

WORK OVERVIEW



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Introduction

2021 in Georgia was marked with an ongoing political crisis, which neither the April 19 Agreement mediated by the international partners nor the 2021 local self-government elections could resolve. The agenda that was solemnly focused on the political crisis has completely missed the following issues:

- · Disturbing human and social consequences of the pandemic;
- The dire social and economic situation in the country, which has been exacerbated by the unprecedented scale of inflation;
- Issues related to the reforms aimed at protecting human rights and equality.

Political polarization and radicalization were particularly intense in the context of self-government elections of 2021. In the pre-election period, the campaign strategies of the parties were rather reflecting state of emergency, and completely ignoring real challenges and needs of the regions and cities. Antagonism and hostile rhetoric have taken over the political and media space, and neither public nor political means were found to alleviate this state. On the contrary, the shortcomings observed in the elections and the developments around the third president of the country that were evolving at the same time further contributed to the radicalization of the situation. The factor of Saakashvili deepened the state of polarization and weakened the political influences and electoral results of small political parties even more.

The political polarization and undemocratic internal processes inside the ruling party have substantially damaged the process of Europeanization in the country. After the appointment of Irakli Gharibashvili as a Prime Minister, the leaders of the ruling party started making disturbing statements about the country's international partners. Moreover, the relations with the European Union are clearly in crisis, which is confirmed by the harsh and alarming statements made by number of members of European Parliament.

The decisions made by the authorities after Mikheil Saakashvili's return to Georgia were deeply problematic. Meaning the decisions of restricting a right to a fair trial and refusing to provide adequate medical treatment for the prisoner on a hunger strike. Given the politicization of the existing justice system and the clan structure, it is clear that the judiciary will not be independent and fair to Mikheil Saakashvili. This fact not only violates the rights of the individual, but also makes it impossible to make a fair assessment of the past and to cultivate consent in the society about it, which is another cause of political polarization and conflict.

The tendency that after the elections the ruling political party is trying to put pressure on the newly elected opposition MPs in some Sakrebulos in order to consolidate power is disturbing. In this context, special attention should be given to the death of Nugzar Putkaradze, a newly elected member of the Batumi City Council who was pressured to act in favor of the interests of the ruling party. A similar trend is evident in Dmanisi, where there are also signs of pressure on the opposition council member, Ramiz Ramazanov.

Transcripts published in September 2021, which allegedly indicates the mass illegal eavesdropping by the State Security Service, once again uncovered the excessive role of the security services in the political system and their scale of penetration into micro-social relations that creates the heaviest sense of control and mistrust in society.

Anti-crisis aid and direct monetary compensation for those who lost their jobs as a result of pandemic restrictions that were issued on the expense of increased state debt to some extent responded to the severe social and economic crisis in the country. However, ensuring social aid for persons enrolled in informal economies and providing quick and adequate response to large-scale strikes and various types of workers' protests is still a challenge for the state. Throughout the year large-scale protests of environmentalists is visible in different regions. On sight, the local population resorted to extreme forms of protest, hunger, and even days-long picketing, to which the state responded by ignoring or repressing, restricting the right to protest and freedom of movement in the main protest localities.

The radicalization and violence of ultra-right groups has dreadfully emerged again in 2021. The tolerant policies and impunity for the violence perpetrated by these groups has been practiced by the state over the years and it has further increased the threats posed by these groups. In this regards, particularly disturbing was the mass, pre-organized violence orchestrated by the leaders of the Alt-Info group on July 5-6, 2021 during the anti-Pride rally, which resulted in the restriction of the rights and professional activities of 52 journalists, including, violence against several of them. It should be noted that the investigation of the events is still sporadic and it is not clear whether there is a political will to impose legal responsibility on the organizers of the violent gathering. Against this background, the establishment of parties and televisions by these groups and the entry of sharply anti-democratic, unconstitutional forces into the field of institutional politics are the matters of government's political responsibility.

This year we have again saw social conflicts with religious and ethnic connotations in our country. This, unfortunately, once again did not become a locomotive for a positive transformations and substantial reforms in the policy of equality and integration for the government. Moreover, the pre-election processes in the regions with high ethnic minority presence and the experience of their political instrumentalization by the authorities have once again demonstrated the weak policy of integration of these regions, exclusion from democratic participation and the political intentions of peripheralization.

It is clear that in the context of policies of political polarization, weak democratization and integration, it becomes virtually impossible to work on important political issues related to the peaceful transformation of conflicts and moving the reconciliation policies to a new level.

Thus the deep and unresolved political crisis and polarization, the undemocratic attempts of the ruling political team to remain in power, the pandemic, the deep economic crisis and the inflation have substantially worsened the living conditions and human rights condition of our citizens. It is obvious that the state is not able to respond to various types of social conflicts and grievances with the long-term social and legal reforms, which ultimately create an unstable political and economic environment and produce social despair.

2021 in Numbers

NEW CASES OF 2021:

4 Cases litigated before the European Court of Human Rights

24 Criminal cases before investigative bodies

Public Defender as an equality mechanism –

1 Case

1 Case before the Constitutional Court

9 Cases conducted in administrative bodies

36 Ongoing cases in common courts

2021 - NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL CASES

12



PUBLIC EVENTS

48



SOCIAL POLICY PROGRAM

This year, the program has concentrated its efforts on environmental concerns, most notably the opposition to and violations surrounding the Namakhvani HPP project. Additionally, the organization invested significant resources in raising public awareness, particularly in the area of development projects involving natural resources, which require additional information from both investment firms and the government, as well as discussions about the projects' justification, transparency, and its public benefits.

The program also focused heavily on monitoring the Labor Inspectorate's renewed mandate this year. Assessments of the Labor Inspection Mechanism's institutional flaws and enforcement concerns have been undertaken for the first time since its creation. Additionally, this year marked the start of a post-2020 labor reform phase, which enabled the organization to identify problematic aspects of informal and non-standard work beyond the safeguards available in formal employment. Additionally, the organization spent extensive time examining formalization potential in Georgia and identifying relevant efforts that might assist the state in encouraging or implementing formalization legislation.

