



# 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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This study was conducted by CRRC Georgia for the Co-operation Project "Fight against Discrimination, Hate Crimes and Hate Speech in Georgia".

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CRRC-Georgia is a non-governmental, non-profit research organization, which collects, analyzes and publishes policy relevant data on social, economic and political trends in Georgia. CRRC-Georgia, together with CRRC-Armenia and CRRC-Azerbaijan, constitutes a 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

**D**iscrimination, hate crime, and hate speech continue to be issues, in Georgia. This is well exemplified by the widely covered incidents that appear to be motivated by animus towards minorities in Georgia such as the 2018 incident of migrants being chased from a football court in Tbilisi to the riots that took place in response to a small rally on the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) in 2013. Smaller scale, everyday incidents involving discrimination are also important and known to take place. To understand the situation, the Caucasus Research Resource Centres Georgia (CRRC-Georgia) carried out a baseline study for the project, “Fight against discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech in Georgia”, which is implemented by the Council of Europe and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, through its Neighbourhood Programme (DANEP).

The study aims to provide an understanding of **appreciation and awareness** of the following issues:

- Diversity in Georgian society;
- The rights of minorities and vulnerable groups;
- Occurrence of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Georgian society and who it affects;
- Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech;
- Existing redress mechanisms and their effectiveness;
- Different actors’ work on the issues.

To provide an understanding of the above issues, CRRC-Georgia carried out a mixed methods study. In terms of qualitative data collection, the study included in-depth interviews and focus groups with a number of different minority groups and ethnic Georgians. In terms of quantitative data collection, CRRC-Georgia carried out a nationally representative survey, with an achieved sample size of 2205 respondents and average margin of error of 2.9%. The sample contains representative samples of areas of the country where the population’s main language is Armenian as well as of those where the population’s main language is Azeri. The survey is also nationally representative.

Quantitative data analysis has made use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to provide an overview of the situation in the country. Inferential statistics are used to test whether attitudes vary significantly between groups. Two different types of attitudes are explored using inferential statistics. First, they are used to test whether people have more positive or negative attitudes towards a given subject, and second, to understand who is more ambivalent and uncertain about a subject. This second form of analysis was carried out to help inform the project’s targeting strategy. The thinking behind carrying out this type of analysis is that people who hold strong views are generally harder to sway. In fact, they may argue against information presented to them, no matter its quality, and in turn strengthen their previously held views, through a process known as motivated reasoning.<sup>1</sup> Hence, if awareness raising campaigns are to change minds, they should attempt to target those who hold less strong views i.e. the ambivalent and uncertain.

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<sup>1</sup> See Epley, Nicholas and T. Gilovich. (2016). “The Mechanics of Motivated Reasoning.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 30(3), pp. 133-140.

The findings of the study suggest that women and men are generally aware of the larger minority groups (e.g. Armenians and Azeris) in Georgian society. However, when asked what the first minority group that came to mind was, 37% responded don't know or I cannot think of one. Further, 27% of people reported they had never heard of the Avar, a North Caucasian ethnic group with a population of several thousand people in Georgia, suggesting people are less aware of smaller ethnic minority groups in Georgia.

A slight majority of people (56%) think diversity is positive for the country. However, attitudes are less positive when it comes to religious diversity, which 46% think is positive. When asked why diversity is positive or negative, people who think diversity is negative for the country generally reported that it "threatens our culture and traditions". In general, women and ethnic Georgians and Armenians are more ambivalent and uncertain about whether diversity is positive for the country.

Attitudes are more positive towards people with disabilities than any other minority group. Attitudes towards religious minorities, migrants from countries outside Europe, and LGBT people are generally more negative. Only one in five people would approve of someone like them doing business with a homosexual. Attitudes towards ethnic minorities from the Caucasus fall somewhere in-between the high approval of people with disabilities and low approval of LGBT people.

People's attitudes towards different minority groups generally mirror their perceptions of who is most likely to be the victim of hate crime and hate speech. People think LGBT people are the most common victims of hate crime and hate speech. The next most common group was Jehovah's Witnesses and migrants from outside Europe. Ethnic minorities from the Caucasus were the next most common groups mentioned, followed by people with disabilities.

In general, majority groups' perceptions of the issues minorities face differ significantly from the perceptions that minority groups perceive they face. Twice as many Orthodox Christians (44%) think that religious minorities face no issues compared with Muslims (17%) and non-Orthodox Christians (20%). While 41% of men say there are no issues facing women, significantly fewer women (28%) think so. This suggests that majority groups often lack a clear understanding of the issues their fellow citizens that are part of minority groups face. Almost three times as many ethnic Georgians report there are no issues for ethnic minorities in Georgia (29%) compared to ethnic Armenians (10%) and ethnic Azeris (12%). This suggests a lack of understanding of the challenges that minorities face among majority groups. When it comes to issues that minorities face, ethnic minorities highlight economic issues. Women highlight domestic violence and sexual harassment. Religious minorities point to a diffuse set of issues from hate speech to labour market discrimination.

About one in three people think that hate crime is a problem in Georgia, while one in two think hate speech is. Older people (36+) and people in urban areas outside Tbilisi are significantly less likely to report that hate speech and hate crime are a problem in Georgia. Women are also more likely to think that hate crime is a problem in Georgia. Ethnic minorities are significantly less likely to report that hate crime and hate speech are problems in the country. Religious minorities are no more or less likely than Orthodox Georgians to report that hate crime is an issue.

Awareness of large scale incidents motivated by animus towards minorities is middling. About two in three people were aware of the incident in Tbilisi in 2018, in which a group of migrants were chased from a football field. A similar share was aware of the International Day Against Homophobia riots which took place in 2013. About half (56%) had heard about the case in Kobuleti in 2014 when a group of residents nailed a pig head to the door of a madrasa, and 39% reported they were aware of the incident in 2014 when a transgender woman was murdered

and then burned in her apartment. While a majority of the public that has heard of these incidents believes the latter three incidents were cases of hate crime, opinion is split on the incident on the football field in 2018.

The public is generally aware of the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups, but are less aware of political rights. From a list of 14 rights asked about, the average number of rights recognized was 10. While 92% of people recognize minorities' right to access education, only 47% recognize their right to hold protests. People generally think it is important to protect the rights of minorities, with the exception of LGBT people. More people think it is not important to protect the rights of LGBT people than think it is important. Armenians, women, and people in rural areas are slightly more likely to be ambivalent about the protection of minority rights in general as well as the rights of LGBT people specifically.

People are generally moderately informed about Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. For instance, only one in five people in Georgia is aware of the 2014 Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. The data suggest that people think that hate speech should be prohibited in the media and from being used by politicians. Yet, attitudes are divided over whether hate speech and hate crime legislation should impose criminal penalties on ordinary citizens.

When it comes to existing redress mechanisms, half of people are generally aware of the fact that they can turn to the police, the courts, and the Public Defender's Office if they are the victim of hate crime or hate speech. Yet, a smaller share of people would actually turn to these organisations if they were a victim. One in ten people (9%) report they would not turn to any institution if they were a victim of hate crime.

Although the police are generally one of the more trusted actors, and perceived to be performing at a relatively high level, some qualitative interviews suggested issues with police performance. In an interview with an expert on Roma issues, the respondent noted that there was a lack of trust in the Roma community towards police. Because of this lack of trust, members of the Roma community did not seek out the police when they faced challenges. In interviews with government officials, doubt was expressed about the legitimacy of some LGBT people's and particularly trans people's claims to be being discriminated against or the victims of crime, while an interview with an LGBT person highlighted that the police often do not take claims about harassment seriously.

In contrast, the Prosecutor's Office is relatively less trusted and perceived to be performing poorly, relatively to other institutions asked about on the survey. Despite this, the prosecutors interviewed during the study seemed generally well-informed about hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination even though they did not work on cases involving these issues directly. Still, they noted that issues of trust inhibited some investigative work.

The study suggests that the Council of Europe and the Public Defender's Office are relatively well trusted and are believed to be performing well relative to other institutions when it comes to combating discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. In contrast, the courts and the Prosecutor's Office are less trusted and perceived to be performing poorly on these issues relative to other institutions. Approximately one in four people in Georgia report they have heard of the "No Hate" campaign. These people are more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education.

The above findings suggest a number of recommendations for actors working towards the elimination of discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech.

First, the study suggests that the more aware people are of minority rights and events that have happened that many considered hate crime, the more likely they are to hold tolerant

views. This suggests that **awareness raising activities may help generate more tolerance**. At the same time, this finding should be taken with caution, because people who are more aware may generally be more predisposed towards tolerance than people who are not aware of such issues. Nonetheless, careful communications campaigns and awareness raising activity may lead to more tolerance in society. Indeed, many people in qualitative interviews and focus groups recommended these steps.

Second, **the study suggests that people are most aware of the fact that LGBT people are victims of hate crime and hate speech. At the same time, attitudes towards LGBT people are worse than towards any other group**. Hence, it is recommended to work on this contradiction, making the case for why the protection of LGBT people's rights is important for the development of the country. At the same time, caution should be exercised when it comes to messaging regarding LGBT people. Focus group discussions suggest that people think LGBT people are paid to protest for their rights and that Western organisations are behind the LGBT rights agenda in Georgia. Hence, **awareness raising on this issue should be locally led and avoid the appearance that it is a foreign imposition**.

Third, the pattern with LGBT people – **people hold negative attitudes towards LGBT people while also recognizing that they are at greater vulnerability** – holds more generally, and the more negative are attitudes towards a group, the more likely is the general public to believe that they are likely to be victims of hate crime and hate speech. In some way, **this provides a general prioritization of the groups that are most at risk, and hence require more support. LGBT people are the group that is likely most at risk, followed by religious minorities and migrants**. While few people express negative attitudes towards people with disabilities and the survey suggests people believe they are not the victims of hate crime, this suggests the need to highlight the problems people with disabilities face.

Fourth, **people are least aware of minority political rights**. Only 47% of the public believes minorities have the right to hold protests, and 53% think they can be elected. This suggests a clear need to raise awareness of minority political rights.

Fifth, about half of the public are aware of the Public Defender's Office (PDO) (53%). Only 35% of the public is aware that the PDO has a mandate to combat discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. This clearly suggests that **the PDO should attempt to raise awareness about itself as well as its mandate related to discrimination**.

Sixth, **the data suggests that people are opposed to politicians and the media disseminating hate speech. At the same time, they are more divided over whether there should be criminal penalties for hate crime or hate speech for regular citizens**. This suggests that it will be easier to pass legislation prohibiting the dissemination of hate speech in the media and among politicians than among the general public, if the political will to act is present. Hence, it is recommended to focus on the low hanging fruit of legislation against media- and politician-disseminated hate speech, while working towards building momentum towards the further criminalization of hate speech and hate crime for ordinary citizens.

Seventh, **women, ethnic Armenians, and people outside Tbilisi, and in some cases ethnic Georgians were more likely to report ambivalent and uncertain attitudes towards the issues covered in this study**. This suggests that these groups are more likely to be responsive to a communications campaign than other groups. Hence, it is recommended that these groups are worked with, as it will focus energies where change is most likely and avoid creating a backlash against the campaign, thus reinforcing intolerant views.

Eighth, a lack of trust between the police and the Prosecutor's Office on the one hand and the Roma and LGBT communities were identified as issues in qualitative interviews. Hence, **trust building activity between police and the Roma community and the police and the LGBT community would likely be positive**.

# Introduction

**D**iscrimination, hate crime, and hate speech in Georgia continue to be issues. This is well exemplified by the widely covered incidents that appear to be motivated by animus towards minorities such as the 2018 incident of migrants being chased from a football court in Tbilisi to the riots that took place in response to a small rally on the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO) in 2013. Yet, smaller scale, everyday incidents involving discrimination are also important and known to take place. To understand the situation on the ground, CRRC-Georgia carried out a baseline study for the project, “Fight against discrimination, hate crimes and hate speech in Georgia”, which is implemented by the Council of Europe and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, through its Neighbourhood Programme (DANEP).

The baseline study aims to provide an understanding of **appreciation and awareness** of the following issues:

- The diversity in Georgian society;
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- Occurrence of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Georgian society and who it affects;
- Georgian legislation against discrimination hate crime and hate speech;
- Existing redress mechanisms and their effectiveness;
- Different actors’ work on the issues.

To provide an understanding of the above issues, CRRC-Georgia carried out a mixed methods study. In terms of qualitative data collection, the study included in depth interviews and focus groups with a number of different minority groups and ethnic Georgians. In terms of quantitative data collection, CRRC-Georgia carried out a nationally representative survey, with an achieved sample size of 2205 respondents. The sample contains representative samples of areas of the country where the population’s main language is Armenian as well as a representative sample of areas of the country where the population’s main language is Azeri. Besides being representative of predominantly minority regions of the country, the survey is also nationally representative.

Quantitative data analysis has made use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to provide an overview of the situation in the country. Inferential statistics are used to test whether attitudes vary significantly between groups. Two different types of attitudes are explored using inferential statistics. First, they are used to test whether people have more positive or negative attitudes towards a given subject, and second, they are used to understand who is more ambivalent and uncertain about a subject. This second form of analysis was carried out to help inform the project’s targeting strategy. The thinking behind carrying out this type of analysis is that people who hold strong views are generally harder to sway. In fact, they may argue against information presented to them, no matter its quality, and in turn strengthen their previously held views, through a process known as motivated reasoning.<sup>2</sup> Hence, if awareness raising campaigns are to change minds, they should attempt to target those who hold less strong views i.e. the ambivalent and uncertain.

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<sup>2</sup> See Epley, Nicholas and T. Gilovich. (2016). “The Mechanics of Motivated Reasoning.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 30(3), pp. 133-140.

This report presents the findings of the study; it is organised as follows. It first presents findings related to awareness and appreciation for the diversity in Georgia, and then moves on to discuss the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups. Thereafter, awareness of discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech and who is perceived to be affected is presented. Next, awareness and appreciation for Georgian legislation is presented, which is followed by a discussion of perceptions of existing redress mechanisms and their effectiveness. Thereafter, the report provides data on attitudes towards various actors and their perceived effectiveness in combating discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech in Georgia. The report ends with a discussion of conclusions and recommendations. In appendix to the report are the results of the survey, including data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity and the qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments.



# Methodology

CRRC-Georgia carried out a mixed methods research design, including both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The study started out with focus groups and in-depth interviews. Next, a survey was implemented. Finally, focus groups and in depth interviews were again carried out to better understand the quantitative findings. This section of the report provides an overview of the quantitative and qualitative methods used in the project.

## Qualitative methods

Within the project, CRRC-Georgia carried out focus groups and in-depth interviews with a number of target groups, both before and after the survey. Besides enriching the analysis of the quantitative data, the qualitative data was used to inform survey design and fill in remaining gaps in understanding, following the survey. The type of qualitative data collection, data collection instrument, target group of the data collection, pre- or post-survey status, and content of the interviews is provided in the table below:

Figure 1: Qualitative Data Collection

#	Data collection method	Instrument	Target group	Pre- or post-survey	Focus
1	In depth interview	Minority Interview Guide	Roma	Pre-survey	General attitudes and experiences of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime
1	In depth interview	Minority Interview Guide	Jehovah's Witness	Pre-survey	General attitudes and experiences of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime
2	In depth interview	Law Enforcement Interview Guide	Prosecutors	Pre-survey	Attitudes and experience working on discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime
1	In depth interview	Law Enforcement Interview Guide	Police Officers	Pre-survey	Attitudes and experience working on discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime
1	In depth interview	Law Enforcement Interview Guide	MIA Officials	Pre-survey	General attitudes and experiences of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime
1	Focus Groups	Majority Focus Group Guide	Ethnic Georgians	Pre-survey	General attitudes and experiences of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime
1	Focus Groups	Minority Focus Group Guide	Ethnic Armenians	Pre-survey	General attitudes and experiences of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime
1	Focus Groups	Minority Focus Group Guide	Ethnic Azeris	Pre-survey	General attitudes and experiences of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime

1	Focus Groups	Minority Focus Group Guide	Muslims	Pre-survey	General attitudes and experiences of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime
1	Focus Groups	Attitudes towards Redress Mechanism Guide	Ethnic Georgian Men	Post-survey	Attitudes towards Redress Mechanisms
1	Focus Groups	Attitudes towards Redress Mechanism Guide	Ethnic Georgian Women	Post-survey	Attitudes towards Redress Mechanisms
1	Focus Groups	Attitudes towards Redress Mechanism Guide	Ethnic Armenians	Post-survey	Attitudes towards Redress Mechanisms
1	Focus Groups	Attitudes towards Redress Mechanism Guide	Ethnic Azeris	Post-survey	Attitudes towards Redress Mechanisms
1	Focus Groups	LGBT Messaging Guide	Ethnic Georgian Men	Post-survey	Attitudes towards LGBT People
1	Focus Groups	LGBT Messaging Guide	Ethnic Georgian Women	Post-survey	Attitudes towards LGBT People
2	In depth interview	Minority Interview Guide	Roma	Post-survey	General attitudes and experiences of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime

## Quantitative methods

Within the project, CRRC-Georgia implemented a nationally representative survey using clustering with stratification. The sampling frame was the list of electoral precincts. The survey contained two macro strata: ethnic Georgian and ethnic minority. The ethnic minority strata were equally split between ethnic Armenian and ethnic Azeri clusters. Clusters were defined as Armenian or Azeri if 40% or a larger share of the population of those areas spoke Armenian or Azeri as their native language. The clusters were further sub-stratified into urban and rural clusters. The ethnic Georgian strata was sub-stratified into Tbilisi, other urban areas, and rural areas. Other urban and rural areas were further sub-stratified by geographic quadrant (North East, North West, South East, South West). The data was weighted following fieldwork. The survey took place in August, 2018. The response rate was 49%, and the achieved sample size is 2205. The average margin of error for the survey is 2.9%.

