

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



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Use of hate speech in the election campaign process and the participation of foreign citizens still continues

GYLA is observing the period prior the second round of presidential election. The campaign is actively in progress currently. This period revealed cases of unlawful agitation, during which, foreign citizens/individuals without citizenship were actively involved in the campaign, also, the supporters of election subjects still continue practicing hate speech.

GYLA calls on:

The election subjects and their supporters:—

To conduct the election campaign in the compliance with legislation and prevent statements containing hate speech, violence, national hatred and hostility, religious and ethnic confrontation;

The Election Administration (EA):—

To explore the facts of illegal agitation and take appropriate decisions.

Detailed information:

Participation of foreign citizens/individuals without citizenship in the campaign and xenophobic statements □ alleged citizens of foreign countries/stateless citizens are actively engaged in agitation. Namely:

- Teimuraz Gorjestan, a son of independent presidential candidate Salome Zurabishvili, who is supported by the government, actively participates in the campaign of Salome Zurabishvili. By his estimate, the candidate will win and this will

be the victory for the whole country. According to him again, the society will vote to choose the European future.

„ There is only one future: the victory of Georgia! There is not another future! These are important elections for the future and liberty of this country. Salome Zurabishvili will win, and the whole country will win by this victory. The society will vote to choose the truth, running parallel to Georgia with European future and will not let the candidate of Russia to win.”

- The third president of Georgia - Mikheil Saakashvili actively participates in the campaign as well. In addition to illegal participation in agitation (Mikheil Saakashvili took an active part in the pre-election campaign 2016-2017 too, **despite numerous statements and complaints of GYLA, the Election Administration did not consider his involvement to be illegal**), he is also using hate speech in the video footage spread on social media on November 4, 2018.

Mikheil Saakashvili says in his address: „We need rich tourists from everywhere. The arrival **of the scrawny, sorry but, the ugly** with their own sausage and can, will not make us rich. We need from Emirates, not the Bangladeshis living there, I have nothing against the Bangladeshis, just, they are workers, Hindus who arrive there ☐ they do not have so much income ☠☐☐ Mikheil Saakashvilin is applying the word „ugly ☐☐ to the address of the Bangladeshi and Indus tourists, the term noted has a negative context in Georgian. Noteworthy, before applying the word ugly, Saakashvili apologizes, the late clearly indicates that he is using the word in the negative content utterly judiciously.

Applying a negative vocabulary against the concret national, ethnic and religious group, represents the xenophobic hate speech. Such statements promote the establishment of negative stereotypes in society towards the vulnerable group and, ultimately, replicate hate speech. By applying the term „ugly ☐☐ against the Bangladeshis and Hindus, the third president went beyond the legitimate discussion scopes of tourism policy and obviously acquired xenophobic nature.

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Unfortunately, this is not the first time when the supporters of election subjects use hate speech and replicate statements containing violence, national hatred and hostility, religious and ethnic confrontation.

GYLA continues to monitor the election process and will introduce the results of the monitoring to the public.