



## **Committee of the Parties**

Council of Europe Convention  
on preventing and combating violence  
against women and domestic violence  
(Istanbul Convention)

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### **Recommendation on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence by Georgia**

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The Committee of the Parties to the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “the Convention”), acting under the terms of Article 68(12) of the Convention;

Having regard to the purposes of the Convention to protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence; to contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women; to design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence; to promote international co-operation with a view to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence; and to provide support and assistance to organisations and law enforcement agencies to effectively co-operate in order to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence;

Bearing in mind the provisions of Article 66 (1) of the Convention concerning the monitoring role of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (hereinafter referred to as “GREVIO”);

Having regard to the Rules of Procedure of the Committee of the Parties;

Having regard to the instrument of ratification deposited by Georgia on 19 May 2017;

Having examined the Baseline Evaluation Report concerning the implementation of the Convention by Georgia adopted by GREVIO at its 28th meeting (10-13 October 2022), as well as the comments of the Government received on 17 November 2022;

Considering the overarching priorities set out in Chapter I of the Convention (purposes and scope of the Convention, definitions, equality and non-discrimination, due diligence and gender-sensitive policies);

Bearing in mind the primordial importance of the provisions set out in Chapter II of the Convention, in particular the obligations to (1) ensure a holistic response to violence against women by devising a set of comprehensive and co-ordinated policies implemented by way of effective multi-agency cooperation; (2) institutionalise and fully mandate one or more co-ordinating bodies as required by Article 10 of the Convention; (3) adequately resource policies, measures and mandates introduced to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women, including government and nongovernmental specialist support services; and (4) to collect relevant statistical data disaggregated, at a minimum, by sex, age, type of violence, relationship of the perpetrator to the victim and geographic location;

Welcoming the measures taken and progress achieved by the Georgian authorities in implementing the Convention and noting in particular:

- the efforts made in recent years to align the scope of policy documents and legislation, for example Law on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, with the scope of the Istanbul Convention and its definitions, resulting in a firm anchoring of a gender perspective in key legislation;
- a succession of national action plans and strategies that address the various forms of violence against women and domestic violence;
- the efforts made to improve the collection of statistical data within the criminal justice system, which cover the number of restraining orders issued and the introduction of a new electronic criminal case-management system for use by law enforcement agencies and prosecution services which allows for harmonised data collection across the criminal justice chain disaggregated as required by the Istanbul Convention;
- the recording of the number of gender-related killings of women since 2018 and the efforts made to harmonise the methodology in use;
- the setting up, in 2017, of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence as the national co-ordinating body required by Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention;

- efforts to raise awareness, on the basis of a national communication strategy on violence against women and domestic violence, specifying detailed awareness-raising activities to be carried out, and the measures taken to involve the education sector in awareness raising efforts of the different forms of violence against women;
- the alignment of the Georgian Criminal Code with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention by introducing new criminal offences on stalking, female genital mutilation and forced marriage and by expanding the offence of domestic violence to include psychological violence and the comprehensive provision of legal aid for victims of the offences established under the Convention;
- the introduction of a state compensation scheme for victims of violence against women taking effect in 2023;
- the standardisation of police and prosecution procedures related to domestic and sexual violence cases;
- the explicit recognition by law of gender-based violence against women as a form of persecution and that this can lead to the granting of refugee status.

A. Recommends in light of the considerations indicated in the preamble above, that the Government of Georgia take the following measures identified in GREVIO's baseline evaluation report<sup>1</sup> for immediate action to:

1. ensure that the provisions of the Istanbul Convention are implemented without discrimination on any grounds listed in Article 4, paragraph 3, notably by ensuring that women exposed to or at risk of intersecting forms of discrimination receive adequate information about their rights and support services available to them; by improving access to protection and support for women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic minorities, women living in rural areas and LGBTI women through policy orientation and measures which incorporate the specific perspective of such women and through co-operating with women's rights NGOs representing them (paragraph 25);
2. intensify efforts to systematically assess the gender-related impact of the measures taken to prevent and combat violence against women and to ensure that all policies and measures implemented in practice are based on a gendered understanding of violence (paragraph 31);
3. pursue efforts aimed at improving the co-ordination between national and regional/local authorities in the implementation of policies to prevent and combat violence against women and at providing an independent monitoring of the implementation of policies (paragraph 41);
4. increase and ensure the sustainability of the financial resources allocated to measures and policies for preventing and combating violence against women, including in particular the budget for the entity in charge of co-ordinating policies and measures in this area and the budget for women's rights organisations which offer specialist support services for victims; and identify more effectively the sums spent on preventing and combating violence against women by all relevant national and local institutions (paragraph 50);
5. increase the involvement of NGOs in all stages of the preparation, co-ordination and implementation of laws, public policies and programmes to prevent and combat violence against women; support the expansion of NGO-run specialist services, in particular by establishing suitable and stable funding opportunities based on transparent procurement procedures (paragraph 56) and reinforce the support and recognition of independent women's rights organisations by acknowledging the value and expertise they bring to preventing and combating violence against women and by ensuring that threats or harassment they face are investigated and measures undertaken to prevent them (paragraph 57);

