

# *Human Rights to the Regions*



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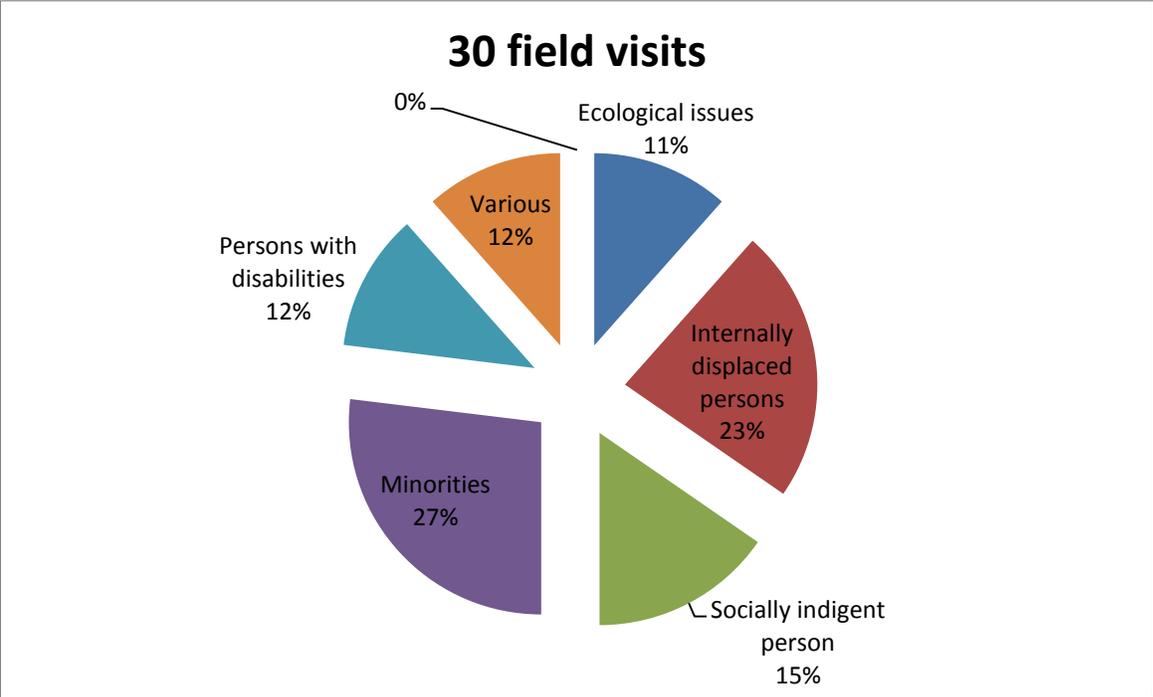
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# Introduction

Human Rights House Tbilisi, with the financial support of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Georgia, has been implementing the project *Human Rights to the Regions* since August 1, 2014. The project aims to defend human rights and monitor the state of human rights in the regions.

In the frame of the project, the goal of the organization is to identify the facts of human rights violations, assist vulnerable groups, issue free legal and psychological consultations to beneficiaries, conduct monitoring, prepare photo and video-footage, document human rights violations, disseminate information, and prepare TV-stories, articles and publications, etc. For the achievement of these goals, a mobile group of human rights defenders (HRDs) was established which unifies lawyers, psychologists, journalists and a monitor. From August 1, 2014 to August 30, 2015 the mobile group of HRDs paid 30 field visits.



The following document is an annual report on the state of human rights in Georgia and covers the period from September 1, 2014 to August 1, 2015. The document was prepared based on the findings of the mobile group of human rights defenders in the frame of the project ‘Human Rights to the Regions.’

In parallel to other violations, the mobile group identified social problems such as the right to adequate housing, right to life in a healthy environment, social rights of IDPs, right to a safe life, safe labor, and others.

## Summary

The following Report reviews the state of human rights in the country and was prepared based on the findings from monitoring implemented by the Human Rights House Tbilisi (HRHT). Ongoing developments in the country, existing hard social and economic conditions, unstable environment and state policy result in various human rights problems. The Report revealed the violations of human rights of national and ethnic minorities, as well as violation of the rights of religious minorities. It is noteworthy that the Report pays particular attention to social issues, together with other human rights problems, and that the findings from the monitoring are vivid examples of how grave the human rights state is in the country today. The monitoring demonstrated that effective protection of human rights is also an issue. Faulty legislative regulations breach human rights at the initial stage. The same can be said about the rights of socially indigent persons, IDPs and eco-migrants. The state of human rights of ethnic and religious minority groups shall be discussed separately. A number of miscarriages of practice were revealed, and in concrete cases the inactivity of government officials and law enforcement bodies aggravated the problem and further complicated the current grave state of human rights. To improve the situation, it is suggested that relevant institutions implement the recommendations of the project that are represented in the Report. In various cases the report suggests improving the legislative basis, creating additional regulation tools, and improving practice in order to change state policy towards concrete problems.

The Report is composed of several chapters. Its structure was designed in accordance with the classification of the facts of violation, and similar violations were unified under one chapter in order to simplify the process of information accumulation for interested parties.

## Civil-Political Rights

During the monitoring, HRHT identified violations of civil-political rights. These facts most often applied to discrimination on religious and ethnic grounds.

### Minorities:

To study the problems of religious and ethnic minorities, the HRDs visited different sites including: Kobuleti district, where a pig's head was at one time nailed to the door of the Muslim Boarding School; Mokhe, where there was controversy between local Muslim and Orthodox people; Terjola, where controversy happened between local Orthodox Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses; Kareli where controversy happened on religious grounds between Orthodox Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses; Leninovka, where ethnic minority Roma people live; and Gachiani and Samgori with Roma settlements.

### Religious Minorities:

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia and other international acts. Article 19 of the Constitution of Georgia protects the right to freedom of conscience, religion and belief. The state shall not violate freedom of religion of individuals and moreover shall support them to effectively realize this right.

In the reporting period, discrimination on religious ground was still a problem; more precisely, facts of violence and inadequate reaction of law enforcement officers were identified.

- On September 19, the mobile group visited Kobuleti to investigate the September 10 incident when member of the local population nailed a pig's head to the door of the Kobuleti based Medrese. The local Orthodox population protested the construction of the Medrese in their neighborhood by a citizen of Turkey. During the incident, no Muslims were in the area and no physical conflict happened on the site. The Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC) took on the case. They said a concrete/identified group of people continued to insult the administration of the boarding school and to hinder their activities. The action contained signs of crime punishable under Article 156 of the Criminal Code of Georgia (persecution) and requires timely and effective investigation by law enforcement bodies.
- On October 23, the HRHT mobile group of HRDs visited the Mokhe village of Adigeni municipality where tension had begun following the fact that local Muslims from Adjara had refused to allow the bid-winning company to rehabilitate the former building of the culture house. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, officers of the Samtskhe-Javakheti regional department of the MIA began patrolling the vicinity of the building in order to prevent possible controversy between conflicting parties. According to locals, the protesters verbally insulted police officers and damaged police cars. As a result 14 persons were arrested. According to Muslim witnesses, the police used disproportionate power against them. They claimed several detainees, including one woman, were brutally beaten by police; the woman had injuries on her face. According to local Muslims, the police arrested young people who tried to video-record the activities of the police officers. The police allegedly seized their telephones and destroyed them.

