



## Statement of Members of NGO Platform No to Phobia on Acts of Racial Intolerance

On September 21, a Facebook page named Georgian Ultras released a video footage of two incidents of assault of peaceful people in the streets of Tbilisi by an organized group. The videos were captioned as “Bergman against Negros. Hooligan firm of Dinamo often performs similar “cleaning works.” The hooligans from Tbilisi mostly target Negros but they also resist Turks and Arabians.”

Notably, the Facebook page also featured another video, photo materials and symbols that illustrated hatred towards different ethnic and racial groups. The Facebook page is no longer accessible; however, media and non-governmental organizations were able to store the materials. Analysis of the video footage, photos and texts suggests that the group is well-organized and is propagating xenophobic ideas by means of social networks. In addition, it perpetrates physical violence against representatives of different racial and ethnic groups.

According to official information provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA), based on Article 125 of the Criminal Code investigation has been launched into the act of beating shown in the first episode of Bergman’s video. The MIA must ensure timely detection and investigation of all acts of violence allegedly perpetrated by the group. The MIA must properly assess and consider the clear motives of racial and

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ethnic hatred in the case. In this respect, based on the Instruction no.47 of the Interior Minister (dated December 23, 2014), in their description of circumstances of the crime, the investigating authorities must specify the existence of hate crime (para.3<sup>1</sup> of Article 53 of the Criminal Code).

Xenophobia and racism, and their extremist manifestations in particular, pose a threat to each and every individual, to peaceful coexistence of different groups and positive image of the country in international arena. It is extremely important for law enforcement authorities to take timely and effective actions in response to crimes motivated by discrimination and hatred, and to realize the importance and sensitivity of the issue.

In light of the risks posed by the said group, it is essential for the MIA to take all reasonable actions to identify the group in a timely manner and prevent any future violence.

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