



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.

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The Democracy research Institute responding to the latest developments in Ukraine and stands with Ukrainian people.

DRI calls on Georgian authorities to respond adequately to security challenges

The Democracy Research Institute responds to the act of aggression committed by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. In the current situation, it is necessary for Georgia to use all the available opportunities to protect the security and sovereignty of the country.

In view of the above, the DRI calls on the Parliament of Georgia, the Government of Georgia and state-political officials to:

- express principled position, in accordance with state interests, in order to protect population, security and territorial integrity of the country
- provide comprehensive information to the public about the security challenges facing the country and the steps taken by the State to prevent the threat
- take decisive action against organizations supporting radical ideology and/or persons associated with such organizations. The State should investigate the violent crimes committed by these groups in a timely manner in order to bring the relevant persons to justice
- take steps to ensure transparency of funding sources of radical ideology organizations, their organizers and/or persons associated with such organizations
- stop providing any kind of state funding or other support to the mentioned radical groups and political parties.

DRI appeals to the authorities regarding problems of the village of Atotsi

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

On February 4, DRI representatives visited the village of Atotsi located near the occupation line. Due to the icy road, movement across the village was nearly impossible. According to the locals, despite their request, the local authorities have failed to clean the internal roads of the village.

Due to the daily problems related to isolation and security, the villages located along the occupation line need special attention. In order to receive additional information on the issue and resolve the above-mentioned

problem of the population, the organization wrote a letter to the State Representative in the Shida Kartli Region and the Mayor of the Kareli Municipality.

DRI calls on authorities to launch 24-hour hotline for residents of occupied territories

Residents of the occupied territories face particular difficulties to have communication with the territory controlled by the central government. In the context of the pandemic, this problem has been exacerbated and the population has been, in fact, left without essential information.

The Democracy Research Institute (DRI) has appealed to the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia to create a 24-hour hotline for the population of the occupied territories.

DRI: Situation in Potskhoetseri IDP settlement is the gravest

Representatives of the Democracy Research Institute continue to visit IDP settlements. This time they were in the settlement of Potskhoetseri IDPs in Tsalenjikha Municipality.

The situation is especially difficult in the Potskhoetseri IDP settlement in the Tsalenjikha municipality. The settlement is completely cut off from the outside world. IDPs have to live in the most difficult conditions.

DRI has already addressed the Prime Minister of Georgia and other responsible officials regarding the difficult social conditions of people living in the Potskhoetseri IDP settlement in Tsalenjikha. Appeals have been sent to the State Representative in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region, the Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure, the Chairman of Tsalenjikha Assembly, the Mayor of Tsalenjikha, the Minister of Refugees, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia and the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality. None of the agencies have yet replied to us about the measures taken to address the problems of IDPs in Potskhoetseri.

Will the de facto authorities of Abkhazia defeat ethnocracy?

DRI published its reflection on this question. The issuance of de facto Abkhaz passports to Georgians living in Abkhazia is still on the agenda. Georgians constitute a large part of the population of Abkhazia and their

exclusion from both the political space and economic activities is only detrimental to the development of Abkhazia.

It is noteworthy that the vast majority of the Georgian population in the Gali district are citizens of Georgia and hold Georgian passports. In all the known cases, when the de facto authorities of Abkhazia tried to issue de facto Abkhaz passports to the Georgians of the Gali district, the above became the basis for internal confrontation and political crisis. Opposition to de facto President Sergei Bagapsh, as well as his successor, Alexander Ankvab, was based on this nationalist sentiment. It can be said that the latter lost power due to the issuance of these very passports to Georgians.

Georgian Government has been working without human rights strategy for two years

For the second year in a row, the Government of Georgia has been working without a document of human rights strategy.

DRI echoes the deteriorating human rights situation, in particular, the recent abolition of an independent investigation mechanism, complete politicization of state institutions, extreme weakening of the guarantees for the independence of individual judges, incitement to violence, gross violation of freedom of assembly and neglect of the problems of IDPs and persons at risk of homelessness.

The Democracy Research Institute called on the Government of Georgia:

To ensure the development of a new national human rights strategy defining the broad vision, main challenges and priorities for the strengthening of human rights in Georgia based on the reports of authoritative international and non-governmental organizations.

The influence of the State Security Service on public institutions

The Democracy Research Institute held a presentation of the study "Control Mechanisms of the State Security Service relating to Public and Private Institutions", which was aimed at studying the influence of the State Security Service on state bodies, legal entities under public law and private institutions, including by appointing the so-called ODRs by the Service.

The study revealed the following: In a number of cases, the State Security Service signs cooperation contracts with unauthorized entities; Representatives of the State Security Service are authorized by contract to monitor work-related non-confidential correspondence, which is especially problematic in the context of the mass

dissemination of proofs of illegal and total surveillance of people by the said service; The State Security Service links the signing of cooperation contracts with entities to operational-technical activities, which is incompatible with legislation; The ambiguity of the legislative norm and its broad interpretation by its addressee make it difficult to identify the so-called ODRs appointed by bypassing legislation; The mayors of at least three municipalities elected in the 2021 local government elections had previously held senior positions in the security/counterintelligence sector.

Democracy Research Institute responds to beating of designer Giorgi Maskhulia

The Democracy Research Institute condemned the brutal violence against designer Giorgi Maskhulia. DRI considers the bullying of the victim, use of hate speech and comments of homophobic/transphobic content posted on social networks categorically unacceptable.

The Democracy Research Institute called on the Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia:

- To grant victim status to Giorgi Maskhulia;
- To consider alleged hate motive when filing charges;
- To ensure an effective and impartial investigation.

DRI: Defendants in July 5 case continue aggression against reporters in court

The court hearings on 5 July mass violence cases are conducted against the hostile environment towards affected journalists. On 22 February, one of the defendants in the case of July 5 mass violence made a threatening statement against journalist Rati Tsverava. In a trial monitoring report released by the Democracy Research Institute relating to the violence of July 5, 2021, the organization repeatedly highlighted the intimidating and tense environment in the courtroom during the questioning of victims, experts and witnesses.

DRI has repeatedly said that the inappropriate response by officials to the July 5 mass violence and the impunity of organizers may encourage commission of similar crimes in the future.

Monitoring Report on the Participation of Clergy in the Election Process

On February, the Democracy Research Institute presented a report "Monitoring of the Participation of Religious Organizations and Clergy in the Pre-Election Process."

The document covers both the participation of the clergy in the pre-election campaign of the 2021 local self-government elections and the manipulation of religious themes, the Orthodox Church and the influence of high-ranking clerics by the electoral entities, which drew the attention of social and online media.

The organization considers that in order to eliminate the above-mentioned problems, it is necessary for religious organizations/clergy to refrain from participating in the pre-election campaign and for political entities not to use them to influence the will of the voters.

DRI in Coalition activities

The Democracy Research Institute actively cooperates with other civil society organizations. In February, with the support and involvement of DRI, [a statement](#) was issued within the framework of the Coalition for Euro-Atlantic Georgia.

In the wake of Russia's gross violation of international law, its attack on Ukraine and its use of deadly weapons against civilians, the Georgian Prime Minister has announced that he does not intend for Georgia to join the financial and economic sanctions imposed on Russia. Also, the ruling party rejected an extraordinary session of parliament on the issue of Ukraine.

The signatory organizations unequivocally opposed and condemned the Prime Minister's statement and called on the Georgian authorities to stand by the anti-Russian Western alliance and establish a security plan for Georgia with the help of country's Western strategic partners.

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