Muslim residents of the village, who make up 90% of the local population, are against the opening of a culture house or library in the building because they claim it was once an old mosque. Instead, they request its restoration. Locals said they had addressed the government several times since the 1990s but in vain.

The Orthodox population of the village protests the request of Muslim neighbors. They claim they first settled in the village of Mokhe in 1944 after Muslim Meskhs were exiled from the village by the soviet government. As there is no culture center for youth in the village, the Orthodox population welcomes the initiative of the government to rehabilitate the building.

The mobile group of HRDs observed the inactivity of police officers and noted that the controversy within the village population has become more serious and escalation of the conflict is expected any moment.

- In March 2014, Jehovah's Witnesses from Terjola purchased a plot of land in the town center. The space in their current place of worship- a small chapel on the ground floor of the residential house of one of their community members - is too small for religious rituals. As a result, they decided to construct a new hall in the town. The district administration issued permission for the construction but later suspended it citing a complaint from a local resident as the reason. The suitor claimed the construction of the hall damaged his house. The Jehovah's Witnesses said the Orthodox population insulted them and threw pebbles at the windows of their houses. According to the Jehovah's Witnesses, Orthodox clergymen organize similar discriminative activities even now.

- Discrimination against Jehovah's Witnesses was also observed in Kareli district. On July 28, 2015 the HRHT mobile group visited Dirbi village of Kareli municipality to study the situation on the ground. There they met Jehovah's Witnesses who were being harassed by clergyman. According to the Jehovah's Witnesses, they had been persecuted by the village clergyman for a long time. In May 2015, the clergyman allegedly beat one of their witnesses. The Khashuri district Prosecutor's Office started a criminal investigation into the persecution on religious grounds. The lawyer of the HRD mobile group found out that the witnesses did not yet have victim status in the case.

To summarize the situation regarding minorities, it should be highlighted that religious intolerance is still a problem in Georgia. The cases monitored by the mobile group revealed the inactivity of the state which creates precedents of human rights abuses that restrict freedom of religion.

State investigative bodies do not adequately react to facts of violence against minorities on religious grounds. In the facts of violence, when Orthodox clergymen are the violators, the investigation bodies do not conduct any procedures; victims and accused persons are not identified in such cases for years. However, in the cases of violent facts when civilians are violators, the investigation is also conducted ineffectively; the process is artificially dragged out and left unfinished. Finally, nobody is punished for crimes committed on religious grounds.

Although Freedom of Religion is guaranteed by different legal acts in the country, the ineffective investigation procedures conducted by investigative bodies have established a syndrome of impudence for crimes committed on religious grounds.

### Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities

Although the National Conception on Tolerance and Civic Integration and Programs under the Action Plan adopted by the Government of Georgia are being implemented in the country, there is very low or in some cases no progress in the defense of rights of national minorities and their civic integration. The monitoring revealed gross violations that are related to the rights of ethnic minorities. The rights of Roma people require particular attention, who experience numerous problems in their various sites of compact settlement:

- During the field visit, the mobile group of HRDs found a very complicated situation in the Khornabuji village (former Leninovka village) of Dedoplistskaro district. The local population is not supplied with natural air or drinking water. The villagers get water from wells but in summer the water level reduces significantly and they are left with insufficient drinking water. The road to the village is in a state of disrepair. There is no kindergarten or school in the village. For that reason children go to the school in the neighboring village by minibus. There is also no pharmacy or shop in Khornabuji village. Cattle of the local Azerbaijani population enter the gardens of Roma people and systematically damage their harvest and plants. It is quite a serious problem and source of potential conflict between the two ethnic groups. Hard social life is associated with the population's problems. Very often conflicts happen due to the inactivity of local self-governmental bodies as the locals live in hard conditions. The majority of Roma people do not have birth certificates or ID documents. Alongside social needs and problems with integration into society, they do not have documents and have financial problems for which reason Roma people cannot register their houses.

- Ten Roma families, about 100 persons, live in Agtaklia in Gardabani district, near Gachiani village. The village does not have drinking water and locals have to fetch it from the tap located near the railway station. There is electricity in the village but it is often switched off. There is no gas, and locals buy liquid gas which makes their social-economic conditions harder. There is no road in the village and buses do not run there. The nearest shop is located 2 kilometers away. Only three children go to the public school in Rustavi; others do not go to school and beg in Tbilisi – it is their job and only source of income. The houses in the village are wooden and during rainstorms, water leaks through the roofs. The majority of locals does not have houses or registered land plots. The village is unsanitary because the garbage dump is located close to the settlement. The main problem of the Roma community in Gachiani village is unregistered properties that is a result of two issues: 1. The social-economic conditions of the population and 2. The low awareness of people and lack of knowledge of the state language. The Roma community complains about high crime rate and early marriages of girls. According to tradition, early marriages often occur in their community and is not adequately responded to by the government. The HRDs met Roma living in the vicinities of Samgori metro station in Samgori district of Tbilisi, where they trade. Many of them do not have passports or IDs. One 12-year-old child in the settlement does not have a birth certificate. Since many Roma do not have documents, they cannot enjoy the various programs and social benefits available in the country; children cannot go to school or to kindergartens, elderly Roma people cannot get pensions, the socially indigent population is unable to receive benefits and cannot enjoy the program of universal insurance.

## Social-Economic Rights

The study and protection of social-economic rights made up a significant part of the monitoring process. The majority of the report is dedicated to this issue. The monitoring revealed several significant violations of social – economic rights, particularly in the compact settlements of IDPs, as well as the hard conditions of homeless persons and people without shelter.

### Rights of Socially Indigent People, Right to Adequate Housing

The right to adequate housing is guaranteed by numerous international conventions which were ratified by Georgia. The State should take all necessary measures to ensure access to healthcare, adequate housing and safety for each individual. If a person is homeless and does not have adequate housing, he/she should have the right to claim adequate housing. Besides that, the State should take measures to elaborate policy and legislation to guarantee the right to the adequate housing of its people.

Unfortunately, although the State of Georgia is authorized to protect rights to adequate housing in accordance with a number of international conventions, it is not implemented in practice and the violation rate of this right is quite alarming.

According to the head of the Social Service Agency, there are 120,000 socially indigent families in Georgia. A person is socially indigent if she/he receives benefits from the State to create the minimal conditions to live. Socially indigent persons are people registered in the data base of socially indigent families.

In the frame of the project ‘Human Rights in the Regions,’ the mobile group of HRDs organized five meetings with socially indigent people. In addition, the mobile group of lawyers permanently issued consultations to socially indigent persons in person and by phone. Socially indigent persons applied to the organization for legal aid in most cases.

