



## Civil society organizations are responding to the facts of the detention of human rights defenders

We, civil society organizations, strongly support the human rights defenders detained at the Parliament of Georgia, who are bravely fighting against content restrictions on freedom of expression. This night, the police arrested 7 participants of a peaceful gathering in the vicinity of the Parliament, completely arbitrarily, illegally and in an aggressive manner. Among those detained are the lawyer of the Institute of Tolerance and Diversity - Shota Tutberidze (currently released on the basis of the signature), the chairman of the Democratic Initiative of Georgia - Eduard Marikashvili, the employee of the Open Society Foundation - Saba Brachveli, the activist - Nika Romanadze and others.

It is worrying that the Georgian society is witnessing such a negative trend, which undermines the fundamental principles of democracy and, in fact, negates the basic

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right to freedom of expression. With the arbitrary practice of administrative arrests, the system tries to subject the participants and organizers of peaceful gatherings to police control, which aims to weaken citizens' self-organization, intimidate the public, and harass activists.

We call again

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs should immediately release the detainees and stop the practice of illegal detentions;
- Special Investigation Service - to study the facts of illegal detention of peaceful activists and abuse of authority by law enforcement officers;
- The Public Defender of Georgia, as the person supervising the protection of human rights on the territory of Georgia, should act with the mechanisms stipulated by his mandate and, among them, monitor the freedom of assembly and expression, the legal status of detainees on the ground;
- To the GBA - to respond to the cases of violations of the rights of lawyers.

## **Signatory organizations:**

GYLA

Guard of the court of Georgia

Defenders of democracy

Center for Social Justice

SALAMI

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy

Open Society Foundations

Women for a Common Future (WECF) - Georgia

Transparency International - Georgia

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Governance Monitoring Center (GMC)

Rights Georgia

Democratic initiative of Georgia

Media Ombudsman

Partnership for Human Rights

Institute for Tolerance and Diversity

Georgian Reforms Association (GRASS)

Journalistic Ethics Charter of Georgia

Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI)

Women's Initiatives Support Group, WISG

Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture - GCRT

Media Development Fund

Alliance of Regional Broadcasters of Georgia

Journalism Resource Center