



Review of the Year 2019 Activities

We Defend and Strengthen Human Rights Defenders!

Our Strategic Goals:



Defending and strengthening human rights defenders



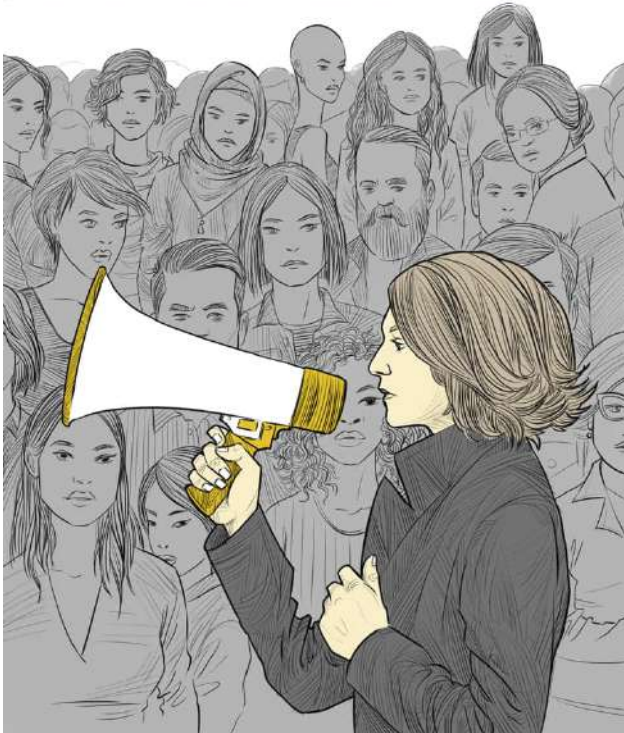
Strengthening human rights organizations



Raising awareness on human rights issues

Looking back at 2019 - A year full of challenges for the human rights defenders and activists throughout the world. Whereas the human rights defenders make a stand to defend the rights of other people, democratic values, or peace, very often they become the victims of persecution and harassment from the state. This is the continued tendency in many countries of the world nowadays including Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. The situation repeatedly forces human rights defenders together with their family members to leave homelands, places of residence, and move to other countries in order to find secure shelter. On our behalf, we offer commitment and safe shelter in Georgia to human rights defenders or activists from the above countries requiring rehabilitation. We hope that Georgia will preserve the status of the country offering the safe shelter in the region, and we will have a further possibility to serve the human rights defenders from other countries frequently needing complex support. Regretfully, apart from this, in 2019 we saw the increased need to support Georgian human rights defenders as well, and considering the problem, promoted our activity to this extent. We faced misleading accusation campaigns against Georgian human rights defenders, smear campaigns against activities of human rights organizations from the representatives of state institutions and high-ranking officials, cases of violence from the side of ultranationalists, and homophobic groups, including cases of physical assaults on human rights defenders. It is worth to mention that LGBT activists and defenders of their rights appeared under concentrated pressure. We are grateful for the chance to help 23 human rights defenders and their families from Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Russia, to advocate and offer legal and anti-burnout assistance to 34 Georgian human rights defenders in 2019. Together with our member organizations, we managed to provide legal and psychological assistance on time and to offer financial support and shelter for human rights defenders who overcame existing problems and most importantly managed to continue the defense of human rights.

საერთაშორისო დღი
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS DAY



We believe that alongside supporting human rights defenders, it is important to raise awareness on human rights issues and activities of human rights defenders, as well as identification of the young activist and offering them trainings and educational activities. We implemented the prioritized work in this direction with young women human rights defenders in 2019. In our opinion, women human rights defenders need special support and they often are the victims of double discrimination first of all as women in the conditions of gender inequality and second, as the human rights defenders. In 2019 we offered capacity building trainings up to 60 young women activists from Georgia and Azerbaijan about creative campaigning, social marketing, project development, and project implementation. 7 small grants were offered and assigned after completion of the training which gave the possibility to the young activists to make first steps in their project-planning and campaigning skills development. We are glad that the mentioned activity developed and established new initiations.

Successful participants of our trainings founded their own organizations and continue the human rights defending activities. We also provided 8 travel grants to young women human rights defenders that gave them the possibility to attend international conferences, scholarships, gain new contacts and international partners and use acquired knowledge for their activity in Georgia. Together with this, we met and discovered women who fight for changes and social problems arrangements in their communities and whose activities were not well known for the wide society. We worked with women from the regions of Georgia, representatives of ethnic minorities and women with disabilities and offered capacity building trainings together with small grants and helped them to be heard by the society through the media campaign.