This year, in the interest of ensuring adequate housing, the organization examined the peculiarities of eviction regulation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and issued several recommendations to the judiciary and executive branches to address the subject matter. According to the study, it is projected that the state will become more repressive toward homeless persons due to the legislative changes of 2021.

Throughout 2021, the Social Justice Center was actively seeking to identify systemic barriers to protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and developing strategies to address them on an individual level and in collaboration with communities of people with disabilities and organizations that work on the issue. This year, the organization focused on mental health issues and the systemic short-comings that exist due to the non-implementation of support policies for people with disabilities, which creates a barrier to care policy implementation.

GREEN POLICY

The Social Policy Program has dedicated 2021 to studying and analyzing the hydropower and mining industries to promote equitable, socially, and environmentally sustainable resource management.

For this purpose, it was critical to investigate the Namakhvani HPP cascade project. Throughout the year, the Social Justice Center has monitored and responded to ongoing processes in the Rioni Valley, assessing them both legally and politically. An in-depth study - Violations, Inconsistencies, and Unsubstantiated Concessions: A Brief History of Namakhvani HPP Project - summarizes the undemocratic, opaque, and unsubstantiated decision-making process and accompanying violations. The Social Policy Program team made the assessments and findings public through statements, articles, and videos. In addition, the Social Justice Center appealed decisions related to various stages of the project, such as issuance of environmental impact assessment and a construction permit, in court, both independently and in collaboration with partner organizations.

Additionally, in collaboration with other civil society organizations, the Social Justice Center participated in an unprecedented six-month-

long mediation process involving the European Energy Community regarding the Namakhvani HPP project. The Social Justice Center described and evaluated the mediation process, informing the general public and stakeholder organizations of the process's shortcomings and successes. Regrettably, the mediation process paid insufficient attention to several substantive issues, such as the accuracy of the project documentation, the request for a temporary suspension of construction, and so forth. Nonetheless, it is critical that an agreement was reached regarding the project's environmental component being re-evaluated in the event of a project renewal. Following the mediation, a public discussion was held to summarize the proceedings, which was attended by the mediator as well as representatives from a number of other organizations that participated in the format. Additionally, the Social Justice Center prepared an alternative report of the mediation process.









As for the mining industry, Chiatura remains a hotbed in this regard. Residents of Shukruti village in Chiatura engaged in an extreme form of protest in 2021, a hunger strike, to demand compensation for property damage. The social policy program conducted an investigation into the village of Shukruti and compiled its findings in a report titled the Chiatura crisis. This paper builds on several years of research to study the mining industry. In addition to monitoring traditional mining hotspots (such as Chiatura, Tkibuli, and Bolnisi), in 2021, the Social Policy Program began investigating a significant new case of mining in the village of Shkmeri in Racha, where new mining licenses were issued in parallel with criminal disputes against the locals.

In collaboration with the people affected by Tbilisi's chaotic settlement, the Social Justice Center is waging a legal battle to stop the ongoing construction on Kipshidze Street. Furthermore, organization promotes the preservation





Video: Hippodrome residents for green spaces

of the city's cultural heritage and green spaces, as well as their management in the public interest through strategic litigation. In 2021, the Social Justice Center also spoke against the ongoing constructions on Batumi Boulevard. The ongoing construction on the site of the cultural heritage monument is irreversibly damaging; however, the court denied the Social Justice Center's request for an immediate suspension of construction, and the developer company exceeded the allowed height of the building.

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



42 STATEMENTS



1 STUDY



1 REPORT



7 ANALYTICAL DOCUMENTS

0

18 VIDEOS

0.

5 PHOTO REPORTS



1 BLOG



1 INFOGRAPHIC

LABOR POLICY

To improve workers' labor conditions and ensure fair labor rights, the Social Policy Program dedicated the given year to studying and analyzing what issues the reform addressed and how labor reform accomplishments are being implemented in practice.

Additionally, the social policy program's objective was to investigate the intersection of labor and social protection concerns. As a result, the program studied the state's anti-crisis assistance during the pandemic and concentrated on the study of informal employment, which included peculiarities of informal social protection.

As previously stated, the Social Justice Center investigated the issues and achievements associated with labor reform 2020. The primary accomplishment of the reform is the expansion of the Labor Inspection Service's mandate and the delegation of authority to them

to oversee the adherence of labor rights. The Social Policy Program team created the Labor Inspection Performance Evaluation 2021 to assess the Labor Inspection Service's performance. The first of its kind research was conducted to evaluate the Labor Inspection Service's performance, assess its obstacles, and identify necessary steps for its improvement. Furthermore, the organization evaluated the legislative regulation of maternity leave before and after the change. The video product reflected issues that have persisted since the reform, such as low wages for parents and lack of paternity leave.





Video: Labor Reform - Interview with Kote Eristavi

Additionally, in 2021, the Social Policy Program emphasized examining the issue of informal employment. The organization's research examines the various forms of non-standard and informal employment prevalent in Georgia. The study elicits local knowledge about the labor, social, and legal status of informal and non-standard employees, conducts a thorough legal analysis of the identified challenges, and proposes possible solutions and reform visions. The organization created a video titled "non-standard employment" to define non-standard labor; it further explores the labor guarantees that an employee is left without when they apply for informal employment. In addition, the Social Justice Center created a blog post and two competition videos to explain the employment status of informal workers: profession - cleaner and what do women street vendors want to say. The issue of informal labor is also addressed in the article "Challenges in formalizing the shadow economy," which addresses the topic through an international lens.







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Video: Tkibuli in the context of three historic events

The social policy program maintained a research interest in industrial cities in order to gain theoretical understanding and new evidence about extractivist economies, so 2021 was devoted to the drafting of the following studies: the labor market for women in Tkibuli, its demographic, sectoral distribution, and development prospects, and another on extractivism and economic empowerment of women in Tkibuli, examine the labor market for women in Tkibuli, its demographic, sectoral distribution, and development prospects. Furthermore, video material prepared in the scope of the program activities, using interpersonal narration, seeks to explore how women's daily lives, working conditions, and living environments changed in Tkibuli in light of the city's three historical eras: mine operation, closure, and finally privatization.

