

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER
(HRC)



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER
(HRC)

CONTACT ADDRESS:

HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER'S TBILISI OFFICE
(HEADQUARTERS)

11a, Gakhokidze st., 3rd Floor,

Tbilisi, 0160 Georgia

Tel.: (+995 32) 237 69 50; (+995 32) 238 46 48

Fax: (+995 32) 238 46 48

Email: hrc@hrc.ge

Web: www.hrc.ge

www.humanrights.ge

BRANCH OFFICES:

KAKHETI REGIONAL OFFICE

Address: 14, Noneshvili Street, III Floor, Gurjaani, Georgia

Tel.: 0 (353) 22 50 70

SHIDA KARTLI REGIONAL OFFICE

Address: 45, Chavchavadze Street, Gori, Georgia

Tel.: 0 (370) 27 07 18



ALEKO TSKITISHVILI

Executive Director

The pandemic of the new coronavirus - COVID19 - exposed the mankind to many new problems and dilemmas. To prevent the spread of the virus, large-scale restrictions were imposed in many democracies, including in the form of a state of emergency, which was unusual and shocking for the citizens of these countries. Humans began to think not only of their own rights but also of the responsibilities they owed to other human beings and to the Earth in general.

With an optimistic forecast, in the post-pandemic period humans will be able to analyze mistakes, will no longer look at the Earth only through the lens of users, will protect the environment and other human rights. However, perhaps we should also listen to pessimists who, traditionally, do not believe in such a straightforward transformation.

According to the pessimistic forecasts, based on the lessons of the past, humans invariably walk in a circle because they

can learn nothing from own mistakes. Human Rights Center will be 25 years old in 2021.

A quarter of a century has passed since our organization has come to existence, and whatever experience and knowledge we have gained during this time, we still have all reasons for both optimism and pessimism. We are optimistic about the development of civil society, when the citizens of the country respond more and more adequately and promptly to unlawful acts, violence and human rights violations. In recent years we have seen unprecedented examples of solidarity and support. At the same time, other things are still unfolding before our eyes pushing us into a pessimistic mood: we still are not able to hold elections so that no questions are left about them, and polarization and wrangles are more acceptable to political parties than cooperation and consensus.

Naming other examples will lead us too far. The only conclusion a human rights organization can draw from this is that despite progress, human rights will always have to be protected: sometimes like a many-headed dragon this or that problem arises. If you cut one head, the other rises. So we must not lose vigilance and fighting spirit.

In 2020, HRC strengthened its monitoring component. To the team of historically strong free legal aid, a team of monitors has been added monitoring throughout the year the court proceedings with alleged political motives and protest demonstrations. Such specific observations were made possible by another project "Public Events Monitoring" supported by the traditional donor of HRC, NED. In the second half of the year, the monitoring of the protests became stronger in cooperation with the ECNL.

With the support of Open Society Foundation, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, and the Black Sea Trust Fund, HRC has also strengthened its election monitoring component with long-term observers and legal analysts. As a result, HRC

observed October 31, 2020 Parliamentary Elections not only immediately on the Election Day, but also in terms of the events of the pre-election period and after the second round of the elections.

The results of the work of the monitoring team were reflected in the analytical documents and reports of the legal analysts. In the event of an emergency response, HRC was promptly disseminating relevant press releases and appeals. In 2020, HRC devoted a great deal of time to analytical work and public relations. As a result, unlike previous years, more reports, analytical documents, appeals, statements or press releases were published. The media also actively covered the news provided by HRC.

The cooperation with international partners is continued: the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC), the Network of Human Rights Homes, and other organisations. It is important that our partner international organizations from year to year show ever-more interest in the development of democratic processes and the protection of human rights in Georgia. Unfortunately, the pandemic prevented the visits of HRC representative for advocacy to Europe, however, the meetings with the members of the European Parliament and various international actors were still held remotely.

The growing trust and support of donor organizations leads to the development of HRC, further, to the preparation of new projects focused on solving current problems and to the effective protection of the rights of citizens.

NINO
TSAGAREISHVILI

Co-Director



Human Rights Center continued working in strategic human rights directions on international and local levels during 2020, including:

- Documenting, analyzing and informing society regarding the human rights violations committed along the dividing lines of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. During 2020, the representatives of Human Rights Center visited nine villages along the dividing line of South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region where the occupying forces of Russian Federation committed various human rights violations. The representatives of Human Rights Center got acquainted and documented the problems on the spot. The results of the visits are analyzed in the report of Human Rights Center: [Human Rights Situation in Occupied Regions of Georgia - Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region and Dividing Lines](#).

- Informing international and local society regarding the challenges related to the investigation of 2008 August War by the International Criminal Court and advocating towards the organs of the ICC. Human Rights Center continued active cooperation with international human rights organizations, including International Federation of Human Rights and Coalition for International Criminal Court in order to draw attention of various

actors to the need of comprehensive representation of interests of victims and promoting their effective participation in the ICC process. Human Rights Center, along with its partner organizations, within the frameworks of Coalition for International Criminal Court, participated in the preparation of various statements and letters and advocating for the protection of rights of victims.

- On July 17, 2020, on International Justice Day, I had opportunity to participate in the webiar organized by the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), underlining the challenges related to the ICC investigation and lack of victim participation in the ICC process to the participants of the webinar.

- **Monitoring realization of right to peaceful assembly and manifestation under the conditions of restrictions enacted by the government of Georgia.** The amendments made to the Law on Public Health of Georgia in May 2020 according to which the government is authorized to adopt mass restrictions on civic rights and freedoms, raised many questions. As a result, the restrictions similar to the state of emergency are operating in the country without the necessary parliamentary oversight. In such situation, the possibilities of realization of right to peaceful assembly and manifestation are especially important, considering that it is one of the main ways for requesting protection of fundamental rights by different groups of society and raising accountability of responsible bodies. **Human Rights Center was observing these rights during 2020 by the support of European Center for Not-for-profit Law.** On November 8, 2020, the observers of Human Rights Center were monitoring the protest action in front of the Central Election Commission when the government used the water cannon and the so-called pepper spray against the protestors, by violating the UN Human Rights Guidance on Less Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement. Human Rights Center urgently called on the state to immediately stop using the special means against the protestors.

- **Monitoring the pre-election period of 2020 Parliamentary Elections and Election Day.** Human Rights Center observed

parliamentary elections in 7 regions of Georgia – Adjara, Imereti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti and Samegrelo. Human Rights Center revealed numerous cases of use of administrative resources during the pre-election period. The violations and tendencies identified during the monitoring are presented in the reports – [Monitoring October 31 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia and Monitoring 2020 Parliamentary Elections in the Regions of Georgia](#). The long-term observers of Human Rights Center followed main developments during the pre-election period, the work of the public bodies and requested various public information. HRC observed the Election Day, including the second round with static observers and mobile groups who moved around different electoral districts, in concrete municipalities and observed different stages of the polling process.

- [Monitoring the state of prisoners and conditions in the penitentiary establishments](#). Similar to previous years, Human Rights Center continued protection of rights of prisoners during 2020. In August 2020, the representatives of Human Rights Center and Penal Reform International (PRI), along with the representatives of National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), based on the special warrants issued within the mandate of NPM, made monitoring visits to Gldani N8 penitentiary establishment. Within the frameworks of the monitoring, they studied the situation of foreign, juvenile and life sentenced prisoners in Gldani N8 penitentiary establishment. The monitoring revealed significant problems, including the lack of rehabilitation-resocialization activities during the pandemic and lack of inclusion of social workers in the rehabilitation-resocialization of prisoners. The results of the monitoring are published in the report regarding the monitoring N8 penitentiary establishment.



NINO TLASHADZE

*Deputy Executive
Director*

The COVID-19 health crisis has swept across the world and impacted every aspect of life. Because of the pandemic, Human Rights Center had to implement the projects and organize different events remotely. HRC defended the rights of the beneficiaries remotely on both local and international levels. The new project ideas were analyzed, developed and presented to the donor organizations in the online format.

Regardless the common challenges created by the pandemic, 2020 was full of dramatic public events. HRC team was in the mid of this turmoil: we monitored the court proceedings into allegedly politically motivated cases in the common courts; defended the rights of the people who became victims of the law enforcement bodies or other state institutions; we observed the 2020 Parliamentary Elections almost in all regions of Georgia.

In order to be actively engaged in the developments, it is important to keep close partnership with the international partners – human rights organizations and donors. In 2020, we elaborated and released joint statements together with our international human rights partners to address the violations committed by the

members of law enforcement structures, the facts of restricted freedom of expression and various facts of discrimination.

Planning and managing the work of the human rights organization to respond to the force-majeure situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic was particular challenge in 2020. It was necessary to plan and implement old and new projects without any obstacles and the most important – they should have responded to the problems of the people affected by the pandemic. Therefore, we had to adapt with the new reality that was significantly facilitated by various grant competitions announced by donor organizations, which were designed specifically to respond to the current unusual challenges. As a result, in 2020, with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Georgia, Human Rights Center commenced a new important project to advocate the problems of the citizens affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 4 regions and in the capital. In another important project, which HRC implemented in partnership with ISFED and GDI with the financial support of the Open Society Georgia Foundation, we provided the citizens with free legal aid during the pandemic.

Like in the previous years, in 2020, HRC not only assisted citizens in the restoration of their breached rights, but through strategic litigation and advocacy, tried to address: legislative miscarriages, malicious practice of law enforcement system and identifies and advocates significant miscarriages in the judiciary system. HRC, by the financial support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), has been successfully implementing the program of free legal aid in the Tbilisi head office and two regional offices in Kakheti and Shida Kartli regions for over 15 years. In 2020, the team of five lawyers issued legal consultations to thousands of beneficiaries, represented hundred citizens in front of the domestic common courts, administrative bodies and also on the international level – ECtHR, ICC and UN Committees.

