

NGOs Welcome the Decision of the Parliament about the Draft Law on Jury Trial

The Parliament of Georgia examined once more the draft law about waiver of jury trial, envisaging the possibility to apply jury trial based on mutual consent between the parties. The draft law was returned back to the parliament following the president's veto. NGOs had certain concerns about the draft, as highlighted on a number of occasions. Representatives of NGOs called on the parliament of Georgia against approving the proposed regulations and to keep the right of a defendant to refuse jury trial based on a substantiated motion.

On May 1, the parliament of Georgia revisited the draft and did not support either the president's comments or the initiated draft law. As a result, the existing norm was maintained in the Criminal Procedure Code.

The existing norm allows jury trial waiver for a defendant. Defendants will also keep their right to file a substantiated motion in court, refusing jury trial.

We welcome the parliament's decision to keep the existing norm intact. We also welcome the decision of the legislative branch to take into account the comments voiced about the draft law and to maintain legal guarantees for protecting defendant's interests.