



## Conflict of interest in judicial appointments at the High Council of Justice

The High Council of Justice has commenced the process of judicial appointments to fill 61 vacant positions in the general courts of Georgia.

Under the decision of the HCoJ no. 1/86 dated September 24<sup>th</sup> 2014, the Council collects information about candidates and interviews them to evaluate their integrity and professionalism. Successful candidates will meet both of the above criteria.

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Therefore, it is extremely important for the Council to examine the professional skills and integrity of candidates in detail, as well as their professional and moral reputation, in order to make decisions that will promote public trust and respect towards the judiciary. To this end, the HCoJ should favor candidates with excellent professional qualifications, and an excellent public reputation. The Council should carefully study and evaluate the professional activities of all candidates with judicial experience, including whether the public has questioned the fairness and independence of their decisions.

In addition, we have observed conflicts of interest in the selection of candidates, in violation of the principle of fair decisions. The HCoJ should immediately review the potential conflict of interest related to its Secretary, who is also competing in the selection process, and ensure that the Secretary does not attend interviews. The Secretary should also be distanced from the HCoJ during its deliberations, and the making of the decisions involved in the selection process.

We remain hopeful that the process of judicial selection and appointment of candidates selected by the Council will not deepen the long-standing public distrust towards the judiciary, and instead that it will contribute to increasing public faith and respect towards the system.

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

Human Rights Center (HRIDC)

Article 42 of the Constitution

Identoba

Partnership for Human Rights (PHR)

Public Defender

Media Development Foundation

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center

Baltic and Black Sea Alliance (BBSA)

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Georgian Bar Association (GBA)

Open Society – Georgia Foundation (OSGF)