



# Inside IRIS Georgia

For more information about IRIS Georgia activities, please contact us at:

7 Radiani Street  
Tbilisi 0179, Georgia  
Tel/Fax: (995 32) 913378, 913379, 224020  
E-mail: [office@iris.ge](mailto:office@iris.ge)  
Web: [www.iris.ge](http://www.iris.ge)

### In this issue:

IRIS supports adoption of anti-corruption laws	1
Book from the Center for Pluralism	1
Featuring IRIS grantee: Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union	2
IRIS sponsors a constitutional roundtable	2
Liberty Institute helps victims of police impunity	3
Afami exhibition	3
IRIS Georgia calendar of events	4

**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.

## IRIS supports adoption of anti-corruption laws



At the request of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), IRIS Georgia conducted a workshop in Bakuriani (30 Jan - 1 Feb) to discuss and refine the set of draft anti-corruption laws prepared by the MOJ. Among the participants of the workshop were representatives of the

MOJ, the General Procuracy, the Supreme Court of Georgia, local NGOs and legal professionals (a total of 20 people).

The set of draft laws recently considered by Parliament proposes amendments to the Criminal Code, the Civil Code, the Administrative Procedures Code and other legislative acts. The proposed amendments aim to introduce a number of innovations designed to combat corruption, such

as simplification of criminal proceedings against wanted former government officials, introduction of plea bargaining, and seizure of illegal or unjustified property of public officials.

Agreements were reached on a number of issues that will substantially improve provisions of the draft laws.

The Parliament of Georgia has since passed the proposed laws.

## Book from the Center for Pluralism



Today, only a small part of Georgian society considers concepts such as human rights, rule of law, civil society and democracy to be an indivisible part of Georgian culture. A large number of Georgian citizens believe that these concepts are alien to our national values. Branded

as "imported" and "imposed," implementation and sometimes even mentioning these concepts are met with indignation and even aggression.

The purpose of the book *Human Rights and the Georgian Culture*, which was published by the Center for Development and Cooperation - Center for Pluralism with the financial support of IRIS, is to show that there is no conflict between human rights and national values, and that the concept of human rights is not only acceptable to Georgian culture, but also an

inseparable part of it.

A group of authors studied Georgian history, historical legal documents, cinema, publications, rhetoric, literature and daily life. This was the first time Georgian culture was studied from such a standpoint. Despite the unique nature of the Georgian culture, the authors ultimately came to the conclusion that the concept of human rights is principally compatible with all of the above-referenced components of the Georgian culture, and that the latter is openly liberal and humanist.

**Featuring IRIS grantee**

**Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union**



The Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union is one of IRIS's grantees that won a grant under the *Human Rights are Part of Georgian Culture* competition. The Union implements a project entitled *Ancestors and Predecessors Protecting Children's Rights*, which aims to explain and promote the idea of children's rights among Georgian society through interpretation of well-known national literature and art.

The project plans dramatic performances, debates, concerts, films based on original literary sources, and exhibitions to promote a better understanding of

human rights and children's rights among young people. One of the major goals of the project is to show that the protection of human rights is not a newly initiated campaign. In fact, luminaries of Georgian culture and public figures, present and past, have long strived to protect these values.

The Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union has already organized several interesting events:

- First demonstrative debate among children. The debate resolution was: "Society must protect children from violation."
- Presentation of the Georgian movie *Lazare*,

- which was followed by a discussion concerning the right of every child to be provided with food, clothing and housing.
- A literary evening with the participation of members of the Literary Philosophy Club.
- Performances communicating ideas about children's right to life, development in an atmosphere of respect, and free expression.
- Junior cinema and photo club. Children began working on their first documentary.
- Publishing of *Eight +1*, a newspaper for pupils, where children discuss their rights.

**IRIS sponsors a constitutional roundtable**



*Constitutional roundtable*

IRIS Georgia sponsored a constitutional roundtable organized by the Georgian NGO, the Center for Strategic Research of Constitutional Problems (CSRCP), at the Marriott on February 5, 2004. More than 80 participants, representing university law faculties, NGOs, media, parliamentary factions, international organizations and embassies, discussed proposed amendments to the Constitution of Georgia.

The Chairman of the

CSRCP, former chairman of the Constitutional Court and one of the principal authors of the Georgian Constitution of 1995, Mr. Avtandil Demetrashvili, opened the meeting and spoke about the general context of the upcoming constitutional reform. After that, IRIS attorneys presented the draft amendments and gave a comparative analysis of the suggested model of distribution of powers and responsibilities between the legislature and executive branch, and between the President and the Prime Minister. Presentations were

followed by discussions from more than 30 participants. They were unanimous in expressing strong disappointment with the decision of the new political leadership to adopt such important amendments without prior public debates. Most of the speakers noted that the suggested constitutional model would significantly weaken the Parliament and leave considerable uncertainty in the relationship between the President and the Prime Minister.

**Continued on Page 3**

**Focus on corruption****Liberty Institute helps victims of police impunity**

Liberty Institute's Rustavi office exposed officers from Rustavi Police Department No. 1 of corruption and violation of human rights, which led to the arrest of the inspector Iagubat Shaverdov. Liberty Institute, in cooperation with the media investigative TV program *60 Minutes*, took hidden camera footage showing police officers receiving money from Kakha Gogokhia, which resulted in the arrest of the officers.

Kakha Gogokhia was arrested by Rustavi police officers and allegedly brutally beaten on January 24, 2004. He was later allegedly threatened by police officers that false evidence (narcotics and a

gun) would be seized from him and that he would face criminal charges.

Gogokhia was arrested for alleged participation in a demonstration against police impropriety in Rustavi on January 21. Nearly 200 people took part in the demonstration, some of them brutally beaten by police. Liberty Institute investigated this event and helped the victims of police brutality write complaints. Later, police officers allegedly threatened the victims, and the latter withdrew their complaints.

