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Group of Experts on Action
against Trafficking in Human Beings

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Questionnaire

for the evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Georgia

Fourth evaluation round

Thematic focus: Addressing vulnerabilities to trafficking in human beings

Adopted by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) on 30 June 2023

Reply submitted on 13 February 2024

Introduction

In accordance with Article 38, paragraph 1, of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings ("the Convention"), GRETA evaluates the implementation of the Convention following a procedure divided into rounds. At the beginning of each round, GRETA selects the specific provisions on which the evaluation procedure is based.

The first round of monitoring of the Convention provided an overview of its implementation by States Parties. The second evaluation round of the Convention examined the impact of legislative, policy and practical measures on the prevention of trafficking in human beings (THB), the protection of the rights of victims of trafficking, and the prosecution of traffickers, paying particular attention to measures taken to address new trends in human trafficking, in particular trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, and the vulnerability of children to trafficking. The third evaluation round focused on trafficking victims' access to justice and effective remedies.

GRETA has decided that the fourth evaluation round of the Convention will focus on **vulnerabilities to human trafficking** and measures taken by States Parties to prevent them, detect and support vulnerable victims, and punish the offenders. This includes a focus on the use of information and communication technology (ICT), which brings structural changes to the way offenders operate and exacerbates existing vulnerabilities.[1]

A number of provisions of the Convention establishing substantive and procedural obligations are relevant to this topic. The concept of "vulnerability" appears in Articles 4 (definitions), 5 (prevention of trafficking in human beings) and 12 (assistance to victims) of the Convention. According to paragraph 83 of the Explanatory report to the Convention, "by abuse of a position of vulnerability is meant abuse of any situation in which the person involved has no real and acceptable alternative to submitting to the abuse. The vulnerability may be of any kind, whether physical, psychological, emotional, family-related, social or economic. The situation might, for example, involve insecurity or illegality of the victim's administrative status, economic dependence or fragile health. In short, the situation can be any state of hardship in which a human being is impelled to accept being exploited. Persons abusing such a situation flagrantly infringe human rights and violate human dignity and integrity, which no one can validly renounce."

GRETA refers to the ICAT Issue Brief No. 12/2022 on Addressing vulnerability to THB which refers to vulnerability as "those inherent, environmental or contextual factors that increase the susceptibility of an individual or group to being trafficked". It classifies vulnerability factors in three categories: personal (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, disability), situational (e.g. destitution, unemployment, legal status) and contextual (e.g. discriminatory laws, policies and social norms, armed conflicts, crises) factors, which interact and may increase the risk of human trafficking for certain individuals, groups and/or communities.[2] Vulnerability to human trafficking is also subject to intersectional factors, such as gender, belonging to a minority group and socio-economic status.

Applying a socio-ecological approach to the analysis of vulnerability to human trafficking demonstrates how different risk factors influence vulnerability, and how protective factors may reduce the risk of victimisation by increasing resilience.[3] The socio-ecological model considers the complex interplay between individual, relationship, community and societal factors. It helps to understand how anti-trafficking strategies should: (a) reduce the vulnerability of individuals, (b) work with the communities (which may also include relationships) concerned to ensure that their practices or current dynamics do not exacerbate or contribute to vulnerabilities to human trafficking and, (c) change a number of

[1] Paolo Campana, Online and Technology-Facilitated Trafficking in Human Beings, Council of Europe, April 2022.
[2] ICAT Issue Brief No. 12 on Addressing vulnerability to trafficking in persons - Search (bing.com)
[3] https://www.avoiceforcentraloregon.com/uploads/1/3/9/9/139904528/socio_ecological_model_and_trafficking.pdf

system-driven or structural elements (such as policies) so that they do not facilitate but discourage an environment conducive to human trafficking.

In addition to the thematic focus on vulnerabilities to human trafficking, GRETA has decided that each State Party will receive **country-specific follow-up questions** related to recommendations not implemented or partially implemented after the third evaluation round.

States Parties are requested to transmit to GRETA a reply to this questionnaire **within four months** from the date it was sent. The reply to the questionnaire should be submitted in one of the official languages of the Council of Europe (English and French), and preferably also in the original language. Where appropriate, in order to avoid unnecessary repetition, the reply may refer to information contained in the report submitted by the national authorities on measures taken to comply with the Committee of the Parties' recommendation concerning the implementation of the proposals made in GRETA's third evaluation report. States Parties should provide links, copies or extracts of relevant legislation, regulations, national action plans and case law mentioned in the reply to the questionnaire, in the original language and, wherever possible, also in one of the official languages of the Council of Europe.

A variety of stakeholders and civil society representatives should be effectively consulted in the preparation of the reply to the questionnaire, to ensure that the information provided is as comprehensive as possible.

Part 1 – Addressing vulnerabilities to trafficking in human beings

I. PREVENTION (Articles 5, 6 and 7)

1. Do you have specific data/research/analysis of what makes people vulnerable to trafficking in human beings (THB) in your country? Please provide information on the categories/groups of people identified as being at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking, and how they are addressed in the national anti-trafficking strategy and/or action plan. Have you identified geographical regions or economic sectors in your country as particularly vulnerable to THB, and how do you address them in your strategy or policy?

Government of Georgia acknowledges that combating THB requires concerted interagency policy. In this regard, the role of the Interagency Council on Combating Human Trafficking (A- THB Council) set up in 2006 remains indispensable in adopting serious and sustainable measures and coordinating inter agency policy in combating THB. The A-THB Council chaired by the Minister of Justice of Georgia is inclusive and includes representatives from all line ministries and agencies (Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Office of the Prosecutor General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of IDPs from Occupied territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Education and Science, Parliamentary Secretary of Government of Georgia, LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, Parliamentarians and Public Defender's Office). NGOs (Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, the Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health –Tanadgoma, Anti-Violence Network of Georgia) and international organizations, including International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the missions of EU and CoE to Georgia, as well as the US Embassy to Georgia are the invited members of the A-THB Council.

The A- THB Council has the both mandates/functions – Coordination and Monitoring. In particular, the A- THB Council:

- supports and coordinates the implementation of the measures taken by relevant Governmental Agencies for prevention, investigation and prosecution of THB cases, as well as protection and assistance of victims and statutory victim of THB;
- identifies the THB related challenges, elaborates the legislative and practical measures in response to them and submits the proposals and recommendations to the Government of Georgia;
- cooperates with State institutions, NGOs, International Organizations and partner states;
- approves the Anti-Trafficking National Action Plans (NAP) and monitors their implementation, as well as adopts recommendations.

In every two years the Inter-Agency Council elaborates and approves the NAPs on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings. Since its creation the Inter-Agency Council adopted 9 NAPs for 2007-2008, 2009-2010, 2011-2012, 2013-2014, 2015-2016, 2017-2018, 2019-2020, 2021-2022 and 2023-2024.

On December 21, 2022, the Interagency Coordinating Council for the Implementation of Measures Against Human Trafficking approved 2023-2024 Action Plan on Action against THB (available at: https://justice.gov.ge/files/6VpU8Z8N7J2G.pdf.)

The THB NAPs are based on 4P principles and reflect most of EU, US, UN and CoE treaty body & special rapporteurs' recommendations, as well as the most recent trends from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

In addition, it should be noted that the process of developing an action plan is usually a long process and, in addition to the recommendations of international and local organizations, it considers a report on the implementation of its previous action plans and general tendencies of THB crimes and a statistical analysis.

Since 2015, the Secretariat of the A-THB Council (International Relations and Legal Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia) has been producing a single database of THB, which is constantly being updated based on the information provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (MIA), the General Prosecutor's Office of Georgia and LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking (LEPL State Care Agency). The integrated database contains the following types of information:

1. Data on criminal cases - the number of investigations, criminal prosecutions, cases sent to court and verdicts, segregated according to the form of exploitation;
2. Data on accused and convicted persons - number, citizenship, age, gender, type of punishment;
3. Data about victims and statutory victims of trafficking - number, citizenship, gender, age, form of exploitation, services they were referred to (medical, legal, psychological, asylum, compensation);
4. Mutual legal assistance and police cooperation in the field of criminal law - number of requests for mutual legal assistance and extraditions on the subject of trafficking by segregated states.

Based on the above mentioned statistics and the case descriptions the Ministry of Justice of Georgia elaborates annual analysis of the THB cases, profiles of the (statutory) victims and offenders, methods and means for committing this crime. Since the beginning of 2020, 33 victims/statutory victims have been identified in Georgia out of which 13 victims/statutory victims were minors. 60% (20) of identified victims were subjected to labor exploitation, followed with sexual exploitation and sale of a person, including minors. In case of minors most of the cases of labor exploitation are related to forced begging. In these cases the traffickers (mostly the family members) physically and psychologically force the children to beg in the streets during the different episodes of the day. Children are forced to submit all their collected money to their exploiters. If the children do not obey, they are physically and psychologically abused. As for the sexual or labor exploitation of adults, the means of recruitment are the following: traffickers promise victims to be employed in various places in Georgia, and be paid high salaries; however, they are not paid adequately as promised. There are still the several cases of deprivation of passports/identification documents; restriction and control of free movement and communication, psychological coercion and blackmailing and/or physical violence. In most cases the traffickers are those whom the victims trust.

The analysis of the THB cases shows that the most of them are mostly resulted from low level of awareness and education. As for the geographical regions, most of the cases are identified in capital City of Georgia – Tbilisi. Adjara Region is also one of the high risk region, since it is a touristic area and there is a border between Georgia and Turkey. In case of exploitation of foreign victims, the Georgia-Turkey border is used by the traffickers to enter Georgia.

Based on the analysis of such statistical data, the target group of a specific event is defined in the action plan. Children in street situations, ethnic and national minorities, IDPs are identified as one of the priority target groups of the THB, hence activities to reduce the mentioned risks are included in the NAP for 2023-2024.

In addition, annually the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia researches the trafficking trends and criminological aspects. The Human Rights Protection Department of the General Prosecutor's Office examines human trafficking cases on a daily basis, studying the dynamics, trends and challenges. In the reporting period, analyzes of human trafficking cases were prepared for 2020, 2021, 2022 and

2023. The facts of child trafficking and adult trafficking, forms of exploitation, aspects of launching prosecution, territorial distribution of the crime, personal characteristics of the defendants and the victims were analyzed.

The case analysis documents cover important facets, investigation challenges, trends and future plans. They were published in English on the website of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia[4].

2. What specific measures are taken to reduce children's vulnerability to THB by creating a protective environment for children? Please provide information in the following areas:

As mentioned above, one of the most vulnerable groups for the THB crime is children in street situations - the persons under 18 years of age living and/or working in the street. Since 2014, the Government of Georgia has implemented a number of legislative and institutional reforms in order to improve the legal status of children living and/or working in the street, overcome existing challenges, their psycho-social rehabilitation, raising the level of education and social integration. Since 2014, the "Shelter for homeless children sub-program" has been in operation, which fully includes the provision of shelter and day center services for children living and/or working in the street. The mentioned sub-program is a family/child support measure, the purpose of which is to prevent homeless children from being abandoned or separated from their families, their psychosocial rehabilitation and integration, as well as providing safe housing (shelter). Within the framework of this sub-program, 4 shelters and 4 day care centers are operating in Tbilisi, Rustavi and Kutaisi. The Care Agency has 6 mobile teams, whose main function is to find homeless children in the street, establish contact and gain trust in order to divert them from the street and involve them in various services based on the needs analysis. In 2014-2022, mobile groups made contact with a total of 2 564 homeless children, although only a part of the children express their desire to use the day center and day shelter services. A total of 1 937 homeless children were referred to the day center and day shelter services based on their will These children are also provided with the education, healthcare programs and free of charge identification documents In 2020-2023, 24 children were provided with identification documents free of charde

Since the forth evaluation round focuses on vulnerability and prevention of THB among the vulnerable groups, Georgia would like not to duplicate the information on protective measures and kindly requests to refer to the reply of Georgia to the questionnaire of the third evaluation round for further information[5].

In order to better protect children living and/or working in the street from all types of violence, including human trafficking and prevent them from going out into the streets A-THB Council has finalized the Governmental Strategy on Protection of children living and/or working in the street from Violence, including Human Trafficking. Finalized document has been approved by A- THB Council member agencies. For that aim special working group has been actively working consisting of the representatives from Ministry of Justice of Georgia, the MIA of Georgia, Office of the Prosecutor General, Ministry of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Science and Youth, LEPL National Agency for Crime Prevention, Execution of Non-custodial Sentence and Probation. The Strategy and Action Plan was shared to NGOs, IOs, US Embassy for Georgia, as well as Public Defender's office and other stakeholder for comments. The draft Strategy

[4] Case analysis for previous years are available at:
1. https://pog.gov.ge/uploads/45b2ff65-TRAFFICKING-IN-HUMAN-BEINGS-2020-2021-Eng.pdf;
2. https://pog.gov.ge/uploads/c32ed78e-ANALYSIS-OF-HUMAN-TRAFFICKING-CASES-2022-ENG.pdf;
3. https://pog.gov.ge/uploads/124143f0-Traficking-in-Human-Beings-2023-full-ENG.pdf

[5] https://rm.coe.int/greta-2018-26-geo-rep-en/168098188b

covers the years of 2024-2030 and will be approved by the Government of Georgia in the nearest future.

a. protecting children's rights from attitudes, customs, behaviour and practices that can have an adverse effect (including child, early and forced marriage, and illegal adoption);

One of the main goals of the Government is to oppose harmful stereotypes and practices in society. In the field of anti-trafficking, early marriage and gender inequality in general are seen as one of the main factors causing further violations of children's rights, including their exploitation.

Firstly, the major developments towards fight against gender ineqyality and violence against women, including girls, are related to the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence againsy Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) in 2017. To further strengthen the legal framework, in relation to the Istanbul Convention, as many as 25 laws have been amended. Amendments included but are not limited to the adoption of the definitions for violence against women and stalking; criminalization of forced marriage, forced sterilization and female genital mutilation; provisions for temporary residence for foreign women who are the victims of violence; etc. In accordance with the commitments undertaken under the Istanbul Convention, Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in the executive branch consisted of all state agencies has significantly improved the coordination between state entities.

Notably, in 2022 the second nationwide survey on Violence against Women was conducted in Georgia (the first one was held in 2017). According to the Survey, some groups of women are victimized by intimate partners and non-partners at a far higher rate than others, as certain sociodemographic characteristics heighten women's vulnerabilities to intimate partner and non-partner violence. At particular risk are women with lower levels of education (e.g. primary education or less), women who are married before the age of 18 and/ or women living in rural areas[6].

Regarding the early marriage, since January 1, 2017 marriage in Georgia is permitted from the age of 18 and the spouses have equal personal and property rights and bear equal responsibilities in domestic relations. Latest amendments to the Civil Code of Georgia removed all exceptions to the minimum age of marriage at 18, and the Criminal Code was amended to criminalize forced marriage. Article 172 of the Code of Administrative Offences foresees fines for parents neglecting their children, or failing to assume their "duties to raise, educate a minor and to provide him/her with dwelling, food and other conditions necessary for normal development". In addition, Article 172[6] establishes an administrative sanctions for a failure to detect and report instances of child abuse.

However, Governmental agencies acknowledge that only sufficient legislation enough to address the stereotypes and harmful practices. Therefore, state-wide awareness-raising campaigns have been held in Georgia to address the issue of child marriage. For example:

- The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia implements strict criminal policy on the facts of early marriage. Timely and effective response to the cases of early marriage is a priority for the prosecutor's office. Through the official website and Facebook page of the Prosecutor's Office, the public is informed about the response and measures taken by the Prosecutor's Office regarding the facts of early marriage. Informing the public about the strict criminal policy and implemented measures aims at common and special prevention of early marriage and contributes to the raising of public awareness on the mentioned issues.

[6] The Report is available at: updated_vaw_eng_web4-2.pdf (unwomen.org)

- In 2023, in order to raise public awareness and prevent early marriage, within the framework of the Council of Europe campaign - "I choose equality", representatives of the prosecutor's office held meetings with schoolchildren on the issues of equality, early marriage and domestic violence. At the meetings, the prosecutors provided information to the young generation about the reforms implemented in the prosecutor's office with respect to violence against women and domestic violence, including forced marriage, and the victim-centred approach.

- During the 16-day global campaign against violence against women and the campaign against femicide, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia organized local council meetings in 11 cities of Georgia on the topic of combating violence against women, forced marriage and domestic crime. The local council meetings were held in Mtskheta, Gori, Rustavi, Marneuli, Bolnisi, Telavi, Akhalkalaki, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Batumi and Ozurgeti. Representatives of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, the MIA, the Ministry of Education and Science, local self-government, executive authorities, the National Agency for Crime Prevention, Execution of Non-custodial Sentences and Probation, LEPL State Care Agency, the Public Defender's Office and non-governmental organizations took part in the sessions.

- Local councils have been functioning in all regions of Georgia since 2016 and they are coordinating bodies established by the prosecutor's office at the regional level, whose main functions are to review the criminogenic situation in the region, make decisions on preventive measures, develop initiatives and elaborate a coordinated plan through multisectoral cooperation to fight crime.

- The members of the local council discussed the strict criminal law policy on the crimes of gender-based violence against women, domestic violence, femicide and forced marriage based on the peculiarities of each region and the reforms implemented by the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia. They discussed the measures planned by the authorities to ensure gender equality, legislative novelties and enforcement mechanisms introduced for strengthening the victims and protecting their rights.

- Within the framework of the campaign from 25 November to 10 December 2023, in order to improve women's access to justice, ensure equality and raise awareness, more than 30 events were organized by the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia.

- As it comes to the competence of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth (MoESY), Legal issues related to early marriage are taught in civic education subject. This topic is represented in the context of civil awareness, personal development and human rights. In particular, early marriage is discussed as a violation of human rights and a factor preventing personal development.

Topics of early marriage, sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, violence etc. are envisaged in the following training modules provided by Teachers Professional Development Centre (TPDC), the Agency under the MoESY:

- In 2021, the training module "Gender Mainstreaming in Education: Gender-based violence and Domestic violence" was developed with the joint cooperation of the Ministry, TPDC and UN WOMEN. The training module covers the following: violence against women and girls, domestic violence, discrimination in the workplace, impact of stereotypes, stigmas, sexual harassment in the workplace, discrimination based on heritage, cases of rape of minors, early marriage, femicide and human trafficking.

- Training module: "Overcoming Violence Against Children, INSPAIR Strategies".

- Training module: "Sexual and Reproductive Health for Teachers", which is uploaded on the Edx platform and was offered to teachers from 2023.

Since 2020, TPDC has been providing targeted consultations to schools involved in the implementation of the education reform in the process of implementing the Council of Europe "Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture". School principals and administration staff worked on school projects that dealt with human rights topics, including trafficking and early marriage.

From 2019 until now, the Legal Aid Service has been implementing the project "Know your rights before the age of 18". Within the framework of the campaign, service representatives visit schoolchildren, children of day care centers, beneficiaries of youth centers and others. During the meetings, the representatives of the service conduct a presentation on the rights of the child, including bullying, inclusive education, early marriage and other current legal issues. Meetings also include Role plays, mock trials and psychological workshops. Information brochures, booklets, triplets are periodically distributed. For instance, in 2023, the representatives of the service held 21 meetings with schoolchildren, and 51 meetings with different social groups.

Since 2019, the MIA of Georgia has also joined the campaign against child marriage - so called "Do Not Deprive Childhood". In 2021-2023, within the framework of the "Do Not Deprive Childhood" campaign, the representatives of the Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department of the MIA, together with representatives of local police units, held informative meetings with up to 6,000 persons including school student, subjects of referral procedure (school principals, representatives of resource centers, medical staff, resource officers, representatives of local governments and gender councils) and with the local population.

It should be noted, that with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), work is underway on a practical guide for social workers on child and early marriage case management. The goal of the guide is to introduce child-friendly approaches to each aspect of early marriage.

As for the Illegal adoption, this issue is not relevant for Georgia, however, in order to prevent and reveal the facts of buying or selling of minors or any other unlawful transaction with respect to minor for the purpose of their adoption, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia and the Agency for State care and Assistance to (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking activelt cooperate with each us. In particular, relevant law enforcements study the cases of adoption and interview adoptive and biological parents.

b. developing children's life skills (including media literacy and online safety skills), knowledge and participation;

Government of Georgia acknowledges that education and development of children's healty life skills are one of the most powerful tools to recognize the signs of human trafficking and avoid situations that may lead to exploitation. To that end the relevant agencies working on THB issues individually and jointly in close cooperation with civil society, local NGOs and International Organizations periodically conduct information meetings or other types of preventive activities to raise the awareness of children on the risks of human trafficking, how to protect themselves and to whom to refer for reporting and assistance. In addition, TV and radio shows and advertisements are frequently devoted to THB issues. For example, in 2020 the Ministry of Justice of Georgia in close cooperation with IOM conducted information campaign on homeless children with the message "Danger might be invisible at first." Within the campaign video clip was prepared and disseminated via Social networks and TV broadcasters (Euronews, Borjomi TV, Formula TV, Mtavari Arkhi, Adjara TV, Public

Broadcaster), banners were placed in Public Service Halls of Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Telavi and Batumi in a visible place for everyone, as well as at bus stops in Batumi and Tbilisi.

In 2023 within the framework of the "Befriend the Police" campaign, the heads of the units of the Ministry held informative and educational meetings in the youth camp in Anaklia. The representatives provided up to 1,000 young persons in total with information on various important issues, including on the topics of human trafficking. Within the same project up to 1,300 high school students in different public schools of Tbilisi were also delivered information on human trafficking.

In 2022, LEPL Legal Aid Service introduced a mobile application, "LAS-Georgia," which is available in Android and iOS. The application is anonymous. Beneficiaries can receive consultation on domestic violence, child rights, and human trafficking. Noteworthy, the application and the webpage are fully adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities.

Government of Georgia also prioritizes prevention of trafficking through enhancement of education in secondary and high schools. In this regard, issues related to human trafficking are largely covered by the national curriculum.

Notably, A-THB Council, on its meeting held on 27 December, 2023, created a working group responsible to elaborate the action plan with the awareness raising activities to be implemented during 2024. Currently, elaboration of the action plan is underway.

Apart from it, the pandemic has increased the risks of online trafficking as people continue to live mostly in the virtual realm and traffickers refined online exploitation methods. To that end, raising awareness of children on media literacy and online safety skills is crucial.

According to the National Curriculum of the MoESY, media literacy is a cross-cutting topic and covers all subject group/subject standards. In cooperation with the Communications Commission and the UNICEF, up to 1 600 teachers have already been trained and information meetings have been held with up to 300 school principals from different regions of Georgia. In addition, a teacher's guide has been developed.

From the 2023-2024 academic year subject Media Literacy was added to the list of elective subjects at the secondary level of general education. Non-formal courses on Digital and financial literacy are piloted in 7 vocational and 2 general educational institutions of Georgia. The courses were developed by the initiative of the Skills Agency – an Agency founded jointly by the MoESY and Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and with the involvement of specialists in the field. The aim of the courses is to develop soft and transferable skills - analytical thinking, digital and IT skills, financial literacy, problem solving, critical thinking, etc. using non-formal education methods.

