



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.

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IRIS outdoor poster campaign



In the coming months, IRIS plans to re-launch its outdoor poster campaign. As part of the poster campaign, seven billboards on the right to legal counsel, the right to

remain silent, police bribery, torture, illegal search and religious equality will appear in 56 locations throughout Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Poti.

The campaign was first launched in September 2003, and the billboards are based on the series of IRIS-funded public service announcements (PSAs) entitled, "Know the Law

and You'll Be Protected." The PSAs appeared on Georgian TV channels in September 2002 and quickly gained popularity among viewers. In June 2003, the American Advertising Federation and the International Advertising Federation honored the IRIS-funded PSA campaign with a Gold ADDY® award for the best public service campaign worldwide.

Raising Public Awareness Bus Tour

IRIS grantee, the Georgian Young Lawyer's Association (GYLA) is continuing its public awareness campaign, but with an added feature: a public awareness bus tour that is the first of its kind. GYLA intends to organize four bus tours that will begin in Tbilisi and cover the eastern, western, southern and northern regions of Georgia. The goals of the tour are to distribute GYLA's publications, to show various documentaries and to hold discussions on human rights and freedoms, with special emphasis on human rights versus the government and social rights. GYLA also regards the bus tours as a new effort to combat corruption.

IRIS encourages its grantees to be creative in

employing new mechanisms for the public awareness campaign, while at the same time it encourages synergy between partners: the documentaries that GYLA will present during the tours were produced by Internews Georgia, one of IRIS's partners.

The first bus tour began on March 10, 2004 and lasted five days. During the tour, the GYLA team covered the regions of Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Shida Kartli and Imereti (19 villages). According to the preliminary data received from GYLA, over 600 people participated in the event.

At the meetings, representatives from GYLA showed documentaries on various

legal issues, distributed legal literature, calendars, and other materials, and held discussions on property rights, labor rights and available remedies in cases where human rights have been violated. The GYLA team has also tried to address problems of direct relevance to the local population.

During the first bus tour, the major subject attracting participants' interest was social rights. Among the documentaries produced by Internews Georgia, the film "Kvali", which describes torture in police custody, triggered the most active discussion.

GYLA will continue bus tours, targeting a broad audience in the regional population.



Featuring IRIS grantee

International Center for Civil Culture

As part of IRIS Georgia’s grants program “Human Rights are Part of Georgian Culture,” the International Center for Civil Culture (ICCC) has been producing a series of radio programs and audio clips to promote human rights throughout Georgia. The project began last November and will last through June 2004.

ICCC’s radio programs link abstracts from the well-known Georgian novel *Samoseli Pirveli* to various principles enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such as equality before the law and the right to freedom of movement. Programs are aired on channel 1 of Georgian Radio on the

first and third Monday of the month. Programs are then repeated on Georgian Radio on the second and fourth Sunday of each month.

Similar to the projects run by other partners of IRIS Georgia, this project emphasizes that the ideals of human rights are not imported or imposed values, and that the concepts of personal dignity and equality before the law can be found throughout Georgian history and culture.

In addition to the programs, ICCC is also broadcasting radio clips on the works of Georgian writers and their campaigns for personal dignity and freedom. Audio clips of 3-5 minutes

show the parallels between Georgian literature and specific articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Fifty audio clips are being produced, which are aired by Radio 2 and repeated by Georgian Radio three times a day.

Radio is an effective mechanism for reaching Georgian citizens in regions and villages. Radio covers the entire territory of Georgia, does not require electricity, which is often lacking in the regions, and is a trusted information source. For the creation of these radio programs and clips, the State Radio of Georgia made its technical equipment, broadcasting time, and studios available free of charge.

UNAG’s efforts for transparency in public agencies



UNAG’s assessment

In February 2004, under an IRIS-funded FOI implementation project, the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG) published *An Assessment of the Process of Public Agency Reporting on December 10, 2003 – Analysis and Recommendations*. The analytical report provided an assessment of the form, content and number, as well as regional and branch indicators, of the FOI implementation reports submitted by public agencies to the State

Chancellery on December 10, 2003. The report also contains an analysis of the relevant favorable and non-favorable factors involved in the reporting process. The final part of the report includes several recommendations designed to facilitate the process of reporting and to raise its effectiveness.

The report was submitted to the Bureau of State Service of the State Chancellery in order to help them prepare their own

analysis. In addition, 100 copies of the analytical report have been published and distributed among high-ranking officials in the Georgian Parliament, the judiciary, and various government departments. The report was also sent to local NGOs and international organizations working in this area and/or interested in the implementation of the General Administrative Code of Georgia and transparency of public agencies in general.

Liberty Institute's newsletter continues to focus on corruption

The Liberty Institute continues to publish its newsletter *Liberty*, focusing attention on corruption and the negative impact corruption has on Georgian society. Almost all of the articles in the latest issue of the newsletter are devoted to this topic.

In the article, "The Choice

– WE," author Pridon Sakvarelidze discusses the nature of corruption, including issues of nepotism and favoritism in human resources policy. The causes and results of corruption are analyzed using examples from Georgia and other countries. The author assumes that one of the major causes for this

social phenomenon is the maintenance of power by one person or party for an extended period of time. The extent of nepotism and favoritism are considered primary indicators of a corrupt system, in which citizens are deprived of their constitutional rights and professionals are left unemployed, while a "select few" enjoy the majority of privileges.

and the legal results of such proceedings.

