



Democracy Research Institute (DRI)

Democracy Research Institute is a public policy think tank that aims at promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms; establishment of the transparent and accountable governance system based on the rule of law and human rights; support to the establishment of free and fair society; support to the protection of human rights in conflict-affected regions; restoration of trust among parties and promotion of integration policy and support to the European integration.

December Activities

Conflicts	2
The tempting policy of the de facto authorities of Abkhazia in the Gali districto.....	2
Mortality of women and prohibited abortion in Abkhazia.....	2
29 years since the Lata tragedy	2
After New Year, freedom of movement may be restricted for part of Gali population.....	3
Unprecedentedly high rate of illegal detentions in Tskhinvali.....	3
Security	
Persecution on political grounds.....	4
Investigation into Lekso Lashkarava's death is unreasonably delayed.....	4
DRI held a meeting on investigative activities of the State Security Service.....	5
Disinformation	
Public Broadcaster assesses problems of students living near occupied line as false information.....	5
DRI in Coalition activities.....	5

The tempting policy of the de facto authorities of Abkhazia in the Gali district

Democracy research Institute actively works on the problems, needs and integration of people living in the occupied territories.

This time DRI talks about the policy of the de facto government of Abkhazia in the Gali region, which continues its policy of tempting residents of Gali to denounce their Georgian identity and recognize themselves as Abkhazians from Samurzakhano. Such a policy deepens the internal dividing lines in the Gali district and creates mistrust between those

who want Georgian ethnicity and those who give it up.

The de facto authorities of Abkhazia, on the one hand, irritate people and, on the other hand, lower the moral standard, which in pragmatic terms will not play in favor of the idea of Abkhazian independence. Passportation and cultural-educational tools do not contribute to the strengthening of Abkhazia's identity as a country, but encourage the soft power of the Russian Federation.

Mortality of women and prohibited abortion in Abkhazia

Women are one of the most vulnerable groups in Abkhazia. It is an established belief in society that a woman is respected only after motherhood, after she manages her reproductive health in accordance with the requirements of the society. In 2016 the de facto parliament of Abkhazia banned abortion including for medical reasons, which led to an increase in the number of illegal abortions and impacted women's mortality rate.

DRI states that it is necessary to ensure the protection of women's rights in Abkhazia and to recognize them as subjects of rights. The Democracy Research Institute recommends that the legal framework governing abortions in Abkhazia should be brought in line with the World Health Organization guidelines and international human rights standards.

29 years since the Lata tragedy

In December, the Democracy Research Institute recalled the Latin Lata tragedy, which took place near the village of Lata in the Gulripshi district of

Abkhazia on December 14, 1992 and became one of the most tragic events of the fratricidal war.

On the 29th anniversary of the tragedy, Democracy Research Institute calls on the Georgian Government to express an official position on the Lata tragedy, ensure its

investigation of the Lata tragedy to identify all responsible persons involved in it and declare December 14 a remembrance day in order to immortalize the memory of the victims of the Lata tragedy.

After New Year, freedom of movement may be restricted for part of Gali population

According to the information obtained by the Democracy Research Institute, Form #9 may be abolished from the beginning of the new year, which is related to the freedom of movement for some of Gali residents.

The abolition of the document required for movement serves to create an additional barrier for locals. For fear of not being able to return home,

five thousand residents of Gali may be forced to use Abkhazian-Russian passports. There is another solution: to wait for more than two months to get a residence permit or pay a bribe to the Russian military.

According to this situation Georgian Government must intensify its efforts to prevent discrimination against residents of Gali, to protect their interests and to restore their violated rights.

Unprecedentedly high rate of illegal detentions in Tskhinvali

In parallel with the active borderization by the so-called border guards, the detention of Georgian citizens on charges of "illegal border crossing" without any legal basis has intensified in Tskhinvali.

The Democracy Research Institute believes that it is necessary to stress the worsening tendency in Tskhinvali and to work proactively with the international community to resolve the above-mentioned issues quickly and effectively.

