



## The GYLA's statement regarding the recent developments in the High Council of Justice

The GYLA is responding to targeted attacks on two non-judicial members of the High Council of Justice □ who are distinguished by their critical views □ on the part of judicial members of the Council, which has assumed a permanent character. These developments clearly demonstrate the intolerance to dissenting and critical opinion and further undermine trust in the judicial system.

The current rule of composition of the Council aims to involve both judicial and non-

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judicial members in the activity of the Council and to make it possible to submit dissenting opinions regarding ongoing issues, which is supposed to ensure that acting in personal interest is avoided. However, more and more often, judicial members of the Council intentionally come into confrontation with individual non-judicial members of the Council due to the latter's critical views. As a rule, the confrontation does not concern the issues to be discussed, which complicates and, in some cases, makes it impossible to hold a thematic discussion on important issues.

A clear example of this is the most recent case when Anna Dolidze, a non-judicial member of the Council, was attacked by judicial members of the Council. At this session, a judicial member of the Council came up with an initiative to amend the rule of automatic, electronic distribution of cases in courts and, to some extent, involve chairpersons of courts again in this process. After Anna Dolidze criticized this initiative, judicial members reminded her of her past cooperation with Russian Justice Initiative, an NGO registered in Holland, portraying this as an act that is shameful and [harmful for the country's interests](#). These accusations were repeated by Dimitri Gvritishvili, a judicial member of the Council, in the *Archevani* TV program on February 20.

We would like to point out that "Russian Justice Initiative" has an extensive experience of cooperation with numerous authoritative human rights organizations and experts. The GYLA cooperated with this organization in cases of human rights violations in 2008-2012, including in important cases, such as the torture of Georgian prisoners of war (Georgian soldiers) and the bombing of the central square of Gori, which were sent to the European Court of Human Rights against Russia. With the help of a representative of RJI, the GYLA was able to find and get in touch with Georgian citizens who had been detained in detention centers and jails in the Tskhinvali region after the 2008 Russia-Georgia war and to help protect their rights.

**We believe that some judicial members' portrayal of cooperation with the NGO in connection with protection of human rights as an act that is shameful and harmful for the country's interests is an attempt to discredit a critically disposed member of the Council and aims to avoid thematic discussion on important issues.**

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**We call upon the non-judicial members of the High Council of Justice to refrain from unethical and unfounded accusations and to conduct the sessions in the framework of thematic discussion.**