GYLA ASSESSES HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN GEORGIA IN 2020

Seventy-two years ago, on December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration is a milestone document, which is based on the common value suggesting that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. The date of adoption of the document is celebrated annually as International Human Rights Day.

The year 2020 was different and full of challenges in terms of human rights. The main topic of the year was the Covid-19 pandemic. The crisis caused by the spread of the virus has contributed to increasing poverty, inequality, and deepening other problematic human rights issues across the world.

Despite the obstacles posed by the epidemiological situation, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association has been actively working to protect human rights throughout the year by means of litigation, monitoring, advocacy, and participation in legislative processes.

According to GYLA, problematic issues during the year were delegating powers by the

Parliament of Georgia to the Government of Georgia to determine quarantine measures, leaving a number of vulnerable groups beyond the government's anti-crisis plan, disregarding human rights in environmental decisions, appointing judges of the Constitutional Court through obscure and unbalanced procedures, challenges regarding the publicity of criminal proceedings, violations during the 2020 parliamentary elections, and other issues.

The amendments introduced to the Labor Code of Georgia, which have somewhat improved the labor rights of employees, should be positively assessed. The institutional strengthening of the Labor Inspectorate and the increase of its powers must be particularly appreciated. However, the amendments unfortunately only partially responded to difficult working conditions existing in the country. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the issue of employee safety and labor rights has become even more acute. This is especially true for those employed in the medical sector (doctors/nurses/sanitary assistants), as the working conditions of mineworkers have further exacerbated, the same as of metro employees whose working conditions are problematic as well, etc.

Below you can view a full version of the statement detailing the key human rights challenges identified by the GYLA in 2020.