

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



GYLA's Special Statement regarding the Fake Report Broadcasted by Imedi TV on March 13

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association considers that the report broadcasted by Imedi TV on March 13, 08:00pm during Kronika newscast violates the Law of Georgia on broadcasting and the Broadcasters' Code of Conduct.

On 80:00pm Kronika was reporting that the Russian military forces, including its tank battalion, deployed in the occupied region of Akhalkori declared combat readiness; and they would possibly start marching towards the capital; it also reported about the panic in the cities of Georgia, long queues at patrol stations and department stores.

The war report continued for 30 minutes, without any caption saying that the report was fake, which caused the audience to believe that the television was broadcasting a real story.

Para 15 of Article 13 of the Broadcasters' Code of Conduct of Georgia stipulates that "in order to avoid misleading the audience, broadcaster shall refrain itself from staging and dramatization of reports in newscasts and social-political programs, or it shall clearly elucidate that the report is staged or dramatized. Broadcasting reconstruction of documental or real facts shall be explicitly indicated".

Kronika is a newscast reporting current events. Additionally, the report broadcasted on March 13, 2010, 8:00pm was featuring the topic of high public interest. GYLA considers that noted two circumstances were sufficient for Imedi TV to have refrained itself from staging and dramatizing the report. In one of its judgments the European Court of Human Rights declared that "in considering the 'duties and responsibilities' of a journalist, the potential impact of the medium concerned is an important factor. It is commonly acknowledged that the audio visual media has a much more immediate and powerful effect than the print media". GYLA emphasizes significance of freedom of speech and expression, which may also entail staging and dramatization; although, due to the scale of impact of broadcasting media and the damage the medium may inflict to the society because of the impact, GYLA calls for journalists to observe ethical standards.

GYLA calls for the Georgian National Communications Commission to apply its obligations under the Law on Broadcasters and impose respective sanctions on Imedi TV.