

DRI: The number of questions sent by Members of Parliament to the security sector is still low in 2024

The Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia allows the Member of Parliament to send a question to the Government of Georgia, other bodies accountable to the Parliament, members of the Government, government bodies of all territorial units and state institutions. It is mandatory to give a timely and complete answer to the question of the Member of Parliament.

It should be noted that, compared to the same period of 2023, the number of questions sent by MPs to the agencies of the security sector has decreased. From January 1 to March 15, 2023, Members of Parliament sent 9 questions to the Ministry of Defence, while in the same period of 2024, only one MP addressed the Ministry with a question. The number of questions sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs also decreased - unlike the 20 questions sent in the same period of last year, this year, in the period from January 1 to March 15, MPs addressed the Ministry with only 12 questions.

12 written questions belong to the parliamentary opposition. Only one member of the majority sent a question to the security sector agency. Not a single question was sent from the Parliament of Georgia to the State Security Service.

From 2022, the Procedural Issues and Rules Committee of the Parliament has been studying information regarding the responses to the questions of Members of Parliament and submitting the results to the Bureau of the Parliament. It is not the responsibility of the Committee to verify the completeness of the content of the answers given to the MPs' questions. Accordingly, there are frequent cases when the accountable agencies answer the question of the Member of Parliament only formally, and the author of the question cannot receive an appropriate and comprehensive answer.

The Democracy Research Institute analyzed the content of the questions sent by Members of Parliament to the agencies of the security sector (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, State Security Service and its subdivisions) and the answers received from January 1 to March 15, 2024. The organization used public information posted on the website of the Parliament.

During 2.5 months, a total of 13 written questions were sent to the State Security Service, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Of these, one question has not been answered.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia

During 2.5 months, 12 written questions were sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. Of these, the deadline set by the Rules of Procedure for answering a question has not expired in one case, another question was withdrawn by the author of the question,¹ and all other questions were answered by the agency. Member of Parliament Tamar Kordzaia sent the most - 3 written questions to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

¹ Letter No. 1036/3-77/24 of Member of Parliament Aleksandre Rakviashvili, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32460>

One of the questions² of MP Tamar Kordzaia concerns how many people have their driving license suspended based on paragraphs 1 and 2 of Article 116 of the Administrative Offences Code (driving a vehicle under the influence of alcohol). The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia redirected the MP to the official website - info.police.ge (https://info.police.ge/page?id=183&parent_id=179), where, according to the agency, the statistics processed within the framework of the competence of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia are periodically updated about the violations of traffic rules under the Administrative Offences Code.³ Other questions of the MP⁴ were related to the information about the employment of a specific person in the Ministry. According to the Ministry's response, no information about the employment of that person could be found in the Ministry's system.⁵

Only one member of the parliamentary majority sent a question of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Nino Tsilosani requested statistical information on traffic accidents.⁶ Like Tamar Kordzaia, Nino Tsilosani was redirected⁷ to the portal where similar statistical information is posted by the Ministry.

The question⁸ of Taniel Nakaidze, an independent Member of Parliament, concerns the discriminatory treatment of Muslims during crossing the state border. According to the position of the Ministry,⁹ the employees of the agency constantly undergo training on the principles of religious neutrality and equality and apply all measures within the scope of their competence to make the border-passport control at the border crossing point as comfortable as possible for passengers. **At the same time, the Ministry avoided answering a question about the specific problem named by the MP** on the grounds that it belonged to the authority of the Customs Department of the Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance of Georgia.

MP Khatia Dekanoidze addressed the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia twice with one and the same question.¹⁰ The question concerned the need to adopt subordinate acts referred to in the Law of Georgia on Public Safety. The Member of Parliament was interested in the content of the subordinate acts to be adopted by the Emergency Management Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, how many acts had already been

² Question No. 106/3-53/24 of Member of Parliament Tamar Kordzaia, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32160>

³ Letter No. MIA92400169246 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32220>

⁴ Questions No.1052/3-53/24, No.630/3-53/24 of Member of Parliament Tamar Kordzaia, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32462>

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32314>

⁵ Letter No. MIA 1 24 00568083 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32608>

⁶ Question No. 1693/1-6/24 of the Member of Parliament of Georgia, Nino Tsilosani, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32806>

⁷ Letter No. MIA 5 24 00782395 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32885>

⁸ Question No. 1017/3-79/24 of Member of Parliament of Georgia Taniel Nakaidze, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32466>

⁹ Letter No. MIA 1 24 00527439 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32567>

¹⁰ Question No. 68/3-23/24 of Member of Parliament of Georgia Khatia Dekanoidze, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32030> question No. 730/3-23/24, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32330>

adopted and whether the process of their development was delayed or not. In both cases, the agency gave a formal answer to the MP's question: *"The field of regulation of legal acts (January 01, 2026 is defined as the deadline for their issuance) belongs to the competence of various agencies, the development of legal acts is related to the search for the best international practice, the support of experts, the involvement of various subjects of the national system, which is actively ongoing."*¹¹ Only the answer sent by the agency on January 26, 2024 is available on the official website of the Parliament, while Khatia Dekanoidze sent a repeated question on February 2.

