



Statement of NGOs regarding the meeting of the Prosecutorial Council

In response to the Prosecutorial Council meeting held today for the purpose of selecting the new Chief Prosecutor, signatory organizations would like to state once again that the process must be halted until the constitutional amendments take effect.

The procedure for selecting the Chief Prosecutor contains significant shortcomings. More specifically, candidates are being proposed by the Minister of Justice, who is also the Chair of the Prosecutorial Council. Members of the Council are MPs and 2 non-

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prosecutor members elected by the parliamentary majority. This model of the Council cannot ensure that a politically neutral person is selected as the Chief Prosecutor, which was once again confirmed by the meeting held today.

The ongoing process of selecting the Chief Prosecutor has raised many questions from the very start, including the consultation stage. After the conclusion of the consultation stage, the acting Minister of Justice (Deputy Minister) named three candidates for the Chief Prosecutor. The fact that one of these candidates had family ties with the Minister of Justice pointed to the risk of conflict of interest in the entire process. The Prosecutorial Council ended up supporting this exact candidate at today's meeting. The statement of the Minister of Justice at the Council meeting that she would not take part in the vote also points to the problem of conflict of interest during the nomination stage. Moreover, the Prosecutorial Council refused to hold open interviews with the candidates, which left the public in the dark as to how the Council came to its final decision.

Recent developments in the process of selecting the Chief Prosecutor clearly demonstrate the flawed nature of the existing procedure and its problem of legitimacy, which will undoubtedly affect the level of public trust towards the future Chief Prosecutor and the Prosecution system as a whole.

Therefore, organizations signatory to this statement once again call on the Government of Georgia to suspend the process of selecting the Chief Prosecutor under the existing procedure and do this in accordance with the new constitutional model, which excludes political participation in the process and raises the possibility for a politically neutral and impartial person to be selected as the Chief Prosecutor.

Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC)

Open Society Foundation

Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)

Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI)

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International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)

Human Rights Center

Article 42 of the Constitution

Transparency International Georgia

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)