To analyse the survey data a mix of descriptive and inferential statistics are used. Descriptive statistics are used to provide an overview of the situation in the country. Inferential statistics are used to test whether attitudes vary significantly between groups. In general, multivariate logistic or ordinary least squares regression is used to understand whether differences between groups are significant or likely to be attributable to survey error. Unless otherwise noted, the report makes use of a baseline demographic model. The model controls for:

- Age groups (18-25; 26-35; 36-45; 46-55; 56-65; 65+);
- Sex (Male, female);
- Religious minority status (Respondent reports a religion that is not predominant among their ethnicity);<sup>3</sup>
- Ethnicity (Armenian, Azeri, Georgian);
- Tertiary education (Has attended at least some Bachelor's courses or a higher level of education);
- Settlement type (Capital, Other Urban, Rural).

In any case where significant differences are present, **including based on sex**, they are reported in the body of the report below.

In a number of cases, indexes are constructed to test whether certain factors predict attitudes in general rather than to specific questions about a specific minority group. For example, on the questions about minority rights, rather than run analyses for every single minority right asked about, an analysis is carried out to understand which demographic characteristics predict whether a group is more or less likely to recognize more or fewer rights. To ease interpretation, simple additive indexes were created rather than using factor analysis or principal components analysis, common methods for creating indices or reducing the dimensionality of data.

Besides the indexes, two outcomes are often tested with the same question or index. First, a regression is used to understand who has more positive and more negative attitudes towards a given subject (e.g. whether diversity is positive or negative). Second, a regression is used to understand who has uncertain or ambivalent attitudes towards a specific subject. This analysis is carried out to support the project's targeting strategy. The thinking behind it is that people with strong opinions are less likely to change their minds about a given subject. In fact, they may engage in motivated reasoning, i.e. arguing against information they hear that is counter to their own attitudes. Hence, the people most likely to change their minds (i.e. those who are ambivalent or uncertain) should be targeted by awareness raising campaigns.<sup>4</sup>

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3 In Georgia, religion and ethnicity are generally correlated. This makes it difficult to separate out the experience of being a religious versus ethnic minority statistically. For example, a large majority of Armenians in Georgia identify as Armenian Apostolic Christian. However, within the survey 55 ethnic Armenians identified as Roman Catholics. Similar "mismatches" occurred in the majority of ethnic groups that participated in the survey. Individuals with similar "mismatches" are considered as religious minorities for the purposes of the data analysis within this report, unless otherwise noted.

4 For further background on this issue, see Wason, Peter C. (1960), "On the failure to eliminate hypotheses in a conceptual task", *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, Psychology Press, 12 (3): 129-40, doi:10.1080/17470216008416717, ISSN 1747-0226

Edwards K. & Smith E. E. (1996). "A disconfirmation bias in the evaluation of arguments." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 5-24.

Westen, D.; Blagov, P. S.; Harenski, K.; Kiltz, C.; Hamann, S. (2006). "Neural Bases of Motivated Reasoning: An fMRI Study of Emotional Constraints on Partisan Political Judgment in the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election". *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*. 18 (11): 1947-1958.

Lewandowsky S.; U. K. H. Ecker; C. M. Seifert; N. Schwarz; J. Cook. (2012). "Misinformation and Its Correction: Continued Influence and Successful Debiasing". *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*. 13(3) 106-131.

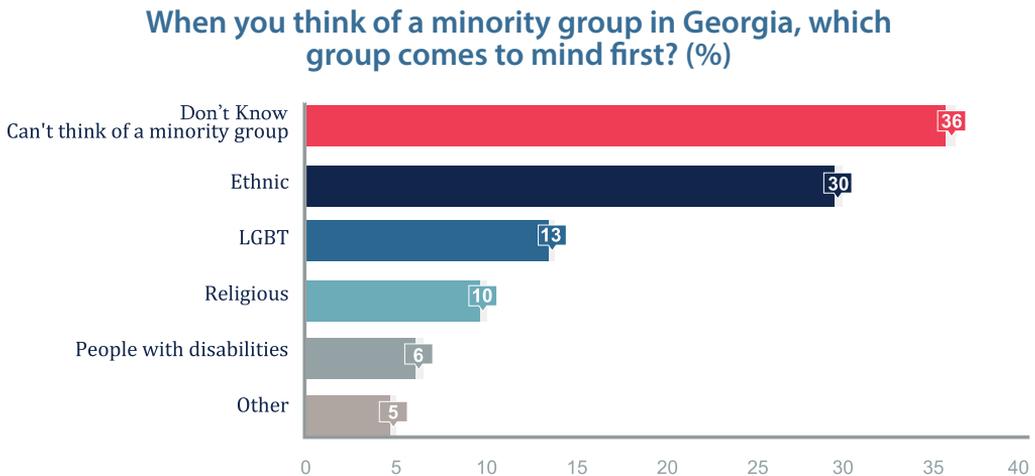
# Diversity in Georgian society

Georgia has a diverse minority population along multiple dimensions. From Jehovah's Witnesses and Salafi Muslims to followers of the Yazidi religion, Georgian citizens profess a wide variety of faiths. There is also significant ethnic diversity with Udi people, Ukrainians, and Pontic Greeks, among a wide variety of other ethnicities. Georgia's ethnic diversity is also reflected in its linguistic diversity with Armenian, Azeri, Avar, and Abkhaz among numerous other languages spoken in the country.

Clearly, Georgia is a diverse place. But, is the population aware of this and do they appreciate the country's diversity? To address these questions, the survey asked the public what minority group comes to mind first. The most common response was "don't know" or "I cannot think of a minority group," suggesting that many people do not actively think about minority issues. Respondents who named a specific minority group most often named ethnic minorities (30%), LGBT people (13%), and religious minorities (10%).

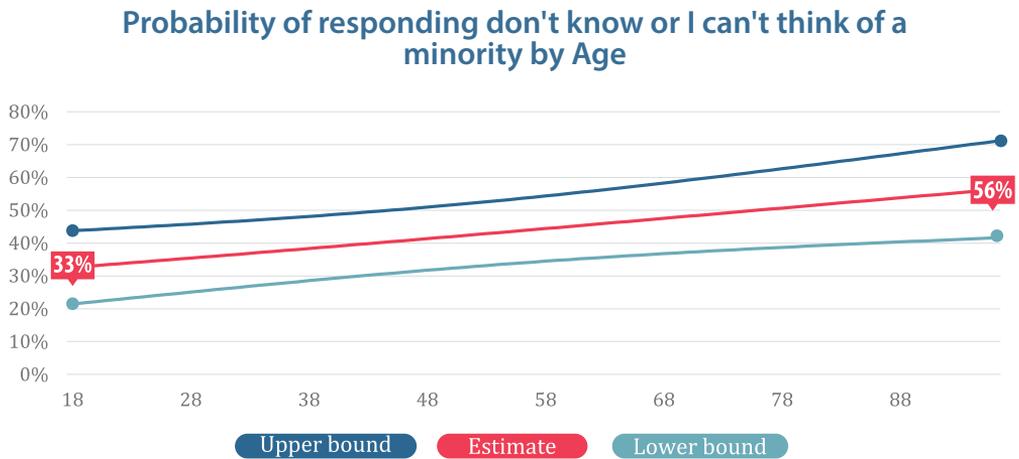
The survey asked the public what minority group comes to mind first. The most common response was "don't know" or "I cannot think of a minority group," suggesting that many people do not actively think about minority issues. Respondents who named a specific minority group most often named ethnic minorities (30%), LGBT people (13%), and religious minorities (10%).

Figure 2: When you think of a minority group, which minority group comes to mind first?



Generally speaking, older people are more likely to respond either "don't know" or "I can't think of a minority" than younger people, all else equal. People with tertiary education are less likely to respond "don't know" or "I can't think of a minority." Ethnic Georgians are more likely than ethnic Armenians to respond with one of these answers, while ethnic Azeris responses are between the two.

Figure 3: Awareness of minorities by age



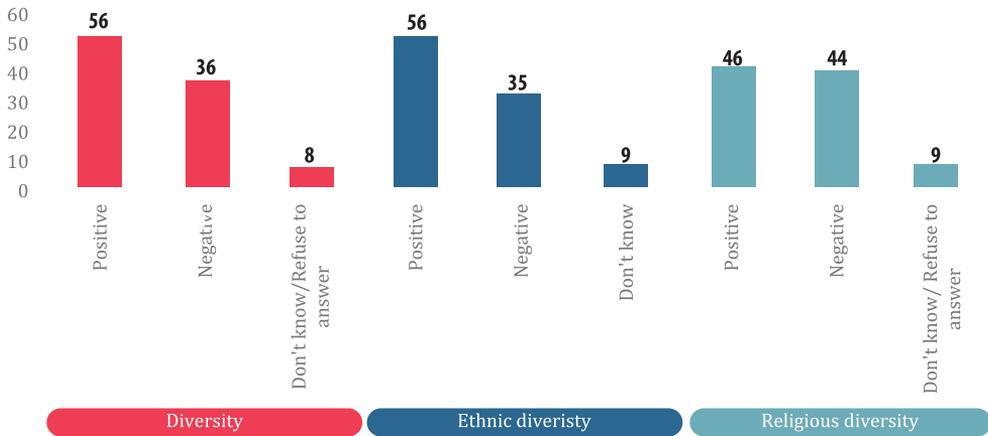
A further measure of awareness of minority groups is whether or not people are aware of different groups. This was measured indirectly via asking people whether or not they approved or disapproved of people like them doing business with a variety of different minority groups. Respondents were instructed to tell the interviewer if they had not heard of the group. For the vast majority of groups asked about, people had heard of them. However, 26% reported they had never heard of the Avars, a group with a population of approximately 3000 people in Georgia. This may suggest that people are generally aware of the larger ethnic groups in Georgia, however, they are often unaware of the smaller ethnic groups in the country. Still, further research would be needed to confirm this finding.

Moving beyond awareness, does the population of Georgia appreciate the diversity in the country? To understand this, respondents were asked about whether they thought diversity was positive for the country, as well as specifically about their attitude towards religious and ethnic diversity in Georgia. Overall, more people report that diversity is positive for Georgia than report it is negative. However, opinion is split on religious diversity, and fewer people report it is positive compared with diversity in general or ethnic diversity.

**M**ore people report that diversity is positive for Georgia than report it is negative. However, opinion is split on religious diversity, and fewer people report it is positive compared with diversity in general or ethnic diversity.

Figure 4: How positive or negative is diversity?

On a scale were 1 means negative and 4 means positive, would you say [diversity, ethnic diversity, religious diversity] is positive or negative for the country? (%)

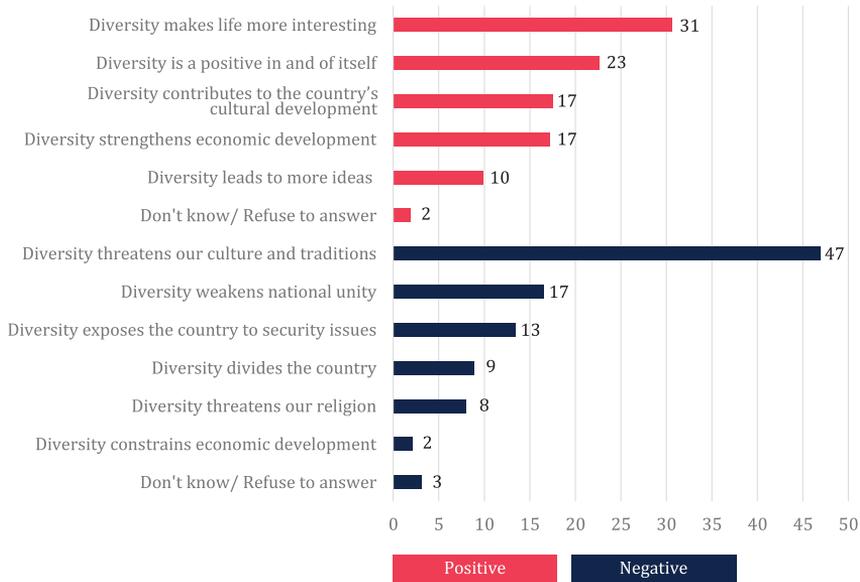


The reasons people give for thinking diversity is either positive or negative are provided on the chart below. They suggest that the main reason people think diversity is positive is that diversity makes life more interesting or that it is valuable in and of itself. In contrast, the main reason people think that diversity is negative for the country is that it is a threat to “our culture and traditions.” The same general pattern holds with why people think ethnic diversity is positive or negative. With religious diversity, a plurality (38%) report that it threatens their religion, and a comparable share (31%) report that it threatens “our culture and traditions”.

**T**he main reason people think diversity is positive is that diversity makes life more interesting or that it is valuable in and of itself. In contrast, the main reason people think that diversity is negative for the country is that it is a threat to “our culture and traditions.”

Figure 5: Reasons for thinking diversity is positive and negative

Using this card, please select the main reason why you think [diversity] is a [positive/negative] thing. (%)



A regression analysis controlling for a number of factors suggests that women, religious minorities, ethnic Azeris, and people with at least some tertiary education are significantly more likely to think that diversity is positive overall. People with tertiary education have a 65% chance of thinking diversity is positive versus a 51% chance among those without, all else equal. Controlling for other factors, women have a 57% chance of being positive about diversity compared with men having a 49% chance. Azeris have a 92% chance of reporting that diversity is positive compared with 54% of Georgians and 61% of Armenians, again controlling for other factors. Religious minorities have an 82% chance of thinking diversity is positive, compared with 51% of religious majorities.

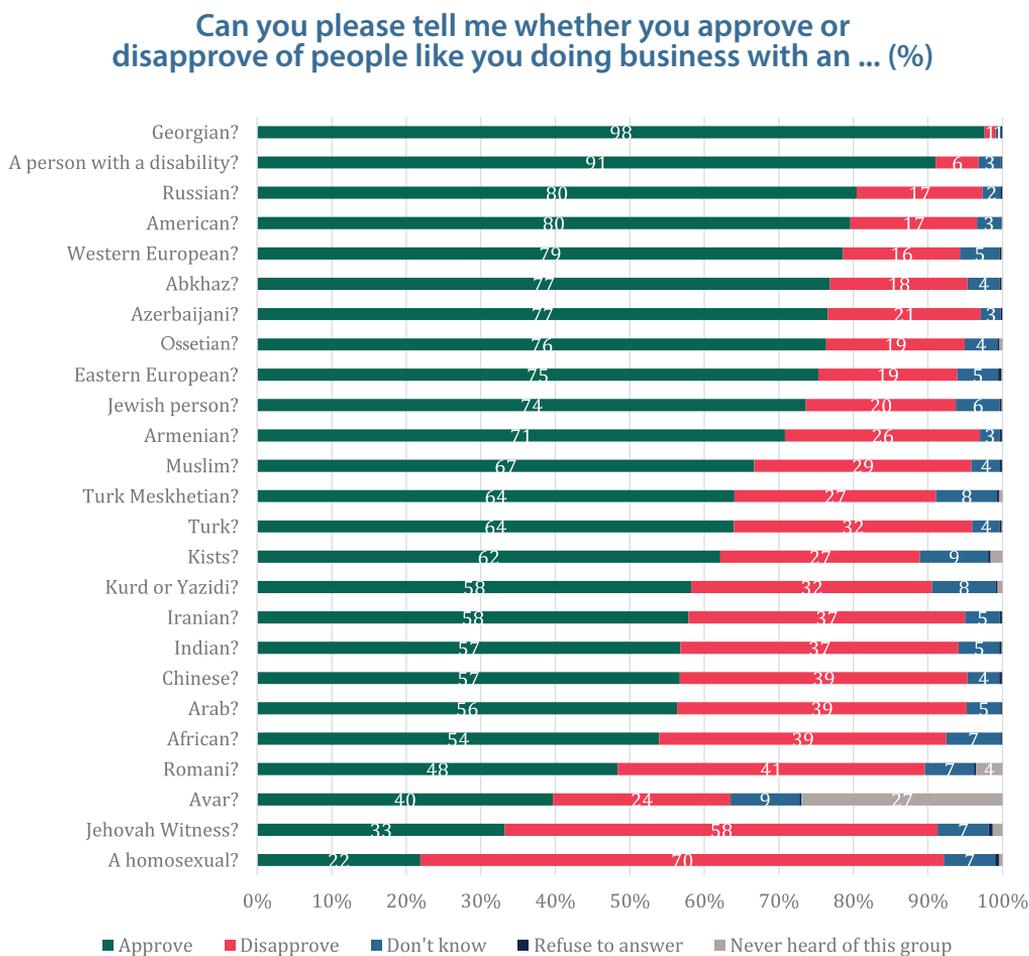
A second regression analysis was carried out to understand who is either ambivalent or uncertain about diversity. The results suggest that women and ethnic Georgians and Armenians are more likely to be ambivalent or uncertain about whether diversity is positive or negative. While women have a 53% chance of reporting an ambivalent or uncertain response, men have a 46% chance. While Azeris have a 28% chance of responding with an ambivalent or uncertain response, ethnic Georgians and Armenians have a 51% and 64% chance, respectively.