Human Rights Center actively works on peacebuilding. For years, the organization has been involved in or implemented joint projects together with the Abkhaz and South Ossetian partners; participated in the peace dialogues and various meetings. In 2020, with the financial support of the German Federal Foreign Office's funds by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), funding programme Zivik, Human Rights Center implemented the project *Support to confidence-building between Tbilisi, Sukhumi and Tskhinvali*. Unfortunately, because of the restrictions established for the prevention of the spread of Covid-19, it was impossible to organize two significant meetings between the representatives of the Abkhazian, Georgian and Ossetian civil societies in the third country. However, HRC managed to organize online discussions on the topics commonly problematic for all three societies, like – healthcare during the pandemic, right to education, gender-based and domestic violence, rights of the child and more. HRC continues to be active part of the peace dialogue and plans to implement new projects for the restoration of trust between conflict-divided societies.

In 2020, HRC continued to educate young people in the field of human rights. It is important that the youth grew up with the democratic values and became active citizens. With the help of Human Rights Center, adolescents in Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions were actively engaged in the advocacy of local human rights issues – they met the representatives of the local self-governments to discuss the ways of the solution of the identified problems.

Considering the successful litigation and advocacy cases in 2020, we can evaluate the year as fruitful and important period for Human Rights Center. We, together with the international partners, with the support of donor organizations, continue our work for the better future of our country and with the implementation of the old and new initiatives, we continue our fight for the better respect of

human rights, rule of law and with the belief that everybody is equal.



UCHA NANUASHVILI

Project Director

PROJECT OF THE NORWEGIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee has been a strategic partner and donor of HRC for many years. In 2020, with the support of the Committee, HRC continued to monitor human rights, study cases and provide advocacy in the conflict-affected regions, as well as the monitoring of the Parliamentary Elections.

Within the framework of the project, HRC prepared and published a special Report in 2020 - [Human Rights Situation in the Occupied Regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia / Tskhinvali Region and on the Boundary Lines](#).

The report covers the ongoing mass violations on the boundary lines of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, including illegal restrictions of liberty, ill-treatment of detainees, restrictions on movement and freedom of education; The Report also examines the socio-economic problems of tackling with the global pandemic - Covid

19 - in the occupied territories and in the settlements near the boundary line.

During the year, the process of borderization was going on along the South Ossetian boundary line resulting in number of cases where local inhabitants lost agricultural lands. Due to the restriction of freedom of movement and the lack of access to timely and adequate medical care, many patients from Akhagori died.

In September 2019, as a result of the closure of the crossing connecting Akhagori and the Georgian-controlled territory, a humanitarian crisis was created in Akhagori, which has not yet ended. The facts of murders/deaths at or near the boundary line has not yet been investigated and no perpetrators have been punished.

Despite the pandemic, HRC continued to raise the awareness of the persons affected by the war and provide them with legal aid as well as document current violations along the boundary line. Cooperation with various bodies of the International Criminal Court continued. Among them, HRC actively worked with the Trust Fund for Victims, which took a [Decision on initiating a victim assistance program in Georgia](#), to be launched in 2021.

HRC continued administering the website of the Georgian Coalition for the International Criminal Court (www.gcicc.ge) and prepare articles on issues related to the ICC investigation process and on the issues of victims as well as the elections.

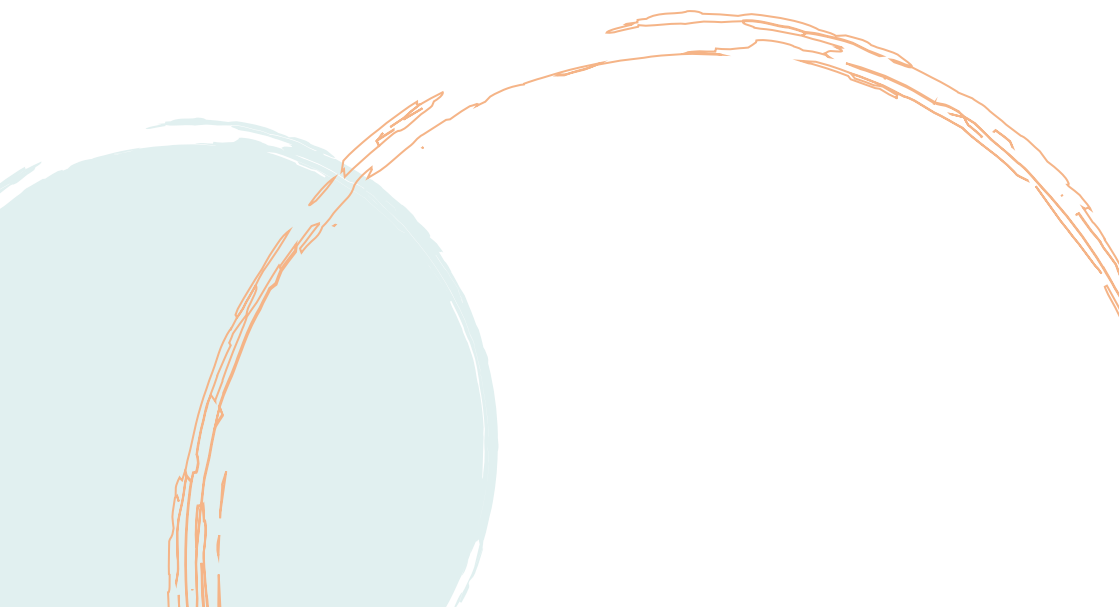
In terms of 2020 Parliamentary Elections, the monitoring of the pre-election period was reflected in a Special Report providing the main trends and problems identified during the pre-election period. On October 31, the monitoring of the Election Day was carried out by specially trained observers. The Report also summarized the results of the election monitoring.

PROJECT OF THE EUROPEAN CENTER FOR NON-FOR-PROFIT LAW

Project the Situation with Peaceful Assembly and Other Civil Rights in Georgia under the Conditions of the Covid-19 Pandemic implemented with the financial support of the European Center for Non-for-Profit Law (ECNL). The project aims to monitor the civil rights situation under the Covid-Pandemic and to prepare regular reports on freedom of assembly and advocate for the rights. Special appeals are also being made and disseminated regarding violations of the right to freedom of assembly.

HRC monitors the protest demonstrations as part of the project using a specially developed monitoring methodology adapted to the pandemic conditions. Monitoring also includes issues of freedom of association, freedom of expression and the exercise of other civil rights. Several reports will be prepared as part of the project, a round table will be held and articles will be published regularly.

Within the project, it became possible to respond promptly to the disproportionate restrictions on the right of assembly. For instance, in November, HRC published [a Statement on dispersal of peaceful protest rally in Zhoneti with disproportionate police force](#).





NESTAN LONDARIDZE

*Head of the Legal Aid
Office*

One of the strongholds of HRC is free legal aid, which includes legal advice and advocacy services, including representation both in local general courts and the Constitutional Court, as well as in the European Court of Human Rights and other international bodies.

HRC is involved *ad hoc* in all cases where gross violations of human rights are identified; the State, as an institutional system, opposes citizens and jeopardizes the rights constitutionally guaranteed to them. The purpose of the HRC free legal aid is to protect the rights of citizens.

A significant challenge for the lawyers of HRC in 2020 was the uninterrupted continuation of legal aid under the conditions of the state of emergency, when the citizens were in particular need of legal advice or legal services. Despite the difficult epidemiological situation in the country, HRC has transformed the free legal aid services to meet the challenges, and telephone and online consultations are now available to citizens both through connections to lawyers' mobile phones and through social networks.

HRC is successfully carrying out activities concerning the rights and status of prisoners in penitentiary facilities. Throughout the

year, HRC has been actively pursuing the cases of paying for the damage inflicted in the result of torture and ill-treatment in the penitentiary facilities. Particular problems stem from the practice of granting a status of victim during the legal proceedings, subsequently, from the legal rights of persons with such a status.

The Constitution recognizes and protects the right to peaceful assembly and demonstration as a fundamental right, but in practice we see that these rights are often threatened by unlawful and illegal interference. During 2020, there were several such strategic cases on which HRC lawyers were elaborating including the cases of interference into professional activities of journalists. In this regard, HRC carries on pursuing several cases in the European Court of Human Rights.

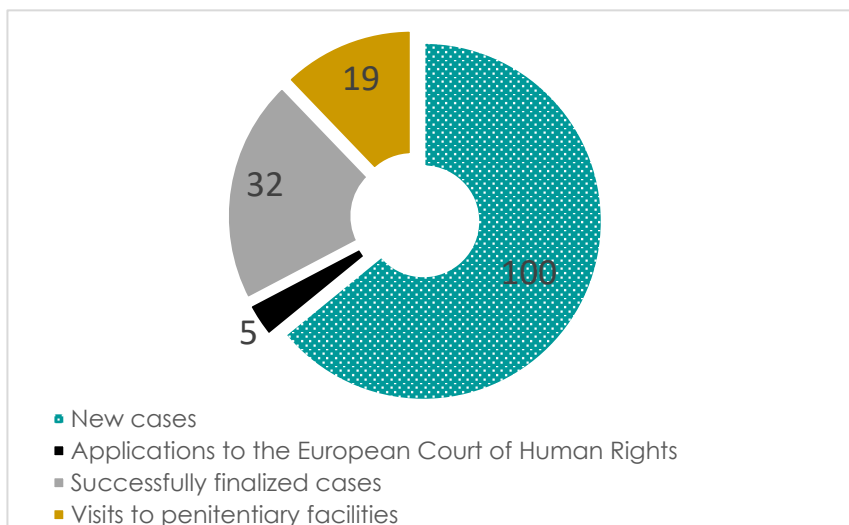
HRC is successfully involved in number of cases bearing particular interests on the part of the public. One of such high-profile cases in 2020 was the so-called Case of Cartographers. On October 7, 2020, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Georgia arrested Iveri Melashvili and Natalia Ilychova, former members of the Governmental Commission on Delimitation and Demarcation. They were charged with committing the actions violating the territorial integrity of Georgia. The time of initiating the investigation should be taken into account, in particular: This was a pre-election period, where signs of selective justice in the process of investigations were evident, further, the statements made by the leaders of the ruling party during the investigation violated the presumption of innocence, thus suggesting that the investigation was politically motivated. In the current case, HRC together with partner organizations, represents the interests of Natalia Ilychova.

