

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია
GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



GYLA demands timely investigation of alleged crimes committed during the Georgian Wrestling Championships

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association responds to the [report](#) broadcasted on Rustavi 2 on January 19, 2019, which reflects the possible violent crimes during the Freestyle and Greco-Roman Wrestling Georgian Championships in the Sports Palace on January 11. The video footage obtained by Courier confirms that Tamaz (Gega) Gegeshidze, President of the Wrestling Federation was among the participants of the violent incident. Also according to disseminated information, there was a lot of video footage showing violent crimes, which was recorded by eyewitnesses, but all of them were apparently being frightened and were made to delete the video.

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According to the information [released](#) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the investigation is carried out under Article 126 (violence) and 239 (hooliganism) of the Criminal Code of Georgia.

On January 22, 2019, Tamaz (Gega) Gegeshidze was detained regarding the incident at the Sports Palace under part 1 of article 126. On January 24, at the court hearing, the prosecution ordered bail of 5,000 GEL with ensuring of imprisonment and the suspension of the wrestling federation's presidential authority as a temporary measure. However, the City Court did not satisfy the demand of dismissal of Gegeshidze and only bail for 5 000 GEL was imposed.

We believe that the decision is unsubstantiated because most of the witnesses are under subordination of this person and there may be a real danger of the pressure on the witnesses.

Part of these persons involved in the above-mentioned fact, among them Vladimer Gegeshidze, the brother of Gega Gegeshidze, the president of the National Wrestling Federation, also participated in the incident of the village of Kortskheli of Zugdidi district.

GYLA monitored the process of investigation of the crimes committed in the village of Kortskheli and the progress of a trial. It should be noted that more than 50 people participated in a physical confrontation, which was proved by relevant evidence, but the Prosecutor's Office accuses only six persons of the crime. That is why the issue of the implementation of full-scale and objective investigation is still relevant.

The verdict delivered by the Zugdidi District Court is evidence that the crimes committed in Kortskheli are not fully investigated. The court verdict describes the criminal facts that have not been investigated, the violent crime delivered in the verdict have not been committed by accused persons and the criminal prosecution have not brought against persons who committed the crime. In particular, the witnesses say that the journalists were hindered to perform their job and the operators were not allowed to shoot. It should be noted that the investigation did not answer questions about the alleged political motive and mobilization of persons participating in the incidents by the ruling party.

The story ran by Saturday Courier also delivers information about the possible

violence against Gocha Chorgoliani, general secretary of the Wrestling Federation a year ago, which has not been investigated yet.

In addition to the above mentioned possible offences, the information spread on media on January 25, 2019, about the shooting at the house of David Eradze, the journalist of Rustavi 2 is also alarming. The Ministry of Internal Affairs launched an investigation under Article 236 of the Criminal Code of Georgia. It is noteworthy that Davit Eradze personally obtained information about the alleged offences in the Sports Palace. Therefore, it is necessary to establish whether the shooting at Davit Eradze's house was linked to his journalistic activity. The incident was responded to Media Advocacy Coalition and demanded a quick and full-scale investigation from investigative bodies.

Uninvestigated violent offences in the country establish the syndrome of impunity and encourage committing such types of crimes. Also, this fact raises doubts regarding the political neutrality the law enforcement system.

Accordingly, it is important that the investigation will be conducted in full and objective manner. To withdraw all the saved video material that might reflect the facts of alleged offences. It is also necessary to investigate facts of possible threats and of destroying of video evidence of eyewitnesses.

Gyla calls on:

Ministry of Internal Affairs

- To conduct a full-scale and objective investigation of the possible crime committed during the Georgian Championship in Sports Palace;
- To investigate the facts of the destruction of possible evidence and alleged threats made against eyewitnesses in the Sports Palace;
- To investigate the fact of the possible violence resorted against Gocha Chorgoliani, General Secretary of Tbilisi Wrestling Federation a year ago;
- To investigate the fact of shooting at the house of the journalist Davit Eradze and determine if there is a link between the shooting and professional activities of the journalist;

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- To continue to investigate the incidents of Kortskheli and identify the person involved in each possible crimes;
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs will provide public information on the progress of the above-mentioned investigation due to the high public interest.

The General Inspection of the Ministry of Internal Affairs

- To examine the response made regarding the incident in the Sports Palace was timely or not;
- To investigate why the investigation of crime against Gocha Chorgoliani was delayed a year ago.