From August 2014 to July 2015, the mobile group of HRDs met the following beneficiaries: homeless people living in the shelter in Moscow Avenue, Tbilisi; socially indigent people living in the so-called Tent Town; socially indigent people living in Lotkini and Alekseevka settlements and socially indigent people evicted from Melikishvili Street # 49.

- The monitoring of the mobile group revealed the real situation of the socially indigent population. Today it often happens that these people lose social benefits in violation of the law if their family members die, or purchase a TV-set or other electric device. Socially indigent persons cannot appeal the decision of the social agency on suspending their benefits at the court. The monitoring showed that the socially indigent population mostly occupies space in buildings which belong either to the State or to private individuals. After court trials they are turned out onto the street. The HRHT mobile group advocated the case of socially indigent persons evicted from Melikishvili Avenue # 49 and the Vake-Saburtalo district administration offered to rent flats for them in the neighborhood. Some of the families refused the offer as they feared the district administration would stop paying the rent after a while and they would end up on the street again. Instead they chose to wait for alternative accommodation.

12 families living at Melikishvili Avenue # 49, Tbilisi, stayed on the streets. The owners of the building where the families lived wanted to pull it down and construct a new building in its place. For that reason they forcibly evicted 23 persons from the building with the support of workers and damaged the stairs in it so that the socially indigent persons could not take their personal belongings and furniture from the building. Getting into the house is now dangerous. For some time these people were left uncared for but as a result of the advocacy of non-governmental organizations and the Public Defender’s Office, the local self-governmental body became interested in their problems.

After eviction, Mtatsminda district administration rented flats for two families with children and gave a single allowance of 510 Lari to each. The remaining families found flats themselves but the flat owners requested advance deposits on the rent costs while the district administration requires the signing of rent contracts with the owners.

The main request of the socially indigent families was to give alternative shelter to them and register accommodations in their names.

- The mobile group of HRDs became interested in the eviction of 108 families from two buildings in the Tbilisi Sea settlement on Lotkini Mountain, Tbilisi. These residential buildings were constructed for the workers of the MetroMsheni (Metro Construction Company) in the 1990s. Afterwards, the building was abandoned. In 2003, homeless people settled in the building when the late president of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze, made a statement on TV that homeless families could settle in any empty building which belonged to the state and promised that the government would register those accommodation in their names. The families hold papers from the Civil Registration Agency [CRA] which prove that the territory and buildings belonged to the state but nowadays private persons claim their flats in the building saying they received those spaces from the MetroMsheni and can prove it with papers from the CRA. Presumably, in 2006 the two residential buildings were registered as state property then assigned to the Tbilisi City Hall in 2008 and finally to the MetroMsheni.

Police evicted the families from the buildings during the night through a violation of norms. In addition to that the police insulted and degraded the people. Some beneficiaries had

psychological problems – insomnia, anxiety, permanent tension, fear, problems communicating with family members (children), and ideas of suicide. To advocate the problems of the evicted families, the lawyer of the mobile group sent notice to the General Inspection of the MIA. The lawyer petitioned the Tbilisi City Mayor and requested that adequate measures be taken in the frame of his authority.

- D. Ch-Tch applied to the HRHT for help. She is a single mother with two children and is a socially indigent person. She does not have a place of permanent residential or income and she does not own any property. D. Ch-Tch has been sheltering with her friend for four years with her two children. Unbearable conditions and a stressful life have had a negative impact on her own mental and physical health and that of her children.

Social services and the culture city service of the Tbilisi City Hall discussed her housing problems and said that the state does not have flats for homeless people. It should be noted that local self-governmental bodies are obliged to provide homeless persons with shelter.

D. Ch-Tch. has been cultivating a plot (600 sq. meters) in the territory of Didi Digomi in Tbilisi for 20 years. She petitioned Tbilisi City Hall to register the plot but the latter forwarded her case to the city council, to the commission for acknowledging property rights of physical or legal persons over plots factually possessed by them. The commission refused to acknowledge property rights, claiming the plot is empty without any construction on it.

D. Ch-Tch said that after all refusals she had to take a loan– took her social benefits in advance as credit and, with the support of her relatives, built a little house on the plot. Instead of implementing the obligation of the supervisory city service, the chief specialist of said service of Tbilisi City Hall, G. Darchiashvili, threatens her with deconstruction of the aforementioned building on the plot which in reality is the only shelter for D.Ch-Tch and her children. In addition, the family fully meets the definition of homeless persons in Resolution #131 of the Government of Georgia, issued on February 7, 2014. The HRHT mobile group visited the so-called Alekseevka settlement in Tbilisi. One 30-year-old construction in the area is abandoned and is registered as the property of the Ministry of Economy.

In September 2014 four families broke into that building; three of which are socially indigent. One of the socially indigent families has six underage children, one of whom has psychological problems. The family had to break into the building due to hard social-economic conditions and lack of alternative accommodation.

It is two-floor non-roofed building without a sewage system, electricity or natural air supplies.

The representatives of the district administration request them to leave the building and threaten the families with eviction. For that reason, the families are on constant watch, together with their children, in freezing cold rooms in order to protect their shelter.

The monitoring revealed that such practice requires improvement that should be based on improved legislative basis and effective work of state structures that will significantly ease the conditions of homeless people.

- L. G was born in the Russian Federation but during childhood together with parents moved to Georgia and remained here. HRHT provides him with legal aid; L.G is a disabled person and has received a pension for years. Since 1992, L.G has been taking medical treatment at the Tbilisi based Ltd Center for Mental Health and Prevention of Drug-Addiction. For unclear reasons the status of disabled person and pension were suspended 4 years ago. L.G is a citizen of Russia but has lived in Georgia for many years. Currently, he lives in the so-called Tent Town. He does not have family members or relatives to take care of him. With

the legal aid of the HRHT, L.G received the status of stateless person and the restored status of disabled person; consequently his pension was also restored.

## Ecological Problems: Right to Live in a Safe Environment

Ecological problems are quite acute in the South Caucasus as well as in other regions of the world. Polluted air and water resources, irrational use of mineral resources, pollution of the environment with industrial and housing remains, river-washed beaches, land erosion, reduction of forests, and more.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the grave ecological conditions and low number of NGOs working on environmental issues in Georgia, HRHT became interested in the ecological situation in three significant districts of Georgia: namely the Zestaponi, Tchiatura and Dusheti areas. The mobile group of HRDs visited Mleta, Zetaponi and Tchiatura to study the problems on the ground and hear the complaints and needs of the locals.

The ecological conditions are alarming in Zestaponi and Tchiatura areas due to smoke from the ferroalloy factory and incorrect obtaining of manganese there. The study of 2007-2011 showed that the number of patients with cancer was drastically increasing in Zestaponi district annually. If the planned activities are not conducted in accordance with estimated norms as observed in summer of 2013, the situation will get much harder in Zestaponi.

- The mobile group HRDs visited Zestaponi on November 3, 2014. The field visits revealed numerous problems. The number of cancer cases has increased. According to the evidence obtained, the ferroalloy factory works mostly without filters, so threatening the health of the local population.