Importantly, the European Court of Human Rights registered the [Applications of journalists injured during the events of June 20-21, 2019](#) prepared and sent to Strasbourg by HRC. HRC still actively assists the citizens affected by August 2008 War and monitors the investigation of the International Criminal Court.

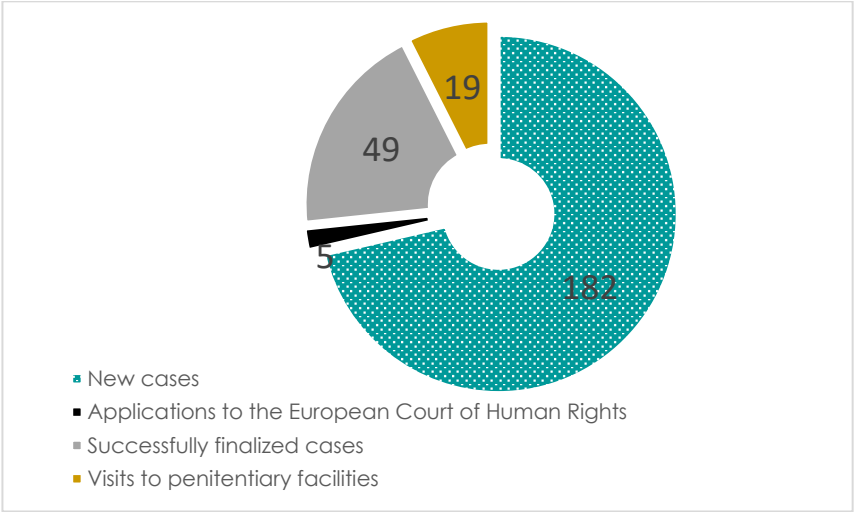
PROJECT LEGAL AID AND HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORINGDonor: National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

Tbilisi, Shida Kartli, Kakheti offices 2020

Free legal advice	5 834
New cases	100
Applications to the European Court of Human Rights	5
Successfully finalized cases (including 1 case <u>in the European Court of Human Rights</u>)	32
Visits to penitentiary facilities	19



Activities of the Legal Aid Office of HRC 2020	
Free legal advice	7 087
New cases	182
Applications to the European Court of Human Rights	5
Successfully finalized cases (including 1 case <u>in the European Court of Human Rights</u>)	49
Visits to penitentiary facilities	19





ALEKSI MEREBASHVILI

*Coordinator of the Shida
Kartli Regional Office*

In 2020, Shida Kartli office of HRC provided more than 1 300 legal consultations, during which citizens were furnished with information about their rights, as well as about legal remedies and ways to protect these rights. Shida Kartli Office has successfully completed a number of cases enabling the beneficiaries to protect their violated rights and pursue their interests through our aid.

HRC activities in Shida Kartli are often covered by the regional media resulting in more than 100 stories and articles during the year. Numerous positive reviews should be noted in this regard. Like in previous years, EUMM assessed the activities of HRC in positive terms. Representatives of Shida Kartli Office participated in the meetings organized by various organizations.

The main problems regarding which citizens addressed to Shida Kartli Regional Office were as follows: Disputes of social character, fines imposed by the patrol police, illegal actions by the police including during the state of emergency, the problems of the population living near the boundary line, the problems of IDPs and people affected by the war, the issues related to registration of property rights, family disputes, domestic violence, labor disputes with public institutions, the disputes with credit institutions or private lenders.

Among the successfully completed cases we can highlight the following: The case of I.Kh. where a citizen living in a village near the boundary line was claiming the allowance provided for the citizens affected by the hail as he was illegally denied of. Further, the Case of Ruisi Sports Ground, where residents of Ruisi protested and appealed against the privatization of the property owned by the local government, designated for a sports ground. Through the court, the privatization process was not only suspended, but even terminated. Unfortunately, the State is still trying to privatize the land parcel. In the case of T.M. and others, HRC Shida Kartli Office managed through the court to cancel the seven fines of GEL 3 000 unjustly imposed during the State of Emergency declared in 2020. In the cases of V.B. and Kh.Ts, Shida Kartli Office released the beneficiaries through appropriate legal proceedings from the disciplinary actions imposed by employers.

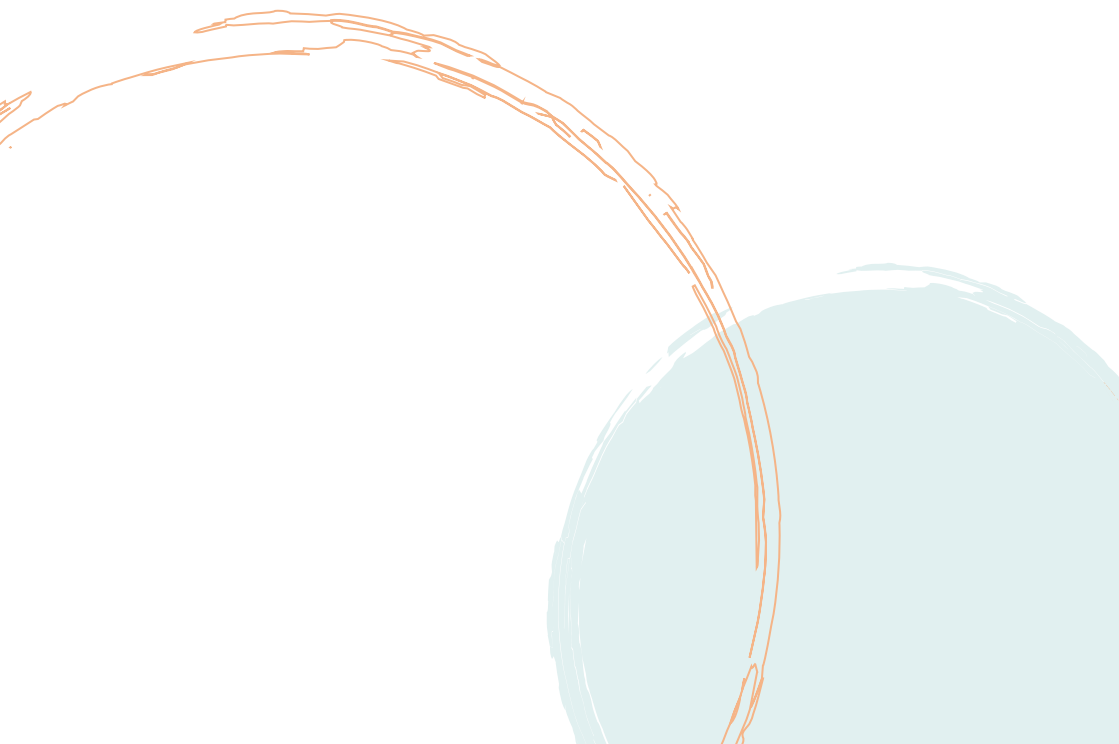
Even in 2020, it was quite difficult to take effective actions against illegal acts committed by law enforcement agencies. A clear evidence for this is the case of K. Ts. where, despite the fact that an investigation was launched into the offenses committed against the juvenile by the police, the investigation was not actually conducted and the juvenile was not held as a victim. Because of this, we even applied to the European Court of Human Rights. The case of V.T. is an example of how the police acted arbitrarily and unlawfully during the state of emergency. V.T. was severely beaten by the police. In this case also an investigation has been launched into the offense committed by the law enforcers against the citizen, but no real outcome has been achieved either, the responsible police officers have not been punished.

Further, a major problem stems from protracted litigations. In this regard, the situation in Gori District Court has worsened after the only judge hearing the civil disputes was transferred to another court and for about 4 months a similar category of disputes remained unheard.

Within the framework of the project supported by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, Shida Kartli Office provides legal aid to the victims of August 2008 War furnishing them with the information about the International Criminal Court and the rights of the victims, and studying the needs of the victims.

Within the framework of a project supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Georgia, Shida Kartli Office of HRC provides legal aid to citizens to protect and restore the rights violated as a result of the pandemic. HRC provides legal advice and legal representation to the beneficiaries who lost their jobs during the pandemic, whom were illegally charged with increased interest rates on loans, who could not receive allowances, who were fined unlawfully, etc.

Shida Kartli Office of HRC observed 2020 Parliamentary Elections through 15 observers in the villages adjacent to the boundary line. Observation was also carried out by a mobile group in the second round of the elections.





LIA KHUROSHVILI

*Coordinator of the Kakheti
Regional Office*

HRC Kakheti Office has a fifteen-year history of activities in Kakheti Region. During this time, HRC implemented a number of successful projects across the region. As of today, Kakheti Office is involved in two projects: Free Legal Advocacy and Human Rights Monitoring after the Pandemic, supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands, and Legal Aid and Human Rights Monitoring, which has been supported for many years by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

HRC in Kakheti provides legal aid to beneficiaries in criminal, civil and administrative cases. Numerous cases processed by the Office were completed successfully. Of particular significance are the cases where we protect the interests of girls from ethnic minority groups affected by sexual violence and unlawful deprivation of liberty.

In 2020, I was defending the interests of a victim in the case involving the abduction of a 14-year-old girl. I worked with the family to prevent the girl abducted according to the established custom to marry the perpetrator. As a result, the offender was prosecuted by the law serving for an example preventing such offenses. In working on the cases of juveniles my professional skills

in juvenile justice in terms of both criminal and civil cases help me a lot. Behind such cases, in most of the instances, there are hidden facts of domestic violence.

