

# **HATE CRIME, HATE SPEECH AND DISCRIMINATION IN GEORGIA: ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS**

Report of Public Survey  
Conducted for the Co-operation Project  
“Fight against Discrimination,  
Hate Crimes and Hate Speech in Georgia”

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



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DISCRIMINATION IN GEORGIA:  
ATTITUDES AND AWARENESS**



CAUCASUS RESEARCH  
RESOURCE CENTER

Hate Crime, Hate Speech and Discrimination  
in Georgia: Attitudes and Awareness  
This study was conducted by CRRC Georgia  
for the Co-operation Project “ Fight against  
Discrimination, Hate Crimes and Hate Speech in  
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collects, analyzes and  
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data on social, economic and  
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CRRC-Georgia, together with  
CRRC-Armenia and  
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network of research centers  
with the common goal of  
strengthening social science  
research and public policy  
analysis in the South Caucasus.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Hate speech, hate crime, and discrimination are clear problems in Georgia. These issues manifest themselves in a range of events, from the high profile acts of violence against LGBT people to the more everyday experiences of discrimination which people with disabilities experience. To combat hate speech, hate crime, and discrimination, the Council of Europe (CoE) conducted the “Fight against discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech in Georgia” project from 2018 to 2021 with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, through its Neighbourhood Programme (DANEP). It aimed to “provide expertise, build competences, advocate and raise awareness among policy makers, legal professionals, law enforcement agencies and civil society organisations to enable them to” ensure legislation is in line with European standards, effectively implemented, as well as to raise awareness among the public about the importance of these issues.<sup>1</sup>

In support of this goal, the Council of Europe hired CRRC Georgia to conduct a study on the public’s attitudes towards hate speech, hate crime, and discrimination in line with a study the organisation conducted for the Council of Europe in 2018. The study focused on six distinct themes, including:

- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of diversity in Georgian society;
- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups;
- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of the occurrence of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Georgian society and who it affects;
- ▶ Awareness of Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech;
- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of existing redress mechanisms and their effectiveness;
- ▶ Appreciation of different actors’ work on the issues.

To address understand the above issues, the report uses a mixed methods approach that makes use of a survey from 2018 and repeated in 2021, in depth interviews, and focus groups. All three methods are used to address these issues. Qualitative data is used to dive deeper into the above issues in a manner that would be inappropriate for quantitative data.

The data presented in this study lead to a wide range of conclusions as relates the above themes.

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<sup>1</sup> See CoE, 2018, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/national-implementation/georgia-fight-against-discrimination-hate-crimes-and-hate-speech-in-georgia>

The study demonstrates that knowledge of and appreciation of diversity in Georgian society has increased between 2018 and 2021. People are more capable of naming a minority group when asked what minority group comes to mind first. The public has significantly more positive attitudes towards diversity in general, ethnic diversity, and religious diversity.

The public's attitudes towards specific minority groups have also improved, including among groups that the public expresses the most animus towards. There was an increase in people's willingness to engage in business relations with Arab people by 16 percentage points and with African people by 15 percentage points. The two groups that people were least willing to do business with in 2018 were homosexual persons and Jehovah's Witnesses. In 2021, the data suggests this is still true. However, the share of the public willing to do business with Jehovah's Witnesses increased by 13 percentage points and with homosexual persons by 10 percentage points. While doing business with another group is a relatively weak form of social bond (as opposed to for example marriage), this data suggests that several hundred thousand people's attitudes have moved towards greater tolerance between 2018 and 2021.

The public also became more aware and accepting of minority rights between 2018 and 2021. Out of 14 rights asked about on the survey, the public acknowledge 1.2 more in 2021 than they did in 2018, on average. The data indicate that one in six people began to acknowledge the right of minorities to participate in national decision making processes. One in seven began to recognise minorities' right to work in public service, to protest, and to be elected during this time period. Smaller increases were also present in terms of the acknowledgement of a number of other rights.

The public also began to recognise the importance of minority rights to a greater extent. While the public's attitudes generally moved towards increased recognition of the importance of the protection of minority rights, the change in attitudes towards LGBT people is notable. While in 2018 42 percent of the public thought the protection of LGBT rights was unimportant, only 29 percent did in 2021. Similarly, there was a rise in the share thinking it was important from 33 percent in 2018 to 47 percent in 2021.

As in 2018, there are substantial gaps in the perceptions of minority and majority groups in Georgia with regard to the problems minority groups face. However, majority groups increasingly recognise that minorities do face challenges. The share of the public reporting that ethnic minorities, religious minorities, women, people with disabilities, and LGBT people face no problems declined substantially between 2018 and 2021, reflecting a rising awareness of the issues minorities face.

The rising awareness of the problems minorities face is also reflected in the data on people's views of hate speech and hate crime. The data show that more of the public think that hate speech and hate crime are problematic issues in Georgia than thought the same in 2018. Moreover, when asked about how often different groups experience hate speech and hate crime, there were substantial declines in the shares reporting never for many of

the 25 groups asked about. This data further suggests that there is increased recognition of the challenges minority groups face, specifically related to hate crime and hate speech.

Even though the public increasingly recognises the challenges of hate speech and hate crime, the data suggest that many remain unaware of high profile incidents motivated by animus towards minority groups. One in eight remember the neo-Nazi murder of Vitali Safarov. Only two thirds of the public were aware of the July 5<sup>th</sup> riots against Tbilisi Pride. While relatively few remembered the incidents asked about on the survey, those who did tended to believe they were hate crimes.

The public's attitudes towards and awareness of Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech has changed strikingly little between 2018 and 2021. In this regard, attitudes towards and awareness of every piece of legislation asked about on the survey have remained stable between 2018 and 2021.

As with legislation, the Georgian public's views of response mechanisms and actors involved in combatting discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime have changed very little between 2018 and 2021. The data show that many people are aware that they can turn to the police, the courts, the Public Defender's Office, and NGOs to deal with issues around discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime. Yet, awareness and willingness to actually do so has changed little.

Given the lack of change in attitudes towards Georgian legislation and response mechanisms, it is perhaps unsurprising that there has also been little change in trust in the actors engaged in combatting hate speech, hate crime, and discrimination and little change in performance assessments of these institutions on combatting the aforementioned issues.

# INTRODUCTION

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Hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination are persistent problems in Georgia. This is reflected in large scale hate crime events such as the July 5<sup>th</sup> 2021 anti-LGBT riots, notably the second anti-LGBT riot which has occurred in Georgia during the last decade. LGBT people are not the only group which faces hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination in Georgia though. Ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, among a wide range of other groups face discrimination in the country. Though this is sometimes exemplified through large-scale events such as those which took place on July 5<sup>th</sup>, it is also manifested in challenges with access to property registration for Jehovah's Witnesses as well as difficulty in accessing banking services for some migrant groups.<sup>2</sup> It is also manifested in more subtler and pervasive forms of discrimination, which is well exemplified in the 2018 report "Hate Crime, Hate Speech, and Discrimination in Georgia: Attitudes and Awareness".<sup>3</sup> The report showed that a plurality of people in Georgia thought a range of minority groups faced no issues. It further showed that people's attitudes towards Jehovah's Witnesses and LGBT people were particularly negative. All of these issues suggested that Georgia has a consistent problem with hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination.

To work towards ameliorating this situation, the Council of Europe implemented the "Fight against Discrimination, Hate Crimes, and Hate Speech in Georgia" Project between 2018 and 2021 with funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, through its Neighbourhood Programme (DANEP). The project included a wide array of activities, such as direct work with law enforcement and judicial bodies as well as public outreach campaigns.<sup>4</sup> In support of understanding attitudinal change during the project period, the Council of Europe commissioned CRRC Georgia to conduct a survey of attitudes on hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination in Georgia.

In looking at these issues, this study explores the following domains as relates to changes in attitudes:

- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of diversity in Georgian society;
- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups;
- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of the occurrence of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Georgian society and who it affects;
- ▶ Awareness of Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech;

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2 See PDO, 2021, available at: <https://ombudsman.ge/geo/saparlamento-angarishebi>

3 See Council of Europe, 2018, available at: [https://caucasusbarometer.org/downloads/Hate%20Speech\\_ENG.pdf](https://caucasusbarometer.org/downloads/Hate%20Speech_ENG.pdf)

4 More information on the project is available from the Council of Europe's website: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/tbilisi/fighting-discrimination-hate-crime-and-hate-speech-in-georgia>

- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of existing redress mechanisms and their effectiveness;
- ▶ Appreciation of different actors' work on the issues.

To achieve the above goal, this study used a mixed methods research design. This included a partial panel survey conducted in 2021, repeating a baseline survey which was conducted in 2018 as well as focus groups and key informant interviews with different minority groups as well as government officials who work on the issues of hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination.

This report proceeds as follows. In the subsequent section of the report, the study's methodology is described. Thereafter, the report provides the findings. The findings section focuses on changes in attitudes between 2018 and 2021. Each section within the findings chapter is further broken down into sub-sections on appreciation and awareness of diversity in Georgian society; appreciation and awareness of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups; appreciation and awareness of the occurrence of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Georgian society and who it affects; awareness of Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech; appreciation and awareness of existing redress mechanisms and their effectiveness; and appreciation of different actors' work on the issues. The report ends with conclusions.

# METHODOLOGY

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This study addresses the issues described in the previous section using a mixed methods approach, which includes qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. This section of the report first describes the quantitative data collection and analysis strategy. It proceeds to describe the qualitative data collection and analysis process.

## QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

### SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument used within the present study was developed in 2018, and slightly modified in 2021. It was developed to cover the following topics:

- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of diversity in Georgian society;
- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups;
- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of the occurrence of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Georgian society and who it affects;
- ▶ Awareness of Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech;
- ▶ Appreciation and awareness of existing redress mechanisms and their effectiveness;
- ▶ Appreciation of different actors' work on the issues;
- ▶ Social and demographic characteristics of respondents.

The modifications in 2021 were minimal so as to ensure that the results of the 2018 and 2021 surveys were comparable. In this regard, modifications included changing the name of campaigns and events asked about within the survey. A number of economic variables that were not used in the original round were also removed from the survey.

### SAMPLE

A representative sample of the population of Georgia was drawn in 2018 using a complex clustering with stratification sampling approach. Clusters were election precincts. Strata include Tbilisi, other urban areas, rural areas, predominantly Armenian areas, and predominantly Azeri areas. In 2021, CRRC Georgia returned to the same clusters to conduct survey fieldwork, resulting in a partial panel survey. The table below provides the key characteristics of the survey, including sample size, response rate, and margin of error.

Figure 1: Survey characteristics

Year	Sample size	Margin of error	Response rate
2018	2205	2.9%	49%
2021	2138	2.5%	38%

## QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

To describe how attitudes have changed, the report makes use of descriptive statistics, including frequencies and crosstabulations. The key comparison of interest is between 2018 and 2021 in this regard. Differences between waves are tested using multi-variate regressions, which report whether significant differences are present between 2018 and 2021 within the data. To understand whether attitudes within different groups have changed, a multivariate regression analysis interacting year and group status is conducted to test for a significant change between 2018 and 2021. To test for differences between groups in 2021, the same regression is carried out with the 2021 data alone. The regression controls for the following variables:

- ▶ Age group (18-34, 35-54, 55+);
- ▶ Sex (Male or Female);
- ▶ Settlement type (Capital, other urban, rural);
- ▶ Ethnic or religious minority status (Minority or not);
- ▶ Wealth (A simple additive index of durable goods owned by the respondent's household, a common proxy for household wealth);
- ▶ Educational background (Tertiary education or not);
- ▶ Parental background (At least one parent has tertiary education or not);
- ▶ Employment status (working or not);
- ▶ Presence of children in the household (children present or not);
- ▶ Internal displacement status (IDP or not).

The analysis below only presents statistically significant differences for the above tests ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

The project made use of focus groups and key informant interviews to understand a number of issues in qualitative rather than quantitative terms. The qualitative data collection included 8 focus groups and 16 key informant interviews. The guides used in

the study included a wide range of issues, but tended to focus on the same issues as described in the previous section focused on quantitative data collection. The qualitative data collection efforts are described in the table below.

Figure 2: Qualitative data collection characteristics

Nº	Data collection type	Target group
1	Focus group	Ethnic Georgians Regions Men
2	Focus group	Ethnic Georgians Regions Women
3	Focus group	Ethnic Azerbaijani Men
4	Focus group	Ethnic Azerbaijani Women
5	Focus group	Ethnic Armenians Men
6	Focus group	Ethnic Armenians Women
7	Focus group	Ethnic Georgians Tbilisi Men
8	Focus group	Ethnic Georgians Tbilisi Women
1	In Depth Interview	Georgian Muslim 1
2	In Depth Interview	Georgian Muslim 2
3	In Depth Interview	Person with disabilities 1
4	In Depth Interview	Person with disabilities 2
5	In Depth Interview	LGBT person 1
6	In Depth Interview	LGBT person 2
7	In Depth Interview	Immigrant 1
8	In Depth Interview	Immigrant 2
9	In Depth Interview	Kurd/Yazidi
10	In Depth Interview	Jehovah witness
11	In Depth Interview	Catholic
12	In Depth Interview	Ministry of Internal Affairs
13	In Depth Interview	Public Defender's Office
14	In Depth Interview	Judge
15	In Depth Interview	Prosecutor 1
16	In Depth Interview	Prosecutor 2

All interviews and focus groups were transcribed after being conducted, and then analysed with the goal of understanding the research questions in qualitative terms.

# FINDINGS

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The data collected within this study suggest that there were a wide range of changes in attitudes towards hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination in Georgia. This section describes these changes, with subsections focused on the following issues: appreciation and awareness of diversity in Georgian society; appreciation and awareness of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups; appreciation and awareness of the occurrence of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Georgian society and who it affects; awareness of Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech; appreciation and awareness of existing redress mechanisms and their effectiveness; and appreciation of different actors' work on the issues. The text reports on statistically significant changes between groups and between the 2018 and 2021 waves of the survey. The reader can assume that if not reported, no other statistically significant change was identified between the different groups noted in the methodology section.<sup>5</sup>

## CHANGES IN ATTITUDES

### DIVERSITY

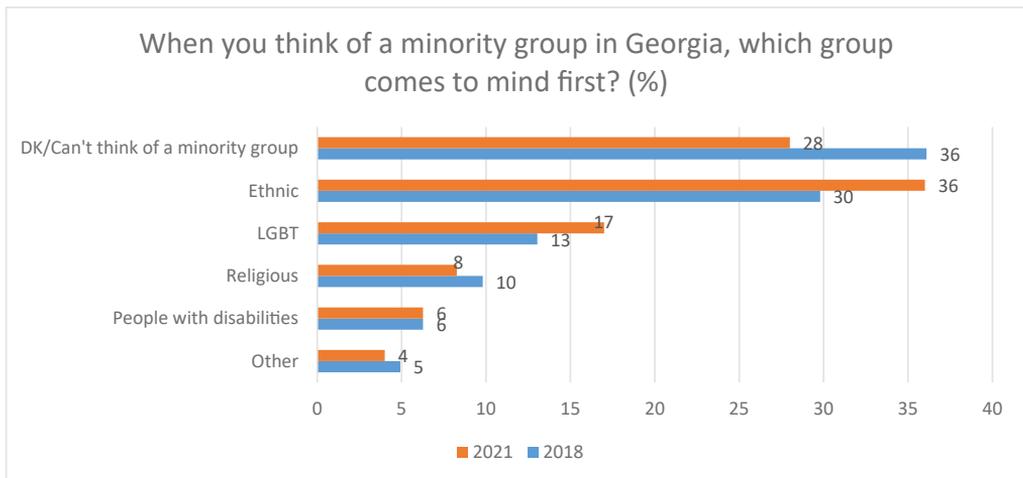
Georgia is a highly diverse country, with numerous ethnic groups, religions, languages, and even regional identities and dialects. To understand attitudes towards diversity and how they have changed, the survey asked respondents about which minority comes to mind first when they think of minorities, their attitudes towards diversity, and why they hold these attitudes.

With regard to which minority group comes to mind first, the data suggest a number of important changes between 2018 and 2021. In 2018 the most common response to this question was don't know or cannot think of a minority group, named by 36 percent of respondents. In contrast, 28 percent of respondents reported the same in 2021, a change of 8 percentage points. Instead of not being able to name a minority, the data indicate that people were more likely to name ethnic minorities. This data largely coincides with the focus group data, which found that Georgians mostly talk about ethnic and religious minorities and try to avoid talking about other minority groups such as LGBT people and people with disabilities. In a similar vein, minority groups in focus groups tended to name similar minority groups (e.g. ethnic minorities would name other ethnic minorities).

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5 These include, age groups, sexes, settlement types, minority statuses, wealth, educational backgrounds, parental backgrounds, employment statuses, and the presence of children in the respondent's household

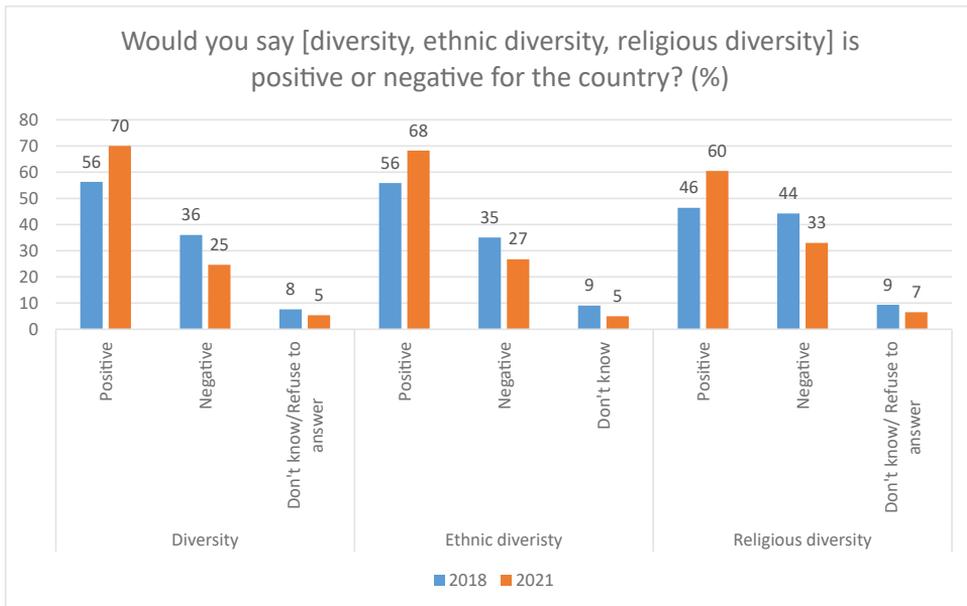
Figure 3: Which minority group comes to mind first?



The results of regressions testing for awareness looking at changes between the waves of survey between different groups suggests no significant changes between groups between waves of the survey. The results of a regression on the 2021 data suggest a number of significant differences between groups. Older people (55+) are six points less aware than people 35-54 and eight points less aware than people 18-34. Ethnic and religious minorities are nine points more capable of being able to name a minority group, controlling for other factors. People with higher education and vocational education are eight and fourteen points more likely to be able to name a minority group than those with secondary education, controlling for other factors. Internally displaced people are eight points more likely to be able to name a minority group than those who are not IDPs, controlling for other factors. Again, however, it is important to note that these changes do not suggest significant increases or decreases among these groups between waves of survey.

Attitudes towards diversity have become more positive during the project period. The survey asked respondents whether they had positive or negative attitudes towards diversity in general, ethnic diversity, and religious diversity. Positive Attitudes towards diversity in general increased from 56 percent to 70 percent during the project period, a 14 percentage point increase. For ethnic diversity, the data show a 12 point increase in positive attitudes from, 56 percent to 68 percent. For religious diversity, the data show an increase of 14 percentage points from 46 percent in 2018 to 60 percent in 2021.

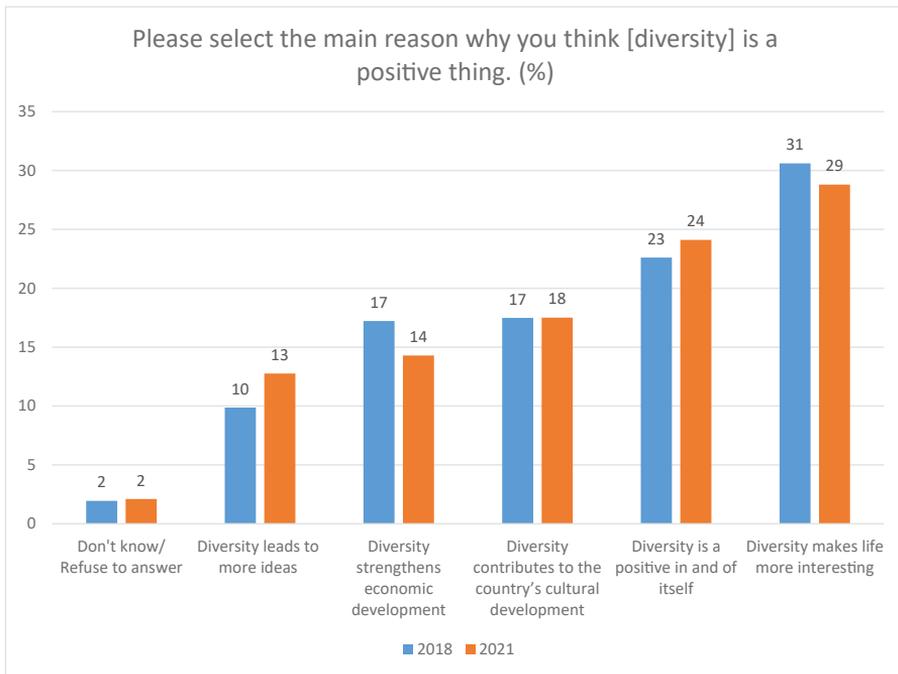
Figure 4: Attitudes towards diversity



When attitudes towards diversity are put into a regression analysis looking at whether specific groups' attitudes changed between waves, the analysis suggests that there were no significant changes between waves within groups. An analysis of attitudes in 2021 though suggests that there are significant differences between groups in society. Younger people (18-34) are eight percentage points more likely to have positive attitudes towards diversity than people aged 55+. People 35-54 do not have significantly different attitudes than those either group, with their attitudes falling between the older and younger age groups. Ethnic and religious minorities are 29 percentage points more likely to hold positive views than ethnic Georgian, who are predominantly Orthodox Christians, about diversity. People with secondary education or less are 12 points less likely to hold positive views about diversity than people with higher education and seven points less likely to hold positive views than people with vocational education.

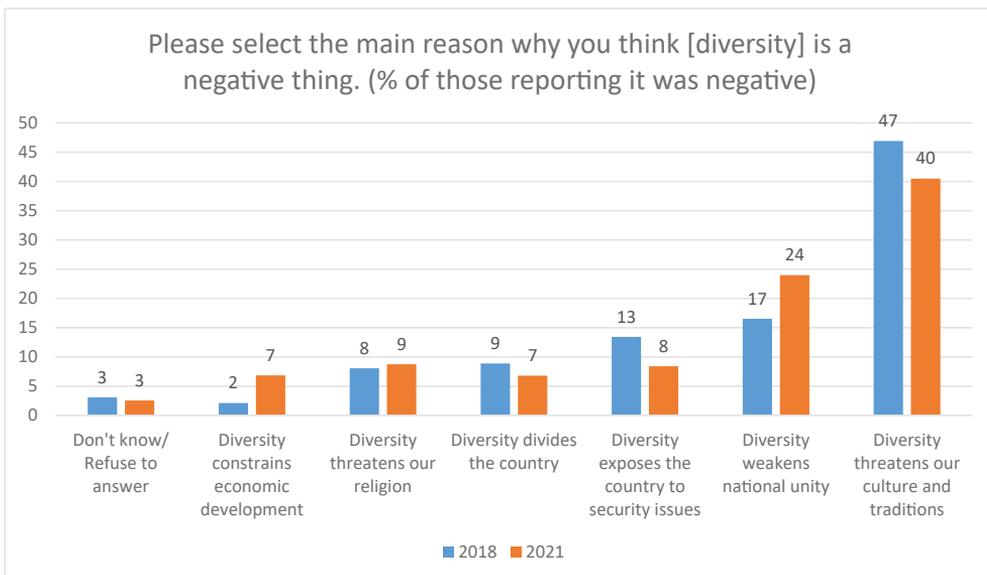
Respondents were asked why they had positive or negative views of diversity. The results suggest that the main reason why was that diversity makes life more interesting. This finding is consistent between 2018 and 2021, with slight variation in response options. As with 2018, in 2021, the second most common response was that diversity is a positive characteristic in and of itself. Diversity's contribution to the country's cultural and economic development were the next most common responses as in 2018. The views of focus group participants were quite similar to the data presented in the chart below. Institutional actors interviewed within the study tended to share these opinions. For instance, the interviewee felt that diversity leads to freedom of choice, greater empathy and tolerance, while also cautioning that it can lead to tensions or conflict in society. A similar view was expressed by a prosecutor, with regard to the positive aspects of diversity.

Figure 5: Reasons for reporting diversity is positive



With regard to reasons for not having a positive attitude towards diversity, the data again indicate a similar picture to 2018 in 2021. The most common reason people named for thinking that diversity was not positive was that diversity threatens culture and traditions. This was followed by the response that diversity weakens national unity.

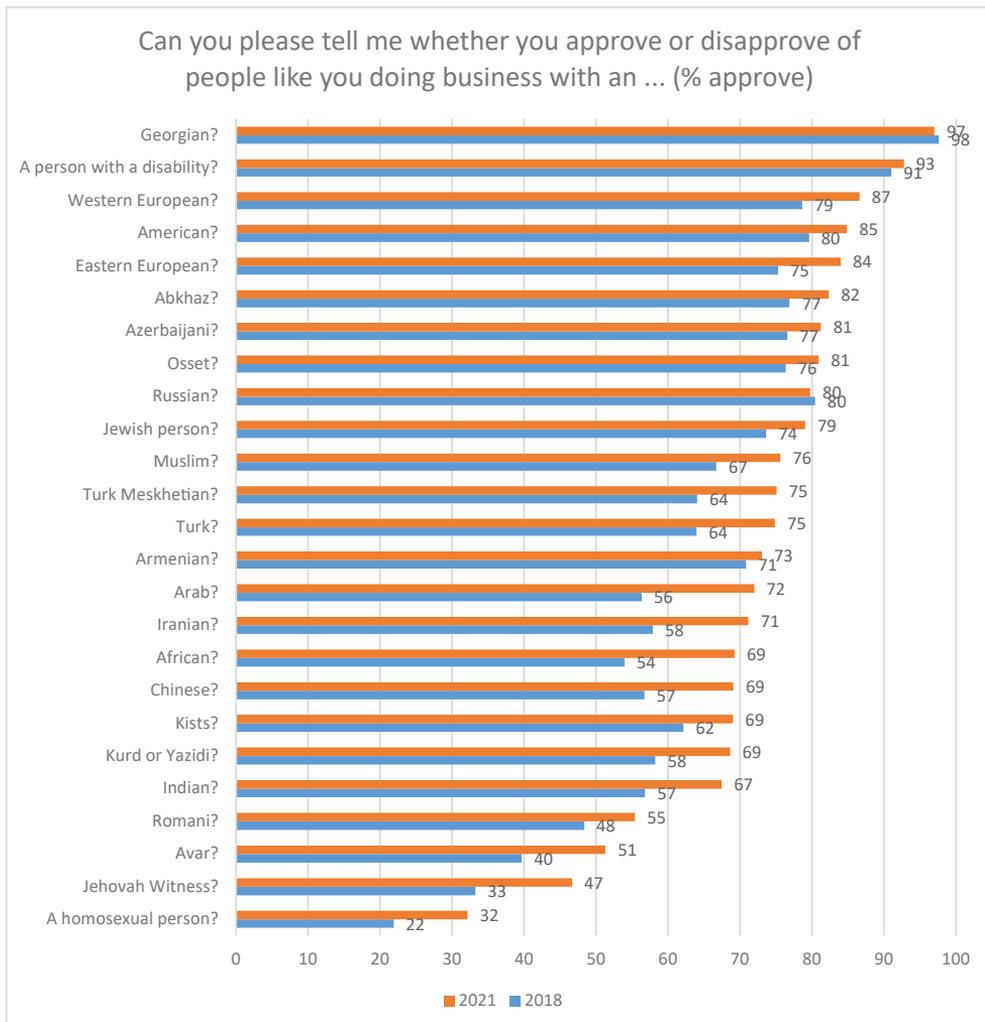
Figure 6: Reasons for thinking diversity is negative



## ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPECIFIC MINORITY GROUPS

The survey also measured attitudes towards specific minority groups, through asking whether or not an individual would approve of someone like them doing business with a specific group. Overall, the data suggest a positive trend towards acceptance at this level. Specifically, the data suggest that there was an increase in tolerance on this indicator of 16 points for Arab people, 15 points for African people, and 13 points for Jehovah's Witnesses and Iranians. There was also increases of 12 points for Chinese people and Avars, 11 points for Meskhetian Turks, Turks, and Indian, and of 10 points for Yazidis/Kurds and homosexual persons. Muslims and Easter Europeans had increases of 9 percentage points, while Western Europeans had an 8 percentage point increase in approval. Romani and Kists also had 7 point increases in approval. Abkhaz, Jewish people, and Americans were all five points more approved of than in 2018. The data do not show a significant change for any other groups, either in terms of more or less approval.

Figure 7: Approval of people like them doing business with different groups



The patterns of approval overall shown in the quantitative data were quite similar to what appeared in the qualitative data. For instance, people expressed relatively positive attitudes towards minority groups that have longer recognised histories in the country such as Jewish and Muslim persons, while having negative views of groups that have relatively shorter histories in Georgia such as Jehovah's Witnesses. This sentiment is depicted in this quote, from a respondent in Tbilisi: "Georgians have always been tolerant towards other traditional religions and Georgian people will always have positive attitudes towards them, but those who are acting differently and impose their views violently [the respondent is speaking about Jehovah's Witnesses], Georgians' attitudes won't be positive and they won't have good relations with them" (Male, 66, Tbilisi). Despite this, focus group participants tended to think that attitudes are changing positively towards religious minorities generally. Notably, a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs felt that attitudes towards LGBT people were changing as well. This respondent felt that through protest LGBT people have changed the public's attitudes and ways of thinking for the better. Notably, this view coincided with the view provided by a homosexual person in a qualitative interview.

To explore the overall pattern in tolerance of inter-ethnic interaction, the above questions were made into a simple additive index, which varied from 0 to 25, with 0 meaning that a person accepted someone like them doing business with none of the above groups, while 25 means they accepted doing business with all of the above groups. The mean for 2021 was 18, while the mean for 2018 was 16. These differences are significant, suggesting an average change of 2 points on average.

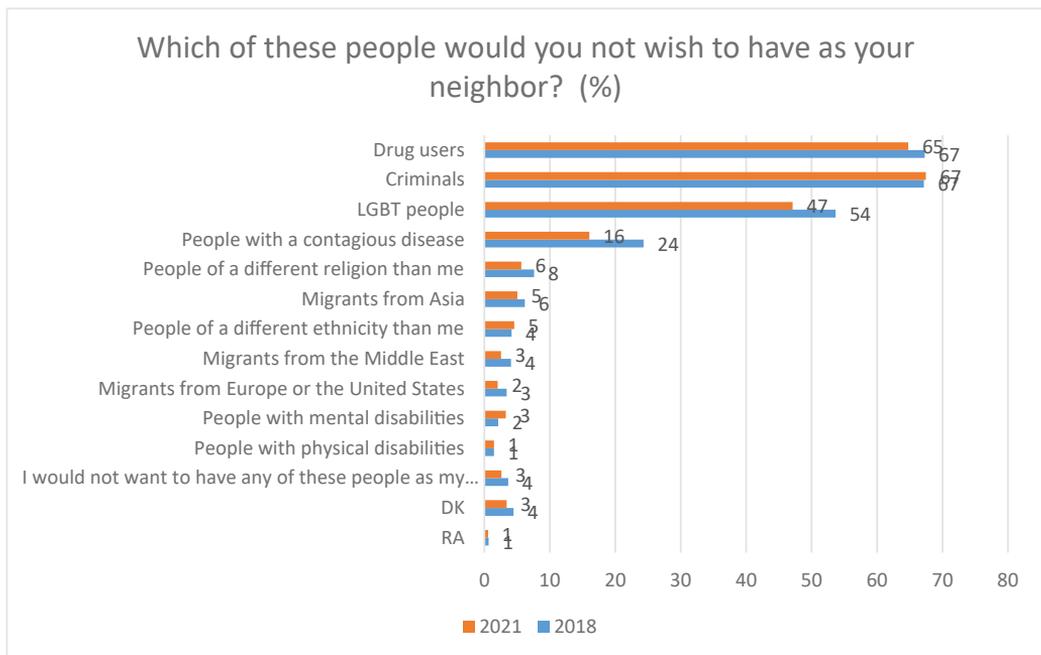
A regression analysis looking at whether attitudes changed for different groups between 2018 and 2021 suggests that people became significantly more positive about doing business with other groups in Tbilisi and rural areas, while attitudes did not change in urban areas outside the capital. In Tbilisi people responded positively to doing business with 3.7 more of the 25 groups asked about in 2021 than 2018, controlling for other factors. In rural areas, people answered positively to 2.7 more groups than in 2021, on average, controlling for other factors. The data also suggest that people living in poorer households became significantly more willing to do business with the different groups asked about, while there was little change in attitudes among the best off households. While in 2018, people in the poorest households were willing to do business with 16.3 groups on average, controlling for other factors, they were willing to do business with 21.0 groups on average in the current wave of the survey. In contrast, people in the richest households reported willingness to do business with 0.75 more groups on average in 2021, a statistically insignificant difference. The data suggest that there were no other statistically significant changes between groups between 2018 and 2021.

Aside from exploring changes between waves, an analysis was conducted to look at whether different groups had significantly different scores on the tolerance index in 2021. The data indicate that younger people (18-34) report willingness to do business with 1.6 more groups on average, controlling for other factors than older people (55+). The middle

age range group is not significantly different from either of these groups. Men report being willing to do business with 1.5 more groups, on average, controlling for other factors. Minority groups report being willing to do business with 1.4 groups less on average, controlling for other factors. The data suggest people with higher education are willing to do business with 1.4 more groups on average than people with secondary education or a lower level. People with vocational education have attitudes that are not statistically significantly different than either of the other educational groups, with attitudes falling somewhere in between. People whose parents both had higher education, suggesting a higher social economic background, are more willing to do business with 1.4 more groups on average, controlling for other factors. Internally displaced people report being willing to do business with 1.3 groups more, on average, controlling for other factors.

In addition to the above question about attitudes towards different groups, respondents were asked which groups they would not like to have as a neighbour. The data indicate that the share of the public which reported they would not want to live next to an LGBT person above and beyond all of the above groups decreased by seven percentage points. The share reporting that they would not like to live next someone with a contagious disease also decreased by six percentage points. None of the other responses of the public changed significantly between 2018 and 2021.

Figure 8: Groups respondents would not want as neighbors



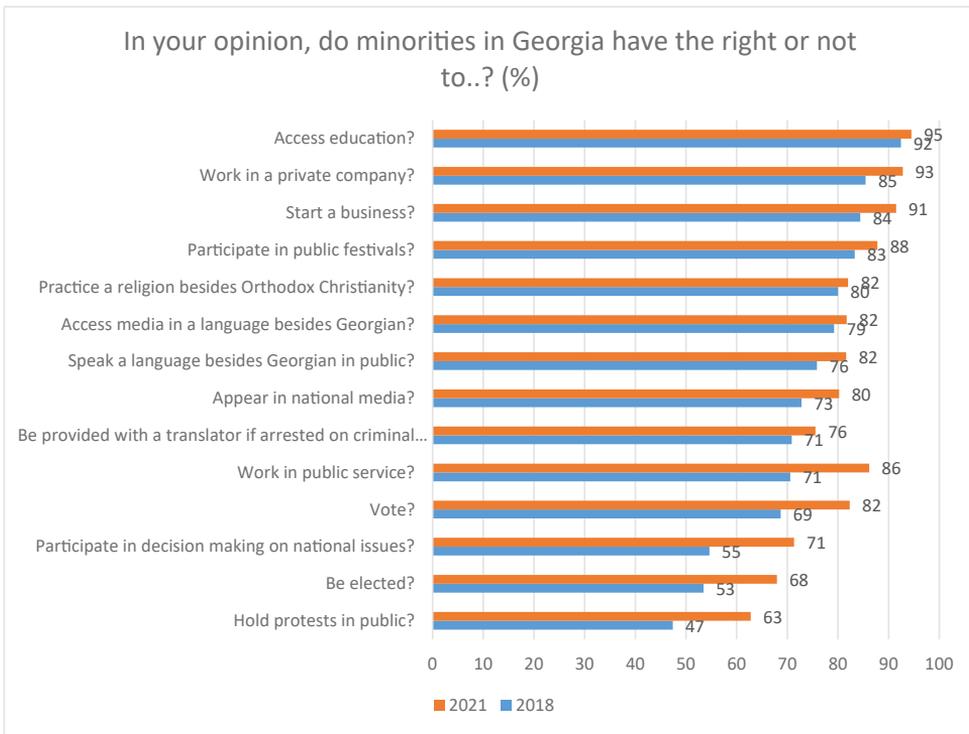
## THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

To understand the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups, the study asked about the following set of rights:

- ▶ Access to print and broadcast media in minority languages and representation of national minorities in the media;
- ▶ Right to manifest one's religion;
- ▶ Equal access to education and intercultural content;
- ▶ Institutional framework for the participation of national minorities in decision-making;
- ▶ Representation of national minorities in elected bodies and public administration;
- ▶ Participation in social and economic life;
- ▶ Right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language;
- ▶ Right to be informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and cause of any accusation against him or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter;
- ▶ Right to vote;
- ▶ Right to be elected;
- ▶ Freedom of assembly.

The data tend to paint a positive picture regarding changes in the appreciation and awareness of minority rights. In 2018, 55 percent of the public acknowledged the right to participate in decision making on national issues, compared to 71 percent in 2021, a 17 percentage point increase. In 2018, 71 percent of the public recognised minorities' right to work in public service, compared with 86 percent in 2021, a 15 percentage point change. There was a similar increase in people recognizing minority's rights to protest of 15 percentage points, moving from 47 percent to 63 percent of the public. There was also a 15 percentage point increase in the share of the public recognizing the right of minorities to be elected (from 53 percent to 68 percent) and a 13 percentage point change in the public's awareness of minorities' right to vote. There were smaller but still significant increases of between six and seven percentage points on the right to speak a language in public besides Georgian, start a business, working in a private company, and appear in national media. In contrast, there were no significant differences between 2021 and 2018 on the remaining rights.

Figure 9: Recognition of minority rights

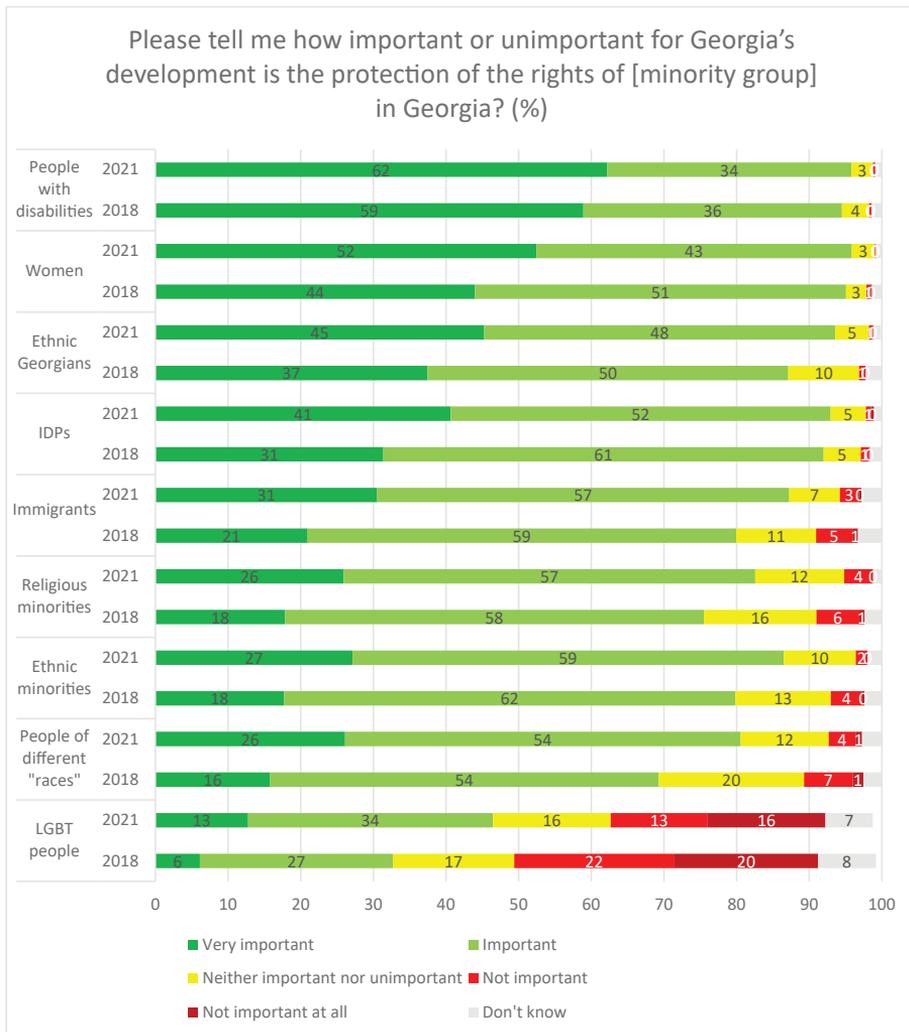


Overall, 37 percent of the public recognises all of the above rights, an increase of 12 percentage points compared with data from 2018 (25 percent). The share which recognises none of the above rights did not move significantly (2018:3 percent; 2021: 1 percent). In 2018, the average number of rights recognised was 10.2, while in 2021 the average was 11.4, a change of 1.2 rights. This difference is statistically significant, suggesting that more people recognise more minority rights.

A regression analysis of the number of rights which people recognise of the 11 rights asked about suggests that there were no significant changes among different population groups between 2018 and 2021, suggesting the increase in recognition of rights is across the population. The data do show that in 2021 there are a number of significant differences between different groups in the population, however. Specifically, the data indicate that men recognised 0.5 rights more than women, all else equal. People in Tbilisi recognised 1 right less than people in rural areas. In other urban areas the number of rights recognised was between these two figures and not significantly different from either. Minorities recognised 0.9 rights more on average, than non-minorities. People in relatively wealthy households recognised 1.5 more rights than people in the poorest households. People with higher education recognised 0.75 rights more than people with secondary or less education, controlling for other factors. The data for people with vocational education lay in between, and are not significantly different from either of the other educational attainment levels. People with one parent with higher education recognised 0.9 rights more.

The study also explored people’s perceptions of how important it is to protect the rights of different groups. As in 2018, the data suggest that people are most positive about the protection of the rights of people with disabilities and least positive about the protection of the rights of LGBT people in 2021. At the same time, the data suggest a number of shifts in attitudes. People became more likely to think that the protection of the rights of LGBT people (by 14 percentage points), people of different “races”<sup>6</sup> (by 11 percentage points), ethnic minorities (by seven percentage points), religious minorities (by seven percentage points), immigrants (by seven percentage points), and ethnic Georgians (by six percentage points) was important.

Figure 10: Importance of protecting different minority groups’ rights



6 Since all human beings belong to the same species, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe rejects, as does the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), theories based on the existence of different “races”. However, in this document, the term “race” is used in order to ensure that those persons who are generally and erroneously perceived as belonging to another race are not excluded from the protection provided for by the legislation and the implementation of anti-racism policies.

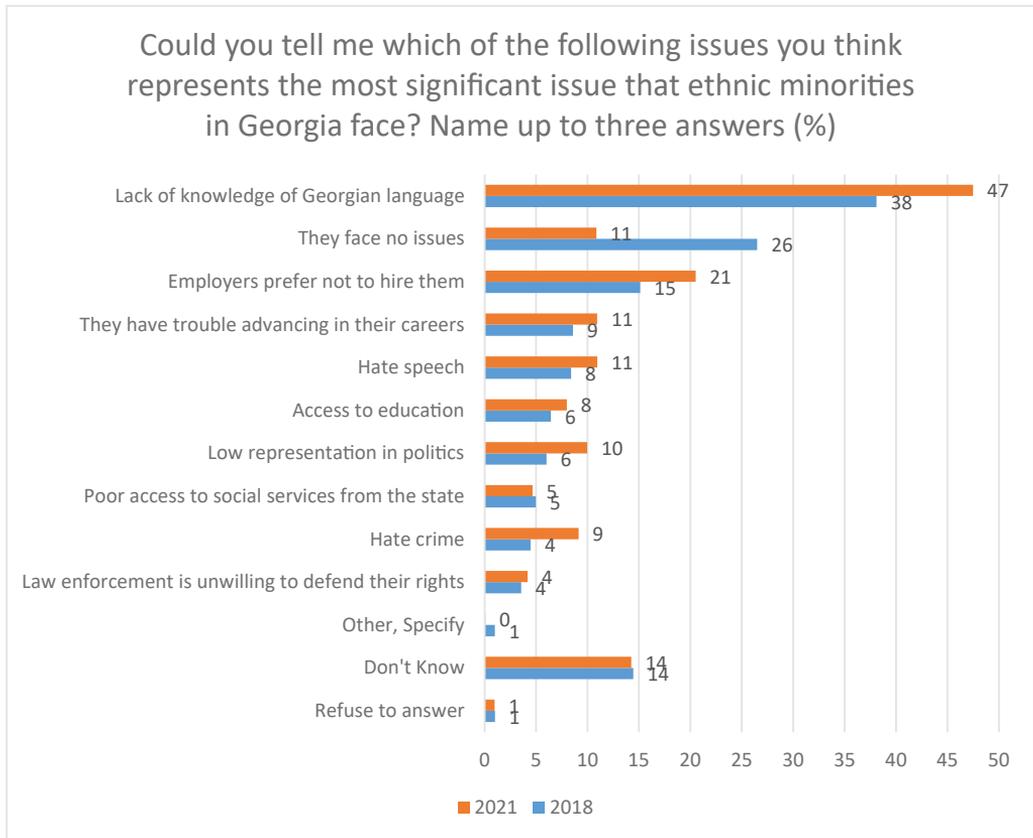
A regression analysis was carried out to look at whether demographic characteristics predict how unimportant or important people considered the rights of the groups asked about. To do so, an index was created. The index had a maximum score of 36 and a minimum score of 0. A score of 0 suggests that the respondent said that it was not important at all to protect the rights of any group. A score of 36 suggests that the respondent said that it was very important to protect the rights of every group asked about. The average score increased by 1.6 points between 2018 and 2021. The data suggest that people with one parent that completed university had higher scores of 3 points in 2021 compared with 2018. Otherwise, there were no significant changes in groups between 2018 and 2021 on this value. In 2021, the data suggest that younger people (18-34) had higher scores on the index than older people (55+) by 1.3 points. People in rural areas had relatively low scores on this index than people in Tbilisi (by 1.2 points). People in other urban areas had scores closer to people in Tbilisi, but these were not significantly different from either group. Minorities had scores 1.6 points higher on the scale than non-minorities. People with secondary education or less scored 0.9 points lower on this index than people with tertiary education. People with vocational education had scores in between these groups, and the scores were not statistically distinguishable between groups.

## OCCURRENCE OF DISCRIMINATION, HATE CRIME AND HATE SPEECH IN GEORGIAN SOCIETY

Different groups in Georgian society face different barriers to engagement in society, from discrimination towards religious minorities to language barriers which ethnic minorities face. Data from this survey suggest that people are increasingly aware of the problems many minorities face, though gaps remain in perceived problems that minority groups perceive and non-minority groups.

In 2018 and 2021, the main issue which people perceived ethnic minorities to be facing was a lack of knowledge of the Georgian language. The share of the public reporting that minorities faced no problems declined by 16 percentage points between 2018 and 2021. Most of the shift stems from an increase in recognition of challenges with languages. Otherwise, there was little change in attitudes on this issue when comparing 2018 and 2021.

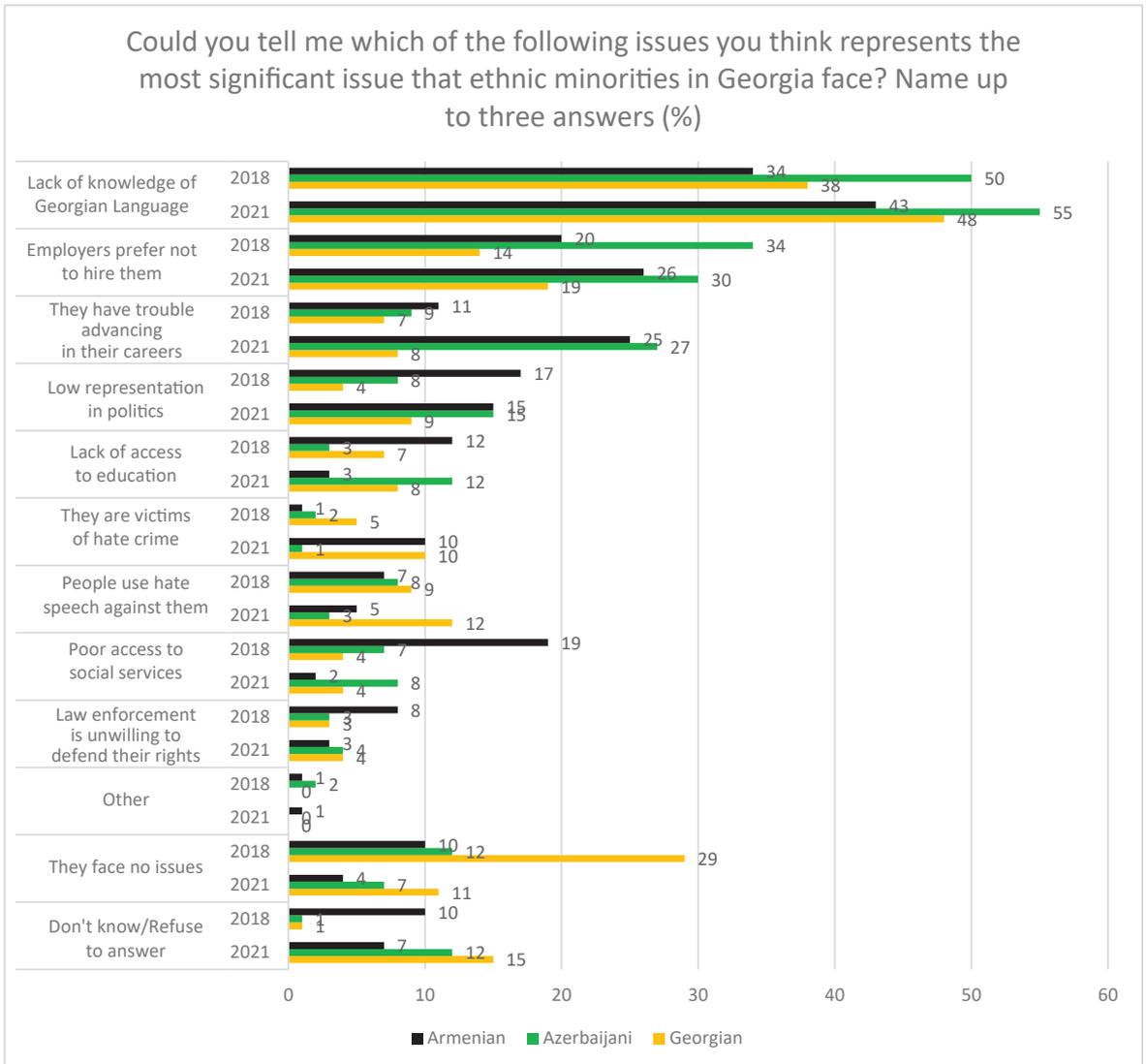
Figure 11: Problems which ethnic minorities face



When the data is broken down for ethnic Georgians and ethnic minorities, a number of patterns stand out. First, ethnic Georgians continue to be less likely to report being aware of the problems which ethnic minorities face in Georgia. However, ethnic Georgians have also become 18 percentage points more likely to recognise at least some issue which ethnic minorities face. Otherwise, ethnic minority groups became increasingly likely to respond that they face challenges in advancing their careers. Other apparent changes in the data are relatively small given the available sample size of ethnic minorities.

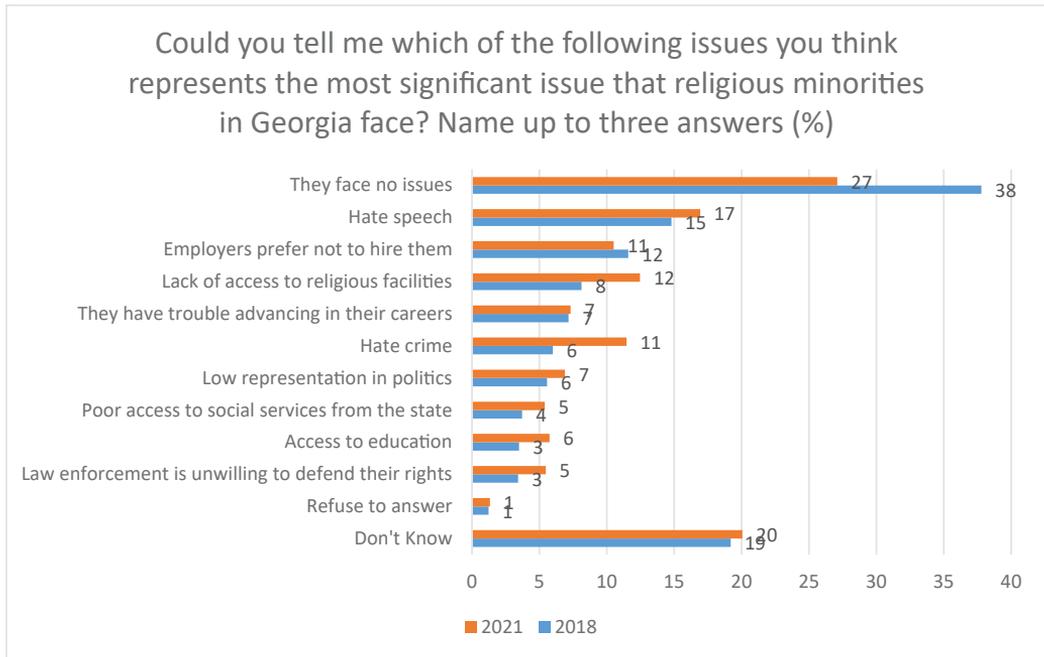
In the qualitative component of the research, participants highlighted the language issue. Ethnic Azerbaijanis and Armenians in particular highlighted that more young people in particular were learning Georgian in recent years. In turn, this is resulting in better relations between Azerbaijanis and Georgians in the view of participants. At the same time, they felt that Georgians are often aggressive towards Azerbaijanis that do not speak Georgian. One respondent stated, “If you speak in Georgians [Georgians] will like you and speak with you, but if you can’t speak with them in their language, they will call you Tatars” (Female, 56, ethnic Azerbaijani).

Figure 12: Problems ethnic minorities face by ethnicity



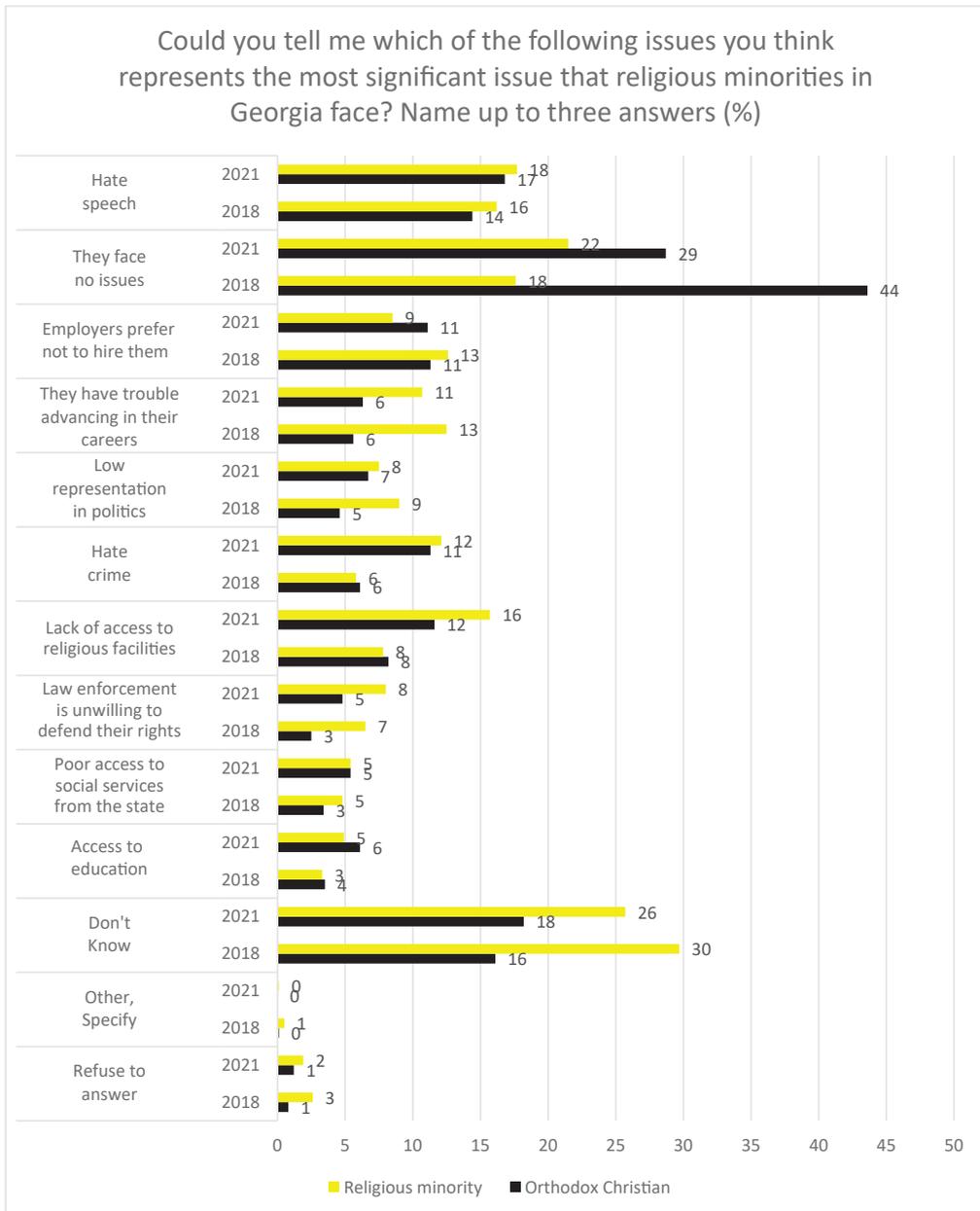
The data paint a similar picture with regard to religious minorities. In 2021, a plurality of people reported they face no issues, as in 2018. At the same time, the share of the population reporting that religious minorities face no issues declined by 11 percentage points. Hate crime also became a more common reported issue religious minorities face in 2021 compared with 2018, increasing by five percentage points from 6 percent to 11 percent.

Figure 13: Problems religious minorities face



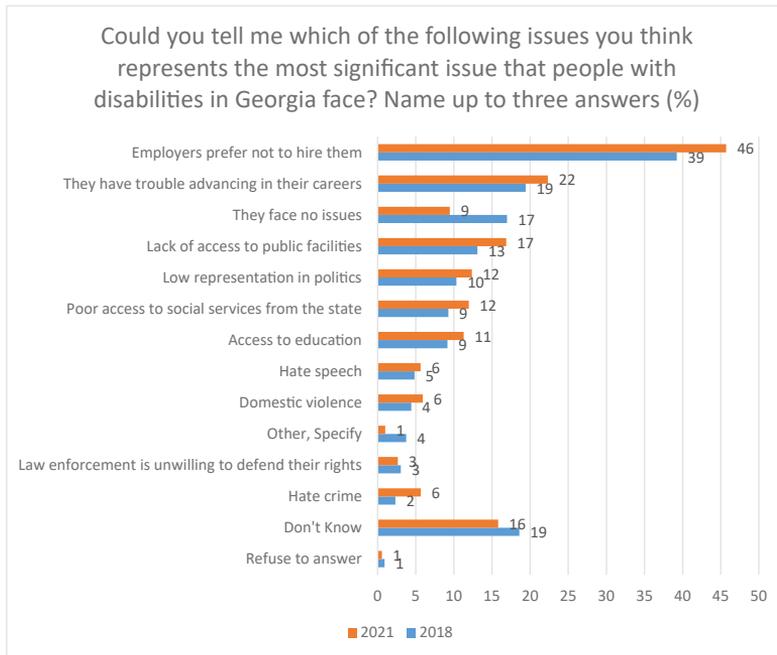
As in 2018, a gap remains between religious and non-religious minorities in terms of perceived challenges. The data suggest that Orthodox Christians named no issue or reported they didn't know what issue religious minorities faced less often in 2021 (47 percent) compared with in 2018 (60 percent). Aside from this change, there are no clear changes between 2018 and 2021.

Figure 14: Problems religious minorities face by religion



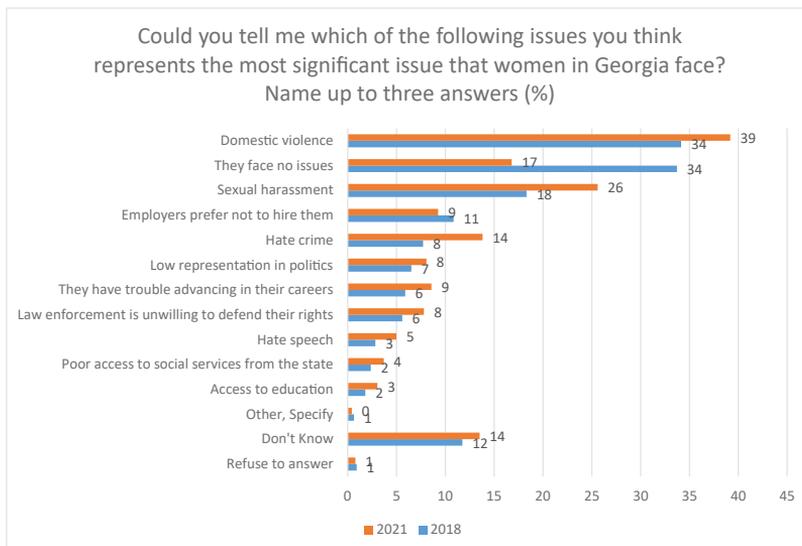
The data on issues which people with disabilities face suggests that the main issues the public perceives remain economic. In 2021 and 2018, the main issues which people perceived were employers preferring not to hire people with disabilities and having trouble in advancing careers. The share reporting this rose by seven percentage points in 2021, from 39 percent in 2018 to 46 percent in 2021. There was a corresponding decline in the share reporting they face no issues from 17 percent to 9 percent.

Figure 15: Problems people with disabilities face



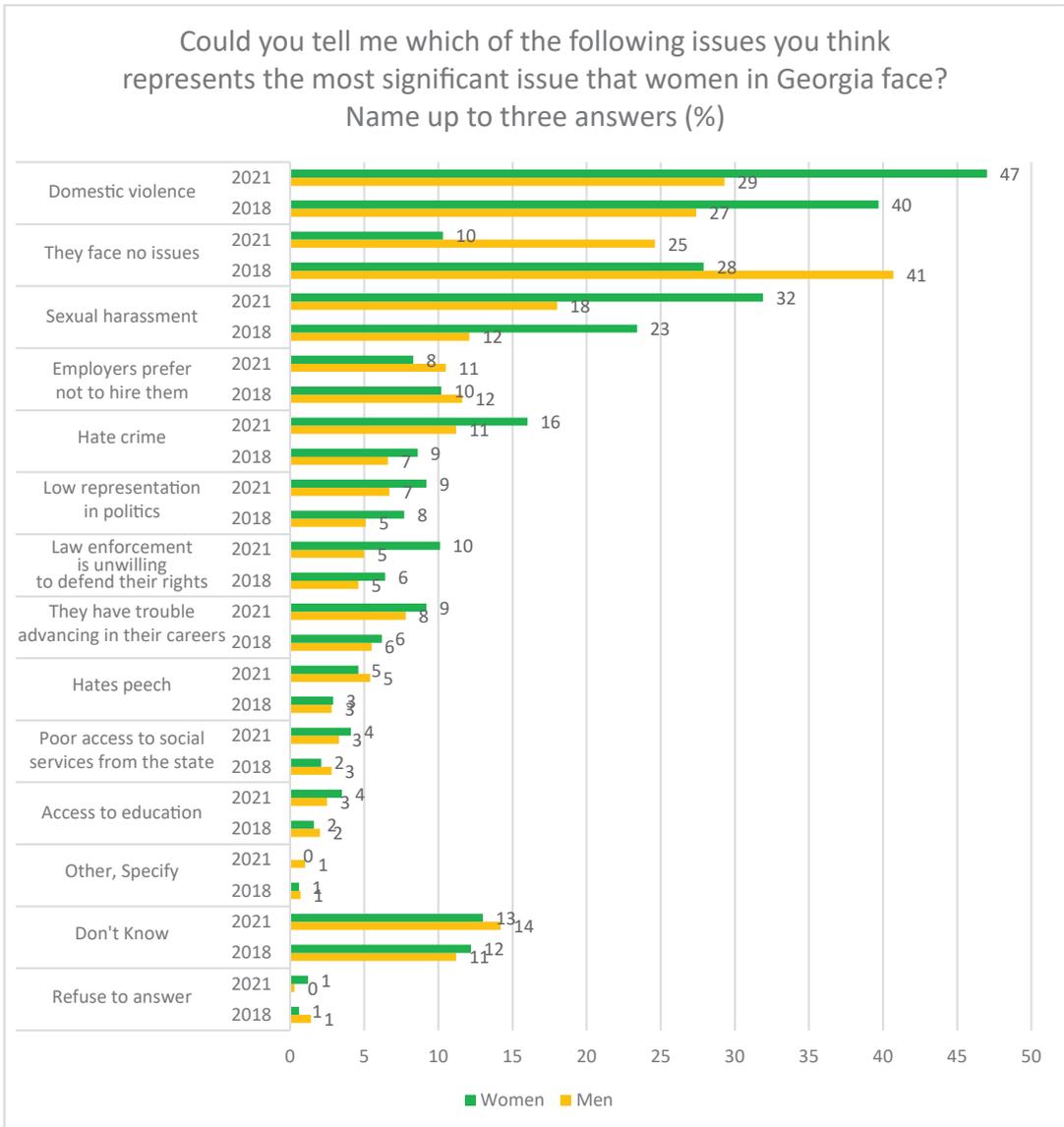
As relating to issues which women in Georgia face, the data indicate that there was a decline in the share of people reporting that women face no issues in 2021 compared with 2018 from 34 percent to 17 percent, a 17 percentage point change. The data indicate that 39 percent of people recognised domestic violence as an issue in 2021, compared with 34 percent in 2018. The share reporting sexual harassment also increased from 18 percent to 26 percent, an eight percentage point change.

Figure 16: Problems women face



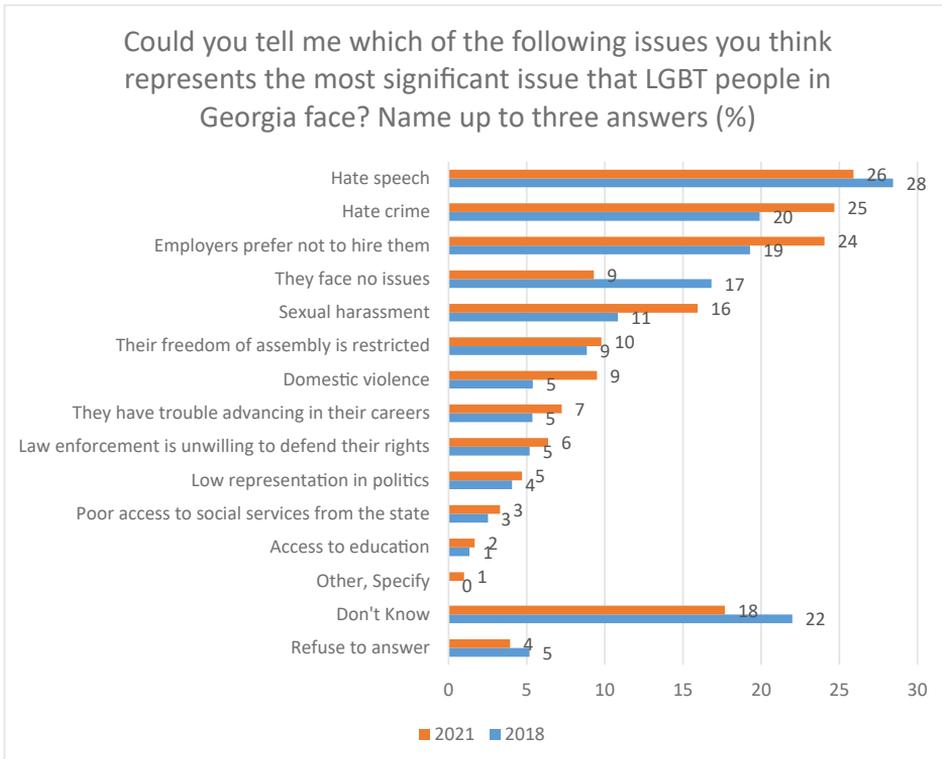
When the data is broken down by sex, the data indicate that there was similar shifts in attitudes between men and women. For instance, 13 percent fewer men reported that women faced no issues and 15 percent fewer women reported that women faced no issues in 2021 compared with 2018.

Figure 17: Problems women face by sex



The study also sought views on the largest challenges that LGBT people face. The data suggest relatively minor changes in attitudes, with the exception of a decrease in the share reporting they face no issues of eight percentage points.

Figure 18: Problems LGBT people face



The above data show a gap in awareness between majority and minority groups with regard to problems that minority groups face. However, the data also almost uniformly show a rising recognition that minority groups do in fact face problems associated with their group belonging.

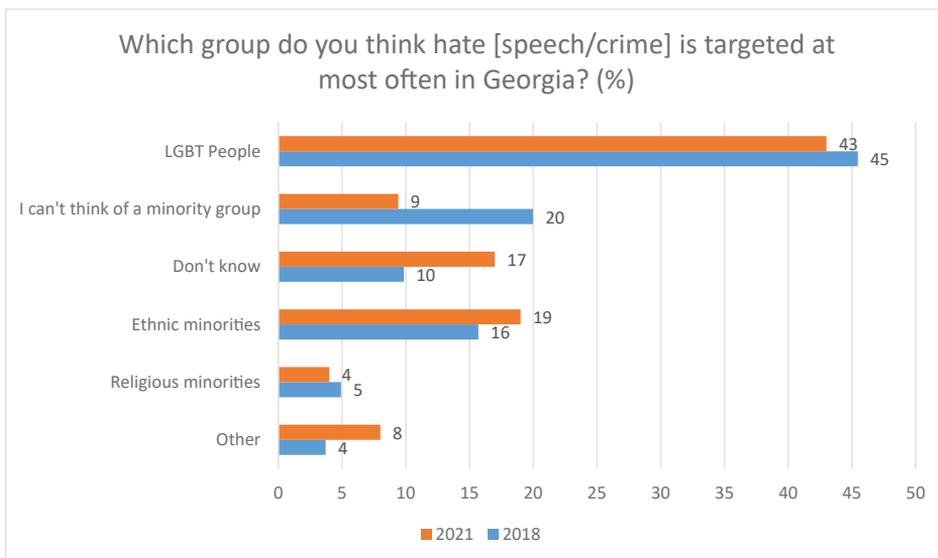
### PERCEPTIONS OF HATE SPEECH

Hate speech has increasingly become a topic discussed in the Georgian discourse, particularly as relates to political polarization. While much of this likely would not qualify as hate speech, the Georgian public is at a minimum increasingly discussing it. In this regard, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is a rise in the share of the public which reports that hate speech is a problem in Georgia. While in 2018, 45 percent of the public reported that hate speech is an important problem in the country, 56 percent did in 2021, a rise of 11 percentage points.

This increase in belief that hate speech is a problem is significantly more common among women than men, with a 16 percentage point rise in reporting that hate speech is an important problem in Georgia compared to seven percentage points for men. There were no other significant changes between groups between 2018 and 2021. In 2021, young people were 11 percentage points more likely to think hate speech was an important issues than people over the age of 55 and seven percentage points more likely to report the same compared with people aged 34-54. Women were nine percentage points more likely than men to report that hate speech was an important issue. People in Tbilisi were 11 percentage points more likely to think hate speech was an important issue than people in other urban areas and 13 percentage points more likely than people in rural areas to report it is an important issue. People whose parents have higher education are approximately ten percentage points more likely to report that hate speech is an important issue, controlling for other factors.

The study also examined who people thought were most likely to be victims of hate speech. The data indicates that responses are relatively stable between 2021 and 2018, with LGBT people facing the most hate speech in the public’s view. More people did respond don’t know in the current wave of the survey, however, this appears to stem in a decline of people reporting they cannot think of a minority group.

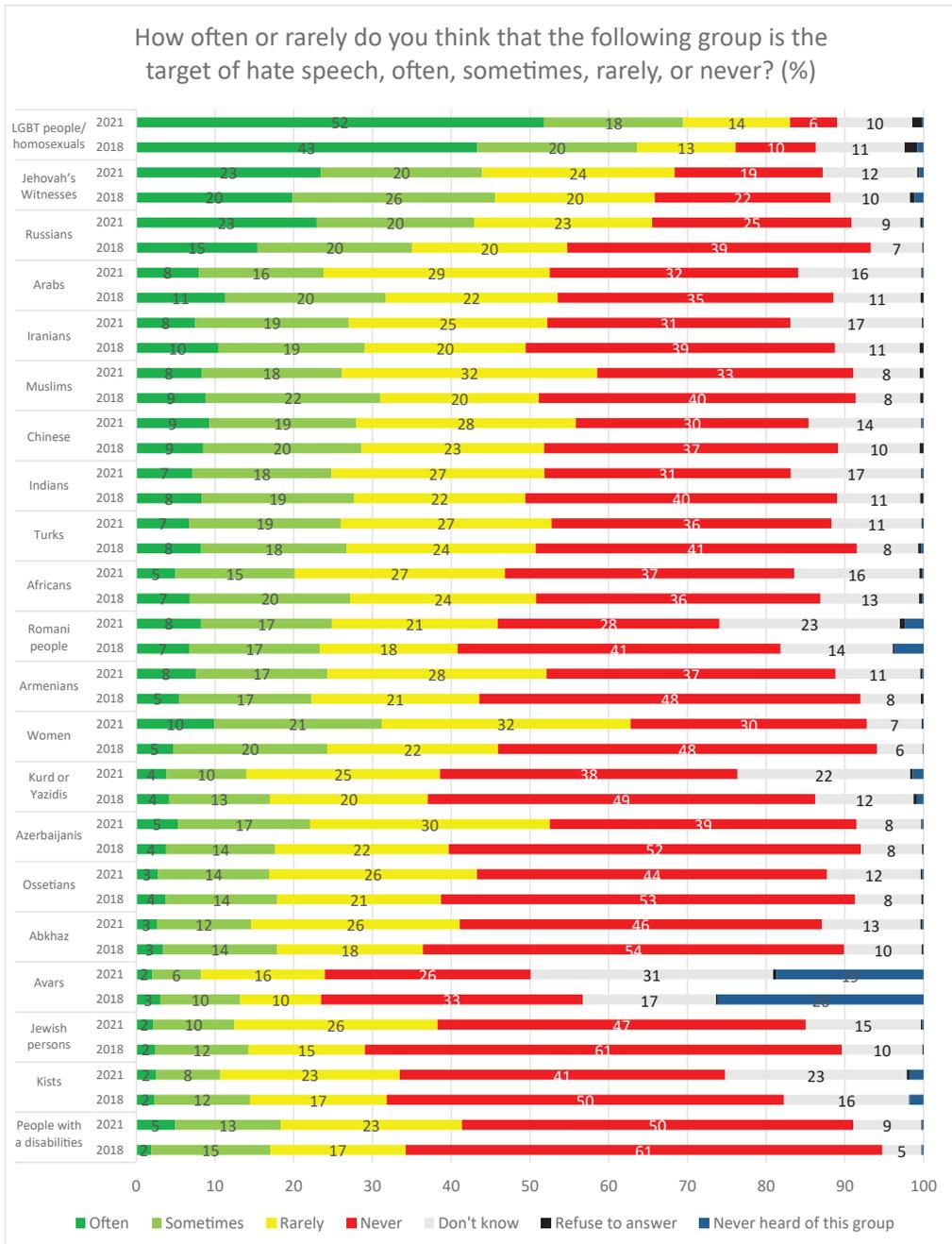
Figure 19: Groups most targeted by hate speech



The survey also asked about a range of individual groups and the frequency with which people think they experience hate speech. The data indicate that people continue to believe that LGBT people are most often the targets of hate speech. The main change in attitudes on this question between 2021 and 2018 is with the share reporting never for a variety of groups. The share reporting never declined by 10 percentage points or more for people with disabilities, Kists, Jewish people, Azerbaijanis, Kurds/Yazidis, Women,

Armenians, Romani people, Russians. Instead of responses in the never category, people shifted to a variety of other categories with no clear overall trend. Nonetheless, this data suggests that more people are more aware of the occurrence of experiences of hate speech among a wide range of groups than in the past.

Figure 20: Frequency of targeting of hate speech



In contrast to the above findings, wherein a large share of respondents feel that many groups never face hate speech (despite the decline in the share reporting this since 2018), many minority respondents in a wide range of groups in qualitative research reported experiencing hate speech. In this regard, the starkest contrast is likely with regard to people with disabilities. While a qualitative interview respondent who has a disability stated they face hate speech daily, the above data suggests that the public is largely unaware of this issue. This issue was not limited to people with disabilities, however. Rather ethnic minorities, LGBT people, and religious minorities in a range of denominations reported facing hate speech. An official from the Ministry of Interior highlighted that transgender people in particular face high levels of hate speech, relative to lesbians, gays, and bisexuals, even though these groups also all face high levels of hate speech.

Another issue that emerged in the qualitative data as relates to hate speech was its political use. A PDO representative highlighted how politicians and state officials use hate speech against women and other minority groups. Similarly, a number of focus group participants highlighted this issue, noting that the politicians use it and it is then broadcast by the media.

All of the above data taken together suggests that there is an increasing level of recognition of the problem of hate speech in Georgia, and increasing awareness that different groups can face hate speech. At the same time, the qualitative data indicate that the general public is not as aware of the degree of hate speech which many minority groups report facing.

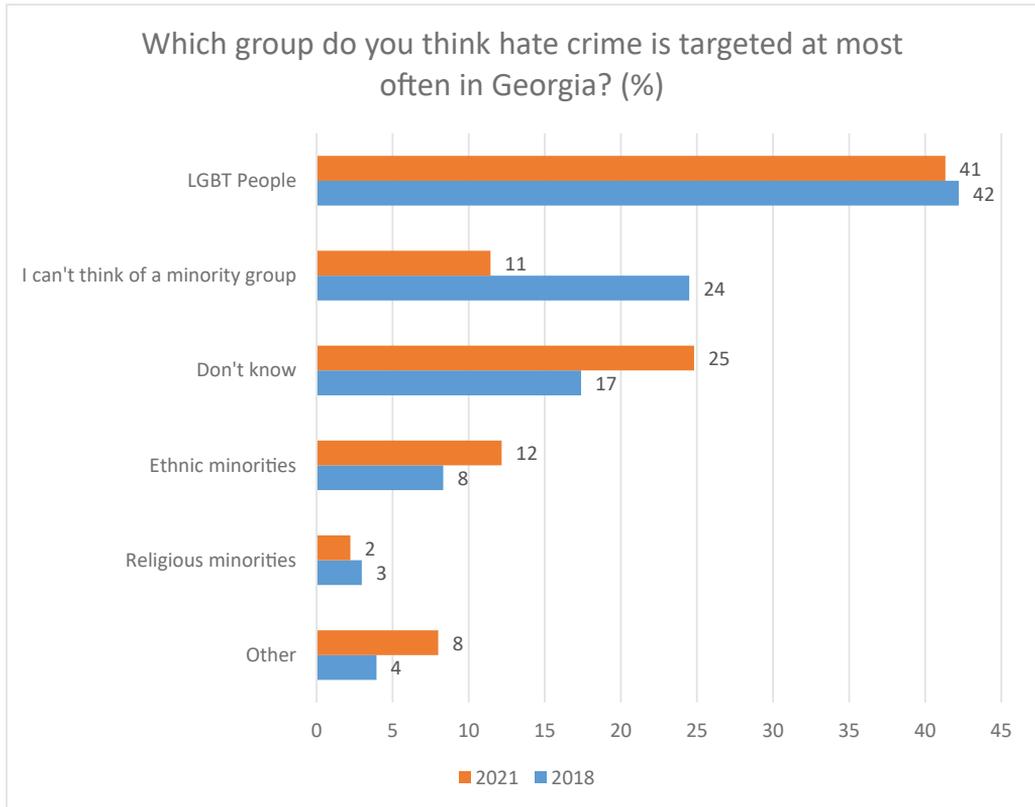
## PERCEPTIONS OF HATE CRIME

The study also asked people about perceptions of hate crime in Georgia and who was targeted most by it. The data indicate that as with hate speech there is an increase in the share of the public that believes that hate crime is an important problem. In 2018, 35 percent of the public thought that hate crime was an important issue, while in 2021, 48 percent did, an increase of 13 percentage points. The data do not show any significant changes between groups between 2018 and 2021. In 2021, the data suggest that younger people are nine percentage points more likely to report that hate crime is an important issue than people 35-54 and 15 percentage points more likely than people 55+. Women are 14 percentage points more likely to report that hate crime is a problem than men, controlling for other factors. People in Tbilisi are 14 percentage points more likely to report hate crime is a problem than people in other urban areas and rural areas.

The survey also asked the public who they thought was most likely to be the victim of hate crime. The data indicate again that people most often name LGBT people, as in 2018. Notably, the share reporting that they cannot think of a group declined from 24 percent in 2018 to 11 percent in 2021, a 13 percentage point change. However, there was also a

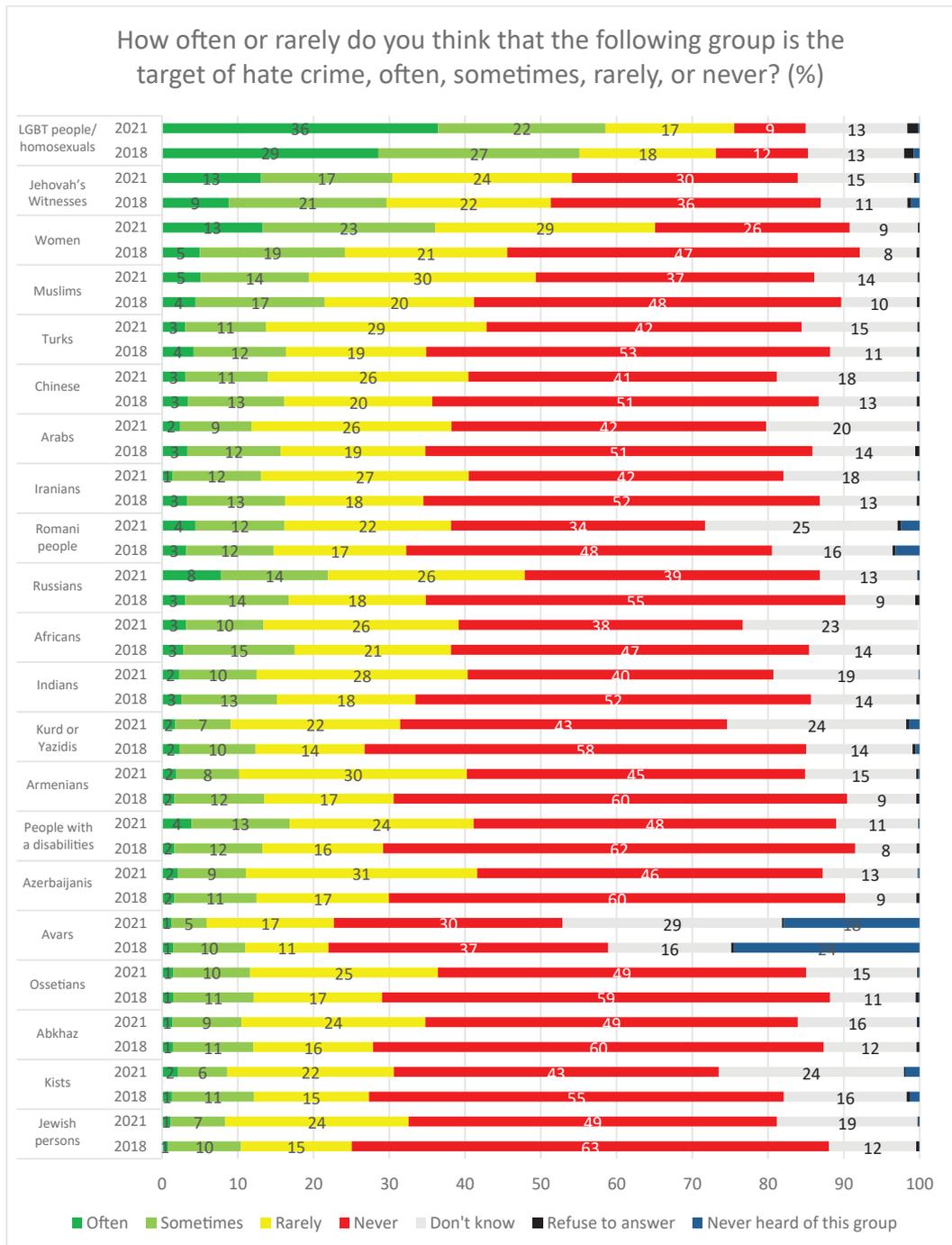
corresponding rise in the share reporting don't know of eight percentage points. Otherwise, responses to this question changed little between 2018 and 2021.

Figure 21: Groups most frequently targeted with hate crime in Georgia



The above data lines up with the picture provided by survey data that asked about each group individually. People were most likely to believe that LGBT people faced hate crime most often. This is in line with findings from the 2018 survey. Generally, the data changed little in this regard. The key exception is that many people moved from the never category to other categories.

Figure 22: How often are different groups the victims of hate crime



The qualitative data tended to reflect the above quantitative data. In this regard, most respondents felt that LGBT people were most likely to face hate crime. One exception

stands out in this regard. A representative of the PDO felt that religious minorities face the most hate crime. To an extent, this sentiment was demonstrated in the data. One of the participants in qualitative research fondly remembered being engaged in a hate crime against Jehovah's Witnesses. She stated, "There was 300-400 people coming to his/her place to pray or for discussion, and because of all this we all were irritated and closed the entrance and make them to quit all this and slowly it has stopped." (Female, 63, Tbilisi)

As with perceptions of hate speech, the public increasingly considers hate crime a problem and is less likely to report that hate crime never happens to a wide range of groups.

### **AWARENESS OF HIGH PROFILE INCIDENTS MOTIVATED BY ANIMUS TOWARDS MINORITIES**

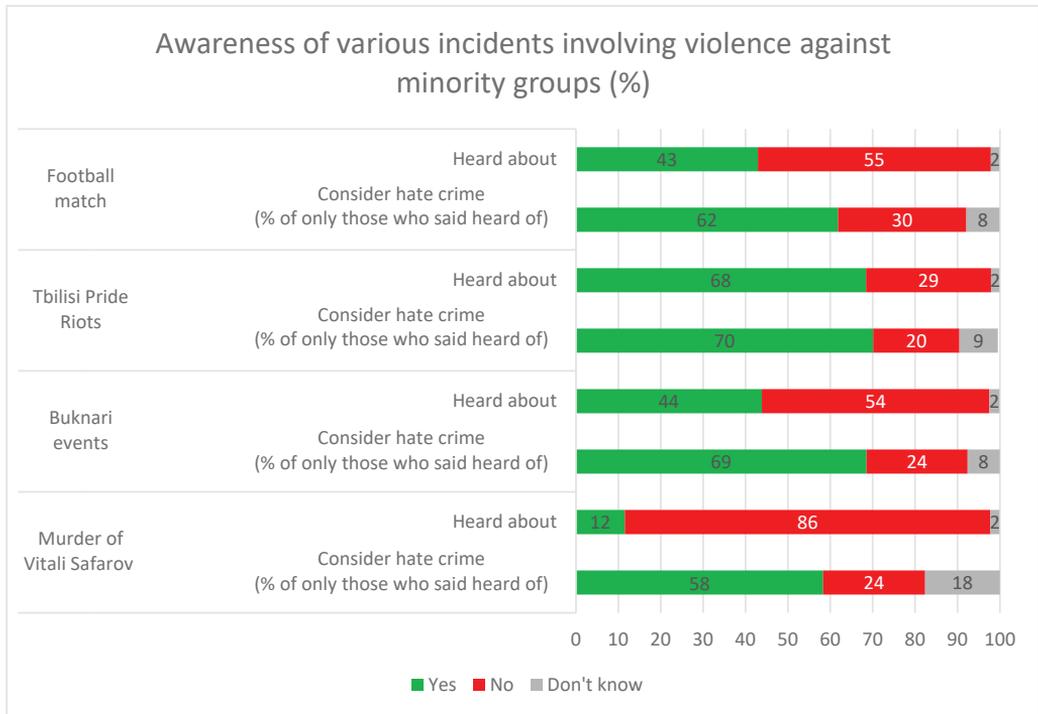
Georgia has witnessed a number of high profile incidents motivated by animus towards minorities in recent years. Several of the more high profile examples include the anti-LGBT riot in response to Tbilisi Pride Week's attempt to hold a March of Dignity and the murder of Vitali Safarov by neo-Nazi youth, a Jewish Yazidi human rights worker. The current survey looked at different animus motivated events than the 2018 survey. As a result, this section only provides the results of the 2021 survey.

On the 2021 survey respondents were asked about:

- ▶ The murder of Vitali Safarov;
- ▶ Clashes in Buknari over whether or not people would be allowed to have a mosque in a private home;
- ▶ When a group of people from Africa playing football were chased off the field;
- ▶ The riots that took place in response to Tbilisi Pride.

The data suggest that people were most aware of the 2021 riots which took place in response to Tbilisi Pride (69 percent). People were next most aware of the incidents in Buknari (44 percent) and the incident involving African people being assaulted while playing football (43 percent), followed by the murder of Vitali Safarov (12 percent). Respondents who were aware of the above events were also asked about whether they thought that the events were hate crimes. The data indicate that if people were aware of the incidents, they tended to also believe they were hate crimes.

Figure 23: Awareness of major events



The qualitative data resemble the quantitative data in many respects. In this regard, many participants had trouble remembering the occurrences of hate crime. Respondents did tend to remember crimes against LGBT people more than against other groups, however. For instance, an Arab-Israeli respondent brought up the case of a transgender person being murdered.

The data indicate that overall, people in Tbilisi were more aware of the events described above, controlling for other factors. Ethnic minorities were less aware of the above events. Wealthier people were slightly more aware of these events. People with higher education were also slightly more aware of the above events.

Given that many of the above events were relatively recent and the riots around Tbilisi Pride were extremely high profile, the above data can be taken to suggest that there is relatively low awareness of hate crime in Georgia.

## GEORGIAN LEGISLATION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION, HATE CRIME, AND HATE SPEECH

Georgia has a range of legislation related to discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. Among the most important pieces of legislation is the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination, which passed in 2014.<sup>7</sup> At present, 21 percent of the public is aware of this law compared with 23 percent in 2018 data. Notably, in qualitative data the MIA noted that this law is rarely used, which could potentially explain a lack of change in awareness. Among those that were aware of the law in 2021, 43 percent had a positive view and 11 percent had a negative view, while 38 percent had neutral views. This is comparable to 2018, when equal shares had a positive (38 percent), neutral (38 percent), and negative (14 percent) view of the law.

People who were aware of the law were also asked their views of why it was passed. People's views of why the law passed have changed little. In 2018 and 2021, 75 percent thought that the law was passed to help Georgia meet the requirements of the Association Agreement. As in 2018, people are as likely to believe that the law was passed to eliminate all forms of discrimination (2018: 67 percent, 2021: 64 percent).

People who are aware of the law appear to be moderately informed about it, as they were in 2018. Four questions were asked about what the law contained:

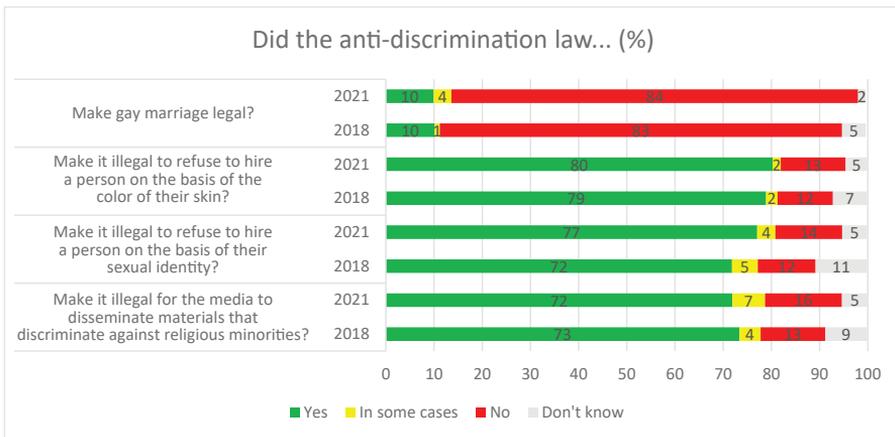
- ▶ According to the anti-discrimination law is same sex marriage legal or illegal? (It is not legal according to the anti-discrimination law)
- ▶ According to the anti-discrimination law is it legal or illegal to refuse to hire a person on the basis of the colour of their skin? (It is not legal according to the anti-discrimination law)
- ▶ According to the anti-discrimination law is it legal or illegal to refuse to hire a person on the basis of their sexual identity? (It is not legal according to the anti-discrimination law)
- ▶ According to the anti-discrimination law is it legal or illegal for the media to disseminate materials that discriminate against religious minorities? (It is not legal according to the anti-discrimination law)

The data for 2021 and 2018 are quite similar. In this regard, there are no substantial changes between 2018 and 2021 on these questions.

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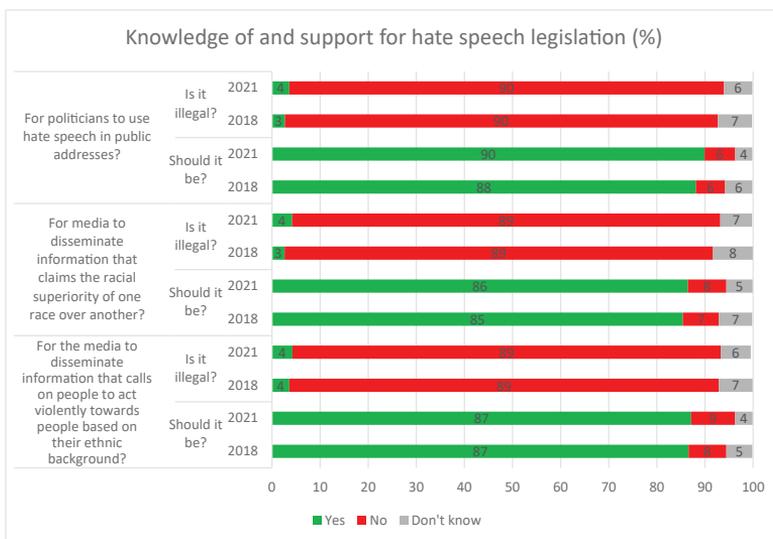
<sup>7</sup> Parliament of Georgia (2014). Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. Available at: <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2339687?publication=0>.

Figure 24: Knowledge of the anti-discrimination law



With regard to hate speech, respondents were asked whether a number of different activities were legal or not in Georgia as well as whether they thought they should be. The figures for 2018 and 2021 are almost identical, with no significant changes. As in 2018, people are moderately aware of the legislation on hate speech, while also tending to support it. In reality, legislation on hate speech explicitly prevents the media from incitement to violence towards people based on their ethnic background, and from disseminating material that claims the racial superiority of one group over another.<sup>8</sup> However, legislation only prohibits politicians from using hate speech in specific circumstances, suggesting a knowledge gap on this issue (among the general public).<sup>9</sup>

Figure 25: Knowledge of and support for hate speech legislation

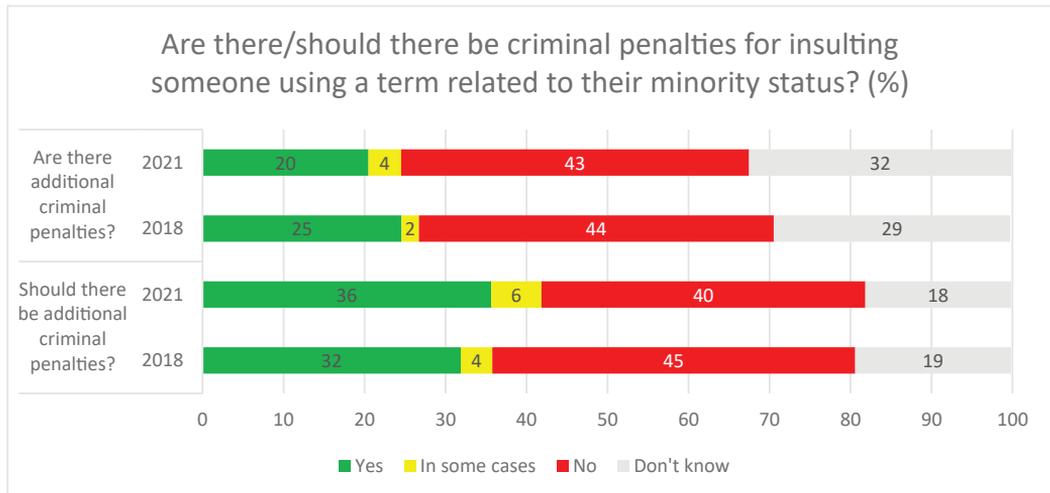


8 See *Law of Georgia on Broadcasting 2016*. Available at: <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/download/32866/39/en/pdf>

9 It is illegal under the Electoral Code of Georgia for political parties, candidates for electoral subject, electoral subjects, and their supporters to use speech that contains appeals for “religious or ethnic confrontation.”

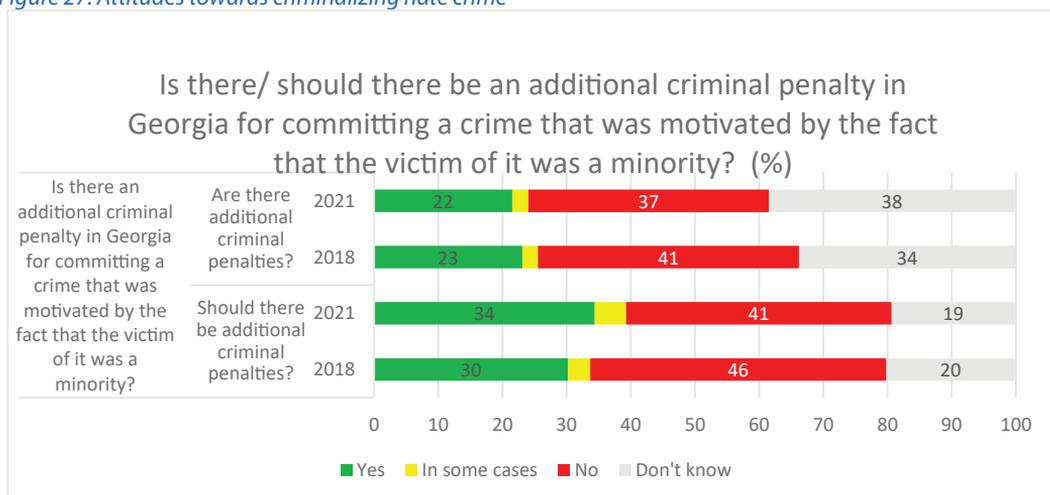
The survey also asked whether it should be illegal and whether it was illegal to insult someone based on their minority status. Overall, there were no changes in attitudes between 2018 and 2021 on this issue.

Figure 26: Attitudes towards criminalizing hate speech



The survey also asked about views on hate crime legislation. Overall, the data paint a similar picture on hate crime and hate speech in terms of attitudes and awareness. In 2018, 23 percent reported that there was an additional criminal penalty in Georgia for committing a crime that was motivated by the fact that the victim of it was a minority, while in 2021, 22 percent reported the same. Similarly, in 2018 30 percent reported that this should be illegal, while 34 percent thought the same in 2021. These changes are statistically insignificant.

Figure 27: Attitudes towards criminalizing hate crime



With regard to legislation the PDO noted that Georgian legislation is generally positive, but felt that hate speech is inadequately covered, noting there is no definition of hate speech in Georgian legislation. The MIA also noted this gap, and as a result, they cannot take action related to hate speech.

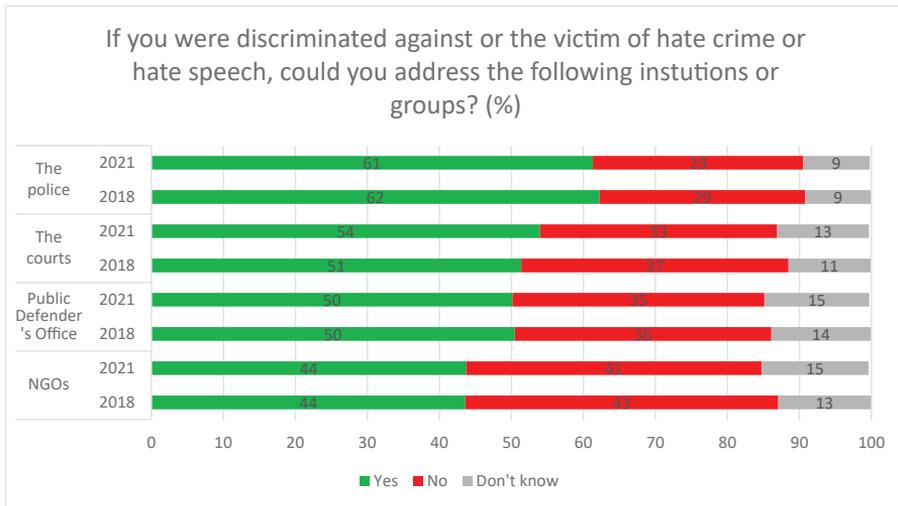
With regard to hate crime, the MIA noted a gap in legislation around committing crimes against people with disabilities. A representative of the Prosecutor's Office also noted that legislation is lacking around hate crime generally, resulting in few prosecutions. A respondent at the PDO noted that, "The Ministry of Internal Affairs had prepared legislative changes regarding [hate crime], but only a few working meetings took place. The changes were prepared with the support of the Council of Europe but didn't move forward".

## EXISTING REDRESS MECHANISMS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

There are a range of redress mechanisms in Georgia for victims of hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination. But how many people are willing to turn to those mechanisms and are people aware that they can turn to them in the first place? Data from the 2018 and 2021 surveys suggest that people remain only moderately informed about opportunities to address different redress mechanisms and moderately willing to make use of them if they are aware of them.

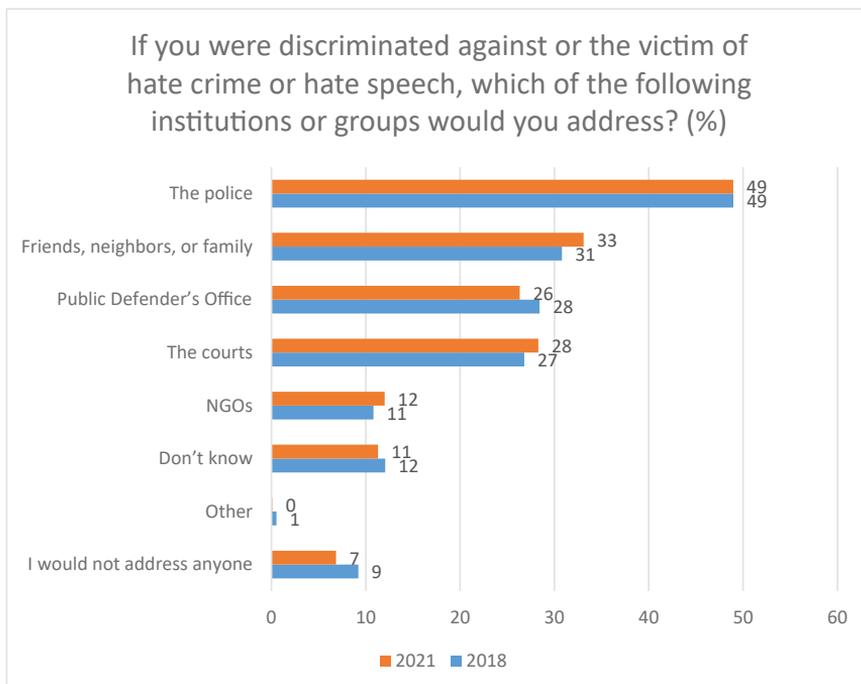
Respondents were asked whether they could address the Public Defender's Office, the courts, the police, and NGOs if they were discriminated against or the victims of hate crime or hate speech. The data indicate that in 2021, the police remained the most common institution which people are aware they can turn to. The data suggest that awareness remained relatively constant for all institutions between 2018 and 2021. Notably, even though the police are the group that most people report they know they could turn to, the qualitative data indicated that minorities often feel uncomfortable doing so. In this regard, they tended to report that whether a police officer effectively responded to their needs was often a matter of luck.

Figure 28: Groups people feel they can address if they were victims of hate crime or hate speech



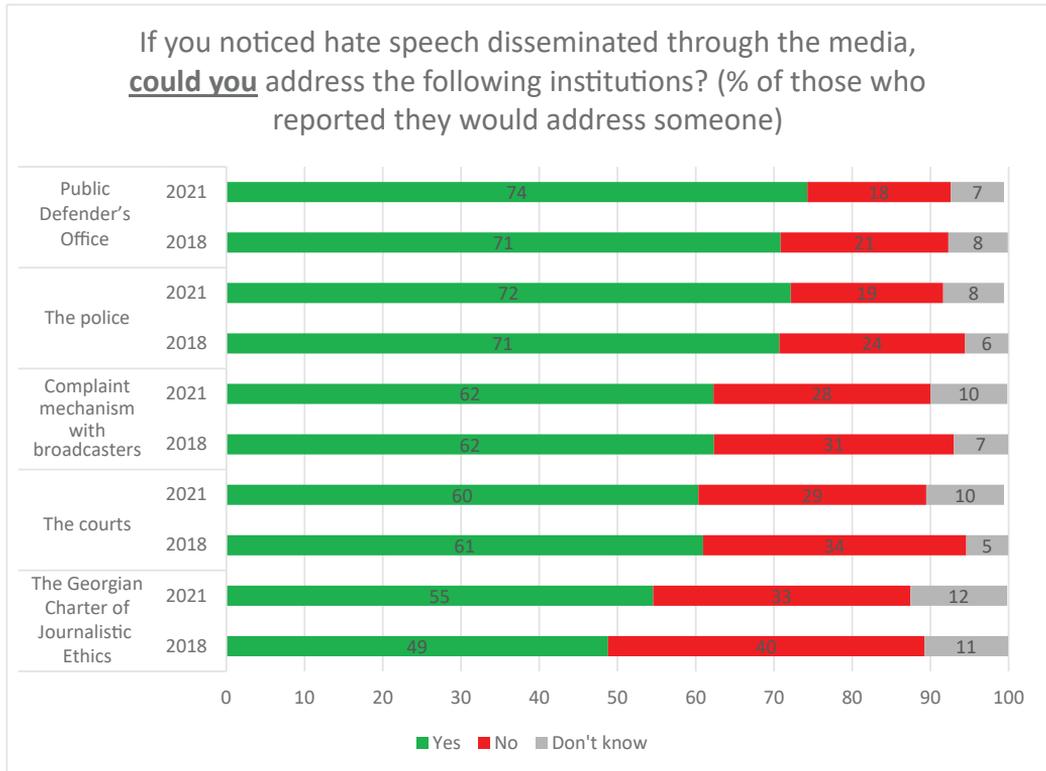
The data on who people would address is unchanged. The largest share of the public reported that they would address the police in 2021 as well as 2018 if they were the victim of hate crime, hate speech, or discrimination. Rather than formal institutions aside from the police, people were more likely to report that they would turn to family and friends in 2018 as well as in 2021.

