

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



GYLA's press-conference on unlawful actions committed against convicts of the penitentiary establishment N15



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Several days ago it became public that convicts of the penitentiary establishment N15 applied to the Public Defender of Georgia with a collective petition about their verbal and physical abuse on various occasions, signed by up to 700

convicts.

After the information was made public, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association met with nine convicts who were transferred from Ksani N15 establishment to the penitentiary establishment N1 on June 24. In an interview with lawyers of GYLA, convicts confirmed facts cited in the collective petition and seven of them consented to launching a probe. Consequently, their statements will be referred to the office of the prosecutor. Furthermore, the following three convicts – Besik Guledani, Zurab Naskidashvili and Paata Modebadze, have consented to making their names public. As for the remaining convicts, they prefer to keep their identity private.

According to the petition, convicts were subject to various unlawful actions both during their admission to penitentiary establishment and afterwards. Statements of prisoners suggest that following types of illegal actions were committed by personnel of the penitentiary establishment:

- ☐ holding convicts in a dump and dirty bathhouse for several days;
- ☐ verbal abuse by making offensive remarks and swearing at them, as well as physical abuse/beating with their feet, fists and truncheons;
- ☐ unlawful seizure of personal belongings of convicts;
- ☐ failure to provide convicts with personal hygienic items, to force them to buy;
- ☐ locking cell doors for punishing convicts and restricting their movement for several days; holding convicts in solitary confinement without reasoning;
- ☐ forcing convicts to stay by an open window with only their shirts on in cold weather in February;
- ☐ inflicting pain by means of electroshock device on various parts of their body;
- ☐ tying convicts to bed with their hands;

Forcing them to shave their heads;

Convicts implicate concrete individuals that participated in said illegal actions, including Shota Tolordava, Levan Lezhava, Dima Chkhaidze, Gela Iosava as well as some Prajanadze, Ucha, Kakha and Dima. They also complain about doctors, since after physical abuse they were demanding to see the doctor but in vain.

GYLA deems unlawful and degrading treatment of prisoners unacceptable. Therefore, it calls on

1. The head of the penitentiary department to immediately act on the unlawful actions that occurred at the penitentiary establishment N15
2. the office of the chief prosecutor of Georgia to undertake all necessary investigative actions in a timely manner and ensure effectual investigation of alleged facts;
3. personnel and the administration of the penitentiary department N15 to immediately cease unlawful actions against prisoners

Further, GYLA remains hopeful that publicizing of the facts will not pose a risk to safety of authors of the petition and will not result in yet another unlawful and degrading treatment against them.