



Member organizations of the ‘No to Phobia!’ civil platform respond to a new wave of aggression against Guram Kashia

We, member organizations of the **‘No to Phobia!’** civil platform, express concern about the homophobic attitudes existing in the country and about statements that followed the UEFA preliminary announcement about awarding of Guram Kashia, a member of the Georgian national team, for his support for members of the LGBT community. **‘No to Phobia!’** declares its support for members of the LGBT community who are subjected to direct oppression in all areas of life and are victims of discrimination. The platform also supports Guram Kashia and all those individuals who, despite pressure on the part of certain members of society, openly and boldly express their solidarity with members of the LGBT community.

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Wearing an armband with an LGBT symbol during a football match by Guram Kashia [in October](#) last year was followed by aggressive homophobic statements and actions on the part of the public, extremist groups, and some political parties. On August 22 this year, the UEFA established a new award titled #EqualGame, whose first [recipient](#) will be Guram Kashia, due to the solidarity he has expressed with LGBT people. This gesture prompted a new wave of aggression. For example, Konstantine Morgoshia, a member of the Georgian March movement, made the following homophobic and threatening [statement](#) on his Facebook page in response to the awarding of Guram Kashia: 'Come to Tbilisi on September 9 and you'll see the rest.'

It is a welcome fact that the MIA responded to the foregoing and summoned Konstantine Morgoshia for an interview. It is also a welcome fact that the President of the Georgian Football Federation, [Levan Kobiashvili](#), Vide-President [Nika Jgarkava](#), and [a part](#) of the footballers of the Georgian national team declared solidarity with Guram Kashia. Guram Kashia himself [responded](#) to the pressure against him with the following words: '□□ long as I have one fan left, I will be playing in the national team for that person.'

The aggression towards Guram Kashia is, first of all, indicative of the systemic nature and gravity of the oppression and violence against LGBT people. Despite being recognized as equal by law, in practice LGBT people are ignored, systemically oppressed, and subjected to violence. Homophobia that has been institutionalized in public agencies and administrative practices still remains a problem, while the educational system fails to properly fulfill its function in the building of a society based on equality, freedom, and other liberal-democratic values. Under these circumstances, homophobia, which is supported and politically instrumentalized by various political and social groups, causes a significant damage to the process of democratic development. Unfortunately, the authorities and responsible governmental agencies fail to create a discourse supporting equality and to achieve a systemic resolution of social conflicts in society. Provision of proper and timely legal response to incidents of violence, discrimination, and threats still remains a challenge.

Against the background of increased homophobic attitudes, it is important that the political elite and, especially, the political group in power disseminate clear public statements supporting equality and that law enforcement bodies provide a proper legal response to statements containing threats and to all actions designed to provoke

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conflict. It is also important to ensure that the football match planned for September 9 is conducted in a peaceful environment.

Signatory organizations:

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI)

Institute for Democracy and Safe Development (IDSD)

Georgia's Reforms Associates (GRASS)

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC)

Sapari

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)

Media Development Fund (MDF)

Equality Movement