



We, the signatory organizations respond to the fact of the State Security Service summoning Tamta Mikeladze for questioning

Today, Tamta Mikeladze, one of the founders of the [EMC](#) Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC) [\[link\]](#) was summoned to be questioned by the State Security Service of Georgia related to the investigation launched on May 30. According to the [SSSG \[link\] particularly vague statement](#), the investigation is carried out into the fact of racial discrimination, as [\[link\]](#) certain individuals are trying to stir up ethnic strife between ethnic Georgians and Azeris in the Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions”.

Launching an investigation by the SSSG with an ambiguous task, and as a result, summoning the head of a non-governmental organization for questioning, can be

perceived as a hint and a warning to civil rights activists. This is especially problematic in our State, where the devotion to the rule of law and the excessive powers of law enforcement agencies, that are beyond parliamentary or judicial control, are already a major challenge and civil society is often the only center of control and balance in Georgia.

Such vicious practice is dangerous for other reasons too: most likely, SSSG will require to sign the pledge of confidentiality. That will make it impossible not only to effectively discuss the issue of summoning the head of the NGO in this context, but, Tamta Mikeladze, who is a crucially important activist working on problems of ethnic minorities, will lack the opportunity to provide the public with alternative information freely and unrestrictedly.

This case once again puts the civil sector in the position to remind the Georgian authorities that CSOs are not the source of the problem, but the actors that expose them. Prudent state would have considered CSOs as its ally, not as the inciting factor of the conflict.

The Institute for development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)

Transparency International Georgia (TI)

Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI)

Open Society - Georgia Foundation (OSGF)

Rights Georgia

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Partnership for Human Rights (PHR)