

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021



**GEORGIAN  
YOUNG  
LAWYERS'  
ASSOCIATION**



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**D**ear GYLA members,

It is a great honor for me to greet you for the first time as the Chairperson of GYLA. At the same time, it's a huge responsibility to lead an organization that, for more than 27 years, has been fighting for human rights, for democracy, and to this day remains a prominent representative of civil society in the country.

The year 2021 turned out to be exceptionally difficult for the country. Like 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was a significant challenge this year. Nevertheless, we have been able to properly organize our activities to ensure that the democratic process improves and that much-needed free legal aid is provided to the population. This year was full of large-scale political events as well as human rights violations. However, thanks to the excellent team of GYLA, we managed to cope with the existing difficulties properly.

This year has significantly strengthened the relationship between GYLA and the country's international partners, which has taken our cooperation to a new level. The most important was the contribution of the organization to the mediation process in resolving the political crisis and its successful development. Unfortunately, the highly polarized political environment paid off, and the agreement reached was annulled by the ruling party. This was followed by quite complex political processes in the country. However, in parallel with this challenging situation, we continue to work to find the necessary solution for the country and to advocate for it.

Fundamental reforms of the electoral law and the judiciary were a vital part of the agreement reached between the political parties on April 19. Despite some changes, the electoral system and the rules for staffing the election administration are still far from desirable. Accordingly, GYLA continues to advocate for them. A special problem was the need for justice reform, which our international partners have repeatedly pointed out to the government. GYLA makes an essential contribution to intensifying the discussion on these issues at the international level.

During the reporting period, the dispute between the states against the Russian Federation over the August 2008 war in the European Court of Human Rights ended, in which GYLA made a significant contribution to the highly qualified preparation and successful conduct of individual cases.

GYLA's business card – the Legal Assistance Center, due to the pandemic situation, mainly operates remotely and helps thousands of people with legal problems to solve them. Our Constitutional Litigation Team has also been successful, having won a number of important cases in the Constitutional Court and continues to make appeals for new cases.

The problem of the State's attitude towards environmental issues was especially evident in connection with the construction of the Namakhvani HPP cascade on the Rioni River and the ongoing protests in parallel. GYLA is actively involved in these processes and continues to fight for fair procedures and decisions in terms of environmental protection.

The events of July 5 were especially severe, which significantly pushed Georgia back on the path of democratic development. The facts of violence against media representatives and activists were outrageous, as well as the steps taken by the government, which, on the one hand, encouraged the actions of the perpetrators and, on the other hand, tried to justify them. It is noteworthy that the State has not yet conducted an effective investigation into these cases.

In parallel with the political turmoil, we are continuing the process of organizational reform and trying to resolve the issues that accompany the practical implementation of the reform. There are many more challenges ahead that we believe we will be able to deal with. We also have plans to make our activities even more successful.

I would like to thank all the GYLA employees for their excellent work and giving me the opportunity to be a leader of the excellent team. The result of the tireless work, enthusiasm, and sleepless nights of our staff is that even after almost three decades, GYLA is still one of the leading civic organizations in the country. Of course, thanks to the members of the GYLA Board, whose contribution to the improvement of the organization's work is invaluable, as well as thanks to the GYLA members for their support. I wish the organization and each of you success in increasing the quality of democracy in the country and in the fight for human rights.

Sincerely,  
Nikoloz Simonishvili  
Chairperson of the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association



• 2014  
ZUGDIDI

• 1996  
KUTAISI

• 2001  
OZURGETI

• 1995  
ADJARA

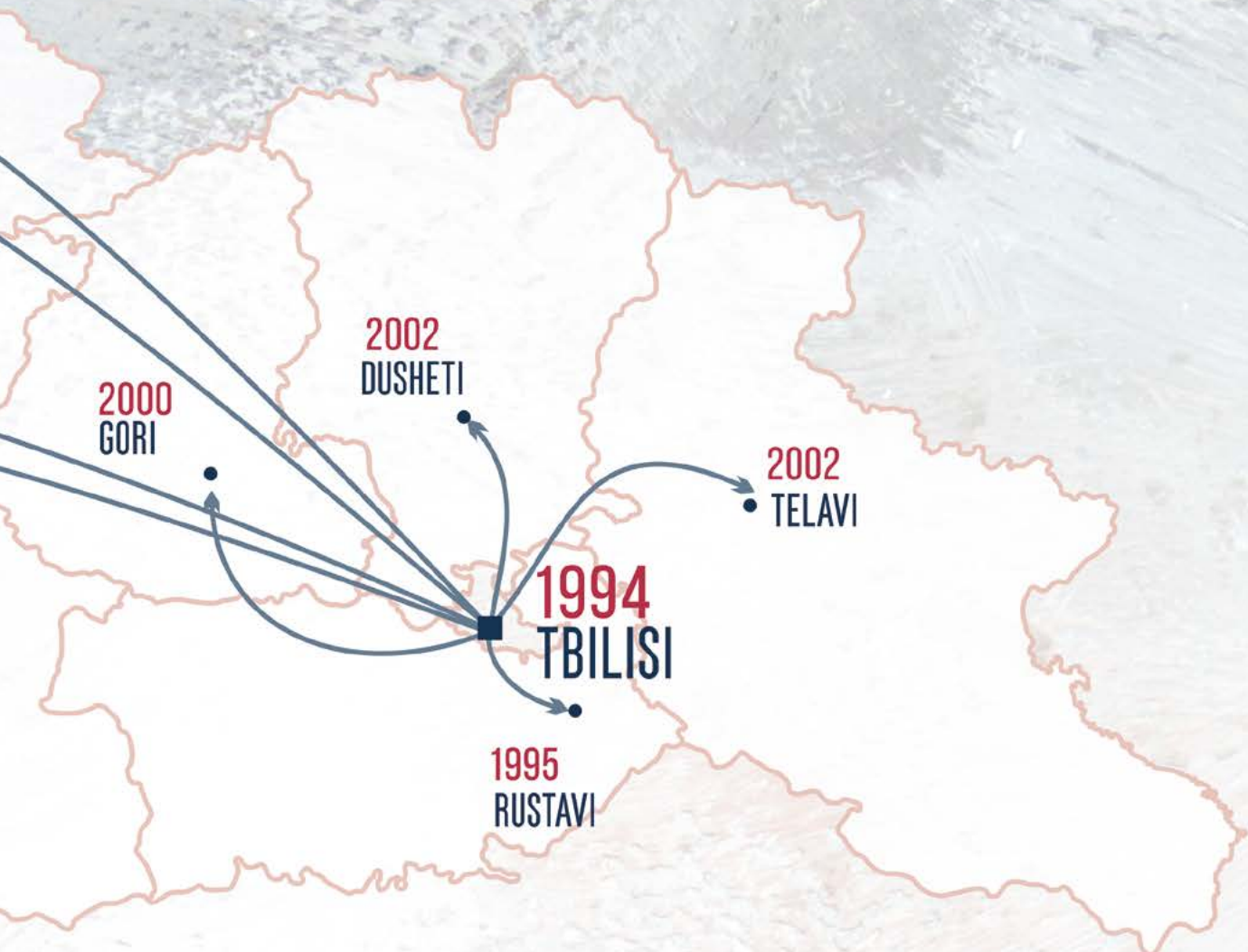


# OFFICES OF GYLA



GEORGIAN  
YOUNG  
LAWYERS'  
ASSOCIATION

TBILISI OFFICE – 1994  
ADJARA OFFICE -1995  
RUSTAVI OFFICE - 1995  
KUTAISI OFFICE - 1996  
GORI OFFICE - 2000  
OZURGETI OFFICE - 2001  
TELAVI OFFICE - 2002  
DUSHETI OFFICE - 2002  
ZUGDIDI OFFICE - 2014





# WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) is the membership-based organization, uniting about 400 members. GYLA was established in 1994 and since then has been expanding its geographic coverage. Today, GYLA operates through 9 offices throughout Georgia. The major goal of its work is protection of human rights and supporting good governance in Georgia.

Along with the growth of the organization throughout years, the need for structural changes has evolved, to adjust to the new requirements of donors and the changes of the civil society (CSO) ecosystem. In 2016, with the support of USAID's Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD 2020) project in Georgia, GYLA's work was evaluated from the human resource and institutional development perspective. As a result, recommendations were developed and since 2018, two phases of reform were planned. The first phase covers structural changes of the organization, while the second phase emphasizes on the improvement of the human resource policy, regional network and communication strategy development.

As a result of the structural changes, financial and organizational coordination functions were accumulated under the responsibilities of the Administrative Director, while project-related work of GYLA was divided into three thematic Programs. Those are:

- **Human Rights Protection;**
- **Supporting Democratic Institutions;**
- **Legal Aid.**

Organizational reform in GYLA will continue throughout the next year.

For now, according to the Statute and established tradition of GYLA, we present the 2021 report of work of Tbilisi and 8 regional offices (the reporting period covers: November 1/2020 – November 1/2021).





# HUMAN RIGHTS



**P**rotecting human rights is one of the main strategic missions of the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association. The organization studies the situation in the country in this regard, analyzes the challenges, and promotes changes at the policy level.

The Human Rights Program works in 4 priority areas:

-  **Equality Policy**
-  **Social Policy**
-  **Criminal Justice**
-  **Media**

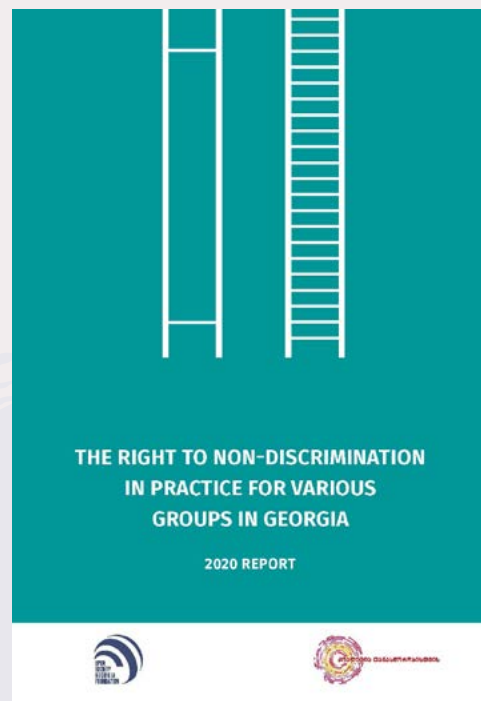


## EQUALITY POLICY

Studying the rights situation of vulnerable groups and assessing the current situation in Georgia in this regard remains one of the main activities of GYLA. The pandemic and the resulting constraints have put specific individuals at even greater difficulty.

In the framework of the Coalition for Equality, the fifth report was prepared - The Right to Non-Discrimination in Practice for Various Groups in Georgia. The publication describes the rights situation of 10 groups in this direction during 2020.

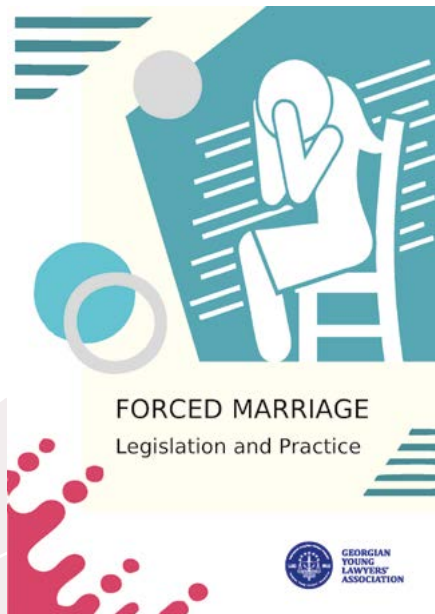
During the reporting period, GYLA independently and/or in coalition issued statements on the situation regarding protecting the rights of the specific groups. Below are the systemic problems that have emerged in different directions.



## WOMEN

In recent years, Georgia has taken a number of measures to implement its commitments to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) to achieve equality for women and to protect them from violence. Despite the steps taken, the issue of gender equality remains a problem, which requires strengthening the work of the State in various aspects.

Women and girls often become victims of domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, femicide, forced marriage, forced abortion. Despite the efforts of the State, after many years of training of law enforcers, the timely and effective investigation of crimes committed against women, especially sex crimes, remains problematic. Justice for such facts often takes place with outdated methodologies, which ultimately create barriers for victims in terms of access to it.



During the reporting period, GYLA prepared a study - Forced Marriage - Legislation and Practice. According to the document, the highest rate of launching investigations into forced marriage in 2016-2019, compared to other country regions, was revealed in Kvemo Kartli. Cases of forced engagement are also frequent. It is essential that the State step up preventive work to prevent early and forced marriages. According to international practice, taking precautionary measures is the most effective way to combat such facts. Setting a minimum age for marriage, maximizing access to education, and raising public awareness are important levers for preventing forced marriage.

## CHILDREN

The State still faces a number of challenges in protecting children's rights. In the country, for years, children have been vulnerable to poverty and the dangers posed by poor living conditions. Due to the socio-economic problems created by the pandemic, these risks have increased even more, affecting socially vulnerable and homeless children.

There are also significant challenges in terms of making full use of the right to education. Lack of computer equipment and the Internet restricted children's access to education during the pandemic.

Particularly noteworthy in the context of pandemics are the risks associated with violence against children. Due to the transfer of some services to the remote mode, it is difficult to identify children who are victims of violence. At the same time, the effective implementation of support programs and services is threatened. The challenge remains the full replacement of large institutions with alternative forms of care.



## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs)

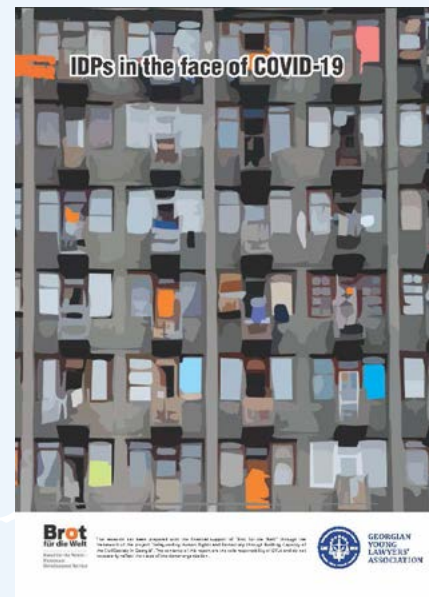
The pandemic posed special challenges to persons with disabilities. GYLA has prepared a study on this topic - COVID-19 and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The aim of the document was to study the measures taken by the State in the conditions of the pandemic, the international recommendations developed in this direction, and the experience of other countries, as well as to identify the problems of persons with disabilities. The study analyzes the following issues: access to information, consultation, and involvement in decision-making, the right to health and access to medical services, provision of food, medicines, and protective equipment, as well as financial support, education, employment, etc.



Another document prepared by GYLA deals with social programs tailored to the individual needs of children with disabilities at the municipal level. It has been found that these programs are often not adequately planned and do not consider the real needs of the beneficiaries. The measures taken by the local authorities are mainly short-term and are insufficient to change the situation of children with disabilities for the better.

## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs)

During the reporting period, GYLA prepared a document on the challenges faced by IDPs during the pandemic. It turned out that their already difficult socio-economic situation had deteriorated since the spread of COVID-19. According to the focus group participants, IDP families mainly have only one member employed, most of whom work in the service sector. Due to the declaration of a state of emergency in the country and the suspension of business activities, they were left without a source of income.



In addition, some of the IDPs have not yet received housing, or the apartments provided to them in some settlements do not meet the minimum standard of adequate housing.

## RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Issues related to freedom of religion and belief are still relevant in Georgia. Discriminatory norms against the principle of equality remain in the legislation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a number of systemic problems in this regard. The State failed to protect freedom of religion and belief, neglected equality between religious unions and the mutual independence between religion and the government.

## ETHNIC MINORITIES

Significant positive changes have not affected the systemic challenges that exist in the protection and integration of ethnic minorities in Georgia. The pandemic has further highlighted their difficult socio-economic situation, lack of access to information, language barriers, problems with getting an education, a sharp rise in xenophobic sentiments in the society.

During the reporting period, GYLA, together with other non-governmental organizations, worked on the initiative of the Salam Platform and prepared a bill aimed at removing non-authentic endings (ov, ev, etc.) from the surnames of Georgian citizens and revoking the right to return their authentic surnames.

## LGBTQI PERSONS

No significant steps have been taken in recent years to improve the rights situation of LGBTQI people in Georgia. This community is one of the most vulnerable and particularly unprotected to stigma and violence.

LGBTQI people do not freely enjoy the opportunity to assemble and express themselves; they face discriminatory barriers, including in labor relations. Transgender people, whose right to physical inviolability is often violated, are at increased risk. The existing problems had been added to the difficulties caused by the pandemic from March 2020, and the vulnerability of the community has grown even more. However, their social and economic needs were not considered in the first or next phase of the government's anti-crisis plan.

The worst manifestation of this problem was July 5, 2021, when homophobic, ultra-right-wing aggressive groups disrupted the Dignity March organized by Tbilisi Pride. These groups, at the urging of representatives of the Georgian Orthodox Church and various violent unions, demanded the abolition of the March of Dignity and invaded and raided



the office of the movement Shame, where the organizers of the event were. They also climbed from the balcony to the Tbilisi Pride office, raided it, tore down the LGBTQI flag, and physically assaulted journalists.

## SOCIAL POLICY



## LABOR LAW

GYLA is actively involved in the work of the Fair Labor Platform, which brings together independent trade unions, human rights organizations, and activists. During the reporting period, the platform participants issued a number of statements regarding the rights situation of people employed in various sectors - nurses, social workers, couriers, subway workers, and others - in the light of the difficulties caused by Covid-19.

To protect and advocate for labor rights, special online resources have been created within the framework of the Fair Labor Platform: **WORKPLACE SAFETY MONITOR**, **WAGE THEFT CALCULATOR**, and the website **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**.

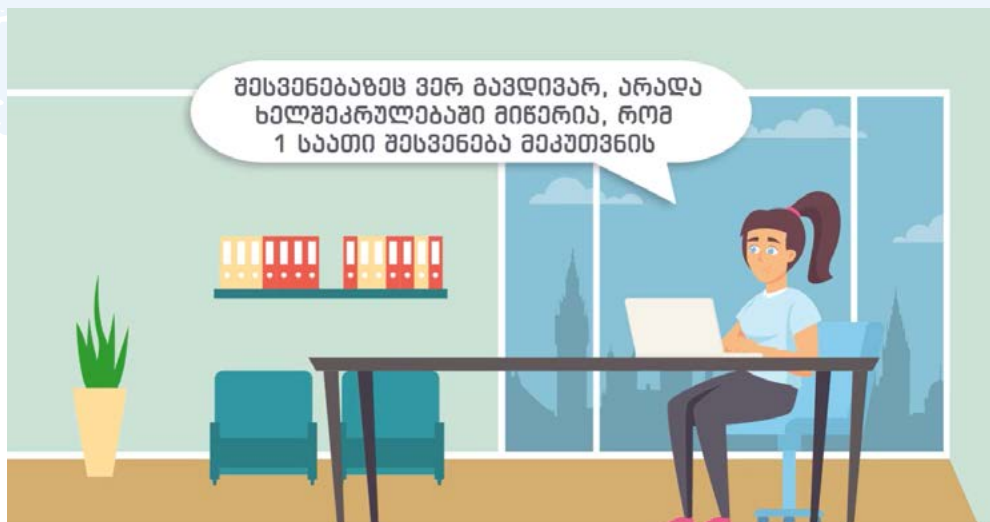
**WORKPLACE SAFETY MONITOR** is an online database that collects reports on job inspections by the Georgian Labor Inspectorate in one place. Consequently, stakeholders have the opportunity to monitor the workplace safety inspection process.

The **WAGE THEFT CALCULATOR** allows an employee to calculate the amount of money an employer has failed to pay legally owned to the employee, including Unpaid overtime, Illegal salary deductions, Unpaid tips, or more.



The website KNOW YOUR RIGHTS answers frequently asked questions about labor rights in a way that is easy for everyone to understand. It covers topical issues such as equality in employment, working hours, women workers, salaries and wages, informal workers, trade unions, and labor protection mechanisms (the Labor Inspection of Georgia, the Public Defender of Georgia, and Common Courts).

To inform the public about the changes made to the Labor Code of Georgia during the reporting period, GYLA prepared an information booklet on the fundamental rights and responsibilities of employees and employers. The document was also translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani and distributed in regions populated by national minorities. It addresses the following issues: Labor discrimination; Working hours, duration and established restrictions; Internship rule; Women's rights; Strike; Mechanisms for concluding, terminating, appealing, and protecting the employment contract. In addition, the booklet discusses the powers and rules of labor inspection, the formation of trade



unions, and how to become their members. GYLA also produced videos on labor inspection powers, maternity leave, strike regulation, and experience, which were posted on the organization's website and social platforms.

During the reporting period, GYLA published a report on trade unions, which analyzed general international standards on the functions and rights of trade unions and models from Sweden, Germany, and Lithuania. In addition, the document focuses on norms related to collective bargaining and strikes, and internal regulations.

Given the urgency of the issue, GYLA has studied the impact of the pandemic on loan and credit relations, which has exacerbated the problematic social situation in the country. The document prepared by the organization describes the challenges in this area, analyzes the recommendations of the Global Partnership Network and examples of best practices in dealing with this problem by other countries.



## საქართველოს კონსტიტუციის 26-ე მუხლით

აღიარებულია გაფიცვის უფლება. იგი გულისხმობს დავის შემთხვევაში, დასაქმებულის დროებით ნებაყოფლობით უარს შრომითი ხელშეკრულებით გათვალისწინებული ვალდებულებების მთლიანად ან ნაწილობრივ შესრულებებზე



## THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association and the Legal Education Foundation prepared a study reviewing the policy of developing and evaluating textbooks in the general education system to achieve equality and eliminate all forms of discrimination. Based on the information analyzed in the study, recommendations were issued to the relevant state agencies.

A study of the needs of textbook authors was also published during the reporting period. The analysis of the identified challenges revealed that to achieve the textbooks' compliance with the principles of equality, it is essential to properly invest in the process of their creation, to train the authors, to increase their competence and motivation.



## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

### ■ **GYLA's Opinions on the Draft Law on Amendments to the Environmental Assessment Code**

During the reporting period, GYLA expressed its views on the draft law on Amendments to the Environmental Assessment Code. The bill proposes an institutional transformation, according to which the Department of Environmental Assessment within the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia will be transferred to the LEPL National Environment Agency, and it will be delegated the authority to enforce the Environmental Assessment Code. The reasons given for this modification are unsubstantiated and insufficient for such an institutional change.

In addition, according to the bill, for the entities that had to apply to the Ministry for the right to continue their current activities by June 1, 2019, this obligation will be postponed until January 1, 2022. The bill expands the circle of these entities as well. The proposed changes are not based on any objective circumstances and justifications in the explanation card; therefore, GYLA evaluates them negatively.

The modification will also cover the screening procedure, changes to the environmental decision, and the activities specified in the Annexes to the Code, some of which should be evaluated positively. However, even in this case, a number of important issues need to be corrected and relevant legislative changes/clarifications to be made.

### ■ **Pre-Mediation Process for the Namakhvani HPP Cascade Project**

During the reporting period, GYLA was involved in the pre-mediation process related to the Namakhvani HPP Cascade project, between the Government of Georgia on the one hand and the local population and non-governmental organizations on the other. The mediator was Dirk Buschle, a representative of the EU Energy Union. On June 12, 2021, the first meeting between the parties was held, which was also attended by GYLA. The participants agreed on three main topics:

1. Protesters in the Rioni Gorge should be allowed to exercise their right to free movement, assembly, and manifestations under the Constitution without restriction;
2. An independent and impartial expert must evaluate the environmental impact assessment document submitted under the project, as well as the Build, Own and

Operate Agreement of the Namakvani HPP cascade; Construction work should be suspended until the assessment is completed to avoid damage to the environment;

3. The Government of Georgia, with the involvement of the non-governmental sector and other stakeholders, should develop an energy development plan for Georgia.

To fulfill the agreement reached and meet the preconditions set for the start of the mediation process, a number of other meetings were held in which GYLA was actively involved. In addition, on May 30, 2021, the organization sent a report to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association. The document describes the problems related to the Namakhvani HPP cascade project, the cases of violation of procedural rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia and the Aarhus Convention, the specific facts of restriction of assembly, manifestation, and freedom of expression of participants in rallies against this project.



## ■ Brochure on Environmental Procedural Rights

During the reporting period, GYLA prepared a brochure on Environmental Procedural Rights. The purpose of the document is to raise public awareness on this issue. It explains in detail the three basic procedural rights guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia and the Aarhus Convention, which enable people to access a healthy environment and enjoy other related fundamental human rights effectively. Specifically, the brochure reviews the rights to participate in the decision-making process on environmental issues, as well as access to information and justice.



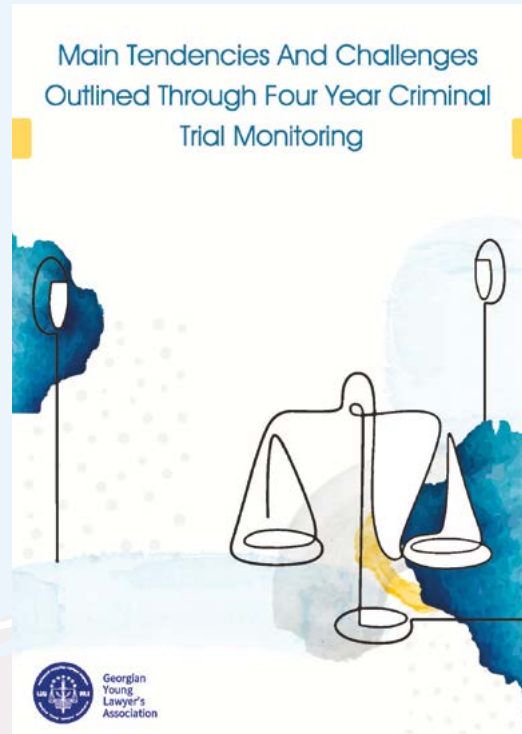
# CRIMINAL JUSTICE

## RESULTS OF FOUR-YEAR MONITORING OF CRIMINAL PROCEEDING

The purpose of the GYLA's Four-Year Report on Criminal Procedure Monitoring is to identify practical and legislative gaps, including positive trends. The report covers criminal proceedings from March 2016 to February 2020.