Furthermore, the social policy program supports workers who went on strike in 2021, demanding better working conditions. Through statements and videos, the Social Policy Program responded to workers' legitimate demands for their employers to comply with labor law's minimum standards. The program expressed solidarity with the Tbilservice employees' protest through a statement. Furthermore, the organization created a video that describes the demanding, difficult working conditions and legitimate demands of the Social Service Agency employees.

Since 2020, the organization has developed an interest in front-line workers as a result of the pandemic crisis. In 2021, three articles were devoted to the harsh working conditions and hazardous work environment that the front-line workers had to endure, focusing on Tkibuli miners, women traders, and social workers of the care agency.

In 2021, the Social Justice Center continued to pursue strategic litigation to safeguard employees who had their rights infringed. The following dispute concluded in the organization's victory: Discriminatory firing of workers who participated in the HPP protest - against Mestia Municipality; Dispute against book store "Biblus" in all three instances. The Social Justice Center is currently engaged in a judicial battle over the wrongful termination of eight social workers. The district courts ruled that the layoff of seven social workers was unconstitutional. Simultaneously, the Court of First Instance reinstated four workers immediately, while the Court of Appeals granted reinstatement and

compensation to the remaining workers. The Social Justice Center's legal battle at the Supreme Court against the wrongful firing of two social workers continues. Additionally, the Social Justice Center and Georgia's Young Lawyers Association (GYLA) filed an appeal with the court this year to protect the labor rights of those illegally terminated due to widespread staff changes at the National Museum following Tea Tsulukiani's appointment as Minister of Culture, Sports, and Youth.





IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



14 STATEMENTS



4 STUDIES



3 ANALYTICAL DOCUMENTS



12 VIDEOS



9 ARTICLES



1 BLOG

THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

By 2021, the government had not only ignored homeless groups' needs but actively pursued oppressive and punitive measures against them.

As a result, the Social Justice Center employed various strategies to identify obstacles in this area, devise strategies to overcome them, and educate the public on the subject, especially during the pre-election period.

The organization focused on both housing and eviction in general. The Social Justice Center recommended that the government develop the Housing Policy Document as part of the process of drafting an Open Government Partnership (OGP) Action Plan. The government agencies shared the given logic; however, the action plan has not yet been approved, and its final content remains unknown.

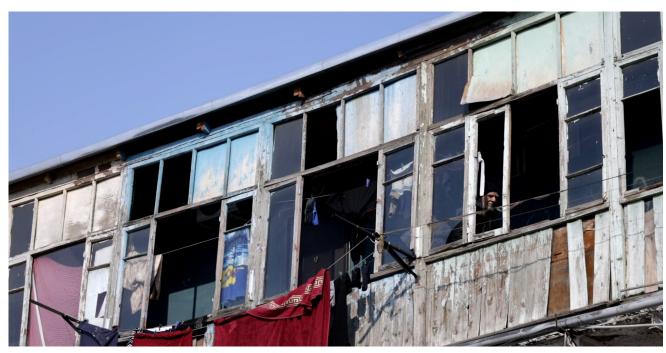
Additionally, the organization collaborated with numerous homeless groups and document-

ed their needs. Representatives of the Social Justice Center visited the residents of Orkhevi social housing several times. Also, they spoke with inhabitants of the so-called "the city of dreams residents" in Adjara and members of social housing in Kutaisi. Issues identified in the scope of the meetings is planned to be the subject of further research and advocacy for the organization in the years to come. The Social Justice Center also engaged in strategic litigation in addition to the visits. The most significant precedent in this regard is the organization's victory in a lawsuit in which the Supreme Court ruled that the 6.4 square meters per capita housing provision violates the right to adequate housing.



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Orkhevi residence - in a state of disrepair



Article: Dangers of Eviction During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

This year, the organization examined the peculiarities of eviction regulation and made several recommendations to the judiciary and executive branches regarding how to address the issues. The analytical document titled "Evacuation Threats During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic" in particular described the significant issues in this area, analyzed the existing challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and discussed mechanisms for overcoming them. Furthermore, the organiza-

tion provided legal assistance to the residents of the "Golden District" who were threatened with eviction and criminal prosecution. Additionally, the Social Justice Center participated in parliamentary debates deliberation process, making amendments to the construction legislation and Enforcement Code. Furthermore, the organization evaluated and publicly responded to the stipulated legislative changes and made pertinent recommendations to the state.

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



5 STATEMENTS



1 VIDEO



1 PHOTO REPORT



1 ARTICLE

RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Throughout 2021, the Social Justice Center has been actively working to protect the rights of people with disabilities by identifying barriers and looking for solutions, both independently and in collaboration with relevant communities and organizations.

This year, the organization focused on both the issues surrounding mental illness and the systemic flaws within policies aimed at assisting people with disabilities.

This year, the organization, in partnership with a number of disability activists and organizations working on the issue, has addressed critical topics such as non-compliance with or delay in fulfilling its obligations under the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a lack of guarantees for the effective implementation of the Disability Convention, and the need to expand the social assistance package for people with disabilities.

Due to the complexity of the mental health system, the organization has concentrated its efforts this year on several key areas. For example, in the context of human rights, the Social Justice Center assessed problematic issues in the field and collaborated with partner organizations to examine the working version of the Mental Health Strategy 2021-2030. Furthermore, the organization identified problems that need to be adequately addressed in the coming years' mental health policy and made several recommendations to the state.





Video: Why do people with psycho-social needs still live in large institutions?

One of the organization's focal points was the content of the state's mental health program, the separation of inpatient and outpatient services, and the state's adequate administration and supervision of them.

