



# INSIDE IRIS GEORGIA

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## Roundtable on reform of the Administrative Violations Code



On the 22nd of September, with the collaboration of the Legal Committee of Parliament, IRIS Georgia held a roundtable on the reform of the Administrative Violations Code.

Representatives from Parliament, the government, the judiciary, NGOs and the legal community attended the event. During recent years, many new laws have been adopted by Parliament. However, the Administrative Violations Code, which was originally adopted in 1984, has to be updated. Many of its articles are out of date and do not apply to the reality of the current situation.

IRIS Georgia hired an expert to analyze the existing code, conduct related research, and make recommendations for reform to the code.

The research was presented and discussed with the participants during the roundtable.

Participants expressed their interest in future collaboration for positive reform to the code.

Through the initiative of the Legal Committee of Parliament and the decision of the Bureau of Parliament, a special commission will be formed. The commission will work on reform of the Administrative Violations Code and creation of the new draft law. The research conducted through IRIS will provide essential information to the commission for the reform process.



IRIS experts will continue to collaborate with the commission throughout the process. The Legal Committee of Parliament is also soliciting assistance for the commission from other sources to support its operations during the working process. Therefore, cooperation between the commission and IRIS Georgia as well as other donor organizations will continue to develop throughout the code reform process.

Parliament's plan for the fall sessions includes the adoption of the new Code of Administrative Violations.

## Roundtable on Presidential Authority to Hear Administrative Claims

On October 6, IRIS Georgia held a roundtable concerning “The Authority of the President of Georgia to Examine and Solve Administrative Claims.”



Representatives of the Georgian Parliament, Presidential administration, State Chancellery, Supreme Court and Tbilisi District Court, as well as the NGO and legal community participated in this event.

The importance of this topic is exemplified by the fact that the President’s office has received approximately 17,000 claims, including administrative claims. The goal of the roundtable was to produce special recommendations for making the process of examining and solving administrative claims more effective and efficient. By improving the process, mechanisms for protecting citizens’ rights and legal interests would be put in place, and it would ensure more effective use of the presidential office.

IRIS’s experts carried out related research and studied experiences

of foreign states prior to the roundtable in order to present comprehensive research to the participants.



Special recommendations, based on the opinions expressed at the roundtable, will be sent to the participants in written form.

IRIS Georgia will continue to follow up with the Parliament, Presidential administration and the State Chancellery regarding the issues discussed at the roundtable.

## Seminar on FOI for responsible officers



October 8-10, the United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG) conducted a seminar on freedom of information (FOI) issues for state employees who are responsible for providing public information at local government institutions.

The seminar took place in Gudauri, with 22 people from all of the target regions in attendance.

UNAG lawyers and invited experts facilitated and led the theoretical part of the seminar.

Participants received comprehensive information on the principles and mechanisms of the FOI Chapter. They were also briefed on methods of implementing the FOI Chapter in public institutions.

The third day of the seminar was dedicated to practical exercises and role-playing. The exercises covered those areas of the FOI Chapter that have proven most problematic to implement in public institutions.



“Participants were very much involved in the practical part of the training and received high grades on the final test,” remarked Zviad Devdariani, Director of the FOI implementation Program at UNAG.

## Licensing HOTLINE !!! Press-Club Session against Torture

In the scope of the “New Licensing Law Implementation” project, the Association of Young Economists of Georgia has opened a “Licensing Hotline” (93 64 75). All interested individuals can now receive telephone consultations from qualified lawyers on licensing-related issues. In addition, entrepreneurs can receive complete and detailed information about the procedures and requirements for obtaining licenses and permits.

Since its inception, the hotline has received over 50 calls from entrepreneurs in sectors ranging from food products manufacturing, healthcare and construction. Most questions are about the rules of obtaining licenses/permits as well as the requirements and duty rates.



Young Economists have also published the guide, “How to Obtain A Construction Permit.” Topics included in the guide are: relevant regulating legislation, procedures, rules and requirements for obtaining a construction permit. The guide is currently in distribution.

A media campaign is also being launched through printed advertisements that provide information about the “Licensing Hotline” and related guides.

Liberty Institute (LI) documented 533 cases of torture of individuals detained by police in Georgia in the last year. To address this, LI is calling for the adoption of amendments to Georgia’s Criminal Procedures Code and the introduction of effective mechanisms to monitor pre-detention precincts.