### Attitudes towards specific minority groups

As noted above, the public was asked whether they would support someone like them doing business with a variety of different groups. The data suggest that different groups are more approved of than others. While doing business with Americans and Russians is approved of by 80% of the population respectively, only 54% support doing business with an African and 22% with a homosexual. A number of patterns also appear from the data. Ethnicities from outside Europe are approved of less frequently than ethnicities not associated with Europe.

Jehovah's Witnesses are disapproved of doing businesses with more than any other religion, and the only group that more people disapprove of people like them doing business with is homosexuals. With homosexuals, the qualitative findings reaffirm that there is a low level of tolerance towards LGBT people. This was the case no matter which group was being interviewed or participating in the focus group. Notably, even a participant with a quite positive attitudes towards LGBT people relative to others participating in focus groups used a slur to refer to homosexuals during the focus group.

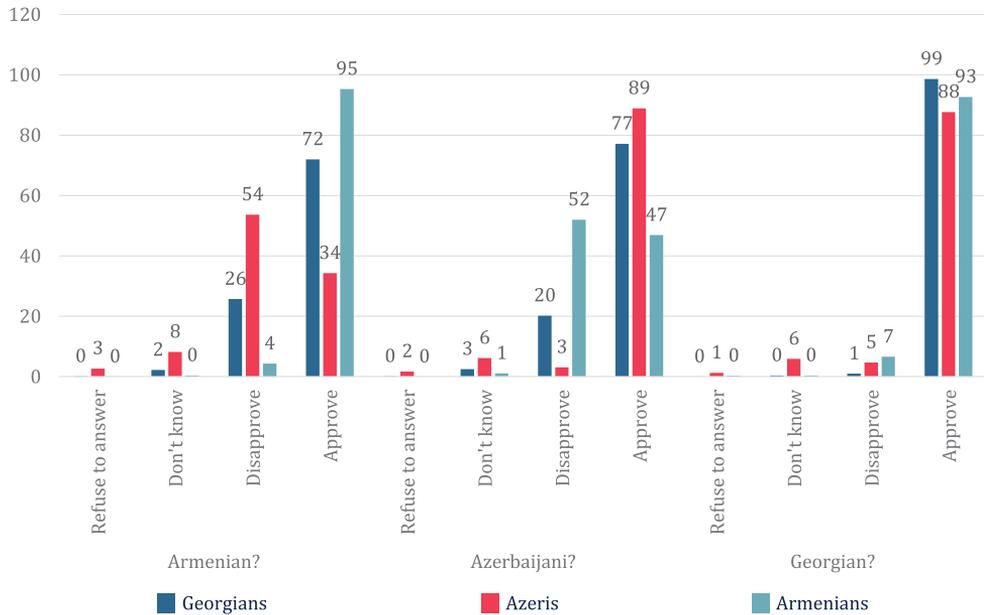
Figure 6: Approval of doing business with different minority groups



Ethnic Armenians and ethnic Azeris disapprove of someone like them doing business with someone of the opposite ethnicity at a higher rate than ethnic Georgians. However, during the focus group discussions ethnic Armenians generally expressed some sympathy for the issues ethnic Azeris face in Georgia, and ethnic Azeris expressed sympathy for the problems that ethnic minorities faced more generally, no matter their specific ethnicity. As one participant stated, "Minorities are second class citizens. This happens in every country" (Azeri, male, 32 years old).

Figure 7: Approval of doing business by ethnicity

Can you please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of people like you doing business with an ... by ethnicity (%)



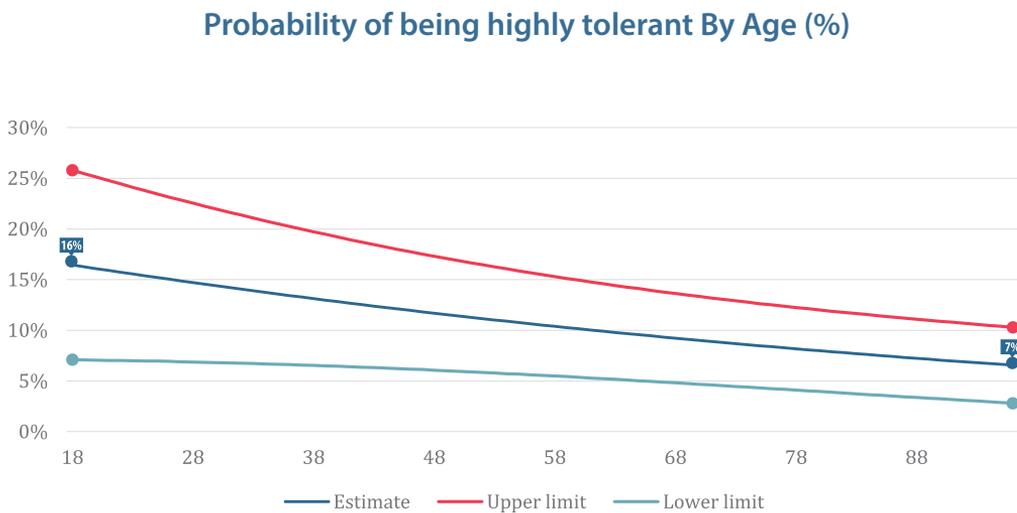
To understand whether there are factors which predict whether or not someone is more or less likely to express tolerance, at least in terms of approval of doing business with a variety of different ethnicities, an index was created. For each response of “yes” to the above questions 1 point is added to an individual’s score. For each response of “no”, a score of -1 was assigned. For each response of “don’t know”, “refuse to answer”, and “never heard of this group”, 0 points were assigned. This leads to a potential range of scores of -25 to +25. A score of +25 suggests that someone approves of doing business with all of the above minority groups, while a score of -25 suggests someone disapproves of doing business with all of the above minority groups. The average score on the index was 9 points, suggesting that people in general are more willing than not to do business with minority groups. One in ten people in Georgia (11%) said they would do business with all of the groups asked about, suggesting a high level of tolerance among this group. In contrast, 1% scored -23, -24, or -25, suggesting that they would not do business with the vast majority of the above groups and a low level of tolerance.

**R**elatively few people in Georgian society are entirely intolerant, while a relatively large share (about one in ten) are generally tolerant, at least when it comes to doing business with minority groups.

Young people are also more likely to be tolerant, with people between the ages of 18 and 23 having a 16% chance of being highly tolerant, compared with a 7% chance among people 86 and over.

The above suggests that relatively few people in Georgian society are entirely intolerant, while a relatively large share (about one in ten) are generally tolerant, at least when it comes to doing business with minority groups. To understand who is more or less likely to be highly tolerant, a regression analysis was carried out to understand whether any characteristics are associated with people who scored 24 or higher on the index created above. Controlling for other factors, ethnic Georgians have an 11% chance of having a highly tolerant score compared with 4% of ethnic Armenian and ethnic Azeris. Young people are also more likely to be tolerant, with people between the ages of 18 and 23 having a 16% chance of being highly tolerant, compared with a 7% chance among people 86 and over. All else equal, a person with tertiary education has a 16% chance of being highly tolerant, compared with a 10% chance among people without tertiary education.

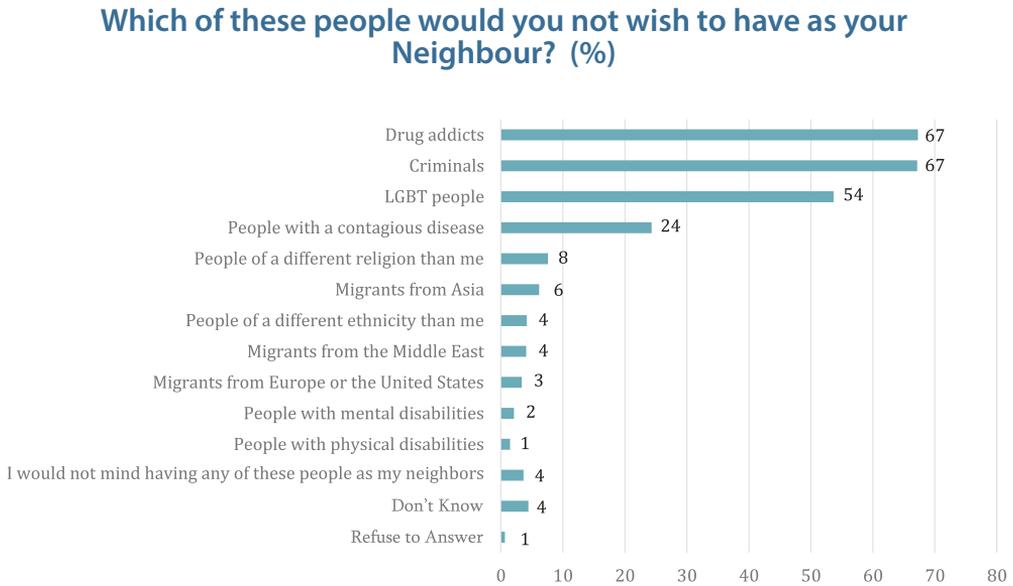
Figure 8: Probability of being highly tolerant by age



Another way of getting at tolerance is looking at who people prefer not be their neighbours. On the survey, people were asked which groups they would not want as neighbours, and allowed to select as many groups as they wanted. The most common responses were drug addicts (67%) and criminals (67%), followed by LGBT people (54%). Other groups were named by a small minority of people, re-affirming the point that attitudes towards LGBT people are more negative than towards other minorities in Georgia.

**P**eople were asked which groups they would not want as neighbours, and allowed to select as many groups as they wanted. The most common responses were drug addicts (67%) and criminals (67%), followed by LGBT people (54%).

Figure 9: Which of the following groups would you not wish to have as neighbours?



When it comes to awareness and appreciation for diversity, the above data and analysis suggest a number of findings. First, many people do not think much about diversity, given the fact that one in three people (36%) either reported they did not know or could not think of a minority group when they were asked which minority group came to mind first. Second, when it comes to minorities in general, people first think of ethnic minorities when they are asked to think of a minority group. Third, people are more likely than not to think that diversity is positive, although they are less positive about religious diversity. People who think diversity is negative are primarily concerned with the preservation of culture and tradition. Fourth, a number of factors predict the chance that someone will express more tolerant attitudes. Tertiary education is generally associated with more positive attitudes, and younger people also appear more tolerant. With ambivalence and uncertainty, women, ethnic Georgians, and ethnic Armenians (compare with ethnic Azeris) are more likely to express such attitudes about diversity, suggesting that these are the groups that the project’s awareness raising campaign should aim to work with. Finally, if the pattern with business holds more broadly to other topics, then it is likely that religious minorities, with the potential exception of Jewish people, and LGBT people are the least tolerated minority groups in Georgia.



# The rights of minorities and vulnerable groups

**M**inority groups are entitled to the same rights as non-minorities. Yet, in practice minorities face a significant number of challenges that majority groups do not. How aware is the population of Georgia of minority rights and do they appreciate the importance of protecting the rights of different groups? The data suggest that in general people are aware of minority rights, but that people view a number of groups' rights as less important to protect than others. Moreover, among majority groups a sense that minorities should not impede the rights of majorities is present.

In general people are aware of minority rights, but that people view a number of groups' rights as less important to protect than others. Moreover, among majority groups a sense that minorities should not impede the rights of majorities is present.

The survey asked either directly or indirectly about the following rights:

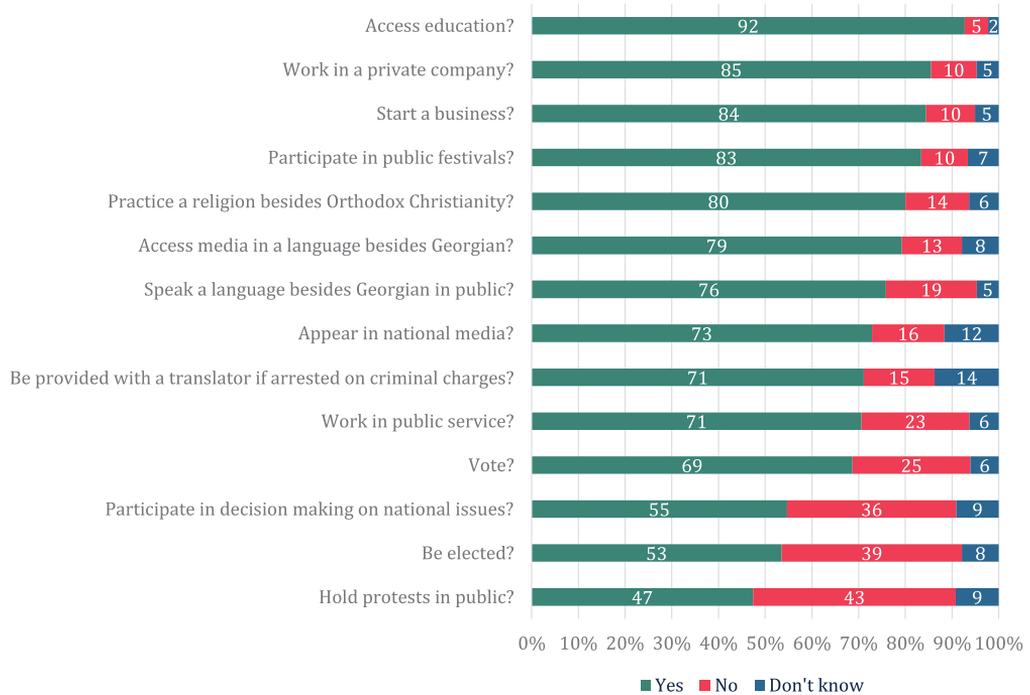
- Access to print and broadcast media in minority languages and representation of national minorities in the media;
- Right to manifest one's religion;
- Equal access to education and intercultural content;
- Institutional framework for the participation of national minorities in decision-making;
- Representation 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 results suggest that most people in Georgia recognize a majority of these rights. Still, between 5% and 43% of people do not recognize one of the above rights. People are least aware of minorities' political rights. Only 69% think minorities have the right to vote; 55% report that they can participate in decision making on national issues; 53% think they have the right to be elected, and 47% think that minorities have the right to hold protests in public. More people reported that minorities had all of the other rights asked about than about the previously noted political rights.

People are least aware of minorities' political rights. Only 69% think minorities have the right to vote; 55% report that they can participate in decision making on national issues; 53% think they have the right to be elected, and 47% think that minorities have the right to hold protests in public.

Figure 10: What rights do people think minorities have?

### In your opinion, do minorities in Georgia have the right or not to..? (%)



One quarter of the public (25%) recognize all of the rights, while 3% did not report “yes” to any of the questions asked about. On average, people think that minorities have 10 of the 14 rights asked about. To understand whether any socio-demographic characteristics predicted whether or not people are more or less aware of minority rights, an index was created from the 14 questions on rights. For each time, a respondent reported that minorities had a right, they are given a point in the index. Any other response option was coded as zero. The results of a regression analysis suggest that people with tertiary education recognize about one more of the above rights than people without, all else equal. Ethnic Azeris and Armenians recognize approximately two and three more rights, respectively, on average than ethnic Georgians. People in rural areas recognize one more right on average than people in Tbilisi. Women recognize one less right on average than men. Older people are less likely to recognize the above rights, although the size of the difference between older and younger people is substantively small.

Although the population of Georgia is generally aware of minority rights, people think some minorities’ rights are more important to protect than others. To provide a basis of comparison for how much people think that rights are important to protect, respondents were asked how important they thought it was to protect the rights of eth-

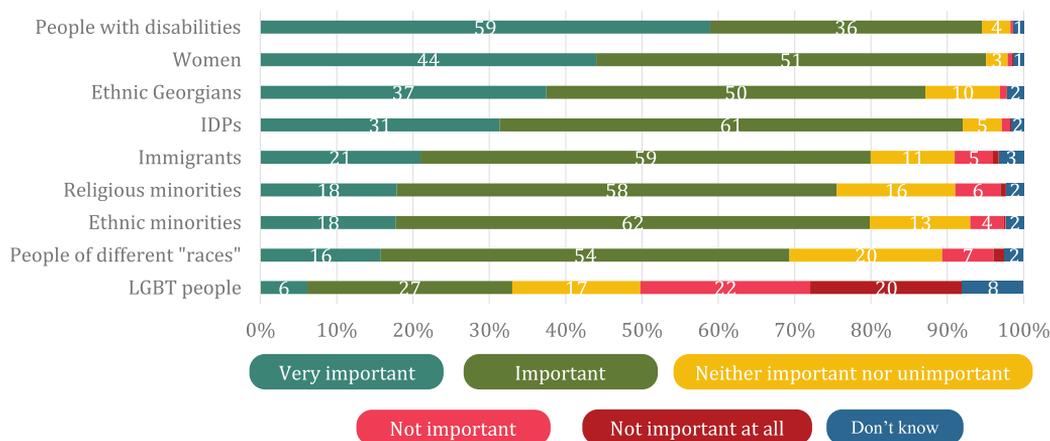
**A**lthough the population of Georgia is generally aware of minority rights, people think some minorities’ rights are more important to protect than others.

nic Georgians: 87% reported it was either very important or important. By comparison, 95% thought it was important or very important to protect the rights of people with disabilities and women and 92% thought it was important or very important to protect the rights of internally displaced people. In contrast, fewer people think it is important to protect the rights of immigrants (80%), ethnic minorities (80%), religious minorities (76%), people of different “races” (70%), and LGBT people (33%) than ethnic Georgians. LGBT rights are clearly considered the least important for the development of the country, and were the only group asked about that more people thought was not important or not important at all to protect the rights of than thought it important.