Additionally, the organization used a variety of methods to focus on mental health issues, such as mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, the failure of legal capacity reform, and various aspects of its implementation - including the role of social work in this area, its relevance to procedures for granting disability status, care policies for people with chronic mental illnesses, the practice of institutionalizing people with disabilities, and deinstitutionalization and the importance of housing services in given process. Additionally, the organization has released a collection of translations and a series of essays titled "Rethinking Psychiatry - Five Perspectives," which examines many areas of mental health and the human rights norms applicable to persons with psychosocial needs.



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Blog - Caring for People with Chronic Mental Disorders: Past, Present, Future

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



4 STATEMENTS



6 ANALYTICAL DOCUMENTS



1 COLLECTION OF TRANSLATIONS



6 VIDEOS



6 ARTICLES

3 BLOGS

JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY PROGRAM

The Social Justice Center has been actively engaged in institutional reforms of the judicial and law enforcement institutions for many years. These challenges continue to be significant for the organization in light of the growing polarization of government institutions and the emergence of illicit influences on them. Apart from institutional constraints, the social sensitivity of courts/law enforcement bodies, criminal justice policy, and overall access to justice substantially impact the quality of citizens' rights.

In 2021, the government enacted almost no legislative or institutional reforms to strengthen the judiciary and law enforcement agencies and increase their political and operational independence. The State Security Service's disproportionate power and the frailty of its external oversight systems were exposed last year. Along with the acute institutional issues, currently, the political agenda includes access to the overall justice system and criminal policy. Questions arose, in particular, about the Georgian court and judicial system's social sensitivity and how much these institutions are centered around human needs.

JUDICIAL SYSTEM

To assess access to justice, the organization developed a universal methodological framework in 2021 that examines all characteristics that prevent residents from accessing judicial institutions.

The Social Justice Center conducted research last year using this methodology and discovered that, in addition to legislative and institutional impediments, the social, cultural, and economic variables significantly hinder ordinary citizens' and certain groups' access to justice. It is worth noting that this was the first document of its kind in Georgia, providing the comprehensive overview of the country's access to justice conditions.



Video: Why are case considerations delayed in the Constitutional Court?

The organization resumes its work on socially sensitive justice concerns, and in 2021 it established an expert platform to study pertinent academic resources bearing in mind the Georgian context. One critical objective of the program is to increase public awareness of justice-related issues and facilitate the formation of activist groups. As a result, this work

will serve as the foundation for developing an academic curriculum that will be offered to universities.

Significant setbacks in judicial institutional reforms have occurred over the last year. In 2021, the existence of internal and external influences on the activities of the Georgian judiciary became more apparent for both domestic and international actors. Furthermore, it was reaffirmed that the government has no intention to establish an independent and politically neutral court. The April 19 agreement, which underlined the importance of systemic justice reform, also fell short of resolving existing challenges. Unfortunately, despite the requests of local civil society organizations, professional groups, and international actors, the government failed to exploit the opportunity provided by the April 19 agreement, and the prospect of judiciary reform was dashed. Last year, we also witnessed that the previously chosen strategy and approach to judiciary reform were inadequate, as evidenced by the plethora of criticism directed at the existing High Council model.





Video: Why are courts not independent?

In the spring of 2021, the Social Justice Center was elected as a Chairman of the Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary¹ (hereinafter referred to as the Coalition). In November, its chairmanship was extended for an additional year. Last year, much of the coalition's work was devoted to developing new visions for justice system reform that would be

adequate to the challenges facing the country. Last summer, the coalition prepared a reform model that would fundamentally alter the logic of judicial governance, emphasize the importance of political consensus, and revitalize the judiciary to regain genuine public confidence.

The case of a former judge, Maia Bakradze, is critical while discussing the need for systemic institutional reform. The case exemplifies the arbitrary judgments taken by the High Council of Justice in the pursuit of dissent and during the judge appointment process. The Social Justice Center represents the interests of Maia Bakradze before the European Court of Human Rights in this case. Therefore, the decision made by the European Court on October 6 to start the substantive hearing of Maia Bakradze's case will be one of the focal points of the organization's activity next year as well.

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



21 STATEMENTS



1 STUDY



3 ANALYTICAL DOCUMENTS



1 GUIDELINE



5 VIDEOS



1 BLOG

<?> On April 29, 2011, the Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary was created, bringing together 40 non-governmental organizations. The Coalition's mission is to unite human rights organizations, professional and business associations, and the media outlets in their efforts to promote an independent, transparent, and accountable justice system. For additional information about the Coalition's activities, please visit: https://cutt.ly/NAykxhQ

LAW ENFORCEMENT SYSTEM

Unaccounted for and politicized law enforcement continues to be a significant threat to human rights and democracy. Moreover, a criminal justice system that lacks social sensitivity and is prone to punitive measures is especially troublesome during a pandemic, which inevitably results in socioeconomic and human rights deterioration within the country.

The Social Justice Center prepared many impotant documents in 2021 to advocate for institutional reform of the criminal justice system. Last summer, in partnership with IDFI (Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information), detailed research was conducted on the State Inspector's Office's activities, institutional arrangements, and competencies. The study identifies the problems and challenges encountered by the Inspector's Office during the investigative process. It is worth noting that the Inspector's Office is responsible for investigating crimes committed by law enforcement authorities, such as abuse of power, ill-treatment, and so forth. In this regard, the agency's institutional and functional independence is crucial, and a number of recommendations have been made in the current study to that effect.



Research presentation:"Independent Investigative Mechanism in Georgia - Achievements and Challenges"

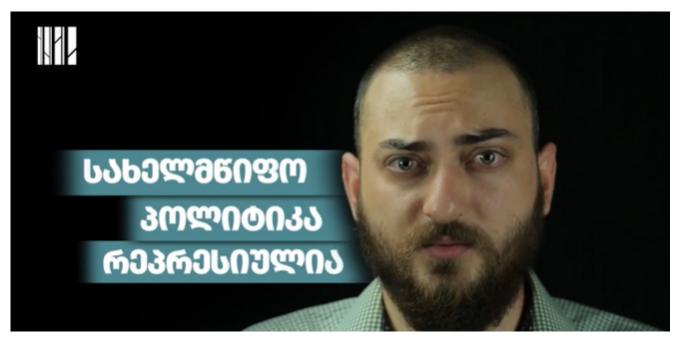


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Video: Investigation System Reform

priority issue for the Social Justice Center. Currently, the prosecutor's and investigator's roles are confused; the investigator is viewed not as an independent actor but as an instrument of the prosecution. These circumstances endanger the conduct of an objective and comprehensive investigation. Arguments and thematic directions for the investigation system reform are briefly summarized in the information brochure prepared by the organization. The organization's information booklet summarizes the arguments and thematic directions for reforming the investigation system.