Cases of torture in police precincts and in the penitentiary system were discussed at a press-club meeting at LI on September 24. Representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the General Inspector’s Office, NGOs, international organizations, and the Public Defender’s Office, as well as journalists, attended the meeting. According to LI, the 533 people who were transferred to the penitentiary system with bodily injuries

were tortured and beaten at pre-detention precincts.

“We have 533 cases of torture today, but tomorrow this number will increase to 1000 if we do not demonstrate the political will for struggling against this epidemic,” observed Levan Ramishvili of LI during the meeting.

LI emphasizes the necessity to amend the Criminal Procedures Code to include more severe punishment for persons involved in torture. The draft law presented by LI defines torture as a crime and prescribes punishments ranging from financial fines to imprisonment from 5 to 12 years.

Public defender, Sozar Subari, spoke about forming a group to monitor pre-detention institutions. Subari further suggested that this group should have unrestricted access to pre-detention precincts for monitoring purposes. Participants also raised the idea of joining the UN Protocol against torture.

## A book on Freedom of Assembly and Association

As a part of its publication activities, GYLA has published a book on Article 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) – Freedom of Assembly and Association.

The purpose of this publication is to detail ECHR practices and to

promote the principles of the European Convention in Georgia, as well as to avoid violation of the Convention’s norms.





Lela Ebralidze

## Introducing IRIS staff

### Lela Ebralidze, Legal Translator

Lela Ebralidze joined IRIS in 2000 as our Office Secretary with translating duties. Now, however, Lela has been promoted to the Legal Translator position.

Lela has a degree in English language and literature from Tbilisi State University. She also has previous experience as a translator with other

international organizations and has been teaching English at the university for many years.

As Legal Translator, Lela's responsibilities include translating legal documents, proofreading and serving as the contact person on translation publishing contracts. IRIS congratulates Lela on her new position.

## Schedule of October events:

Date	Events
Oct 2	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union: demonstration of the movie "A Tree of Dreams" and discussion <i>(A child must grow in a respected atmosphere)</i>
Oct 4	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union: competition for the best literary work "Georgian writers protecting children's rights"
Oct 6	GYLA: town hall meeting in Rustavi about the human rights protection for NGOs
Oct 8	UNAG: training on FOI for the representatives of local self government institutions (through Oct 10) GYLA: town hall meeting in Kutaisi on Human Rights Protection
Oct 15	GYLA: workshop for NGOs and young lawyers on ECHR in Tbilisi (through Oct 16) GYLA: town hall meeting in Kutaisi for self-government agencies on Constitutional amendments Liberty Institute: roundtable in Gori on discrimination of Osetian minorities and restitution of the property
Oct 16	Liberty Institute: roundtable in Telavi about illegal search
Oct 17	Liberty Institute: roundtable in Rustavi about Corruption at the regional police
Oct 18	Liberty Institute: roundtable in Poti about the police brutality
Oct 19	GYLA: town hall meeting in Gurjani region for the local council about the participation of public in local budgeting process Liberty Institute: roundtable in Akhaltsikhe about the violation of the right of Catholic Community to maintain and build places of worship
Oct 20	GYLA: workshop for heads of administrative agencies on FOI in Bakuriani GYLA: town hall meeting in Gori for FOI officers about the freedom of information Liberty Institute: roundtable in Kutaisi about torture in police precincts Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union: a literary court <i>(A child must grow in respected atmosphere)</i> .
Oct 21	Ozurgeti Young Teachers Union: A theatre festival with the participation of the studio "Berikebi" and YPU's theater studio "Pepillota" <i>(A child must grow in a respected atmosphere, Every child has right to express his/her own idea)</i> (through Oct 22) Young Economists: workshops for the transportation sector (through Oct 25)
Oct 22	GYLA: town hall meeting in Akhalgori on women's rights
Oct 23	GYLA: town hall meeting in Rustavi for the national minorities in Kvemo Kartli about women's rights
Oct 26	Young Economists: workshops on commodity import-export (through Oct 31)
Oct 27	GYLA: town hall meeting in Kutaisi for mass media and NGOs about the right to education
Oct 28	GYLA: town hall meeting in Kutaisi for NGOs about freedom of thought, conscience and religion Liberty Institute: press club session—reform of Ombudsman's department

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