HRC Kakheti Office is a member of Telavi and Gurjaani local councils, as well as a member of the Gender Equality Council under Gurjaani City Council in Kakheti. We are actively cooperating with media outlets, regional TV companies, as well as other non-governmental organizations.

Unfortunately, there are many challenges and problems for lawyers involved in human rights activities. For example, the investigation of the offenses allegedly committed by police officers still lingers on with indefinite time frames. The impression is created that by delaying the investigation the relevant authorities are trying to make the aggrieved person lose the interest in the investigation of the case.

In general, there are no actual time frames for hearing cases in the courts, which is also a big problem. Hearings of some of the cases, especially under administrative law are going on for years. For example, one of the cases began in 2015 and it is not over yet even in the first instance of courts. Such a situation is even more problematic as the opposing party in administrative disputes are always public authorities and the other party is a citizen whose legitimate interests are violated.

The difficulties caused by the pandemic also have a negative effect on the practice of hearing the cases. Due to the current epidemic situation, the hearing of cases has been further delayed in time; the procedure for remote hearings has been introduced worsening the quality of the protection and creates many inconveniences for the parties to the dispute.



EKA KOBESASHVILI

Lawyer

During 24 years of existence, HRC protects the legal rights of persons bearing different status. One of the major challenges for HRC in recent years was to protect the rights of victims and that of their legal successors.

HRC representatives rendered legal aid to a number of victims over the years. HRC lawyers protect the rights of victims both at the stage of investigation and at the court hearings.

In accordance with the applicable legislation, the victim is no longer a party to the proceedings and his/her legal status is determined only by the status of the person participating in the proceedings. In criminal cases, the state prosecutor stands as a representative of the victim, there are however certain gaps in the legislation when it comes to restricting or violating the rights of the victim immediately by the investigation authorities. There are frequent cases when the Prosecutor's Office does not grant the victim the status of a victim, after which the case files would be made available to the lawyer of the victim and the lawyers would obtain more information about the investigation process. Presumably, this is the reason why the victims are not formally granted this status: the investigator and, in general, the

prosecution feel more comfortable when the victim and the lawyer do not interfere into the case. In such cases, HRC, as an advocate for the rights of victims is refused in writing by the prosecutor to grant the victim the status of a victim. Such a refusal can now be appealed in the court. Until 2019, the victims did not enjoy such a remedy.

In 2018, as a lawyer of HRC, I prepared a constitutional claim regarding the status of a victim called the case *Khvicha Kirmizashvili v. the Parliament of Georgia*. The claim of HRC was granted by the Constitutional Court of Georgia on December 14, 2018, as a result of which an amendment was made to the law and all potential victims were given the right to appeal to the court against the refusal of the Prosecutor's Office to grant the status of a victim.

Despite such positive legislative changes, the problem of victims has not been fully addressed and shortcomings have been identified in the court practice. Where an appeal is lodged against a prosecutor's decision denying a victim the status of victim, the judge will usually hear the case *in absentia*, without participation of the victim concerned. At the same time, in most of the cases, the judge upholds the decision by the prosecutor refusing the status to the victim.

In 2019-2020, HRC lodged an application with the European Court of Human Rights resulting in the cases *Khmaladze v. Georgia* and *Tsaava, Svanadze and Kmuzov v. Georgia*. These are the cases where the State refused to grant the victim the status of victim, due to which the rights of the victim have been violated and the investigation of the cases has been unreasonably delayed.

DIMITRI NOZADZE

Lawyer



HRC is approached for help by the citizens whose family members or relatives have been disappeared. HRC shortly applies to the investigation authorities for granting the status of victim to the family of the missing

person. Only after the status of a victim has been granted, it the HRC lawyer representing the interests of the missing person is allowed to study the case files and assess how properly and competently the investigation is conducted. The attorney defending the rights of victims has more opportunities to assist the investigation in obtaining evidence, finding witnesses, and organizing their interrogation.

There are cases when the Prosecutor's Office does not timely grant the status of victim to the family of the missing person, because of which the lawyers of HRC representing the interests of the family of the missing person appeal the decision of the Prosecutor's Office to the superior prosecutor and finally to the court.

In the case a person is missing, the investigation is mainly launched under: Article 143 of the Criminal Code (unlawful deprivation of liberty). The subsumption may be changed during the investigation and the investigation may be initiated under Article 143¹ of the Criminal Code (trafficking), Article 144 of the Criminal Code (taking a hostage) or any other article. There are

several cases on which HRC is elaborating, revealing altogether the acute problems faced by the families of missing persons.

Regarding the case of Soso Osorauli, a Georgian pilot captured by rebels in the Congo, HRC organized a number of press conferences, made public statements and held rallies. Unfortunately, still there is no progress with the case. The investigation was launched by the Office of the Prosecutor General in 2017 under Article 144.2(e) of the Criminal Code (taking a hostage). It has been 3 years since 2017 and after repeated appeals during this time, the Office of Prosecutor General unjustifiably refused to grant the status of a victim to the family of the missing person. HRC appealed the refusal of the Prosecutor's Office to the city court, but the city court rejected the complaint.

We have a different outcome in another high-profile case involving a minor Ilia Pilpani missing in Mestia. The investigation of this case was launched in July 2020 at Mestia District Prosecutor's Office under Article 143(d) of the Criminal Code (unlawful deprivation of liberty knowingly against a minor). Three months after the start of the investigation, the family still was not granted a status of victim. HRC lodged an application with the Office of the Prosecutor General, after which, on September 24, 2020, Mestia District Prosecutor's Office issued a decision and recognized the family as a victim.

One of the characteristic problems of the cases of missing persons is the late start of inquiries and ineffective search operations. This problem became acute in the case of a young programmer, Tamar Bachaliashvili, dead under suspicious circumstances. The 23-year-old programmer disappeared on July 18, 2020. Active investigative efforts began after family members of the missing person staged a protest and blocked the road. Tamar Bachaliashvili was found dead in her car in Tetrtskaro forest on the fifth day after her disappearance. The investigation was launched under Article 143 of the Criminal Code (unlawful

deprivation of liberty), but then was complemented with Article 115 of the Criminal Code (incitement to suicide).

The delayed search and investigations by law enforcement agencies following the disappearance of the person subsequently have a negative impact on the investigation and show public distrust of the police and the prosecution. In the case of a late investigation, important evidence in the case may be destroyed or lost. The late start of investigative measures by the Prosecutor's Office mostly indicates indifference to the case and certain incompetence, as well as a lack of logistical support.

A big problem on the part of the investigating authorities is the lack or absence of communications with the family of the missing person. Family members of the missing person often tell HRC that the investigator and prosecutor do not answer the phone and avoid meeting with them. The family of the missing person has no information on how the investigation is going and what kind of investigative actions have been carried out by the police. The statements of the investigation authorities are comprised to the standard response: "the investigation is underway."

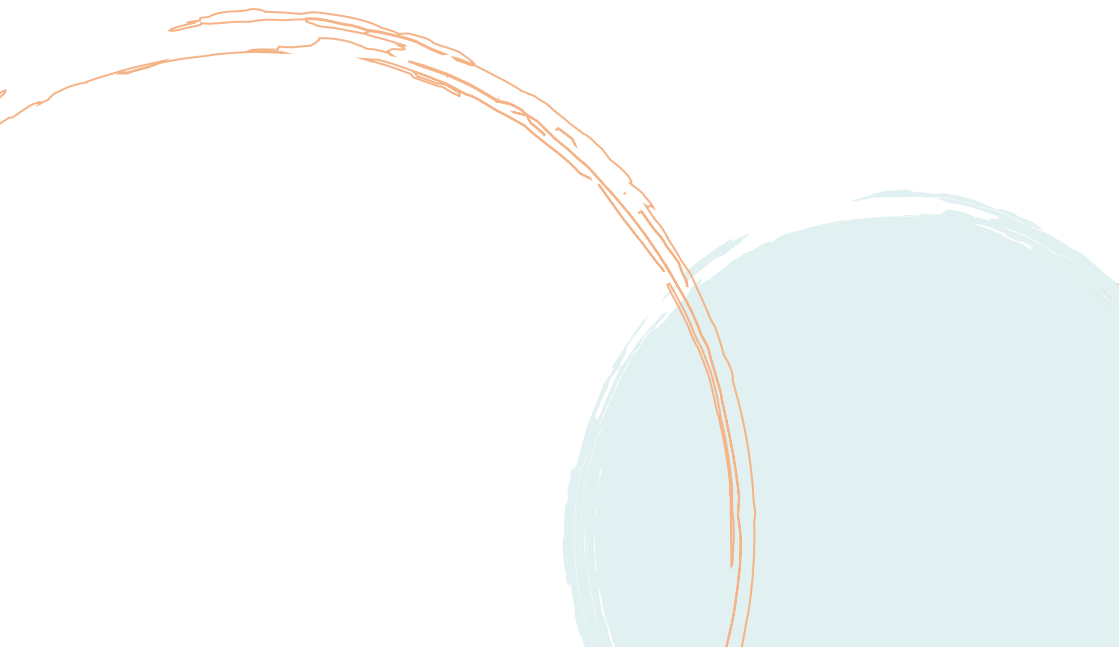
Investigations into the case of disappearance have been going on for years and usually end without any result. The case is closed so that the family of the missing person may not even have the status of a victim during all this time and have no access to the case files. One of the reasons for the protracted investigation is the late preparation of the forensic report by Samkharauli Forensics Bureau. The opinion from the expert examination may take several months or years, the huge problem here is the lack of experts. An expert may have hundreds of cases pending. The law does not provide for the specific timeframe when the report of the expert examination must be ready causing also huge problems.