The main findings are related to preventive measures, investigative actions, and proper judicial control over the plea agreement, shortcomings identified at various stages of the process. The report pays special attention to domestic, drug, and social crimes.

Significant findings from the four-year report relate to difficult social background crimes. Monitoring shows that the prosecution and the court do not treat such cases with empathy. Their response focuses more on punishing the accused and not on their subsequent rehabilitation-resocialization.



**სისხლის სამართლის პროცესების ოთხწლიანი მონიტორინგის შედეგები**

**თანდინამიები და არსებული გამოწვევები**

**ნარკოტიკულ დანაშაულებასთან დაკავშირებული პრობლემური საკვლევი მიმართულებები**

- ნაწილობრივ დასაჯებელი განაჩენების გამოყენების შემცირება და სასამართლო რეაბილიტაციის საკვლევი მიმართულების განვითარება.
- საქმიანობის დასაჯებლობის შემცირება და სასამართლო რეაბილიტაციის საკვლევი მიმართულების განვითარება.
- საქმიანობის დასაჯებლობის შემცირება და სასამართლო რეაბილიტაციის საკვლევი მიმართულების განვითარება.

USAID EAST-WEST MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

**სისხლის სამართლის პროცესების ოთხწლიანი მონიტორინგის შედეგები**

**თანდინამიები და არსებული გამოწვევები**

**მნიშვნელოვანი შედეგების მიხედვით**

- სამართლო პროცესების ეფექტურობის გაზრდა და სასამართლო რეაბილიტაციის საკვლევი მიმართულების განვითარება.
- საქმიანობის დასაჯებლობის შემცირება და სასამართლო რეაბილიტაციის საკვლევი მიმართულების განვითარება.
- საქმიანობის დასაჯებლობის შემცირება და სასამართლო რეაბილიტაციის საკვლევი მიმართულების განვითარება.

USAID EAST-WEST MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE



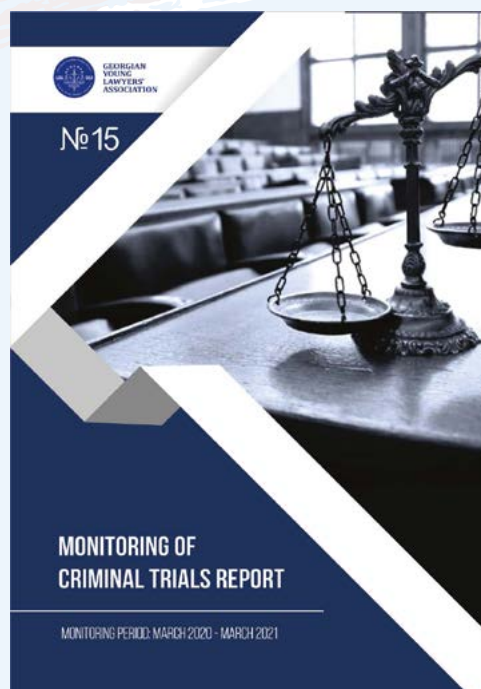
Monitoring each year reveals a number of less dangerous acts for the public on which the court could have pursued a more humane policy, for example, due to its insignificance (citing the Criminal Code, Article 7, Part 2), persons were refused to approve a plea agreement or terminate criminal prosecution at the pre-trial hearing. For its part, at their discretion, according to the Code of Procedure, the prosecutor may, at such times, refuse to prosecute or resort to an alternative prosecution mechanism - diversion, which precludes a person from being convicted. However, in some cases, the prosecution did not use this opportunity.

## THE CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS MONITORING REPORT №15

In 2021, GYLA published the Criminal Proceedings Monitoring Report №15. This is the first one-year publication to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ongoing hearings in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Rustavi City, Zugdidi, and Telavi District Courts.

The report, on the one hand, reflects the trends identified in the ongoing hearings without the attendees and, on the other hand, assesses the positive and negative features of the remote proceedings, as well as the compliance of the decisions made with the legislation. Meanwhile, the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for courts, proceeding participants, and penitentiaries are analyzed.

These serial publications prepared by GYLA have been used in the reports of many international organizations. They are indicated as a reliable source of information on the current situation in Georgia in this field.



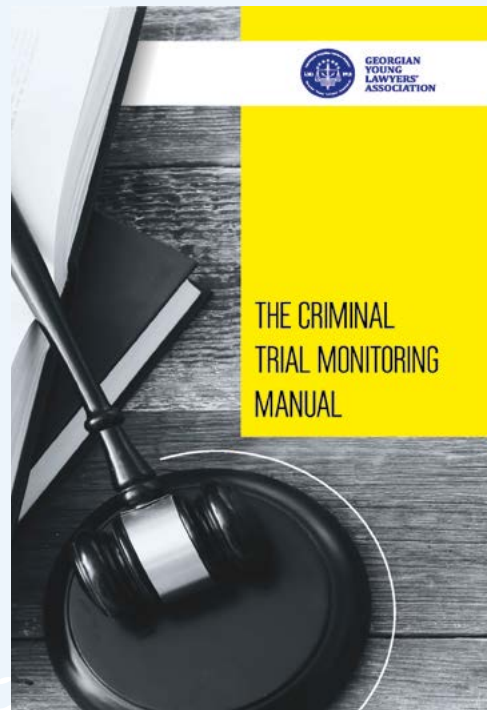


During the reporting period, GYLA participated in the annual meeting between the organizations monitoring the court proceedings, organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The purpose of these meetings is to share the experience of OSCE monitoring missions and similar profile missions in different European countries.

## GUIDE TO CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS MONITORING

GYLA prepared a methodological guide for monitoring criminal proceedings during the reporting period. The document is intended for any entity, body, or practicing specialist involved in the justice system reform process that participates in or plans to engage in court monitoring.

GYLA has been monitoring criminal proceedings since 2011. It is the first and only organization in Georgia, which monitors the implementation of criminal justice through



pre-designed, professionally conducted quantitative and qualitative indicators and publicly presents the monitoring results.

The guide integrates the criminal case monitoring methodology and all the important components of the monitoring project activities. The document describes the whole system of identifying shortcomings in the legal proceedings and finding ways to solve them, all the tools and means that ultimately result in developing the monitoring reports. It presents the standards for the development of questionnaires for the project, the specifics of the monitoring of criminal cases, the main restrictions, the activities of monitors, the methodology of preparing reports, and their advocacy. The manual is accompanied by questionnaires of the relevant stages of the process.

## GYLA'S OPINIONS ON THE AMNESTY OF JANUARY 11, 202

During the reporting period, GYLA actively participated in the committee hearings on the draft law on Amnesty and its amendments to the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes. The organization presented its views on the topic. It positively assessed the proposed bill, which was based on the principle of humanism and, by creating additional mechanisms for release from punishment, improved the rights situation of specific categories of persons.

The draft law mainly concerned persons accused/convicted of drug crimes. Given the strict drug policy that has been in place for years, the Amnesty Act is a positive step for the rehabilitation and re-socialization of those convicted of this crime. However, certain aspects of the project needed to be clarified. Among them were: The issue of restoring the rights confiscated due to drug crimes; Different preconditions for criminal liability or release from punishment for certain types of crimes (consent of the victim and compensation for damages); An existing record of release from the sentence that did not relate to the type of sentence - the fine; Distribution of amnesty on articles related to violation of work safety rules, etc. An important part of GYLA's opinions was taken into account by the Parliament.

## GYLA'S POSITION ON THE SEARCH AND SEIZURE BILL

GYLA was actively involved in the parliamentary committee discussion of another bill related to the Search and Seizure. Its purpose was to enforce the decision of the Constitutional Court of Georgia in the case Giorgi Keburia v. Parliament of Georgia and, therefore, to bring the criminal procedure legislation in line with the Constitution of Georgia.



## GYLA RESPONDS TO THE DRAFT LAW ON AMENDMENTS TO THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE OF GEORGIA

According to GYLA, the law adopted by the Parliament of Georgia does not respond to the decision of the Constitutional Court of Georgia. It does not ensure the elimination of existing structural and systemic shortcomings.

The Constitutional Court of Georgia has set July 1, 2021, for declaring the disputed norm invalid. In doing so, it gave the legislature a six-month deadline to clearly define the instructions for law enforcement to conduct a proper search and, at the same time, with the appropriate technical means during this period. In contrast, with the proposed amendment, Parliament only formally enforced the court decision.

## FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA/EXPRESSION

Freedom of the media and creating a free, safe environment for journalistic activities are guaranteed by both Georgian legislation and international acts. Freedom of expression faced a number of challenges during the reporting period.

Developments in 2021 have shown that the current situation in terms of media security in the country is problematic and noteworthy. The facts of assault on journalists, verbal and physical abuse, illegal interference in their professional activities have been increased. It shall be stressed that the government's response is insufficient and contains hate speech against journalists. This was especially evident on July 5-6, when radical and homophobic groups inflicted various injuries on more than 50 members of the media, which was also encouraged by the aggressive rhetoric of high-ranking officials. The State's response to the facts of violence was not appropriate this time either. Proceedings in the July 5 cases are ineffective, and the cases of journalists injured during the dispersal of the June 20-21, 2020 protest rally are still uninvestigated.

During the reporting period, GYLA was actively involved in the ongoing processes in the field of media. Together with the Media Advocacy Coalition, the organization has made a number of public statements in support of journalists. It has also responded several times to problematic initiatives by the National Communications Commission, including reviewing program content and attempting self-regulation. In addition, a study on the events of July 5-6 has been prepared and will be published shortly. It describes the preconditions for the large-scale attack on the media and the processes that took place during Pride Week and assesses the state response effectiveness in terms of a positive commitment.



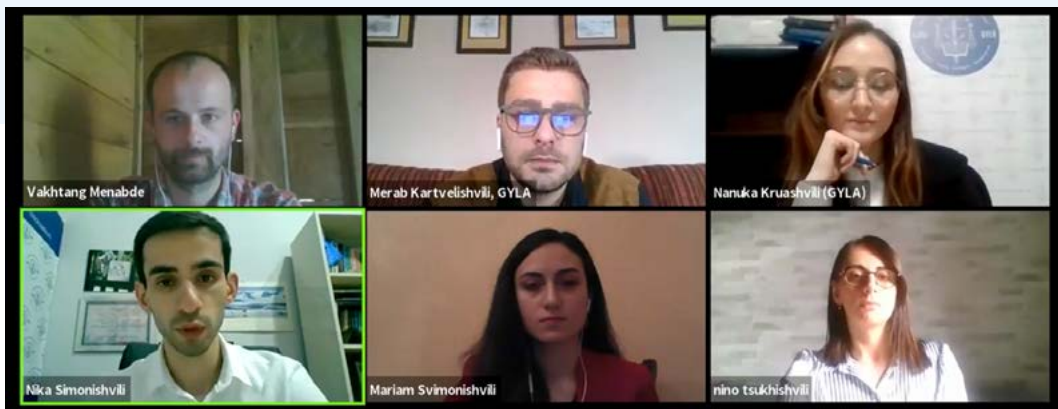
During the reporting period, GYLA attended a working group meeting on media security issues organized by the Coalition for Media Advocacy. Speakers included journalists and heads of media companies, as well as representatives of local and international NGOs. In addition, GYLA participated in the global online conference Media Security and Access to Information during Elections, which discussed the challenges facing the Georgian media during the pre-election period and on the election day. The organization also took part in the presentation of the annual report of the Coalition for Equality. GYLA played a leading role in the preparation of an important part of this document - the chapter on media freedom.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### THE HUMAN RIGHTS DURING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

During the reporting period, GYLA prepared and published the study Sovereign – "Prime Minister." The document concerns the declaration of a state of emergency due to the spread of COVID-19 in Georgia and its subsequent processes, which did not take place without shortcomings. The study analyzes the general standards of derogation, as well as the validity of derogating from the principles provided by international agreements. In addition, challenges related to individual rights restricted during a state of emergency are discussed, such as Compliance of isolation and quarantine rules with human rights standards; Prohibitions on freedom of assembly; Barriers to access public information and administrative proceedings initiated on environmental issues; Imposition of administrative and criminal responsibilities by presidential decree. Additionally, a separate chapter is dedicated to the legislative activity of the Parliament with regard to regulating the State of emergency.



## REPORTS SENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

In 2021, GYLA, together with partner organizations, submitted shadow reports to international organizations.

A report on the status of women and various aspects of gender mainstreaming, prepared by the Coalition for Equality and other local NGOs, was prepared for the UN Committee pre-session on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Its purpose is to inform the working group of the 81st session about the current situation in Georgia and to develop relevant recommendations.

A shadow report was also prepared, which provided information on gaps in legislation and practice on rape and other forms of sexual violence.

The reports cover areas such as violence against women, participation in political life, access to education, employment, and health care, their rights situation in marriage and family relationships, and so on.

Two more shadow reports were submitted by the organizations to the Council of Europe Independent Expert Group for Monitoring the Implementation of the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Alternative Reports reflect the achievements and challenges of Georgian law and practice concerning sex crimes. Furthermore, the efforts made by the State in recent years to bring the legislation in line with international standards are underlined. However, despite this, these new regulations, proactive response and sufficient positive measures are not being implemented. Withal, the obligation to introduce anti-discrimination mechanisms in both the public and private sectors is partially unfulfilled. The documents describe the challenges that remain in the country in the form of violence against women and the problems that hinder the achievement of substantial equality between women and men in the context of a sustainable patriarchal society.

