



The Round Table “Reinforcing Civil Society’s Role in Prevention of Torture, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment”

The round table “Reinforcing Civil Society’s Role in Prevention of Torture, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment” was held on October 11, 2013 in the frames of the project “Improvement of Prisoners’ Conditions –Joint Advocacy” implemented jointly by GYLA and the Public Defender’s Office.

Head of the Human Rights Committee of the Parliament, other MPs, Deputy Minister of Corrections and Legal Assistance of Georgia, Head of Penitentiary Department and representatives from Public Defender’s Office and NGOs participated in the event.

The round table aimed to promote reinforcement of civil society’s role in prevention of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment by restoring NGOs’ right to implement monitoring in penitentiary establishments. Previous years, the right was granted to NGOs by applicable legislation, yet the right was curtailed later. Since 2009 Public Defender’s Office had the exclusive right to carry out monitoring in penitentiaries as the national preventive mechanism. By setting up the mechanism, the state has fulfilled obligations undertaken by UN Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT). However, as the guiding principles of the National Prevention Mechanism provides, the National Prevention Mechanism should complete, rather than substitute other applied monitoring mechanisms.

Prevention of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment is among state’s declared objectives, which should be attained by the state and civil society’s joint endeavor.

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Monitoring of penitentiary establishments by human rights organizations will promote effective prevention of torture and protection of prisoners' rights in general. Certain local and international NGOs have applied to state authorities with relevant recommendation to grant NGOs the right to monitoring. European Parliament also issued the similar recommendations in the frames of UN mechanism –universal periodic review.

In view of above, the round table intended to submit to participants of the event specific model of public monitoring mechanism and to ensure dialogue among government representatives and NGO sector for introducing the monitoring mechanism in practice.

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