As previously stated, the politicization of law enforcement agencies continues to be a significant issue. The April 19 agreement provided a critical chance to address the problem



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Video: What are the motives of theft / robbery and drug crimes in Georgia?

if only in part, discussing the need to reform the prosecutor's office and appoint a general prosecutor based on political consensus. The ruling team drafted a special bill on the subject last summer, which only partially addressed the issue of politicization dangers. Regrettably, consideration of the aforementioned bill was halted indefinitely following the April 19 agreement's annulment.

Parallel to institutional difficulties, oppressive criminal policies pose equally grave hazards

to a democratic and egalitarian society. The Social Justice Center published two significant studies last year that examined punitive and socially insensitive criminal policies and existing practices. The research critically addressed Georgian criminal justice and its punitive system, which primarily focuses on isolating an individual via oppressive measures. Moreover, the existing political agenda ignores socioeconomic, cultural, or other factors that may have contributed substantially to the conduct of the crime.

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



24 STATEMENTS



3 STUDIES



2 ANALYTICAL DOCUMENTS



5 VIDEOS



1 TRANSLATION



1 ARTICLE



1 INFOGRAPHIC

DRUG POLICY

Georgian drug policy stands out in the context of repressive justice. Regrettably, comprehensive drug policy reform was again left off the political agenda last year, with only minor, insufficient adjustments made to the legislation governing drug quantities.

The organization's annual assessment again demonstrates that Georgian drug policy remains punitive in nature, with the goal of controlling and isolating individuals. In addition, the inadequate number of treatment and rehabilitation programs continues to be a problem. In this regard, the difficulties associated with methadone replacement therapy in prisons have been noted, which is why long-term replacement therapy for convicts is not currently available.



Video: Temo Khatiashvili - Problems of substitution treatment in prisons

In recent years, Georgian drug policy has been shaped solely by Constitutional Court decisions. Accordingly, the organization also prepared an analytical document in 2021 assessing the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the Constitutional Court's enforcement of drug policy-related decisions and the drafting of appropriate legislation by Parliament. Additionally, the Constitutional Court's decisions are frequently viewed as excessive by the population, which increases the risk of unknowingly committing a crime. The organization published an information brochure last year summarizing recent legislative changes and actions imposing administrative or criminal liability to address this issue. The document is available in Georgian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, and English languages.

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



POLICE AND ABUSE OF POWER

Focusing on repressive mechanisms while managing political processes naturally leads to excessive police violence. Last year was no exception, as we saw numerous instances of the government resolving social or political conflicts solely through the use of police and special forces. The Namokhvani protest is a clear indication of this.

For months, there was a restriction on free movement and the right to peaceful assembly in the villages surrounding the HPP. The organization has drafted a special report on these issues, summarizing the justification and proportionality of the police force employed on the ground.

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Video: What happened on July 5-6 and what was the government response?

On the other hand, the state and law enforcement systems were utterly ineffective at protecting disadvantaged communities. The events of July 5-6 provided an explicit and regrettable confirmation of this, as law enforcement agencies failed to safeguard the Pride movement's right to peaceful assembly, thereby paving the way for violent groups. The preliminary analysis of the state's effectiveness during these

events demonstrates unequivocally that the government took insufficient precautions to avert violence. The investigation into the matter has also been problematic and ineffective, as it focuses solely on specific violent acts, ignoring the organizers' responsibilities.

The evidence of illegal listening and eavesdropping disclosed by the media in September of last year indicated that the state was committing widespread violations of citizens' rights. Regrettably, this has once again demonstrated how frail the risks of external accountability and monitoring of the state security agency are, as well as the dangers posed by these agencies' disproportionate authority for human rights violations. In this regard, the Social Justice Center prepared research on the use of these instruments for wiretapping and counterintelligence purposes, which details the legislative and institutional shortcomings that allow the State Security Service to intervene arbitrarily and illegally in a person's private life. At the national and international levels, the organization also engages in strategic litigation on the issue of illegal wiretapping.

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:





1 ANALYTICAL DOCUMENT

EQUALITY POLICY PROGRAM

In 2021, we again witnessed social tensions with religious and ethnic overtones in our nation; sadly, they failed to signal the government to subject equality and integration policies to positive transformations and considerable adjustments. Furthermore, during the pre-election period, the community's political instrumentalization, exclusion from democratic processes, and marginalization were brought to the forefront within regions densely populated with ethnic minorities.

An unprecedented process of self-organization has defined this year by activists from non-dominant religious and ethnic groups. Yet, while activist organizations have been vigorously advocating for their community's issues and needs, institutional policies towards these vital voices remain closed.

In 2021, the issue of radicalization and violence perpetrated by ultra-right organizations resurfaced. The state's lenient policies and impunity for the violence done by these groups have heightened with the progression of time. The mass, pre-organized violence perpetrated by the leaders of the Alt-Info group on July 5-6, 2021, during the anti-Pride rally is particularly alarming in this regard, as it resulted in the restriction of 52 journalists' rights and professional activities, including violence against several of them. We should highlight that the investigation into the events is still fragmented, and the government's political resolve to prosecute the organizers of the violent assembly is lacking. Against this backdrop, the government should focus on deterring them from creating political parties and media channels and, more broadly, on blocking the entrance of virulently anti-democratic forces into the sphere of institutional politics.

Working on critical political problems relating to the peaceful conflict transformation and the progress of reconciliation and integration programs becomes almost impossible in the face of political polarization, a weak democratic system, and feeble integration policies.