Member of Parliament Paata Manjgaladze requested from the Ministry of Internal Affairs statistical information about the migration of Georgian citizens in 2012-2023.¹² The agency redirected¹³ the Member of Parliament to the portal where statistical data are posted, however, the MP asked for information about the migration of Georgian citizens by country, while the link provided by the Ministry does not contain information processed in this regard.

Alexandre Rakviashvili requested information from the Ministry of Internal Affairs about the number of citizens of Georgia, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Kazakhstan and other countries entering and leaving the territory of Georgia in 2019-2022, by quarter.¹⁴ On the portal referred to by the Ministry, the data are provided by year and month, but not by quarter.¹⁵

Member of Parliament Roman Gotsiridze requested data on the Deputy Minister's remuneration, bonus/supplement, assistants' remuneration, assistants' bonus/supplement, driver's remuneration, driver's bonus/supplement, telephone expenses, fuel expenses, car service expenses, office expenses, travel expenses.¹⁶ In response, the MP was provided with information about the salaries (net) of the Deputies, the data on travel expenses, and the total remuneration of assistants and drivers. According to the Ministry, the fuel and various utility costs are calculated in total, therefore the data that the MP was interested in were not provided.¹⁷

Member of Parliament Teona Akubardia asked the Ministry whether it was planned to appoint or give a one-time compensation to firemen and rescuers dismissed in 2020, who had not reached the retirement age

¹¹ Letter No. MIA 5 24 00242952 of the state sub-agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia - Emergency Management Service, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32393>

¹² Question No. 100/3-62/24 of Paata Manjgaladze, Member of Parliament of Georgia, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32052>

¹³ Letter No. MIA 4 24 00203729 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32247>

¹⁴ Question No. 215/3-77/24 of Member of Parliament of Georgia, Aleksandre Rakviashvili, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32151>

¹⁵ Letter No. MIA 6 24 00203730 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32245>

¹⁶ Question No. 974/3-17/24 of the Member of Parliament of Georgia, Roman Gotsiridze, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32435>

¹⁷ Letter No. MIA12400582122 of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32626>

and who were dismissed without any compensation.¹⁸ According to the Ministry,¹⁹ a draft law was prepared under their authorship, according to which, when calculating the supplement for the years of service, the period of work from April 1, 2005 to January 10, 2015, and the period of work from January 10, 2015 to September 2, 2016 in the legal entity of public law operating in the sphere of the Ministry's management - Emergency Management Agency, the employee with a state special rank of the Emergency Management Agency, will have the years worked without a rank in the above-mentioned units included in the years of service.

A significant part of the questions sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs refers to requests for various statistical information. This is logical to some extent, since it is the Ministry of Internal Affairs that produces statistics on both crimes and border crossing. However, the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight would be improved if the questions of the Members of Parliament better covered various directions of the agency's activities, the results of the activities and the identification of the causes of problems.

Ministry of Defence of Georgia

In the period from January 1 - March 15, 2024, only one question was sent to the Ministry of Defence in writing. Member of Parliament Roman Gotsiridze's question referred to: the annual expenses of the Deputies of the Minister (separately for each of them), including: salary, bonus/supplement, assistants' salary, assistants' bonus/supplement, driver's salary, driver's bonus/supplement, telephone expenses, fuel expenses, car service expenses, office expenses, travel expenses.²⁰ The Ministry of Defence provided the MP with the requested information,²¹ except for: 1. Data on the car service expenses of the First Deputy Minister of Defence of Georgia and other Deputies. As the reason, the agency's answer states that the technical service of the vehicles of the Ministry of Defence is carried out within the framework of a contract registered as the classified contract; 2. In addition, the MP was not provided with information about the office expenses of the First Deputy Minister and other Deputies, since, according to the Ministry, such expenses are incurred for the organization in total.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war in the region and the preparations for the deployment of the Russian navy in the territory of occupied Abkhazia, sending only one question to the Ministry of Defence during the two and a half months of the parliamentary session is another indicator that the parliamentary oversight of the security sector is passive and, and Members of Parliament need to be more active for the effectiveness of oversight, both by sending questions and using other mechanisms.

¹⁸ Question No. 980/3-2/24 of the Member of Parliament of Georgia, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32446>

¹⁹ Letter No. MIA12400580809 of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32620>

²⁰ Question No. 967/3-17/24 of Roman Gotsiridze, Member of Parliament of Georgia, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32442>

²¹ Letter No. MOD 7 24 00249868 of the Ministry of Defence of Georgia, available at:

<https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/MpQuestionContent/32637>

