

## **Statement of non-governmental organizations to the Advisor to the Prime Minister of Georgia on Human Rights, Mr. Niko Tatulashvili**

Mr. Niko,

With this letter, non-governmental organizations operating in Georgia (see the list below) are addressing you in order to once again openly state our position regarding the draft law initiated by members of the parliamentary majority on the transparency of foreign influence<sup>1</sup> and to present our opinion regarding our involvement in the process of developing the human rights action plan.

Signatory organizations that have been fighting for years, using various formats, to protect children and women who are victims of violence, religious and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, victims of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment, LGBTQI people, illegally detained, displaced, homeless people, prisoners, socially vulnerable families, illegally dismissed citizens; organizations that have been working for years to implement better institutional arrangements and reforms consistent with the principle of a democratic state, consider it important to have a coordinated and effective participation in the process of developing a human rights action plan.

For this purpose, after February 28 was set as the deadline for submission of written opinions on the human rights protection action plan by non-governmental organizations at the February 3, 2023 meeting, two coordinated gatherings were held between representatives of non-governmental organizations.

**Regarding the action plan for the protection of human rights, non-governmental organizations were ready to present written opinions in a coordinated manner, but we believe that the initiation of the draft law on the transparency of "foreign influence", taking into account the already existing Russian experience of increasing control, harassment and repression, is directly related to and makes impossible the goals set by the strategy and effective execution of any tasks/activities to be considered in the action plan.**

**We believe that the adoption of this draft law undermines constitutional principles and, as a result, the idea of establishing a democratic, social state of rule of law, protection of constitutional and convention rights is endangered. Adoption of the draft law will radically worsen the legal environment in the state, damage the process of the country's integration with Europe,<sup>2</sup> among others, it will hinder Georgia's progress towards EU membership, which does not have a similar law in any of its member states. At the same time, the implementation**

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<sup>1</sup> see General statement of about 400 organizations: "Russian law is not Georgia's choice", 21.02.2023, available at: <https://gyla.ge/ge/porst/rusuli-kanoni-ar-aris-saqartvelos-archevani#sthash.uVSiellr.dpbs>, [27.02.2023].

<sup>2</sup> See For example, the statement of the representative of Georgia at the United Nations regarding the draft law on the transparency of foreign influence: "The adoption of such a law may hinder the activities of the United Nations within the framework of the Sustainable Development Cooperation Agreement, the country's strategy that we signed with the Government of Georgia." 26.02.2023, available at: <https://www.undp.org/ka/georgia/news/un-statement-on-draft-law-on-transparency-of-foreign-influence>, [27.02.2023];

ee Also, the statement of the spokesperson of the European Union Peter Stano, 21.02.2023, available at: [https://netgazeti.ge/opinion/656136/?fbclid=IwAR0qf-60u\\_eelTQxyhq1y3SCUDJrraeD03GnbDRiPhk16nJuvCJJju1ezQUU](https://netgazeti.ge/opinion/656136/?fbclid=IwAR0qf-60u_eelTQxyhq1y3SCUDJrraeD03GnbDRiPhk16nJuvCJJju1ezQUU), [27.02.2023]; see Also, assessment of the Commissioner of the Council of Europe, 28.02.2023, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/commissioner-urges-the-georgian-parliament-to-reject-the-draft-law-on-transparency-of-foreign-influence-?fbclid=IwAR1SrKIFQp4GkG83yzAXWuutoDS9B9mkPKTlDzJa-93Gm0VSpzWyaWMJLrI>, [28.02.2023].

**of this law will be impossible without causing immeasurable harm to hundreds of thousands of citizens of Georgia.**

**For the reasons presented above, we believe that in case of adoption of the draft law, it will be impossible to define/implement the human rights action plan and implement it in reality.**

**The signatory organizations encourage you to publicly state your position on the draft law, and to meet with us in a private format.**

**Please let us know your position in writing.**

Signatory organizations:

1. Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)
2. Equal Participation Opportunity Center\_EPC
3. Democracy Research Institute
4. Association "Dea"
5. Union of Therapy of the Socially Helpless of Signaghi Region - Temi Kedel
6. Coalition for Independent Living
7. A/O "Let's be friends"
8. "Inclusive Society - Georgia" movement
9. Community of solidarity
10. Georgian Academy of Children with Limited Opportunities
11. Caucasus Open Space (COS)
12. Down syndrome association of Georgia
13. Georgian Democratic Initiative (GDI)
14. Women's Initiatives Support Group (WISG)
15. Equality movement
16. Association Anika
17. Independent Living Center of Zugdidi
18. Center for Empowerment of Women with Disabilities
19. Identity of Yus
20. Kutaisi Independent Living Center
21. International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)
22. National Network of Women with Disabilities
23. SAFARI
24. Foundation Global Initiative in Psychiatry-Tbilisi
25. Human Rights Center (HRC)
26. Georgian Network of Persons with Disabilities (GDN)
27. Organization of parents of disabled children "Families Against Discrimination" - FAD
28. Rights Georgia
29. Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI)
30. Welfare and Development Center
31. Center for Democratic Development
32. Fund Aures
33. "Parents"
34. "Youth Organization Changes for Equal Rights"
35. "Batumi Center for Independent Living"
36. IP "Big Family"
37. JSC "Telav Independent Life Center"
38. "Disabled Women's Alliance"
39. "Cooperation for equal rights"

40. "Georgian Network of Psychiatry Service Users and Survivors"
41. Lagodekhi Center for Independent Living
42. "Oda Keri" JSC
43. "Ozurgeti Independent Life Center"
44. "Hang" Association for Integration and Development of Persons with Disabilities
45. IP "Platform for new opportunities"
46. Mental Health Association of Georgia
47. "Rea"
48. "Sons of the Sun"
49. Coalition Movement for Change
50. Center for Social Justice
51. Partnership for Human Rights (PHR)
52. Center for Rule of Law
53. Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)
54. Tbilisi Pride
55. Queer Association - Themida