It should be noted that the existing financial literacy course is being adapted and will be placed on the LMS digital platform.

For the first time in the educational institutions of Georgia, Office of the Resource Officers of Educational Institutions (an Agency under MoESY) started to introduce a model of social work in schools, which has been developed together with local and European experts. More than 60 social workers have been hired by the Office of Resource Officers (ORO) and gradually deployed to 63 public schools. All of them have received basic in-house training as well as demands-led training on sexual abuse, sexual harassment, stalking, economic violence, violence against girls, women, most vulnerable groups/monitories.

In order to prevent any form of violence, ORO representatives - resource officers, social workers, phycologists and psychiatrists regularly carry out informative and educational activities, awareness

raising campaigns in the public and private schools for students and teachers on human rights, children's rights, equality, diversity, hate speech, nondiscriminatory approach and harmful practices.

In addition, LEPL Digital Governance Agency (DGA) operating under the Ministry of Justice of Georgia ensures, through inter-agency coordination, the production of a unified education and awareness raising campaign, which includes various areas related to cyberspace protection (cyber security basics and cyber hygiene, cyber defense, cybercrime, media literacy, protection of personal data in cyber space). Taking into account the best international experience, relevant, high-quality educational programs have been created both at the secondary and higher education levels. In addition, awareness raising campaigns in the field of cyber security have been conducted for the public (including defense) and private sectors, the population and the media, which ensures public awareness of cyber threats and risk management and, most importantly, the formation of cyber culture in society.

High-quality educational programs have been developed and implemented both in secondary schools and at the university level. Bachelor's and master's courses are established from time to time in accredited educational institutions in Georgia, including state security education and training centers and the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. As a result, the education system should ensure the training of specialists corresponding to the requirements of the labor market. In addition, in order to discover young talents, it is envisaged to conduct cyber trainings and exercises for schoolchildren and students (eg: Cyberclass), as well as training of teachers and trainers (ToT) in this field. The "digital citizenship" course includes the creation of age-appropriate learning materials on cyber security, cybercrime, cyberbullying, personal data protection and the basics of media literacy in cyberspace. Schoolchildren and students equipped with appropriate skills have the basic competence necessary to identify cyber threats, prevent cyber incidents and deal with them independently.

During the reporting period, awareness-raising activities were actively carried out in different focus groups of the society, within the framework of international (Safer Internet Day, Stop. Think. Connect Cybersecurity Month.) and local initiatives, creation of trainings, distance learning platforms and educational materials, familiarization and working meetings, production of informative videos and through the production of other advertising and information campaigns. The Digital Government Agency has updated the basic cyber security course on the portal elearning.gov.ge, and those who wish can take the new training program online for free. The training course aims to teach the mechanisms of protection of the principles of confidentiality, integrity and availability of information. The program is updated taking into account the current threats and the needs of the applicants. As for the information campaigns, in February and October, 2023 (Cybersecurity Month) up to 10 meetings on cyber security were held with more than 150 students from Tbilisi and regional schools of Georgia.

Mentioned awareness raising activities within the DGA have permanent character and are carried out regurarly.

Furthermore, 2023-2028 Cyber Security Awareness Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared and is in the approval stage.

c. putting in place a system for monitoring and reporting cases of abuse;

For the protection of children from all forms of violence, to implement referral procedures in a coordinated and effective manner, child protection referral procedures are in place, which was approved on September 12, 2016, under the resolution №437 of the Government of Georgia. Since the date, child protection referral procedures have expanded the circle of agencies involved in the

mentioned procedures, including asking municipalities to participate, which contributed to the formation of a coordinated and effective system to protect children from all forms of violence.

The authority and role of state agencies in identifying cases of violence against children, including trafficking against children are described in the mentioned referral procedures on child protection. The system looks as following:

1. Detection of the alleged case of violence against a child;
2. Reporting to the Police and Social Service (Agency for State Care and Assistance of (Statutory) Victim of Human Trafficking
3. Assessment of the condition of a child and in case of a violence, removal of a child from violent environment in case the health or life of a child is in danger.
4. Provision of relevant services to the child and case management.

The failure to report alleged cases of child violence to the relevant state bodies by persons involved in the child referral mechanism will invoke administrative liability.

Based on the mentioned Referral Procedures, each agency involved has internal detailed instructions how to implement the Referral Mechanism.

Since the role of the State Care Agency is crucial under the Referral Procedure, it has a 24-hour response mechanism for emergency cases, the purpose of which is to implement an urgent, quick and effective response to cases of child abuse or homeless children by the relevant authorized persons of the Agency, 24 hours a day, including over the weekends and during holidays. Effective and quick response is based on both a proper internal departmental system and a coordinated mechanism of interdepartmental cooperation. And, in addition, one of the obligations of social worker is to monitor children's rights and needs under State Care at least once in a month to protect them from any form of violence.

When it comes to the role of the MoESY, ORO was set up to ensure safe and psychologically healthy environment for children at schools across Georgia. It employs Resource officers, phycologists, psychiatrists and social workers. The ORO has 10 psycho-social service centers throughout Georgia. The Centers provide qualified, free of charge psychological services to students, their parents and school representatives.

In addition, since January, 2020 the Juvenile Referral Center has been functioning under the LEPL National Agency for Crime Prevention, Execution of Non-Custodial Sentences and Probation of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia. The target group of the cCnter are juveniles aged of 10 to 18 with difficult behavior, unless the person has been diverted or prosecuted or sentenced to imprisonment. Children with difficult behavior include, among others, minors involved in anti-social activities (e.g. children living/working in the street). The Center also works with those minors aged of 7 to 14 years, in relation to whom the commission of an act stipulated by the private part of the Criminal Code of Georgia is confirmed by the standard of reasonable suspicion by the competent agencies.[7] Homeless children receive the services of a psychologist and a social worker at the Juvenile Referral Center, and have the opportunity to participate in rehabilitation programs promoting the improvement of emotions and social competence. Also, in order to stimulate diverse interests, it is possible to engage in projects and events based on the child's interests.

Since 2020, 27 minors have received services at the Juvenile Referral Center.

[7] The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia; Ministry of Internal Affars of Georgia

d. providing training to child care professionals, legal guardians, education professionals;

MoESY developed a training module for teachers, principals and school resource officers covering all aspects of VAW/DV (Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence) and consequent reporting obligations in cooperation with UNW (UN Women's EU supported action Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in Georgia (EVAWGG)). The training modules has been institutionalized with the TPDC and the ORO. For this purpose, under the framework of cooperation with UN Women a ToT for teachers and resource officers of general educational institutions was conducted. As a result, more than 2300 teachers, principals and school resource officers trained in 2022-2023.

In order to prevent any form of violence, Human Rights Education programme has been developed for the ORO in cooperation with the Council of Europe experts. More than 1 300 Resource Officers, psychologists and social workers are trained in human rights education.

In 2023, in cooperation with donor organizations, 5 trainings were held for public lawyers and employees of the Legal Aid Service. With the support of the Council of Europe, 1 training of trainers was conducted on juvenile justice. 15 employees of the service were trained. Also, the service received a training module from the donor organization regarding the mentioned topic. In cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund and the Association of Young Lawyers of Georgia, 4 training sessions were held on separation issues. 18 employees of the service were trained. Also, 2 trainings on "best interests of the child" were held for paralegals. 1 training was held in Batumi, for paralegals of the Ajara region, and the 2nd training for paralegals in Kutaisi, Imereti region.

Since 2020, the Legal Aid Service (LAS) has conducted four training sessions for its public lawyers and administrative personnel. In total, 91 employees, including public lawyers, have been trained on topics concerning human trafficking.

As for the child care proffessionals, in cooperation with international organizations (IOM, ICMPD, EU, INL, OSCE) total of 6 trainings on THB were held for representatives (social workers, lawyers, psychologists, etc.) of LEPL State Care Agency. Trainings covered wide range of thematic issues including: protection of minor victims of THB, psychological and medical aspects of protection of THB victims, effective inter-agency cooperation against THB and etc. and a total of 99 representatives of LEPL State Care Agency participated in the them.

e. access to education and health care for vulnerable children, including from minority groups, unaccompanied migrant children, and children of migrant workers;

The Universal Health Case program provides persons with Georgian citizenship, ID card, neutral travel document with the following:

1. Planned outpatient services that include services of family physician/nurse and specialists, clinic-laboratory and instrumental studies:

    - For people aged 0-5 years are fully funded;
    - For persons aged 6-18 years old-involves 30%co-efforts specialist services and several clinic-laboratory and instrumental studies.

2. Emergency outpatient services that are financed fully;

3. Emergency inpatient services:

    a. 80%of people with disabilities aged 0-5 years of age are funded, the patient's co-payment is 20%of the payment amount, but not more than 1000 GEL from the

customs, although the co-payment is not subject to critical conditions, neonatal age and cases of this age, as well as cases of this age, as well as , Hospitalization related to palliative care of incourse patients;
   b. For persons aged 6-18-Emergency inpatient service limit is 15,000 GEL and provides full funding or 30%co-payment from the patient (but no more than GEL 1500) (depending on the type of service).

4. Planned surgical operations, which also include planned surgical hospitalization, all types of laboratory and instrumental studies of all types of surgery, and postoperative periods - the annual limit is 15 000 GEL and provides:

   a. 20% of the disabled period of 0-18 years of age, but not more than 1 000 GEL from the consumer. Co -parade does not include neonatal age and cases starting at this age, as well as cardiac surgery and oncological surgeries and related examinations;
   b. For people aged 6-18, 30% co-payment, but not more than 1 500 GEL. Companion does not include cardiac surgery and oncological surgeries and related studies.

5. Treatment of oncological diseases (chemotherapy, hormone therapy and radiation therapy and examinations and medications related to these procedures): The annual limit is GEL 25,000 and is fully funded;

6. Cochlear implant of beneficiaries;

7. Treatment of congenital heart defects;

8. medicines that include:

   a. Provide medication with chronic diseases of the cardiovascular, lung and thyroid gland, as well as the medication prescribed by the order of the Minister of Patients with Parkinson and Epilepsy.
   b. Provide antibacterial medicines prescribed by the order of the Minister of Age 0-5 years (including).

Within the healthcare services, early detection and screening program is performed:

   a. Prevention of mild to medium quality mental developmental disorders for children aged 1 to 6 years, early diagnosis and mental retardation prevention.
   b. Diagnosis and supervision of epilepsy, which includes the production of epilepsy registry, first diagnosis of epilepsy and confirmation of the patient to confirm the diagnosis;
   c. Screening of retinopathy, which includes examination of infants in the medical institutions of Tbilisi and two regions of Georgia for diagnosis of retinopathy, according to national screening criteria;
   d. Biomonitoring of lead content in the blood, which includes medical testimony based on the referral of a family physician and/or pediatrician, examining children under the age of 7 on lead content.

The immunization program provides immunization provided by the National Vaccination Calendar. The national calendar provides 13 diseases prevention.

The mental health program involves the study/diagnosis of patients under the age of 18 who have a change in mental and behavior, deteriorating social functioning and disadvection, and psychiatric inpatient services.

The oncochemical service program of the children includes outpatient and inpatient treatment for children under the age of 18 with oncolous diseases.

Diabetes management program includes supervision of children under the age of 18 (clinic-laboratory studies) and medication.

Patient treatment programs with rare diseases and permanent replacement treatment include outpatient children under the age of 18 (consulting a physician, clinical-diagnostic and instrumental examinations necessary for outpatient supervision of rare diseases) and inpatient medication.

Children can also enjoy tuberculosis management, HIV/AIDS management, dialysis and kidney transplantation, palliative care of incourse patients, drug treatment patients, emergency medical care and rural physician programs

As to the education, primary, basic and secondary education (12 year) is free of charge for all: citizens of Georgia, persons having neutral ID cards, neutral travel documents or temporary ID cards, aliens (including the citizens of foreign countries with the status of compatriot living abroad), asylum seekers, humanitarian status holders, refugees and persons under temporary protection. School students affected by the ongoing war in Ukraine are enrolled in Georgian public and private schools in a simplified manner.

The state ensures universal access to primary, basic and secondary education for all children including vulnerable children, ethnic minority groups, unaccompanied migrant children, and children of migrant workers. There are ethnic minority schools (Azerbaijani and Armenian language) and several Russian-language schools, also three newly opened Ukrainian-language schools.

Students of public schools are additionally provided with textbooks by the State. Students of ethnic minority schools receive textbooks translated into their language of instruction.

In order to promote the integration of migrant children into the general education system, the Ministry is providing one-year free Georgian language course for all asylum seekers, refugees and persons with international protection.

Up to 20 non-formal education projects are funded each academic year within the "Social Inclusion program" for integration of several vulnerable groups: such as Roma children, Meskhetians returned to Georgia after forced deportation to Central Asia in 1944 (most of them are Muslims), internally displaced persons, students of schools located in high mountainous areas etc.

In 2022, a Roma girl successfully passed the national exams and became a student at a higher education institution. In 2023, a category - was added to the existing categories within the framework of the Social Program and since 2023, in order to promote higher education opportunities for the Roma, MoES is financing studies at the bachelor's level for Roma students (Decree of the Government of Georgia, №324, 18/08/2023).

As mentioned above, since 2014, the Government of Georgia has implemented important measures both at the legislative level and from an institutional point of view to improve the legal status of children living and/or working on the street. In 2016, for the first time, the concept of a homeless child appeared at the legislative level, according to which a homeless child was defined as "a minor living on the street and/or a minor working in the street, who is identified as such by a social worker with the appropriate authority, in accordance with child protection referral procedures." The

regulation contributed to free identification documentation for this category of children, which, in turn, made various state services (education, health care, social programs, etc.) available to them.

f. birth registration for all children born in the country.

Registering a birth is governed by the 2011 Law of Georgia "On Civil Acts" and the Order N18 of 2012 of the Minister of Justice of Georgia on "Approval of the procedures for civil acts registration".

Birth is a fact of legal significance that is subject to mandatory registration. Registration of civil act of birth is performed on the basis of a medical certificate (notification) of birth received from a medical institution and/or a statement of an authorized person. Since 2011, medical reports are filled with special software and automatically, within 5 working days after the birth of the child, are sent to the LEPL Public Service Development Agency (PSDA), which registers the child's birth based on the mentioned electronic certificate. Noteworthy, if an authorized employee of a medical institution does not provide the Agency with a medical certificate of birth of a child within 5 days, he/she will be charged a fine stipulated by the Code of Administrative Offenses. Information regarding the registration of the child's birth is sent to the parent/parents in the form of an SMS to the phone number specified in the medical certificate.

Interested persons can obtain a birth certificate by applying to any branch of the Public Service Halls or to any territorial service of the PSDA, as well as by submitting an application through distance services.

In addition, From June 1, 2021, the record of the civil act of birth and the birth certificate are created in the form of an electronic document. Accordingly, an interested person is able to download and receive an electronic certificate from the website of the PSDA from anywhere in the world.

The purpose of the service is to ensure the mandatory registration of civil acts on births, the existence of correct statistical data on births on the territory of Georgia, and the improvement of the quality of data in the electronic database of the PSDA. At the same time, simplifying the service for interested parties and increasing accessibility.

In 2016, MoLHSA in alliance with the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) launched the nationwide electronic registry "Mother's and neonate's health surveillance system", so called "Georgian Birth Registry" (GBR). The system tracks information on all cases of pregnancy, delivery, postpartum, neonatal care and abortion.

3. What measures are taken in your country to address vulnerabilities related to the gender dimension of human trafficking?

As it is clear from the statistics attached to the report, women and girls are a particularly vulnerable group for crime. Therefore, the state policy should also pay special attention to the protection of those vulnerable groups.

Therefore, the state ensures that every step planned against THB and implemented reform are equally responsive and adapted to the needs of both women and men.

Every policy document in the field of action in the country is created on the principle of effective fight against crime, and every activity described in it equally serves to protect the rights of every person, regardless of any difference. This naturally involves ensuring access to state services, crime and victim detection mechanisms for both men and women.

4. What specific measures are taken to reduce the vulnerability to trafficking of persons from disadvantaged minorities? Please provide information on policies and measures in the following areas:

a. research;

As mentioned above, minorities are one of the vulnerable group for the crime of human trafficking. Therefore, these people are one of the target groups of the National Action Plans against Human Trafficking. Every year the Ministry of Justice of Georgia collects the information what kind of activities have been taken under the Anti-Trafficking NAP with regard to minorities, including the awareness raisning activities, analyse them and put the further actions in the new NAPs. Apart from it, in Every two years, a public opinion survey on migration and related issues is organized by the State Commission on Migration Issues. Similar researches were conducted in 2017, 2019 and 2022. Among other things, the study pays an important attention to THB, in particular, the level of awareness of the population, including in minorities about what is THBand what dangers it is associated with. According to the latest survey 2022 out of 10 interviewed minority people, only 4 know what is THB.

It is on the basis of the above-mentioned studies that the next steps of the state are determined, including the need for awareness-raising measures, the appropriate target area and groups.

b. information, awareness-raising and education campaigns;

Awareness raising of minoroties on the issues of human trafficking is one of the important activities under each 2-years action plans on THB. In the period of 2020-2021, due to restrictions imposed by Government of Georgia for prevention the spread of COVID-19 the state agencies were limited to conduct extensive information meetings throughout Georgia. The state agencies lacked the opportunity to conduct face-to-face information meetings with civil society on threats of THB. However, several information meetings with local population and students were conducted. Apart from it, video clips were distributed through TV channels.

Within the common information strategy following awareness raising activities were conducted by A-THB Council member agencies in 2020-2023:

Information meetings:

- within the framework of the A-THB Council 38 meetings were held in the territorial units inhabited by ethnic minorities, attended by more than 800 people. The target audience of 8 of these meetings were specifically representatives of ethnic and national minorities, and a total of 234 people participated in them. At the information meeting, the participants were provided with information about the state services for victims/statutory victims of THB as well as the leaflets on the language they understand.
- Since 2020 various educational initiatives have been conducted in VET institutions to raise awareness about human trafficking, including informative meetings, seminars, lectures, public discussions, movie nights. These activities were attended by VET students, teachers and administrative staff members, including the minorities. Since 2020, over 2300 VET students have actively participated in the above-mentioned educational and informative campaigns.
- Since 2020 various educational initiatives have been conducted in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to raise awareness about human trafficking, including informative meetings, seminars and public lectures. Issues related to human trafficking (trafficking) are taught in the form of courses and relevant syllabi of undergraduate and graduate programs of various higher educational institutions.
- Similar to the previous reporting period, in 2020-2023, a number of information events were dedicated to World Day (Jule 30) and European Day (October 18) against THB, which were

organized by representatives of various state agencies, non-governmental and international organizations;

- Since 2021, the Strategic Communications Department of the MIA, in cooperation with the relevant units of the MIA and the financial support of the European Union, is implementing an information campaign on the Fight against Organized Crime. One of the directions of the campaign is the fight against human trafficking.
- In 2021-2023, prosecutors actively participated in public awareness raising campaigns, meetings, lectures, trainings and moot courts held for students within the framework of the "Community Prosecutor's Office", the 16-day government campaign against gender-based violence against women and the "Equality Week" of the Council of Europe.
- On April 12, 2022, the presentation of the Campaign against Organized Crime of the MIA was held, in the framework of which, in order to raise public awareness, videos created with the support of the European Union (1 of which was dedicated to the topic of the crime of human trafficking) were shown. The mentioned event was covered by various media outlets. Four video clips, covering all four directions, were aired on TV commercials for two weeks, and the videos were also posted on social networks.
- Since 2022, the MIA has started conducting the information-aducational campaign "Befriend the Police", which aims throughout the country to raise the awareness of minors on their rights and related issues. Within the framework of the campaign, the representatives of the Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department, together with other representatives of the Ministry, held informative and educational meetings with school students. The employees of the MIA have met with up to 3500 school students and teachers in more than 50 schools across the country.
- On July 14th, 21th, 30th and August 3th, 2023, within the framework of the "Befriend the Police" campaign, the heads of the units of the Ministry held informative and educational meetings in the youth camp in Anaklia. The representatives provided up to 1,000 young persons in total with information on various important issues, including on the topics of trafficking and the importance of timely cooperation with the law enforcement agency.
- In 2020-2023, 4 series of the criminal documentary series "Police Files" were filmed on the topic of trafficking. The said series was broadcasted on television and posted on the official "Facebook" page of the Ministry.
- In 2021-2023, within the framework of the "Do Not Deprive Childhood" campaign, the representatives of the Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department of the MIA, together with representatives of local police units, held informative meetings with up to 6,000 persons including school student, subjects of referral procedure (school principals, representatives of resource centers, medical staff, resource officers, representatives of local governments and gender councils) and with the local population.
- In 2021-2023, within the campaign - "I Choose Equality", representatives of the prosecution service held a total of 6 information meetings about equality and crimes committed with intolerance motive. Issues related to the legal status of ethnic and religious minorities were widely discussed during the meetings. During the 16-day global campaign against gender-based violence against women, specialized prosecutors held meetings with the local population, participated in the events planned by the Georgian government administration and other agencies, and provided information to the interested individuals about the measures implemented by the prosecutor's office in this field.
- On October 6, 2022, the PSG launched a large-scale public information campaign "No to Femicide". The purpose of the campaign against femicide is to raise public awareness about VAW/DV and to prevent femicide. In 51 cities and towns throughout Georgia, prosecutors held more than 200 informational meetings. 8,916 individuals participated in the activities, 5,934 of them were women and 2,982 were men. Within the framework of the campaign against femicide, specialized prosecutors held information meetings with the public in all regions of Georgia in order to raise public awareness. Prosecutors met with representatives of

kindergartens, resource officers of educational institutions, teachers, pupils, students, representatives of municipalities and the health sector. They visited the victims accommodated in the service institutions for victims of violence, met with social workers and representatives of various professions.

- In the framework of the campaign, informative videos were prepared with the participation of famous figures and prosecutors. Special attention was devoted to the representatives of the ethnic minorities and women with disabilities as participants of the campaign, leaflets were printed in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages. Representatives of local non-governmental organizations as well as prosecutors were actively engaged in the campaign. Up to 40 advertising banners and video monitors were arranged in various cities of Georgia. In the scope of the campaign, the Prosecution Service of Georgia cooperated with more than 20 international and local non-governmental organizations and state agencies. Prosecutors and witness and victim coordinators of the Prosecution Service visited the facilities for victims of violence and met female victims in four cities of Georgia: Tbilisi, Gori, Senaki and Zugdidi. In order to improve coordination between agencies, prosecutors and witness and victim coordinators held a multisectoral workshop with the organizations that provide services for the victims of violence against women and domestic crime. Prosecutions Service of Georgia organized and held a meeting of the multi-sectoral local council on combating violence against women and domestic crime in Kakheti. Prosecutors gave public lectures for students from different universities in six cities of Georgia. Within the framework of the campaign, specialized prosecutors held informational meetings with the representatives and coordinators of educational programs of kindergartens, including all kidnergartens in Tbilisi. A total of 190 coordinators and 35 representatives of kindergartens attended the meetings
- In 2023, significant attention was paid to improving the legal status of women with disabilities. Within the framework of the "No Femicide" campaign, representatives of the Prosecution Service of Georgia held meeting with women with disabilities and representatives of organizations working on their rights, as well as with minors with disabilities and their parents in 5 cities of Georgia: Rustavi, Marneuli, Telavi, Sachkhere and Ambrolauri. The main goal of the meeting was to improve access to justice for women with disabilities and to deepen cooperation with representatives of the community. The participants of the meeting were presented achievements and current challenges of the Prosecution Service in relation to access to justice for persons with disabilities. They discussed the results of monitoring of the implementation of guidelines on the standards of working with witnesses, victims and defendants with disabilities. The opinions and needs of women with disabilities were also voiced during the meetings.

Information materials:

During the above mentioned information meetings, the relevant agencies distribute informational brochures and leaflets among the population in different languages, including in the languages of etnic minorities. In addition,

- IMore than 25 000 multilingual information brochures were produced and distributed throughout Georgia. The brochures were distributed on the languages of ethnic minorities, in particular on Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian and Turkish languages. The information campaign also involved the distribution and placement of information materials in public gathering places, border crossings and other busy areas.
- Information brochures prepared on the issue of human trafficking are also placed in the Migration Department of the MIA and on the border checkpoints of Georgia. Brochures prepared on the dangers of human trafficking are handed to citizens. The above-mentioned brochures are prepared in Georgian, English, Russian, Turkish and Azerbaijani languages.

- Within the framework of the information campaign - "Fight against human trafficking" - carried out by the International Organization of Migration (IOM) in 2022, flyers (up to 35,000 flyers) on human trafficking (trafficking) issues were produced in Georgian, English, Russian and Turkish languages. In order to provide information to citizens, the mentioned informational flyers were handed over to the Main Division of Border Management and Coordination of the Patrol Police Department of the MIA and were placed at the border checkpoints of Georgia (Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi Airports, Sarfi, Dariali, Red Bridge, Sadakhlo border checkpoints).

Other types of preventive measures:

The Legal Aid Service (LAS) has initiated significant projects. A key focus has been on analytical quarterly research dedicated to assessing the accessibility and effectiveness of legal aid services. This research inter alia emphasizes the identification and prevention of human trafficking and forced labor, with a special emphasis on vulnerable populations in mountainous and rural regions.The insights gained from these studies have been instrumental in shaping the LAS strategies. A notable outcome was the recognition of the necessity for a mobile consultation center. This facility, envisioned as a specialized van, adapted to the needs of PWD, is designed to extend legal aid services to remote and underserved areas, ensuring that legal support is accessible to all, especially where the risk of human trafficking and forced labor is pronounced.

With the support of UNDP Georgia, the procurement of this mobile consultation van was successfully completed in October 2023. Since its inception, the mobile consultation center has made a tangible impact, delivering over 100 consultations. These sessions not only provide legal assistance but also play a crucial role in raising awareness and preventing human trafficking, demonstrating our continued commitment to combating this grave issue.

From 2020 to 2023, as part of fulfilling its government obligations, the Legal Aid Service collaborated with various government agencies to conduct meetings in villages located near to conflict zones. These meetings primarily focused on issues related to trafficking and providing assistance to victims within the LAS mandate.

In 2022, the USAID Rule of Law Program supported the printing of 500 booklets in Georgian. These booklets, which contained vital information on the protection of the rights of trafficking victims, were distributed not only at the meetings near to the occupation line but also at sessions conducted by LAS paralegals in the mountainous Adjara region (Keda, Shuakhevi, Khulo). This initiative aimed to enhance awareness and support for trafficking victims in these critical areas.

The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia pays due attention to protect the rights of representatives of minorities and vulnerable groups living in the country and ensuring their access to criminal justice.

In order to proactively inform the public and raise awareness, information is actively published on the official website of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia about measures implemented by the Prosecutor's Office noncerning the protection of human rights and the fight against specific crimes.

A special "human rights" tab was added to the website of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, where analyzes prepared since 2014 to the present day on the issue of human rights protection are published (ill-treatment, gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, hate crimes and human trafficking).see - https://pog.gov.ge/en/public-info/Inner/95

In 2021, in order to ensure the exercise of the right of access to public information by Georgian citizens and foreign-speaking individuals and legal entities operating in Georgia, international organizations, statistical data with practical value placed in the special tab "Human Rights" and the above-mentioned analyzes were translated into English. This gives the opportunity to any interested person to consult the segregated statistical data and existing trends in Georgian and in English on gender-based and family violence against women, hate crime, torture and ill-treatment, human trafficking and violence against disabled persons.

Special attention is paid to the requests of international organizations and disabled community rights organizations operating in Georgia to the authorities, to ensure the involvement of disabled persons and their representative organizations in the decision-making process, especially if these decisions are related to the exercise of the rights and freedoms of disabled persons.

Accordingly, in order to improve access to justice for persons with disabilities, as well as to broaden cooperation and accountability with representatives of the disabled community, in 2021-2023, 3 working meetings were held with the Consultative Council of Monitoring Promotion, Protection and Implementation of Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and representatives of the disabled community.

On the official platforms of the Ministry and the "Facebook" and "Instagram" pages of the Central Criminal Police Department, informative banners, videos, films, briefings are proactively published, through which the public is provided with information regarding the measures taken and the results achieved in the fight against trafficking. For example, on July 30, 2021, in connection with the World Day against THB, an informational banner and a graphic video were placed on the social media – "Facebook" and "Instagram" pages - of the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA. The purpose of the mentioned graphic video clip and banner was to raise public awareness on the issues, such as: how to protect themselves against human trafficking, what should be emphasized and paid attention to in relation to employers, what information should be sought about the company or the employer, and how to act in the situation when the person becomes a victim of trafficking.

c. socio-economic initiatives targeting underlying and structural causes;

The Governmental policy is focused to create a sustainable social protection system, that will help population to realize their social rights and reduce social risks caused by poverty. Social protection system in Georgia includes different support and assistance programmes for various vulnerable groups of people, including elderly, persons with disabilities (including children), households under the poverty line, orphans and other vulnerable groups. Cash assistance is given in the form of State Pension (retired persons), State compensation (special groups who have special merit in front of the state), Social Package (persons with disabilities (including children) orphans, survivors, etc), Target social assistance (vulnerable households under the poverty line) and non-financial social assistance - the social services for elderly people, vulnerable children, including children lacking parental care, persons with disabilities / children, victims of domestic violence and abuse. These various protective activities serve to reduce poverty and vulnerability in country.

d. education, vocational training and job placement programmes.

Component of teaching about trafficking is part of the current National Curriculum (NC). The National Curriculum envisages topic of trafficking and topics related to trafficking in the standard of the subject group of Social Sciences, namely:

In Grade IV

The standard of the subject "I and society" envisages the following - - why is child labor a violation/exploitation?

Class Activity - Discussing a case in everyday life, when the labor of one of their peers is exploited (eg: hard physical work, limited play or study time)

Grade IX

One of the topics of the subject "Citizenship" is: international threats (trafficking, fundamentalism, terrorism, extremism, radicalism, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, armed conflict) and contemporary challenges of migration (refugees, IDPs, asylum seekers, persons with humanitarian status) and their identification.; Discussing the possible ways to solve the above- mentioned challenges and the resources needed for this. Thematic block of the same subject covers the following topic: why is it important to sign an employment contract at the start of service? Under the study topic - healthy life a student should be able to analyze, based on the legislative documents, what can become the basis for the violation of the right to health and education (early marriage, labor exploitation of minors).

The school textbooks created on the basis of the National Curriculum (including translated textbooks for non-Georgian schools) contain information about trafficking accordingly.

Vocational education is equally accessible for everyone. The state fully finances education in public VET institutions, moreover education in private VET institutions is financed by the state as well in accordance with priority areas determined by the Minister. State funding is provided to Georgian citizens, as well as to foreign citizens with the status of compatriot living abroad, asylum seekers, refugees, humanitarian status holders or stateless persons in Georgia, persons who are or were under state care (in foster care, small family-type homes, shelters, etc.). VET education system offers both qualification and vocational training and retraining programs.

The Ministry actively works on increasing access to VET education and inclusiveness of the system. One of the important conditions for improving accessibility to vocational education is the expansion of the geographic network of vocational education and making access to VET for learners close to their home. During the last 2 years, several colleges started functioning in new locations (Kaspi, Marneuli, Khulo, Keda, Lanchkhuti -Goraberezhouli etc.). In 2023 The construction of several colleges were finalized (Khasuri (Shida Kartli), Lanchkhuti(Guria), Tskaltubo (Imereti). Construction works are ongoing to develop new colleges in Bolnisi (Kvemo Kartli), in Borjomi (samtskhe-Javakheti) and in Gurjaani (Kakheti). Ethnic minorities have the opportunity to undertake selection procedures in Armenian, Russian and Azerbaijani languages from 2016. Once they pass selection procedure, they are offered a Georgian language module, after completion of which they can continue their studies at the desired vocational education program.

To promote and facilitate socialization, integration and competitiveness of non-Georgian speaking persons, preparatory modules of the state language have been developed. These modules are intended for all learners, including ethnic minorities, immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, persons with humanitarian status etc. and serve to increase access to quality education and accordingly, employment opportunities.

LELP Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration delivers the state-funded Georgian language learning programs and courses across Georgia through its 12 education centers in the regions as well as mobile groups deployed at the places of residence including the most remote villages in the regions densely populated by ethnic minorities and in hybrid/distance format.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of Georgia clarifies that LEPL Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration has been providing Georgian language courses for public servants and

employees belonging to ethnic minorities and working at budgetary organizations throughout Georgia. The School also serves various target groups including teachers and other administrative personnel of schools and preschool institutions, military recruits on the military bases, clergymen, youth, and others offering up to 30 long and short-term state language courses within the "State Language Teaching and Integration Program", that aim to ensure improvement of the state language competences as well as, through sectoral sub-programs, development of diverse vocational skills for better integration of the representatives of ethnic minorities. Annually, in total, up to 5200 citizens benefit from this program through 12 education centers in the regions of Georgia and 222 mobile groups. The School also administers "Program – Ambassadors of the State Language" (training of trainers), which intends to create so called multipliers of the state language trainers. The Program aims to prepare and/or retrain trainers in the topics related to state language teaching and integration. In 2021-2023, 40 people were trained, including 3 representatives of ethnic minorities (2 Armenian-speaking and 1 Azerbaijani-speaking), 30 of them are already employed at the Zhvania school.

According to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, State ensures access to and openness of higher education and academic freedom in learning, teaching and scientific research and the opportunity to acquire higher education at any time during a person's lifetime.

Access to higher education is ensured through the merit-based transparent procedures of unified national exams administered by the National Assessment and Examination Centre under MoESY.

Maximum amount of tuition fee at state universities are fixed to the size of state education grant (2250 GEL). State funding for Higher Education is secured through merit-based and needs-based education grants, as well funds allocated to the state universities for financing priority fields. State education grants, awarded to the best scoring students in the UNE entrance exam, provide secondary school graduates with an opportunity to continue their education at higher education level both at public and private universities. Foreign citizens passing unified national exams are funded under special program designed purposefully for them.

20% of state education grants are annually allocated for the social grants program. Needs-based grants are awarded to students with different social background: students from highland areas; graduates from minority schools (Azerbaijanian and Armenian); students of the KIA (Killed in Action) and MIA (Missing in Action) military families; repatriates; orphans and students from large families, students under the state care; students impacted by Russian aggression; students from occupied territories; students with special education needs/disabilities; socially vulnerable students, students of Roma descent .

In addition, state scholarships for the best performing students are awarded annually, under the special support program.

Besides, "1+4 Program" a higher education opportunity for ethnic minorities is available as an accredited, special one-year preparatory program in Georgian language. Beneficiaries of the Program are financed for one-year language course and Bachelor studies for the duration of the educational program in authorized higher educational institutions.

University entrants are entitled to pursue their studies on the mentioned program, if they pass one of the following tests in Unified National Examinations:

- Azerbaijani-language general skills test
- Armenian-language general skills test
- Ossetian-language test

- Abkhazian-language test

In order for the Government to promote the employment of Georgian citizens, especially "hard to employ" groups, the LEPL State Employment Support Agency (SESA) was established and is operational as of January 2020. Active Labour Market Policy is being implemented since 2015 through state programs. Vulnerable groups, including victims of trafficking and domestic violence, are on a priority list and various activities are being implemented in this regard. The programs aim to increase the competitiveness of job seekers, provide them with short-term vocational training/retraining, and internships, and develop their core competencies, career guidance, and intermediary services, individual and group consultations, job fairs.

5. What specific measures are taken to reduce the vulnerability to THB of persons with disabilities? Please provide information in the following areas:

a. deinstitutionalisation, including community and family-based services for children and support for independent living;

Ministry of Justice elaborated new Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[8], which was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in July, 2020. An important novelty of the new law is to shift from a medical approach to a bio-psychosocial model in determining the status of a person with a disability. It is an approach whereby a person's disability status and quality, together with medical testimony, are determined based on an assessment of his or her actual needs. The same principle determines the amount of relevant social security guarantees. By approving the Law by the Parliament of Georgia, Georgia has a single legislative act specifying mechanisms for safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities. The law imposes obligations for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities on state and administrative bodies, defines the obligations of various agencies to prepare timely action plans for the effective implementation of the law within their competencies in health, education, civil integration, employment, social, political and economic areas, as well as, in terms of integration of these people into the community and ensuring their access to all kinds of services. The legal act also provides for regulations to ensure full access to litigation for persons with disabilities. A special plaintiff institute is set up in this respect. Organizations with this status are able to defend the rights of persons with disabilities in the court without any barriers or additional powers. The Law pays particular attention to public awareness-raising measures to increase the protection of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in the public and to create an environment free of discrimination and stereotypes.

As for the question a., according to the Code on The Rights of The Child, the state is obliged to provide special protection and support to a child temporarily or permanently left without parental care, as well as to a child whose family stay is against the child's best interests. Therefore, the state creates such forms of care that are close to the family environment, such as foster care and services of small family-type homes.

It should be noted that Children with disabilities are placed with a specialized foster carer who is trained in the care and looking after the children with different needs.

In case of impossibility of placement or adoption of a child for the purpose of foster care, the child is placed in a small family-type home, where an environment close to the family is provided for the minor.

[8] Available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/4923984?publication=0

Small family-type homes operate under the administration of provider organizations, however, social workers of the LEPL State Care Agency work with the beneficiaries enrolled in the service, perform case management and respond to identified needs.

Within the "State Program of Social Rehabilitation and Child Care" there is a sub-program of specialized family-type services for children with severe and profound disabilities or health problems, the purpose of which is to provide care and education in family-friendly conditions by placing children with severe and profound disabilities or health problems who are deprived of care in an environment close to their families.

Within the framework of the same program, there is a long-term pediatric care medical-social center service sub-program, the target group of which are the children with severe and profound disabilities or health problems, care-deprived children who, in addition to a caregiver, need long-term qualified medical/nursing care.

Currently, there are 33 small family-type homes and 4 specialized family-type homes for children with severe and profound disabilities or health problems, and 641 foster parents are registered in the foster care program, including 173 specialized foster carers. In total, 1,344 beneficiaries benefited from the foster care sub-program in 2023, 236 minors benefited from small family-type services, and 28 beneficiaries were enrolled in severe and profound specialized services.

It should be noted that within the framework of the " State Program of Social Rehabilitation and Child Care" for adults with disabilities, community organizations of persons with disabilities are functioning, the purpose of which is to promote deinstitutionalization, develop alternative services, creation of conditions close to the family environment for persons with disabilities, promotion of independent life and social integration.

In 2023, the process of deinstitutionalization of boarding houses for disabled people was actively underway. 18 beneficiaries were transferred from Martkofi boarding house for people with disabilities in to small family-type houses in Dusheti.

In the period of 2024, the process of deinstitutionalization will continue actively. As part of the Czech government grant, the procurement, renovation and service provider selection processes for additional small household names are underway.

In order to increase the degree of independence, the State Care Agency draws up and implements an individual service plan for the beneficiaries; supports developing professional skills, taking into account the individual abilities and wishes of the beneficiaries – it includes the selection, teaching and practical use of crafts, the acquisition of skills and experience necessary for independent life and promotion of employment;

b. monitoring institutions and foster families accommodating persons with disabilities;

The cases related to the beneficiaries is monitored by a social worker of the LEPL State Care Agency, who works directly with the beneficiary in accordance with the law. It should be noted that when a minor is placed in state care, a social worker visits the beneficiary once a week, after that, once a month, the visit may also be made unscheduled, depending on the needs encountered. Also, the monitoring and assessment department is a structural unit of the LEPL State Care Agency, whose function is to carry out planned and unplanned monitoring in the structural units of the agency or the services provided by the sub-program, and case study based on the application/complaint.

Apart from the State Care Agency, the Office of the Ombudsperson as an independent human rights monitoring body monitors the institutions and publishes the reports with recommendations. According to the organic law of Georgia "On the Public Defender of Georgia", the latter can enter and monitor the services without hindrance.

c. procedure for the selection and appointment of legal guardians and monitoring of their work;

Pursuant to Section 5 of Article 1205^1 of the Civil Code of Georgia, parental rights and responsibilities are considered suspended when the child is abandoned by the parent(s) through their own actions or inaction, when the child is placed in 24-hour state care. Accordingly, the legal representative of the minor becomes the corresponding authorized person of the guardianship body - a social worker and protects the rights and interests of the minor while providing representation.

The professional supervision of the activity of the social worker is carried out by the professional supervisor, whose functions are defined by the regulation approved by the director of the LEPL State Care Agency.

Also, it should be noted that based on Article 25, Part 3 of the Law of Georgia "On International Protection", the MIA of Georgia is obliged to immediately inform the body of guardianship and care defined by the legislation of Georgia about minors left without a legal representative, also, if necessary, to inform such a body about a person with disabilities. In case of need, the said body ensures the appointment of a guardian/carer/provider in accordance with the procedure established by the legislation of Georgia.

Apart from it, a supporter is assigned to a person with psychosocial needs in accordance with the procedure defined by the Civil Code of Georgia. In particular, a supporter is assigned to a person who has a strong mental, mental/intellectual disability, who lacks the ability to fully and effectively participate in public life under equal conditions with others, to freely express his/her will and make an informed and thoughtful decision. The purpose of the support institution is to protect the rights and interests of a person with psycho-social needs.

A person's family member, relative or specialist can be appointed as a supporter. If it is not possible to choose a supporter from among the mentioned persons, the court appoints an authorized person of the State Care Agency as a supporter, and in case a person is enrolled in the specialized institution – a representative of the institution.

The State Care Agency supervises the supporter's performance of his duties once in every 6 months.

d. access to adequate accommodation, education and work;

The detailed information is available under question 5a. The mentioned services aim at to promote deinstitutionalization, develop alternative services, creation of conditions close to the family environment for persons with disabilities, promotion of independent life, employment and social integration.

As for the education, MoESY started implementation of the inclusive vocational education within Georgia's VET system since 2013 and still remains one of the main priorities. In order to increase access to vocational education for persons with special educational needs and persons with disabilities, an alternative approach of enrolment has been developed since 2013.

To support the learning process of VET students with special educational needs and disabilities various types of services are available: an inclusive vocational education specialist, learning process assistant, individual assistant, sign-language interpreter, orientation and mobility specialist. Adapted learning materials, individual study plans, transportation and more are constantly provided. Since 2017, VET students with special needs and disabilities are provided with additional funding in the amount of 1000GEL on a quarterly voucher. Ramps and adapted restrooms are provided in the VET institutions and in 5 VET institutions, the physical environment is adjusted according to universal design. To support the education of VET students with special needs, educational resources were developed.

In 2021, a unified rule of enrolment in educational institutions was introduced in VET system according to which, it became possible to enrol VET students with unified enrolment procedures not only in public but in all private institutions. In accordance with the new enrolment rule 15% of the announced places are offered to the people with special needs. Additionally, an alternative selection procedure (practical testing) for programs is defined, which is tailored to the individual needs of persons with disabilities or special needs. Moreover, in 2021-2022 the regulation of providing inclusive vocational education has been developed. which considers provision of orientation service for persons with special educational needs, to help beneficiaries to make informed decision regarding future career. Within the scope of the service, detailed information is available about the desired occupation, educational opportunities and labor market characteristics, also, interested individuals can practically try the activities typical to the occupation.

e. access to information and reporting/complaints mechanisms which are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities have an opportunity to report crimes, including the crime of trafficking in human beings, to the MIA through the hotline of the LEPL Public Safety Command Center "112" of the MIA. Since February 11, 2017, the Public Safety Command Center "112" of the MIA has been implementing a service based on modern technologies - a mobile application. The mobile application enables communication and location recognition between citizens and the operators of Public Safety Command Center "112". The main purpose of the application is to enable the operator to detect the location and send appropriate assistance immediately. The mobile application is free and supports iOS and Android platforms.

In 2023, the mobile application of "112" was updated. As part of the update, the function of making a video call was added to the mobile application for hearing impaired people. In addition to Georgian, English and Russian languages, the application was additionally translated into Armenian and Azerbaijani languages and is currently available in 5 languages (Georgian, English, Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian). Also, the application is adequatelly adapted for the visually impaired. In particular, all functions of the app are voiced and adapted for the target group.

In addition, the hotline of the LEPL State Care Agency (116 006) and child-tailored hotline (111) operate continuously, where anyone could obtain information on trafficking-related issues. There is also a complaint box in the services of the State Care Agency, where the beneficiary can also express an opinion regarding the service.

Apart from it, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia pays particular attention to the fight against crimes committed against persons with disabilities, to ensuring the access to criminal justice for persons with disabilities and to the protection of rights of persons with disabilities participating in the criminal proceedings.

Combatting crimes against Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), ensuring access to justice for PWDs without discrimination are subsequently reflected in the Strategy of the PSG for 2022-2027. In particular, a separate chapter in the strategy and N2.7 objective is dedicated to increasing the effectiveness of combating crimes committed against PWDs and improving access to justice for PWDs, including children with disabilities.

In order to achieve these goals and endorse the core principles of the "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" and the law of Georgia "On the rights of persons with disabilities", the Prosecution Service of Georgia developed two annual Action Plans particularly on Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which has been approved by the order of Prosecutor General of Georgia.

The main objectives of the 2021, 2022 and 2023 action plans of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia on protection of the rights of PWDs are to protect persons with disabilities from exploitation, ill-treatment and discrimination, to respond effectively to crimes committed against PWDs, and to ensure access to justice.

The action plans endorse inclusion and effective communication with the PWD community. They include various activities, such as training and capacity building of the employees of the Prosecution Service of Georgia, monitoring the cases involving PWDs, implementing methodology of investigating and prosecuting the cases involving PWDs.

Furthermore, an important part provided by the action plans is to adapt the website of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia for PWDs and to improve the accessibility of the administrative buildings recorded on the balance sheet of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia.

In order to effectively implement standards provided by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including women with disabilities, in 2021 two guidelines were developed by the Human Rights Department of the Prosecution Service of Georgia: Guidelines on the Standards and Methodology of Working with Witnesses, Victims and Defendants with Disabilities and Guidelines on the Standards and Methodology of Working with Minor Witnesses, Victims and Defendants with Disabilities. They were approved by the order of 23 March 2021 of the Prosecutor General of Georgia. Operation of two sets of guidelines ensures application of age-appropriate approaches.

Human Rights Department of the PSG conducts monitoring and analysis of the cases of crimes against persons with disabilities. The monitoring ensures proper implementation of national legislation on the rights of persons with disabilities as well as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the guidelines developed by the PSG. Prosecutors identify the cases of ill-treatment against persons with disabilities, including persons with mental and intellectual disabilities and ensure prosecuting them with proper legal qualification, including identifying the motive of intolerance based on disability in relevant cases.

Web page of the PSG contains a special tub: "Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" in the "Human Rights" section, which is applied for reporting on the measures related to the rights of persons with disabilities implemented by the PSG. Annual Action Plans on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Reports on Implementation of the Action Plans, as well as annual analysis of the crimes committed against PWDs are published in the subsequent section[9].

Information on prosecuting the crimes committed against PWDs, including the crimes committed with the motive of intolerance, is published on the official website and Facebook page of the PSG. Communicating on the effective response to these crimes informs interested community on the crimes committed against the Persons with Disabilities and sends clear message to the public on the strict criminal justice policy implemented by the PSG.

In order to ensure access to justice for the victims and witnesses, including the most vulnerable, PSG as well as MIA has the Service of Witness and Victim Coordinators. According to the guidelines implemented in the field of the rights of persons with disabilities, witness and victim coordinators are

[9] https://pog.gov.ge/page/default/shshm-pirTa-uflebebis-dacva

involved in all relevant cases and the prosecution party (investigator, prosecutor) inform social services in cases of neglect from legal guardians or family.

Victim and Witness coordinators are participants of the criminal proceedings. They ensure full legal service (consultation, drafting documentation and representation in court) for victims/alleged victims of domestic violence, irrespective of their finances. They can be involved in hate crime cases and offer psychological help to the victims in order to make their communication with the law enforcement agencies more convenient. Guidelines implemented for the coordinators define that hate crime cases are highly prioritized and important and the coordinators are actively engaged in them to support the victims considering their specific needs. Coordinators apply referral mechanisms for victims in relevant cases.

6. How do you ensure in practice that an assessment of the vulnerability and special needs of asylum seekers is carried out at an early stage? What procedures are followed when vulnerability to THB is detected? Please provide information on policies and measures in the following areas:

a. provision of comprehensive and accessible information, in a range of relevant languages, on the rights of asylum seekers, indicators of THB, rights of victims of THB, and contacts of relevant organisations;

b. access to legal assistance and representation;

c. access to decent accommodation, health (including psychological) care, work and education.

Applies to a, b and c:

The victims of trafficking in the context of the Georgian asylum procedure are considered as persons with specific needs. The Law of Georgia on International Protection[10] (hereafter: the Law) establishes the list of persons with specific needs.[11] The procedural guarantee of an early identification of vulnerable persons for planning the relevant future activities is applied, hence, the Asylum Procedure ensures prioritized reception, registration and review process in case of persons with specific needs.

Asylum seekers are provided with information about asylum procedures, their rights and obligations, as well as social guarantees for asylum seekers, in a language they understand, both orally and in writing, at all stages of the asylum procedure. In addition, the mentioned information can be provided to the person upon request. They are also informed on the possibility of contacting UNHCR and its partner organizations, as well as the Public Defender's Office, for legal counselling. In addition, brochures on human trafficking are distributed and available in various languages (Georgian, English, Russian and Turkish) on information boards at the Migration Department of MIA. Brochures on human trafficking in different languages are also available at airports and border crossing points of Georgia.

If the department reveals an alleged victim of the human trafficking while conducting administrative procedures, it immediately notifies the responsible units of the MIA and LEPL State Care Agency.

Asylum seekers are entitled with the following rights: pre-school, general education, professional and higher education in accordance with Georgian legislation; health care from the Universal Healthcare Program as provided for citizens of Georgia and the right to employment. Moreover, asylum seekers have the right to be accommodated at the reception centre during administrative procedures, where they are provided with the items of primary use and food packages. In order to determine the necessity for resettlement in another place, the Division of International Protection of the Migration Department of the MIA of Georgia first identifies the specific needs of the asylum seeker placed in

[10] Available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/3452780?publication=4
[11] In Article 3(w) of the Law of Georgia on International Protection.

the reception center, on the basis of an appeal by the asylum seeker placed in the reception center or at the initiative of the head of the reception center. In addition, psychological service is available at the Migration Department, as needed.

In addition, it should be noted that relevant employees of the Migration Department participate in various trainings, courses and working meetings held on the issue of international protection and trafficking in human beings.

According to Article 2 of the Law of Georgia "On Legal Aid", legal advice is available to any person, including asylum seekers. According to Article 5, Clause 2^3 of the same law, drafting legal documents and representation in court regarding the issue of obtaining asylum or international protection status is also guaranteed.

The legal aid service representatives, if necessary, ensures communication with the asylum seeker with the help of an interpreter in the relevant language. If the issue of placing the beneficiary in a shelter was identified within the scope of the consultation, they are redirected to service institutions (shelters) for victims of human trafficking.

Also, it should be noted that based on Article 25, Part 3 of the Law of Georgia "On International Protection", the MIA of Georgia is obliged to immediately inform the body of guardianship and care defined by the legislation of Georgia about minors left without a legal representative, also, if necessary, to inform such a body about a person with disabilities. In case of need, the said body ensures the appointment of a guardian/carer/provider in accordance with the procedure established by the legislation of Georgia.

Notably, there are 6 shelters and 7 crisis centers operate throughout the country within the framework of the LEPL State Care Agency for presumed victims as well as for officially identified victims of human trafficking. In 2023, the new service facility for victims of violence and human trafficking (trafficking) – shelter was opened in Tbilisi, and a crisis center for the services of victims of violence was also opened in Telavi. While shelters are available only for officially identified victims of human trafficking, services of the crisis centers are available for presumed victims of THB and if there is a ground to suspect that asylum seeker may be the victim of the THB he/she will be referred to crisis center.

There is a counseling hotline (116 006) available in 9 languages within framework of the LEPL State Care Agency.

Access to education is described under Q4 – d.

7. What specific measures are taken to reduce the vulnerability to THB of migrant workers (including seasonal workers, seconded/posted workers, domestic workers, diplomatic household employees)? Please provide information on policies and measures in the following areas:

a. provision of comprehensive and accessible information, in a range of relevant languages, on migration and labour laws, worker protection and contacts of relevant organisations;

Labour Inspection Office (LIO) is a Legal entity under public law - created based on the Law of Georgia "on Labor Inspection Service" and Law of Georgia "on Legal entity under public law" and is operational since January 1, 2021. LIO is the Successor of the Labour Inspectorate Department under the MoLHSA that was operational since 2015. The purpose of the LIO is to ensure the effective application of labor standards.

On May 17, 2023, the Parliament of Georgia amended the law on Labour Migration[12], which came into effect on September 1, 2023. The amendments established the LEPL Labour Inspection Office (LIO) as the enforcement institution. The LIO's responsibilities include:

- Certifying the activities of intermediary companies involved in arranging employment outside of Georgia.
- Monitoring compliance with the conditions of these certifications.
- Supervising the labour rights of labour migrants as defined by the Labour Code of Georgia.
- Requiring employers to register labour migrants in a dedicated software system.

Additionally, it's worth noting that the Labour Inspection Office, in accordance with the Law on Labour Inspection Service[13], supervises the enforcement of labour norms defined by the Labour Code of Georgia and the Organic Law of Georgia on Occupational Safety. Additionally, the LIO conducts inspections under Government Resolution No. 112 of 7 March 2016, "On the approval of the rules of state supervision to prevent and respond to forced labour and labour exploitation." Mainly, it keeps checking of private and state institutions in order to reveal the facts of forced labour and labour exploitation. During the inspection the labor inspectors check employees' identity, citizenship, in case of foreigners the date of arrival, the country the employee comes from, identified documents and the terms of the employment contract. In case of absence of any mentioned documents, the case will be immediately referred to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia for further identification of labor exploitation case.

Based on the above, the Labour Inspection Office in Georgia has a comprehensive supervisory mechanism for ensuring the effective application of labour norms. This structure allows the LIO to effectively protect the rights of workers throughout Georgia.

For the accessibility of information in different languages, all relevant and comprehensive information about labour norms is available on the official webpage of the Labour Inspection Office and on the website of the Legislative Herald of Georgia. Apart from the inspections the labor inspectors conduct information meetings with employers and employees on labor rights and labor security, risks related to forced labor and labor exploitation, existed legal mechanisms and services available for THB (statutory) victims. During the information meetings the Labor Inspection Office disseminates brochures regarding their functions, as well as on their hotline.

b. provision of clear employment contracts;

The Labour Code of Georgia and the Law of Georgia on Labour Migration both stipulate the requirement for an employment contract. It's also worth noting that, with the support of GIZ's Shaping Development-Oriented Migration (MEG) program, the Labour Inspection Office (LIO) has begun developing model agreements for two key documents:

- Agreement on Assistance in Employment Arrangement: This is a written agreement between a person and an intermediary company, as defined in Article 3 of the Labour Migration Law.
- Agreement on Labour Arrangement: This is a written agreement between a foreign employer and an intermediary company, also defined in Article 3 of the Labour Migration Law.

[12] Available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2806732?publication=3
[13] Available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/5003057?publication=0

The Law of Georgia "On Labour Migration"[14] defines the minimum requirements for the labour contract to be signed between a labour migrant and a local employer. Articles 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Law prescribe details of the contract on the provision of employment, requirements with regard to a contract for assistance in the provision of employment, terms and conditions of labour contracts signed in Georgia between labour emigrants and foreign employers, respectively.

c. access to decent work and housing, health care, social services and education;

Provision of decent working conditions to Georgian workers is one of the top priorities of the Georgian Government. In this regard, a lot has been done in terms of the elaboration of labour legislation and the creation of an effective, full-fledged enforcement mechanism. Detailed information on the work of Labour Inspection Office can be seen under question 8 and throughout the questionnaire.

Social programs/services:

Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, in accordance to its competencies, assigned by the law in frames of state budget for the relevant year, implements state health and social protection programs, content of which and inclusion criteria are defined by the same state programs. One of the factors of involvement in various social protection programs is the citizenship status of the person. The Law of Georgia on State Pensions applies to both Georgian citizens and stateless persons with status in Georgia and to foreign citizens permanently residing legally on the territory of Georgia for the last 10 years at the time of applying for a universal state pension. Similar regulations are in place when providing the relevant target group with a social package (financial support for disabled people, survivors e.t.c).

As for the targeted social assistance program, in this case, like the citizens of Georgia, persons permanently residing in Georgia legally, also, refugees and persons with humanitarian status, stateless persons with the status of Georgia have the opportunity to participate in this program.

In addition, there is a social rehabilitation and child care program in the country, which includes preventive and supportive measures: child rehabilitation /habilitation; specialized family service sub-programs for providing maternity and child shelter, wheelchairs, prosthetic and orthopedic devices, hearing aids, children with severe and profound disabilities or health problems, and more. These measures are available not only for the citizens of Georgia, but also children with temporary identity card / victims of violence, persons with a neutral ID card, a neutral travel document, persons without citizenship status in Georgia, asylum seekers in Georgia, persons with refugee or humanitarian status.

