



# **It Affects You Too Campaign: the issue of direct access to networks of mobile service providers should be resolved without postponement**

Non-governmental organizations participating in the campaign It Affects You Too deem the initiative of the legal affairs committee of the parliament to extend the work of the parliamentary task force for elaboration of legal amendments on secret phone surveillance to April 2015 completely unacceptable. The fact that the task force has not made final decision about the system of secret surveillance and phone tapping was cited as the reason for the postponement; however, the task force has not convened yet to make such final decision.

It is alarming that the legal affairs committee submitted the initiative to the parliament secretly, without informing members of the task force first. Further, despite official requests sent by several members of the working group to the chairperson of the committee, it was impossible to organize a meeting of the task force to finish the work before the legal deadline – November 1. Such actions of the legal affairs committee at the very least suggest the lack of the committee – respect to their colleagues as well as their attempt to ignore the task force members.

After learning about initiation of the draft law, eight members of the task force including representative of the public defender and two members of the parliament of Georgia Nino Goguadze and Tamar Kordzaia applied to Vakhtang Khmaladze, the chairman of the legal affairs committee, requesting calling of the task force meeting immediately, to discuss the initiative. Regrettably, the meeting has not yet been called.

We would like to highlight that the work of the commission was productive and majority of its members had a clear view about the so-called surveillance access key. Absolute majority of the members sided with the idea of keeping the access key away from the Interior Ministry. Following the visit of CoE experts, majority of the task force members agreed to a compromising model of two-key system. Evidentially, law enforcement authorities did not have any arguments against the model, which could be the potential reason why subsequent meetings of the task force were never organized. Law enforcement authorities were probably convinced that majority of the task force members would have voted in favor of the two-key system.

Regrettably, the law enforcement authorities ignored public yet again. We clearly stated that adoption of part of the draft law was progressive; however, all regulations will become pointless if law enforcement authorities maintain unrestricted access to personal information by means of phone surveillance. Leaving the key in the hands of MIA will ensure the unrestricted access.

Participants of the campaign It Affects You Too believe that the task force working to elaborate legal amendments on secret surveillance should convene immediately and present its findings to the parliament. Members of the campaign urge the parliament of Georgia not to uphold the initiative to extend the deadline and call for an immediate convention of the working group. We also urge MPs and other political officials to publicly express their stance on the issue.