



## “Coalition for Equality” responds to the issue on non-recognition of LGBT rights by the Parliament and Human Rights Committee

კოალიცია თანასწორობისთვის for Equality A critically assesses the statement made by Sopo Kiladze, a chairperson of Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament regarding May 17, 2018, the celebration of International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT). According to Sopo Kiladze, the Human Rights Committee does not intend to celebrate the Day Against Homophobia, even though the annual celebration of May 17 is envisaged in Action Plan for 2017-2020. The Coalition believes that the mentioned decision is continuation of practices of non-recognition and ignoring of rights of the LGBT people by the Parliament of Georgia. **The Coalition calls upon the Parliament of Georgia not to allow support for oppression and exclusion of the marginalized and vulnerable groups and to carry out a policy based on the protection of human rights and equality within its mandate.**

The mandate of the Parliament of Georgia is essentially related to human rights protection policy. Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament is precisely the space, which should have a special vision and sensitivity to the idea of equality of people and social groups. The official aims of the Committee's activities are directly related to the issues on building a society based on democracy and

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respect for human rights and complete integration of minority representatives in the society.

Despite the critical role of the Parliament of Georgia in human rights and equality policy, precisely the Parliament often becomes a space, where the existing discriminative attitudes and predispositions towards marginalized groups are most acutely revealed. The practice of marginalization and neglect of specific social groups by the Parliament of Georgia is most openly visible towards LGBT people. Despite the practices of continuous violence, harassment and oppression against LGBT people by the State Institutions and private groups, the Parliament of Georgia has repeatedly stated negative, indifferent or openly homophobic attitudes against LGBT people, which shows the lack of sensitivity and knowledge of political parties and the problem of thoughtlessness of own public liabilities.

Yet while assessing mass violent dispersal of the participants of peaceful gathering for celebration of IDAHOT day on May 17, 2013, carried out by the counter demonstrators, the Human Rights Committee blamed LGBT group members for provoking violent action. By doing this, the Committee has totally blamed the oppressed group and denied the legitimacy of their demands and dehumanized the group.

Problematic statements were also made in 2014 during the discussions concerning the Law [ ] the elimination of all forms of discrimination A in the Parliament of Georgia, including from the representatives of the ruling political party. Even at this time the Human Rights Committee could not show a valuable enough firmness to protect the rights of the LGBT group and it directly demonstrated non-secular approaches by public statements.

The problem of political instrumentalization of the LGBT group by the Parliament of Georgia should also be noted critically. In 2016-2017, before the elections, members of the Parliament of Georgia initiated the amendments several times, which imposed unjustified restriction of Article 36 (Equality of rights and free will of spouses) of the Constitution of Georgia. Initiative of the amendment was made despite the fact that the Parliament could not justify its legal necessity and explained it only by political arguments, which was accompanied by the public promise of the Prime Minister of Georgia on [ ]A implementation of the mentioned amendment, as a result of which the mentioned amendment was made to Article 30 of the New Edition of the

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Constitution.

In the process of constitutional changes in Georgia facts on mentioning LGBT group in humiliating context by the members of the Parliament of Georgia were observed several times. Among them are humiliating public statements made by the Members of the Parliament in response to the previous demonstration hold by the organization "Identoba" in front of the Parliament in Kutaisi.

**The ignoring policy of the existing challenges facing the LGBT group by the Parliament of Georgia is also shown in the content of Action Plan for 2018-2020 of Gender Equality Council of the Parliament, where the Council develops a restricted, narrow approach of gender policy while discussing gender equality issue.** It does not consider the special needs and concerns that different groups of women (Including women belonging to ethnic, religious minorities, LGBT women) may have.

Since the Parliament is accountability mechanism of the Executive Branch of Georgia, it is of even more critical importance for the Parliament to be fundamentally aware of the principle of consistent protection of human rights, importance of existing social, economic, cultural and political challenges to minority rights, in order to be able to effectively carry out controlling function of specific state institutions and to define state policy in this regard.

Homophobic statements and initiatives made by the Human Rights Committee and more widely by the Parliament, as well as non-recognition and ignoring policy of LGBT people, are in contradiction to anti-discrimination policy declared by the state and neglect of the fundamental principles strengthened by national and international law. The non-recognition policy of LGBT rights or in some cases homophobic policy by the State deepens even more marginalization of LGBT people and promotes strengthening of violent and discriminatory practices.

**According to the mentioned above, the Coalition calls upon the Parliament of Georgia, among them, the Human Rights Committee:**

**- To take care of fulfilling its obligations constantly and steadily and to take political responsibility on respect for Human Rights and Equality.**