Accordingly, the organization called on the Georgian authorities to take immediate measures to clarify the rights situation of Georgian citizens detained in Tskhinvali and to provide comprehensive information to public. Also called on the international community and the Georgian authorities - to use all the leverages at their disposal to ensure the immediate release of Georgian citizens detained in Tskhinvali.

Persecution on political grounds

Representatives of the Democracy Research Institute arrived in Dmanisi to verify the reports about the alleged pressure on Ramiz Ramazanov, a majoritarian MP who entered the Dmanisi City Council as a representative of the United National Movement.

The cases of harassment, intimidation and threats against teachers, employees of local governments and public sector during the election and post-election period have unfortunately become a trend. It is especially noteworthy that according to the locals, those involved in intimidation are mainly representatives of the State Security

Service and the police. The use of the above-mentioned methods by the law enforcement agencies increases the radicalization of the population, instills hopelessness and minimizes trust in the law enforcement agencies.

DRI calls on the relevant institutions to investigate the cases of alleged political persecution of opposition MPs in Dmanisi and other regions and to ensure that the public is informed about the ongoing processes.

Investigation into Lekso Lashkarava's death is unreasonably delayed

The Democracy Research Institute (DRI) has responded to the ineffectiveness and non-transparency of the unreasonably protracted investigation into the death of Alexandre (Lekso) Lashkarava.

The investigation into the death of Lekso Lashkarava could be seen as an attempt to cover up the perpetrators and organizers of gang violence. It

is extremely worrying that the organizers of the mass violence have not been arrested so far, even though their identities are known to the public as well as to the investigative bodies.

DRI calls on the investigative bodies to conduct an objective investigation into the death of Lekso Lashkarava and to arrest the organizers of the July 5-6 mass violence.

DRI held a meeting on investigative activities of the State Security Service

the Democracy Research Institute (DRI) held a working meeting on "Investigative Functions of the State Security Service and Distribution of Criminal Cases among Investigative Bodies." The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate the start of a discussion on the need for the State Security Service to relinquish its powers to investigate

certain crimes, which in turn would reduce the politicization of investigative structures.

Before the meeting, a policy document prepared by the Democracy research Institute was sent to representatives of state structures, political parties and non-governmental organizations.

Public Broadcaster assesses problems of students living near occupied line as false information

Several students living near the occupation line, who, for unknown reasons, were denied funding for higher education from the state budget has applied to DRI for assistance. DRI has stated its position on this issue and assessed this action as unequal and unfair treatment of young people.

Following the media coverage of the issue, the Georgian Public Broadcaster assessed the non-funding of students as false information without verifying the facts, which represents a violation of the standard of journalistic ethics.

the Public Broadcaster, which is funded by the state budget to cover issues that are problematic for the public, did not even get interested in the problems raised by students and covered the issue without verifying information with the local

population or students, presenting the problem "students are not funded" as a false narrative.

The Democracy Research Institute appealed to the Georgian Public Broadcaster to deny the information it has incorrectly covered.

DRI in Coalition activities

The Democracy Research Institute actively cooperates with other civil society organizations and issues joint statements/appeals.

In December, four coalition statements were issued with the support and involvement of DRI.

The first [statement](#) was about the case of alleged political harassment of Ramiz Ramazanov, a majoritarian MP who entered the Dmanisi City Council as a representative of the United National Movement. NGOs called on the government to take all measures to protect its safety and dignity.

On the possible abolition of the State Inspector's Service, the Democracy research institute in cooperation with partner organizations, [called to the authorities](#) to stop the attacks on independent institutions and to create all conditions for the smooth operation of the State Inspector's Service.

In relation to the accelerated revision of the amendments to the Organic Law on Common Courts, the Democracy Research Institute has [highlighted the shortcomings](#) of the changes within the Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary and called upon the

Parliament to suspend the revision of the amendments.

In the final [statement of December](#), Democracy Research Institute, along with partner organizations, called upon the president of Georgia to veto changes to the Law on Common Courts, as the changes significantly limit the independence of individual judges and reverse the effects of four waves of judicial reform.

Contact

Address

Third floor, 2 a Kazbegi Ave. Tbilisi 0160, Georgia

Telephone

(+995) 32 237 52 28

Web

www.democracyresearch.org

E-mail

info@democracyresearch.org