



We would like to respond to [the interview given by the Deputy State Minister of Georgia](#) on Diaspora Issues to the Kviris Palitra newspaper on October 25. The interview contains apparent hate speech towards the head of NGO Identoba, Irakli Vacharadze, and a call for physical reprisals against him.

It is a serious problem when a political official calls him "a person with a sick mentality, a one-celled creature" and makes a call for physical reprisals against him ("There will appear a group of people who will themselves use force due to emotional background!") and for restriction of the NGO's activity.

We believe that such statements by a public official, the more so by a high-ranking political official, pose a serious threat to the country's democratic development; they encourage intolerance to differing views and physical reprisals and serve to discredit the activities of NGOs.

Freedom of expression is one of the most important values for a democratic society and a fundamental human right which is guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia. A democratic state cannot exist without tolerance. Officials and public policy makers are obliged to ensure unwavering protection of this right. It is an obligation of the authorities to protect citizens' freedom of expression even when the expressed opinion is unacceptable for the majority of society. To this end, officials themselves in the first place must refrain from expressing hate and intolerance in public.

It is all the more impermissible when a government representative himself violates a fundamental right of a person, insults him for holding a differing opinion, and, moreover, makes a call for restricting his activities and inflicting violence on him.

Proceeding from all the aforementioned, it is obvious that the views of Sandro Bregadze are completely inappropriate for a public official. Accordingly, we believe that he must resign from the office of the Deputy Minister.

Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI)

Media Development Foundation (MDF)

Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI)

Georgia's Reforms Associates (GRASS)

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC)

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)

Identoba

Article 42 of the Constitution

Union "Sapari"

# საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



Georgian Yung Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

Transparency International – Georgia (TI)

NGO “Translation Development Center”

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