



GYLA responds to complete closure of the SSSG report discussions

GYLA would like to respond to the discussions of the report on the activities of the State Security Service of Georgia in the Parliament. Noteworthy that the part of the committee's as well as the plenary session discussions of the report was fully closed. The decision was motivated by the confidential nature of the Service's work.

Certainly the specific nature of the activities of the State Security Service as well as increased state interest towards protecting state secrets related thereto should be taken into account. However, it is important to meet high public interest towards the work of the Service. Therefore, it is important to strike a reasonable balance between

these two legitimate interests, which has not been provided at any session so far.

The principles of a democratic state implies an appropriate public monitoring of the agencies that may pose high risks of violation of human rights and freedoms (naturally Security Service), which cannot be achieved only by the report submitted.

The public nature of the report is the grounds for creating a space for discussion on the issue of public interest. It is noteworthy that reviewing the report at the committee session is actually the only format for ensuring public monitoring where interested persons are given the opportunity to ask questions and get relevant answers from the agency representatives.

The necessity for reviewing the sensitive information on the activity of the Service in closed format is undisputable, but the complete deprivation of the wider public of those few chances disproportionately limits the possibility of meeting public interest and may not be justified in the name of state security.

Implementation of in-depth parliamentary control, which obviously means access to non-public information, should be realized so as not to jeopardize very small levers of public control over the closed agency.

The mentioned case once again demonstrates the necessity of introduction of effective parliamentary control mechanisms of the Security Service that will not be limited to only the committee / plenary hearings, and will include open and closed format meetings for different category audience. The abovementioned need has been pointed out multiple times by the civil sector. We hope that the Parliament of Georgia will recognize the mentioned necessity and propose relevant legislative amendments.