The mobile group found that Georgian Manganese Ltd does not have a license to work in Zestaponi.<sup>2</sup> On February 19, 2015, the mobile group was notified that Georgian Manganese Ltd holds a license to obtain fossil fuel only in Tchiatura and Sachkhere and to obtain manganese in Tchiatura Manganese Deposit. In Zestaponi district Georgian Manganese had a license to obtain only underground freshwater. Thus, it was discovered that Georgian Manganese Ltd was working in Zestaponi district illegally – without a license.

The Zestaponi district Center for Public Health also sent an annual report about people with cancer in 2007-2011. According to the data for 2007, 983 persons out of 100,000 had cancer. The issue is that the figure was increasing early and in 2008 it reached 1,023, in 2009 – 1,067, in 2010 – 1,125, and in 2011- 1,133 persons had cancer in the district. It was really alarming statistics.

- The mobile group of HRDs visited Tchiatura on February 9, 2015. According to the information collected during the field visit it was revealed that in the territory surrounding the village, futile rocks, created as a result of manganese mining, made hills with a height of several dozen meters. Minor landslide zones now exist in a number of places, which make movement impossible during rainstorms, both for transport and pedestrians. In the sites where manganese is stored, holes of 15-20 centimeters are created after manganese is removed, which become sources of multiple pollution. The water-wells and springs disappeared in the village. The used territory was not re-cultivated. It is noteworthy that Darkveti village is not the only problematic site in Tchiatura district.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://geocoproblems.wordpress.com/>; last seen in August 2015

<sup>2</sup> National Agency of Environment # 21/1381 (February 10, 2015)

According to the information obtained, the water is not cleaned or disinfected without which it is impossible to drink water as it might cause serious infection of the intestines. The population should be informed about the rules for using the water correctly. The epidemic quality of the water is unacceptable. Kvirila River is in an alarming situation with polluted waters flowing in as well as mine and construction remains to be found in the territory of the town. Patterns from water-systems, surface waters, ground sediments and air tests were taken for study. The water from the five tested water-systems had not been properly cleaned. All tests showed that the manganese and iron concentration in the water was higher than allowed.

Ground sediment and air test analyses concluded that manganese concentration is much higher than allowed. The health of the workers was also examined in Tchiatura and Zestaponi. The results in both districts were almost equal because of the equal influence of manganese on people's health; however, symptoms of nervous disorder – general weakness, low memory, dizziness, insomnia, and high perspiration – were higher among the workers of Tchiatura mine than the workers of Zestaponi factory.

A population study showed that disease dissemination in Tchiatura is twice higher than in the villages. The research results are very important but it must be noted that it was a pilot survey and a larger-scale survey is necessary which will be focused on the aforementioned diseases and symptoms.

Laboratory analysis of the air in Tchiatura ordered by the non-governmental organization Union of Tchiatura Residents found an influence of manganese obtaining factories over houses and the atmosphere.<sup>3</sup>

- There is no hospital in Tchiatura. For that reason patients are often taken to Zestaponi, Sachkhere or Kutaisi based hospitals. Consequently, there are no statistics about sick persons in Tchiatura or what are the main tendencies in the health problems of the local population. It is fact that in 2014 only 341 children went to school – which means locals are migrating from the town.

Georgian Manganese closed first aid units in the factories and they now only function in the mines.

The miners do not get an adequate amount of or quality food (yoghurt, sour cream, milk). Very often workers get intoxicated with low-quality meat products.

- During the field visit to Tchiatura, the mobile group learned about a protest rally in Darkveti village. The locals had protested transportation of the raw materials by trucks through their village. The trucks loaded with manganese polluted the town, the vibration caused by their movement damaged the buildings and noise bothered the population. Manganese dust in the streets of Tchiatura seriously damaged the health of the local population. The Institute of Sanitary and Hygiene issued a conclusion that pollution in the town is much higher than allowed. Patterns from water-systems, surface waters, ground sediments and air tests were taken to study. The water from the five tested water-systems was not properly cleaned. All tests showed that the manganese and iron concentration in the water was higher than allowed.

In the past, company Tchiatura Manganese obtained more manganese than Georgian Manganese obtains now. But in the past they transported the fossil by ropeways and not by trucks. Currently, the ropeway does not work and needs complete rehabilitation.

The manganese is processed with a “dry” method instead “wet” which results in the dissemination of a large amount of manganese dust into the air. After obtaining the fossil the soil is not re-cultivated. Thus, the rule of obtaining manganese is blatantly violated.

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<sup>3</sup> Laboratory analysis of the air and surface waters in 2013- 2014 conducted by the G. Natadze Scientific Research Institute of Sanitary, Hygiene and Medical Ecology, Ltd.

Special sagging equipment are amortized. For that reason the polluted water is allowed to flow directly flows the Kvirila River and poison it.

Although the Tchiatura Drinking Water System belongs to Georgian Manganese, the reservoirs and the system in general have not been cleaned for a long time.

The roads to the mines also need rehabilitation. The holes created by intensive movement of heavy trucks are filled in with manganese remnants that eventually turn into powder and poison the environment and people.

It is noteworthy that locals had been protesting this fact for a long time but only after the mobile group arrived there did a representative of the Georgian Manganese meet the protesters and confirm that their request will be satisfied. He promised the company will start construction of an alternative road from the very next day and repair the damaged road in the village. Several months later, the mobile group was informed that the company had kept its promise.

Environmental issues are one of the most acute problems of the modern world. The right to live in a safe environment is guaranteed by Georgian and international law. Namely, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to live in an adequate environment for the health and well-being of himself and of his family.

The analysis of environmental cases by the mobile group of HRDs demonstrated that there are still many problems in terms of participation and awareness of society about the decision-making process regarding environmental issues. It is necessary to enact detailed rules and procedures in the national law. Head of the Zestaponi based NGO Strong and Healthy Zestaponi informed HRHT that there is alarming ecological state in Zestaponi because of smoke from the ferroalloy factory.<sup>4</sup> The 2007-2011 survey showed that number of cancer patients increased yearly in Zestaponi district. Unless the factory works in accordance to the estimated norms, the situation will get worse in summer in Zestaponi.

