



PLATFORM "NO TO PHOBIA!" RESPONDS TO THE EVENTS TAKING PLACE AT THE PUBLIC SERVICE HALL

Platform "No To Phobia!" responds to the events taking place at the Public Service Hall and call the law enforcement bodies for taking immediate measures to prevent blocking of the entrance of the administrative office that hinders its functioning and the services provision of the Public Service Hall.

[The video footage](#) demonstrates demonstrates that people are assembled at the entrance of the Public Service Hall, who do not allow Non-Georgian citizens to enter the building. They protest against the decision of the Constitutional Court on December 7, 2018, which once again annulled the restriction on acquisition of agricultural land by foreign citizens. According to the statements of the participants of the assembly, they will not allow the appropriation of Georgian lands by foreigners in the remaining period (before the new edition of the Constitution is enacted). Xenophobic statements were also heard at the rally.

It should be noted that blocking of the entrance of the state agencies and preventing it from functioning is inadmissible ^[1] and it is a legitimate basis for limiting the right to freedom of assembly and manifestation. It should also be noted that "during the assembly or demonstration it shall be prohibited to call for actions ... that incite national, regional, religious or social hostility and pose an obvious, direct and essential threat to actions considered in this article." If these requirements are

violated, law enforcement bodies shall take appropriate measures to terminate illegal manifestation ^[2], including to detain who are not subject to the legal requirement of law enforcement.

Extremely disturbing is the recent facts of strengthening the racism, xenophobia and aggressive attitude towards people with different opinions or identity. Unfortunately, in many cases, the state itself encourages violence by adopting discriminatory law against foreigners and not having the strategy to fight against racism and xenophobia. Thus, instead of implementing strict policy towards abusers, on the one hand, the state itself is running an aggressive campaign against political opponents, on the other hand, it has a tolerant attitude towards violence. (Breaking up the peaceful assembly in response to special operation of Basiani, instead of the aggressive group gathered against the assembly, the response of the government representatives to the attack in Akhalkalaki during the pre-election period, the other cases of assault on political opponents, etc.). The xenophobic rhetoric of politicians is added to this. The [statement](#) of Otar Danelia, the chairman of the Agrarian Issues Committee of Parliament about the rally should be taken into consideration: "If I were not the MP, I would have been there," he said.

Thus, we call:

To the law enforcement bodies - to take immediate action to prevent illegal manifestation;

To the Georgian Government - to take a strict policy towards any manifestation of xenophobia and to develop a strategy for fighting against racism and xenophobia.

Georgian Democracy Initiative, GDI

Equality Movement

Institute Democracy and Safe Development, IDSD

საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



Union Safari

Media Development Foundation, MDF

Tolerance and Diversity Institute, TDI

Georgian Young Lawyers Association, GYLA

Georgian Reforms Association, GRASS

Transparency International Georgia, TI

Human Rights Centre, HRC

[1] According to Article 9, paragraph 3 of the Law of Georgia on Assembly and Demonstrations "it is prohibited to block the entrances, motorways, and railways during the assembly or manifestation."

[2] Based on Article 1741 of the Administrative Offenses Code of Georgia.