<sup>1</sup> The number of the paragraph setting out GREVIO's proposals and suggestions in the report is indicated in brackets.

6. allocate sufficient human and financial resources to the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence to enable it to adequately fulfil its role as national co-ordinating body established under Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention, while ensuring, on the one hand, the co-ordination and implementation of policies and measures and, on the other hand, the independent monitoring and evaluation, in order to ensure objectivity in the evaluation of policies (paragraph 65);
7. Increasing data collection efforts by collecting data within and across the criminal justice chain with a view to assessing attrition rates (paragraph 75), data in relation to healthcare providers' contact with women patients for reasons related to experiences of gender-based violence (paragraph 77), data on the outcomes of asylum claims made on the basis of gender-related persecution, including female genital mutilation and forced marriage (paragraph 81) while addressing, through research, violence affecting vulnerable groups of women such as ethnic and/or national minority women and girls, migrant women, LGBTI women and women with disabilities (paragraph 87);
8. set up institutionalised structures for the co-ordination and co-operation among all of the different statutory agencies, non-governmental bodies and specialist service providers to ensure multi-agency co-operation tailored to the specific needs of victims of all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, in particular rape and sexual violence, forced marriage, stalking and sexual harassment, as well as in cases of domestic violence (paragraph 146);
9. provide or arrange for adequate specialist women's support services with a gendered approach throughout the country and for all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, including their digital manifestations (paragraph 174) while ensuring that all women victims of violence and their children have access to such specialist support services, in particular women exposed to or at risk of intersecting forms of discrimination such as women in rural and remote areas and internally displaced women (paragraph 175);
10. expand the number and/or the capacity of shelters in order to reach the minimum standard of one family place per 10 000 head of population throughout the country and to ensure equitable access to such shelters including by removing any additional requirements and bureaucratic obstacles, such as the requirement of obtaining victim status, and to take measures to provide women victims with accommodation in same-sex shelters (paragraphs 186 and 187);
11. establish a sufficient number of rape crisis centres and/or sexual violence referral centres accessible to victims of rape and/or sexual violence, which meet all their needs and include immediate medical care, high-quality forensic examinations, psychological and legal support and referral to specialist support organisations, while ensuring that victims' access to these services should not depend on their willingness to file a complaint and/or to be granted the status of the victim (paragraph 200);
12. ensure that the legal recognition of the harmful effects of witnessing violence by one parent against the other or any other form of violence translates into the provision of adequate and age-appropriate counselling and support for such children, including longer-term psychological counselling as appropriate (paragraph 207);
13. amend the provisions of the Criminal Code covering rape and the other sexual violence offences under Articles 138 and 139 of the Criminal Code in order to fully incorporate the notion of the lack of freely given consent as required by Article 36 of the Istanbul Convention and to ensure that such provisions are effectively applied in practice by law enforcement, prosecutors and the judiciary, including where the circumstances of the case preclude valid consent, including by providing relevant training on the matter (paragraph 261);

14. ensure that sentencing in cases of violence against women and domestic violence is commensurate with the gravity of the offence and preserves the dissuasive function of penalties and that members of the judiciary resort to the full range of punishments that are prescribed by the Georgian Criminal Code, while respecting the principle of the independence of the judiciary (paragraph 291);
  15. ensure on-the-job training for law-enforcement officials to overcome persistent attitudes, beliefs and practices that stand in the way of a police response to domestic violence that is based on an understanding of power differences between the victim and the perpetrator, the gendered nature and the impact and consequences of the violence (paragraph 319);
  16. swiftly identify and address any/all legislative and procedural factors that contribute to the very high threshold for proving rape in court, while paying due regard to the principle of avoiding re-traumatisation of victims during investigation and judicial processes (paragraph 321).
- B. Requests the Government of Georgia to report to the Committee of the Parties on the measures taken to improve the implementation of the Convention in the above-mentioned areas by 4 December 2025.
- C. Recommends that the Government of Georgia take measures to implement the further conclusions of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report.