



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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NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN EUROPE AND ITS IMPACT ON GEORGIA

On May 30, three organizations Civic IDEA, Democracy Research Institute (DRI), Democracy Index – Georgia held a Conference “New Security Architecture in Europe and its Impact on Georgia”.



The conference was opened by Salome Zourabichvili, President of Georgia, and Carl Hartzell, Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia. The event was attended by representatives of political parties, heads of embassies and international organizations accredited in Georgia, representatives of civil sector and academia.

The aim of the conference was to analyze the consequences of the ongoing war in Ukraine and the national security challenges in Georgia, to discuss the essence of European integration and the prospect of EU membership status.



DRI supports student protests relating to the right to education

DRI supported student protests relating to the right to education. For more than 2 weeks, Tbilisi State University students have been protesting against the decision of the university administration to fully switch from online to in-class lectures from May 2 and demanded the maintenance of the hybrid model until the end of the current academic year.

The decision of Tbilisi State University exposed many problems. It was unclear what necessitated the decision to fully resume in-class lectures 2 months before the end of the education year. It was easy to anticipate that in May-June, thousands of students living in the regions would not have been able to find accommodation in Tbilisi, especially given the rising rental prices due to the influx of Russian visitors.

DRI defends interests of journalist affected by far-right groups

The Democracy Research Institute is defending the interests of journalist Ketevan Tutberidze, who has been the victim of far-right groups. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has launched an investigation into unlawful interference with Tutberidze's professional activities on December 24, 2021 under Article 154 of the Criminal Code (Unlawful interference with a journalist's professional activities), **although the journalist has not been granted the status of the victim so far.**

In recent times, attacks on representatives of the media has reached a critical level. Therefore, it is important to respond immediately to the incidents containing signs of crime. The inaction of the authorities encourages the perpetration of motivated crimes against representatives of the media and journalists. In order to conduct an investigation objectively, impartially and thoroughly, it is necessary for the victim to be involved in litigation in accordance with law.

The Democracy Research Institute has applied to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to ensure that Ketevan Tutberidze is granted victim status.

DRI: The court verdict proves the existence of organizers of the July 5 violence

The conviction of defendants by the Criminal Cases Panel of Tbilisi City Court in the episode of Lekso Lashkarava and Miranda Baghaturia relating to the violent events of July 5-6, 2021 once again proves that the violent crackdown of July 5 was organized.

Tbilisi City Court Judge Nino Elieshvili, unlike the judges hearing the July 5 violent events, found all six defendants guilty of participating in organized gang crime.

It is alarming that even ten months after the violent events of July 5, the Georgian Prosecutor's Office has not launched criminal proceedings against the organizers of the violence, despite the fact that the guilt of the organizers was confirmed by the guilty verdict of the court as well.

DRI called on the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia to immediately launch criminal proceedings against the organizers of the July 5 violent events.

Openly pro-Russian party Conservative Movement/Alt-Info has new donors

The openly pro-Russian Conservative Movement/Alt-Info party was founded on November 20, 2021. For three months after the party was founded, the party had not had donors. The political union first received donation on February 16, 2022; however, the Conservative Movement started opening offices in the regions on December 27, 2021, well before receiving the first funding.

Today, the Conservative Movement has 64 offices (two offices are not though operational) and the amount of donations exceeds GEL 200,000. Although party donations have increased sharply in recent months, the amount officially declared is unlikely to be enough to maintain 62 regional offices.

From 16 February 2022 to 23 May 2022, the Conservative Movement received 210 donations. In total, the party has 80 donors, most of whom have donated money to the party several times. The main donors are the heads of the Conservative Movement's regional offices.

DRI: Mechanisms for exerting illegal influence on police officers, military servicemen and State Security Service employees are expanding

According to the draft law submitted by the ruling political team to the Parliament of Georgia, it is becoming possible to transfer police officers, military servicemen and State Security Service employees to equal positions with similar functions **in other geographical areas, with or without their consent**. After the expiration of the transfer period, if it is impossible to return the person to the original position and if he/she refuses the offered position, he/she will be dismissed.

The submitted draft law **leaves no choice for the public servant**. An authorized official may transfer an employee to another territorial unit regardless of whether the person to be transferred agrees to do so. According to the Constitutional Court of Georgia, the stability of the civil service is a necessary condition for the independence of state officials.

Given the above circumstances, it is clear that the draft law contains vague norms, which allow high-ranking officials to act uncontrollably and unjustifiably, and does not rule out the use of the norms for "punishment".

DRI believes that the adoption of the draft law will undermine the principle of stability of the civil service, unjustifiably increase the power of the heads of the relevant agencies and make the labour guarantees of public servants extremely fragile.

30 years have passed since the tragedy of Dzari

May 20, the Ossetian people recall the most horrific date of the 1991-1992 Georgian-Ossetian conflict. 30 years ago, a convoy traveling from South Ossetia to North Ossetia was attacked and fired by unidentified individuals in the village of Dzari in the Java district. 32 people were killed, including children; 16 were injured. The violence of unheard brutality in Dzari left us with an incurable wound on both sides of the conflict.

We have high hopes that our Ossetian friends, who are alienated from the rest of Georgia, will hear our voice and know that the massacre in Dzari is a tragedy of Georgia. With this statement, the Democracy Research Institute reminds all citizens of our divided country that it is inadmissible to repeat such a crime.

Muhajirism without Georgian Government's political assessment

According to the media reports, the Ministry of Internal Affairs launched administrative proceedings relating to the stencils that can be seen on various buildings in the territory of the Tbilisi Municipality. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the author of the stencil(s) has been identified.

in view of the high public interest, DRI requested the following information from the Ministry of Internal Affairs:

- What investigative activities were carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to rule out elements of crime?
- Were administrative proceedings launched into the so-called stencils case? If so, on what legal grounds and against how many persons?
- According to the media reports, Giorgi Gigolashvili, a citizen of the Russian Federation, stated that he had done only one stencil. Did the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia find out who did other stencils?

DRI in Coalition activities

The Democracy Research Institute actively cooperates with other civil society organizations. In May, with the support and involvement of DRI, four joint statements were prepared.

The first [statement](#) concerned the necessity to make the answers to the EU questionnaire public. Given the high public interest in Georgia's accession to the EU, the Coalition called on the authorities to make public the answers to the EU questionnaire or justify that the information was confidential under the Georgian law.

On May 8, the Coalition for Information Credibility, DRI is a member of since April 2022, responded to the date of the celebration of [the Day of Victory over Nazism in Europe](#).

DRI has joined the [NGO statement](#) on Nika Gvaramia's imprisonment, as we believe that a guilty verdict against the CEO of a critical media outlet, including on the basis of managerial decisions, is yet another example of selective investigation, prosecution and conviction. We think that such processes may have a negative impact on Georgia's European integration process. DRI also responded to the guilty verdict against [Nika Gvaramia](#) within the framework of the Coalition for Independent and Transparent Justice.

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