



Inside IRIS Georgia

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Inside IRIS Georgia is a monthly newsletter published by IRIS Georgia, a USAID contractor implementing the Rule of Law Program in Georgia.

IRIS Georgia is a satellite office of the IRIS Center at the University of Maryland. IRIS is an internationally recognized source of research and advisory expertise for addressing economic growth and governance issues in transition and developing countries. See the Web site at <http://www.iris.umd.edu> for more information.

Presentation in Telavi



On the 25th of June, IRIS Georgia held a public presentation in Telavi, to showcase IRIS programs and the activities of its ten rule of law grantees. "We chose Telavi because this city has a great history and a promising future. Currently civil society in this region is weak and with this action, IRIS aims to bring about some positive changes," said David Usupashvili, Senior Legal and Policy Advisor at IRIS.

Preparations began a month prior to the event and included selection of Telavi theatre's large lobby as the optimal presentation site.

Telavi citizens were able to view grantee exhibits of their printed materials as well as public service announcements (PSAs), films, and radio programs produced within the framework of the Rule of Law program. Upon entering the building,

attendees received a brochure highlighting activities of IRIS partner organizations. More than 150 representatives of civil society and the legal community of the Khakheti region attended the presentation.



We have never held such an event in Telavi," said Ms. Eldino Jangulashvili, a representative of the local University.



Nona Tsotsoria, IRIS Georgia's Chief of Party, spoke to the gathered guests and introduced IRIS activities. Guests then had an opportunity to meet the representatives of IRIS-partner NGOs, ask questions about their work, and pick up

available reports, brochures, and books.

More than 1,000 copies of materials, including books, journals, brochures, guides and CDs with radio programs were distributed during the presentation.

"The request for printed materials was overwhelming. The books and brochures printed by our organization were really popular among the attendees, and I wish we had provided three times the items to these people," said Lali Chkhetia, a representative of Georgian Young Lawyers' Association.

IRIS invited guests to a reception following the presentation.



Trip to regional offices



During the first week of July, IRIS Georgia staff visited grantee offices in the western part of the country in Gori, Kutaisi, and Ozurgeti to discuss current activities and consult about upcoming projects. Staff visited the offices of Liberty Institute

and GYLA (Georgian Young Lawyers' Association), two high-profile NGOs working on human rights issues as well as legal aid.



Staff also visited Ozurgeti Teachers Union, which since last fall has engaged children and the

community through art and film media to promote children's rights. IRIS was impressed with this grantee's welcoming office and cheerful atmosphere for children's creative activities.



Regional office visits are an excellent opportunity

for IRIS to meet partners firsthand, learn about the issues they face in the regions, and explore opportunities for future cooperation. IRIS Georgia Chief of Party Nona Tsotsoria was quick to notice this, pointing out, "The program reports we receive from grantees can never compare to a live conversation with people in regional offices."

Trainings to increase legal knowledge

On May 18-20, IRIS organized a training session for journalists in Bakuriani on issues related to freedom of information and freedom of speech.

IRIS Georgia continues its collaboration with the Ministry of Justice to implement the Freedom

of Information (FOI) Chapter of the General Administrative Code.

One aspect of this collaboration is IRIS involvement in the Ministry of Justice's Georgian Training Center for Justice project entitled, - Legal Education for Journalists.

Different stages of this project are carried out with the support of various donor organizations, including OSCE and GTZ.



IRIS's staff attorney, Maia Kopaleishvili, served as the trainer.

Training in Chakvi

On June 25-27, IRIS grantee GYLA held a seminar for judges in Chakvi.

The aim of the seminar was to discuss problems connected to the implementation of the General Administrative Code and to expand the practice of certain courts that successfully implement the code.

Twenty-four participants attended the event - among them judges of the Supreme Court, Tbilisi District Court and Adjara Autonomous Republic courts. Supreme Court and Tbilisi District Court judges served as experts.

Roundtable on State of Emergency

On July 14th IRIS organized a roundtable on the State of Emergency - related legislation issues. Representatives of Parliament, the government, the Public Defender's Office and NGOs participated in this event at the Marriott Courtyard hotel. IRIS Georgia conducted research concerning Georgian legislation and international practices on the State of Emergency, discussed by attendees.



As a result of the roundtable, participants formulated joint recommendations and decided to create a working group within the Legal Committee of the Parliament in order to facilitate improvement of State of Emergency legislation.

Another Training in Vani

On July 2nd, IRIS conducted a FOI training in the Vani region for local government and self-government agency employees. The training was conducted at the request of the local NGO, Legal Education Center.

Attendees included 30 people from various government agencies, NGOs and the local court.

Conference on the status of the Adjara Autonomous Republic

On the 1st of July, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the Constitutional Law on the Legal Status of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara. Prior to the adoption, a special commission was formed within the Parliament to collect comments and suggestions expressed during public debates.

After the change of the undemocratic regime in the Adjara Autonomous Republic, the adoption of a Constitutional Law defining the status of the region was necessary.

On Monday, June 14, IRIS grantee GYLA organized a conference to obtain public comments on the draft Constitutional Law.