GYLA and Equality Now have submitted a joint report to the 90th Pre-Session Working Group of the Committee on the Child's Rights. The document covers topical issues such as access to justice for children who are victims of sexual violence, harmful practices of sexual abuse of minors, in particular, their marriage, forced marriage, kidnapping, etc. The report provides recommendations for eliminating these problems and measures to be taken by the State. The Committee was also provided with relevant questions to be asked to the governmental agencies for a comprehensive study of the current state of sexual violence against children in the country.



## PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE EU-GEORGIA HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE

Together with the Open Society Foundation and other non-governmental organizations, a report was prepared on the key human rights challenges in Georgia in 2020. The document addresses the following important issues: Anti-discrimination legislation; Human rights in the occupied regions of Georgia; Freedom of religion and belief; Violence against women and domestic violence; Women empowerment; Children's rights; Labor rights; Torture and ill-treatment; State Inspector Service.

The report aims to promote human rights dialogue between Georgia and the EU, highlight the contribution of civil society, and develop recommendations to address the challenges in this area.

## THE 65TH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

During the reporting period, GYLA participated in the online discussion of the 65th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, which was dedicated to the elimination of violence against women in public life. GYLA addressed the delegates and presented the activities carried out by the organization in this area.

Delegates highlighted the role of NGOs in empowering women and girls, protecting them from violence, and actively involving them in public life.

During the discussion, the delegates presented action-oriented recommendations, the implementation of which will help eliminate violence against women, achieve the goal of gender equality and address existing challenges.







# SUPPORT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS



**W**ithout widespread public involvement in institutionalized politics, state institutions become instruments in the hands of political and clan groups. In these conditions, the public good is used for their well-being, while the interests of other citizens are neglected. GYLA's Democratic Institutions Support Program continues to work on reforms that will facilitate an inclusive political process and provide a solid foundation for public participation in the decision-making process to develop a realistic policy tailored to the needs of the people in Georgia.

The program works in 5 priority areas:

-  **Parliamentary oversight**
-  **Justice Reform**
-  **Public governance**
-  **Local Self-Government**
-  **Election**

## PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Strengthening parliamentary oversight mechanisms is an essential component of democratic policy. In this regard, it is important to in-depth analyze and share both the local context and international experience.

During the reporting period, GYLA studied the functioning of the Parliament's oversight instruments according to the developed methodology. It was also involved in the



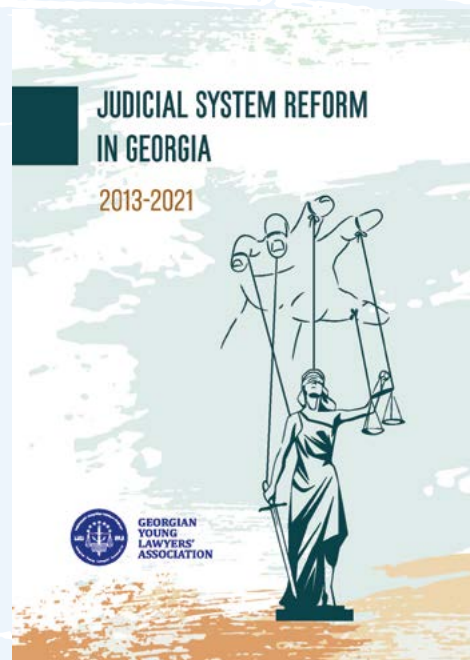
activities of the Permanent Parliamentary Council on Open Governance and participated in the development of its action plan, which included making recommendations for parliamentary oversight. The organization is currently monitoring the implementation of this plan.

In 2021, GYLA published a comparative study on the Distribution of Parliamentary Positions between the Majority and the Opposition, which examines different combinations of positions in the parliaments of 15 states and, consequently, the distribution of power.

## JUSTICE REFORM

GYLA participates in the activities of the Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary with the mandate of the Steering Committee. The organization was involved in the preparation of all the statements and documents issued on behalf of the coalition during 2021.

During the reporting period, GYLA prepared an important document, The Justice System Reform in Georgia. It assesses the strategy chosen by the government for judicial reform in 2013-2021, the adopted legislative changes, and their impact on the degree of independence of the judiciary.





The analytical framework used in the document is based on a critical and complex analysis of the reforms carried out in relation to political, institutional, historical experiences, and existing challenges.

GYLA has been monitoring and evaluating the activities of the High Council of Justice of Georgia every year since 2012. The 9th monitoring report was published during the reporting period. According to the document, the main challenge of the system is still the clan governance.



The organization also monitored the process of nominating and appointing judges to the Supreme Court. Due to the renewal of the composition of the Supreme Court, the report prepared by GYLA on the activities of the Plenum in 2020 was significant. The document analyzes the decisions made by the collegial body and the regulatory framework for the powers of the plenum in a comparative context.

Two small studies were also published during the reporting period:

1. Models of the Supreme Courts in the EU Member States - reviews models of courts in EU member states where the justice system is similar to Georgia;





2. The Rule of Staffing the Constitutional Court in Georgia and EU Member States -analyzes the basis for the staffing of the Constitutional Court in Georgia and the EU member states, where all three branches of government participate in the formation of the Constitutional Court.

All of the above analytical documents were prepared as part of the project, Promoting the Rule of Law in Georgia (PROLoG), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the East-West Management Institute (EWMi). The project was completed in June 2021.

Two blogs were also published during the reporting period (The Narrow Circle - Distribution of Clan Members to Managerial Positions in the Court, and The Key Challenges of the Justice System from the Third Cycle of Universal Periodic Review (UPR)) and reviews on various issues. From September 2021, GYLA has continued to monitor the judiciary and to promote judicial reform with the financial support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands under the project - Monitoring the Judiciary.

# PUBLIC GOVERNANCE

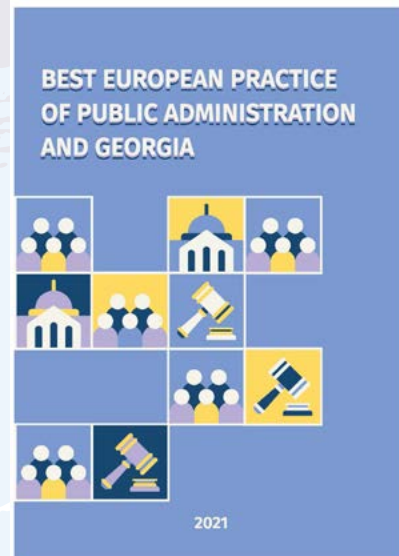
In 2020-2021, GYLA's Democratic Institutions Support Program, together with the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), implemented the EU-funded project Supporting Public Governance Reform through Civic Monitoring and Involvement. GYLA studied two areas: policy planning and coordination, public finance management. The project created a digital platform PAR tracker, which enabled the general public to receive information about the progress of public governance reform.

Since December 2020, GYLA has published 5 monitoring reports. It issued Monitoring Reports for the First and Second Half of 2020, within the scope of the Policy Planning and Coordination, and 1-Year Final Report (2020), within the scope of the Public Finance, and 2-Year Final Reports in both areas. In the process of working on the documents, the organization actively cooperated with the responsible agencies (Government Administration, the Ministries of Justice and Finance), sharing their research findings and recommendations.

In the area of Public governance, GYLA's Democratic Institutions Support Program also explored good policy planning and coordination practices on the example of 5 EU countries. The study The Best European Public governance Practices and Georgia was prepared, which was presented by GYLA together with IDFI.

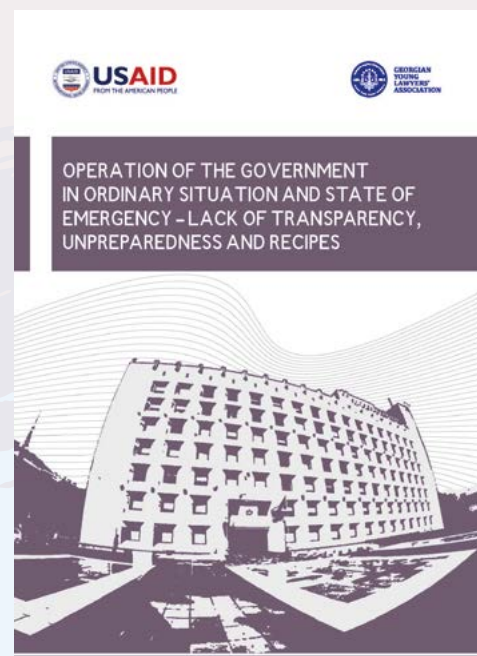
For a theoretical study of public governance, the organization published the blog posts: The Majority, the Minority, and the Technical Governments - How to Recognize Them, The Scope of the President's Veto. In addition, two more blogs were prepared on the transition from an authoritarian past to a democratic system in Chile and the consequent changes to the country's constitution (Chile's Path from Authoritarian Rule to Democracy and The Legacy of Dictatorship - Impunity in Chile).

The pandemic that has been spreading around the world since December 2019 has led to the declaration of a state of emergency in a number of



countries and the imposition of appropriate regulations. This was followed by a reshuffle of powers in higher state bodies. As a result, the power of the executive has increased and extended to legislative and, in part, judicial functions.

The study prepared by GYLA analyzes the activities of the executive branch during the State of emergency and the problems faced by the states due to the extraordinary situation created. One of the main challenges was the possible uncontrolled sovereignty of governments in the process of declaring a state of emergency, introducing appropriate rules, and enforcing them. As in other countries, there was a need in Georgia to assess the functioning and competencies of the government during the State of emergency, the basis and motives for the decisions made, as well as the tendency for the distribution of powers within the government during this period. The study presents an assessment of the activities of the Government of Georgia through the analysis of the normative framework related to the regulation of the State of emergency announced in March 2020 and the actions beyond it. The best practices and experiences of foreign countries are also studied. The document discusses the principle of government work in ordinary situations under the legislation of both Georgian and nine EU member states. GYLA submitted the findings and recommendations of the research to the relevant entities, including the government administration. Working on the document and preparing it was made possible by the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Good Governance Initiative (GGI).



The three blog posts were also published within the scope of the project: The parallel emergency management - Operational Level, The parallel emergency management - Interagency Council, Emergency as a Medical Prescription.

An essential role in the process of improving the electoral environment is the foreign policy course focused on European integration and the fulfillment of the obligations set out in the Association Agreement with the European Union. In April 2021, GYLA held an online discussion entitled Georgia's Road to European Integration: A Crisis That Nobody Needs. Speakers at the event were: Marketa Gregorova - Member of the European Parliament; Natalie Sabanadze - Ambassador of Georgia to the Kingdom of Belgium and

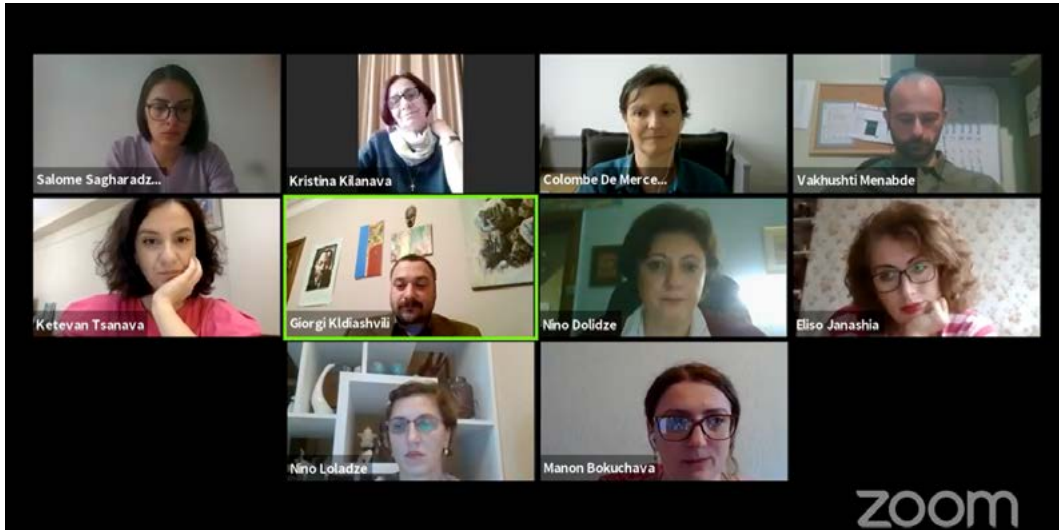




Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Head of the Mission of Georgian to the EU in 2013-2021; Steven Blockmans - Research Director, CEPS; Franziska Smolnik - Eurasia Deputy Head of Research Division, the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. The discussion was moderated by Teona Lavrelashvili - European Party Research Program Manager at the University of Leuven.

The political crisis created in the country after the 2020 parliamentary elections have made it especially necessary to raise awareness and actively advocate for democratic governance. In April-May 2021, an online conference Georgia - The Future of Democracy, was organized by GYLA, the German Embassy, and the Council of Europe Office in Georgia. Four sessions were held during the conference: (1) What is Democracy? How Can We Measure It and Evaluate Its Progress? (2) Thirty Years of Democratic Development in Georgia - Achievements and Challenges; (3) At What Stage Is Georgia Now? What Needs to Be Done in the Future? (4) Accountable Government. Scholars and politicians were invited to each session to discuss the achievements, needs, and challenges of Georgia's democracy. The conference was attended by academicians, representatives of civil society, the diplomatic corps, and international organizations. Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions to the speakers.





## LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

During the reporting period, GYLA completed an ongoing project with the support of GIZ, which aimed to determine the efficiency of public service delivery in the municipalities of Georgia. The study included an assessment of the quality of both newly introduced services and existing mechanisms. As a result, in 2021, the article Access to Municipal Services was published.

In addition, the monitoring of Public Governance reform provided support to civil society in the regions to increase their involvement in Public Governance reform. In 2021, 6 projects were funded, in which a total of 15 organizations participated, and their activities were implemented in 26 municipalities. A regional conference coordinated by GYLA was held in September. The non-governmental sector, government officials, and civil society discussed public governance challenges at the local levels. 0222

In addition to monitoring, GYLA's task was to raise awareness of the ongoing reforms in the target municipalities, including policy planning and coordination issues. For this purpose, GYLA plans to conduct training by the end of 2021.



## ELECTIONS

With the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), GYLA continued to implement the project Free, Fair, and Equal Election Political Cycle 2019-2022 in 2020-2021. The project aims to promote the improvement of the election environment through monitoring and evidence-based advocacy. The organization monitors current political processes and develops relevant recommendations to achieve this goal. During the reporting period, GYLA was actively involved in the process of reforming the election legislation, as well as the re-staffing of the Central Election Commission. Numerous statements, conclusions, recommendations, and research in this area have been published.

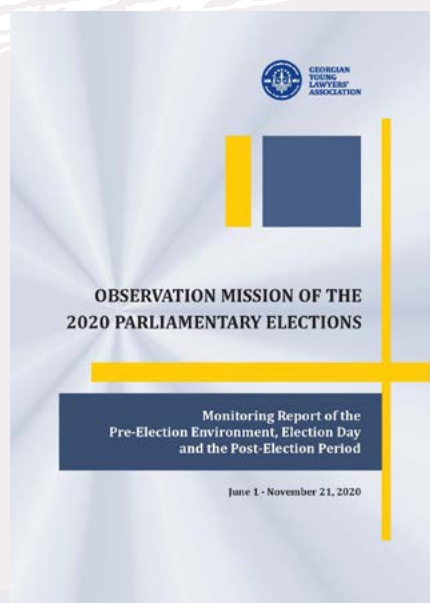
In July 2021, the Democratic Institutions Support Program produced an extensive article entitled - What Should (not) We Expect from the October 2 Elections. Blog posts were also published: Tendencies to Control the Will of the Electorate in Georgia and Another Negative Conclusion from the Venice Commission and ODIHR. The latter concerns the international evaluation of initiated bills on changes in the registration rules and financing of political parties. In addition, the blog Principle of Equality of Voting at the Local Level was prepared, which reviews the best practices related to equality of votes in local self-government elections. A comparative study on the staffing models of the election administration was also published in 2021: The Election Administration as an Independent Body.



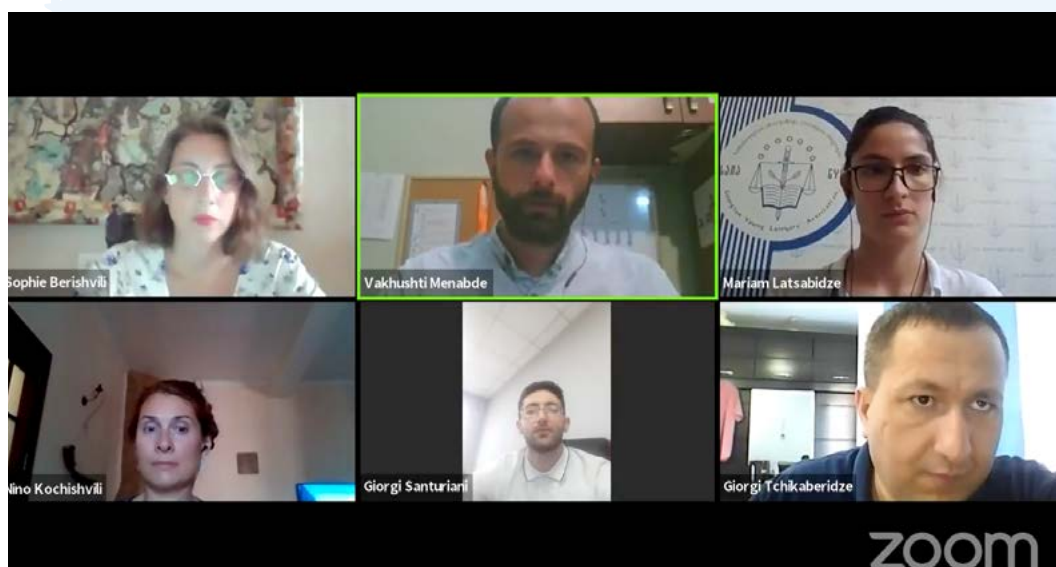
GYLA prepares monthly newsletters in the direction of monitoring the political environment, one of the components of the project Free, Fair, and Equal Election Political Cycle 2019-2022. During the reporting period, 12 such documents were published, describing all the important political events that impacted the political environment. Their presentation was held by the organization in July 2021. Meanwhile, in July and August 2021, network meetings were held across the country with representatives of political parties to assess the environment for the 2021 local self-government elections.

Developing a political equality index, which aims to measure the degree of electoral-political equality of various groups, including vulnerable groups, is an integral part of the work

carried out to assess and improve the electoral environment. It shows how close the connection is between the institutional framework, political programs, political decisions, and the needs of vulnerable groups in society. The project aims to develop an appropriate methodology for research on the issue of political equality, explore opportunities for vulnerable groups to access institutionalized politics, and prepare the first index of political equality. During the reporting period, GYLA, through groups of experts, has already developed a methodology based on which it started its research activities.



In the framework of the project funded by the Open Society Foundation – The Long-Term Observation Mission for the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in Georgia - GYLA observed the pre-election environment. The aim of the project was to promote free, equal, and competitive elections. In 2020, the organization published the Fourth Interim Report of the Long-Term Observation Mission, which assesses the election campaign before the voting day of the parliamentary elections, the last week, and the pre-election period of the second round. In July 2021, with the financial supports of the Norwegian Embassy in Georgia, the British Embassy, the European Union, and the Open Society Foundation, a summary report of the 2020 Parliamentary Election Observation Mission was published, covering the assessment of the pre-election, the election day and post-election periods.



With the financial support of the Open Society Foundation, GYLA has also been monitored the ongoing political processes in the country and the pre-election environment as part of its Long-Term Local Election Observation Mission. In the first report, which covers the period from May 1 to July 31, 2021, GYLA assessed the pre-election environment (before the entry into force of the election campaign regulations). In September, the organization also released a second interim report, which analyzes the pre-election campaign and includes information on the facts revealed from August 3 to September 24. The third interim report reviews the events from September 25 to October 24. Finally, it is planned to publish the final report of the 2021 local self-government election mission.



As part of its short-term local self-government election observation mission, GYLA also monitored the voting process during both the first and second rounds of the elections. The first round mission was carried out with the financial support of the British Embassy. As a result, on October 2, the polling day, up to 350 GYLA district and precinct observers were represented in 10 municipalities across the country.





The second round mission consisted of 247 observers and covered 9 municipalities in 4 regions (Tbilisi, Rustavi, Senaki, Martvili, Zugdidi, Tsalenjikha, Chkhorotsku, Batumi, Khelvachauri). GYLA was able to observe the October 30 polling day with the financial support of the British Embassy and the Open Society Foundation.

GYLA Central Election Headquarters and Regional Headquarters were functioning during both rounds. Based on the information provided from the regions, the Central Headquarters provided timely information to the public and disseminated announcements on the results of the mission.





# B

## LEGAL SUPPORT

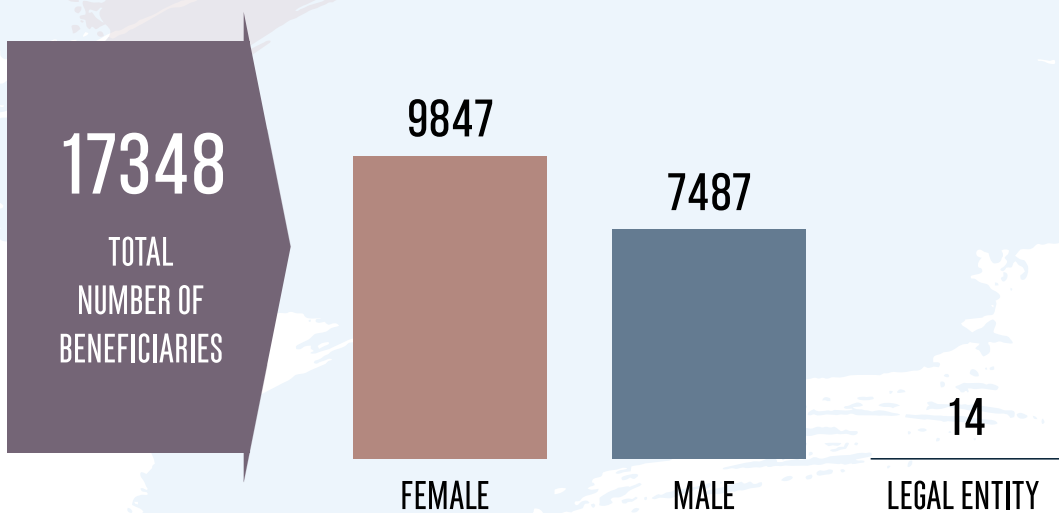


The Legal Aid Program of the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association works in 4 priority directions:

- ➔ Legal Support
- ➔ Strategic Litigation
- ➔ Use of enforcement mechanisms
- ➔ Support for Hague Court and Georgia situation investigation

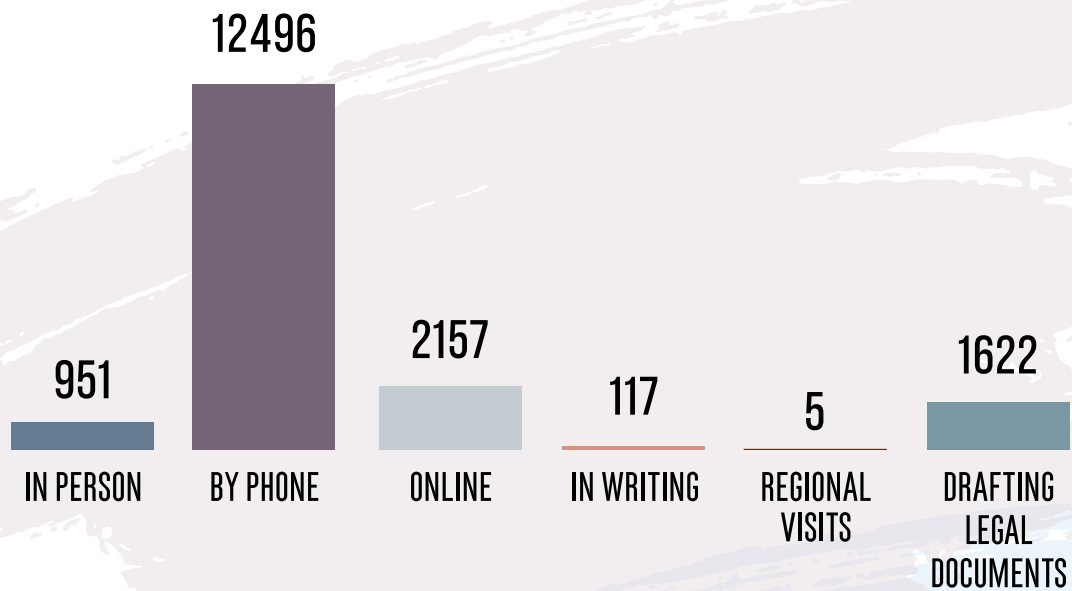
## LEGAL SUPPORT

GYLA provided legal assistance to more than 17,300 people during the reporting period.





Types of legal aid provided:



As of October 31, 2021,

GYLA has 298 ongoing cases at the national level



## SUCCESSFUL CASES

GYLA successfully completed 49 cases at the national level during the reporting period. Here are some of them.

### ■ **Material and moral damages were imposed on the Ministry of Internal Affairs in favor of the person injured in the mine explosion**

The victim was in Adjara on August 21, 2004, for a vacation. After the Rose Revolution, in 2004, by the order of the then commander of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara Aslan Abashidze, the Choloki bridge near the entrance of Adjara was mined. Mines were also placed on the whole territory of Adjara. While driving by the seaside in a car, the victim exploded on one of such anti-tank mines. As a result, they underwent amputation of both legs. In 2005, they appealed to the Tbilisi City Court and demanded compensation from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The dispute has been going on until this time. Finally, based on the decision that entered into force, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia was ordered to compensate the material and moral damage in favor of the citizen.



The decision was based on the fact that the State had information about the mining of the area around Chakvi but did not take preventive measures to clear the area in a timely and complete manner. This created a situation dangerous for human life.

A complaint was also lodged with the European Court seeking a finding of a violation of Article 2 (right to life) of the Convention. On July 21, 2014, the Government of Georgia submitted a unilateral declaration acknowledging a violation of Article 2 of the Convention for failing to fulfill its positive obligation to clear the territory.

■ **Due to delays in proceedings, the National Bureau of Enforcement was ordered to pay compensation to the citizen**

According to the decision of the Tbilisi Court of Appeals, the LEPL National Bureau was ordered to compensate the damage in the form of unreceived income due to the delay in the proceedings. The case concerned the enforcement of the 2012 decision of the Tbilisi City Court, which ordered the transport company to reimburse the costs of treatment (prosthetics) in favor of the plaintiff.

The court found the inaction of the Bureau illegal, which was manifested in the sale of the land owned by the debtor with a delay of about 3 years. The court clarified that the Bureau could immediately assess the real estate and sell it at auction, and the delay in this process caused the plaintiff damage in the form of unreceived income.

■ **Public Defender of Georgia has established discrimination based on other opinion against Bolt Food couriers**

The Public Defender of Georgia adopted a recommendation, according to which direct discrimination against the couriers of Bolt Food on the grounds of other opinions has been established. The adoption of this recommendation was preceded by the company sending a notice to the couriers about the tariff reduction. After receiving the notification, some of the couriers contacted the local representation of Bolt Food. They received an explanation that they got instructions from the Estonian central office on the definition of working conditions. After that, the couriers decided not to switch on the application and refused to accept orders. The couriers again appealed to the company administration for negotiations without any result. In response to the protest on the same day, the company restricted access to the application to approximately 25 couriers (including applicants). On the reasons for the ban on access to the program, the so-called support group explained to the couriers that there had been instances of their participation with the group from which organized activities had taken place that had disrupted their service.



Based on the analysis of the circumstances and evidence in the case, the Public Defender indicates that the interference with the applicants' rights was, in fact, based on their other opinions and their protest, which was found to be unacceptable to the employer. The defendant failed to present a proper and convincing argument to refute the Public Defender's allegation of discriminatory treatment. Accordingly, the company was instructed to immediately restore the couriers' access to the Bolt Food application.

■ **Due to the violation of property rights, the City Hall and the Public Registry were ordered to compensate for the damages in favor of the citizen**

Tbilisi City Court instructed Tbilisi City Hall and the National Agency of Public Registry to pay \$14,000 as compensation for material damage to the citizen. The court found that the illegal actions of the mentioned administrative bodies violated the property right of the citizen. In particular, in 2005, the applicant registered the land. In 2011, the LEPL Property Management Agency applied to the National Agency of Public Registry to register the ownership of the self-governing unit on the same plot. The latter approved the application without investigating the matter, after which the Property Management Agency auctioned the land to a private individual.

Tbilisi City Court instructed the Tbilisi Municipality City Hall and the National Agency of Public Registry to compensate the citizen for material damages in the amount of 14,000 USD. The court found that the above-mentioned administrative bodies' wrongful actions violated the citizen's right to property. In particular, the mentioned person registered the right of ownership on the land plot in 2005. Nevertheless, LEPL, the Property Management Agency, applied to the National Agency of Public Registry in 2011 requesting registration of the same land plot for the self-governing unit, which the Agency complied with without investigating the matter. After the property rights registration, the Property Management Agency sold the property to the private entity through an auction.

The court clarified that it was necessary to properly investigate the circumstances of the case when applying for registration of a land plot in the name of self-government. As a person becomes the owner of the land plot after registration in the Public Registry, the administrative body, when applying to the registration service for registration of a real estate as its property, should have had information on the land plot in the Public Registry, including in case of inaccurate registration of the land plot. The court also noted that the National Agency of Public Registry, as the registering authority, had an obligation to make a decision as a result of the investigation of the circumstances of the case.

#### ■ The IDP family will receive housing

GYLA protected the interests of the IDP family, which was refused housing by the LEPL – Agency for Internally Displaced persons, Eco-migrants, and Livelihood. As a basis for the refusal, the agency indicated that the family lived in an apartment owned by a close relative, and there was no need to provide alternative accommodation.

GYLA argued in court that the agency's refusal was based on a misinterpretation of the law and that living in an apartment owned by a close relative did not deprive the IDP family of the right to be provided with alternative accommodation. The courts of all three instances shared GYLA's position. As a result, the IDP woman and her minor children will receive housing.



■ **Gori Municipality City Hall was ordered to pay for the restoration of a house damaged by the war**

GYLA represented a person whose residential house located in the village of Zemo Nikozi, Gori Municipality, was damaged during the August 2008 hostilities, making it impossible to live in it. For the affected family, Gori Municipality City Hall has been refusing to rebuild the house for years on the grounds that the budget did not have adequate funding.

With the help of the GYLA office in Gori, the victim applied to the court and demanded compensation of GEL 24,893.05 needed for the reconstruction of the house. At the court hearing, the municipality stated that the rehabilitation of the damaged homes was not done under the local budget; the funds were allocated by the Ministry of Finance of Georgia from the Reserve Fund of the Government of Georgia. Consequently, they had no obligation to reimburse. On the other hand, GYLA argued Gori Municipality was obliged to finance the rehabilitation of the plaintiff's house from the Municipal Reserve Fund.

And that if it was insufficient to reimburse the amount, it should have made a substantiated request for a special transfer to the Government of Georgia. The court of all three instances shared the position of GYLA and ordered the Gori Municipality City Hall to pay GEL 24,893.05 to the plaintiff.

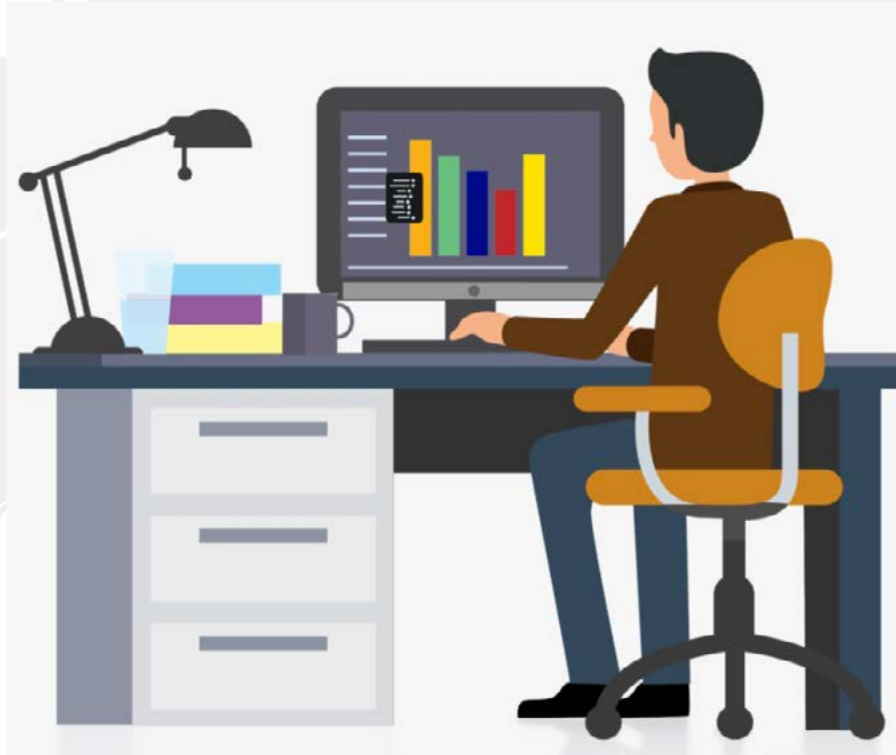
■ **An electro technician affected by an industrial injury will receive the allowance**

GYLA defended the electrician who received an industrial injury in 1989 and was awarded the appropriate monthly reimbursement. For years, the monthly salary was not recalculated for the position of the electro technician monitoring the electricity in accordance with the current salary. It amounted to only 60 GEL per month.

With the assistance of GYLA, he applied to the court and requested reimbursement of the unpaid allowance and a corresponding recalculation of the monthly allowance. The dispute was resolved in the Tbilisi City Court in favor of the plaintiff. Defendant JSC Georgian State Electro system was instructed to pay an unpaid allowance in favor of the victim - GEL 17,280, as well as GEL 550 per month before reaching the retirement age. The defendant appealed the court's decision of the first instance to the higher instance courts; however, the decision was not reversed and entered into legal force.

### ■ An illegally dismissed public servant has been reinstated

GYLA represented a public servant dismissed on June 17, 2021, who was employed in the inspectio applied for their dismissal on the grounds of political discrimination, but within 14 working days, in accordance with the law, they requested to leave it unconsidered. Nevertheless, on June 17, City Hall issued an order dismissing them.



On July 16, 2021, a dismissed civil servant, with the help of GYLA, appealed to the Gurjaani District Court, requesting the establishment of discriminatory treatment, the annulment of a dismissal order, reinstatement in service, reimbursement for forced unpaid salary, and compensation for moral damages. In order to secure the lawsuit, GYLA requested that the Gurjaani Municipality City Hall be banned from appointing another person to this position for life which was upheld by the court.

Following the admission of the claim, the Gurjaani Municipality City Hall annulled the dismissal order on its initiative and reinstated the public servant to the same position they had previously held. They also reimbursed the unpaid salary and retained the class rank awarded before their dismissal.

■ **With GYLA support, a citizen won the case against L. Sakvarelidze National Center for Disease Control and Public Health**

GYLA protected a person registered in the Unified Electronic Blood Donor Database as HIV-infected. Because of this, their right to be a blood donor was restricted. L. Sakvarelidze National Center for Disease Control and Public Health named the reason for the ban the examination conducted by the Blood Bank Ltd. in 2012, which indicated that the person was infected with HIV. It is noteworthy that they were only informed about the 2012 survey in 2020 when they were going to donate blood to help a friend.

The applicant presented the results of a survey conducted in 2015, 2016, and 2017, according to which they had not been diagnosed with HIV. To dispel any doubts, on December 4, 2020, they again applied to the Scientific-Practical Center for Infectious Diseases, AIDS and Clinical Immunology, from which they received a negative answer on December 12, 2020 (no anti-HIV antibodies were found).

Despite presenting the relevant results, the Center refused to update the information on the applicant. The reason given was that the current legislation did not provide for the restoration of status for donors rejected due to a positive result of a blood-borne infection screening test, including in the case of a negative result of a confirmatory test. Accordingly, the Center did not consider it necessary to update the information.







With the help of GYLA, the applicant applied to the Office of the State Inspector. The administrative body found that the Unified Electronic Database of Blood Donors does not allow chronologically and consistently displaying information about the donor's health status, even when the following data contradicts the previous one. Consequently, all persons who have access to the database may be notified of outdated information about the subject. The latter themselves have a limited opportunity to post updated information about their health in the database.

According to the State Inspector, they can not discuss the issue of restoring the right to donate to a person because it is a medical category. However, health information is particularly sensitive, and people have a constitutional right to have a correct and complete picture of their health in front of all those entities that process data through a Unified Electronic Database of Blood Donors.

Accordingly, L. Sakvarelidze National Center for Disease Control and Public Health was instructed to add the technical functionality of changing the donor's health status to the Unified Electronic Database of Blood Donors within 2 months of the decision and reflecting the results of the applicant's HIV testing after 2012.



### ■ 2 social workers who had been dismissed illegally were reinstated

GYLA defended the rights of 2 illegally dismissed social workers. They were released on January 31, 2020, from the LEPL Social Service Agency after its reorganization. As a result of the changes, the rights and responsibilities of guardianship and custody were transferred to the LEPL State Agency for Care and Victims of Trafficking, which, if necessary, should have transferred the employees of the Social Service Agency to the relevant positions without competition. Nevertheless, a number of social workers were dismissed without justification under the pretext of reorganization.

With the help of GYLA, two social workers who had appealed the Kutaisi and Telavi City Courts successfully completed their cases in the first instance. The courts fully complied with their requests: they annulled the dismissal orders, instructed the defendant to reinstate them in the service, and compensated them for the forced absence from work. Defendant no longer appealed the decisions to higher instances, reinstated social workers in service, and reimbursed compensation.



## STRATEGIC LITIGATION

### STRATEGIC LITIGATION IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

GYLA is currently working on 30 cases in the Constitutional Court. During the reporting period, the organization filed 12 claims. 8 of them were successfully completed. In 6 of these cases, the court granted the claim. In one, it made a significant explanation of the norm, and in one, the problem was resolved before hearings.

#### *NEW CASES*

The lawsuits filed during the reporting period addressed the following issues:

- The constitutionality of the order of the Minister of Education and Science, which favored persons between the ages of 19 and 29 over admission to the vocational school over applicants over the age of 29, which constitutes age discrimination;

- The Resolution of the Government of Georgia does not provide for the participation of a person with appropriate qualifications during the evaluation of a public servant. For example, an economist does not assess an economic entity, thus violating the right guaranteed by Article 18 of the Constitution - a fair hearing in an administrative body;
- According to Georgian law, a single man does not have the right to use the services of a surrogate mother, as well as an egg donor bank. At the same time, a single woman has access to a sperm donor bank, while couples can join a surrogacy program. Consequently, a single man is deprived of the opportunity to have a child, thus violating the right to privacy guaranteed by Article 15 of the Constitution;
- The National Communications Commission, misinterpreting the decision of the Constitutional Court, has allowed itself to impose a sanction on the media for airing an obscene program. The Constitutional Court ruled on November 10, 2009, that only the court, and not the commission, had the right to respond to the obscene program. In the lawsuit filed, GYLA argues that such authority of the Communications Commission is contrary to the requirements of Article 17, Paragraph 5 of the Constitution, according to which freedom of expression may be restricted "only by law";
- Upon reaching the age of 55, a firefighter is automatically dismissed from service without being assessed for their ability to perform their duties properly as a firefighter, which is discriminatory based on age;



- The time limit for appealing to the lawfulness of the search in court is calculated not from the moment of delivery of the decision on the legal recognition of the search to the interested person but the moment of completion of the search. This violates the right to a fair trial;
- The legislation allows the High Council of Justice to extend the powers of a Supreme Court judge whose 10-year term has expired. This violates the right of access to the court of proper jurisdiction for those whose cases are heard by such judges;
- An individual cannot delegate the right to sign a constitutional claim to their representative, while a leadership or an authorized representative of a legal entity has such an opportunity by law;
- The National Archives encrypt personal data, does not release criminal cases related to Soviet repression, including in an encrypted form. At the same time, those interested in accessing the archive are required to prove the person's death about whom they wish to obtain information. Also, an unreasonably high fee is imposed for obtaining a copy of the materials stored in the archives;



- The State did not fully reimburse the recourse compensation to those employed in civil aviation who had their monthly allowance reduced on August 17, 2007;
- Equal voting rights are not protected in local self-government elections. For example, 5935 voters in Dusheti and 735 voters in Magaroskari and Ukanapshavi elect an equal number (one each) majoritarian MP in Dusheti City Council;
- The appealed norm provides for the possibility of deferment of compulsory military service if he/she is the only child. According to the relevant administrative bodies, the term "the only child" includes only the concept of a mother's only child and does not refer to a person who is the only child of a father. Therefore, the above entry in the law does not apply to the latter. GYLA believes that such an interpretation of the disputed norm discriminates against the persons who are the only child of a mother and those who are the only child of a father and contradicts the principle of equality protected by the Constitution.