Most of the cases of missing persons are destined to lay on the shelves for good. Investigators and the prosecutors often rotate during the investigation of cases, which also has a negative impact on the quality of the investigation. Investigators often lack

the appropriate competence and experience, which is one of the reasons why the prosecution does not grant the family a status of victim for years: the less the family and its lawyer have the opportunity to study the case files, the less comments and claims would there emerge.

In the case the decision from the Prosecutor's Office refusing the status of victim is appealed to the court, the court hears the case without presence of the parties. Unfortunately, the court does not study the case in detail, does not satisfy the complaint and simply copies the decision of the Prosecutor's Office into the judgment.

Where a Georgian citizen disappears in a foreign country, the Prosecutor's Office is restricted in possibilities to conduct the investigative actions and completely relies on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which often does not show much activity and tries to shift the responsibility to the Prosecutor's Office. In its turn, the Prosecutor's Office points at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Such attitudes towards the case and the uncoordinated work of the agencies hinder and make the investigation ineffective.





GIORGI KAKUBAVA

Project Director, Lawyer

In February 2020, HRC launched a new project, Public Events Monitoring, which included both protest demonstrations as well as monitoring of the court proceedings of the criminal and administrative cases with alleged political motives. As part of the project, HRC observed 25 court proceedings where alleged political motives could be identified. Within the framework of the project, HRC prepared 6 analytical documents aimed at identifying/revealing possible violations in specific cases. As part of the project, three legal monitors of HRC attended a total of 96 court hearings on 25 cases. The monitors were using a special questionnaire developed for observing the proceedings of allegedly politically motivated cases; further, after each hearing, the court monitors were preparing reports describing the details of the court hearings.

During the monitoring, HRC observed 56 protest demonstrations. The purpose of the monitoring was to analyze the violations identified during the protest demonstrations in Georgia and to assess the actions of law enforcement agencies.

In October 2020, within the project, the representatives of HRC and International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) held meetings with representatives of the European Union (European External Action Service, the European Commission, the European Parliament) sharing their views on the human rights situation in Georgia.

The rapid and large-scale spread of the new coronavirus (Covid-19) has posed major global challenges. In parallel with the spread of the virus, the restrictions imposed by Georgian government both within the state of emergency and afterwards, created legal problems in many regards. Therefore, many citizens needed legal aid. Stemming from the current situation, a joint project Democracy and Human Rights during the Pandemic and State of Emergency was initiated by three partner organizations: International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), Georgian Democratic Initiative (GDI) and Human Rights Center (HRC).

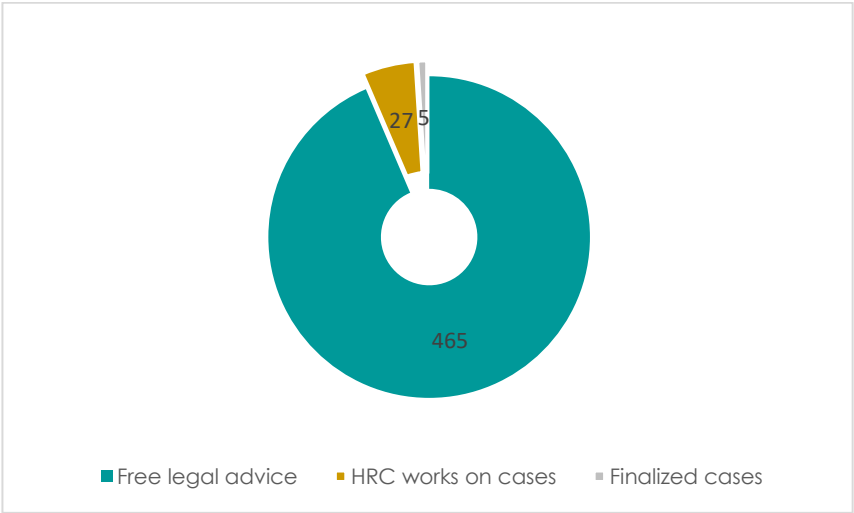
One of the main goals of the project was to provide legal aid to citizens whose rights were violated during the state of emergency declared because of the coronavirus and/or who needed an adequate and immediate response from the State to protect their rights. Further, within the framework of the project, legal aid was provided after the end of the state of emergency in relation to the problems caused by the coronavirus, and to the needs and the facts of human rights violations.

Evidently, the timespan of the pandemic is still unknown, so it is imperative that the State take timely steps to address the existing legislative gaps, ensure the proper functioning of the relevant institutions, and adhere strictly to constitutional principles.

From June 2020 to December 2020, the lawyers of HRC provided 465 free legal consultations and were involved in 27 cases, some of which are still pending with administrative bodies, courts and other institutions.

PROJECT:
Democracy and Human Rights in Times of Pandemic and of the State of Emergency
DONOR: Open Society Foundation

Activities of the Legal Aid Office of HRC (June-December 2020)	
Free legal advice	465
HRC works on cases	27
Finalized cases	5



LAZARE JIBLADZE

Lawyer, Analyst



The activities of HRC for the reporting year were significantly affected by the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus Covid-19 in the world and in Georgia, and the measures taken by the State to prevent/stop the spread of the infection having a direct and immediate impact on the human rights situation in the country. Therefore, in 2020, a significant portion of analytical work was devoted to analyzing systemic problems related to the human rights violations, to the challenges for justice and equality, and to the ways of addressing the challenges in the context of the pandemic.

During 2020, I have prepared 8 analytical documents that, in addition to the legal study of various human rights issues, include a problems identification component and offer relevant recommendations to various stakeholders.

In 2020, HRC worked closely with various civil society platforms and coalitions. In this regard, the active and fruitful cooperation with the Coalition for Equality, established with the support of Open Society Foundation, should be noted.

As part of the Coalition, HRC, along with the partner organizations, participated in the process of preparation of shadow reports and advocacy for the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

In particular, we should name an appeal made in 2020 to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

(CEDAW) in cooperation with the Union Sapari, regarding the case of Khanum Jeiranova.

In 2020, HRC was actively involved in the parliamentary and lawmaking processes. We have submitted to the Parliament of Georgia the draft amendments to the Law of Georgia - the Prisons Code; we attended committee hearings on changes to the labor law; together with the Equality Coalition, we participated in the process of drafting legislative changes related to sexual crimes.

In connection with the Parliamentary Elections of October 31, 2020, we actively cooperated with the Central Election Commission, where we participated in the preparation of the special regulations related to the conduct of elections under the pandemic, in drafting a Code of Ethics for Political Entities, etc.

In order to improve the legislation and better protect human rights, we also worked in the direction of constitutional proceedings in 2020, where a claim filed by HRC related to property rights was heard.

At the end of 2020, I prepared the Annual Report of HRC providing a comprehensive overview of the human rights situation in Georgia for 2020, including the trends identified in terms of protection and violation of human rights, the evaluation of legislative activities and the needs in this regard.

In view of the dire consequences of the pandemic and the increased risk of human rights violations, with the assistance of the Embassy of the Netherlands, special attention was paid in 2020 to promoting the protection of the rights of the population affected by the pandemic with dozens of citizens having already received the legal aid; appeals of various meanings were disseminated, which, in addition to calling on the government to solve the existing problems, also offer the necessary ways and steps in this direction.

PROJECT:

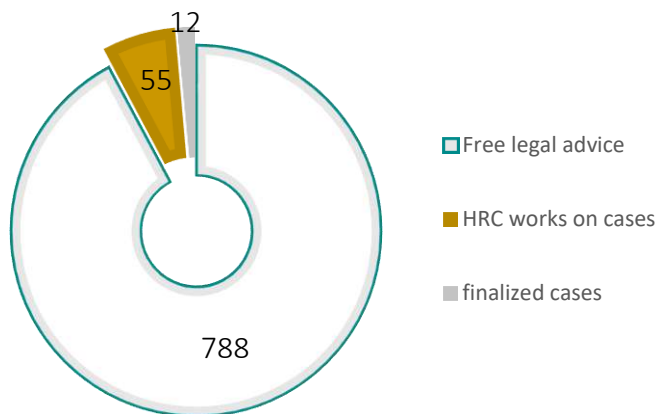
Free Legal Advocacy and Human Rights Monitoring after the Coronavirus Pandemic

DONOR: Embassy of the Netherlands in Georgia

Tbilisi, Shida Kartli, Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Imereti, Samegrelo

Activities of the Legal Aid Office of HRC
(August-December, 2020)

Free legal advice	788
HRC works on cases	55
Successfully finalized cases	12



GIORGI TKEBUCHAVA

Lawyer, Analyst

As in previous years, the following issues are still relevant and problematic in Georgia for 2020: Alleged political motivations in legal proceedings and investigations; unlawful interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly; use of disproportionate force against protesters and obstruction of journalists; violations revealed in the pre-election period, polling day and post-election period.



Due to these problems, in 2020, my work at HRC progressed in several directions. Firstly, the project *Public Events Monitoring* has to be mentioned, supported by the US Foundation *National Endowment for Democracy* starting from February 1 and lasting until December 31. During court monitoring activities, I have prepared 6 analytical documents, 2 interim reports and 2 summary reports on the Results of Monitoring Court Proceedings of the Cases with Alleged Political Motives and on the Results of Monitoring Protest Demonstrations held in 2020, analyzing both the main findings and trends identified from immediate monitoring the trials and protests, as well as other problematic issues identified in the study of the case files of the criminal and administrative offenses. In every document, I further applied international standards and examples of the best practice from different states to evaluate the state measures and the court decisions; moreover, based on the comparison of the relevant judgments of the European Court of

Human Rights, I made a comparative-legal analysis more clearly presenting various legal problems.

In 2020 the most significant event was October 31 Parliamentary Elections, the fundamental significance of which was evident from the very beginning both for the process of European Integration of Georgia and because of the challenges of unprecedented scales posed to the democratic world by the spread of the new coronavirus, Covid-19.

