

At Least 5 Journalists Attacked, Beaten in Run-Up to Parliamentary Elections

State reply

On September 29, 2020 (around 9:20pm) Zaza Baramidze, a cameraman of television channel Pirveli was about to cover the clash between the supporters of the political parties Georgian Dream and United National Movement (UNM), when he was approached by several men and hit twice in his face.

On the same day, Jeikhun Narzalov, Bachuki Turashvili, Nika Darchia and Lasha Gurgenzidze, journalists and cameraman of TV Pirveli and Mtavari Arkhi were assaulted by several men while covering the incident of the beating of UNM supporter.

On September 29, 2020, in the Marneuli district division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia an investigation was launched promptly under the article 154 (1) of the the Criminal Code of Georgia on the fact of unlawful interference with the journalists' professional activities.

Number of witnesses have been interviewed within the investigation of the above-mentioned criminal case. Several interviewees stated that they were physically and verbally abused, also their video camera was damaged in Marneuli on September 29, 2020, during the night hours. However, Neither Baramidze nor the other witnesses were able to identify the assailants. Similarly, in the case of the second incident neither Nika Darchia, Bachuki Turashvili and Lasha Gurgenzidze, Jeyhun Narzalov nor the other witnesses could identify the attackers. Commodity examination and forensic medical examination have been assigned. According to the forensic analysis reports, Zaza Baramidze had no noticeable physical injuries, while Nika Darchia, Bachuki Turashvili and Jeyhun Narzalov had been inflicted minor injuries without deterioration of health. Other interviewed witnesses of the mentioned criminal case, stated that they did not see the fact of physical abuse.

Journalist of the TV broadcaster „Mtavari“ - Jeikhun Narzalov was known as a victim on the above-mentioned criminal case.

The investigation is pending over the alleged unlawful interference with the journalist's professional activities under Article 154 (1) of the Criminal Code of Georgia.