



Newsletter on the Activities of the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia

Parliament of Georgia elected Levan Ioseliani as Public Defender of Georgia



On March 7, the Parliament of Georgia elected Mr. **Levan Ioseliani** as Public Defender of Georgia. 96 Members of the Parliament supported the candidacy of Mr. Ioseliani.

Levan Ioseliani has been a member of the 10th convocation of the parliament since 2020 and a Vice Speaker since 2021.

Mr. Ioseliani studied law at Tbilisi State University and has an MA from the Chicago-Kent College of Law. Mr. Ioseliani served as an Executive Director of the Georgian Civic Movement from 2018 to 2020.

The term of office of the 6th Public Defender of Georgia, Ms. Nino Lomjaria, expired on December 8, 2022. Since then, Dr. Tamar Gvaramadze, First Deputy Public Defender, served as an Acting Public Defender of Georgia.

Activities of the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia

January-February

Public Defender Submits Alternative Report to UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women

On January 9, 2023, [the Public Defender of Georgia submitted an alternative report](#) to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) - on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women by the Georgian authorities. The alternative report echoes the 6th Periodic Report submitted by Georgia to the Committee and reviews the measures taken by the Government to implement the Convention.

Acting Public Defender Delivers Speech about Rights of Older Persons at International Conference



On January 11-12, 2023, [acting Public Defender of Georgia Tamar Gvaramadze took part in the International Conference on the Future of Human Rights in the 21st Century](#) held in Ankara, the capital of the Republic of Turkey.

Various challenges relating to the protection of human rights and the role of ombudsman institutions in solving the challenges were discussed at the conference.

E-course on Main Issues of Equality

The Public Defender of Georgia, with the support of the Open Society Foundation, prepared an electronic course on major issues of equality. The course is mainly tailored to the needs of the employees of local self-government bodies, however, it can be taken by anyone. The course is available on the official website of the Public Defender of Georgia: <http://tanastoroba.ombudsman.ge/signin>

The course consists of 4 modules and corresponding exercises. The first module reviews the main theoretical issues of the right to equality and non-discrimination, including the local and international legal and policy frameworks and the obligations of the local authorities. The second module provides an explanation of different forms of discrimination prohibited by Georgian legislation. The third module focuses on the rights of women, LGBT+ people, persons with disabilities and national/ethnic and religious minorities. This chapter also describes specific measures to be taken by local authorities to ensure substantial equality. And, the fourth module concerns the legal remedies available in Georgia for the elimination of discrimination. The module also provides information on possible measures to be taken by the local authorities to ensure equality and prevent discrimination.

Working Meeting on Children Living and Working on Streets



On January 25, 2023, the Public Defender's Office of Georgia held a working meeting with representatives of state agencies and service providers on the rights of children living and working on the street. Acting Public Defender spoke about the scarcity of support services for children living and working on the street and their families, as well as gaps in terms of protection of children against violence, exploitation, discrimination, trafficking, and other crimes.

In addition, recent positive aspects were mentioned, such as: the development of the 2023-2026 strategy for the protection of children living and working on the street; the opening of a day center for children in Batumi; implementation of a 24-hour emergency response mechanism in the State Care Agency. She expressed hope that the meeting would help relevant services to effectively protect the rights of children living and working on the street and to solve their problems.

The working meeting was held with the support of the USAID-PDO partnership programme of the grant agreement between the Public Defender's Office and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

U.S. Department of State Awards Former Public Defender of Georgia and Public Defender's Team

Former Public Defender of Georgia Nino Lomjaria and the team of the Public Defender's Office have received annual Global Human Rights Defender Award from the U.S. Department of State.

„Ms. Lomjaria served as Public Defender of Georgia from 2017 through 2022. Under her leadership, the Public Defender's Office (PDO) was widely considered the most independent democratic institution in Georgia. Throughout her tenure, Nino and her team advocated strengthened human rights protections for all, at times under intense political pressure; they maintained their independence throughout.’, reads the statement released by the Department of State.



Statement of Public Defender's Office on Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of Holocaust

The Public Defender's Office of Georgia echoes the Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. The celebration of this day does not only have a symbolic meaning, as it helps us to understand the scale of the tragedy that can be caused by intolerance and hatred based on ethnic, religious or other grounds.

It is significant that the international human rights system in the form that we have today was created in response to the atrocities committed during the Second World War. It is very important to understand the magnitude of this sacrifice, to respect it and to make every effort so that in the modern world, the intolerance of the different does not become the basis for violating the rights of any group. You can access the full text of the statement [here](#).



The Tolerance Center of the Public Defender, with the support of the United Nations Association of Georgia, Ilia University and Tbilisi State University, held an event to celebrate the Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. At the event, Ketevan Shubashvili, Head of the Equality Department of the Public Defender's Office, spoke about the challenges relating to non-discrimination in Georgia and the importance of remembering the victims of the Holocaust in the process of protecting equality.

Working Meeting between Public Defender's Office and Permanent Parliamentary Council for the Protection of Children's Rights

A working meeting was held between representatives of the Public Defender's Office and the Permanent Parliamentary Council for the Protection of Children's Rights. Representatives of the Public Defender talked about violence against children, poverty, alternative care, progress in deinstitutionalization process, right to education and importance of support programmes for children and their families.