HRC, with the help of various donor organizations, carried out several projects to monitor the pre-election environment, polling day and post-election environment, during which I have also worked as an analyst.

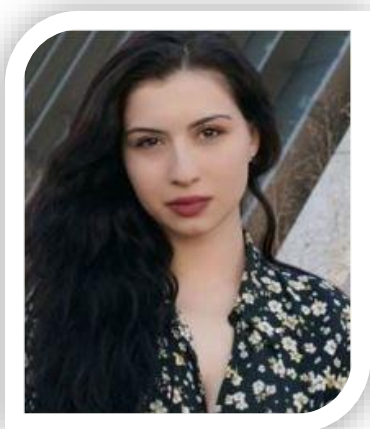
Within the projects, I have prepared 2 interim reports and 1 final report on the monitoring of the pre-election environment of 2020 Parliamentary Elections assessing the elections against the national and international laws. Moreover, on June 30, 2020, the Interagency Commission for Free and Fair Elections was set up in accordance with the electoral law. The commission consisted of high-ranking officials from various ministries and agencies, with whom I was actively cooperating on the issues related to October 31 Parliamentary Elections.

Further, I actively participated in the sessions and conferences organized by the Central Election Commission. I participated *inter alia* in the process of adopting recommendations/comments to the CEC Decree on the Issues of Participation in the Elections of the Voters infected by the Coronavirus residing in Inpatient Medical Facilities and in Isolation (Quarantine, Self-Isolation). In addition, along with other stakeholders, I participated in the development of the Code of Ethics for Political Parties.

In October 2020, representatives of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and HRC held informal remote meetings with representatives of the EU - European External Action Service, the European Commission and the European Parliament to share key findings/assessments on the issues related to October

31 Parliamentary Elections. We have developed a joint statement with FIDH and called on the Georgian authorities to ensure the independence and impartiality of judiciary and investigative bodies; further, equal opportunities for all parties in the Parliamentary Elections.

Despite the difficulties, the observer mission of HRC employed for long-term and Election Day observations worked effectively in the Parliamentary Elections. This was an activity of particular importance at a time when, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, international missions in the Parliamentary Elections involved fewer observers than usual. The monitoring identified number of facts preventing the elections to be carried out in a free and fair environment and increasing public distrust in the transparency of the election administration and other state institutions, hindering the democratic development of the country and promoting the polarization of society within the country.



TEONA SEKHNIASHVILI

*Public Relations Manager,
Editor of [HumanRights.ge](https://www.humanrights.ge)*

I joined HRC team in March 2020. This year has been full of challenges for the entire organization against the backdrop of the pandemic-related constraints. However, despite the challenges, 2020 was a rather successful year for HRC in terms of

public relations.

During this time I was involved in the preparation of press releases as well as in editorial work of the articles for HRC Internet

newspaper [HumanRights.ge](#). HumanRights.ge is a unique platform combining news, publications, articles, releases and statements related to human rights. In 2020, HumanRights.ge had 87,000 visitors, which is 15% more than the data from the previous year, the highest number in the last 4 years.

It is noteworthy that in March we created an HRC [Page](#) on Twitter, which currently has over 600 subscribers. Further, we created HRC [Page](#) on LinkedIn with more than 600 subscribers by now. With the creation of new pages on these social networks, the audience of HRC has grown significantly. The Facebook audience of HRC has also increased. Currently, the Facebook [Page](#) of HRC has more than 7700 subscribers.

Moreover, HRC disseminates relevant information on e-mails about activities, which includes e-mails of active media outlets, activists, NGOs and international organizations active in Georgia.

Within the framework of the ongoing project Public Events Monitoring with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) Foundation, we are constantly providing information to the public on the cases with alleged political motives and on protest demonstrations through live coverage. Further, we also regularly plan and hold press conferences and meetings with project beneficiaries.

In addition to the Public Events Monitoring Project, I was also involved in another ongoing project, Support for Peacebuilding Between Tbilisi, Sokhumi and Tskhinvali with the financial support of the German Federal Foreign Office's funds by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), funding programme Zivik. Although the meetings scheduled under the project were held remotely due to the pandemic, the project was able to create a format in which Georgian, Ossetian, and Abkhazian civil society representatives discussed common issues. For me, participating in this project was a new and very exciting experience. I think that despite the change of the format meaning the remote holding of the meetings, the project was implemented successfully.



Giorgi Nanuashvili
Head of the Board



Fikria Makaridze
Project Accountant



Tsismari Bablidze
Financial Manager



Irma Mamasakhlishi,
IT Manager



Nino Chikhladze,
Lawyer/Monitor



Tamar Kurtauli,
Lawyer/Monitor



Ani Porchkhidze,
Lawyer/Monitor



NEW CHALLENGES REQUIRE NEW SOLUTIONS



MISSION STATEMENT

The Human Rights Center (HRC) was founded on December 10, 1996 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The HRC is dedicated to protection and promotion of human rights, rule of law and peace in Georgia.

VISION

The Human Rights Center believes that everyone is entitled to exercise her/his civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights freely and without any discrimination as guaranteed by national and international law. We consider that protection and promotion of these rights and respect for rule of law are the key preconditions for building sustainable peace and democracy in Georgia.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The HRC aims to increase respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and facilitate peacebuilding process in Georgia. To achieve this goal it is essential to ensure that authorities respect the rule of law and principles of transparency and separation of powers, to eliminate discrimination at all levels, increase awareness and respect for human rights among the people in Georgia.

HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER'S PRIORITY AREAS

- [Strengthening the rule of law by:](#)
 - Supporting harmonization of national legislation with international human rights standards and monitoring their implementation;
 - Raising public awareness about their rights and available legal remedies/mechanisms for their realisation;
 - Providing free legal aid to individuals and groups to defend their rights and freedoms at national and regional/international levels;

- Monitoring, documenting and reporting on human rights violations.
 - Supporting Freedom of Expression and Media by:
- Supporting development of independent media;
- Promoting creation of environment conducive of free expression;
- Capacity building of journalists and media representatives;
- Promotion and development of new media.
 - Promoting Equality and Social Inclusion by
- Fighting against discrimination;
- Protecting the rights of minorities and other vulnerable groups;
- Promoting gender equality and women empowerment.
 - Supporting Transitional Justice by:
- Documenting and reporting human rights violations committed in relation with armed conflicts;
- Promoting accountability for human rights violations;
- Advocating restitution and reparation;
- Confidence building, reconciliation and peace building.
 - Reinforcement of Democratic processes by:
- Strengthening development of civil society organizations through capacity building and networking;
- Encouraging involvement of social groups in public activities;
- Promoting free and fair elections, good governance and transparency.

ACTIVITIES:

- *Monitoring and Documenting* human rights violations in Georgia;
- *Reporting* on human rights situation in Georgia to the EU, Council of Europe, OSCE, UN, ICC and others international bodies on regular basis;

- *Lobbying and Advocacy* of legislative and policy reforms before national and international institutions;
- *Litigating* cases on human rights violations through Legal Aid Office free of charge;
- *Public Awareness Raising* on human rights situation in Georgia by daily-updatable bi-lingual online magazine www.HumanRights.ge
- *Networking* among human rights organizations on national and regional level.

DIFFERENT INITIATIVES

THE SOUTH CAUCASUS NETWORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

The South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders (<http://www.caucasusnetwork.org>) unites 30 human rights NGOs in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The Network seeks to facilitate the creation of a safer and enabling environment for human rights defenders in the South Caucasus and to strengthen their voices in the region and internationally.

The Network offers legal, psychological, medical and financial support to human rights defenders at risk; monitors policy, legal and security environment affecting defenders/NGOs and their work as well as human rights and freedoms in general and provides a regional platform for joint lobbying before national and international institutions.

SORRY CAMPAIGN

Sorry campaign (<http://www.apsni.org>) was initiated in March 2007. The aim of the Sorry Campaign is to change the dynamics and direction of the relationships that have been established between Georgians and Abkhazians during recent years. The Sorry Campaign is not in any way connected with politics; it is a movement that is against war, as the organisation considers that there is no alternative to peaceful dialogue and mutual settlement

of the conflict. The Campaign envisages the reestablishment of confidence between Georgian and Abkhazian people and to break through the informational vacuum. We want to encourage people to think about the horrors of war and the mistakes that have been made.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE

The Human Rights House Tbilisi was formally accepted by the Human Rights House Network (<http://www.humanrightshouse.org>) in 2009. By being the member of such a global network, Georgian civil society organizations will be in a position to advocate and lobby with greater degree of impact as well as to exchange knowledge, skills and experience with fellow NGOs from other countries. The House in Tbilisi serve as a contribution to enhance the respect for human rights in Georgia, support the work of the human rights defenders in the country and be a focal point of human rights organisations in Georgia and the region.

THE COALITION FOR TRUST

The Coalition (www.coalitionfortrust.org) was established in June 2015 by a number of representatives of non-governmental organizations from the South Caucasus and Norway. The coalition resulted from three years of work done in the framework of an EU sponsored program, run by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee in cooperation with Coalition members, with the aim of establishing a coalition for trust. The Coalition has been registered as an international association in September 2015 in Oslo, Norway. It is built on a regional approach, fostering cooperation and partnership.

THE GEORGIAN COALITION FOR INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Human Rights Center is the member of Georgian Coalition for International Criminal Court (GCICC) which aims to protect the interests of victims of crimes within the jurisdiction of ICC, represent their interests both on national as well as on international level, increase public awareness regarding the ICC and promote conflict prevention, peaceful resolution and trust building processes. Following are the member organizations of GCICC: Human Rights Center (HRC), Rights Georgia (Article 42 of the Constitution), International Center on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN), The Georgian Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (GCRT), Human Rights Priority, Justice International and Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA).