**95%** thought it was important or very important to protect the rights of people with disabilities and women and 92% thought it was important or very important to protect the rights of internally displaced people. In contrast, fewer people think it is important to protect the rights of immigrants (80%), ethnic minorities (80%), religious minorities (76%), people of different “races” (70%), and LGBT people (33%) than ethnic Georgians.

Figure 11: How important is the protection of minority rights for the development of Georgia?

**Please tell me how important or unimportant for Georgia’s development is the protection of the rights of [minority group] in Georgia? (%)**



To further understand why people have negative attitudes towards homosexuals, two focus groups with ethnic Georgians, split by sex were carried out. During the focus groups, a number of different discourses emerged in people’s attitudes towards LGBT rights. First, people felt that LGBT people should not bother “society” or “limit” heterosexuals’ rights. Second, there was a sense that LGBT people are engaged in propaganda. For some participants, this propaganda was associated with a fear that homosexuality could be spread rather than being a way that someone was born. Third, people highlighted that Georgia was a religious and traditional society, and they argued LGBT people should not disrespect this. In the male focus groups, this discourse was paired with one that discredited the legitimacy of LGBT people’s claims to rights. This took the form of claiming that a) LGBT people were paid to protest for their rights, and b) that Western organisations and governments pushed an LGBT agenda on Georgia. In general, the male focus group participants were qualitatively more hostile to LGBT people and

their rights than the female focus group participants. These findings suggest that caution is warranted when advocating for LGBT people's rights. Efforts to do so need to be locally led, if they are not to be further de-legitimized in the eyes of some segments of Georgian society.

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 results of the regression analysis suggests older people, ethnic Armenians, and potentially people in rural areas are less likely to think it is important for the development of the country to protect the rights of various groups. Ethnic Armenians scored three points lower on the index than ethnic Georgians, on average, controlling for other factors. Ethnic Azeris did not score in a statistically significant different manner from ethnic Georgians. Although older people report it is important less often, the impact is relatively small (~0.25 points per every 10 years of additional age). People in rural areas scored one point lower on the index compared with people in Tbilisi on average, controlling for other factors.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, ethnic Azeris, people with tertiary education, and religious minorities report higher levels of importance for the protection of minority rights in the country. Azerbaijani, on average and controlling for other factors, scored two points higher on the index than ethnic Georgians. Religious minorities scored three points higher on average than religious majorities. People with tertiary education scored one point more on average than people without.

A second regression analysis looked at whether the number of rights that people were aware that minorities had predicted how important people found it to protect those rights, while controlling for socio-demographic characteristics of the respondent. The results suggest that it is a strong predictor of how much people think that it is important to protect the rights of minorities. This positive association between awareness of minority rights and thinking that is important to protect them is of course correlational, and correlation is not causation. However, it does suggest that raising awareness about minority rights may be a path towards increasing people's sense that it is important to protect minority rights.

When it comes to the protection of LGBT people, a number of different factors predict whether people think the protection of rights is important or not. Sex is a significant predictor, with men being significantly less likely to support the idea that it is important to protect LGBT rights. Religious minorities and people with tertiary education are more likely to support the rights of LGBT people. As with rights in general, a second regression analysis was carried out that looked at whether awareness of different rights predicted people's support for the protection of LGBT people's rights. The data analysis again suggests that people who are more aware of minority rights are significantly more likely to think that it is important to protect LGBT people's rights.

While the above analysis suggests a number of groups that are more positive or negative, activities targeted at people who are ambivalent or uncertain are more likely to lead to change. To understand whether any particular group was more or less likely to be ambivalent, an index was constructed that gave respondents one point for each middle of scale response options (important, neither important nor unimportant, and unimportant) and "don't know" response they reported. Responses on the extreme end of the scale for each question asked about (very important and not important at all) are marked as zero. The results suggest that Azeris are significantly less likely to express ambivalent or uncertain responses, while Armenians are signifi-

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<sup>5</sup> This finding should be interpreted with some caution since the p-value did not reach the conventional level of statistical significance (p=0.08).

**G**eorgia wants to become member of the EU and tries to improve the standards. I believe that everything will be better in 10 years and there will be a big progress in terms of protecting rights of ethnic minorities” (Azeri, male, 29 years old).

cantly more likely to express such attitudes. People in rural areas<sup>6</sup> also appear to be more likely to express ambivalent or uncertain attitudes. Religious minorities were significantly less likely to express such attitudes. Women also appear to be slightly more likely to express ambivalent or uncertain attitudes.<sup>7</sup>

The same analysis of ambivalent attitudes was conducted with attitudes towards LGBT people. The results suggest that women, Armenians, and people outside of Tbilisi are more likely to express ambivalent or uncertain attitudes towards LGBT people, while religious minorities are less ambivalent. While Armenians have a 73% chance of reporting ambivalent attitudes towards the importance of protecting LGBT rights compared with Georgians who have a 45% chance. While men have a 39% chance of reporting ambivalent or uncertain attitudes, women have a 49% chance. People in Tbilisi have a 45% chance of reporting an ambivalent or uncertain attitude, compared with residents of other urban areas who have a 68% chance and people in rural areas a 73% chance.

The qualitative data collected within the project suggests that majority groups think that minorities impinge on majority rights through exercising their rights in some instances. For example, people believed that LGBT people violated majority rights through protesting on Rustaveli Avenue in 2013 on the International Day Against Homophobia. As a focus group participant noted: “They shouldn’t protest in front of Kashveti [a church]. They can go to Tbilisi Sea, near the zoo. There’re only trees and they can run and scream there” (Georgian, male, 32 years old). As another stated, “Of course they can live here, but they shouldn’t impose their religion on others” (Georgian, male, 26 years old). Yet, some people do hold hope for the future. As one focus group participant noted, “Georgia wants to become member of the EU and tries to improve the standards. I believe that everything will be better in 10 years and there will be a big progress in terms of protecting rights of ethnic minorities” (Azeri, male, 29 years old).

Overall, the above suggest a number of findings. In general, a majority of the population are aware of most minority rights, however three quarters of the population are unaware of at least some minority right. Minority political rights are the least widely recognized type of minority right. The vast majority of people think it is important to protect the rights of minorities. However, only about one third of people think it is important to protect the rights of LGBT people. In general, religious minorities, people with tertiary education, and people that are more aware of minority rights are more likely to think that it is important to protect those rights. Women, ethnic Armenians and Georgians, and people in rural areas and urban areas besides the capital are more likely to be uncertain or ambivalent, suggesting that these groups should be worked with during the project’s awareness raising activities. When it comes to LGBT people, the focus group discussions suggest that men are less likely to be open to conversations about LGBT people’s rights; that LGBT people should respect majority rights; and that LGBT rights are being imposed from the outside on Georgia. This suggests that advocacy on LGBT rights should be led by local actors. The data also suggests that women will likely be easier to work with on this issue.

**I**n general, a majority of the population are aware of most minority rights, however three quarters of the population are unaware of at least some minority right.

<sup>6</sup> The p-value here was slightly above the conventional level of significance (p=0.06).

<sup>7</sup> The p-value here was slightly above the conventional level of significance (p=0.06).

# Occurrence of discrimination, hate crime and hate speech in Georgian society and who it affects

**M**any groups have been the target of discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech in Georgia. From the riots which erupted on the International Day against Homophobia (IDAHO)<sup>8</sup> during which thousands of people chased after several dozen LGBT rights activists in 2013 to when migrants were chased from a football field earlier this year, hate crime takes place in Georgia. While rather extreme events enter the public eye many years, discrimination and hate speech take place on a regular basis and take more insidious forms. What problems related to these issues do people think are most common for different minority groups. How aware is the population of discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech, and what are their attitudes towards it?

## What problems do people face?

The survey asked respondents what the largest issues a number of different groups face in Georgia. In many cases,<sup>9</sup> the survey also collected information about whether that person was or was not a member of the group noted. This sub-section reports on which problems people think are the most problematic for each group. Where possible, it also provides data disaggregated by whether the respondent is or is not a member of that group.

A plurality of people in Georgia (38%) think that the most significant issues ethnic minorities face is the lack of knowledge of Georgian language. Evidence from focus groups and in-depth interviews with ethnic minorities further suggests not knowing Georgian often constrains their success on the labour market. Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising that not hiring ethnic minorities and troubles in advancing in their careers (9%) are in the top five answers to this question.

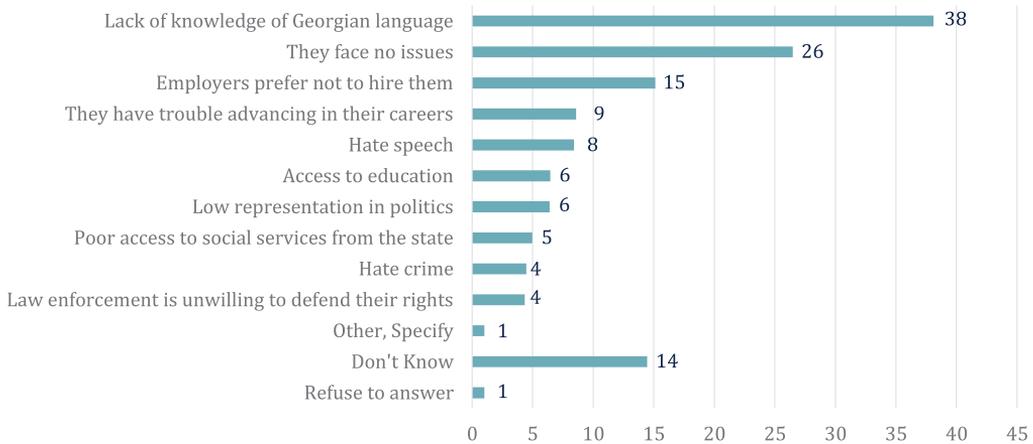
**A** plurality of people in Georgia (38%) think that the most significant issues ethnic minorities face is the lack of knowledge of Georgian language.

<sup>8</sup> At the time of the events, the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia did not include transphobia, and hence it is not referenced here.

<sup>9</sup> Data was not collected on people's sexual identity, as it was considered too sensitive. Not enough people with disabilities participated in the survey to make a reliable statistical inference about the issues they report versus the issues that people without disabilities report.

Figure 12: Issues people report ethnic minorities face

**Could you tell me which of the following issues you think represents the most significant issue that ethnic minorities in Georgia face? Name up to three answers (%)**

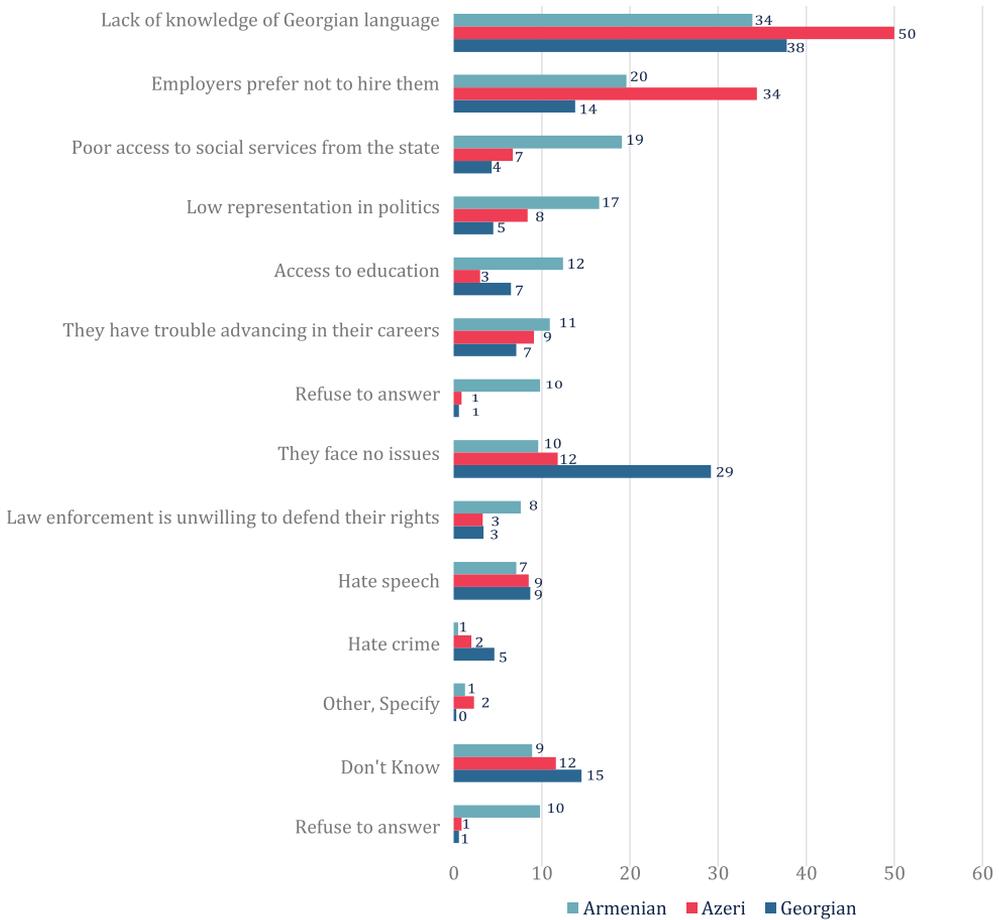


While economic issues are widely recognized as problematic for ethnic minorities, the second most common response to the above question was ethnic minorities face no problems (26%). The fourth most common response was don't know (14%). The data suggests that ethnic Georgians show less empathy when thinking about the minority problems in Georgia: almost three times as many ethnic Georgians report there are no issues for ethnic minorities in Georgia (29%) compared to other ethnic groups. Different issues were also highlighted by different ethnic groups. For ethnic Azeris (50%) lack of knowledge of Georgian language is perceived to be a problem more often than among ethnic Georgians (38%) and Armenians (34%). Ethnic Armenians are more likely to stress issues like poor access to social services from the state (19%) and low representation in politics (17%).

**F**or ethnic Azeris (50%) lack of knowledge of Georgian language is perceived to be a problem more often than among ethnic Georgians (38%) and Armenians (34%). Ethnic Armenians are more likely to stress issues like poor access to social services from the state (19%) and low representation in politics (17%).

Figure 13: Issues people think ethnic minorities face by ethnicity

Could you tell me which of the following issues you think represents the most significant issue that ethnic minorities in Georgia face? Name up to three answers (%)

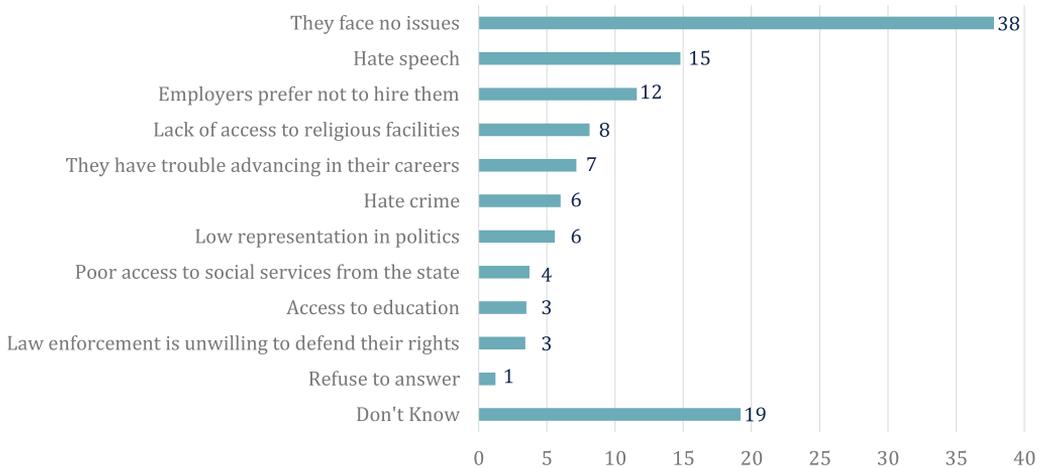


A majority of people report religious minorities face no issue or that they do not know what issues they face. More than a third of people in Georgia (38%) say religious minorities face no issues in Georgia. In addition, 19% report they don't know. Although 57% of people in Georgia could not name any specific issue religious minorities face, hate speech (15%) and employers preferring not to hire (12%) them were mentioned most frequently among those who could provide an issue as a response to the question.

**A**lthough 57% of people in Georgia could not name any specific issue religious minorities face, hate speech (15%) and employers preferring not to hire (12%) them were mentioned most frequently among those who could provide an issue as a response to the question.

Figure 14: Issues people report religious minorities face

**Using this card, could you tell me which of the following issues you think represents the most significant issue that religious minorities in Georgia face? Name up to three answers (%)**

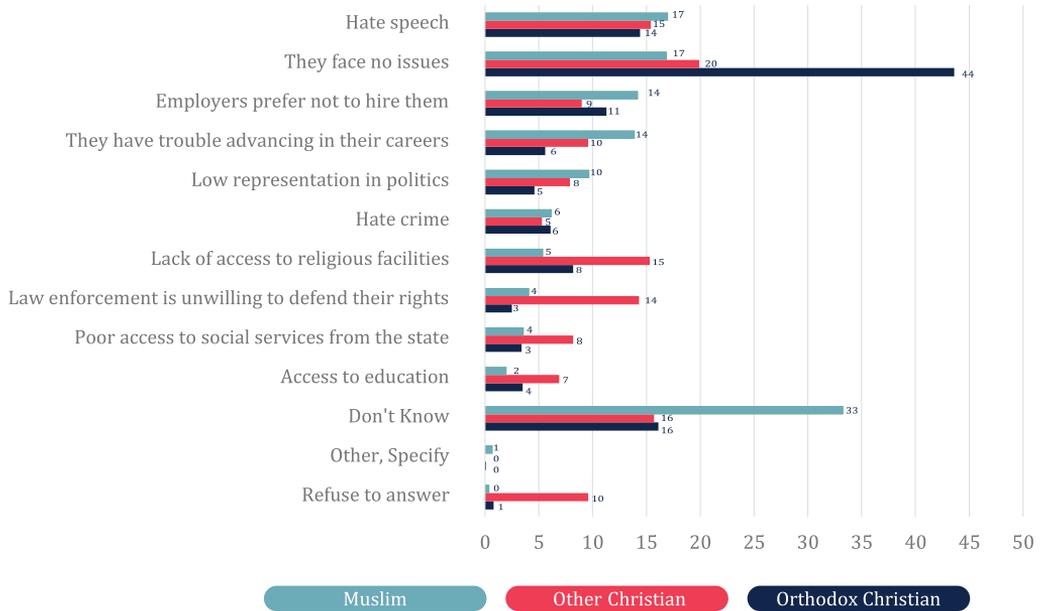


Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with religious minorities suggested that people who are not Orthodox Christians face more obstacles than Orthodox Christians. The survey data confirms that religious minorities and majorities differently assess the issues religious minorities face. Twice as many Orthodox Christians (44%) think that religious minorities face no issues compared with Muslims (17%) and non-Orthodox Christians (20%). Other Christian groups also tend to think more frequently that religious minorities lack access to religious facilities (15%) and law enforcement is unwilling to defend their rights (14%). Interestingly, 33% of Muslims do not know what the most significant issues for religious minorities are.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Religious minorities as used in this paragraph is defined differently than in the rest of the report, as anyone who reported not being an Orthodox Christian is considered a religious minority for the purposes of this section as opposed to anyone who reported that they were not a part of the religious group predominant among their ethnic group.

Figure 15: Issues religious minorities face by religion

Using this card, could you tell me which of the following issues you think represents the most significant issue that religious minorities in Georgia face? Name up to three answers (%)

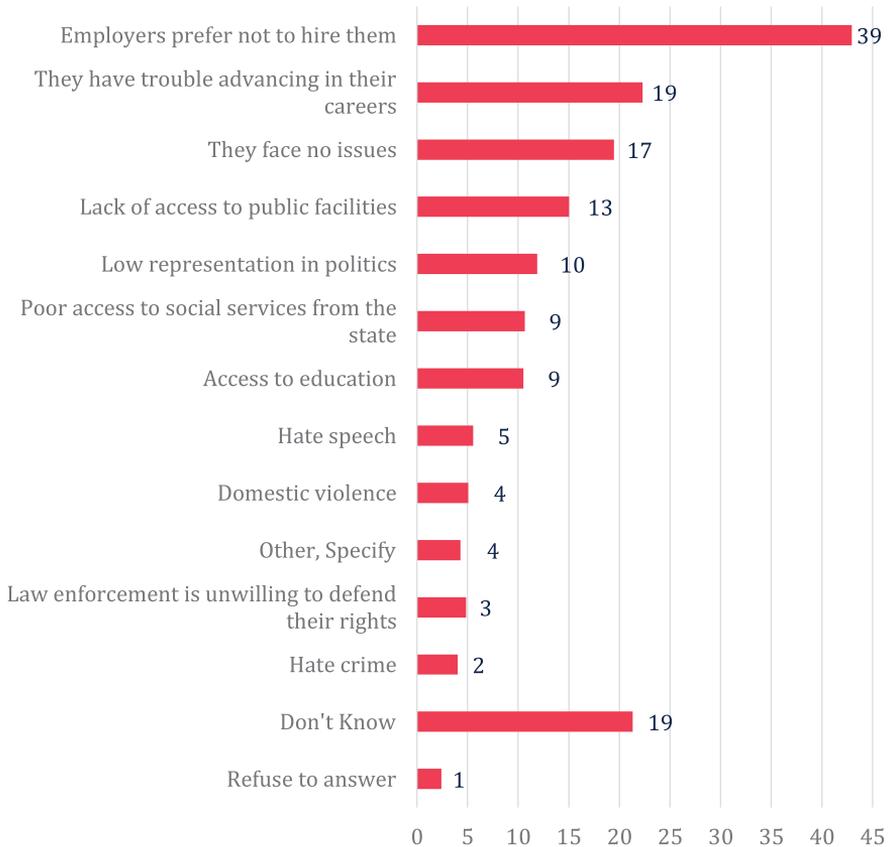


Respondents reported that people with disabilities face a variety of issues in Georgia. The most frequent topics are associated with employment: employers prefer not hire them (39%) and they have trouble advancing in their careers (19%). The lack of access to public facilities, viewed by 13% of the public as one of the main problems, was also noted as an important difficulty in the qualitative data collection. Furthermore, this subject was linked to employment, as people with disabilities face problems of mobility and accessing workplaces.

Respondents reported that people with disabilities face a variety of issues in Georgia. The most frequent topics are associated with employment: employers prefer not hire them (39%) and they have trouble advancing in their careers (19%).

Figure 16: Issues people think people with disabilities face

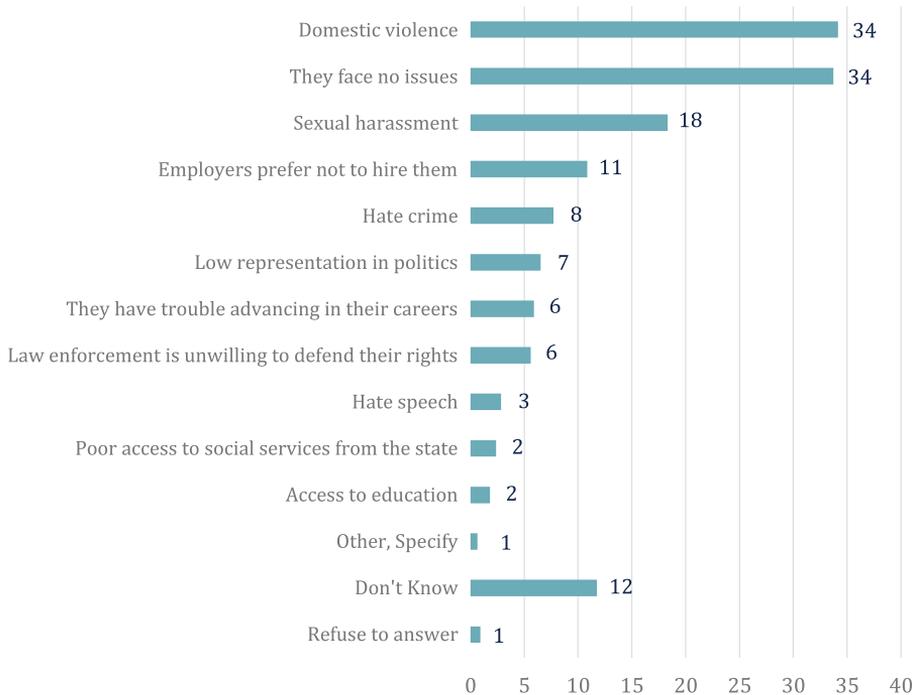
Using this card, could you tell me which of the following issues you think represents the most significant issue that people with disabilities in Georgia face? Name up to three answers (%)



With issues that women face, one third think women face no particular issue in Georgia (34%), and a further 12% reported they did not know what the most significant issue women face was. Among the population that named a specific issue, the most common was domestic violence (34%). Sexual harassment (18%) and employers' preferences when hiring (11%) were also reported relatively frequently.

Figure 17: Which issues do people think women face?

Using this card, could you tell me which of the following issues you think represents the most significant issue that women in Georgia face? Name up to three answers (%)

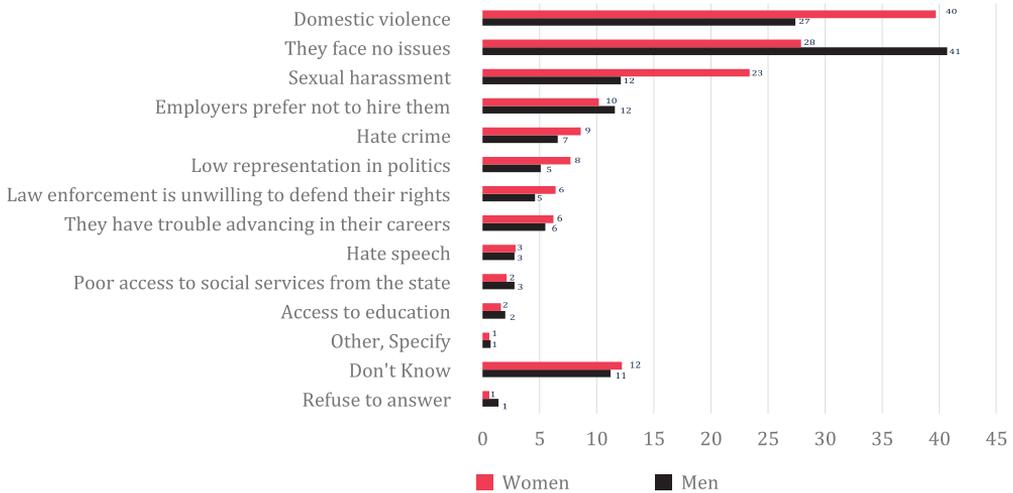


Men and women differ significantly when speaking about women’s challenges in Georgia. While 41% of men say there are no issues facing women, significantly fewer women (28%) think so. Women more frequently stress domestic violence (40%) and sexual harassment (23%).

**M**en and women differ significantly when speaking about women's challenges in Georgia. While 41% of men say there are no issues facing women, significantly fewer women (28%) think so. Women more frequently stress domestic violence (40%) and sexual harassment (23%).

Figure 18: Which issues do people think women face by sex?

Using this card, could you tell me which of the following issues you think represents the most significant issue that women in Georgia face? Name up to three answers (%)

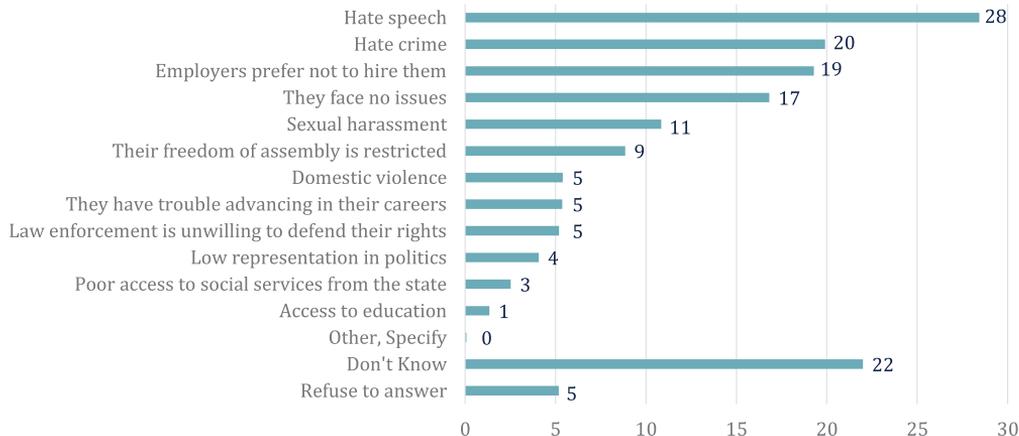


When asked the same question about LGBT people, the responses are rather distinct compared to the problems other groups are perceived to face. People in Georgia think LGBT people are frequently subject to hate speech (28%) and hate crime (20%). They also think that LGBT people have problems with access to the labour market as employers prefer not to hire them (19%).

People in Georgia think LGBT people are frequently subject to hate speech (28%) and hate crime (20%). They also think that LGBT people have problems with access to the labour market as employers prefer not to hire them (19%).

Figure 19: Which issues do people think LGBT people face?

Using this card, could you tell me which of the following issues you think represents the most significant issue that LGBT people in Georgia face? Name up to three answers (%)



The above data and analysis suggests a number of findings. First, a large segment of Georgian society report that minority groups do not face any significant challenges. This was most common with religious minorities and women. This generally suggests a low level of awareness among a significant share of the population. Second, members of the group asked about are significantly less likely to report they face no issues or don't know compared with people who are not part of this group, with the exception of Muslims in relation to religious minority issues. This suggests that majority groups often lack a clear understanding of the issues their fellow citizens that are part of minority groups face. Third, people respond distinctively when asked about LGBT people and religious minorities, reporting that hate speech and hate crime are relatively more important issues for them in comparison to other groups.

A large segment of Georgian society report that minority groups do not face any significant challenges.

### Perceptions of hate speech

To understand which groups people think are most affected by hate speech in Georgia, several questions were asked, including who is most likely to be the victim of hate speech, how often different groups are affected by it, and how important of a problem hate speech is in Georgia. A plurality of people in Georgia (45%) think that hate speech is an important problem. Older people (36+) and people in urban areas outside Tbilisi are significantly less likely to report that hate speech is a problem. Ethnic minorities are significantly less likely to report that hate speech is a problem as well.

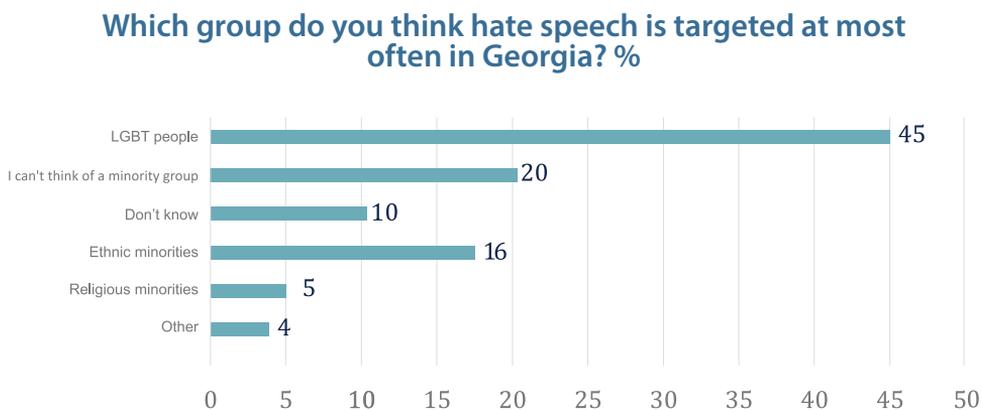
A plurality of people in Georgia (45%) think that hate speech is an important problem.

When asked which group is targeted by hate speech most in Georgia, the most common response was LGBT people. The next most common response was "I cannot think of a minority group that is targeted by hate speech most" and "don't know". This suggests that people are generally aware

When asked which group is targeted by hate speech most in Georgia, the most common response was LGBT people.

of the problems LGBT people face in the country. However, the large share of “don’t know” and “I cannot think of a specific group” responses suggests a lack of awareness among a third of the public.

Figure 20: Which group do you think hate speech is targeted at most often in Georgia?



Respondents were also asked about a number of groups individually, and how often or rarely they think the group experiences hate speech. The results mirror the above, with more people responding that LGBT people experience hate speech often or sometimes more than any other group. After LGBT people, the general pattern is that religious minorities, groups that are generally present in the region as a result of migration, and then groups that have historically lived in the Caucasus follow. Interestingly, women are not among the top targets of hate speech in the public’s view. Although relatively few people think that people with disabilities face hate speech often, a person with a disability noted during a qualitative interview, “Hate speech is part of our everyday life, ingrained, firmly established.” This may suggest a lack of awareness among people without disabilities of the issues people with disabilities face. However, this finding should be taken with appropriate caution as it is the perspective of a single individual.

“Hate speech is part of our everyday life, ingrained, firmly established”, a person with a disability noted during a qualitative interview.

Figure 21: Which groups are perceived to be targeted by hate speech?

### How often or rarely do you think that the following group is the target of hate speech, often, sometimes, rarely, or never? (%)



### Perceptions of Hate Crime

The same questions noted above were asked about hate crime in addition to hate speech. Compared to hate speech (45%) somewhat surprisingly, fewer people (35%) think that hate crime is a problem. Older people (36+) and

people in urban areas outside Tbilisi are significantly less likely to report that hate crime is a problem in Georgia. Women are also more likely to think that hate crime is a problem in Georgia. Ethnic minorities are significantly less likely to report that hate crime is a problem in the country. Religious minorities are no more or less likely than Orthodox Georgians to report that hate crime is an issue.

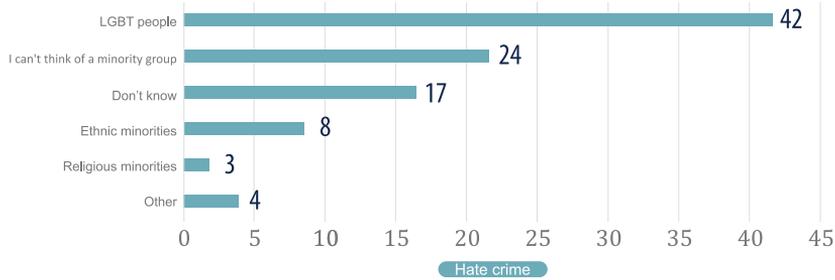
When asked which group is targeted by hate crime most in Georgia, the most common response was LGBT people. The next most common response was "I cannot think of a minority group targeted by hate crime" followed by "don't know". This suggests that people are generally aware of the problems LGBT people face in the country. However, the large share of "don't know" and "I cannot think of a specific group" responses may suggest a lack of awareness among a sizable share of the public.

Compared to hate speech (45%) somewhat surprisingly, fewer people (35%) think that hate crime is a problem.

When asked which group is targeted by hate crime most in Georgia, the most common response was LGBT people.

Figure 22: Which group is the target of hate crime in Georgia most?

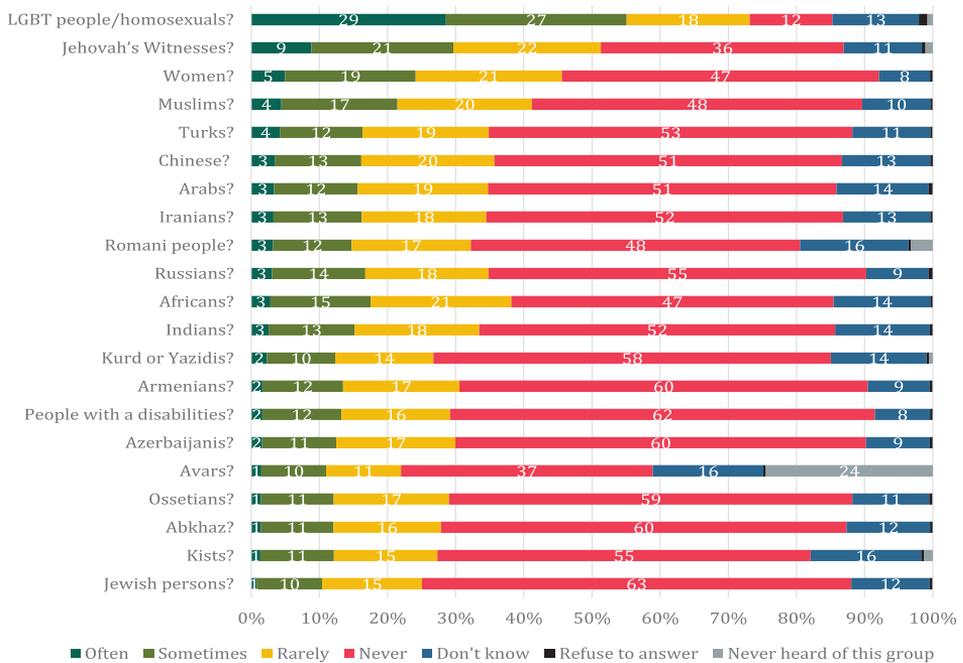
Which group do you think hate crime is targeted at most often in Georgia? (%)



Respondents were also asked about a number of groups individually, and how often or rarely they think the group experiences hate crime. The results mirror the above, with people responding that LGBT people experience hate crime often or sometimes more than any other group. After LGBT people, the general pattern is that religious minorities, groups that are generally present in the region as a result of migration, and groups that have historically lived in the Caucasus follow. Interestingly, women are perceived to experience hate crime at a relatively high rate compared with hate speech. This likely stems from the high profile cases of violence against women that have taken place in recent years as well as the general increase in awareness of the problems women face in society.

Figure 23: How often are different groups perceived to be the target of hate crime?

How often or rarely do you think that the following group is the target of hate crime, often, sometimes, rarely, or never? (%)



## Awareness of high profile incidents motivated by animus towards minorities

The middling importance people attach to hate crime and hate speech is reflected in the general level of awareness of high profile incidents that had the victims' identities at the centre of the crime. Respondents were asked whether they had heard of the following incidents:

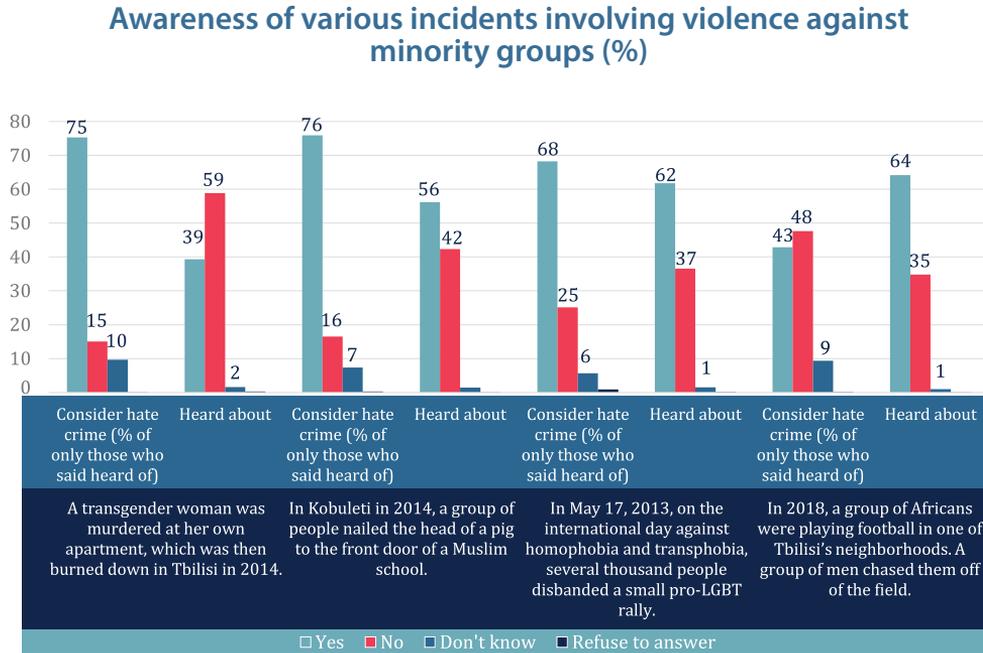
- In 2014 when a transgender woman was murdered and then burned inside of her apartment;
- In 2014 when a group of people nailed the head of a pig to the front door of a madrassa in Kobuleti prior to its opening;
- In 2018, when a group of migrants were playing football in one of Tbilisi's neighbourhoods, and a group of men chased them off of the field and;
- In 2013, when a riot occurred in response to a pro-LGBT rights rally on the International Day Against Homophobia.

Overall, 21% of the public had heard of all four events, 25% three of the four, 22% two of four, 18% one incident, and 14% reported having not heard of any of the events. A total of 39% of the population was aware of the incident with the transgender women, 56% of the incident in Kobuleti, 64% the incident on the football courts in Tbilisi, and 62% the riots on the International Day Against Homophobia. Older people (66+), people outside Tbilisi, and ethnic minorities were significantly less aware of these incidents.

Awareness of each incident is correlated with higher levels of thinking that hate crime and hate speech are significant problems in Georgia. Again, this suggests that awareness raising activities may be a valuable path towards decreasing the prevalence of discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech in Georgia. However, again caution is warranted, because the type of people who are more likely to be informed about these issues are also likely to be the type of people who would generally think that discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech are problems. In other words, it is possible that rather than awareness of these events leading to a greater level of tolerance, more tolerant people may pay more attention to these types of events and hence show greater awareness. In all likelihood, some combination of both processes is likely at work. This issue aside, the focus groups that focused on messaging surrounding LGBT people suggested that people, at least in part, blamed LGBT people for the events of May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013. They argued that minorities should not bother the majority and that holding protests near religious facilities was particularly offensive. For people who agree with this sentiment, awareness raising may be counter-productive, and hence caution is warranted.

Individuals who had heard about the incidents were asked whether they considered each incident a case of hate crime. Among those who had heard of the incidents, a majority thought that the incidents were hate crime, with the exception of the football field case, on which opinion was split.

Figure 24: Awareness of various incidents involving violence against minority groups



When it comes to awareness of the occurrence of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime, a plurality think it is a problem in Georgia. People generally think that the LGBT community is at the largest risk. People’s attitudes towards a group on the question about business discussed above mirror their sense of how likely that group is to be a victim of hate crime or hate speech, with less liked groups more likely to be thought to be the victims of hate speech and hate crime. When it comes to awareness, about a quarter of the public is well aware of events which received extensive media coverage, while about one in six are entirely unaware of these events. Those who are aware are more likely to think that hate speech and hate crime are problems in Georgia. The above data suggests that raising awareness about incidents of hate crime and hate speech may be a path towards increasing how much importance the public places on the problems of hate speech and hate crime in Georgia.

**W**hen it comes to awareness of the occurrence of discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime, a plurality think it is a problem in Georgia. People generally think that the LGBT community is at the largest risk.

# Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech

Georgia has a variety of pieces of legislation which protects minorities from discrimination. The 2014 law on the elimination of all forms of discrimination specifically provides legal protections for discrimination on the basis of gender identity, ethnicity, among other attributes. Yet, how aware are people of legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech? And do people generally support the legislation?

## Discrimination

In 2014, prior to signing the Association Agreement with the European Union, Georgia passed the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. Prior to the law's passage, large scale protests emerged in response, and particularly surrounding the protection of LGBT people. Although large scale protests emerged in response to the law, relatively few people are aware of the law today: only 23% of the population reported they were aware of the law. Among those who are aware of the law, equal shares have a positive (38%) or neutral (38%) attitude, and a minority hold a negative (14%) view.

Generally speaking, people that are aware of the law think it was passed to help Georgia meet the requirements of the Association Agreement (75%). People are slightly less likely to think the law was passed to eliminate all forms of discrimination (67%). People who are aware of the law appear to be moderately informed about it. Four questions were asked about what the law contained:

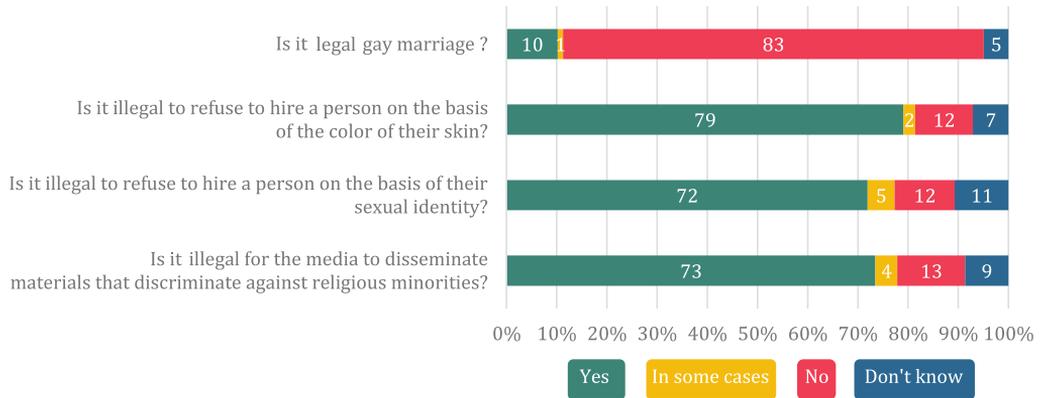
- According to the anti-discrimination law is same sex marriage legal or illegal? (It is not legal according to the anti-discrimination law)
- According to the anti-discrimination law is it legal or illegal to refuse to hire a person on the basis of the colour of their skin? (It is not legal according 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 responses are depicted on the chart below. Overall 45% correctly answered all four questions. A further 32% answered three of four questions accurately, and 14% two of four questions accurately. Only 8% answered only one or all of the questions inaccurately or did not know the response to any question.

Generally speaking, people that are aware of the law think it was passed to help Georgia meet the requirements of the Association Agreement (75%). People are slightly less likely to think the law was passed to eliminate all forms of discrimination (67%).

Figure 25: Awareness of the anti-discrimination law's content

### According to the anti-discrimination law... (%)

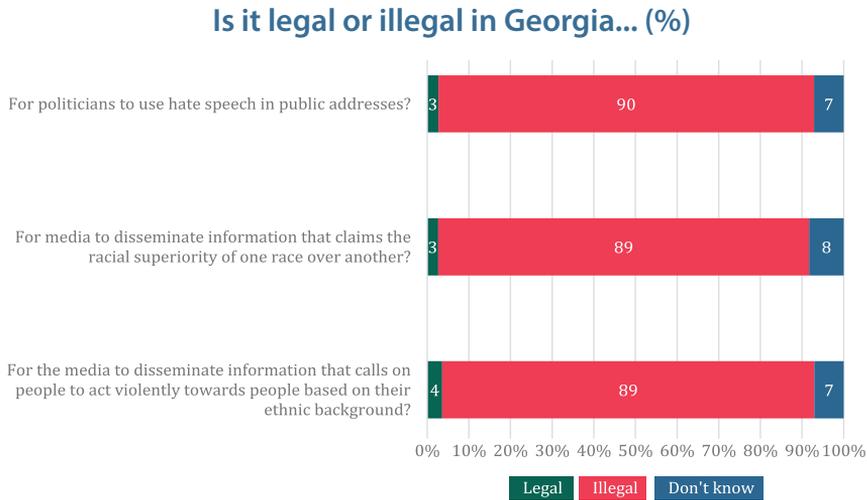


### Hate speech

Respondents on the survey were asked a number of questions about hate speech legislation, specifically focusing on whether it was legal or illegal and whether respondents thought it should or should not be legal. Generally, the results suggest a moderately high level of awareness of hate speech legislation, and strong support for it. The vast majority of people think it is illegal for the media to incite people to violence towards people based on their ethnic background; for the media to disseminate information that claims the racial superiority of one group over another; and for politicians to use hate speech in public addresses.

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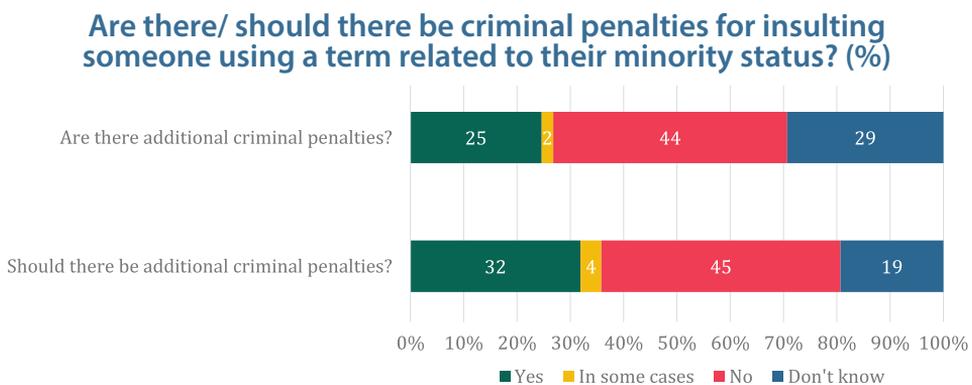
Figure 26: Awareness of the legality of different types of hate speech



At the same time, a large majority of the public reported that all three of these should be illegal. In reality, legislation prevents the media from incitement of violence towards people based on their ethnic background, and from disseminating material that claims the racial superiority of one group over another.<sup>11</sup> Legislation only prevents politicians from using hate speech in specific circumstances.<sup>12</sup>

Respondents were also asked whether there were and whether there should be criminal penalties for insulting someone using a term related to their minority status. In general, more people thought this was illegal, but relatively few people thought it should be. During focus groups and in-depth interviews, participants often suggested that people should deal with such issues themselves. This attitude likely explains the discrepancy between widespread support for criminalizing the dissemination of hate speech in the media and by politicians, while not supporting the criminalization of hate speech among ordinary citizens.

