

INFO SHEET  
GOOD PRACTICES ON NHRI\* ENGAGEMENT  
AND COOPERATION

Promotion and Protection of the  
Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons  
The case of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia



Conflicts arising in Georgia in the early 1990s and in 2008 have caused hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes. The Public Defender's Office (PDO), established in 1996, has developed a strong expertise in promoting and protecting the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from conflict-affected areas.

The PDO provides direct support to IDPs and uses the breadth of its functions, including human rights monitoring, complaints handling, litigation and legal assistance, to improve the situation of IDPs across Georgia.

### Cooperation with national actors

The PDO closely advises state bodies on ensuring a human rights-based approach to legislation, policies and programmes on IDPs (e.g. the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees). Recommendations are made systematically through meetings with state officials, and at the occasion of annual reports presented to the Parliament on the human rights situation in Georgia. The Office has also reported quarterly to state bodies on IDP-related issues. All annual, thematic and special reports are made public by the PDO and widely disseminated.

### Cooperation with other stakeholders: IDPs, CSOs and international organisations

The advice provided is built on in-depth consultations with IDPs, human rights defenders (HRDs), civil society organisations (CSOs) and other stakeholders such as the UN, the Council of Europe and the EU. The PDO is also working closely with CSOs (e.g. Consortium Legal Aid Georgia, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association) and international organisations on monitoring the human rights situation of IDPs and awareness-raising activities.

\*National Human Rights Institution

## Examples of cooperation



### Strengthening the State's legal framework on IDPs

The PDO played a key role in enhancing the legal framework applied to IDPs. For example, most of the PDO's recommendations were adopted in the latest legislation on IDPs in 2014. The PDO continues to provide advice to state bodies to strengthen the legislation and policies in place.



### Providing advice on the implementation of the State Strategy for IDPs and subsequent action plans

The PDO advises state bodies on the implementation of the State Strategy for IDPs through the work of the Steering Committee of the Action Plan for implementation of the National Strategy for IDPs, which gathers representatives of line ministries, donors, and international and local non-governmental organisations. The PDO contributes, for example, to the development of criteria for new housing standards, the evaluation of rehabilitation standards, and the development of outreach strategies on IDP benefits.



### Joint field work on IDP (re-)registration

In 2013, the PDO, several CSOs and international organisations conducted joint monitoring work to assess the human rights compliance of a country-wide renewed registration process for IDPs carried out by the State. The monitoring allowed the PDO to gather detailed information on IDPs' situation, identify gaps in legislation and practice, and advise state bodies on action needed.



### Enhancing IDPs' housing conditions

The PDO has developed strong monitoring systems on the housing situation of IDPs and provides regular recommendations through annual and special reports to state bodies on hazardous accommodation. The PDO also advises decision-makers on IDPs' relocation as part of the durable housing solutions programme, in cooperation with NGOs.

## ENNHRI's 'Human Rights and Conflict Project'

Between April 2017 and March 2020, ENNHRI is conducting a 3-year EU-funded project to enhance the effectiveness of NHRIs to promote and protect human rights in situations of conflict and post conflict in wider Europe.

The project intends to build the capacities of ENNHRI members operating in (post) conflict context and strengthen the engagement of European NHRIs with national, regional and international actors. Furthermore, the Project aims to boost solidarity and cooperation between NHRIs with extensive experience working in conflict environments and those facing rather recent challenges, including NHRIs that find themselves on the opposite sides of the conflict.

A series of Info-sheets are issued throughout the project life-cycle to showcase the work and good practices of ENNHRI members, reflecting NHRIs' functions and methodologies. These materials and many others collected during major project events will inform the work on the "Guidance on the Role if NHRIs in situations of (post) conflict" that will represent one of the main outcomes of the project.

Further information on the project can be found on the Project Micro-site:

[www.ennhri.org/human-rights-and-conflicts](http://www.ennhri.org/human-rights-and-conflicts)

## Further information

Public Defender's Office of Georgia: [www.ombudsman.ge/en/](http://www.ombudsman.ge/en/)  
ENNHRI: [www.ennhri.org](http://www.ennhri.org)

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