Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) condemns unlawful acts of violence committed by police

GYLA comments on the events developed at the MIA Tbilisi police headquarters on 6 May 2009 and unequivocally condemns the fact that the police used equipment, not envisaged by the legislation, against the demonstrators.

It is clearly seen from the videos released by the media that many of the

demonstrators sustained bodily injuries as a result of plastic bullets. Moreover, as asserted by the Public Defender of Georgia and some other eyewitnesses, the members of MIA Special Forces mobilized at the police headquarters were also throwing stones at the demonstrators.

The Law of Georgia on Police does not envisage a possibility of using stones and plastic bullets. In particular, Article 12 exhaustively lists special equipment, which the police is authorized to use when performing its duties, such as protecting public safety and preventing crimes against public order. In accordance with the law the allowed equipment is “handcuffs and other means of restraint, rubber batons, tear gas, means of psychological coercion, equipment for demolishing barriers and stopping means of transport by force, water cannons, armored vehicle and other special means of transport, special paint, trained dogs and horses, electro shock-equipment.”

The list of allowed special equipment, which is exhaustive, does not refer to stones and plastic bullets. Consequently, in accordance with the law in force, the police had no right to use equipments which is not prescribed the law against the demonstrators gathered in front of Tbilisi police headquarters.

GYLA condemns all types of violence used by either the state authorities or the opposition. However, it is believed that particularly alarming is when violence is exercised via unlawful means by the body which is specifically entrusted with protecting public safety and order and observing human rights and freedoms.