



## **GYLA RESPONDS TO THE FACT OF IMPEDIMENT BY THE POLICE TO PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES OF JOURNALIST DAVIT MCHEDLIDZE THROUGH COERCION**

GYLA responds to the fact of impediment by the police to professional activities of journalist Davit Mchedlidze. Any cases of impediment to professional activities of journalists, irrespective of whether such impediments contain the signs of crime or not, are inadmissible in a democratic society. A particular threat is contained in the coercion towards journalists to prevent them from disseminating information on the operation of state agencies or on other important issues, especially if such coercion is coming from the representatives of law enforcement bodies. According to the criminal legislation of Georgia, such action constitutes a crime.

On 18 August 2016, the journalist, who visited the site of a conflict situation created in

# საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



one of the buildings located in Gagarin Street in the city of Rustavi, was forbidden by the police through coercion to collect and spread information, thus being impeded to carry out his professional activities. Davit Mchedlidze, an editor of a web-based paper “Media.ge” states that the police officer turned off his camera through physical coercion, impeded him to take shots and made him out of the room by use of force.

- We are appealing to the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia to immediately launch an investigation in connection with the facts stated by Davit Mchedlidze on unlawful impediment to his professional activities, to promptly and effectively investigate this case, and to provide the society with information on conducted actions and achieved results.

- We are appealing to all relevant state agencies to ensure a safe and free environment for the work of journalists, which is vital for a democratic state, especially in the pre-election period.