## Rights of Internally Displaced Persons

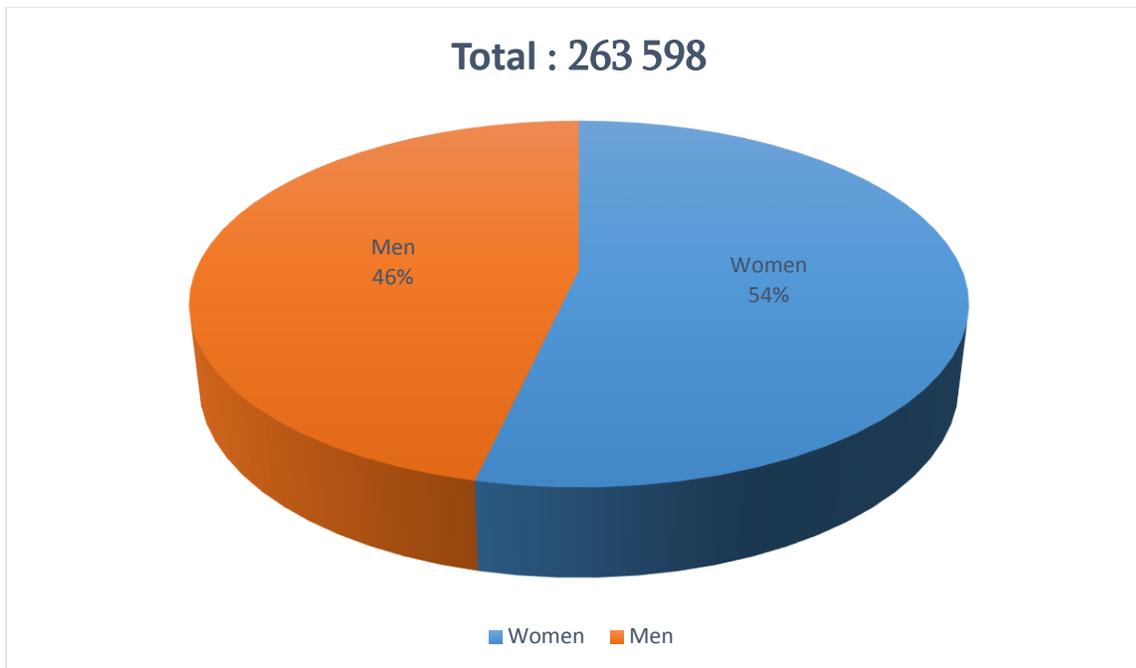
A citizen of Georgia or a stateless person with a status residing in Georgia shall be considered as an IDP if he/she was forced to leave his/her permanent place of residence because of threat to his/her or his/her family member's life, health or freedom as a result of the occupation of the territory by a foreign state, aggression, armed conflict, mass violence and/or massive human rights violations and/or he/she cannot return to his/her permanent place of residence due to the abovementioned reasons.

The legal status of IDPs, their satisfaction with long-term accommodation, and all steps taken by the State to support them, have always been a topic of major public interest. The number of IDPs increased as a result of armed conflicts of the 1990s and the 2008 August War, and the State required more resources in order to resolve their problems. By March 2015, the estimated number of IDPs in Georgia is 263,598 persons; 122,383 of which are men and 141,215 women.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Letter from the L. Sakvarelidze National Center for Disease Control and Public Health 01/1111/8 (February 17, 2015)

<sup>5</sup> <https://idfi.ge/ge/number-of-provided-living-areas-for-idps> Last visited in August 2015



In addition to the IDP statistics, the Ministry of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia has published information about families victimized by natural disasters – a total of 35,000. Most of them need social, economic assistance or accommodation.

Based on the statistical data, the HRHT mobile group visited various districts to study the problems and needs of IDPs on location. The mobile group visited 11 sites in total.

The mobile group visited: an IDP settlement in the territory of the Tbilisi Sea – so called Military (Cadet) School; the building of a former school in Temka settlement, Tbilisi; in the villages on the ABL in Gori (Jariasheni, Akhalubani, Adzvi); in Tskaltubo (sanatoriums Metallurgist and Friendship); in the IDP settlement in Tevdore Mgvdeli street in Tbilisi; the Ortachala IDP settlement, Tbilisi, the building of the former Neurology Institute in Nadzaladevi district, Tbilisi; a settlement in Tsalka, and those settled in two hotels (at Beliashvili Street # 67 and Nutsbidze Street # 62) in Tbilisi.

### Rights of the Conflict-Affected Population

Field visits revealed that IDPs live in hard social conditions and even their minimal living requirements are not satisfied. The majority of cases processed by the mobile group related to the eviction of IDPs from accommodation.

As a result of general analysis of the state of IDPs' rights, we can conclude that the main problems of this community have not been addressed for years. Although each IDP family may have individual and different problems, the monitoring process revealed the main trends which should be addressed in future in order to resolve the major problems and to ensure their rights are protected. The long-term accommodation of IDPs has been an issue of IDPs in Georgia since their first displacement. In the compact settlements, IDPs live in unbearable conditions.

Besides these issues, most IDPs have social problems which hinder their full integration into society.

- IDPs residing in the so-called Cadet School in the compact IDP settlement in the territory of the Tbilisi Sea requested repairs of the roof, sewage pipes, and the creation of minimal living conditions in the building. On the site, the mobile group members talked with the

inhabitants living under risk to their lives and studied their problems carefully. Afterwards, the lawyers petitioned the Ministry of Refugees and requested the timely commencement of repair-rehabilitation works in the building of the so-called Cadet School. On April 16, 2015, the Department for IDP issues at the Ministry of Refugees notified the HRDs mobile group that the building had been rehabilitated.

- On November 10, 2014 the mobile group paid a field visit to IDP settlements in Tskaltubo district, namely to the former buildings of Metallurgist and Friendship.

The situation there was quite complicated. According to the IDPs, 70 families are registered in the sanatorium Metallurgist but, due to the hard social conditions, only 30 families live there. The building is utterly damaged and inadequate for living. The roof needs repairing and it is absolutely impossible to stay inside the building during rainstorms. The basement is full of water which in itself creates a serious threat to the building. All thirty families have one common bathroom. There is no gas supply in the building; the inhabitants have problems with electricity and water supplies, too.

54 IDP families live in building # 1 of former sanatorium Friendship. They also have a lot of problems. According to the IDPs, the building is not supplied with gas, the roof needs repairing and the basement is full of water.

In both aforementioned cases the IDPs stated that their temporary accommodation is in poor condition resulting in a serious threat to their lives and health. They say that despite the many promises to assist them in the improvement of conditions, nothing has changed and nobody has given them alternative accommodation.

### Human Rights Situation in the so-called Administrative Border Line Villages

Although open military operations are not on-going in the country, the population affected by conflict still suffers from the outcome of the war, and their fundamental rights and freedoms are still being breached. Namely, the social and economic rights of the people living close to the Administrative Border Line [ABL] are violated, they live in an insecure environment and have poor infrastructure. Further, they do not have adequate access to healthcare and education.

- The mobile group of HRDs, together with the representatives of the Public Defender's Office, visited the villages in the conflict zone. The first meeting with the local population was organized by the Foundation Taso in Plavi village. About 490 families live in Plavi. The families do not have electricity meters, gas supply or drinking water; social allowances were suspended for them. The local population is not well-informed about State insurance. There is no adequate medical service. Ossetian border guards often arrest the villagers for illegal crossing of the border and people have to pay fines for their release that are not reimbursed by the State. Educational programs were suspended for the students living in the conflict-affected villages.
- The second meeting was in Kvesh village. 16 families have problems with the electricity distribution company Energo-Pro Georgia because they cannot install meters in unregistered houses. The population asked to reduce fees for local transport and supply the village with water. They also request immediate registration of land plots in the conflict zone villages like Jariasheni, Akhalubani and Adzvi, which they are not able to enter. The IDPs complain about unfairly issued social allowances.
- The mobile group visited around 25 IDP families, mostly IDPs from Zardiaantkari village, in a Gori kindergarten building. They have lived in the kindergarten for 6 years. The kindergarten director requests their resettlement because they need the space for children. The IDPs cannot return to their village because of poor living conditions and unsafe

circumstances there. There are no adequate living conditions in the building. The IDPs request compensation.