Figure 29: Who people would turn to if they were victims of hate crime



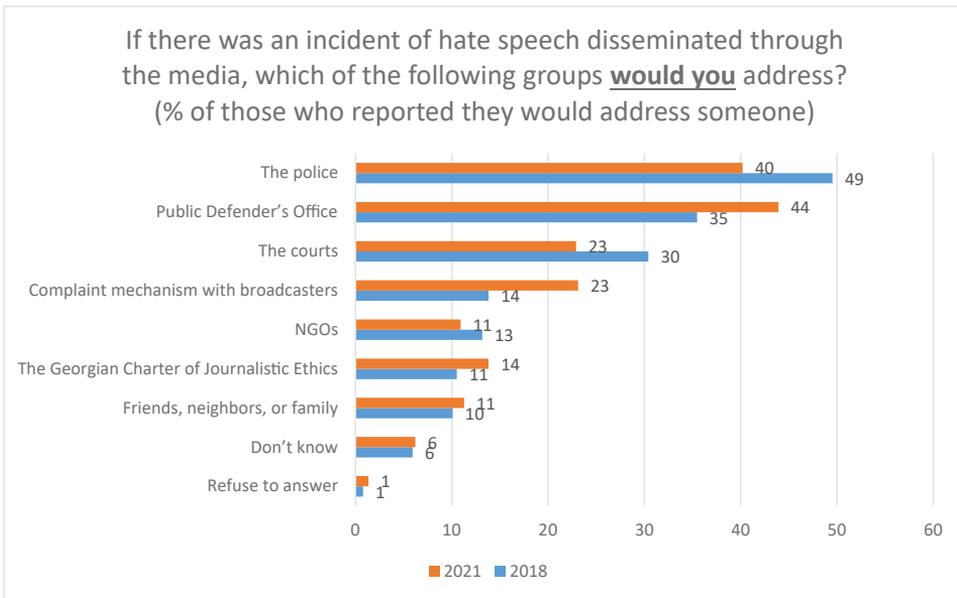
When asked whether they would report hate speech in the media, the data indicate that 21 percent would in 2021, a statistically insignificant difference compared with 2018 (20 percent). Among those that reported they would report the incident, 72 percent were aware they could report to the police, 74 percent to the PDO, 62 percent to the commercial broadcasters complaint mechanism, 60 percent to the courts, and 55 percent to the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics. These figures are in line with the 2018 data, suggesting no significant shifts in awareness.

Figure 30: Who people are aware they can turn to if they saw hate speech in the media



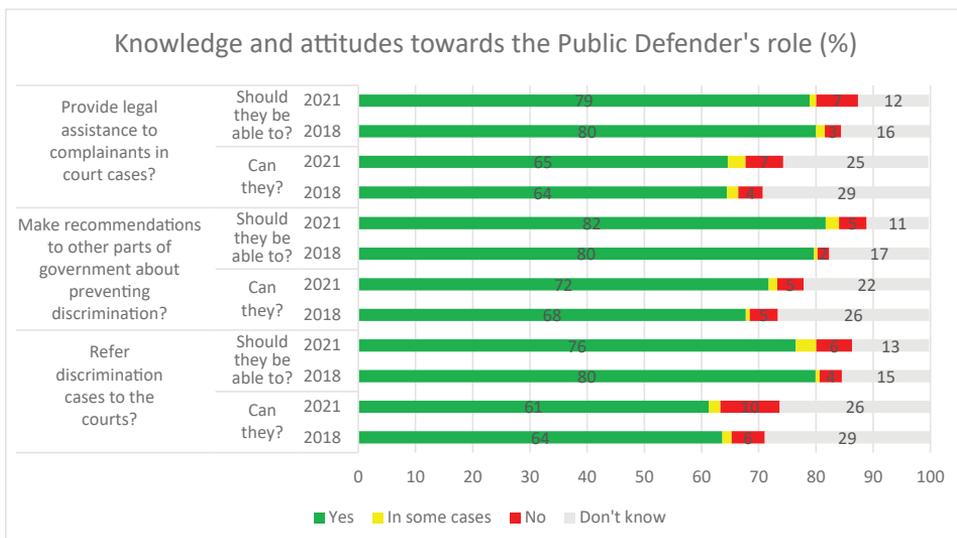
When it comes to who people would actually report an incident of hate speech in the media to, the data indicates that the police and Public Defender were the most commonly preferred institutions. Between 2021 and 2018, there was a decline in the share mentioning the police (by 10 percentage points), and a rise in the share mentioning the Public Defender's Office (by 9 percentage points) and the complaints mechanism of the broadcasters (by 9 percentage points).

Figure 31: Who people would turn to if they saw hate speech in the media



The survey further explored attitudes towards the Public Defender's Office given their key role in addressing hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination in Georgia. The data indicate that 57 percent of the public is aware of the PDO, which is statistically similar to the 2018 data (54 percent). Among those who reported they had heard of the PDO, a number of questions were asked about what the PDO's role was and whether people thought they should have that role. The data show a high degree of stability in attitudes with no significant changes in attitudes between 2018 and 2021.

Figure 32: Knowledge of and attitudes towards the PDO

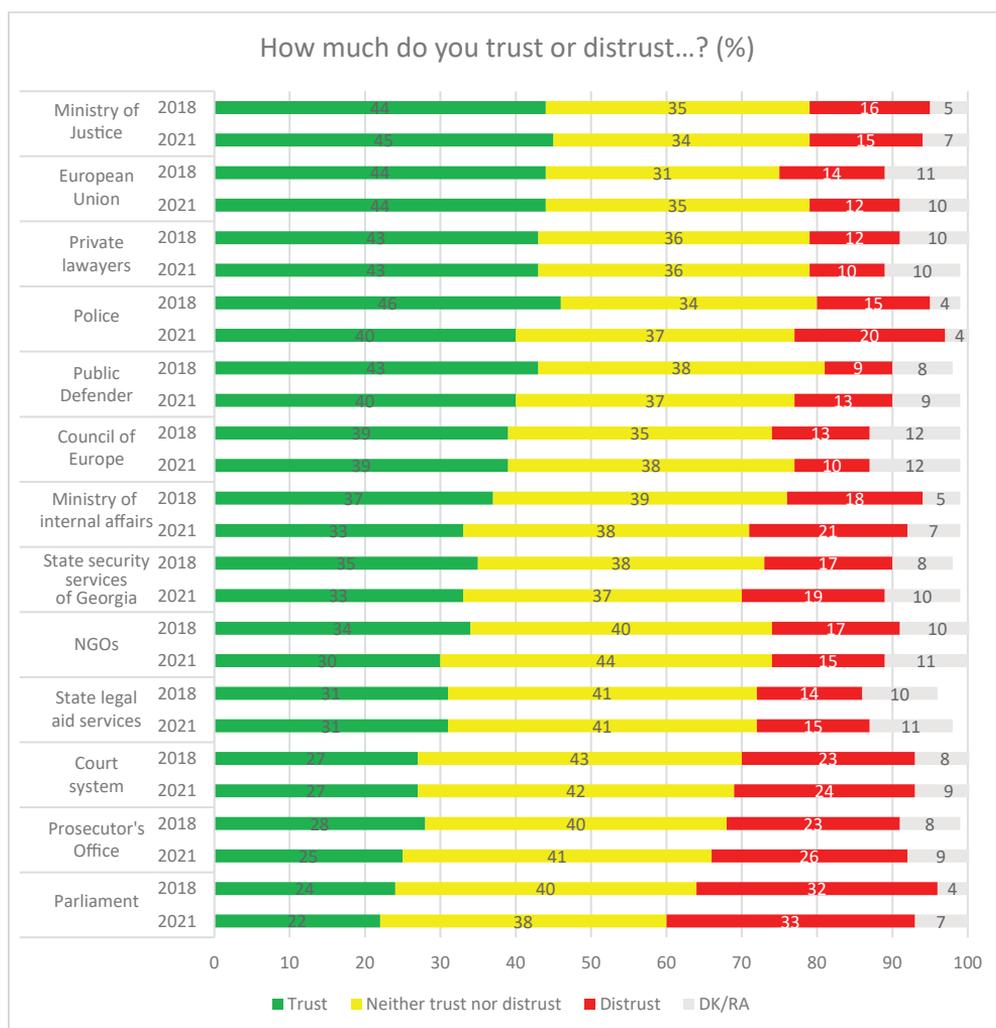


## ATTITUDES TOWARDS AND OF ACTORS INVOLVED IN COMBATTING DISCRIMINATION

The study also asked about a wider range of actors involved in combatting discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime, including trust in these actors as well as performance assessments of them in combatting discrimination. The data indicate that trust and performance assessments have changed little since 2018.

Of the institutions asked about, the data indicate that the Ministry of Justice and private Lawyers are most trusted.<sup>10</sup> All of the changes in the data are within the margin of error of the surveys, however, suggesting that trust in 2018 is at the same level as in 2021.

Figure 33: Trust in institutions

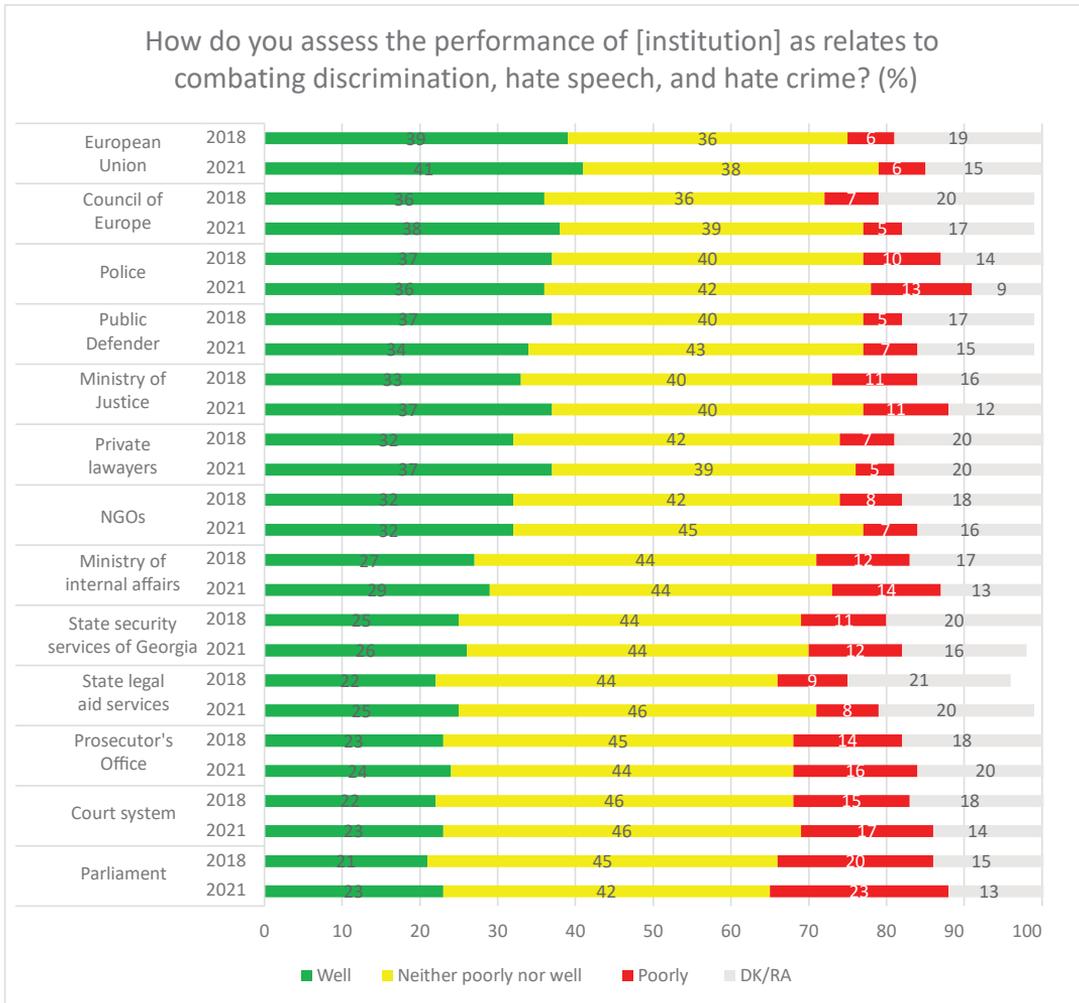


Note: Not all responses may sum to 100% due to rounding error.

10 Although the police are contained within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, both were asked about as the public could have different perceptions of police and the Ministry. Indeed, the data suggests a difference in attitudes, with greater trust in the police than the Ministry.

With regard to performance assessments of the institutions asked about in the survey, the data indicate that attitudes are rather similar to the 2018 data. In this regard, there were no significant changes in attitudes towards the performance of institutions between 2018 and 2021 on the issues discussed within this report.

Figure 34: Institutional performance assessments



Note: Not all responses may sum to 100% due to rounding error.

## CONCLUSIONS

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The data presented above lead to a wide ranging set of conclusions as relates to changes in attitudes between 2018 and 2021 and the contribution of the Council of Europe's project to the fight against hate speech, hate crime, and discrimination.

The new survey data indicate that the public is more knowledgeable and appreciative of diversity in Georgian society than they were in 2018. This is demonstrated through increased awareness of minorities in the country as well as double digit rises in the share of people who now view diversity in multiple forms (including diversity in general, ethnic diversity, and religious diversity) as a positive for the country. This is reflected in the increased shares of the public which report that they would approve of doing business with people of other groups at significantly higher rates than in the past. Importantly, this applies to homosexual persons as well as Jehovah's Witnesses, the two groups which people had the most negative attitudes towards in the 2018 survey.

The data also paints a positive picture in terms of progress on knowledge and appreciation of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups. The public recognises 1.2 more rights on average in 2021 than they did in 2018 out of a group of 14 different rights asked about on the survey. The data also suggest people increasingly think that the protection of minority rights is important, with notable gains in terms of the perceived importance of the protection of LGBT rights.

The public also exhibits increased knowledge and appreciation of the occurrence of discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech in Georgian society as well as who it affects. Significantly fewer people think that Georgian minorities face no problems than did so in 2018, reflecting increased awareness. Fewer people believe that a wide range of minority groups never face either hate crime or hate speech, and more people think that hate crime and hate speech represent important issues in Georgia.

While the public's attitudes have become increasingly positive about diversity, there has been little if any change in terms of awareness of Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. Knowledge of and appreciation of existing redress mechanisms and their effectiveness also remain stagnant. Further, there has been little change in the public's views of different actors' work on the issues.

The above presents a contrasting pattern wherein, the public is becoming more tolerant, while not expressing increased faith in or knowledge of formal mechanisms in the fight against hate speech, hate crime, and discrimination. This may suggest that the government's efforts in this domain need new energy to work with the public on these issues.



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