



NGOs Condemn Dismissals of Public Servants from Tbilisi City Hall on Alleged Political Grounds

With this statement we react to reports of recent illegal dismissals of public servants from Tbilisi City Hall and pressure to force them leave their jobs. As they have themselves reported, since early August 2014, together with other employees of Tbilisi City Hall they have been constantly subjected to pressure to force them into A leaving their jobs. They have also stated that these illegal actions are perpetrated with the involvement of heads and deputy heads of various departments of Tbilisi City Hall, citing their political views as grounds for dismissal. They are also threatened with criminal prosecution.

As head of Krtsanisi Office of Tbilisi City Hall supervisory service as well as two of its specialists have stated, together with their other colleagues they were first subjected to the pressure in late August and later in early September by Gigi Nizharadze, Head of the Supervisory Service, and his first deputy Davit Medulashvili, who allegedly summoned employees to their offices to have them sign letters of voluntary resignation prepared beforehand. These public servants also allege that when they refused to sign the letters, Nizharadze threatened to have them probed by investigating authorities.

Employees of Didube District Gamgeoba also allege pressure by District Gamgebeli Irma Zaverdashvili, saying that Gamgebeli is insulting her employees, humiliating them and forcing them to sign letters of resignation for personal reasons. According to Deputy Gamgebeli, Gamgebeli demanded that he write a letter of resignation instead of a vacation request letter. She was also forcing him dismiss employees and if he failed to do so, she threatened to dismiss all employees herself. Deputy Gamgebeli notes that he wrote a letter of resignation hoping that other employees would no

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longer be dismissed but dismissals continued. Further, Head of the social affairs department of Didube District Gamgeoba alleges that Irma Zaverdashvili demanded she write a letter of resignation, saying that she could no longer work for Gamgeoba since she was not a supporter of the Georgian Dream.

We have learned that dozens of employees have already resigned after being pressured into writing letters of voluntary resignation. We continue examining similar cases; we have also requested access from Tbilisi City Hall to public information about accurate dismissal statistics.

Representatives of our organizations have met with Tbilisi City Mayor Davit Narmania personally to discuss the foregoing facts. The Mayor has categorically rejected the allegations, saying that some employees fail to fulfill or to adequately fulfill their official responsibilities, resulting in dismissal of such employees. He promised to further look into each individual fact and facilitate our meeting with department heads implicated.

It is possible that some dismissals are the result of public servants failing to adequately fulfill their responsibilities or using used their powers excessively; however, Tbilisi City Hall must provide substantiated grounds for dismissal, while employees affected must be able to resort to legal means for appealing. Instead, public servants are subjected to alleged pressure in an attempt to force them write letters of resignation for personal reasons.

This creates a reasonable doubt that in some cases public servants in Tbilisi City Hall are openly or covertly pressured into resignation, with recently appointed officials acting outside the scope of their powers and disregarding stipulations of law. Article 169 of the Criminal Code qualifies into writing a letter of voluntary resignation from work” as crime.

We urge Tbilisi Mayor and relevant authorities to launch a probe and take adequate further actions against alleged discrimination on political grounds, for protection of human rights and the rule of law. Any illegal act (pressure, threats, intimidation) against employees of Tbilisi City Hall must be examined in a timely, effective and unbiased manner, and adequate further legal actions must be taken where applicable. We also urge Tbilisi City Hall to immediately provide (release) information about

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individuals dismissed from Tbilisi City Hall and its system from July 2014 to present, including motives for dismissal;

For detecting any similar facts and taking adequate further actions, we urge all public servants not to write a letter of voluntary resignation as a result of pressure or any other illegal actions, and to contact central or regional offices of our organizations. Please, find our contact details below:

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association

Transparency International