Zaardiantkari village was not controlled by the Georgian authority from 2008 to 2012. Georgian police could not patrol in that village for years. In 2012, the State gained control over the village, which is located adjacent to the occupied territory.

Some of the local population returned to their houses but still face numerous problems. First of all, they have not received IDP status. It is very important because the law offers several significant guarantees to IDPs that promote their adaptation to the new environment as well as their self-realization.

Considering these circumstances, the Zaardiantkari population has several problems. Namely, they live in the building of a kindergarten in Gori, where they have hard and unbearable conditions. After the interview with the IDPs, we learned that they cannot return to their homes in the village because of the following problems: The village does not have drinking or irrigation water; children must walk several kilometers to get to the school in the next village because there is no school in Zardiaantkari; it is impossible to live in their houses because they were damaged during the war and they do not have the feeling of security. It is noteworthy that the Zardiaantkari village population has not received any compensation from the State.<sup>6</sup>

## Rights of People Victimized by Natural Disasters

Natural disasters often happen in Georgia and victims and internally displaced persons – or in such cases ‘eco-migrants’ - as a result of natural disasters face numerous problems. Yet, the State still does not have a comprehensive and consecutive view on how to resolve their problems.

The current law was adopted on January 26, 2015 and regulates the status of the victims of natural disasters and internally displaced families (eco-migrants) as a result of natural disasters. Further, a commission regulating the accommodation of the families victimized by natural disasters was established. From 2013 to 2015 several legislative norms were adopted which aimed to improve the legal status of eco-migrants and their resettlement.

- On September 17, 2014, the mobile group visited Upper Mleta in the Dusheti municipality, where 15 families live with daily risk to their lives. Their houses are located in a landslide zone on the embankment of the Aragvi River. The river might get blocked by a landslide falling from the mountain that will result in the flooding of the village. A tragedy happened in the village several years ago when a landslide and the flooded river took the life of a three-year-old child. The locals urge the government to resettle them to safer alternative residential plots. Dusheti municipality administration notified the HRDs mobile group<sup>7</sup> that 10,000 GEL compensation had been allocated for each family in Mleta and that they would receive it after plots were assigned to them. However, the families have yet to receive the compensation because Dusheti municipality administration refuses to give them plots in the recreation zone where the locals selected alternative plots. After the HRHT mobile group took up the case, the victimized families agreed to find different plots but the problem is that the Dusheti municipality administration has no plots available and so the families have limited choice.
- The HRDs mobile group visited a compact settlement at Gudamakari Street #2, Tbilisi (former building of the Neurology Clinic). 327 families live in the building. Most of them

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<sup>6</sup> G. Janelidze (October 2, 2014) <http://humanrightshouse.org/Articles/20476.html>

<sup>7</sup> Dusheti district administration, letter # 794 (March 26, 2015)

are socially indigent and victimized as a result of an earthquake in 2002 in Tbilisi. They live on the I-IX floors of the building.

Tbilisi Electricity Distribution Company TELASI imposed old electricity bill arrears on the families. Although the court annulled the debts accumulated before 2007, the families have to cover the bill arrears since 2007. According to the contract, the victims of natural disaster should have received flats “free from any obligations and debts,” meaning free from the old debts of the neurology institute. A number of the families had the debt distributed over several months but 70 families did not agree and instead appealed to the court and won the trial. However, TELASI did not annul their debts. Electricity meters were installed in 2009 but since a number of the inhabitants had not registered the flats, the meters were not installed for them. 70 families had electricity supply switched off when the mobile group visited the compact settlement.

The building is in poor condition. It is not supplied with gas and the inhabitants warm their rooms with electric ovens and firewood stoves. The basement was full of excrement because the sewage system was damaged. The tanks of old x-ray apparatus had been left in the basement. It is noteworthy that the district administration paid 17,000 Lari to cover the electricity bill arrears and the inhabitants paid 3,000 lari; the local authority plans to replace the sewage system. The first and second floors of the building are damp and the walls are moldy.

- In the frame of the monitoring process the mobile group visited the victims of the June 13 natural disaster in Tbilisi. The mobile group paid visits to two locations – Nutsbidze Street and Beliashvili Street. Six families, totaling 22 persons from Svanidze Street, victimized as a result of the June 13 natural disaster in Tbilisi, live in the Hotel Merlin at Nutsbidze Street # 62. Representatives of the Vake district administration work in shifts in the hotel. The Tbilisi population also assists the victimized families and they did not complain about anything during the visit of the mobile group.
- The mobile group visited the victims of the Tbilisi June 13 natural disaster in the hotel Iceberg at Beliashvili Street # 91; the nine families (29 persons) lived in Tskneti ravine before the disaster. They said the district administration representatives visit them every day and did not complain about anything during the visit of the mobile group.
- 4 families (total 15 persons) from the Tskneti ravine victimized during the June 13 flood lived in the hotel Texas at Beliashvili Street # 89.

The victims said the state was late to pay compensation to them. They lost almost everything and did not receive daily allowances so creating serious problems for them. They had existed on dry food for one month prior (there is no kitchen in the hotel) and they cannot purchase fruit, vegetables and other products.

The victims of the June 13 natural disaster still wait for the compensation and despite many problems they refrain from complaining.

- Eco-migrants from Adjara, settled in the Tsalka municipality, request registration of their houses. Although the Ministry of the Refugees and Accommodation owns their houses, the former owners, who had migrated to Greece, electronically registered their former houses and request the eco-migrants leave them.
- 105 eco-migrant families resettled in Sameba village from Adjara and Svaneti in 2003. According to the locals, the Ministry has “purchased” 13 houses in the village but does not assign them to eco-migrant families. The majority of eco-migrants live in the former houses of local Greeks. Consequently, after the owners arrive in Georgia, more than 90 families will be left homeless.
- The same situation is found in Artsvini village where 100 eco-migrant families have lived since 2003. According to locals, the Ministry of IDPs has purchased houses for 56 eco-

migrant families but none of the families has received property documents so far. The majority of those houses was purchased with participation of the eco-migrant families in Artsvini village. There are several families who have already been evicted by Greek owners and also families who pay rent to the owners. Both villages have equal problems.

The Government of Georgia approved the project presented by the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees – “on preparation activities to assign real estate to the families victimized by natural disasters for factual use.” According to their clarification, after the preparation works finish, the registration process will begin.

The government is working on the cadaster drafts of the residential houses purchased and registered by the Ministry in 2004-2012 as well as their re-registration in the Civil Registration Agency. After these procedures, the Ministry plans to commence the property assignment process. Further, the Ministry continues to accept applications for alternative accommodations for the victims of natural disasters. The resettlement of the families who have not purchased the houses will be discussed based on the acting law.<sup>8</sup>

The State assigned marshy and barren lands to eco-migrants. They do not have pastures and have to rent them. 99% of eco-migrants have taken loans from a bank. The villages where eco-migrants from Adjara live do not have land for cemeteries and they have to bury relatives in Adjara. Lack of drinking water is also a problem in the villages of the municipality.