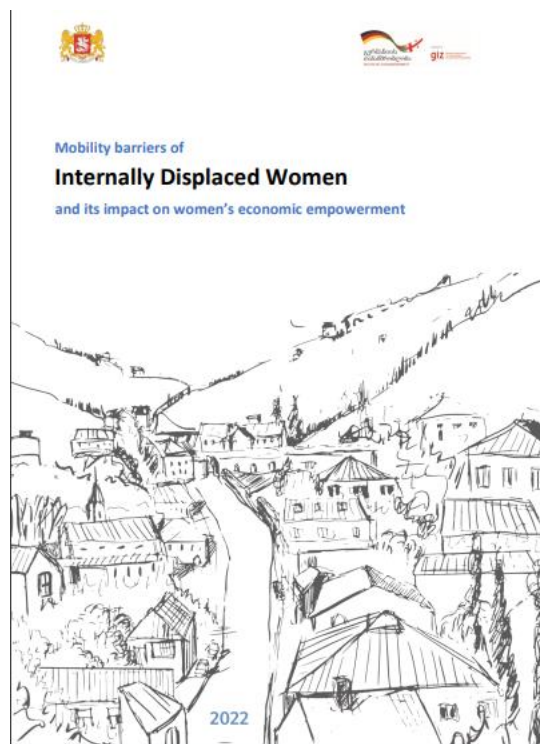


They also presented the results of the monitoring activities in the direction of children's rights and the recommendations issued by the Public Defender. On his part, the Chairman of the Permanent Parliamentary Council for the Protection of Children's Rights, spoke about the methodology of the Council's activities. The event was supported by the USAID Rule of Law Programme.

Research on Mobility barriers of Internally Displaced Women and its impact on women's economic empowerment

[Research](#) examines barriers to the mobility of displaced women and their impact on women's economic empowerment. The study aims to analyze the mobility aspects of displaced women, to determine the challenges that the representatives of this group face on the one hand as women and on the other as displaced persons, as well as to review the impact of mobility of displaced women on their economic activity and empowerment.

The research was conducted by the Public Defender's Office of Georgia within the framework of the project Economic and Social Participation of Vulnerable Displaced and Local Population in the South Caucasus (EPIC) financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) in cooperation with the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (MOH).



Public Defender's Special Report on the Harmful Practices of Early/Childhood Marriages in Georgia

Public Defender evaluated policies relating to the prevention and response to the early/childhood marriages, researched the extent of the early/childhood marriages in the country and assessed the effectiveness of the criminal justice in the area of crimes motivated by the early marriages. This document reviews international and national standards in relation to the legal regulation of childhood marriages and includes statistics of the crimes motivated by the childhood marriage. Report includes recommendations based on the evaluation of the challenges in justice system and work of relevant state agencies. Report was prepared in cooperation with Democracy and Governance Center and with support of UNFPA and Government of Sweden

Acting Public Defender of Georgia Holds Meetings with Various Bodies of Council of Europe

On January 30-31 and February 1, 2023, the acting Public Defender of Georgia, Tamar Gvaramadze, and the Deputies of the Public Defender, Ekaterine Skhiladze and Giorgi Burjanadze, [held meetings with representatives of various bodies of the Council of Europe](#). The purpose of the visit was to provide international partners with information about the situation of human rights and the activities implemented and planned by the Public Defender's Office during the transitional period.



Public Defender Submits Alternative Report to UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

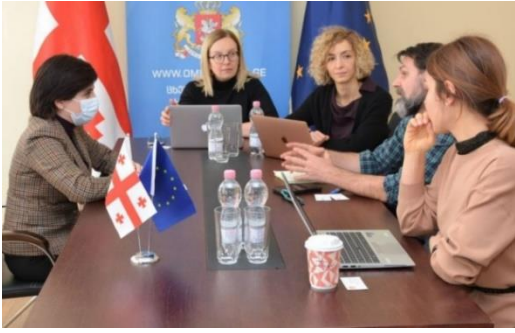
On February 17, 2023, [the Public Defender of Georgia submitted an alternative report](#) on the implementation of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Georgian authorities to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The alternative report echoes the first periodic report submitted by Georgia to the Committee and reviews the measures taken by the authorities to implement the Convention.

Information Meeting for Employees of Center for Mental Health and Prevention of Addiction



On February 20, 2023, representatives of the Public Defender's Office held an information meeting on equality and non-discrimination for the employees of the Center for Mental Health and Prevention of Addiction. Representatives of the Department of Equality and the Department of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Public Defender's Office provided the meeting participants with information on the elements of discrimination, the forms of discrimination and the rights of persons with disabilities. The prohibition of sexual harassment was also the topic of discussion. The Public Defender considers educational and awareness-raising activities to be the most important component in the process of ensuring equality and will continue such meetings in the future too. The event was held with the support of the USAID-PDO partnership programme of the grant agreement between the Public Defender's Office and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Meeting with Chief of Party of USAID National Governance Program



On February 22, 2023, [Tamar Gvaramadze, acting Public Defender of Georgia](#), met with [Richard Haselwood, Chief of Party of the USAID National Governance Program](#), and other members of the program. Tamar Gvaramadze introduced the mandate of the Public Defender and the priorities of the Office to the guests; Mr. Richard Haselwood spoke about the activities and tasks to be implemented under the project.

Training for Employees of Public Defender's Regional Offices

On February 23-24, 2023, training was held for the employees of the regional offices of the Public Defender's Office relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights: needs and challenges of LGBTQI+ people. During the training, expert provided information to the meeting participants about the basic terminology and definitions, discussed myths and stereotypes about gender and gender roles, spoke about local and international standards and practices. The employees of the Office discussed the challenges in the country related to reproductive health issues. The training took place with the active participation of the participants and in discussion mode. The event was held within the framework of the Gender Department project "Monitoring the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Well-being of Women and Girls", which is supported by the Georgia Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).



Strengthening Women's Participation in Civil Integration Process

Acting Public Defender participated in a workshop organized by the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, the topic of which was the strengthening of women's participation in the civil integration process. In her speech acting public defender spoke about the problems relating to the equal participation of women and underlined the need to direct state policy in the on gender equality and gender mainstreaming towards the measures aimed at supporting and strengthening municipalities.