## *SUCCESSFUL CASES*

### **1. Constitutionality of copying criminal case materials for the victim**

On December 18, 2020, the Constitutional Court upheld GYLA's claim and declared the norm unconstitutional, which used to put an injunction on the prosecutor banning to give the victim the opportunity of obtaining copies of the criminal case file. Prior to this decision, the victim could get familiar with the case materials at the prosecutor's office or the investigative body under the supervision of the relevant prosecutor or investigator. The Constitutional Court found a violation of Article Paragraph 2, Article 18 of the Constitution of Georgia, which guarantees the right of every person to be familiarized with information about them in a public institution.

### **2. Constitutionality of obligatory confiscation of a weapon of violation**

On November 12, 2020, the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional the normative content of the Code of Administrative Offenses that restricted a judge's discretion and imperatively ordered them to confiscate the weapon of violation - regardless of individual circumstances.

The plaintiff company extracted 1 m<sup>3</sup> of sand beyond the proper license, the cost of which was 20 tetri, and the total amount of damage to the environment was 201 GEL, of which 200 GEL was the cost of the license fee. The net amount of damage to the environment was 1 GEL. The company was held liable for the act based on the disputed norm and was deprived of a tractor worth \$ 54,650 as an additional penalty.

The Constitutional Court noted that the appealed article did not allow the judge to consider the case and to determine the necessity of confiscating the weapon of violation by themselves. The judge did not have the right to consider different factual circumstances and personality traits of the offender. Accordingly, the disputed norm was declared unconstitutional by the court concerning the first and second paragraphs of Article 19 of the Constitution of Georgia.

### **3. Constitutionality of banning the temporary placement of banners at the private property in Tbilis**

On December 11, 2020, the Constitutional Court of Georgia upheld GYLA's complaint against a provision of the Code of Administrative Offenses that temporarily banned the placement of banners at the private property during a spontaneous protest.

According to GYLA, the Constitutional Court had already made a decision on this issue on July 4, 2019, in the case Besik Katamadze, Davit Mzhavanadze, and Ilia Malazonia v. Parliament of Georgia, which was also conducted by GYLA. This case, apart from Tbilisi, also concerned the temporary placement of banners in other settlements of Georgia during the spontaneous protest. The Constitutional Court declared the impugned provision invalid by means of the prevailing norm in a regulated session in the procedure of summary proceedings.

### **4. The legality of using the maximum period of administrative detention without proper justification**

On December 28, the Constitutional Court of Georgia did not consider GYLA's case for hearing on merits. However, it made an important explanation in its ruling. According to which it was inadmissible to make full use of the 48-hour period if the person was identified within one hour of arrest, or an administrative offense report had already been



drawn up, and there was no longer a need to detain to eliminate the risk of a repeat offense or implement the final court decision.

#### **5. Discriminative nature of the 48-hour administrative detention**

On December 29, 2020, the Constitutional Court upheld another complaint filed by GYLA and declared the norm, according to which, if the 12-hour period of detention of a person coincided with the non-working hours of the court, the arrest of such person lasted for 48 hours, unconstitutional.

Working hours in the courts of the first instance and appellate instance are determined from 09:30 am to 6 pm. The period beyond this time is considered as non-working time. For example, if a person is arrested at 5 am, 12 hours after his or her arrest runs at 5:00 pm when the court is still open. In a given situation, administrative detention may not last longer than 12 hours and must end at 5 pm. In the second case, if a person is arrested at 6 pm, the 12 hours of detention of such person will end at 6:00 am the following day; therefore, such person should have been detained for two days, since 12 hours of detention expired when the court had no working hours (6 am is a non-working time for the court). Thus, the mentioned norm put such persons in an unfavorable position, and they had to spend more than 2 days in the temporary detention isolator of the police. The Constitutional Court found such a different treatment unjustified and therefore discriminatory.



## **6. Constitutionality of quarantine restrictions**

On February 11, 2021, the Constitutional Court partially upheld GYLA's claim and considered it unconstitutional to impose a restriction on labor rights under the Public Health Law, as it was the ordinary and non-organic law. According to the first paragraph of Article 26 of the Constitution, freedom of labor is regulated by organic law.

The Constitutional Court dismissed the claim in part on freedom of movement. It made a decision that the curfew, which meant forcing people to stay home from 9 pm to 5 am, was not seen as a matter of fundamental importance and as an intensive interference with their rights. According to the court, it was permissible to regulate the curfew by the by-law normative act.

## **7. Age discrimination in vocational education**

On July 2, 2021, after GYLA filed a claim to the Constitutional Court, the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia revoked the Order on the Approval of the Vocational Testing Regulations, which preferred applicants aged 19 to 29 over those who are over 29 to be admitted to vocational schools. Although the Constitutional Court has not yet heard this claim, the Minister himself has eliminated the problem of discrimination.

## **8. The ambiguity of an "anti-social activity"**

On July 15, 2021, the Constitutional Court upheld a complaint on the normative contents of Article 171(1) of the Criminal Code of Georgia that envisages criminal liability for the engagement of minors in anti-social activities. GYLA argued that "anti-social activity" was a vague term and allowed to be interpreted differently. To prove this, the organization submitted two rulings of the Supreme Court. In both cases, the adults engaged minors into a robbery.

In one case, the Supreme Court ruled on July 6, 2007. According to it, engaging a minor to commit robbery was an "anti-social activity" and was punishable under Article 171 of the Criminal Code. The verdict in the second case is dated January 3, 2008. In this case, too, the adult committed the crime with the help of a minor. This time, the Supreme Court of Georgia did not consider engagement a minor to commit robbery as an "anti-social activity." It explained that the wording of Article 171 of the Criminal Code, an "anti-social activity," meant the involvement of a minor in an act that did not fall into the category of a crime. Such an action act be, for example, supporting a minor to become an alcohol abuser.

GYLA's position was partially shared by the Constitutional Court. It examined the Supreme Court's apparently contradictory practice, saying it was inconceivable whether engagement a minor to commit a crime was considered an "anti-social activity." Therefore, the court ruled a violation of Article 31, Paragraph 9 of the Constitution (no punishment without law).

## STRATEGIC LITIGATION IN INTERNATIONAL MECHANISM

GYLA is currently litigating 114 cases at both the legal and enforcement stages in international mechanisms. During the reporting period, the organization filed 2 new claims with the European Court of Human Rights and won 3.

At the same time, GYLA continues to communicate actively with the European Court of Justice regarding ongoing cases. In 1 case, the organization submitted an additional legal argument to the applicant's alleged violation of property rights. Also, in 1 case, the court was informed of the applicants' position on the possibility of a settlement agreement—the case related to the interests of the victims of the "borderization" by Russia. In addition, the organization has started updating the data of more than 350 people affected by the 2008 war in the European Court of Human Rights for the purpose of signing new forms of power of attorney and informing the European Court about the status of the applicants.



## ***NEW CASES***

GYLA filed two new complaints with the European Court of Human Rights on behalf of journalists and demonstrators affected by the dispersal of the anti-occupation rally on June 20-21, 2019 (Baghashvili and others v. Georgia; Kurdovanidze and others v. Georgia). Complaints concern the illegality and disproportion of the force used by the State, ill-treatment in and subsequent detention, obstruction of journalistic activities, and ineffective investigations. In addition, GYLA argues the legislative regulation of active special facilities. Complaints filed by GYLA justify the violation of the following articles: European Convention on the Prevention of Torture, Article 3 (freedom from torture), Article 10 (freedom of expression- only in the case of media representatives), Article 11 (freedom of assembly and association - only in the case of demonstrators), and Article 13 (right to an effective remedy).

The European Court of Human Rights began hearing these complaints during the reporting period. The organization, meanwhile, presented to the court the applicants' position on the settlement agreement.

The applicants' interests are represented by GYLA in cooperation with the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC).

## ***SUCCESSFUL CASES***

- **Tlashadze and Kakashvili v. Georgia (Complaint №41674/10)**
- **Kalandia v. Georgia (Complaint №57255/10)**
- **Shubitidze v. Georgia (Complaint №43854/12)**

In these cases, the European Court of Human Rights made 3 judgments that Georgia was liable to the applicants for violation of Article 6 (1) of the European Convention (the right to a fair trial).

The applicants represented various opposition parties/movements and had taken an active part in mass anti-government protests in 2009. They argued that law enforcement officials planted firearms and/or drugs, and subsequent justice was not done properly. According to the European Court, the applicants' searches were conducted based on operative information, the accuracy, and reliability of which were not properly assessed by the national courts. Also, the applicants, in accordance with the legal record in force at the time, were not allowed to invite the attesting witnesses during the search. In addition, the European Court noted in all three judgments that the cases presented

evidence of police officers who were involved in the search and arrest of the applicants while at the same time investigating their cases. Consequently, they were interested in the outcome of the case. Also, their testimonies were not confirmed by any other credible and neutral evidence. As a result, the European Court found that the national courts had not thoroughly examined the applicants' arguments that the police planted illegal items on them. In addition, the Court also clarified that the evidence in the case was not strong enough to deliver a conviction.

The Court imposed an obligation on the State to compensate moral damages of EUR 3,600 to each applicant.



## APPLYING EXECUTIVE MECHANISMS

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS AND RULINGS OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

During the reporting period, GYLA submitted alternative reports to the Parliament of Georgia, which assessed the general measures taken by State to implement the decisions and rulings of the European Court of Human Rights against Georgia. The reports concern

the status of the execution of the cases of the Identity Group and the Tsintsabadze Group. As a result of the analysis, the following issues were identified: The existence of a criminal subculture in penitentiary institutions; Gaps in the investigation of allegations of ill-treatment, including the mandate of the State Inspector's Office; The vulnerable rights situation of the LGBTQ community and religious minorities; Lack of a special division, in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to fight hate crimes; The problem of identifying discriminatory motives in the investigation of such crimes and the lack of a relevant article in the Code of Administrative Offenses of Georgia.

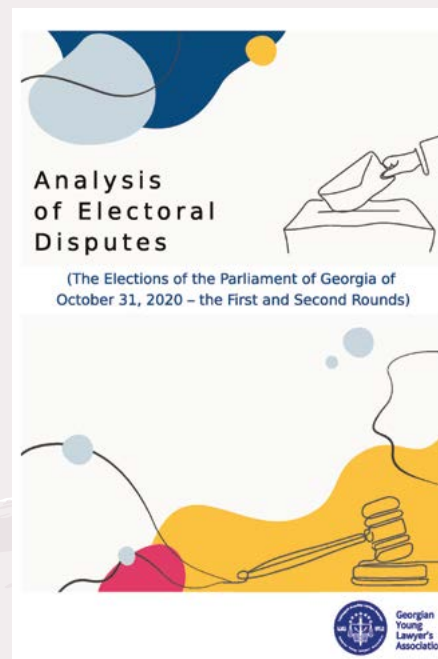
GYLA also submitted a report on implementing European Court decisions/rulings to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe as the relevant international oversight body. Opinions concerned the implementation of the cases of the Identity Group and the Rostomashvili Group. The cases of the Rostomashvili group include facts related to the violation of Article 6 (1) of the European Convention (right to a fair trial), on which the court found a violation by the Georgian authorities. In these cases, GYLA also demanded that the committee use an enhanced oversight mechanism instead of the standard one. GYLA addressed the Committee of Ministers together with the International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) regarding the execution of Rostomashvili's case.