## Repatriated Meskhs: Rights of Meskhs Forcibly Displaced from the Soviet Republic of Georgia in the 1940s

Repatriation of the Meskhs evicted from Southern Georgia in 1940s is still a topic of intensive discussion. In 1999, when the country joined the Council of Europe, Georgia took the responsibility to repatriate Muslim Meskhs and elaborate legal frames for their integration. Georgia was to finalize the repatriation process within 12 years. Yet the time passed and the applications of the Meskhs who wish repatriation are still being processed at the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation.

The Law of Georgia on Repatriation obliges the State to grant Georgian citizenship to the repatriates in a simplified way. However, there are problems in this direction. Analysis of the identified facts in the report period revealed there are groups of repatriates who still have not received citizenship.

People with repatriate status and people who arrived in Georgia before the law was adopted, and so do not have repatriate status, belong to this group. A study of the facts revealed that a few of the repatriates had received Georgian citizenship but the decree of the President will go in force only after they provide documents proving suspended citizenship of another country. The repatriated Meskhs face obstacles at this stage because it is not an easy process to give up citizenship of another country.

If the required document on suspended foreign citizenship is not provided within two years after the President’s decree was issued, the latter will be annulled. Consequently, the repatriates, who will no longer have a legal basis to stay in Georgia, will have to leave the country or be evicted.

- D. A. and her son I.A. hold repatriate status. They arrived in Georgia together with their family and received the status based on the Law of Georgia adopted in 2007 and statement of the former president of Georgia.

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<sup>8</sup> Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees , #03-01/03/19450 (July 16, 2015)

The husband of D.A holds Georgian citizenship. The family has lived in Akhaltsikhe municipality in Georgia for years, they have land and regularly cultivate it; they are farmers.

D.A. and I. A wish to give up their Azerbaijani citizenship and receive Georgian citizenship and live in Georgia together with their family.

They petitioned the State of Azerbaijan about giving up Azerbaijani citizenship but for uncertain reasons they were refused. Further, giving up Azerbaijani citizenship is a costly procedure so it was delayed; meanwhile the 2-year-term estimated by the former president of Georgia on granting Georgian citizenship to repatriates is due to expire.

Considering the above-mentioned circumstances, the family addressed the State Services Development Agency of the Ministry of Justice to get a residence permit in Georgia to maintain family unity and stay in Georgia. However, the Ministry refused to grant a residence permit based on the conclusion of the Counter Intelligence Department of the MIA which stated that their stay in Georgia was not reasonable due to state and/or public interests. The conclusion is confidential and only the court may have access to it; consequently the applicants' party does not have information regarding the conclusion of their being a possible threat to State security. It is noteworthy that the conclusion cannot be appealed; it is final.

## Labor Rights and Rights to Healthcare

### Right to Healthcare

Right to healthcare requires standards of physical, mental and social welfare and obliges the State to create legislation and an action plan which will make healthcare available for everyone in the shortest period of time.

Although we observe progress in the healthcare system, in some cases and in some regions, one of the fundamental rights of people – right to healthcare -is still blatantly violated.

- The mobile group of HRDs visited Tbilisi Mental Health House Ltd. Unfortunately, the group could not examine the rooms of the patients due to resistance from the administration. The Deputy Director of the clinic clarified insufficient finances as the main problem of their institution. With their funds they cannot create the necessary conditions for medical treatment and care of 218 patients. The building, in which the institution has functioned since 2006, needs rehabilitation.
- The mobile group met representatives of the network of the NGO New Vector, who work on the defense of rights of drug-addicts. The network unifies seven organizations. Due to the risk of police intervention, the organization cannot collect the used syringes and instead give out new ones. Drug-addicts are often taken to narcological institutions for drug-tests, followed by administrative or criminal liabilities. Although under Article 42 of the Constitution drug-addicts may refuse to take a bio-test, they are illegally kept in the narcological institutions for long periods of time and are compelled to take tests. There is no clear legal difference between drug-addiction and drug-realization which often results in inadequately high punishments for drug-addicts. The network beneficiaries complain about the low number of lawyers who can defend their interests when they are taken to a narcological institution or when their cases are taken to the courts.
- The mobile group visited the M. Asatiani Center for Mental Health and Drug-Addiction Prevention; more precisely, the department for long-term service where 40 persons with

mental problems receive treatment. A lack of awareness was the main problem observed in this department.

## Labor Rights

Article 30 of the Constitution of Georgia guarantees defense of labor rights for the citizens of Georgia and Article 13 of the Constitution declares that the State is obliged to respect the interests of the citizens. Georgian legislation bans all forms of discrimination in labor and pre-contract relations.

Besides the aforementioned rights, the law regulates the responsibility of the employer to create a working environment free from the threats to life and health for the employee.

Despite the aforementioned regulations, labor rights still remain one of the most problematic fields of economic, social and culture rights, confirmed by the facts of breached labor rights identified by the mobile group of HRDs in the Report period.

- The mobile group of HRDs decided to visit Zestaponi after the owners of private shops located in the territory of the former agriculture market applied to the HRHT for help. According to the shop owners, they purchased plots in the market territory in the 1990s and opened trading centers. Currently, 192 shops function on the territory. On July 15, 2013, the agriculture market owner company Ecomagnat dismantled the constructions on the territory of the market and, despite the protest of locals, removed the remnants of the ferroalloy industry through violation of all norms. The territory is still in a state of disarray and the remnants are scattered around the place and pollute the air. Although the former market owner did not damage the trading centers, the shops lost function because the market was closed. Afterwards, the shop owners installed a door on the other side of the market in order to prologue functioning in the area. Concrete blocks have since been placed on the other side of the road to restrict traffic movement. The traffic movement was restricted after the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection requested the demolition and rehabilitation of the road based on the conclusion of the Levan Samkharauli Forensic Expertise that the current road is hazardous to life because of the underground tunnels in the area. The underground tunnels were created as a result of illegal obtaining of fossil fuels in the area. The entrepreneurs are afraid their shops will cease functioning and they will lose income.
- Workers of Tchiatura based enterprises and mines work based on employment orders instead of labor contracts. For that reason they cannot enjoy holidays and vacations in accordance with the labor law. In accordance with the law they should have holidays and vacations, but the workers claim their employer does not allow them to enjoy this right. As they are afraid to lose their jobs (quite realistic) they prefer not to complain about the employer.

## Various

The mobile group of HRDs worked on various human rights issues of concrete persons or concrete groups of people.

