during the trial and requested his removal from the case, the judge, however, did not satisfy their claim. It is also unknown if allegations on pressure had any response.

GYLA considers that facts of pressure and verbal abuse on detainees need to be investigated. We should emphasize that lawyers’ participation should be ensured when individuals are questioned with witness status, especially when the testimony might be followed by initiation of criminal case. Furthermore, inducement to self-incrimination is violation of one of the fundamental rights of fair trial.

GYLA believes that due to the great public interest and importance of the case, information on investigation process should be disclosed to public.

GYLA will implement monitoring of court trials.