CONDITION OF NON-DOMINANT ETHNIC GROUPS

In 2021, the Social Justice Center was actively engaged in policy advocacy on behalf of non-dominant ethnic communities. On the one hand, the organization responded proactively to the challenging situations encountered in places densely populated by ethnic minorities. On the other hand, it strove to yield long-term positive change in integration policy. In 2021, the Social Justice Center successfully managed to place ethnic minorities' concerns on the political agenda.

Last year, the organization actively advocated for systemic issues affecting ethnic and religious minorities to be included on the agenda. The aforementioned issues stem from poor political representation and engagement, a lack of advisory procedures for ethnic minorities within higher governmental agencies, a dramatic decline in ethnic minorities' employment in public services, and limited access to quality education. Despite these problems, the political division and instability climate have precluded us from engaging with political parties and government institutions to mobilize and advocate for social and legal reform in this field.



Video: Why are ethnic minorities unable to find employment wthin the public sector?

On May 16-17, 2021, a personal dispute in Dmanisi Municipality erupted into a major clash between ethnic groups. The Social Justice Center investigated the incident and convened community forums alongside reputable public figures. As a result, a recommendation package, based on field research and community dialogue, was shared with government entities, outlining a vision for long-term conflict resolution.

Tensions between community members of Meore Kesalo in Marneuli Municipality and the Marneuli and Hujab Dioceses erupted in January of this year. Local farmers requested the right to use agricultural land on the village's state balance, which the diocese refused to grant them. To support local farmers, the Social Justice Center prepared a joint petition for leasing to agencies and got involved in the negotiation process, which was arranged by the State Representative and the Kvemo Kartli region's local government. Unfortunately, this process did not yield any tangible results. Additionally, instances of illicit pressure on local farmers were observed.

It became clear that the government was not receptive to initiatives prompted by the ethnic minority communities throughout the year. For example, the government did not support the initiative of the local activists to proclaim Nowruz Bayram a national holiday. Additionally, citing technical problems, the Georgian government declined to file Platform Salam's legislative initiative to restore their authentic surnames. This verdict is presently being contested in court, where the Social Justice Center is representing the petitioners' rights.

Local elections in 2021 and the pre-election period posed significant challenges in regions populated by non-dominant ethnic groups. There were still signs of the authorities' political instrumentalization of the people who lived in these areas. The Social Justice Center analyzed the ongoing electoral procedures in Kvemo Kartli and Javakheti. Before that, the organization made every attempt to bring the local community's needs to the notice of political parties and mayoral candidates and organize a series of public meetings with them.



Video: Political participation and the role of ethnic minorities



Video: How does the pre-election period seem to ethnic minorities?

This year, the Social Justice Center has been actively raising the citizenship concerns of thousands of ethnic Armenians in Javakheti and Muslim Meskhetians, albeit this process has yet to yield any results.

This year, the organization has also been active in the Javakheti region. Field visits were held in around 25 communities in Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki. In addition, the organization has been actively writing analytical papers and blogs on the problems facing the ethnic Armenian community in Javakheti.

This year, the organization worked actively to protect ethnic minorities' rights through legal dispute mechanisms. Violation cases that we have encountered include the practice of the Marneuli Municipality not using minority languages when communicating with citizens, environmental problems caused by a farm in the village of Svaneti, labour rights violations by the company Akeliks etc.



Conference - "Inter-ethnic relationships, Microconflicts, and Integration Policy"

In 2021, the European Court of Human Rights resumed hearing the case of Temirlan Machalikashvili's murder, where the Georgian government regretfully attempted to pursue baseless and misleading arguments once again. It was concerning that a local elder, Jabrail Khangoshvili, was refused citizenship and later a residency permit, depicting evident political interest and arbitrariness.

It is critical to note that the Georgian government authorized a ten-year (2021-2030) state strategy for civic equality and integration this year. We should note that strategy's language and pathos are critical and self-reflective, recognizing essential concepts. Against this backdrop, a decision to establish a Council of National Minorities inside the Diaspora Committee of Parliament in 2021 counters the strategy's declared aims. Furthermore, the strategy document does not contain any significantly innovative or major visions or plans, which does not raise expectations of big change in this area. The Social Justice Center contributed to the strategy document's development and provided feedback and recommendations for its improvement.

Simultaneously, the organization tried to empower activists from non-dominant ethnic communities while also providing democratic backing for their ideas. The Solidarity Platform, which operates with the support of the Social Justice Center and brings together activists from many regions ethnic and religious groups, has continued its operations and meetings with political parties and government institutions. The platform provides a one-of-a-kind space for activists to get together, express their solidarity to one another and develop critical ideas.

In addition, the Social Justice Center assisted in the formation of a network of Kvemo Kartli teachers. A similar network has successfully operated in other ethnic minority areas; the organization used the network to demonstrate and strengthen the role of teachers in community life and activism.



Meeting of "Teacher Network" participants and representatives of Kvemo Kartli community centers

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



16 STATEMENTS



8 ANALYTICAL DOCUMENTS



16 VIDEOS



3 ARTICLES



3 BLOGS



1 INFOGRAPHIC

THE STATE OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION

The government has made no significant reforms or decisions regarding religious freedom in 2021.

In early 2021, another incidence of religious persecution against the Georgian Muslim population was documented in the form of inter-communal conflict in the village of Buknari (Chokhatauri Municipality). Police detained two people connected with a series of threats and acts of violence. Before the development of the conflict, the local government sought to pacify the situation for many weeks, but they lacked the confidence and resources required to halt the conflict growth; by the time the central government interfered, it was too late. The conflict in Buknari echoes the same basis as prior inter-communal clashes. The Social Justice Center studied the issue and held community discussions with the involvement of local community leaders. The Center has shared recommendations for the long-term transformation of the conflict with government agencies.

It is critical to note that the European Court of Human Rights made a landmark judgement this year, acknowledging that in October 2014, police actions in the village of Mokhe violated the rights of Georgian Muslims. The Social Justice Center represented the villagers' rights before the European Court.