- The mobile group of the HRHT visited the education and rehabilitation institution of children with disabilities located in Borjomi Street in Tbilisi, the medical treatment-pedagogical school-kindergarten of the Archangel Michael Michaelschute, to conduct monitoring. The institution attracted particular attention after father of its 4-year-old

beneficiary, M. Tskhvediani, found the back gate of the school yard leading into the yard of the residential block, stamped. According to media sources, the inhabitants of the residential block did not want to see children with disabilities walk across their yard because it created discomfort for them. Considering the fact that due to security measures every school should have a back gate, the parent of the beneficiary became interested in the fact and decided to resolve the problem through legal procedures. Other parents of the children with disabilities also joined his initiative.

- On the World Day of Mental Health the HRDs mobile group visited Tbilisi Mental Health House Ltd. The visit revealed serious problems in the awareness of beneficiaries about patients' rights. The mobile group lawyers met the beneficiaries and gave consultations. In one case, in order to assist a beneficiary to get the necessary information, the lawyers prepared an application to be submitted to the Chancellery. It became clear that if hospital personnel are properly informed, it would become easier to resolve similar problems for beneficiaries that consequently mitigate the dissatisfaction and anxiety of beneficiaries. After discussion, the mobile group also identified the necessity of psychological assistance and the mobile group psychologist issued consultation on location.
- Based on the information disseminated by media, the HRHT mobile group of HRDs visited Dzveli Anaga village where an 11-year-old juvenile committed suicide in March 2015. Psychologists of the mobile group stayed on the site for two days in order to study the psychological conditions of the public school teachers and pupils. The purpose of the visit was to normalize and stabilize conditions and vent emotions. After the visit of psychologists, the school teachers contacted the HRD mobile group and thanked them for the support.

## Conclusion

The year of work of the mobile group of HRDs in Georgia demonstrates that freedom of religion and rights of various national minorities are the most vulnerable civil and political rights in Georgia.

Violation of social-economic rights is still major problem in Georgia. The mobile group observed problems in the respect of the right to adequate housing, right to live in a healthy environment, defense of IDP rights, rights of the conflict affected population, and rights of the people victimized by natural disasters. On the one hand these problems are caused by objective factors (poor economy in the country, international financial crisis, etc.) and on the other hand subjective factors make these problems more acute. The subjective factors are ineffectiveness and weak activities of municipal services, ministries and courts. Very often problems are observed in those fields which are easily avoided.

In some cases we identified legislative miscarriages. Social services are ineffective or do not exist at all.

Low awareness of the population about their rights and low culture of the defense of rights is another serious problem; very often resulting in groundless conflicts and issues in different fields. It is particularly obvious in the regions.

The mobile group continues human rights activities in Tbilisi and various regions of Georgia as is envisaged under the project.

### **Rights of Socially Vulnerable Persons, Right to Adequate Housing**

*Human Rights House Tbilisi recommends that the Government of Georgia:*

- Consider the engagement of the people in the elaboration process of a declaration on the legislative level. Namely, citizens should have a chance for their registration in the unified data base of socially vulnerable families and for it to happen not with a computer but with human resources. If individuals work on the family declarations, it will make both the filling-in procedure by a social worker and the final result transparent.

*HRHT advises the Tbilisi City Hall and local self-governmental bodies:*

- To work out relevant legislative norms for the registration of homeless persons to ensure transparency in providing these people with adequate housing;
- To make it obligatory to register all homeless persons living in the vicinities of the municipality in the data base and to create a unified data base that will support them to assist homeless persons with shelter;
- When homeless persons are evicted from voluntarily occupied accommodations, the norms of personal security should be strictly respected and law enforcement officers should not degrade and/or insult homeless persons during eviction;
- It is inadmissible for the legal owner of a property to forcibly evict a homeless person from the accommodation or for workers of building companies or other non-public servants to participate in this process.

### **Rights of Internally Displaced Persons**

*With regard to IDP rights, Human Rights House Tbilisi recommends that the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia:*

- Monitor the quality of on-going renovation works of the long-term accommodation of IDPs;
- Work out long-term programs for the promotion of full integration of IDPs into the local population in the places of resettlement and ensure the maximum engagement of various State institutions and non-governmental organizations working on the field in this process.

*With regard to eco-migrants, HRHT recommends that the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia:*

- Create a unified data base of persons harmed and displaced as a result of natural disaster;
- Work out criteria to evaluate loss and injury caused by a natural disaster;
- Launch special programs for families displaced as a result of natural disasters that will assist the eco-migrants to adapt to the environment in the places of resettlement;

- Take special measures to ensure security of the displaced families;
- Take relevant measures to resettle the eco-migrants in a maximally limited period of time.

*HRHT recommends local self-governmental bodies:*

- To conduct effective negotiations with the Ministry of IDPs, Accommodation and Refugees and the Ministry of Economy of Georgia to timely assign agriculture plots to the eco-migrants living in the Upper Mleta village under the right of ownership;
- To inform eco-migrant families about the conditions of alternative accommodation to ensure their timely resettlement.

### **Religious Minorities:**

- Investigative bodies should adequately respond to all facts of violence committed on religious grounds. Timely and effective investigation should be conducted in every case, and the cases should be resolved and final decisions made;
- Local self-governmental bodies should more actively assume the function of mediator between different religious groups and maximally promote constructive dialogue between them.

### **National and Ethnic Minorities**

- Local self-governmental bodies should ensure improved housing conditions for national and ethnic minorities and in some cases create improved living conditions;
- Create / strengthen the service provided by social workers who will directly work with target groups and operatively react to their problems;
- The State Services Development Agency of the Ministry of Justice should clearly inform national and ethnic minorities, in a language familiar to them, how to live in the country lawfully.

### **Repatriated Meskhs: Rights of Persons Internally Displaced from the Soviet Republic of Georgia in the 1940s:**

- The State should take more active measures and create legal mechanisms which will ensure the lawful residence of repatriated Meskhs in Georgia;
- The State should create a long-term effective program for the adaption of the repatriated Meskhs in Georgia and for their effective integration into society;
- Local self-governmental bodies should have proactive constructive dialogue with the representatives of the repatriates and, within their competence, resolve their problems at the initial stage.

### **Ecological Problems: Right to Live in a Safe Environment for Life and Health**

- The Ministry of Labor, Healthcare and Social Welfare of Georgia should study how safely people live in Zestaponi and Tchiatura. The Ministry should also conduct quarterly laboratory analysis of the surrounding air and surface waters in the districts and inform the local population about the results of the lab analysis;
- The Government of Georgia should create a long-term plan for the future and strategic development of these regions.

### **Right to Labor**

- The Ministry of Labor, Healthcare and Social Welfare should study the safety of the working environment for the workers in the Tchiatura enterprises and mines;
- The Ministry should study and evaluate whether the employees have the opportunity to enjoy benefits under the national legislation;
- The Ministry should conduct effective monitoring of working conditions and evaluate compliance with the standards and take adequate measures to ensure their adequacy.

### **Rights of Persons Living in the Administrative Border Line [ABL] Zone:**

- The Government of Georgia should ensure full compliance of social and communal conditions of the population living in the ABL zone with the conditions of people living in other regions of the country;
- The Government of Georgia should work out long-term effective programs to provide humanitarian support of the population in the ABL villages and ensure reasonable engagement of the population with the rest of the country in this process.