CAMPAIGN "SWIM SAFE"

With the initiative of Human Rights Center, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN), Ana Dolidze and Progress Center, the campaign "Swim Safe" has been in progress since



2018. The Campaign will unify civil society organizations and civil activists and will fight against mortality of citizens in the water

bodies in Georgia. The Campaign aims to increase government's responsibility and raise public awareness.

In Georgia, during summer seasons, tens citizens die in the sea, artificial water reservoirs, lakes and rivers every year.

Artificially arranged recreation zones in the water bodies are the problem, where service



of rescue teams is not provided and citizens are not protected. The places, where swimming is prohibited, are particularly dangerous but the state and private companies do not keep those sites adequately protected with solid barriers and often there are no warning banners either.

The Campaign initiators held several warning, information and protest actions in Tbilisi and various citizens. They met the leaders of the cities and public servants, school students. Together with the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum National Platform of Georgia, the campaign advocated the legislative amendments with the parliament and government members. The report and policy document were developed with respective recommendations.

Campaign "Swim Safe" calls on the Government of Georgia to take concrete steps to improve the legislation and to ensure safety of citizens in the water bodies.

HRC IS MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS:

- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
www.fidh.org/en
- World Organization Against Torture (SOS-Torture OMCT Network); www.omct.org
- Human Rights House Network; www.humanrightshouse.org
- Civic Solidarity Platform; <https://civicsolidarity.org>
- NGO Coalition for International Criminal Court(CICC);
www.coalitionfortheicc.org
- Human Rights Without Frontiers, Int.; www.hrwf.net
- International Peace Bureau (IPB); www.ipb.org
- UNITED for Intercultural Action – European Network against Nationalism, Racism, Fascism and Support of Migrants and Refugees; www.unitedagainstracism.org
- Child Rights Information Network (CRIN); www.crin.org

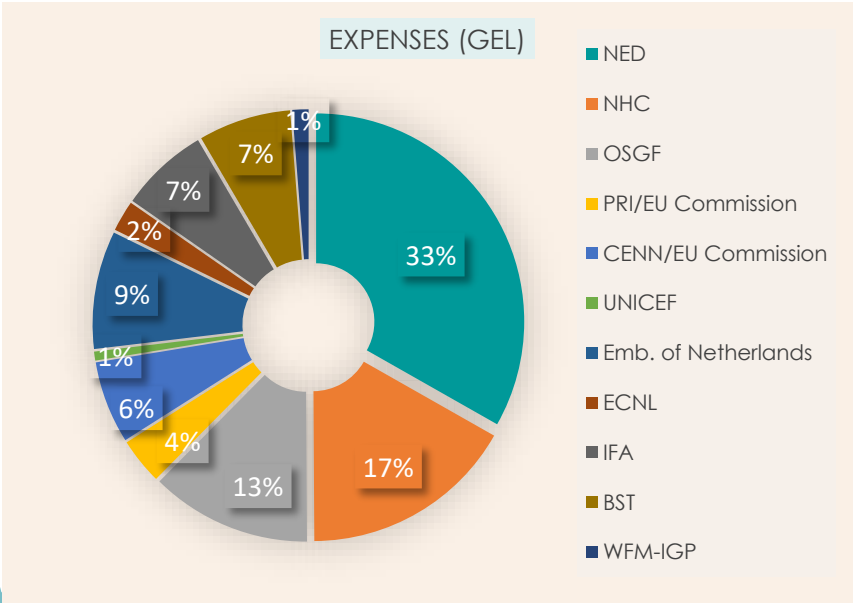
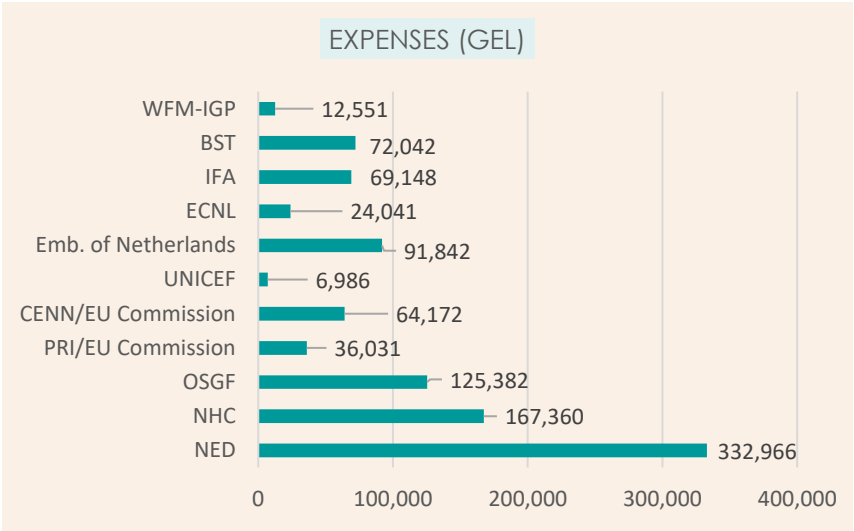
HRC HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS:

- The Norwegian Helsinki Committee;
- National Endowment for Democracy (NED);
- Black Sea Trust of the German Marshal Fund of the United States;
- US Embassy in Georgia;
- Embassy of Canada;
- Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF);
- The Embassy of the Netherlands in Georgia;
- German Federal Foreign Office's funds by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), funding programme Zivik
- UNICEF;
- The European Commission;
- CICC;
- Bulgarian Embassy in Georgia;
- East-West Management Institute/USAID;
- European Center for Not-for-profit Law (ECNL).

HRC FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER, 2020

INCOME (GEL)	
National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	325,240
Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC)	159,325
Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF)	143,780
PRI/European Commission	36,539
CENN/European Commission	59,008
UNICEF	2,497
Embassy of Netherlands	218,000
ECNL	39,388
IFA	63,224
BST	77,847
The World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP)	4,105
TOTAL (INCOME)	1,128,954

EXPENSES (GEL)	
National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	332,966
Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC)	167,360
Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF)	125,382
PRI/European Commission	36,031
CENN/European Commission	64,172
UNICEF	6,986
Embassy of Netherlands	91,842
ECNL	24,041
IFA	69,148
Black Sea Trust	72,042
The World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP)	12,551
TOTAL (EXPENSES)	1,002,522



HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER REPORTS 2020



CRIMINAL CASE OF GIORGI RURUA

LEGAL ANALYSIS

The current document is based on the reports of the court proceedings prepared by the court monitor of the Human Rights Center, further it is based on the identified problematic issues of the substantive criminal law and of the procedural criminal law.

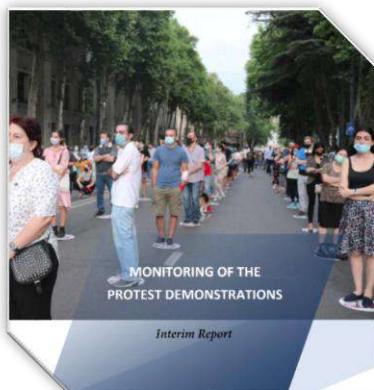
Giorgi Rurua, one of the founders and shareholders of Mtavari Arkhi was arrested on November 18, 2019. According to the indictment, Rurua is charged with committing an offense under paragraphs 3 and 4 of Article 236 of the Criminal Code of Georgia envisaging the illegal purchase, storage and carriage of firearms and ammunitions. In the research, the comparative and legal analysis is made based on the comparison of the national law and national court decisions with the relevant judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) making even more evident the various legal problems.

<http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/RURUA-case-eng-c.pdf>

MONITORING OF THE PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS

INTERIM REPORT

The purpose of this report is to legally analyze the offenses identified during the rallies held in Georgia before the reporting period of 2020, and to determine the compliance of the actions of law enforcement officers with the international standards. This document examines the results of the



monitoring of protest rallies of political content and other types organized by different political parties and civil movements in Tbilisi and other regions from March 1 to August 1, 2020.

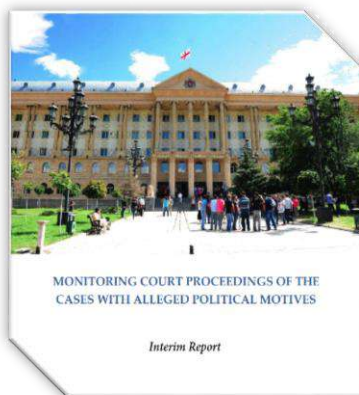
<http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/Monitoring%20of%20the%20protest%20demonstration-eng-c.pdf>

MONITORING COURT PROCEEDINGS OF THE CASES WITH ALLEGED POLITICAL MOTIVES

INTERIM REPORT

The current Interim Report reflects the outcomes of the monitoring of the court proceedings of the criminal and administrative cases with alleged political motives for the period of February 1, 2020, and August 15, 2020. From the beginning of the monitoring until the period of the Interim Report of August 12, the court monitors of HRC have monitored 80 court proceedings on 20 cases. During the monitoring process, 4 analytical documents were published analyzing the results of the court proceedings per se as well as the issues outlined in the examination of the criminal cases.

http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/MONITORING%20--WITH%20ALLEGED%20POLITICAL%20MOTIVES%20-%20Interim%20Report-eng_c.pdf

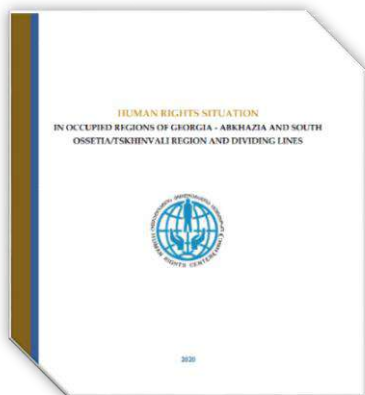




MENTAL HELTH AND GEORGIAN EXPERIENCE

Despite the various reforms in the field of mental healthcare in Georgia, the increased funding and other types of support in recent years, this issue remains problematic and still remains relevant. As major challenges for the country remain the deinstitutionalization, prioritisation of hospital services, scarcity of financial resources and lack of political will, lack of medical and other staff resources, and the poor quality of medical care. According to this report HRC In order to improve the field of mental health and protect human rights, collaborated list of reccomendations for government.