This year, the issue of constructing a new mosque in Batumi was prominent on the political agenda once again. Despite the Court of Appeals' recognition of the illegal and discriminatory nature of the Batumi City Hall's rejection to build a new mosque in Batumi, the Batumi City Hall appealed the ruling to the Supreme Court and once again delayed the process. The Social Justice Center and the Tolerance and



Video: Religion, as the area of freedom

Diversity Institute (TDI) represent the Muslim community before the court.

The current year was challenging for the Orthodox Church as well. In April 2021, the Ninotsminda religious boarding house became a place of tension. The prosecutor's office has initiated an inquiry into the boarding house's violent incidents, but the outcome of the investigation is not yet made public. The Social Justice Center represents the interests of one of the victims in the investigation process.

On September 13, 2021, information concerning the alleged illicit eavesdropping by the State Security Service was revealed. The substance of the extensive assemblies confirmed, on the one hand, the government's widespread and comprehensive control over the clergy and, on the other hand, the Patriarchate's unequivocal governmental backing. The Social Justice Center assists four clergymen in protecting their rights during the investigative process. The European Court of Human Rights is set to hear the case.

In 2021, the situation in the Chkondidi Diocese worsened. Pastors with critical positions were subjected to increasingly brutal persecution by temporarily appointed Bishop Stefane Kalaijashvili and his accomplices, resulting in expulsion, eviction from monasteries, and other coercive activities. The Social Justice Center protects the interests of clergy and their followers in this inquiry.

Notably, Social Justice Center began a critical policy school in Adjara this year, bringing together around 25 young activists and sharing with them with critical theory and space for solidarity and self-organization.





IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



) 16 STATEMENTS



2 ANALYTICAL DOCUMENTS



6 VIDEOS



6 ARTICLES



7 BLOGS

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED REGIONS

The human rights situation in the conflict regions did not improve in 2021. Notably, in the current year, the Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Integration began work to update the engagement strategy and action plan, which has not been updated since 2010.

Unfortunately, this process is not easily accessible, and despite a high level of interest voiced, the Social Justice Center was not invited to participate in the process. Nonetheless, the group has been active this year in conducting policy research and hosting public forums on peace policy.

Discrimination against ethnic Georgians persists in Gali and Akhalgori, and in 2021, teaching in Georgian was fully prohibited in Gali

schools. This ruling effectively finalized the years-long practice of Russification of Gali schools. The same is true for the educational sector in Akhalgori. It is still not possible to improve mobility within the conflict regions, which in 2021 had some tragic consequences. Additionally, illegal detentions persisted as a result of restrictions on movement. The Social Justice Center tried to organize public statements and discussions on these issues.

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Online Discussion: Gali – double omission location

People live in degrading and inhumane conditions in war-ravaged homes along administrative border lines. Most of them lack essential social infrastructure and crucial resources. such as drinking water, irrigation water, pastures, ambulatories, clinics, and kindergartens. The Social Justice Center visited Gori district communities this year to give legal and medical aid.

This year, the Social Justice Center has been actively trying to study legislation and policies that it feels are impeding the process of trust-building. The organization criticized the Law on Occupied Territories and the practice of developing a neutral ID card.

The organization was actively involved in semi-academic activities such as translating and compiling evaluations regarding ideas and approaches to peaceful conflict transformation





Podcast: Memories of war, trauma and every day life

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



11 STATEMENTS



1 TRANSLATION



3 VIDEOS



1 PHOTO REPORT



1 PODCAST



8 ARTICLES

THE LEGAL STATUS OF WOMEN

The Social Justice Center researched the rights and social situation of Muslim women in Georgia this year, focusing on the conditions of women in the Kvemo Kartli and highland Adjara. Through intersectional research approaches, the study analyzes the lives and exclusion of women in political, social, and cultural aspects.



Video: The Presence of Muslim Women - Difficulties and Obstacles

Additionally, the organization sought to address the issues of women from ethnic and religious minority populations publicly this year and preserve their rights through advocacy and legal aid mechanisms. Among other things, the organization presented budget recommendations alongside local women leaders in Adjara and advocated for a policy that addresses their needs.

The Social Justice Center sought to increase women's awareness of reproductive health concerns with the assistance of local activists and their unions. Along with legal aid, the organization provided medical assistance to women.



Video: Young girls from Javakheti region

The organization has also prepared translations of critical texts on women's labour and social reproduction issues. The new collection of translations includes texts by Susan Ferguson, Nancy Fraser, Michael Hardt, Sylvia Federich.

Additionally, the organization encouraged research-based activities in the subject of gender policy, including the following: 1. Climate change and the work of rural women; 2. Personal problems - universal responsibilities; 3. Beyond Emancipation and Exploitation: Women in Soviet Georgia's Collective Farms 4. The Global Chain of Labor and Care for Emigrant Women.

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



) 5 STATEMENTS



1 STUDY



1 COLLECTION OF TRANSLATIONS



7 VIDEOS



1 PODCAST



4 ARTICLES

THE LEGAL STATUS OF LGBTQI **PEOPLE**

The legal status of LGBT people and the fight against homophobia remains a challenge for our state.



Video: Resistance as a fight

The disruption of the "March of Dignity" planned by "Tbilisi Pride" on July 5, 2021, by ultra-conservative organizations, as well as their open violence against community members and media on the streets, are evident examples of the mentioned. As with prior instances of violence against LGBT individuals by various religious and political organizations, the state has remained completely impassive in this case as well. The Ministry of Internal Affairs failed to maintain public order and take legal action against the violence's organizers. Moreover, the populist speech by Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili, in which he effectively authorized and normalized the July 5-6 violence, was unlawful and anti-democratic

Against this backdrop, the government is responsible for the foundation and registration of a political party of the organizers of a violent event. Overall, the authorities' political and legal allegiance to far-right political groupings demonstrates evidence of their political instrumentalization, which is troubling. Regrettably, the state does not yet have a strategy to curtail extremist groups' operations.