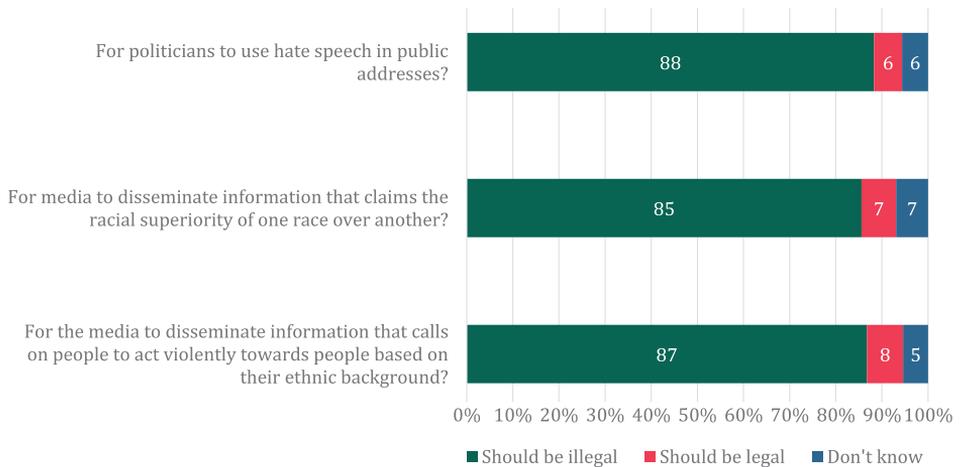
Figure 27: Awareness and attitudes towards hate speech legislation



<sup>11</sup> See *Law of Georgia on Broadcasting 2016*. Available at: <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/download/32866/39/en/pdf>

<sup>12</sup> 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."

## Do you think it should be legal or illegal in Georgia to ... (%)



The above findings suggest that there would be widespread support for anti-hate speech laws related to politicians and the media. However, there is likely to be relatively little support for the criminalization of hate speech among regular citizens. In any case, awareness of legislation about hate crime and hate speech is relatively low.

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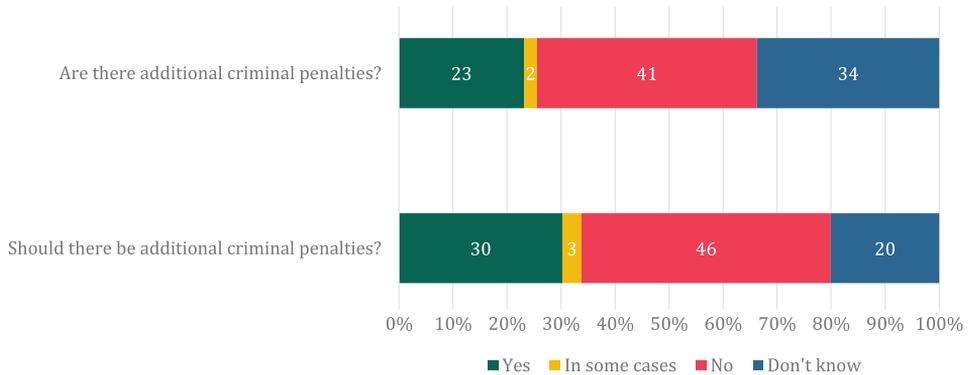
## Hate crime

While people think legislation should restrict the media and politicians from engaging in hate speech, at least along the dimensions measured in the above noted questions, people are less likely to think that additional penalties should be provided for crime motivated by animus towards a minority group. The survey asked whether there are and should be criminal penalties for committing a crime motivated by the fact that the person was of a particular minority group in addition to the normal criminal penalty. Only 23% reported that there was an additional penalty, and 30% that there should be. In contrast, 41% thought there was not such a law and 46% that there should not be such a law. Importantly, a large share of people (34%) reported that they did not know whether there was an additional penalty or whether there should be an additional criminal penalty (20%).

**A** large share of people (34%) reported that they did not know whether there was an additional penalty or whether there should be an additional criminal penalty (20%).

Figure 28: Awareness and attitudes towards hate crime in Georgia?

### Is there/ should there be an additional criminal penalty in Georgia for committing a crime that was motivated by the fact that the victim of it was a minority? (%)



The data presented in this section suggests that people are largely unaware of existing legislation related to discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. While the data suggest that people are generally for restrictions on the use of hate speech in the media and by politicians, they are ambivalent or against the imposition of criminal penalties for regular citizens for the use of hate speech. People are also unlikely to think that there should be an additional penalty for hate crime on top of the normal penalty for committing the crime. Very few people are aware of the law on the elimination of all forms of discrimination. Those that are aware however are reasonably well informed, and generally positive about the law.

People are largely unaware of existing legislation related to discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech.

### Existing redress mechanisms and their effectiveness

A number of redress mechanisms for victims of hate crime and hate speech exist in Georgia. Yet, if people do not know about institutions or would not turn to them in case of need, redress mechanisms are unlikely to protect those in need. To provide an understanding of awareness of the institutions that people can turn to in cases of discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech, the survey asked whether people **could** and **would** turn to the following institutions if they experienced hate crime:

- Public Defender’s Office
- The courts
- The police
- NGOs

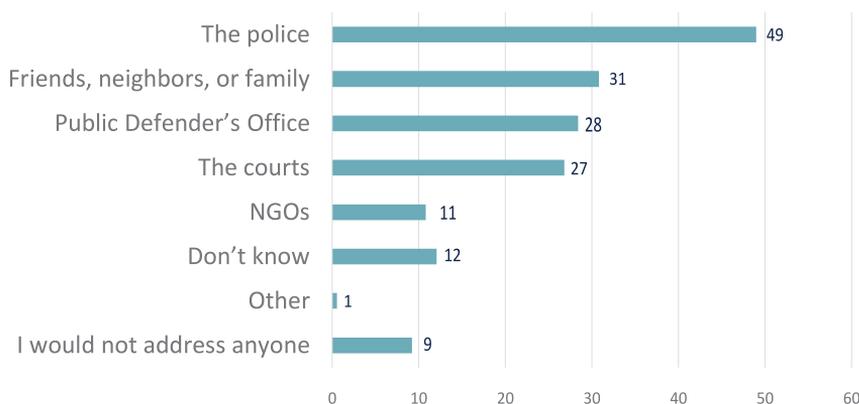
The police were the most commonly recognized institution that could be turned to (62%), followed by the courts (51%) and the Public Defender’s Office (50%).

The results suggest that about half of people are aware that they can turn to the above institutions. The police were the most commonly recognized institution that could be turned to (62%), followed by the courts (51%) and the Public Defender’s Office (50%). While people are generally aware of the fact that they could turn to the above institutions, they are less likely to

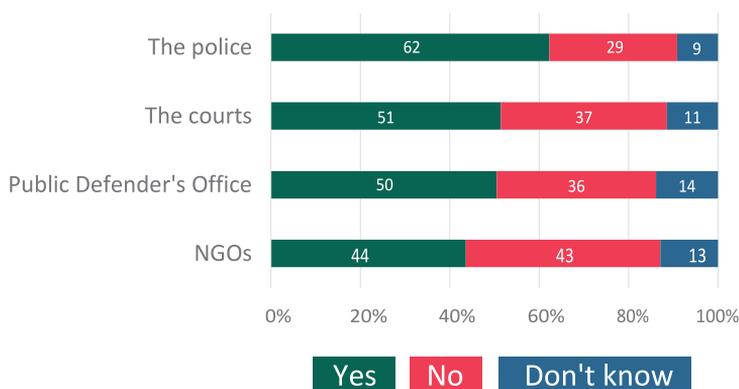
do so. About half (49%) said they would address the police, 28% the Public Defender's Office, and 27% the courts. Only 11% said they would turn to NGOs. Many people do not know who they would address (12%) and about one in ten (9%) report they would not address anyone. Importantly, the share that said they would turn to friends, neighbours, or family was comparable to the share that would turn to other formal complaint mechanisms, besides the police.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 29: Awareness of redress mechanisms

**If you were discriminated against or the victim of hate crime or hate speech, which of the following institutions or groups would you address? (%)**



**If you were discriminated against or the victim of hate crime or hate speech, could you address the following institutions or groups? (%)**



In terms of the awareness of being able to turn to the PDO in cases of discrimination, older people (65+), ethnic Armenians and Azeris, and people outside Tbilisi are less aware. People with tertiary education are more aware. With being able to turn to the courts, religious minorities and people outside of Tbilisi are less aware, while people with tertiary education are more aware. When it comes to turning to the police, older people (65+) and people in urban areas besides Tbilisi are less aware. People with tertiary education and Azeris are more aware rela-

<sup>13</sup> Respondents were allowed to select up to three different institutions or groups they would turn to. Hence, the numbers in the right panel do not sum to 100%.

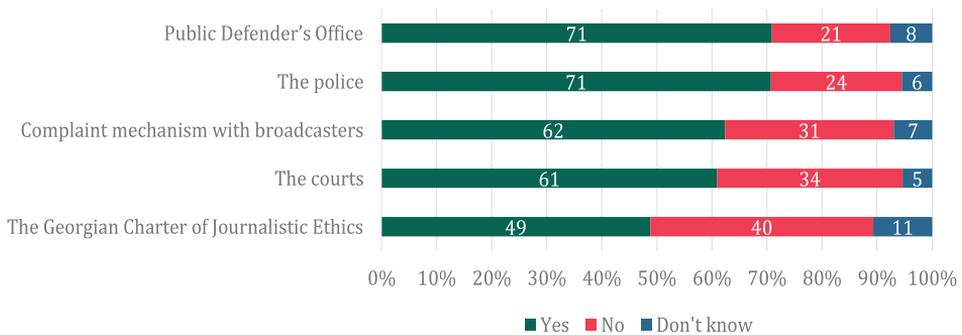
tive to either ethnic Georgians or Armenians. Older people and Azeris are less aware that they can turn to NGOs, while women are more aware that they can turn to NGOs.

No specific demographic group is more or less likely to report that they **would not** address anyone. However, a number of groups are significantly more likely to report that they do not know who they would address. Ethnic Georgians are more likely to report they do not know who they would address than ethnic minorities, and people outside Tbilisi are significantly more likely to report they do not know who they would address than people in Tbilisi.

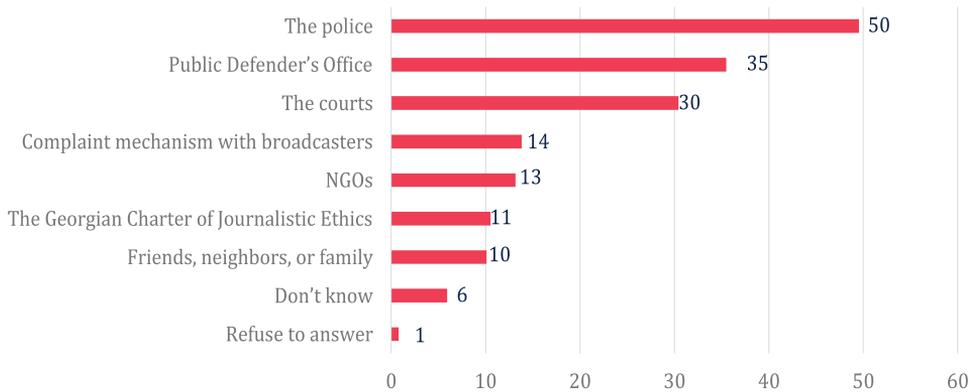
In addition, respondents were asked whether they would address an institution about hate speech if they saw it disseminated through the media. If respondents reported they would address an institutions, they were asked which ones they could and would address. Two thirds of the population (66%) reported that they would not address any institution if they saw hate speech disseminated through the media, and a further 15% did not know whether they would. Among the 20% of people who reported they would address them, 71% said they could address the Public Defender’s Office, 71% the police, 62% the complaint mechanism within broadcasters, 61% the courts, and 49% the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics. Of those who said they would address an institution, the police (49%) was the most common institution the respondents said they would address, followed by the Public Defender’s Office (35%), and the courts (30%). Only 14% and 10% reported they would address the broadcasters’ complaint mechanisms and the Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics, respectively.

Figure 30: Awareness of media-related redress mechanisms

**If you noticed hate speech disseminated through the media, could you address the following institutions? (% of those who reported they would address someone)**



**If there was an incident of hate speech disseminated through the media, which of the following groups would you address? (% of those who reported they would address someone)**



The above data suggest that generally people are aware of where they can turn in cases of discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. Yet, a significant share of people reported they could not or would not turn to the Public Defender's Office, an important institution in combatting discrimination. What are the reasons for this? One is a lack of awareness regarding the PDO. When asked, "Have you heard of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia" prior to any question which mentioned the PDO, only 53% of the population reported they had. Importantly, ethnic minorities were significantly less likely to report they had heard of the PDO. Besides not having heard of the PDO, among those who said they knew about it, only two thirds (65%) thought the PDO had a role in addressing discrimination, either in general or in some cases. This suggests that only 35% of the public are aware of the PDO's role in combatting discrimination. Ethnic minorities and people in rural areas are significantly less likely to be aware of the PDO. People with tertiary education are more likely overall.

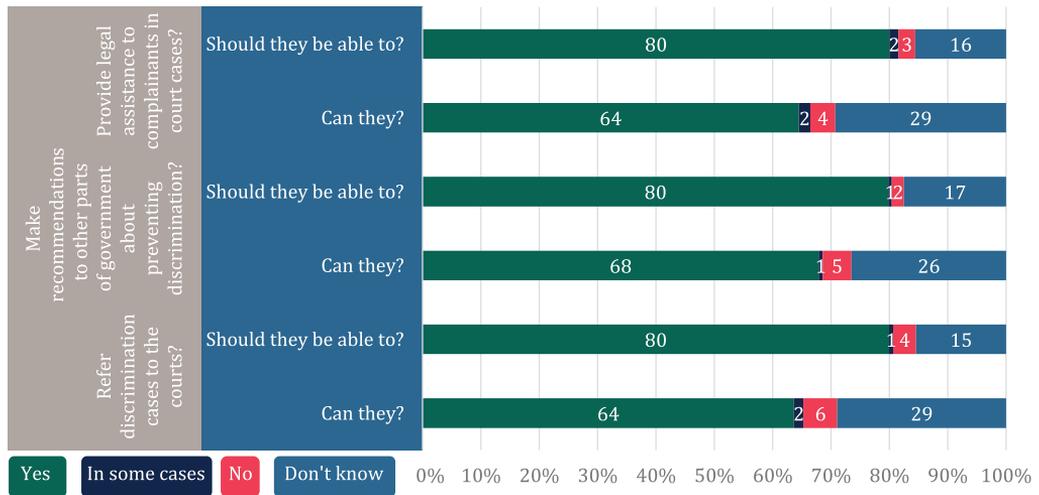
Among those who reported they had heard of the PDO, a number of questions were asked about what the PDO's role was and whether people thought they should have that role. About two thirds of people reported that the PDO could:

1. Refer discrimination cases to the courts (It cannot)
2. Make recommendations to other branches of government about preventing discrimination (It can)
3. Provide legal assistance to complainants in court cases (It cannot).

Less than 5% of people answered correctly to the two incorrect statements above. Around one quarter responded "don't know." These facts re-affirm that knowledge of the PDO's role in Georgia is relatively low. Interestingly, whether or not people have accurate information about the PDO, they generally support the PDO having the ability to do the three things asked about. This suggests that if the two activities noted above which are currently not within the PDO's mandate were to be proposed as part of it, the public would likely support it.

Figure 31: Knowledge and attitudes towards the PDO's role in Georgia

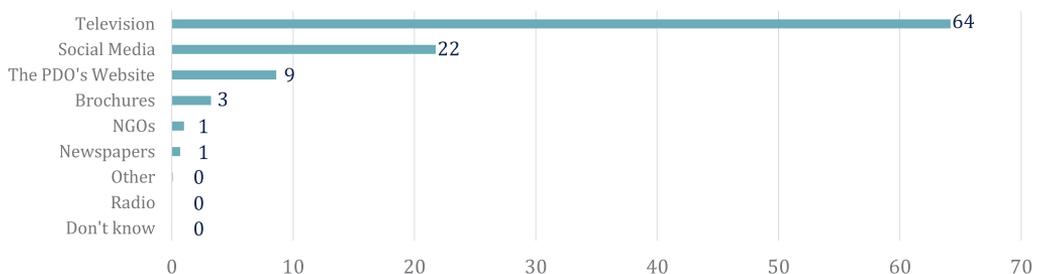
### Knowledge and attitudes towards the Public Defender's role in Georgia (%)



While awareness is relatively low, a majority (66%) among those who are aware of the PDO reported that they would like to receive more information about the PDO. Older people are significantly less likely than younger people to want additional information about the PDO. No other demographic characteristics were statistically significant predictors of whether or not people wanted additional information about the PDO. The majority of those who want to receive more information want to receive it from television (64%) and social media (22%).

Figure 32: Where do people want to get more information about the PDO from?

### Where would you like to receive information [about the PDO] from? (% of those who want to receive more information and are aware of the PDO)



Overall, the public is moderately informed about existing redress mechanisms. Still, many people, even if informed, would be hesitant about using redress mechanisms, besides the police. About half of the public is aware of the PDO, and about a third know about its mandate to deal with discrimination. However, people do not have more specific knowledge about the PDO generally speaking.