## PUBLICATIONS

**During the reporting period, the Legal Assistance Program prepared 6 documents/reports:**

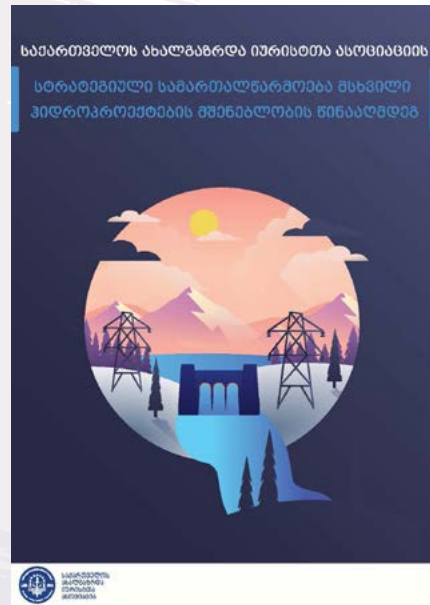
### ■ Analysis of electoral disputes

The report assesses the disputes related to the 2020 parliamentary elections both on the pre-election and on the voting day, and in the post-election period. The document presents the main shortcomings identified in the process of their hearing, as well as analyzes the problematic practices reflected in the decisions of election administrations and courts. Based on the analysis, recommendations have been developed, the implementation of which will help to eliminate legislative barriers and address the challenges in the area of general approaches.



## ■ Strategic litigation against the construction of large hydropower projects

In recent years, the construction of a number of large hydropower plants in different regions of the country has been announced. Part of them have already been built, and some are planned to be implemented in the near future. Large hydropower projects with particular intensity affect the local population, change their living conditions, have a drastic and inevitable impact on the environment. The analysis of the construction projects shows that the process of issuing permits by the State is going on with improper involvement of locals, procedural and substantive shortcomings, which leads to a fair protest from the public. GYLA has been defending the interests of citizens against the construction of hydropower plants since 2014. The document reviews the 4 cases in the organization's proceedings and the problems that arise in the legal proceedings.



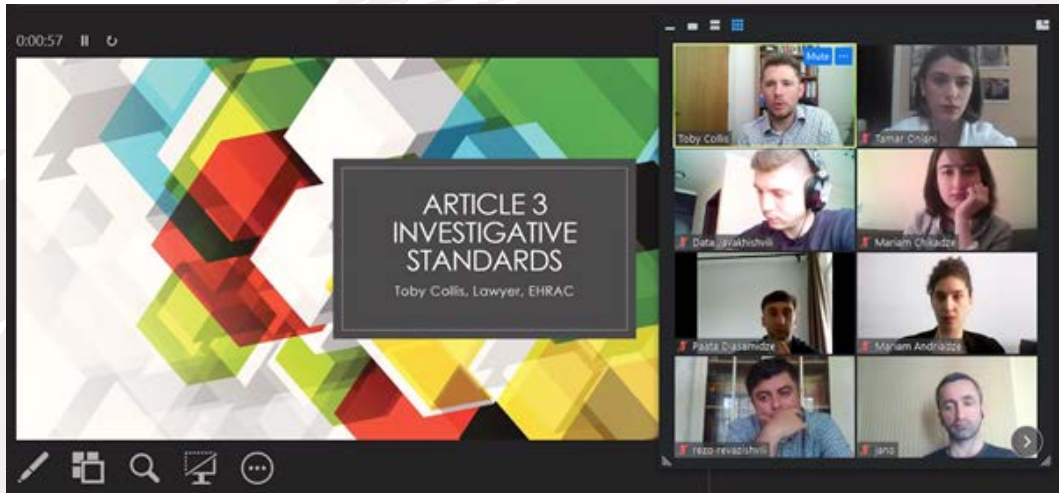
## ■ The problem of conducting expertise in the proceedings of medical disputes

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association has been handled a number of medical cases over the years. This paper summarizes the main problems that arise during medical disputes and often prevent victims from fully implementing their rights.

## ■ Georgia v. Russia (II) - Review of the Court Decision

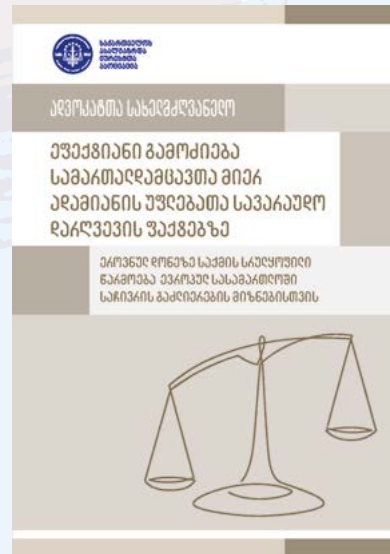
On January 21, 2021, the European Court of Human Rights ruled on the case of Georgia v. Russia (II). It referred to the facts of human rights violations during the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia in August 2008. The document prepared by GYLA includes an overview of the substantive aspects of this decision of the European Court and the frequently asked questions related to it.





### ■ Lawyers' Guide

During the reporting period, GYLA prepared the Lawyers' Guide to Effective Investigation into Alleged Violations of Human Rights by Law Enforcement Officials – Refinement of the Proceedings at the National Level to Strengthen Complaints in the European Court of Human Rights. The guide is intended for attorneys who represent the interests of victims concerning crimes committed by law enforcement. The document reviews the general standards that must be met by an effective case investigation by the State, as well as provides practical advice to help attorneys conduct the case properly at the national level.



### ■ Legislation on Administrative Offenses

The current Code of Administrative Offenses in Georgia is a heavy legacy from the Soviet period, which is used to justify human rights violations. The document prepared by GYLA reviews the unsuccessful reform efforts and the expected and already established results of the organization's strategic litigation.

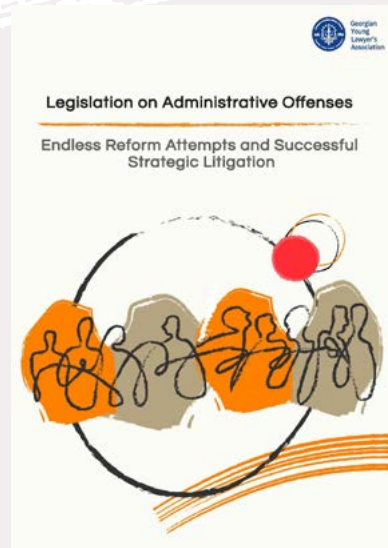
For years, GYLA has been calling for administrative law reform. Violations caused by the Code are documented in the reports of GYLA, other local and international organizations, as well as the Public Defender. The State recognizes the need for reform and maintains

its readiness to carry it out at the declarative level, but to date, despite unsuccessful attempts, no effective steps have been taken in this area.

GYLA's strategic litigation further highlighted the fundamental shortcomings of the Code. The cases won in the Constitutional Court have significantly expanded the areas of human rights, including:

- The procedural rights of a person considered to be an offender have been improved - it has become possible to dispute in the Court of Appeals all the offenses involving imprisonment;
- Clear criteria for the admissibility of an appeal to the Court of Appeals were defined;
- The 10-day time limit for appealing to the Court of Appeals was determined from the delivery of the reasoned decision;
- The discriminatory 48-hour maximum term of administrative detention was abolished. It was also clarified that the use of the maximum term of administrative detention without proper justification is illegal, and a person should be released immediately upon expiration of the grounds for detention;
- A person who is considered an offender for the use of minerals without a proper license will no longer be unconditionally confiscated the weapon of violation. The trial judge was given the opportunity to decide the matter on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the factual circumstances;
- It has become permissible to temporarily place banners, slogans, and posters on the facade of private property, by the owner or with their permission, during spontaneous protests.

It should be noted that based on the decision of the Constitutional Court on the GYLA case, it happened for the first time that serious violations were separated from other misconduct. The court found that the severe violations are those for which, as a sanction, imprisonment is provided. However, it did not rule out that other sanctions provided in the Code, like administrative detention, might reach a degree of intensity and might be considered a severe violation. The progressive decision of the Constitutional Court provides a basis for the reform to be based on this principle and to establish appropriate procedural guarantees of severe violations.







# FINANCIAL REPORT



Within the reporting period, GYLA received a total of 4,987,278.55 GEL in the form of grants, contributions, and membership fees, and the break-down by sources is as follows:

SRT	2,064,465,00
BFDW	1,793,115,00
OSGF	382,349,69
MUNEC (EHRAC)	256,728,28
NE (THE NETHERLANDS MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS)	244,412,21
BE (BRITISH EMBASSY)	86,045,87
BST	61,716,81
EED (EUROPEAN ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY)	41,319,00
EWMI	31,143,00
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	25,644,69
MEMBERSHIP FEES	339,00

Within the reporting period, the organization employed 106 staff members, on multiple jobs, including 43 - in the regions. The salary for all employees in the reporting period was a total of 2,333,896.95 GEL. One-time honoraria were paid to 156 persons – a total of 693,931.09 GEL.

Reimbursement of salaries, honoraria, and income tax for human resources was a total of 621,168.33 GEL.

During the reporting period, GYLA purchased 87,117.35 GEL worth of assets, including various office equipment worth 26,690.00 GEL for the regional offices.

Within the same period, GYLA purchased 21,081.45 GEL worth of small-value office items, including 22 6,583.20 GEL – for regional offices.

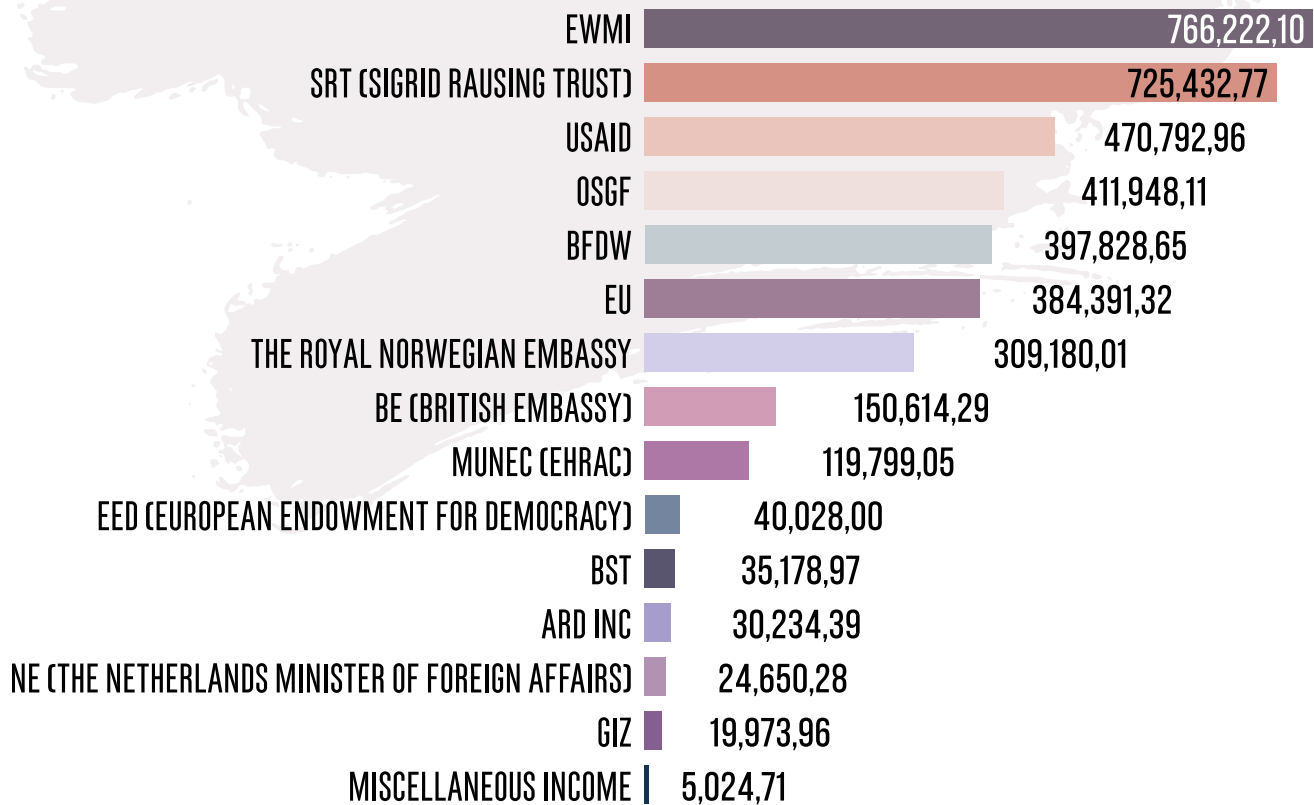
GYLA also spent 16,254.60 GEL for organizing various seminars and meetings, both in Tbilisi and in the regions.



Travel costs of staff members, members, and invited participants of activities were a total of 184,885.26 GEL. Office rent was a total of 142,595.12 GEL, and communications were a total of 37,205.86 GEL (including 8,575.01 GEL – for regions).

Sub-grants provided by GYLA for local NGOs were a total of 136,073.43 GEL.

Within the reporting period, expenditures of GYLA were a total of 3,891,299.57 GEL, with the following break-down by sources:



# GOVERNING BODIES OF THE GYLA

AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2021

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Ketevan Abashidze  
Taia Arabuli  
Zviad Ardzenadze  
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Dimitri Gugunava  
Rati Tinikashvili  
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Teona Macharashvili  
Vakhtang Menabde  
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Nona Kurdovanidze  
Tamar Ghvaladze  
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Vakhtang Menabde - Director of the Democratic Institutions Support Program  
Nona Kurdovanidze - Director of Legal Assistance Program  
Nino Chikhladze - Administrative Director

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Malkhaz Vepkhvadze  
Nino Bibiluri  
Nino Samadashvili  
Ana Kotetishvili

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Kutaisi Branch - Zaal Gorgidze  
Rustavi Office - Natia Kokiashvili  
Gori Office - Ketevan Bebiashvili  
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