Members of the special commission, NGO representatives, political party delegates and reporters attended this event. Participants had an opportunity to express their opinions about the draft law. The special commission members underlined that the conference was an important event in order to collect opinions from different people and thus provide Parliament with the best recommendations.

To increase public awareness about the draft law and to involve a larger population in the discussions, the comments recorded at the meeting were printed in one of the larger newspapers.

Research on Amicus Curiae



Under a grant from IRIS Georgia, the Liberty Institute conducted a study of amicus-curiae related legislation and practices in foreign countries and international tribunals, as well as in relevant Georgian legislation.

The purpose of the study was to examine whether the introduction of this practice is desirable and feasible in Georgian legislation as a means of combating corruption in the judiciary. The research was recently published, and it provides recommendations to better implement the new system if it's considered necessary.

Special Press Club Session



On June 22nd, Liberty Institute held a special Press Club Session on the U.S.'s Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act and a Georgian Draft Law on Racketeering and Organized Crime. The draft law was presented to journalists and NGO representatives by Mr. Beso Loladze, the Deputy Minister of the Justice.

The Liberty Institute's legal expert, Irakli Kotetishvili, talked about similarities and differences between the U.S.'s RICO Act and the Georgian draft law. During the meeting, Liberty Institute representatives expressed concern about whether the

Georgian version would be effective, as it does not reflect the main goal of the American RICO Act. In particular, the draft law does not consider it a criminal offense to be a member of an organized criminal group or to organize and head such an entity; it also does not detail procedures for handling these types of cases.

Mr. Nika Rurua, Deputy Chairman of the Committee of Defense and Security, and MP Mr. Nika Gvaramia agreed with the recommendations of the Liberty Institute. They promised to raise this concern in Parliament.

Participants received an information sheet with the history and an overview of the U.S.'s RICO Act, as well as a comparative analysis of the Georgian draft law and the American Act in practice.

Presentation of CDC Activities

On June 16th, the Development and Cooperation Center (CDC) – Pluralism Center held a presentation at the National Library of the Georgian Parliament.

At the event, CDC presented the book "Human Rights and Georgian Culture,"

as well as several new documentaries, including seven 20-minute films and one 10-minute film. CDC produced the book and films as part of their work to explore human rights themes in Georgian art, literature, and lifestyle.

Introducing IRIS staff

Mo Schroeder-Sanai, Program Manager



Mo Schroeder-Sanai

Prior to joining IRIS, Mo worked at the Academy for Educational Development (AED) as a Program Specialist on educational training projects with participants from Botswana, Eritrea and Zambia. She also worked at the World Wildlife Fund, researching

corporate best practice initiatives for their Private Sector program.

Mo has lived overseas in Samoa, Indonesia, Egypt, Jamaica, the Philippines, and most recently, Lesotho, South Africa where she served as a Peace Corps volunteer.

Mo received her MA in International Development from Clark University; and her BA in Geography from San Francisco State University.

IRIS Georgia staff welcomes Mo.

IRIS Georgia's calendar of events – July 2004

Date	Events
July 1	Green Wave's radio program on the descendants of the <i>Tergdaleulebi</i> movement Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union, debate on children's right to education (through July 7)
July 2	IRIS Georgia's FOI training in Vani for local self government and government agencies
July 5, 7, 9	GYLA's town hall meeting in Gori on the right to education
July 7, 8	Pluralism Center's book and film presentation in Signaghi Green Wave's radio program on Iliia Chavchavadze
July 9, 10	Pluralism Center's book and film presentation in Telavi GYLA's workshop for NGOs in Kutaisi on the right to social security
July 12	Liberty Institute's debates in Gori regarding South Ossetia Pluralism Center's book and film presentation in Gori
July 14	IRIS Georgia's roundtable on legislation of state of emergency Liberty Institute's debates in Akhaltsikhe on local government reform
July 15	Liberty Institute's debates in Telavi on educational system reform Pluralism Center's book and film presentation in Kutaisi Green Wave's radio program on XI-XIII centuries, tendency to secularization
July 16	GYLA's workshop for NGOs and local government representatives in Gori on land law GYLA's town hall meeting in Rustavi on available remedies in case of human rights violation Pluralism Center's book and film presentation in Zestaphoni
July 19	Liberty Institute's debates in Poti on drug dealing
July 21	Liberty Institute's debates in Rustavi on whether Georgian should integrate with EU Pluralism Center's book and film presentation in Kobuleti GYLA's town hall meeting in Dusheti on women's rights
July 22	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union, an evening for the children – victims of war Green Wave's radio program on Vaja-Pshavela
July 23	GYLA's roundtable for MPs, NGOs, prosecutors, attorneys and judges on the rights of defendants and detainees Liberty Institute's debates in Kutaisi on the political situation in the post revolution period Pluralism Center's book and film presentation in Batumi
July 27	GYLA's town hall meeting in Dusheti region, village Choporti on land rights
July 28	Pluralism Center's book and film presentation in Poti Institute of Law's roundtable on the right to work
July 29	GYLA's town hall meeting in Kutaisi on human rights GYLA town hall meeting in Kutaisi and Telavi on protection of human rights Green Wave's radio program on Akaki Tsereteli

Editorial Policy

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