



Universal Periodic Review - Georgia

Joint stakeholder submission to Georgia's third periodic review

July 2020

Introduction

This is a joint stakeholder submission to the third Universal Periodic Review of Georgia, made by the following organisations:

Human Rights House Tbilisi (HRHT)

Human Rights House Tbilisi is a membership-based organisation that unites five Georgian civil society organisations working in the field of human rights. The member organisations have developed a joint strategy focusing on protecting and strengthening human rights defenders and human rights organisations and raising awareness on human rights issues. The five organisations include:

- Rights Georgia
- Georgian Centre for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (GCRT)
- Human Rights Centre (HRIDC)
- Media Institute
- Sapari

Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF)

Human Rights House Foundation is an international human rights organisation. We protect, empower and support human rights defenders and their organisations through Human Rights Houses, which are collaborative projects of non-governmental organisations working in partnership to promote and advance human rights at home and abroad. Within a Human Rights House, human rights defenders and their organisations remain independent and address the rights and issues that matter to them and the society they live in, while they benefit from cooperation, shared resources, solidarity, expertise, visibility, and strength in advocacy.

Institutional and human rights infrastructure and policy measures

1. Although Georgia has a number of international obligations to protect human rights defenders, nevertheless, its human rights action plans¹ and strategies² do not adequately emphasize and address the problems facing human rights defenders (HRDs). Furthermore, it does not appear that the government is considering taking specific steps to address these issues. This is particularly important, considering the tendency toward an increased number of attacks against HRDs or activists and a

¹ *Human Rights Action Plan for 2018-20*, Georgian Human Rights Secretariat, available here:

<http://myrights.gov.ge/en/plan/Human%20Rights%20Action%20Plan%20for%202018-2020>

² *National Human Rights Strategy for 2014-2020*, Georgian Human Rights Secretariat, available here:

<http://myrights.gov.ge/en/About%20us/news/reports/About%20us/news/My%20Rights/Briefly%20on%20Human%20Rights/About%20us/My%20Rights/useful-links/Policy%20Documents/National%20Human%20Rights%20Strategy/>

“culture” of impunity when such attacks occur. These include media smear campaigns alongside attacks by senior state officials which negatively portray activists in front of the general public. This process, in itself, increases the risk of attacks against HRDs. Georgia has not provided a clear vision on how to protect and support human rights defenders.

Recommendations:

- 2. Ensure that the new Human Rights Action Plan incorporates steps to protect human rights defenders, including awareness raising campaigns on the invaluable work of HRDs for state institutions (e.g. policy officers and etc.) and the general public, and ensure the participation of HRD organizations in this process;**
- 3. Ensure that the new Human Rights Action Plan incorporates activities that particularly support minority rights defenders, and women human rights defenders, as they face additional vulnerabilities that are gender-specific.**

Constitutional or legislative framework

4. The legislative framework of Georgia does not provide specific normative protections for human rights defenders from the risks they face. Generally, the rights guaranteed to everyone by the constitution of Georgia (i.e. freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, equality and etc.) provide protection for human rights defenders for their human rights defending activities, but the legislation does not define and recognize the peculiarity of this specific pursuit.
5. One positive step towards acknowledging the crucial importance of human rights defenders and the necessity of their protection was made in 2019. The Public Defender of Georgia started dedicating a separate chapter of its annual parliamentary report to human rights defenders.
6. Human rights defenders and activists in Georgia have begun active discussions to request explicit measures in the legislative framework that will better protect human rights defenders, given the specific challenges that they face. For instance, preventing unlawful interference in the professional activities of journalists is a criminal offense in Georgia. A similar standard of protection regarding the human rights defending work is now proving necessary. The heightened protection and specific regulations will give human rights defenders the possibility to be safer in their professional activities.

Recommendations:

- 7. In consultation with civil society, and with other states, identify best practice in policy protection for human rights defenders;**
- 8. Ensure that human rights defenders have adequate legislative recognition and protection, akin to other groups like journalists.**

Equality and non-discrimination

9. Since Georgia’s previous review under the UPR, human rights defenders and activists who protect and advocate for the rights of minorities have become increasingly vulnerable in Georgia. For instance, HRDs who defend the rights of LGBTQI+ people and/or ethnic minorities have been continuously under attack. There is a rooted stigma in Georgian society against LGBTQI+ people, thus protecting and advocating for members of this community poses advanced psychological and physical risks to

those who are fighting for their rights.

10. Particular attention should be directed to certain non-state actor groups, including those with radical homophobic, ultranationalist, and neo-Nazi ideologies, which have become more active in Georgia in recent times. They are actively opposing minorities (especially LGBTQI+) and those who defend their rights. It is alarming that the relevant authorities do not publicly support minorities living in the country. Moreover, government officials are not working to investigate threats and violations against minorities committed by such groups. For example, two weeks before the first announced Pride week in Georgia, a “people’s patrol” was formed, who then armed themselves with wooden sticks, and threatened the organizers and participants of Pride. The public speeches of the leaders of these anti-rights groups included instances of incitement to violence, including stipulating that they would “tie their [members of LGBTQI+ community] hands with belts and take them away”. It was also mentioned in a Freedom House report that the leader of this group “openly called for vigilante patrols to attack the gathering.”³
11. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA) opened an investigation⁴ into the acts of violence; however, these cases remain unresolved. The LGBTQI+ community in Georgia was ultimately not allowed to exercise their rights; they became the objects of threats and violence, to which the government did not adequately respond. The people who made aggressive statements and called on others to start patrolling in the streets were seen on TV, but the government did not hold them accountable for their actions.
12. In November 2019, these anti-rights groups gathered again and issued violent threats, hours before the premiere of the Georgian-Swedish film “And Then We Danced”. They gathered outside a number of cinemas in Tbilisi and Batumi to thwart the films screening due to the depicted homosexual love story. The protest was particularly crowded at Amirani cinema where human rights defenders Ana Subeliani and Tamaz Sozashvili were accompanying the LGBTQI+ community members. The crowd became aggressive and violent when they saw LGBTQI+ human rights defenders among the movie-goers and the human rights defenders were targeted with aggression and threats. The human rights defenders were particularly targeted, having been previously identified by these anti-rights groups⁵. The person who attacked Ana Subeliani was sentenced to 1,5 year prison time due to his violence on discriminatory grounds, Tamaz Sozashvili’s case is still in court.
13. In recent years, more organized groups have emerged in Georgia that directly oppose minority rights defenders because of their ultranationalist ideologies. These groups have attacked human rights defenders near their houses, damaged their offices, and beaten them, among other violations.
14. Hate crimes towards minorities remain one of the biggest human rights challenges in Georgia. Therefore, people who belong to ethnic minorities themselves and/or protect members of ethnic minorities face overlapping risks and challenges if they speak up and advocate for human rights as well. As the threat of hate-motivated crimes has significantly increased recently with the emerging ultraviolent anti-rights groups, the effective litigation of crimes is still a key challenge. There have been attempts at positive legislative amendments to address these challenges, in particular the implementation of Article 53¹ in the Criminal Code of Georgia, which includes the definition of the aggravating circumstance for the crime committed on discriminatory grounds or intolerance.

³ *A New Eurasian Far Right Rising: Reflections on Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia*, Freedom House, available here: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/FarRightEurasia_FINAL_.pdf

⁴ *MIA investigates Vasadze over forming a vigilante group*, Civil.ge, available here: <https://civil.ge/archives/308884>

⁵ *Statement concerning the incident on November 8 against human rights defenders – Ana Subeliani and Tamaz Sozashvili*, Human Rights House Tbilisi, available here: <https://hrht.ge/en/statement-concerning-the-incident-on-november-8-against-human-rights-defenders-ana-subeliani-and-tamaz-sozashvili/>

However, in practice, it is still a problem for the representatives of the investigative bodies and the prosecutor's office to define the real motive of the crimes in such cases. This can be evidenced in the statistics by the low use of this norm at the investigative stage, and also in the later stage, when the court examines the case.⁶ Consequently, this norm is not properly implemented in practice, indicating the lack of understanding of investigative officers and of the state's will to fulfil its international obligations. Among these, are the State's obligation to "undertake all appropriate means" and to "implement the policy for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination."⁷

15. In the case of Vitali Safarov, a human rights defender who was killed in Tbilisi on September 30, 2018, the prosecutor's office charged two people with crimes on the grounds of ethnic intolerance. Vitali Safarov was murdered by members of a neo-Nazi group that was known for its aggression, especially towards foreigners. However, the Tbilisi City Court did not rule on June 22, 2019, that the defendants had committed a murder on the grounds of ethnic intolerance and/or xenophobia, rather finding them guilty only on the charges of "group murder".
16. Georgia is not fulfilling its obligation under the European Convention on Human Rights, specifically in relation to the following judgement:
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17. *"take all reasonable steps to unmask any racist motive and to establish whether or not ethnic hatred or prejudice may have played a role in the events. Failing to do so and treating racially induced violence and brutality on an equal footing with cases that have no racist overtones would be to turn a blind eye to the specific nature of acts that are particularly destructive of fundamental rights."*⁸
18. The case of Vitali Safarov shows that the above groups are particularly aggressive against people with liberal views and defending rights of minorities, and thus they represent a particular threat to human rights defenders and activists. Georgia does not pay sufficient attention to crimes against human rights defenders. There is no adequate response to the severity of the crimes, even when the result is the death of a human rights defender. There is no separate classification of these types of crimes and their study.

Recommendations:

- 19. Investigate and prosecute all criminal attacks against HRDs effectively;**
- 20. Ensure that attacks on HRDs, particularly minority rights defenders, receive high-level and public condemnation by State officials;**
- 21. Ensure that the investigative officers and court officials have been trained and understand the work and role of human rights defenders.**

Freedom of opinion and expression

Attacks on the Media

⁶ *Racial Intolerance and Xenophobia: Rights of Foreign Nationals in Georgia*, Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI), available here:

http://tdi.ge/sites/default/files/tdi_angarishi_rasobrivi_diskriminacia_ucxoelebis_uplebebi.pdf?fbclid=IwARo npusJH7WQozNHLeCdC14m3C7jRnTeuFNA6fJU14noeNv35kBNM8LC13I

⁷ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article 2(1)

⁸ See the ruling of the ECtHR over the case *Nachova and Others v. Bulgaria* No. 43577/98, judgment of 6 July 2005, para. 160, available here: [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng-press#{%22itemid%22:\[%22001-69630%22\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng-press#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-69630%22]})

22. The media has always played a prominent role in the life of civil society of Georgia. In the previous UPR cycle, Georgia supported the recommendation to “Ensure the right to freedom of expression, in particular through ensuring plurality and independence of the media as well as protection of media outlets critical to the Government from harassment and attacks”.⁹ In Georgia, the media often engages in activities similar to those of activists and human rights defenders - especially when the media has the editorial position to be critical towards the government, acting as a watchdog. However, despite the above-mentioned supported position, there are still cases in Georgia when critical media outlets or journalists face undue and significant pressure from the government.
23. Recent cases of pressure on the media creates a reasonable suspicion that the government is fighting and pressuring media or journalists who are backing the opposition or who just have critical/independent views. Of particular concern are the recent developments at Adjara TV and Radio Company – a publicly funded broadcaster, where a number of journalists were dismissed from their jobs due to their critical views and independence. It is obvious that the organizational and staff changes aim at changing critical editorial policy.¹⁰ The pattern of fighting the opposition or critical media is so apparent that there are clear signs of the application of selective justice by the state by launching criminal investigations against Media owners and/or representatives.
24. When the state tries to oppose and suppress critical positions, the freedom of civil society in general is hindered. The media is as important actor in strengthening civil society as human rights defenders. The inadmissibility of critical opinions indicates that the government has a clear and specific goal to stop civil society representatives from doing their job.

Freedom of opinion and expression of human rights defenders

25. Recently, it has been alarming that activists, including a representative of the Human Rights Education and Monitoring Centre (EMC),¹¹ have been summoned to the State Security Service of Georgia (SSG). According to the general explanation by the SSG, human rights defenders are summoned as part of the investigation concerning racial discrimination, as they believe that certain individuals are trying to stir up ethnic strife between ethnic Georgians and Azeris in the Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions. While no information about the ongoing investigation or the need of summoning civil activists and human rights defenders has been disclosed, there is reasonable cause for concern that it might be connected to controlling and examining activists’ freedom of expression and activism.
26. The investigation launched by the SSG concerns the region inhabited by ethnic minorities in Georgia. The investigation began after the ultimatum of the Bishop of Marneuli region – he gave the “deadline” to government officials to take down the monument of Nariman Narimanov. His demand was perceived as xenophobic. Moreover, the restoration of the monument was criticized by anti-liberal groups on social media – this criticism did not take into account the in-depth understanding of Nariman Narimanov’s historical role and instead of that, was aimed at stirring up ethnic strife and stigmatization of ethnic minorities.
27. It is particularly disturbing that human rights defenders are interrogated during such investigations, and the authorities are obliging them not to disclose the details of the investigation in accordance with the Criminal Code (as they are signing non-disclosure agreement during their interrogation). It is

⁹ *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Georgia – Addendum*, UN General Assembly / OHCHR, available here: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/31/15/Add.1>

¹⁰ *Journalists, activists rally outside Adjara TV*, Civil.ge, available here: <https://civil.ge/archives/357494>

¹¹ *EMC responds to the ongoing investigation at State Security Service and examination of Tamta Mikeladze*, The Human Rights Education and Monitoring Centre (EMC), available here: <https://emc.org.ge/en/products/emc-sus-shi-mimdinare-gamodziebasa-da-tamta-mikeladzis-gamokitkhvis-protsess-ekhmianeba>

likely that the use of this mechanism is the way to control the freedom of expression of HRDs and it will be followed by the so-called “chilling effect” - as the result of such interference in the work of human rights defenders, the government will be reducing the possibility of public control by human rights defenders over the investigation process and deprives respondents of the opportunity to defend their positions and express dissatisfaction.

Recommendations:

- 28. To guarantee the freedom of expression and non-intervention in the work of media;**
- 29. To end the practice of arbitrary inspection and control of human rights defenders and activists’ freedom of expression and their activities.**

Freedom of peaceful assembly

30. Despite some success in the fight against discrimination in recent years, the freedoms of peaceful assembly and expression of the LGBTQI+ community and defenders of their rights are under attack in Georgia.
31. At the beginning of 2019, organizers of the first ever Tbilisi Pride announced that Pride week would take place on 18-23 June 2019, however, according to the organizers, after a long negotiation process, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA) informed them that law enforcement agencies would not be defending the LGBTQI+ community’s freedom of assembly due to what they see as “increased risks and threats coming from radical groups.”¹² Thus, the MIA created a dangerous precedent indicating that the state could not protect people and support them to exercise their constitutional rights in certain circumstances. When activists gathered in front of the government chancellery to call on the police to ensure security of Pride, they were met by violent counter-demonstrators, verbally assaulted, threatened and eventually evacuated by police officers.¹³
32. On June 20 a wave of civilian protests was launched in Georgia.¹⁴ Members of the opposition entered the plenary sitting hall in the Georgian Parliament and took the place of the Chair and prevented a Russian MP, Sergei Gavrilov from entering the hall. The protestors were emphasizing that Gavrilov, who recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, in contravention of Georgian and international law, should not sit in the place of the Chairman in Parliament.
33. On the evening of June 20, the protestors gathered in front of the Parliament to peacefully protest this fact and demanded the resignation of the Chair of the Parliament of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, and other officials. Elements of the largely peaceful protest tried to enter the Parliament and the law enforcers then used rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons indiscriminately against everyone in the vicinity. Ironically, just a few minutes before using them, the Georgian Prime Minister, Mamuka Bakhtadze, had said of his own party that “rubber bullets and different types of gas have never been

¹² *Interior Ministry rejects LGBT activists’ request to hold ‘Tbilisi Pride’* – Ombudsman, Georgian Journal, available here: <https://www.georgianjournal.ge/society/35913-interior-ministry-rejects-lgbt-activists-request-to-hold-tbilisi-pride-ombudsman.html>

¹³ *Tbilisi Pride : Protect the rights of LGBT community and defenders in Georgia*, Human Rights House Tbilisi, available here: <https://hrht.ge/en/tbilisi-pride-protect-the-rights-of-lgbt-community-and-defenders-in-georgia/>

¹⁴ *Georgia protests: Thousands storm parliament over Russian MP’s speech*, BBC News, available here: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-48710042>

¹⁵ As of July 2020, The Georgian Dream is the current ruling party of Georgia

the handwriting of the Georgian Dream (GD)¹⁵ and never will be used when it comes to civilians”.¹⁶

34. During the dispersal, 240 citizens were transferred to clinics, of which 80 were law enforcers.¹⁷ Two of the injured lost their eyes, including an 18-year-old girl who was passing by and had not participated in the protest at all.¹⁸
35. On a separate occasion, the Georgian government announced that in 2020 parliamentary elections in Georgia will be held using a proportional electoral system for the first time. However, in November, only 101 Members of Parliament supported the transition to a proportional election system and that was not enough for the constitutional amendment.
36. Members of civil society announced permanent rallies near the Parliament and picketed the building. The government dispersed the protesters with the use of water cannons and with the mobilization of law enforcement officers. 37 activists or members of political parties were arrested.
37. The detainees were charged with Article 173 (non-compliance with a lawful order or demand of a law enforcement officer) and Article 166 (disorderly conduct) under the Administrative Offences Code of Georgia. The court’s decision on the twelve detainees was announced on November 20 – almost all of them were sentenced to administrative detention.
38. This type of detention as a form of administrative punishment is frequently used disproportionately against activists in Georgia. In this particular case, the court did not take into account the circumstances i.e. detained activists were peaceful while protesting and were not using violent forms of protest while picketing. They had declared peaceful civil disobedience in defence of their fundamental constitutional values.
39. Administrative detention is as intense interference with human rights as it would be in criminal cases. So, the court trial of the persons detained on November 18 should have been held in accordance with the standards of a fair trial. Such standards are not guaranteed under Georgian law. As a result, the judge delivered the verdict regarding the detainees in a hurried manner. Freedom of assembly in Georgia is guaranteed by the Constitution. Therefore, administrative detention by the state is an unproportionate and unconstitutional obstacle used to interfere with the legitimate right to peacefully protest.

Recommendations:

- 40. Guarantee that Georgian legislative framework and its practice is fully aligned with international law with respect to freedom of assembly;**
- 41. Ensure the effective investigations into the excessive use of force on June 20 protest action, as well as criminal threats against Tbilisi Pride activists from the side of ultra-nationalist groups.**

¹⁵ As of July 2020, The Georgian Dream is the current ruling party of Georgia

¹⁶ *Dream does not use rubber bullets, this is not our handwriting – the PM*, Allmedia, available here: https://en.allmedia.news/politika/34766-dream-does-not-use-rubber-bullets-this-is-not-our-handwriting-the-pm-rustavi2/?doing_wp_cron=1562071240.3639330863952636718750

¹⁷ *Government offers treatment abroad to teenager who lost eye during Tbilisi protests*, Agenda.ge, available here: <http://agenda.ge/en/news/2019/1698>

¹⁸ *Government offers treatment abroad to teenager who lost eye during Tbilisi protests*, Agenda.ge, available here: <http://agenda.ge/en/news/2019/1698>

Other areas affecting human rights defenders and their organisations

42. Discrediting of human rights defenders remains one of the most "effective" tools used against them in Georgia. This “weapon” is used by everyone - the government, private individuals, ultranationalist groups, etc. – anyone, who is interested in discrediting human rights defenders and civil society in general. In the eyes of the public, slanderous campaigns against human rights activists are organized by anyone who fights for human rights defenders - if there is no trust in the civil sector, it is impossible for human rights defenders and activists to be able to do their job.
43. Georgian government representatives have repeatedly made defamatory or offensive comments about human rights defenders and NGOs in general. For example:
44. Sophio Kiladze, Member of Parliament and chair of the Human Rights and Civic Integration Committee of the Parliament of Georgia called Ana Arganashvili and Ana Abashidze, human rights defenders with the NGO “Partnership for Human Rights”, “politically motivated”. She noted that according to her information, they had been “instructed” to play a destructive role during the discussion of the proposed draft Code. She added that she was not listening to “politically motivated” people and would not accept their criticism.¹⁹
45. Tornike Rizhvadze, Chairman of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, said about an activist on hunger-strike in front of Adjara TV that he was "starving to lose weight."²⁰
46. In 2018, when several NGOs issued the joint statement addressing issues of high-level corruption and informal rule and demanded action from the Government, Georgian high-level officials launched a media smear campaign against civil society in response²¹:
- Irakli Kobakhidze, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, accused the leaders of the 13 NGOs of having “biased political views” and called them “a political union” rather than a real “civil society”.
 - The Minister of Justice of Georgia, Thea Tsulukiani, attacked the 13 NGOs, stating that they “represent political forces” and that “we are ready to register them as political parties”.
 - The Mayor of Tbilisi, Kakha Kaladze, also publicly slandered the NGOs, who, according to him, were “founded by the opposition party United National Movement” (led by former President Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili) and were “either under false impressions or in debt”.
47. The smear campaigns against civil society groups by high-ranking officials and political figures is a cause for major concern. It is in clear violation of commitments made by Georgia, until recently a member of the UN Human Rights Council, with regard to civil society space and recognition of the essential and legitimate role of human rights defenders in the promotion of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. In the previous UPR cycle Georgia supported the recommendation to “Refrain from interfering in the activities of human rights defenders and non-governmental organizations and

¹⁹ *Defamatory and degrading statements towards human rights defenders by the Chair of the Human Rights Committee are alarming*, Human Rights House Tbilisi, available here: <https://hrht.ge/en/defamatory-and-degrading-statements-towards-human-rights-defenders-by-the-chair-of-the-human-rights-committee-are-alarming/>

²⁰ *Weight gain and weight loss: Rizhvadze on hunger strike in front of Adjara TV*, Adjara, available here: <https://batumelebi.netgazeti.ge/news/281664/>

²¹ *Political leaders in Georgia must stop slandering civil society organisations*, Human Rights House Tbilisi, available here: <https://hrht.ge/en/political-leaders-in-georgia-must-stop-slandering-civil-society-organisations/>

ensure a safe and enabling environment for their work.”²²

Defending the rights in the occupied territories

48. While Georgia does not exercise effective control on the territories occupied by Russia, it still has the obligation to protect Georgian nationals residing in the occupied territories. One case of particular concern has been that of Tamara Mearakishvili, a Georgian activist and human rights defender who faces charges by the de facto South Ossetia authorities after her efforts to expose government corruption in the region. Georgia should use all the international mechanisms at its disposal to protect Tamara Mearakishvili, who has been under travel ban since 2017, and is facing a number of criminal cases.

Exiled foreign country national human rights defenders & activists sheltering Georgia

49. Human rights activists, who are also foreign nationals and sheltering in Georgia, have also been vulnerable in several instances. People who are on the territory of Georgia enjoy the protection of the state and are subject to the territorial jurisdiction of the country. Nevertheless, there are numerous cases of intimidation and harassment of foreign activists in Georgia.
50. For example, in May 2017, Azerbaijani investigative reporter Afgan Mukhtarli disappeared from Tbilisi's city center and was later found in detention in Azerbaijan. According to Mukhtarli's statement, strangers forcibly put him in a car with a sack over his head. Afterwards, he was later arrested in Baku, Azerbaijan on several charges. According to Mukhtarli's testimony, he was kidnapped by people dressed in Georgian police uniforms and speaking Georgian.²³
51. The European Court of Human Rights will soon deliver judgment in the case against Georgia over Mukhtarli's abduction. It is important to expose any state involvement in the abduction of a person from the country's sovereign territory. The Georgian authorities have been conducting an investigation into the case for three years, but the investigation has not yielded any results. In March 2020 Mukhtarli was released from Baku prison, though Georgia's investigation is still pending.

Recommendations:

- 52. Conduct a high-level public campaign to support human rights defenders that includes statements by senior government officials. Particular support should be voiced for minority human rights defenders;**
- 53. Ensure an effective investigation into the case of Afgan Mukhtarli;**
- 54. Use all international mechanisms to guarantee that human rights defender's rights are protected in the occupied territories and in the villages that are close to the occupied territories.**

²² *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Georgia*, UN General Assembly / OHCHR, available here: [A/HRC/31/15](#)

²³ *Case of Afgan Mukhtarli: Facts and Evaluation*, Human Rights House Tbilisi, available here: https://hrht.ge/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ENG_Online.pdf