



## **We call on the Ministry of Internal Affairs to end the practice of unjustified detention of activists and journalists**

On March 2, 2023, the peaceful demonstration in front of the Parliament of Georgia resulted in the administrative arrest of 36 people, including journalists. According to available information, the arrests were made on the basis of articles 166 (petty hooliganism) and 173 (disobedience to the lawful order of the police) of the Code of Administrative Offenses. It should be noted that in the past these articles have been used in the past to detain peaceful activists and restrict their right to assembly and expression.

Last night's events once again confirm that the existing legislation on administrative offenses is a repressive tool in the hands of the law enforcement, which is used for

# საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



unjustified restriction of rights of individuals.

The rights of some detainees are being protected by lawyers from signatory organizations, but they have encountered significant obstacles. According to the data available to us, at least 15 people are currently in temporary detention centers (data to be confirmed). It is reported that some of the detainees were held in patrol cars overnight, their delivery to the detention centers started only in the morning. It has been difficult for lawyers and family members to determine their exact location, preventing them from accessing legal counsel and making it impossible to protect their rights. Moreover some detainees are claiming to have received physical injuries during the arrest.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has not yet provided an official statement explaining why some detainees were not released like others on the basis of a personal pledge and are still being held in detention.

We would like to explicitly declare that the practice of administrative arrests and subsequent detentions is absolutely unacceptable and gravely violates fundamental human rights.

We call on the Ministry of Internal Affairs to ensure the following:

- All detainees should be given the opportunity to contact their family members;
- The lawyers of the detainees should be provided with timely information on which detention centers the persons under their protection have been transferred to;
- Arrested persons should be brought to court immediately and the period of detention should not be unjustifiably extended up to 48 hours.

We call on the Special investigative service:

- To study the facts of arrest/alleged injury of media representatives and demonstrators in a timely manner and to respond accordingly.

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We remain committed to protecting the rights of detainees in the future.

Georgian Young Lawyers Association

Transparency International Georgia

Rights Georgia

Social Justice Center

Human Rights Center

Georgian Centre for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims - GCRT

Georgian Democratic Initiative

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)

WISG

Women's Fund Georgia

Soviet Past Research Laboratory

Open Society Foundation Georgia

Green Alternative

Georgian Court Watch

Georgian Reform Association (GRASS)