



THE STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF GEORGIA UNDERMINES THE RULE OF LAW AND THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

On January 28 addressing the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe[1], the President of Georgia said she was ready to host a delegation of the Russian Federation, including Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on the event planned in May under the auspices of European Union, bypassing the Law of Georgia on Occupied Territories.

The Law of Georgia on the Occupied Territories adopted after the August war defines the status of territories that have been occupied as a result of military aggression by

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the Russian Federation and establishes a special legal regime for these territories. The special legal regime includes, among others, restrictions on the free movement of foreign citizens in the occupied territories. According to the law, people shall be allowed to enter the occupied territories only through the territory controlled by the Georgian authorities. The entry of the occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali is prohibited from all other directions.

According to NGOs, the stated intention of disregarding the law in favor of members of the delegation of the state whose military aggression resulted in the occupation of the country's territories is alarming and contradicts the country's national interests.

In addition, the statement of the President contradicts the principle of the legal state, which is the cornerstone of the rule of law. But the idea of a legal state is useless if state power is not exercised under the law and within the framework clearly defined by law. The disregard of legislation by a higher state-political official will be a message to both the international and Georgian societies that the requirements of the law are a formality and that the state officials decide themselves when they can violate the law.

Given that the action of Law of Georgia on Occupied Territories shall not be entrusted to the President, but to the Government, [2] NGOs call on the Prime Minister to make a clear and public statement about ensuring enforcement of Law on occupied territories.

Signatory organizations:

Democracy Research Institution (DRI)

Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF)

Georgian Young Lawyer's Association (GYLA)

Article 42 of the Constitution

Green Alternative

Multinational Georgia

Human Right Center

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Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI)