



NGO Woman and Development (W&D)

Alternative Shadow Report for GREVIO

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Georgia - Shida Kartli

Secretariat of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating
Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO and Committee of the
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Introduction

This alternative shadow report is submitted by the Georgian non-governmental organization Woman and Development and examines the implementation of the Istanbul Convention at the local level, specifically in the Shida Kartli region. The report is based on the organization's extensive practical experience accumulated over many years, work on individual cases, and interaction with municipal institutions.

Organizational Profile

NGO **Woman and Development (W&D)** has been operating in Georgia, in the Shida Kartli region, for more than 20 years. Our activities focus on the protection of women and girls living in conflict-affected areas, the prevention of violence, and their economic empowerment. This report reflects systemic gaps that hinder the effective implementation of the Convention at the local level.

W&D is one of the first and most authoritative women's rights organizations based in Gori Municipality in the Shida Kartli region. The organization has been actively working in the civil sector for more than two decades, and its activities are particularly important for regions located near the occupation line, where women and girls face multiple vulnerabilities. The organization serves as a bridge between local communities and international standards, ensuring the protection and empowerment of women and the transmission of their voices to decision-makers.

Mission

The mission of the organization is to protect the fundamental rights of women and girls, promote gender equality, and eliminate all forms of violence in the Shida Kartli region. This mission is implemented through women's economic empowerment, legal and psychosocial support, peacebuilding, and active advocacy with local self-government bodies.

Vision

Our vision is to create a safe, just, and equal environment where every woman and girl is protected from violence, has equal access to economic and educational resources, and actively participates in the socio-political life of the region.

Main Areas of Activity

- **Violence prevention and response:** legal counseling, psychological assistance, and rehabilitation of victims.
- **Economic empowerment:** vocational training courses and promotion of women's participation in "green" economy and energy projects.
- **Climate change and energy:** strengthening the role of women in managing environmental challenges and implementing energy-efficient technologies.
- **Advocacy and monitoring:** gender audit and monitoring of local self-government action plans (e.g., SECAP).
- **Peacebuilding:** empowerment of women living in conflict-affected regions and promotion of people-to-people diplomacy.

Why Is Our Engagement Important for GREVIO?

As a regional organization, we possess unique empirical data on the real situation of the Istanbul Convention's implementation at the local level. Our experience demonstrates systemic barriers faced by women's organizations in accessing resources and partnering with state institutions, which is critically important for assessing the implementation of Article 9 of the Convention (support for civil society organizations).

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Executive Summary

The report shows that since the 2022 baseline evaluation, no systemic changes have been implemented at the local level to ensure the effective implementation of the Istanbul Convention. The implementation of Article 9 is particularly problematic, due to the absence of institutional and financial support for NGOs working on women's rights.

Part I – Integrated Policies, Financial Resources, and Data Collection

Article 7 – Comprehensive and Coordinated Policies

W&D notes that following the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, no systemic development of comprehensive and coordinated policies is observed at the local level (Shida Kartli) that would fully cover all four pillars of prevention, protection, prosecution, and integrated policies on violence against women.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Based on the organization's long-term practical experience, sexual harassment against women in the workplace remains one of the least identified and most inadequately regulated issues, especially in the regions

Women in Shida Kartli refrain from reporting cases due to:

- stigma;
- fear of forced divorce;
- retaliation by employers;
- real risk of job loss.

Research conducted by the organization shows that existing institutional mechanisms at the local level fail to ensure safe, confidential, and victim-centered responses. Frequent cases include:

- breaches of confidentiality by responsible personnel;
- ironic or humiliating attitudes toward victims;
- tolerance toward employers that outweighs the interest of victim protection.

Under these conditions, W&D remains the only safe space for women, providing psycho-rehabilitative services with strict confidentiality.

Forced Sterilization (Especially Girls with Disabilities)

The organization expresses grave concern regarding the ongoing practice of forced sterilization of girls and young women with disabilities.

Based on observations of the organization's beneficiaries:

- sterilization is often carried out without informed consent;
- girls with intellectual disabilities constitute the primary target group;
- the practice is frequently justified by arguments such as “facilitating care,” “controlling menstruation,” or preventing pregnancy resulting from sexual violence.

This practice constitutes a severe form of violence against women and represents a systemic violation of fundamental human rights.

Recommendations to GREVIO

GREVIO should strongly urge the Georgian authorities to:

1. ensure effective, confidential, and regionally tailored mechanisms to prevent and address sexual harassment in the workplace;
2. strengthen the accountability of local self-government bodies in responding to all forms of violence against women;
3. develop and adopt legislation that categorically prohibits the forced sterilization of minor girls, in particular girls with disabilities, except in cases of an extreme threat to life or health;
4. ensure the availability of rehabilitation services and compensation mechanisms for victims.

There is no coordinated, integrated policy against gender-based violence in the municipalities of Shida Kartli. Digital violence, sexual harassment, and stalking are not systematically addressed. National strategic documents exist but are insufficiently translated to the municipal level. There are no local action plans specifically addressing stalking, digital violence, and sexual harassment.

Problems

- local social services act reactively rather than preventively;
- policies are not based on gender and intersectional analysis;
- women's empowerment is not a clear policy objective.

Recommendations to GREVIO

GREVIO should strongly urge the Georgian authorities to:

1. recommend that the State impose a mandatory obligation on municipalities to develop local action plans in line with the Istanbul Convention;
2. ensure integration of gender and intersectional approaches into local policies.

Article 8 – Financial Resources

Municipal budgets in Shida Kartli do not include specific budget lines for the prevention of violence against women and victim support. Funding is fragmented and project-based. Despite the existence of state-funded shelters at the national level, the involvement of local municipalities remains minimal.

None of the municipalities of Shida Kartli (Gori, Khashuri, Kareli, Kaspi) have long-term mechanisms for financing local women's organizations' services. Activities are mainly funded through central budget programs, while municipal budgets lack targeted and sustainable funding.

W&D notes that since the baseline evaluation, no significant progress has been observed in allocating adequate and sustainable financial and human resources, particularly at the municipal level.

Recommendations to GREVIO

GREVIO should strongly urge the Georgian authorities to:

1. by 2026, ensure the establishment of a separate budget line in all municipalities for the prevention of violence against women;
2. require municipalities to define minimum human resources (specialized social worker/psychologist);
3. ensure that implementation of national action plans at the local level is funded and monitored;
4. introduce annual reporting mechanisms on resource utilization;
5. require municipalities to allocate part of their budgets to support specialized services provided by local CSOs.

Article 9 – Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society

The requirements of Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention are systematically violated in Shida Kartli. Most municipalities lack formal cooperation with women’s rights NGOs.

Case No. 2/1148-22 illustrates a gross violation, where Gori Municipality seeks eviction of the organization from premises used for years and planned as a “Women’s Support Hub.”

This action demonstrates disregard for Article 9, as the municipality:

- failed to assess the organization’s social function;
- ignored the needs of women and girls;
- failed to consider less harmful alternatives.

This directly harmed access to services for women victims of violence and shows that CSOs are not perceived as strategic partners.

Recommendations to GREVIO

GREVIO should strongly urge the Georgian authorities to:

1. issue a clear recommendation to Georgia to ensure immediate implementation of Article 9 at the municipal level;
2. mandate institutionalized cooperation with women’s NGOs;
3. develop mechanisms obliging municipalities to provide premises to women’s organizations on preferential or free long-term terms;
4. establish municipal funding and support mechanisms;
5. ensure local authorities’ actions do not undermine CSOs;
6. involve women’s organizations in policy planning and monitoring.

Article 11 – Data Collection and Research

Assessment by Woman and Development: W&D notes that existing data is not sufficiently disaggregated by sex, age, type of relationship, or location of violence. There is no integrated case tracking system to monitor progress from the initial report to the final judicial verdict. Furthermore, in the Shida Kartli region, no systemic or coordinated steps have been observed to ensure the comprehensive collection and categorization of data on violence against women and domestic violence, as required by Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention.

Although individual state agencies collect administrative data, these datasets are not harmonized, disaggregated, or interconnected, particularly at the local level.

Current State of Data Categories in Shida Kartli (based on W&D research):

- **Type of Violence:** Data primarily reflects physical violence. Psychological, economic, and sexual violence remain under-identified. Sexual harassment is often entirely absent from official statistics.
- **Sex and Age of Victim and Perpetrator:** Data is rarely disaggregated by age. There is a critical lack of data regarding vulnerable groups, such as women with disabilities and elderly women.
- **Domestic/Personal Relationship:** Law enforcement agencies often use broad, generic categories to describe the relationship type, which complicates the assessment of recidivism risks (repeated violence).
- **Location of Violence:** Data regarding the location of violence is not utilized for policy planning. Municipalities fail to identify "hotspots" for targeted intervention.

Evaluation of Data Sources:

- **Law Enforcement:** Data is fragmented and primarily operational in nature.
- **Justice System:** There are no accessible, disaggregated statistics regarding judicial outcomes and sentencing.
- **Social Services:** Data is not standardized and is not integrated into a national database.
- **Healthcare System:** The identification and coding of violence cases is not a mandatory practice for healthcare providers.

Recommendations to GREVIO

GREVIO should strongly urge the Georgian authorities to:

1. by 2026, introduce a unified national data collection system;
2. ensure mandatory data disaggregation;
3. require municipalities to regularly provide disaggregated data;
4. involve NGOs in data collection and analysis;
5. formalize cooperation with women's NGOs;
6. introduce a unified case-tracking system.

Part II – Prevention, Protection, and Justice (Local Practice)

Articles 12 and 14 – Prevention and Education

Assessment:

According to the observations of W&D, the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence in the Shida Kartli region does not constitute a systemic and sustainable policy. Current prevention activities are fragmented, uncoordinated, and primarily dependent on projects funded by international donors.

At the Municipal Level:

- There are no local prevention strategies based on comprehensive gender analysis.
- Prevention is not integrated into broader social, educational, or youth policies.
- The empowerment of women and girls is not treated as a central, structural element of the prevention framework.

Recommendations to GREVIO

GREVIO should strongly urge the Georgian authorities to:

1. Obligate municipalities to develop and implement localized prevention strategies that are grounded in comprehensive gender analysis and reflect the specific socio-political needs of the Shida Kartli region.
2. Ensure that violence prevention is not treated as an isolated or ad-hoc activity but is systematically mainstreamed into municipal social, educational, and youth policies, backed by dedicated and sustainable budget lines.
3. Shift the national and local prevention frameworks toward the socio-economic empowerment of women and girls, establishing it as a core pillar of violence prevention rather than an elective, project-based activity.
4. Create a standardized, multi-agency coordination framework at the municipal level to ensure synchronized preventive actions between educational institutions, social services, and local law enforcement agencies.

Article 14 – Education

Assessment in the Field of Education:

Gender equality and the prevention of violence against women (VAW) are not systematically integrated into formal educational curricula.

Furthermore, the current Government of Georgia has systematically removed the term “Gender” from national legislation and official state vocabulary. This ideological shift undermines the core principles of the Istanbul Convention.

Activities carried out in schools are not part of a sustainable state policy; they rely almost exclusively on the short-term initiatives of individual donor-funded projects.

Teachers and administrative personnel do not receive regular or mandatory training regarding the early identification of and response to violence.

This prevailing practice fails to provide the long-term, education-based prevention required under Article 14 of the Convention.

Impact at the Local Level:

The absence of a systemic approach to prevention and education results in:

- A significantly high risk of recidivism (repeated cases of violence);
- Delayed identification of victims, preventing early intervention;
- The persistence of stereotypical and discriminatory attitudes within society.

Recommendations to GREVIO

GREVIO should strongly urge the Georgian authorities to:

1. By 2026, ensure that every municipality in the Shida Kartli region develops and implements a localized prevention strategy against violence against women.
2. Ensure Financial Sustainability and transition from project-dependent activities to state-funded preventive measures secured through municipal budgets.
3. Reform Formal Education and reintegrate gender equality and violence prevention principles into formal curricula, including mandatory professional development and certification for teachers.
4. Implement Impact Monitoring and establish concrete mechanisms (KPIs, monitoring, and reporting) to evaluate the effectiveness of preventive measures.
5. Formalize NGO Partnerships and recognize and involve women’s rights NGOs as equal partners in the strategic planning and implementation of preventive and educational policies.

Articles 18, 20, and 22 – Protection and Support Services

Assessment:

Based on the observations of Woman and Development (W&D), the protection and support system for victims of violence against women and domestic violence in the Shida Kartli region continues to lack effective coordination. It fails to provide the comprehensive, multi-agency and victim-centered approach mandated by the Istanbul Convention.

Despite the existence of the Social Service Agency and law enforcement bodies in the region, the following gaps persist in practice:

- **Fragmented Support:** Victim assistance is frequently limited to one-off, ad-hoc interventions rather than sustained support.
- **Absence of Safety Planning:** Systemic risk assessments are not consistently conducted, and individual safety plans are rarely developed for victims.
- **Formalistic Coordination:** Inter-agency cooperation remains largely formal and is not integrated into a unified, functional case management mechanism.

Recommendations to GREVIO

GREVIO should strongly urge the Georgian authorities to:

1. Establish and institutionalize effective multi-agency cooperation mechanisms at the municipal level to ensure holistic and seamless support for victims.
2. Introduce a standardized, digital case management system to ensure real-time coordination and information sharing between law enforcement, social services, and specialized NGOs.
3. Mandate the compulsory use of systemic risk assessment tools and the formulation of individual safety plans for every reported case of violence.
4. Institutionalize CSO Co-financing and ensure that specialized support services provided by NGOs are co-financed through municipal budgets to guarantee their institutional stability and continuity.
5. Define and enforce mandatory quality standards for local specialized services to ensure that all victims receive a consistent level of protection and care.
6. Empower Rural and Vulnerable Outreach and Allocate specific resources to ensure that protection and support services are physically and linguistically accessible to women living in rural areas and near the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL).

Article 24 – Helplines

Assessment:

Despite the existence of a national hotline, several systemic gaps persist at the local level:

- **Lack of Awareness:** There is a total absence of systemic information and awareness-raising campaigns at the municipal level regarding available helplines.
- **Accessibility Barriers:** Services are not consistently accessible to vulnerable groups due to language barriers (lack of multi-lingual support) and a lack of adaptation for persons with disabilities.

Recommendations to GREVIO

GREVIO should strongly urge the Georgian authorities to:

1. Mandate Municipal Awareness Campaigns and ensure the widespread dissemination of information regarding helplines across all municipalities.
2. Guarantee that hotline services are multi-lingual and fully accessible to persons with disabilities.
3. Formally involve municipalities in the information dissemination process to reach rural and marginalized communities.

Article 49 – Justice (Local Aspects)

Assessment:

The justice process at the local level is characterized by several critical failures:

- **Response Delays:** Significant delays in the initial legal response to reported incidents of violence.
- **Ineffective Enforcement:** Insufficient reaction and lack of accountability regarding violations of protection and prohibitive orders.
- **Secondary Victimization:** A persistent and high risk of secondary victimization of victims throughout the judicial process.

Recommendations to GREVIO

GREVIO should strongly urge the Georgian authorities to:

1. Implement compulsory, specialized training for all law enforcement and judicial personnel on gender-sensitive justice.
2. Establish a robust monitoring mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of the state's response to protection order violations.

3. Mandate the implementation of a victim-centered approach at every stage of the legal and judicial proceedings

Conclusion

The effective and meaningful implementation of the Istanbul Convention is impossible without the active and committed participation of local self-governments. The current situation in the Gori Municipality clearly demonstrates that Article 9 of the Convention is being systematically neglected, which directly and negatively impacts the realization of the rights of women and girls.

The organization Woman and Development (W&D) remains fully committed to cooperating with both local and international monitoring mechanisms to ensure the comprehensive and meaningful fulfillment of the Convention's obligations.