



სამართალმოსახლბო დამცველი
PUBLIC DEFENDER (OMBUDSMAN) OF GEORGIA

Regional Conference

Rights of Older Persons and the Role of Ombudsman/NHRIs

**Tuesday, 20 July 2021
10:00 PM - 13:30 PM CEST**

Background

The world population is [ageing rapidly](#) and it has an unprecedented impact on the socio-economic development of the countries. The challenges of ageing population are being actively debated around the world. Especially [defies in the enjoyment of basic human rights and freedoms by older persons](#), due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which has revealed many shortcomings in the human rights protection systems of many countries in the region. In addition to that, the global pandemic has made violations of the rights of older persons around the globe even more visible and acute.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated in his [policy brief on older persons](#) published in May 2020 that the COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the existing challenges of older persons in terms of healthcare, medical services, social exclusion, economic poverty, inequality and ageism. Thus, the elderly are at higher risk of poverty and human rights abuses, as they are often dependent on social assistance and pensions and have to live in difficult conditions. In addition to that, discrimination based on age, neglect, maltreatment, abuse, violence, the risk of poverty and homelessness, etc. represents one of the main challenges faced by the elderly in the region. As governments all around the world rush to respond to the challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to ensure that older persons' rights are not disproportionately affected or discriminated against. At the same time, it is crucial to reflect on the experience of the past year, evaluate the existing [gaps](#) in the older persons' protection system and address their needs by developing relevant strategies/policies.

As stated in the [WHO Global Report on Ageism](#), the COVID-19 pandemic has also intensified the ageist behavior and practices, which were already deeply rooted in the society. The ageist stereotypes that older persons constitute a vulnerable group and that they have limited capacities to contribute to society have been particularly widespread during the pandemic.

The global health crisis showed us clearly that there is an urgent need to [strengthen the international mechanisms](#) and frameworks for protecting the elderly population. It is essential that each country ensures a comprehensive institutional response in order to guarantee the protection of older persons' rights.

International, as well as regional cooperation and coordination is also vital. These are the keys to upholding commitments and guarantees pledged by the states in terms of the protection of older persons.

Ombudsman/National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) play a key role in promoting and protecting the rights of older persons. Given its unique mandate, Ombudsman/NHRIs directly monitor the human rights situation of the elderly and constantly engage with national authorities and other relevant actors on states' responsibilities in relation to the protection of older persons' rights. Ombudsman/NHRIs also report to regional and international organizations, and thus bridge international standards within their national frameworks. Therefore, it is important to start talking about the situation in terms of protection of the older persons' rights in the region and at the same time, review the activities of regional Ombudsman/NHRIs and analyze the challenges they face.

Against this backdrop, the Office of Public Defender of Georgia will host a "Regional Conference on the Rights of Older Persons and the Role of Ombudsman/NHRIs", which will be attended by the representatives of Ombudsman/NHRIs of the region. The aim of the Conference is to raise awareness on the rights of older people in the region, to discuss the existing challenges and role of Ombudsman/NHRIs, and to share regional NHRIs' experience in protecting older persons' rights. The speakers will discuss a wide range of issues including:

- National, regional and international human rights protection mechanisms on the rights of older persons;
- Facilitation of discussions among regional Ombudsman/NHRIs to reinforce the role of Ombudsman/NHRIs in the promotion and protection of older persons' rights;
- Exchange of experiences, expectations, comparing priorities and approaches, discussing dilemmas and agreeing on some future actions in order to ensure the protection of the older persons' rights in the region.

The Conference will bring together representatives of different regional Ombudsman/NHRIs, UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, representative of the Council of Europe, etc. to assess the existing situation and define ways forward.

Draft Agenda

20 July 2021 (Time is displayed in CEST)

10:00-10:15	<u>Opening Remarks</u>
	Ms. Nino Lomjaria, Public Defender of Georgia
10:15-11:00	<u>Panel I. Rights of Older Persons – Existing Regional and International Protection Mechanisms</u>
	<i>Moderator:</i> Ms. Nino Lomjaria, Public Defender of Georgia
	UN Perspectives (Title of the presentation TBC) Ms. Claudia Mahler, The Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons
	CoE Perspectives (Title of the presentation TBC) Ms. Tatiana Puiu, Member of the European Committee of Social Rights
	NHRI Perspectives (Title of the presentation TBC) Ms. Karen Gomez Dumpit, Commissioner to the Philippines Human Rights Commission
11:00-11:15	<u>Interactive Q&A Session</u>
	<i>Moderator:</i> Ms. Nino Lomjaria, Public Defender of Georgia
11:15-11:45	<u>Panel II. Rights of Older Persons and Role of Ombudsman/NHRIs – Ombudsman/NHRIs’ Perspective in the Region</u>
	<i>Moderator:</i> Ms. Anna Chabiera, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of Poland
	Armenian Perspectives (Title of the presentation TBC) Ms. Monika Sargysyan, Head of Unit for the protection of rights of disabled persons, Office of Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia
	Ukrainian Perspectives (Title of the presentation TBC) Mr. Volodymyr Dzhyzhora, Representative of the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Office of Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights
11:45-12:00	<u>Interactive Q&A Session</u>
	<i>Moderator:</i> Ms. Anna Chabiera, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights of Poland
15 minutes	Break
12:15-12:45	<u>Panel III. Rights of Older Persons and Role of Ombudsman/NHRIs – Ombudsman/NHRIs’ Perspective in the Region (Continued)</u>

	<p>Moderator: Dr. Tamar Gvaramadze, First Deputy Public Defender of Georgia</p> <p>Azerbaijani Perspectives (Title of the presentation TBC) Mr. Aydin Safikhanly, Head of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of the Republic of Azerbaijan</p> <p>Georgian Perspectives (Title of the presentation TBC) Ms. Nino Shalamberidze, Chief Specialist, Department of Protection of Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Office of Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia</p>
12:45-13:00	<p><u>Interactive Q&A Session</u></p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Tamar Gvaramadze, First Deputy Public Defender of Georgia</p>
13:00-13:15	<p><u>Closing Remarks</u></p> <p>Ms. Nino Lomjaria, Public Defender of Georgia</p>
13:15	End of the event