



## The Coalition Calls on NGOs to Create Mechanisms for Prevention of and Responding to Sexual Harassment

The Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary is concerned by the recently publicized allegations of sexual harassment. The Coalition considers sexual harassment of women in the workplace and other environments unacceptable and believes that protection from gender-based violence is a fundamental human right. The Coalition expresses its solidarity with all women who have experienced sexual harassment from any person, and considers that their rights must be protected by effective legal mechanisms. To this end, it is important to review and study these cases in relevant fora.

The recent information regarding alleged sexual harassment cases within the civil society gives us a special responsibility to adequately react, including through strengthening self-regulatory mechanisms. Additionally, it is extremely important to take steps towards the prevention and exposure of sexual harassment in public

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agencies, political parties and the private sector. The establishment of sexual harassment at the LEPL Public Registry Agency as a discriminatory act again points to the acuteness of the problem at state agencies. It is important for the decision-makers in the public sector to understand that at its essence sexual harassment is gender discrimination, and have an objective and unbiased, rather than selective, reaction and protect the rights of the victims.

The possibility of protection from sexual harassment is still not integrated into the national legislation, and this requires immediate legislative amendments. It is important for the Parliament to share the responsibility for the fact that the incomplete legislation deprives the citizens of Georgia of protection from sexual harassment.

At the same time, it is important for those civil society organizations that do not yet have internal regulations against sexual harassment to develop such mechanisms. These mechanisms should create a safe environment free from the threat of sexual harassment, consider sexual harassment-related complaints in a speedy and substantive manner, and ensure the sanctioning of relevant persons in cases where sexual harassment is established as a fact.

The Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary is ready to assist civil society organizations in establishing internal organizational mechanisms to protect against sexual harassment. Such mechanisms will prevent the violation of women's rights and will support access to justice for the victims of sexual harassment.