The Social Justice Center provided a shadow report on these facts to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers - as part of its enforcement of the lawsuit "Identity and Others v. Georgia."

The Third Queer Forum, hosted by the Social Justice Center, examined the growth of ultra-conservative politics, with presentations given by local scholars alongside Bozan Bilic and Andrea Peto. Additionally, the organization has translated critical texts.



Report by Bozhan Bilic: The Pain and Pleasure of Writing on a Queer Life

This year, the Social Justice Center issued a research paper that thoroughly examines LGBT people's social exclusion and incorporates quantitative and qualitative research findings.

The study aims to demonstrate the legal and social position of LGBT persons cross-sectionally, as well as the intersection of many power axes in their lives and outcomes.

IN 2021, THE FOLLOWING WAS PREPARED IN THIS DIRECTION:



7 STATEMENTS



1 STUDY



3 TRANSLATIONS



12 VIDEOS



3 ARTICLES

INTERVIEW CYCLE - "ANOTHER CORNER"

In 2021, the Social Justice Center started a series of interviews titled "Another Corner" with technical assistance from Project 64.

The interview cycle's objective is to:

- $oldsymbol{1}_{oldsymbol{\cdot}}$ Provide systematic critical analysis of existing social processes;
- **2.** Facilitate the reintroduction of substantive debates into public and political discourse;
- **3.** Introduce and support the inclusion of social concerns and opinions in the dominant political agenda.

Throughout 2021, the Social Justice Center conducted interviews with scholars, community members, and activists who shared insightful observations, findings, and experiences about contemporary political and social processes.

Through this endeavor, we hope to provide a space for conversation and within "another corner" where we may present diverse alternative viewpoints and analyze the current state of democracy, social justice, equality, the judiciary, and the protection of various alienated groups rights social interests.

- What is the political system in our reality, and how did it emerge historically?
- Why is our country still impoverished, and why is social inequality growing?
- Why and how are public interests and needs obliterated from the political agenda?

By considering and debating these and other problems, we hope to provide viewers with the space and opportunity to make thorough observations on current events in the country.

INTERVIEWS PREPARED IN 2021:



▶ Other Corner: Events of 5-6 July



▶ Other Corner: Movement against Namakhvani HPP



▶ Other Corner: Political crisis and elections



▶ Another Corner: Church in light of the crisis



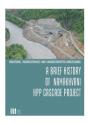
▶ Another corner: Foreign Debt and Georgia



Another Corner: What is the real essence of the current political crisis?

PUBLICATIONS OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CENTER 2021

SOCIAL POLICY PROGRAM



Violations, Inconsistencies and Unsubstantiated Concessions: A Brief History of Namakhvani HPP Project



Extractive Industries and Women's Economic Participation in Tkibuli



Informal and Non-standard Employment in Georgia



Labour Inspection Service Assessment - 2021



Peculiarities of work and migration of Tkibuli Women



Mental Health and Human Rights - Problematic Issues and Potential for Changes



The Importance of Housing Services in the Deinstitutionalization Process of Facilities for Persons with Disabilities



Assessment of Delivery Service Providing Contracts in Georgia



Namakhvani HPP Mediation Process -Report

JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY PROGRAM



Study of the Social aspects of crime and punishment



Policy of Crime and Punishment in Georgia



Independent Investigative Mechanism in Georgia – Achievements and Existing Challenges



Access to Justice in Georgia



Access to Justice Research Methodology



Practice of the Constitutional Court on Drug Policy - Assessing the Process of Reflecting Decisions in Legislation Social Justice Center Tbilisi 2021



Secret Surveillance within the Framework of Counterintelligence Activities - Analysis of Institutional and Legal Framework



The "European Model" of Judicial Institutional Arrangement: Salvation or Obstacle to Successful Judicial Reform



April 19 Agreement - Another untapped opportunity for justice reform

EQUALITY POLICY PROGRAM



Everyday Lives and Multifaceted Oppression of Muslim Women of Georgia



Conflict in Dmanisi ethnic derivatives of everyday conflict



Buknari – One more place of religious conflict



Elections in ethnic minority regions: Analysis of key tendencies and practices



Critical Analysis of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration



Human Rights for Peacebuiding



Vicious and Inhumane Practice of Extradition to Neighboring Countries

DONOR ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS



Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia

Project name: Strengthening ethnic minority integration and rights protection via research, education, advocacy, and confidence-building activities



Project name: Project Regarding the need of Services, Care and Policy Advocacy



- Project name: Formation of Fair and Humane Criminal Justice Policy
- Project name: Strengthening and Supporting Community life and teachers in Kvemo Kartli as agents of social Change
- Project name: Improving the rights of employees in the formal and informal sectors
- Project name: Support for Humane Drug Policy and Law Enforcement in Georgia
- Project name: Strengthening unheard voices of Ethnic Minorities during pre and post election period



Project name: Collusion, corruption and conflict of interest cases surrounding Namakhvani HPP Cascade project





- Project name: Improving Access to Justice
- Project name: Improving Human Rights
 Conditions for Marginalized Groups through
 Strategic Litigation
- Project name: Investigation System Reform Advocacy
- Project name: Supporting Comprehensive Reforms of Georgian Judiciary



Project name: Strengthen the human rights situation of LGBT persons, advocate SRHR issues and support the queer activists



Project name: Supporting The Right To Protest In Georgia

DONOR ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS

- HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG
 TBILISI
 South Caucasus Region
- Project name: Human Rights Dimension of the Environmental Issues
- Project name: Supporting positive Transformation of Peace Politics through research and advocacy



Project name: Support the removal of barriers preventing Women's Equal Participation in the Labor Market



 Project name: Promoting and Enabling Legal Capacity in Georgia



Project name: Support the Independent and Fair Judiciary

JOINT PROJECTS











Project name: Supporting the Functioning of the State Inspector Service

Project name: Legal Aid Network For activists

socialjustice.org.ge info@socialjustice.org.ge www.facebook.com/socialjustice.org.ge Address: 12B, Abashidze str., Tbilisi, Georgia Tel: +995 322 233 706