Statement

A few days ago, Georgian media sources depicted video-footage, which proves mass use of cruel, degrading and discrediting methods against the prisoners in Georgian penitentiary institutions. US State Department, European institutions, Public Defender of Georgia, local and international human rights organizations have been trying to direct the attention of the Government of Georgia to the hardest situation in the custodies by mentioning concrete facts and names of the prison personnel members, who were suspected in those crimes. Despite that, the President, the Parliament of Georgia, government and law enforcement bodies did not respond to cruel treatment and violence facts committed against prisoners. Unfortunately, after the shocking video-footage was depicted, the chairman of the pen-monitoring department, Chief Prosecutor and senior officials of the Georgian MIA tried to avoid responsibilities for those crimes in their public speeches and tried to blame the opposition parties in it. Only extreme astonishment of the Georgian society and large-scaled protest demonstrations compelled Minister of Corrections and Legal Aid and Minister of Interior to resign; as for other senior governmental officials, they changed/softened tone of their speeches and verbally admitted mistakes. In parallel to it, other governmental officials, who have been hiding facts of ill-treatment and torture of prisoners for many years, still occupy high positions in the Georgian Government. They supervise the investigation of the crimes committed in the penitentiary system.

We, representatives of the Georgian civil society, believe that creation of the criminal system, where prisoners are tortured and inhumanly treated, seriously hindered the country on its way towards Euro-Atlantic Integration. Government of Georgia is politically responsible for the current situation, whose activities make us doubt that the investigation will try to impose criminal liability only on the individuals, who were detected in the video-footage as executors of the criminal orders. We believe it is the issue of the country’s honor to punish every person, regardless its rank, who assisted establishment of the system of cruel and inhuman treatment of prisoners, and not only resign them from positions. We call upon the international society, the US government and EU institutions to adequately evaluate the current situation in Georgia. We suggest you to apply the practice of your countries (for example: so called Magnitski Case) in our case too and at least prohibit the former Minister of Corrections and Legal Aid of Georgia, former Minister of Interior and Chief Prosecutor of Georgia to enter your countries before the gravest crimes committed in the penitentiary system are effectively and impartially investigated.

1. Irakli Melashvili – member of the Coalition for Freedom of Choice;
2. Lasha Tugushi – editor-in-chief of the newspaper Rezonansi;
3. Zviad Koridze – journalist, member of the Coalition for Freedom of Choice;
4. Revaz Sakevariashvili – journalist;
5. Ucha Nanuashvili – Human Rights Center; member of the Coalition for Freedom of Choice;
6. Davit Losaberidze - Center of Local Democratic Network; member of the Coalition for Freedom of Choice;
7. Davit Narmania - Caucasian Institute of Economics and Social Research; member of the Coalition for Freedom of Choice
8. La Mamalia – Center of Monitoring; member of the Coalition for Freedom of Choice;
9. Magda Popiaishvili, Georgian Media-Club; member of the Coalition for Freedom of Choice;
10. Murman Pataria, Resource Center of Civic Education, member of the Coalition for Freedom of Choice;
11. Kote Kandelaki, International Center for Civic Culture, member of the Coalition for Freedom of Choice;
12. Teona Akubardia – Georgian Media-Monitoring Center; member of the Coalition for Freedom of Choice;
14. Thea Sichinava – journalist, TV-Company Maestro
16. Irina Putkaradze – Coalition of Nongovernmental Organizations;
17. Public Attorney
18. Nazi Janezashvili – Article 42 of the Constitution;
19. Aslan Chanidze – House of Free Journalists
20. Giorgi Sikharulidze – Newspaper Guria News
21. Tamar Lepsveridze – journalist
22. Zaal Mamaladze – organization “Community and Self-Government”;
24. Gogi Akhalkatsi – journalist;
25. Newspaper “Rustavis Ambebi” [Rustavi news]
27. Mamuka Kuparadze – Studio Re
28. Paata Gachchiladze, Union 21st Century’
29. Eka Beridze – journalist
30. Tamar Chikovani – journalist
31. Madona Kharebava – Association Dea
32. Zaza Khutsishvili – singer, journalist
33. Aleko Elisashvili – journalist
34. Manana Kochladze – Green Alternative
35. Teona Gegelia – journalist