Kakha Gogokhia never actually took part in the demonstration, but police officers considered him to

be its organizer. Gogokhia was allegedly informed that the last date to bring a bribe to the police was January 30. Liberty Institute informed the General Prosecutor's Office and filmed the money hand-over with a hidden camera.

**Alfami exhibition**

On February 11, 2004 IRIS grantee Alfami organized its first exhibition in Rustavi, which will be followed by a series of regional exhibitions under the IRIS-funded project Society and Art Images.

The exhibition *Victim – Please Don't Be Weak* featured the works of photographer Irina Abjandadze and painter Sofia Cherkezishvili. Irina Abjandadze's photos were previously presented at the special exhibition on December 26, 2003 in Tbilisi. Due to immense interest in the exhibition, the regional exhibition was organized.

The works of Sofia Cherkezishvili were a nice complement to the photos of Irina Abjandadze. The messages contained in

The arrest of the police officers encouraged the unlawfully arrested demonstration participants to resume proceedings against the officers in defense of their own freedom.

her works ask the viewer to be active, to overcome fear when facing obstacles and contradictions, and to choose an active rather than a passive attitude in life.

On February 20, 2004, Alfami will hold an exhibition *Public Information Box* in the Academy of Arts, Tbilisi, featuring the works of six artists: Zura Natsvlshvili, Sofio Cherkezushvili, Kote Sulaberidze, Ia Kurmava, Guram Tsibaxashvili and Dato Aleksidze. A special booklet featuring the presented works and short text annotations will be published and disseminated at the event.

The Rector of the Academy of Arts, Mr. Gia Bugadze, will open the exhibition. Among the invited guest will be artists, art critics, representatives of NGOs and the Ministry of Culture. The media will cover the event.

**Constitutional roundtable****Continued from Page 2**

Unfortunately, invited representatives of the new political leadership and government, who drafted the amendments, did not attend the roundtable and therefore, many participants' questions went unanswered.

Georgian media covered the roundtable extensively. In fact, all the evening news programs (at least 5 leading TV stations) covered the discussion of the amendments in the

Parliament and at the roundtable almost simultaneously.

English translation of the constitutional amendments adopted by the Parliament is available for download from the IRIS Georgia website at: [http://www.iris.ge/docs/translations/amends\\_constitution\\_6Feb2004.doc](http://www.iris.ge/docs/translations/amends_constitution_6Feb2004.doc)

**Introducing IRIS staff**

**David Magradze, Program Attorney**



David Magradze

David Magradze works on several legal projects. He manages the grant to Article 42 of the Constitution for free legal aid and the grants on public awareness projects with IRIS's media partners Internews Georgia, Radio

Green Wave, and the International Center for Civil Culture. He also participates in survey and focus group activities.

David has a law degree from Tbilisi State University and Central

European University. Before joining the Rule of Law program he worked at the Council of Justice as Head of Department of International Affairs.

**IRIS Georgia's calendar of events – February 2004**

Date	Events
Feb 3	GYLA's town hall meeting in Dusheti on freedom of information
Feb 5	Alfami's presentation of 5 documentaries in the video film festival (through Feb 10) Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union's presentation of the Georgian movie Lazare Radio Green Wave's program on old Georgian law
Feb 9	Liberty Institute's roundtable discussion in Kutaisi on corruption-related issues ICCC's radio program on basic human rights
Feb 11	GYLA's town hall meeting in Gori on how to receive public information Liberty Institute's roundtable discussion in Akhaltsikhe on corruption in Samtskhe-Javakheti
Feb 12	Liberty Institute's press club session on the new anticorruption strategy of the Government Radio Green Wave's program on Iakob Gogebashvili
Feb 13	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union's literary evening of the Georgian writer Iakob Gogebashvili AYEG's conference for entrepreneurs on healthcare issues (through Feb 14)
Feb 14	GYLA's workshop for NGOs and young lawyers on ECHR in Kutaisi (through Feb 15)
Feb 15	Alfami's exhibition Public Information Box (through Feb 20)
Feb 16	Liberty Institute's roundtable discussion in Telavi on corruption
Feb 17	GYLA's town hall meeting in Khashuri on freedom of speech Liberty Institute's roundtable discussion in Poti on corruption
Feb 19	Radio Green Wave's program on old and medieval Tbilisi
Feb 20	GYLA's town hall meeting in Terjola region on the right to education Liberty Institute's roundtable discussion in Rustavi on police violence
Feb 21	GYLA's town hall meeting in Kutaisi on the problems facing women in Georgia Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union's Karl Popper Debates training seminar for teachers
Feb 23	GYLA's town hall meeting in Ozurgeti on the right to education ICCC's radio program on basic human rights
Feb 24	GYLA's town hall meeting in Gori for NGOs working on human rights issues Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union's Karl Popper demonstrative debate
Feb 25	GYLA's town hall meeting in Lanchkhuti on freedom of information and freedom of speech UNAG's site visits to Gori, Skra, Khashuri, Tirdznisi (through Feb 27) UNAG's seminars for the target institutions of Khashuri and Tirdznisi (through Feb 27) Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union's Theatre Studio performance
Feb 26	Radio Green Wave's program on Rustaveli and Eastern renaissance AYEG's meeting with agency staff on healthcare issues
Feb 28	GYLA's workshop in Bakuriani for the heads of admin agencies, on FOI (through Feb 29) Liberty Institute's roundtable discussion in Gori on smuggling

**Editorial Policy**

Use of the material in this newsletter is encouraged with the permission of the publisher.

For more information please contact [office@iris.ge](mailto:office@iris.ge)

For back issues, visit: <http://www.iris.ge/en/resources.html> > Other