<http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/physy-healsh-eng.pdf>

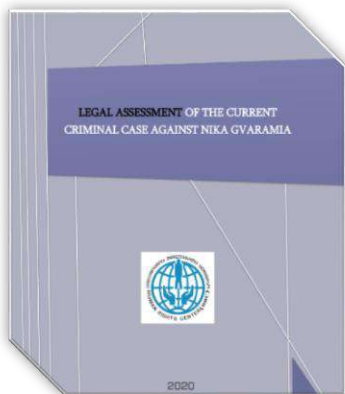


HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN OCCUPIED REGIONS OF GEORGIA –ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA/TSKHINVALI REGION AND DIVIDING LINES

The following report reviews and analyzes human rights situation in the regions of Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region, occupied by the Russian Federation. The report reflects main human rights challenges in the occupied regions during 2020 (since January till August 2020): challenges brought by COVID 19 pandemic and inaction of the Russian Federation when it comes

to ensuring human rights protection in the occupied territories, neglecting vital needs of the occupied regions in relation to the fight against pandemic, not taking measures necessary for the prevention of the spread of coronavirus and not fulfilling its human rights obligations stemming from the fact of effective control.

<http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/gavkofi%20xazi%20eng.pdf>

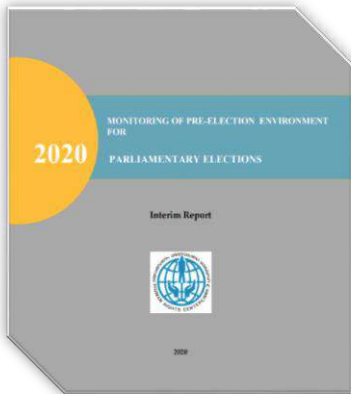


LEGAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT CRIMINAL CASE AGAINST NIKA GVARAMIA

The independent, pluralistic media environment plays an indispensable role in forming a democratic society and protecting human rights. Therefore, HRC is particularly interested in the situation and

challenges that exist in the country in this regard, posing threats to democratic processes. Initiation of criminal proceedings and/or enforcement of investigative actions against the representatives of critical media outlets shall be deemed problematic, especially when such prosecution coincides in time with the intensified resistance to the government. Therefore, Human Rights Center was interested to look into the ongoing criminal case against Nika Gvaramia, the founder and Director-General of TV Company Mtavari Arkhi (Main Channel), critical of government, and the former Director-General of the Rustavi 2 Broadcasting Company.

<http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/gvaramia-eng-final.pdf>



MONITORING OF PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

With a support from the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, HRC monitors the pre-election period from 1 March, 2020, for the October 31 Parliamentary Elections. The interim Report of monitoring the pre-election period reflects the results of the monitoring

carried out by HRC during the reporting period, as well as the significant events that took place before March 1, immediately affecting the situation existing during the monitoring period or the events that were still ongoing during the monitoring.

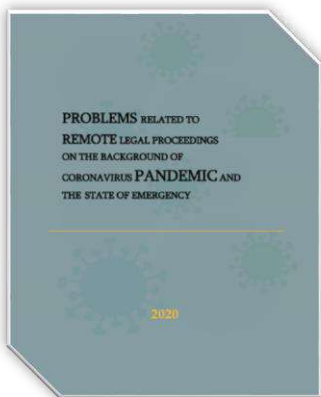
<http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/Monitoring%20of%20Pre-election%202020.pdf>

PRE-ELECTION ENVIRONMENT IN THE REGIONS OF GEORGIA

This report reflects the main trends observed in the pre-election period of the October 31, 2020 Parliamentary Elections in the following regions of Georgia: Imereti, Adjara and Samtskhe-Javakheti. The report covers the period from May 15 to September 1, 2020.

<http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/pre-election%20env.%20in%20reg.%202020.pdf>





PROBLEMS RELATED TO REMOTE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS ON THE BACKGROUND OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND STATE OF EMERGENCY

The new coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) exposed the world community to a number of legal, economic or social challenges. In the current situation, the priority goal for the State under the rule of law is

to protect human life and health. HRC has been monitoring the proceedings of criminal and administrative offenses with alleged political motives since February 1, 2020, preparing the reports based on the information obtained immediately from attending and observing the hearings.

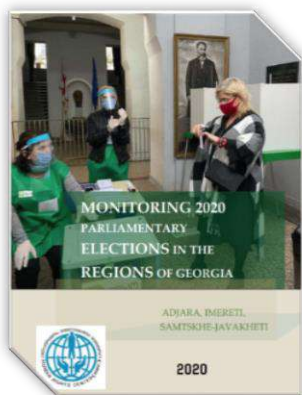
<http://hrdc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/hrc2019/distanciuri%20samartalcarmoeba-eng.pdf>

MONITORING OF THE ALLEGEDLY POLITICALLY MOTIVATED CASES

In the past few years, criminal proceedings started against several political leaders in Georgia that raised questions over partiality and independence of investigative bodies and judiciary authority. This report includes politically motivated cases of Giorgi Rurua, Nika Gvaramia, Giorgi Ugulava, Irakli Okruashvili and the criminal cases committed in connection with the June 20-21, 2019 events.

<http://hrdc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/POLITICALLY%20MOTIVATED%20CASES-eng.pdf>





MONITORING 2020 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE REGIONS OF GEORGIA

ADJARA, IMERETI, SAMTSKHE-JAVAKHETI

This report reviews the pre-election environment of the 2020 Parliamentary Elections and the findings of the monitoring of the Election Day in the regions of Adjara, Imereti and Samtskhe-

Javakheti. On the election day, particular problems stemmed from availability of the coordinators and electioneers of the ruling party interrupting and registering the voters near the polling stations thus influencing the free will of the voters and interfering with a free and fair environment of the elections. Similar practice was observed throughout Georgia.

<http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/MONITORING%202020%20PARL.%20ELECTIONS-eng.pdf>

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS DURING PANDEMIC AND THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

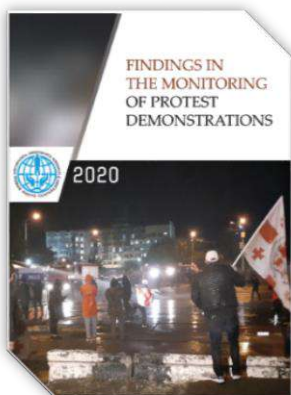
Human Rights Center, in the frame of the joint project implemented by the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI) and Human Rights Center (HRC) - Democracy and Human Rights during Pandemic and the State of Emergency, prepared this report, which presents information about the legal aid provided to the citizens of



Georgia from June through December of 2020. The report also reflects the problems identified during the state of emergency and following period based on the applications of the citizens.

<http://hrdc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/demokratiya,%20ufleb%20ebi,%20pandemia-web-eng.pdf>

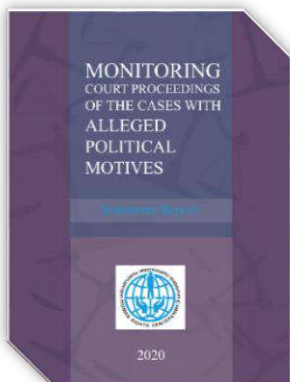
FINDINGS IN THE MONITORING OF PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS



The purpose of this report is to legally analyze the offenses identified during the rallies held in Georgia before December 15, 2020, and to determine the compliance of the actions of the law enforcement officers with the international standards. This document examines the results of the monitoring of protest rallies of political content and other types organized by different political parties and civil movements in Tbilisi and other regions from March 1 to

December 15, 2020. HRC monitored 56 protest rallies in the reporting period.

<http://hrdc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/awciebis%20monitorin%20gi-eng-ff.pdf>

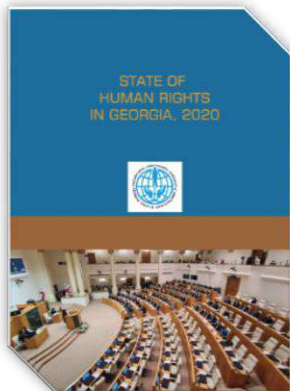


MONITORING COURT PROCEEDINGS OF THE CASES WITH ALLEGED POLITICAL MOTIVES

The current Report reflects the findings of the monitoring of the court proceedings of the criminal and administrative cases with alleged political motives for the period of February 1, 2020 and December 10,

2020. From the beginning of the monitoring until the end of the period of the Final Report, the court monitors of HRC have monitored in total 96 court proceedings on the 25 cases.

<http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report2020/sasamartlo%20monitoringi%2025%20saqme-eng.pdf>



STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN GEORGIA, 2020

This Report reviews the state of human rights in Georgia in 2020. Traditionally, it covers all significant legal and political developments, which influenced the state of human rights in the country. The report relies on the data collected and evaluations made by Human Rights Center, other Georgian civil society organizations, the

Public Defender of Georgia and international organizations. The goal of the report is to assess the activities of various state bodies in terms of human rights protection, also the level of response of different state organs towards human rights violations, the efficiency of the judiciary and the legal and systemic changes which should aim to implement international human rights standards on the national level.

<http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report%202021/annual%20hrc%202020-eng.pdf>

REPORT ON MONITORING THE PENITENTIARY ESTABLISHMENT N8

The current Report presents the results of the monitoring carried out in the penitentiary facility N8 (Prison N8) in August 2020 and the relevant recommendations. The monitoring visits were carried out by the representatives of following NGOs – Human Rights Center (HRC), Penal Reform International together with the representatives of National Preventive Mechanism of Public Defender of Georgia.

http://hridc.org/admin/editor/uploads/files/pdf/report%202021/PENITENCIURI-ENG_F.pdf