We will continue to support and strengthen the human rights defenders in 2020. Despite the crisis in the whole world from Covid-19, human rights defenders continue their activities and protect other's rights even in emergency situations.

In 2020 we will work more actively to give an opportunity to human rights defenders to continue their activities. We have the aim to live in the state where the importance and role of human rights defenders and human rights defending organizations in the protection of human rights, democracy building, and development of the civil society are recognized and where human rights defenders are provided with effective protection mechanisms.

SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS FROM GEORGIA

In 2019, the Human Rights House Tbilisi has started to actively support Georgian human rights activists, taking into account the existing needs.

Offered support under the program:

- ✓ ANTI-BURNOUT TRAININGS
- ✓ PSYCHO-SOCIAL REHABILITATION
- ✓ LEGAL ASSISTANCE
- ✓ ADVOCACY ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS



In 2019, the Human Rights House Tbilisi supported 34 HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS from Georgia

RESPONSE TO DEFAMATORY STATEMENTS MADE TO HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

"It is particularly alarming that instead of respectful and inclusive public dialogue, government representatives respond to the criticism of human rights organizations with verbal attacks and smear campaigns."



STATEMENT ON THE EVENTS OF JUNE 20 IN THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL:

"We urge Georgia to ensure that its security services do not use such methods of crowd control and that any use of force is only justifiable in exceptional circumstances, and governed by necessity and human rights norms. We call on Georgia to carry out a thorough investigation into the rights violations and to ensure that freedom of association and assembly is assured for all Georgians in the future."



On November 8, 2019, human rights activists Ana Subeliani and Tamaz Sozashvili escorted members of the LGBTQI community to the screening of the film "And Then We Danced," during which they fell victim to targeted aggression, threats and physical assault from homophobic groups. Ana Subeliani was later taken to a medical facility because she had been stabbed seven times in the eye. The person who attacked Ana Subeliani was sentenced to 1,5 year prison time due to his violence on discriminatory grounds, Tamaz Sozashvili's case is still in court. The member organization of the Human Rights House Tbilisi, the Human Rights Center, is representing the legal interests of human rights defenders in court proceedings.

HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE TBILISI PROVIDED FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO TAMARA MEARAKISHVILI TO ENSURE HER LEGAL REPRESENTATION IN THE DE FACTO COURT

"We, the 62 undersigned members of the network of Human Rights Houses express their deep concern about legal actions taken by the de facto South Ossetian authorities against prominent human rights defender, Ms. Tamara Mearakishvili.... Ms. Mearakishvili's efforts are basic and legitimate human rights activities and Ms. Mearakishvili should be afforded all protections due to human rights defenders."



STATEMENT TO PROTECT THE RIGHT OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY OF LGBTQI HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS.

"We call upon the Georgian authorities to show commitment to the values of democracy and human rights and to protect the safety and security of all Tbilisi Pride Week and March of Dignity participants."



SUPPORTING FOREIGN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Starting from 2014 Human Rights House Tbilisi is providing support to human rights defenders and activists from Azerbaijan living in exile in Georgia

The protection program for foreign human rights defenders living in Georgia has been extended **since 2019** and as of today's date together with Azerbaijan includes the following countries:



IN 2019 HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE PROVIDED SUPPORT TO 23 FOREIGN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Offered support in frames
of the program:

Shelter

Financial Support

Medical/Psychological Support

Legal Assistance

Integration supportive Activities

Court Trial Monitoring in Azerbaijan

Advocacy on National and International Levels



SUPPORTING FOREIGN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Afgan Mukhtarli, Azerbaijani journalist and activist who disappeared on May 29th, 2017 in Georgia and was later found in the prison of Azerbaijan where he was sentenced to six years on the charges of smuggling contraband, crossing the border illegally and resisting the police. According to Afgan's testimony, he was abducted by some people in the uniform of the police of Georgia and was illegally transported to Azerbaijan. The investigation by the Georgian investigative authorities into alleged abduction of Mukhtarli is still ineffective, without any progress. The activist was released from prison before the end of his sentence on March 17th, 2020 as a result of involvement from civil society worldwide.



Interests of Afgan Mukhtarli in Georgia and the European International Court of Human Rights are defended by "Rights Georgia", member organization of "Human Rights House Tbilisi".



Dashgin Aghalarli, Azerbaijani persecuted activist was sheltering in Georgia together with his son, Orkhan Aghalarli, from 2014. After the final refusal of assigning the status of refugee, long-standing procedures, and exhaustion of all domestic remedies, Aghalarli faced the risk of extradition from Georgia to Azerbaijan. With the involvement and advocacy of Tbilisi House and its member organization "Human Rights Center", Dashgin Aghalarli and his son were not extradited from Georgia. Dashgin Aghalarli left Georgia and received the shelter in another country. Dashgin was again arrested in 2019 based on Azerbaijan's request while crossing the border in the airport of Poland (Gdansk). As of today, Dashgin Aghalarli awaits his court case in Poland.

WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND ACTIVISTS

Very often women human rights defenders need special support as they represent the victims of double discrimination. Various activities were held in 2019 to strengthen women human rights defenders.



“LEADERSHIP ACADEMY”

Up to 60 Georgian and Azerbaijani activists took participation in the Leadership Academies in 2019. Implementation of the creative campaigns and social marketing were the key topics of the Leadership Academy. Sharing the experience from active professionals of the business sector attracted the special interest of human rights defenders' sphere.



Leadership Academy, March 2019.



Leadership Academy, October 2019.

Further information of two Leadership Academies held in 2019, can be seen [here](#) and [here](#)



SMALL GRANTS

7 small grants were offered and assigned after completion of the training which gave the possibility to the young activists to make first steps in their project-planning and campaigning skills development.

Nino Jgarkava

social worker, human rights defender:

"Participating in the Leadership Academy was the door for me to the universe full with opportunities, where I met my future colleagues and together we established the organization "FREYA" - the organization aimed at defending women's rights".

TRAVEL GRANTS

8 travel grants were awarded to young women human rights defenders that gave them the opportunity to attend international conferences and trainings, as well as to gain new contacts, international partners and use acquired knowledge for their activities in Georgia.

Mariam Kvaratskhelia

LGBT activist, the founder of Tbilisi Pride:

"With the help of the travel grant, I attended European Lesbian* Conference (EL*C). This experience was absolutely unique for me. I returned to my country strengthened and motivated, gained numerous new contacts, my activism went beyond the national level and I found my place in regional and European movements".

MEDIA CAMPAIGNS - WOMEN WHO FIGHT FOR CHANGES

In 2019 was implemented the Media Campaign for women who fight for changes and social problems arrangements in their communities and whose activities were not well known for the wide society. Women from the regions of Georgia, representatives of ethnic minorities, and women with disabilities were involved in the Media Campaign.



“This project helped me to discover myself that was especially important for me as for the woman with disabilities to feel the strength and get motivation to accomplish my goals.”

Nino Katamadze
Philologist

Nino Katamadze, one of the winners of the photo contest.
Photographer: Mariam Turashvili

Detailed information: photo contest - "Unknown Portraits-Women and Activism"

Video: Women Who Fight for Changes

Video: You Can Change

Articles: Women and Activism

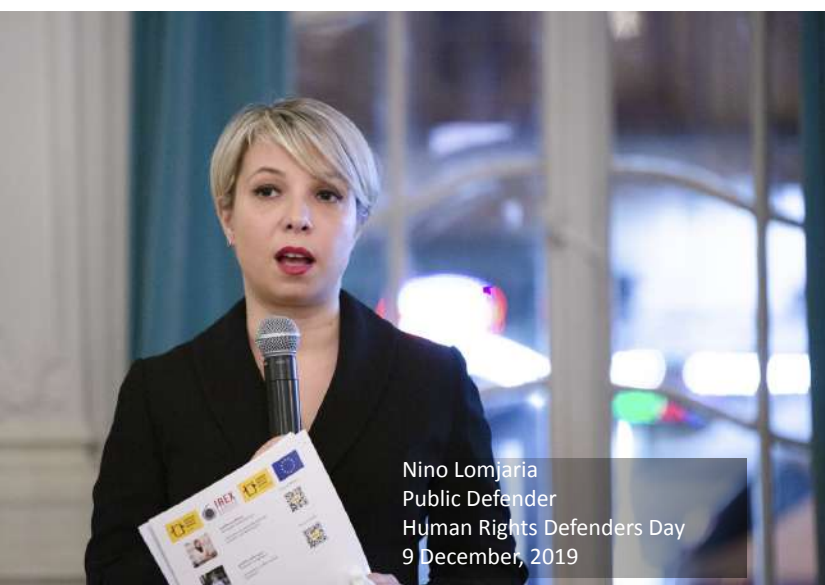
PUBLIC EVENTS OF 2019

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS DAY - 9 DECEMBER

Human Rights Defenders Day is celebrated in the world for raising the awareness about activities of human rights defenders and the due recognition of their activity.



Human Rights Defenders Day
9 December, 2019



Nino Lomjaria
Public Defender
Human Rights Defenders Day
9 December, 2019

In 2019 Human Rights House Tbilisi organized the celebration of the Human Rights Defenders Day – 9th December for the second time in Georgia. The event welcomed up to 150 activists, human rights defenders, representatives of diplomatic corps, and local and international organizations.

[See further details of the event here](#)

PUBLIC EVENTS OF 2019

HUMAN RIGHTS FAIR - TBILISI

The concept of the fair was created in 2018 by the Human Rights House Tbilisi and continued on an annual basis. The aim of the event is to gather activists and organizations working on human rights issues which will create the sharing platform of information and contacts and establish the foundation for future collaboration.



On July 16th, 2019 the fair hosted more than 150 individual activists, representatives of human rights defending organizations, and international and diplomatic missions from Tbilisi and the regions of Georgia. On the event ten organizations from five regions of Georgia at individual stands represented their printed and informational materials at individual stands for the interested participants.

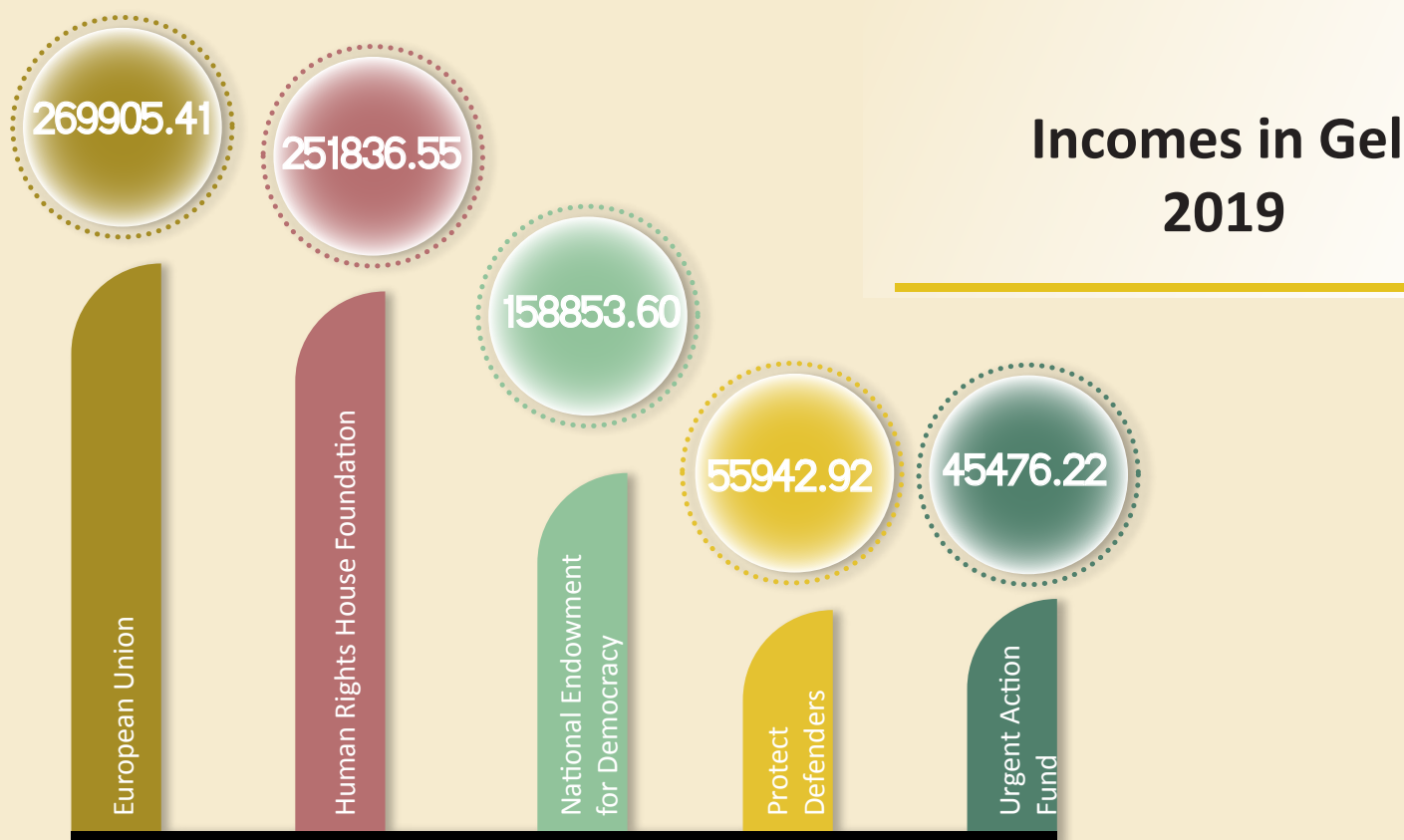
[See further details of the event here](#)

