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Statement of NGOs in response to Resignation of Akhalaia

During the last few days NGOs have been voicing a number of requests, including resignation of the Interior Minister, the Minister of Justice and the Chief Prosecutor.

In response to the demand, the Interior Minister resigned as he felt morally responsible for the facts. However, feeling morally responsible is far from sufficient. In view of zero tolerance policy in Georgia, it is only logical to launch investigation and examine his culpability. As we have noted a multiple times, introduction of methods of inhumane treatment in the penitentiary system, gross and mass violations of human

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rights has been linked to his name. Therefore, resignation of Bacho Akhalaia is far from being a sufficient and proportional measure.

Further, the authorities are still ignoring the NGOs' demand to launch an objective and independent investigation, as the Minister of Justice and the Chief Prosecutor, who failed to respond to human rights violations in prisons for over the years and may directly influence the process of investigation still remain in office. We'd like to reiterate once more that in light of the systemic nature of the recent crimes, it is virtually impossible that these officials were unaware of the facts.

Signatories:

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)

Transparency International – Georgia

Open Society – Georgia Foundation

Article 42 of the Constitution

Penal Reform International

The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics

Public Defender

New Generation New Initiative

International Union for Human Rights Protection and Assistance Trust

Women's Information Center

Women's International Center for Education and Information

Women's Educational Center Tori

Union of War-disabled Persons and Wives of Perished Warriors

National Network of Protection from Violence

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Kakheti Regional Development Fund

Cultural Humanitarian Fund Sokhumi

People's Harmonious Development Society

Gender in Social Economic Development

Workshop Pesvebi

International Association Women's Movement for Equality