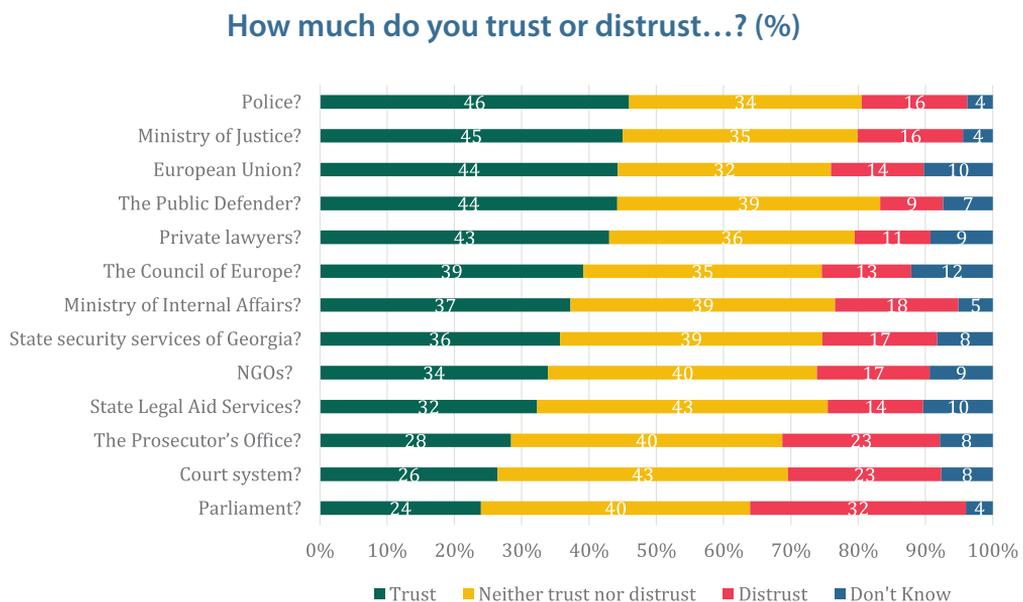
Overall, the public is moderately informed about existing redress mechanisms. Still, many people, even if informed, would be hesitant about using redress mechanisms, besides the police.

# Attitudes towards actors involved in combatting discrimination

To improve the situation surrounding discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech in Georgia action is required. As part of this legislation will surely play a key role. However, social change is also important if the situation is to improve. Hence, social campaigns will likely be an important factor in moving the needle on the issues. Moreover, legislation without public trust in the institutions charged with enforcing it are likely to be ineffective. Hence, an understanding of which actors the public trust in dealing with this issue is important to understanding who will be most effective in delivering messages that counter hate speech, hate crime, and discrimination.

To understand this issue, the survey asked individuals whether they trusted 13 different actors and what they thought of their performance on combatting discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime. The results suggest that the police, Ministry of Justice, European Union, Public Defender's Office, and private lawyers are the most trusted institutions asked about. Slightly fewer people reported trusting the Council of Europe, in part because more people responded "don't know" than on most of the other institutions previously mentioned. The next most trusted institution was the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Security Services of Georgia, NGOs, and the state legal aid services. The least trusted institutions were the Prosecutor's Office, the Court System, and the Parliament.

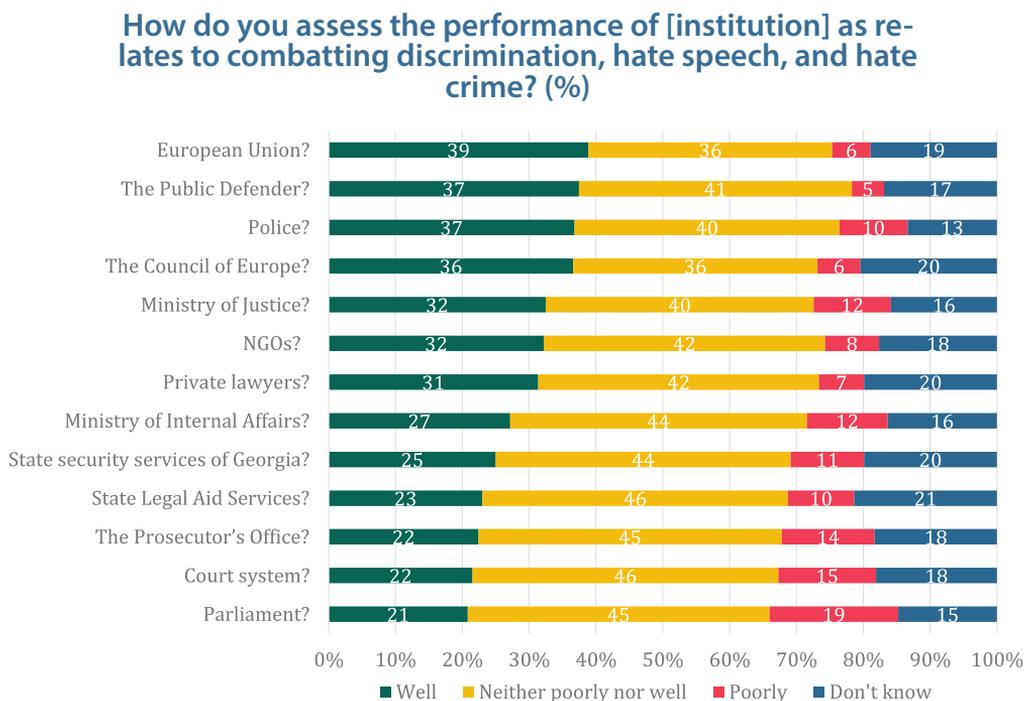
Figure 33: Trust in institutions



Overall, people outside Tbilisi, with tertiary education, and ethnic Azeris are more trusting of the institutions asked about. People with tertiary education, ethnic Azeris, and religious minorities report a higher level of trust in the PDO. Ethnic Armenians are significantly less likely than either ethnic Georgians or ethnic Azeris to trust the PDO. Ethnic Azeris and people with tertiary education are significantly more likely to trust the Council of Europe.

When it comes to performance, the public is generally less certain, with 13% to 20% reporting they don't know how institutions are doing. Generally, the European Union, the Public Defender's Office, the police, and the Council of Europe have the highest performance rating. Parliament, the court system, and the Prosecutor's Office are assessed as performing worse than other institutions. Ethnic Azeris, people in rural areas, and people with tertiary education rate the performance of the institutions higher on average than other groups. Ethnic Azeris rate the performance of the PDO higher than average, while ethnic Armenians rate the PDO lower than average. Other demographic predictors provided no clear distinctions.

Figure 34: Performance of institutions as relates combatting discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime



Although the police are generally one of the more trusted groups, and perceived to be performing at a relatively high level, some qualitative interviews suggested issues with police performance. In an interview with an expert on Roma issues, the respondent noted that there was a lack of trust in the Roma community towards police. Because of this lack of trust, members of the Roma community did not seek out the police when they faced challenges. In interviews with government officials, doubt was expressed about the legitimacy of some LGBT people and particularly trans people's claims to be being discriminated against or the victims of crime, while an interview with an LGBT person highlighted that the police often do not

take claims about harassment seriously. Hence, trust building activity between police and the Roma community and the police and the LGBT community would likely be positive.

The Prosecutor's Office in contrast is poorly trusted, relative to other institutions and also has a relatively low performance rating on these issues. Despite this, in in-depth interviews, prosecutors appeared to be well informed about hate speech, hate crime, and discrimination in Georgia. Still, they also recognized that their institutions experiences issues related to trust, particularly with transgender people. The prosecutors noted that due to a lack of trust in both the police and prosecutors, transgender people often do not report crimes or stop cooperating with investigations. Hence, trust building between prosecutors and the LGBT community in Georgia would also likely be positive.

Besides providing an up to date picture on attitudes towards discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech, this research is aimed at providing a baseline for the No Hate campaign, which is being implemented by the Council of Europe. The survey suggests that 27% of the public claim they have heard of the "No Hate" campaign. The results of a regression analysis suggest that people with tertiary education are more aware of the campaign than other groups. People who are aware of the campaign also generally report greater levels of tolerance as measured through the indexes discussed in previous sections of this report.

The above data and analysis suggest that the PDO and Council of Europe enjoy a reasonable degree of trust, and relatively high performance ratings on the issues of hate crime, hate speech, and discrimination more broadly. This suggests they are appropriate actors to implement activities at combatting discrimination. The Prosecutor's Office and the courts in contrast are doing relatively poorly. This suggest the need to increase the emphasis they place on building public trust, particularly as relates combatting discrimination. Despite the high degree of trust enjoyed by the police, issues related to trust are present between the police and the Roma and LGBT communities.



## Conclusions and recommendations

The above findings suggest a number of recommendations for actors working towards the elimination of discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech.

The findings of the study suggest that women and men are generally aware of the larger minority groups (e.g. Armenians and Azeris) in Georgian society. However, when asked what the first minority group that came to mind was, 37% responded “don’t know” or “I cannot think of one.” Further, 27% of people reported they had never heard of the Avar, a North Caucasian ethnic group with a population of several thousand people in Georgia, suggesting people are less aware of smaller ethnic minority groups in Georgia.

A slight majority of people (56%) think diversity is positive for the country. However, attitudes are less positive when it comes to religious diversity, which 46% think is positive. When asked why diversity is positive or negative, people who think diversity is negative for the country generally reported that it “threatens our diversity and traditions”. In general, women and ethnic Georgians and Armenians are more ambivalent and uncertain about whether diversity is positive for the country.

In general, attitudes are more positive towards people with disabilities than any other minority group. Attitudes towards religious minorities, migrants from countries outside Europe, and LGBT people are generally more negative. Only one in five people would approve of someone like them doing business with a homosexual. Attitudes towards ethnic minorities from the Caucasus fall somewhere in-between the high approval of people with disabilities and low approval of LGBT people.

People’s attitudes towards different minority groups generally mirror their perceptions of who is most likely to be the victim of hate crime and hate speech. People think LGBT people are the most common victims of hate crime and hate speech. The next most common group was Jehovah’s Witnesses and migrants from outside Europe. Ethnic minorities from the Caucasus were the next most common groups mentioned, followed by people with disabilities.

In general, majority groups’ perceptions of the issues minorities face differ significantly from the perceptions that minority groups perceive they face. Twice as many Orthodox Christians (44%) think that religious minorities face no issues compared with Muslims (17%) and non-Orthodox Christians (20%). While 41% of men say there are no issues facing women, significantly fewer women (28%) think so. This suggests that majority groups often lack a clear understanding of the issues their fellow citizens that are part of minority groups face. Almost three times as many ethnic Georgians report there are no issues for ethnic minorities in Georgia (29%) compared to ethnic Armenians (10%) and ethnic Azeris (12%). This suggests a lack of understanding of the challenges that minorities face among majority groups.

About one in three people think that hate crime is a problem in Georgia, while one in two think hate speech is. Older people (36+) and people in urban areas outside Tbilisi are significantly less likely to report that hate speech and crime are a problem in Georgia. Ethnic minorities are significantly less likely to report that hate crime and hate speech are problems in the country. Religious minorities are no more or less likely than Orthodox Georgians to report that hate crime is an issue. Women are more likely to think that hate crime is a problem in Georgia.

Awareness of large scale incidents motivated by animus towards minorities is middling. About two in three people were aware of the incident in Tbilisi in 2018, in which a group of migrants

were chased from a football field. A similar share was aware of the International Day Against Homophobia riots which took place in 2013. About half (56%) had heard about the case in Kobuleti in 2014 when a group of residents nailed a pig head to the door of a madrasa, and 39% reported they were aware of the incident in 2014 when a transgender woman was murdered and then was burned in her apartment. While a majority of the public that has heard of these incidents believes the latter three incidents were cases of hate crime, opinion is split on the incident on the football field in 2018.

When it comes to the rights of minorities and vulnerable groups, people are generally aware of them, but are less aware of political rights. From a list of 14 rights asked about, the average number of rights recognized was 10. While 92% of people recognize minorities' right to access education, only 47% recognize their right to hold protests. People generally think it is important to protect the rights of minorities, with the exception of LGBT people. More people think it is not important to protect the rights of LGBT people than think it is important. Armenians, women, and people in rural areas are slightly more likely to be ambivalent about the protection of rights in general as well as the rights of LGBT people specifically.

People are generally moderately informed about Georgian legislation against discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. For instance, only one in five people in Georgia is aware of the 2014 Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. The data suggest that people think that hate speech should be prohibited in the media and among politicians in public addresses. Yet, attitudes are divided over whether hate speech and hate crime legislation should impose criminal penalties on ordinary citizens.

When it comes to existing redress mechanisms, half of people are generally aware of the fact that they can turn to the police, the courts, and the Public Defender's Office if they are the victim of hate crime or hate speech. Yet, a smaller share of people would actually turn to these organisations if they were a victim. One in ten people (9%) report they would not turn to any institution if they were a victim of hate crime.

Although the police are generally one of the more trusted actors, and perceived to be performing at a relatively high level, some qualitative interviews suggested issues with police performance. In an interview with an expert on Roma issues, the respondent noted that there was a lack of trust in the Roma community towards police. Because of this lack of trust, members of the Roma community did not seek out the police when they faced challenges. In interviews with government officials, doubt was expressed about the legitimacy of some LGBT people's and particularly trans people's claims to be being discriminated against or the victims of crime, while an interview with an LGBT person highlighted that the police often do not take claims about harassment seriously.

The study suggests that the Council of Europe and the Public Defender's Office are relatively well trusted and performing well when it comes to combating discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. In contrast, the courts and Prosecutor's Office are less trusted and perceived to be performing poorly on these issues relative to other institutions. Approximately one in four people in Georgia report they have heard of the "No Hate" campaign. These people are more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher level of education.

The above findings suggest a number of recommendations for actors working towards the elimination of discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech.

First, the study suggests that the more aware people are of minority rights and events that have happened that many considered hate crime, the more likely they are to hold tolerant views. This suggests that **awareness raising activities may help generate more tolerance**. At the same time, this finding should be taken with caution, because people who are more aware may generally be more predisposed towards tolerance than people who are not aware of such

issues. Nonetheless, careful communications campaigns and awareness raising activity may lead to more tolerance in society. Indeed, many people in qualitative interviews and focus groups recommended these steps.

Second, ***the study suggests that people are most aware of the fact that LGBT people are victims of hate crime and hate speech. At the same time, attitudes towards LGBT people are worse than towards any other group.*** Hence, it is recommended to work on this contradiction, making the case for why the protection of LGBT people's rights is important for the development of the country. At the same time, caution should be exercised when it comes to messaging regarding LGBT people. Focus group discussions suggest that people think LGBT people are paid to protest for their rights and that Western organisations are behind the LGBT rights agenda in Georgia. Hence, ***awareness raising on this issue should be locally led and avoid the appearance that it is a foreign imposition.***

Third, the pattern with LGBT people – ***people hold negative attitudes towards LGBT people while also recognizing that they are at greater vulnerability*** – holds more generally, and the more negative are attitudes towards a group, the more likely is the general public to believe that they are likely to be victims of hate crime and hate speech. In some way, ***this provides a general prioritization of the groups that are most at risk, and hence require more support. LGBT people are the group that is likely most at risk, followed by religious minorities and migrants.*** While few people express negative attitudes towards people with disabilities and the survey suggests people believe they are not the victims of hate crime, this suggests the need to highlight the problems people with disabilities face.

Fourth, ***people are least aware of minority political rights.*** Only 47% of the public believes minorities have the right to hold protests, and 53% think they can be elected. This suggests a clear need to raise awareness of minority political rights.

Fifth, about half of the public are aware of the Public Defender's Office (PDO) (53%). Only 35% of the public is aware that the PDO has a mandate to combat discrimination, hate crime, and hate speech. This clearly suggests that ***the PDO should attempt to raise awareness about itself as well as its mandate related to discrimination.***

Sixth, ***the data suggests that people are opposed to politicians and the media disseminating hate speech. At the same time, they are more divided over whether there should be criminal penalties for hate crime or hate speech for regular citizens.*** This suggests that it will be easier to pass legislation prohibiting the dissemination of hate speech in the media and among politicians than among the general public, if the political will to act is present. Hence, it is recommended to focus on the low hanging fruit of legislation against media- and politician-disseminated hate speech, while working towards building momentum towards the further criminalization of hate speech and hate crime for ordinary citizens.

Seventh, ***women, ethnic Armenians, and people outside Tbilisi, and in some cases ethnic Georgians were more likely to report ambivalent and uncertain attitudes towards the issues covered in this study.*** This suggests that these groups are more likely to be responsive to a communications campaign than other groups. Hence, it is recommended that these groups are worked with, as it will focus energies where change is most likely and avoid creating a backlash against the campaign, thus reinforcing intolerant views.

Eighth, a lack of trust between the police and the Prosecutor's Office on the one hand, and the Roma and LGBT communities on the other hand were identified as issues in qualitative interviews. Hence, ***trust building activity between police and the Roma community and the police and the LGBT community would likely be positive.***