



კოალიცია

დამოუკიდებელი და გამჭვირვალე  
მართლმსაჯულებისთვის

# The Coalition Comments on a Working Group Set Up to Evaluate Judicial Reform

The Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary comments on the working group set up in the Parliament of Georgia on judicial reform. It is unfortunate that information about the working group format is closed to the public. Local NGOs working on justice issues, international missions and other stakeholders are not invited to participate in the group, therefore, the process is non-inclusive.

The justice system undeniably requires fundamental, substantial changes. Despite numerous waves of reform, the judiciary is still the subject of criticism from both local NGOs[1] and international partners[2]. To start a new process for the recovery of the system and to gain trust, it is important to do a proper and in-depth assessment of the problems in the justice system, and precisely identify the challenges that have existed in the system for years. A similar obligation was envisaged in the April 19 agreement. [3]

The ruling party has so far not recognized the main challenge in the judiciary, the existence of an influential group of judges; hence, the reforms carried out so far have been mainly fragmentary and have dealt with procedural issues. The "system of

influence" that prevails in the justice system and that helps maintain the existence of an influential group of judges remains intact.

A proper assessment of the judicial reform waves is important to start a new process for improving the system and gaining trust. The format created by the Parliament of Georgia, which takes place non-inclusively and behind closed doors, suggests that this process may be of a formalistic nature and not aimed at identifying real problems in order to take further steps to address them.

### **We call on the Parliament of Georgia:**

- To be consistent in evaluating the waves of judicial reform. Conduct the process in an inclusive, multi-party and maximally public environment. All actors should have the opportunity to participate in identifying significant gaps in the judiciary and finding ways to address them. It is the conclusion developed by such a process on which the Parliament should base the concept of further reform.
- Implement a fundamental reform of the judiciary. In this process, the so-called "Clan influences" should be considered. The Parliament should not be focused only on the procedural refinement of legislation.

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[1] Verdzeuli, S., 2021. *Judicial System Reform In Georgia (2013-2021)*. Available at: <https://www.gyla.ge/files/news/%E1%83%A4%E1%83%9D%E1%83%9C%E1%83%93%E1%83%92.pdf>. Accessed: 08.04.2022.

[2] Association agreement between the EU and Georgia, European Implementation Assessment (update). Available at: <https://bit.ly/3DWrGhN>. Accessed: 08.04.2022.

[3] A way ahead for Georgia, Available at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/210418\\_mediation\\_way\\_ahead\\_for\\_publication](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/210418_mediation_way_ahead_for_publication)