Through the newsletter, the editors are attempting to analyze diverse aspects of corruption. The article *Christian Casuistry and Georgia's Future* is a good example of such an approach. The author, Deacon Basil Kobakhidze, poses important questions about the role of the Church in combating corruption. He reviews Christian morality with regard to corruption and admits that the Church has not been a haven from corruption.

The newsletter also includes a questionnaire, providing citizens with an opportunity to participate in the anti-corruption campaign. By completing the questionnaire, citizens are able to reveal instances of corruption and help authorities to take appropriate measures.

Tax amnesty discussed

On March 4, 2004, the Liberty Institute organized a press club session on tax amnesty, which brought together representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance and private businesses. The participants discussed two draft laws on tax amnesty: one drafted by the Liberty Institute and the other drafted jointly by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice.

There were a number of different opinions expressed at the session. The Ministry of Finance proposed a 15-year period for recent tax restructuring and exemption of businesses from any recent tax if a company owes less than 1 million GEL in debt. The Liberty Institute suggested that such a proposal violated constitutional protection from discrimination. The Liberty Institute proposed that any tax offender who declares recent taxes shall be protected from punishment.

Another difference between the two draft laws relates to whether persons under investigation should be allowed amnesty. In the Ministries' draft bill, amnesty does not apply to persons under tax investigation. In the Liberty Institute's proposal, amnesty applies to any person with taxes that were not known to tax administration and law-enforcement bodies.

The representatives of private businesses noted that if the government forced them to pay all recent taxes in a very short period of time, their businesses would face serious problems.

The participants agreed that successful implementation of a tax amnesty program requires a powerful media campaign.

At the end of the session, the participants agreed to the Liberty Institute's suggestion to continue discussion of the issue in the near future.

In his article, *Founded Suspicion on Unfounded Property*, Irakli Kotetishvili discusses the draft Law on the Return of Unlawful and Unjustified Property of Public Servants to the State. The author analyzes diverse aspects of the draft law, including, questions of who is being subjected to the law, the rules for depriving public servants of unlawful and unjustified property, procedures for returning such property to the state, court jurisdiction on anticorruption appeals,

GYLA publications

Under an IRIS-funded project, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association has produced a wall calendar on human rights. 3,000 copies have been published, and the calendar will be distributed free of charge to citizens during GYLA's town hall meetings and mobile legal aid visits.

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association also

published a guidebook, entitled *How to Request Public Information*. The guidebook will be very useful for citizens and NGOs working in the area of Freedom of Information and monitoring. The guidebook is a unique informative tool, which contains a complete set of application and complaint forms and information on Freedom of Information provisions.

Introducing IRIS staff
Maia Jorjikia, Staff Attorney



Maia Jorjikia

Maia works in the areas of legal drafting and public awareness. She coordinates activities of IRIS grantees under Task One.

Maia has a law degree from Tbilisi State and

L.L.M. from the Bremen University. Before joining the Rule of Law program, Maia had gained professional experience at government agencies in the executive and judicial branches and a legal reform program.

A native Georgian, Maia speaks fluent Russian and English.

IRIS Georgia's calendar of events – March 2004

Date	Events
Mar 2	Institute of Law's constitutional roundtable
Mar 3	GYLA's legal aid visit to Kutaisi IDP community (through Mar 10)
Mar 4	GYLA's town hall meeting in Gardabani region, village Koda, on children's rights and juvenile delinquency Radio Green Wave's program on Georgian Law
Mar 5	GYLA's town hall meeting in Gori on the rule of establishing social benefits AYEG's conference for business people on the licensing of veterinary activities
Mar 6	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union – demonstration of the Georgian film "Another's Children" for the students of Sunday School and other schools AYEG's conference for business people on the licensing of veterinary activities
Mar 9	GYLA's workshop in Gori on domestic violence (through Mar 10) GYLA's legal aid visit to Daba Pasanauri GYLA's town hall meeting in Gori on drug abuse as a crime (through Mar 15)
Mar 10	GYLA's roundtable on freedom of religion GYLA's legal aid visit to Terjola region, village Tuzi GYLA's legal aid visit to Kvareli region, village Almati
Mar 11	GYLA's legal aid visit to Akhmeta region, village Kistauri Radio Green Wave's program on Jacob Gogebashvili
Mar 12	GYLA's legal aid visit to the Telavi region, village Saniore GYLA's town hall meeting in the Gardabani region, village Kumisi, on freedom of information AYEG's conference for the staff of the Ministry of Health
Mar 13	GYLA's workshop in Bakuriani for administrative judges on the Administrative Procedures Code and court practice (through Mar 15)
Mar 14	GYLA's town hall meeting in Terjola region, village Siktarva on available remedies in cases of violation of human rights GYLA's town hall meeting in Ozurgeti on public participation in local budgeting
Mar 15	GYLA's legal aid visit to Gurjani region, village Chumlakhi Alfami's publication of Sofio Cherkezishvili's works "Who will protect me?"
Mar 18	Radio Green Wave's program on the formation of Georgina liberalism
Mar 19	AYEG's conference for the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture
Mar 20	Alfami - Natela Grigalashvili's photo exhibition "Dysfunctional Country" Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union's evening dedicated to Georgian writer Nodar Dumbadze
Mar 23	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union's Karl Popper debate about every child's right to an education
Mar 25	Radio Green Wave's program on Christianity as preacher of tolerance and charity
Mar 26	AYEG's conference for the staff of the Veterinary department
Mar 28	Alfami's exhibition <i>Public Information Box</i> in Gori (through Mar 31)
Mar 30	Institute of Law's constitutional roundtable

Editorial Policy

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