THE OFFICE OF TBILISI HOUSE HOSTED THE FOLLOWING EVENTS IN 2019

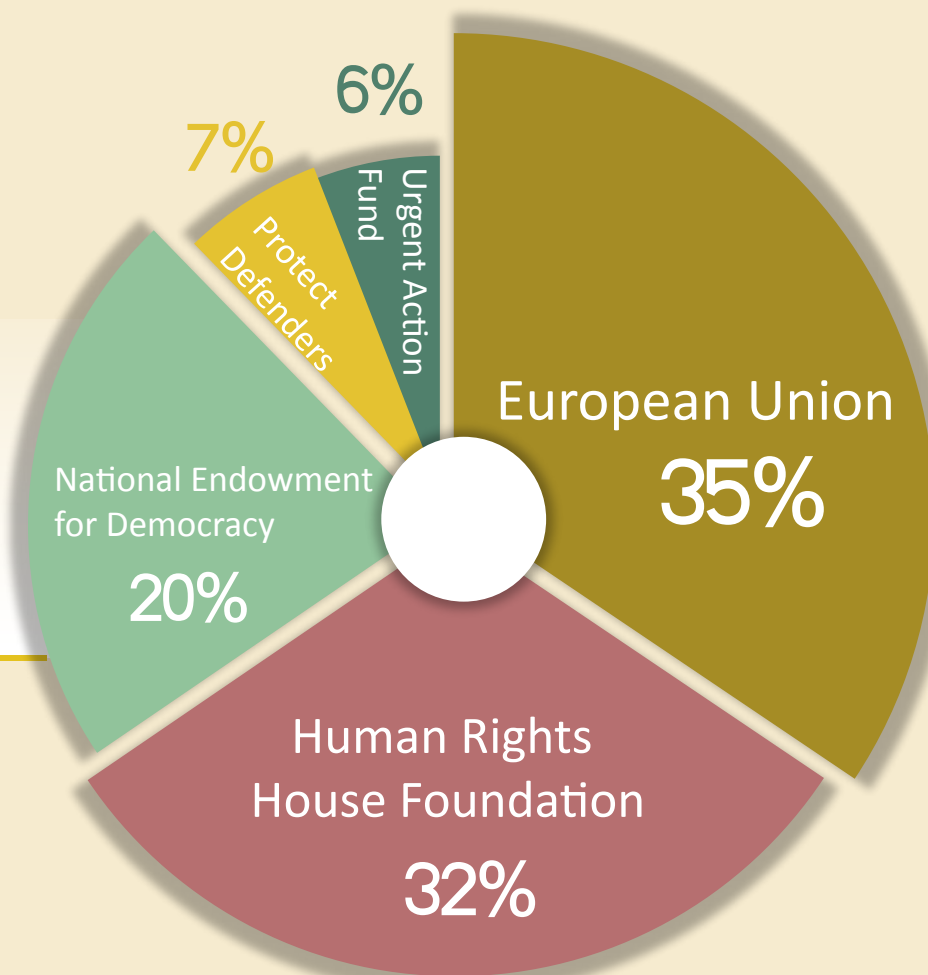
-  16 press conferences
-  20 trainings/workshops
-  50 presentations
meetings
round table



Donor Organizations and Grants:



Share of Donors in Grant Incomes



ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS HOUSE TBILISI

Human Rights House Tbilisi is a Membership-based organization that unites five civil society organizations working in the field of human rights. Tbilisi House was founded in 2010 under the support of the "Human Rights House Foundation". "Human Rights House Foundation" defends, strengthens and supports the human rights defenders and their organizations. Nowadays independent rights defender organizations jointly implement activities in 16 Human Rights Houses working in 11 countries. Human Rights House Tbilisi consists of the following five member organizations: "Human Rights Center", "Rights Georgia", "Media Institution", "safari" and "The Georgian Center for Psychological and Medical Rehabilitation for Torture Victims". With the strengthening of collaboration and joint activity, aiming better protection of human rights and advocating, in the name of its member organizations Tbilisi House protects and strengthens human rights defenders and their organizations, together with the implementation of educational activities to raise awareness about human rights.

Our partner organizations



Our Member Organizations:

