

The Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia
Submission to the call for inputs on violence against older persons

February 2023

The Law of Georgia on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination prohibits discrimination based on age. This Law is intended to eliminate every form of discrimination and to ensure equal rights of every natural and legal persons under the legislation of Georgia, irrespective of race, skin colour, language, sex, age, [...] or other characteristics. According to the law The Public Defender of Georgia shall monitor issues regarding elimination of discrimination and ensuring equality. The Public Defender's Office, as a body of equality and the national anti -discrimination mechanism in all areas, discusses the applications and complaints of discrimination on all grounds, including discrimination in age.

Acts of violence by family members against older persons are frequent in Georgia, as it stated in the Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons on her mission to Georgia.¹ It is reasonable to assume that much abuse goes unreported, given the enormous importance attributed to the institution of the family. Common forms of violence include neglect and physical and psychological abuse, which also involves humiliation and denial of contact with other people, and other forms of financial abuse.

The older persons are one of the most vulnerable groups among the victims of domestic violence. The analysis of cases studied by the Office of the Public Defender show that domestic violence against the older persons is mainly psychological and economic in nature.

A study of the cases reveals that victims avoid the involvement of law-enforcement bodies in instances of domestic violence. Furthermore, older persons refuse to continue the proceedings because the offender in most cases is the guarantee of providing minimum social care of the older person. Regrettably, no specific psychological and economic rehabilitation programs exist for victims of violence, whereas existing programs fail to fully meet the needs of the older persons. For these reasons, the implementation of effective measures of protection and assistance are problematic.

Over the years, the Public Defender had been noting that the Ministry of Internal Affairs processed of statistics on violence against persons over 45 years. This statistical information did not reflect accurate data on violence against older people. As a result of numerous meetings, recommendations and initiatives of the Office of the Public Defender the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia started processing statistics on domestic violence against older people from 2021. Currently, statistics on domestic violence against older people aged 61+ are produced separately.

At the same time, the lack of psychosocial services and support programmes tailored to older victims of violence is problematic both at the central level and in local municipalities. It is important to have a comprehensive approach to the problem of domestic violence against older people, coordinate actions between state agencies and take specific steps.

¹ Report of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons on her mission to Georgia. 10–28 September 2018. Par.31-35.