Notably, the services of the "foster care sub-program", the "small family-type home service sub-program", the "homeless child shelter sub-program" and the "State Program of Social Rehabilitation and Child Care" mentioned aboave are also available for foreign nationals.

Migrants living on the territory of Georgia, who meet the criteria set for the provision of state social protection programs and have the appropriate civil status, will benefit from social protection programs like the citizens of Georgia.

The detailed information abour health care services is available under question 2-e, while access to education is described under question 4 – d.

d. possibility to change employers;

[14] Available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2806732?publication=3

According to the legislation regulating labour migration in Georgia, if a foreigner has a legal basis for staying in Georgia, it does not limit the migrant's right to change his employer.

e. access to confidential complaints mechanisms;

Any labour migrant can appeal to the labour inspectorate, ombudsperson or the court in case of violation of their rights.

f. right to join trade unions and to engage in collective bargaining;

According to the Georgian constitution, any employee (including labour migrants) has the right to join trade unions and to engage in collective bargaining.[15]

g. legal avenues for regularising their stay in the country.

The issues of legal employment of a foreigner in Georgia and staying in the country are regulated by the following laws:

- Law of Georgia on „Labour Migration";
- Law of Georgia on „the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons".

In particular, according to Article 13^3 of the law, the labor arrangement of a labor immigrant with a local employer and the implementation of paid labor activities by him are allowed only in the case of compliance with the conditions defined for the labor contract between the labor immigrant and the local employer and registration in the state database.

After the registration in the State database and the conclusion of the relevant labor contract, a labor immigrant can get the D1 Visa or a labor residence permit for legal stay in Georgia.

8. Do labour inspectorates and other authorities checking workplace conditions possess a comprehensive mandate, and adequate human, financial and technical resources, to conduct regular, proactive workplace inspections in all economic sectors, with a particular emphasis on high-risk sectors prone to exploitation? How do labour inspectors co-operate with other authorities and trade unions? Is there a separation between labour inspection and immigration control functions?

The Labour Inspection Office (LIO) in Georgia possesses a comprehensive supervisory mechanism to ensure the effective application of labour norms across the nation. This framework empowers LIO to conduct inspections based on various legal instruments, including:

- Organic Law of Georgia on Occupational Safety
- Organic Law of Georgia on Labour Code of Georgia
- Law of Georgia on Labour Migration
- Government Resolution No. 112 of 7 March 2016 on preventing and responding to forced labour and labour exploitation

LIO's inspections encompass all economic activities and geographical areas within Georgia. These inspections can be proactive or reactive, and all are conducted unannounced as stipulated by Ordinance No. 80 of the Government of Georgia (2020). This regulation, along with the Law on Labour Inspection Service, grants inspectors the right to enter any workplace at any time, based on complaints or reasonable suspicion, to investigate potential violations, including forced labour, child labour, and trafficking in human beings.

[15] Article 26, Constitution of Georgia: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/30346?publication=36

Furthermore, LIO inspections can be extended to any type of economic activity, including private farms and residential houses. These sectors are considered high-risk environments for forced labour and exploitation, highlighting the importance of LIO's comprehensive approach.

Labor Inspection Office attaches great importance to raising public awareness. However, such events are not limited to communication with employees and involve the organization of working meetings with business representatives, member companies of the Georgian Employers' Association and trade unions.

Apart from it, Labor Inspection Office actively cooperates with the Central Criminal Police Departament of the MIA to detect the labor exploitation cases. For that end there is a memorandum of cooperation between these two institutions envisaging cooperation and information exchange within their competence. Also, the goal of cooperation is to improve the identification of children living and working on the street as victims of trafficking and investigation of such cases. As a result of mutual cooperation, a number of cases were referred from the labor inspection to MIA for further investigation.

As of February, 2024 there are 104 labor inspectors employed out of 123 positions and the LIO is planning to increase the number of its employees. As of now LIO has sufficient financial and technical resources for effective implementation of their functions.

As for the inspection and immigration control agencies, it should be noted that the mandate of the Labor Inspection Office includes the inspection of private companies in order to determine labor rights and safety standards, as well as being within their authority under the Law of Georgia on „Labour Migration" to check all the newly established requirements already discussed above. Although the mandate remains within the one agency, the functions are clearly distiunguished and do not overlap each other.

In addition, in order to proactively detect the facts of trafficking in human beings, the mobile groups of the MIA Central Criminal Police Department and the Task Force established in Adjara Region constantly inspect establishments that pose a risk of trafficking (hotels, bars, clubs, etc.) and conduct interviews with persons regarding the facts of possible cases of trafficking. Representatives of the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA systematically conduct a survey of citizens deported from foreign countries, in order to identify the facts of possible human trafficking committed against them and also to pinpoint the specific persons who took those Georgian citizens over the border and employed them abroad. Thorough providing surveys and checks, children are protected and prevented from their further exploitation during travel and tourism.

Ministry of Internal affairs of Georgia defines necessary annual budget for the units/divisions responsible for investigation of crimes. In accordance to Georgian legislation, investigations of the trafficking cases are supported with proper amount of funds. Ministry of Internal Affairs is fully equipped with essential transportations, fuel, relevant equipment, office facilities to carry out investigation of trafficking cases.

9. How are employment and recruitment agencies regulated and monitored? Are all stages of the recruitment process, including advertisements, selection, transport, and placement, subject to regulation? Are recruitment fees and related costs prohibited from being borne by workers or jobseekers?

Employment and recruitment agencies in Georgia are regulated since 2015 by the law of Georgia on „labour migration ". In 2023, amendments were made in the law of Georgia on „labour migration, which introduced a number of novelties:

- Mandatory certification of private intermediary companies for employment (whose activities are related to the employment of Georgian citizens abroad);
- Establishment of an effective system of state monitoring of the activity of private intermediary companies for employment;
- Encouraging and supporting the development of capacities of private intermediary companies for employment (for example: providing information about certified private intermediary companies for employment to the population, sharing relevant information and conducting trainings for these companies, inclusion of certified private intermediary companies for employment in circular labor migration schemes and etc.);
- Improvement of data recording of Georgian citizens employed abroad by private intermediary companies for employment;

Furthermore, Government Resolution No. 292 of August 8, 2023, specifically regulates the certification process for private intermediary companies and their activities related to labour arrangements outside Georgia.

According to Article 11, Paragraph 2 of the Law of Georgia on Labor Migration, it shall be prohibited to require any fee (honorarium) from persons under the contract signed for assistance in the provision of employment.

As previously mentioned, the Labour Inspection Office (LIO) supervises the enforcement of labour norms across various legal instruments:

- Organic Law of Georgia on Occupational Safety
- Organic Law of Georgia on Labour Code of Georgia
- Law of Georgia on Labour Migration
- Government Resolution No. 112 of 7 March 2016 on preventing and responding to forced labour and labour exploitation

Established in 2022, the Workplace Discrimination, Prohibition of Sexual Harassment and Gender Equality Issues Supervision Division under LIO focuses on preventing workplace discrimination. This unit's activities include supervision of local employment agencies and monitoring of labour norms throughout the employment process, including the pre-contractual stage.

10. How do you prevent and sanction abuses of legal constructions such as self-employment, letter-box companies, sub-contracting, and posting of workers, which may be used to commit THB?

The Labour Inspection Office (LIO) leverages both proactive and reactive approaches, as authorized by the Law of Georgia on Labour Inspection (Article 5), to ensure the effective application of labour norms. One crucial proactive measure is raising public awareness, which helps prevent violations of occupational safety and labour laws. This initiative encompasses various activities, including:

- Informative meetings with employers and employees
- Participation in TV programs and trainings
- Development of educational/informational videos
- Sharing information through social media[16], YouTube channel [17]and website[18]

During the reporting period (2020-2023), LIO conducted a significant number of proactive activities, including:

- 290 informative meetings
- Production of over 40 educational videos
- Creation of 12 informative booklets

For cases involving violations of labour norms, civil/administrative penalties (fines; liquidation) are determined by several legal instruments:

- Organic Law of Georgia on Occupational Safety
- Organic Law of Georgia on Labour Code of Georgia
- Law of Georgia on Labour Migration
- Law of Georgia "General Administrative Code of Georgia"
- Law of Georgia on Labour Inspection Service.

11. How do your country's migration legislation and policies seek to prevent THB by enabling lawful migration and legal employment opportunities accompanied by decent work conditions?

With the Order of Government of Georgia №810 of December 30, 2020, the Migration Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2030 was approved. The strategy defines several priority goals:

- improving migration management;
- promotion of legal migration;
- fight against illegal migration;
- reintegration of migrants;
- development of the asylum system;
- integration of foreigners

In order to achieve the goals defined by the strategy, the State Commission on Migration Issues annually approves an action plan for the implementation of the strategy.

Fight against Trafficking in Human Being is one of the crucial part of one of the main goals of the the Migration Strategy – fight against illegal migration. Hence, relevant policy issues and activities are included in the Strategy and its annual action plans. Detailed information about Strategy and its action plans are available at the official website of the State Commission on Migration Issues https://migration.commission.ge/index.php?article_id=216&clang=1.

As for the legislation, as already mentioned above since 2015 Georgia adopted the law on Labor Migration. The latter regulates the following issues: obligations of legal entities and individuals related

[16] Social media page of the Labour Inspection Service: https://www.facebook.com/Labourinspection
[17] YouTube channel of the Labour Inspection Service: https://www.youtube.com/@labourinspectionofficeofge3301/playlists
[18] Website of the Labour Inspection Service: https://lio.moh.gov.ge/index.php?lang=1

to provisions in recruitment and placement in Labor markets outside of Georgian territory; provision relating to recruitment and placement in Labor market; to meet the requirements stated in the contract about the provision in recruitment and placement; meeting the requirements determined in labor agreement between two parties: a labor emigrant and a foreigner employer; regulations which provide for penalties and administrative responsibility within its jurisdiction.

Bylaws have also been approved, such as: "Recruitment and Placement Rules between Labor immigrant (alien residing in Georgia without a permanent residency) and a Local Employer about Execution of Paid Labor Activity"; "Accessibility of Data among Administrative Bodies in the Sphere of Labor Migration", "Submission of a Report on the Activities Implemented in the Sphere of Foreign Labor Migration by an Accountable Legal Entity, Individual Entrepreneur or a Foreign Enterprise and non-profit (non-commercial) Legal Entity Branch (Representative Office, Permanent Establishment)" and etc.

When employing a foreigner in Georgia, the legislation regulating labour migration establishes a number of obligations for the local employer:

- sign an employment contract with a foreigner in accordance with the minimum standards defined by law;
- Register currently employed labour immigrant in a special electronic system for labour migration and submit the mandatory information required by law.

The legislation also provides for planned and unplanned monitoring of foreigners employed in Georgia, which is carried out by Labour Inspection office.

According to the law on Labor Migration, financial sanctions are established for the legal persons/individual entrepreneurs who are performing activities related to employment and/or facilitation of employment abroad but don't submit reports to the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs about the employment and/or facilitation of employment of Georgian citizens abroad. The failure to submit the mentioned information to the ministry is sanctioned by fine. There are also sanctions (fine) established by the law for local employers who employ the labor immigrants and do not register them in the special database.

Furthermore, since 2019 new crime has been introduced in the Criminal Code of Georgia. In particular, according to article 344^2 of the Criminal Code of Georgia the following acts are criminalized:

1. Creation of appropriate conditions for/organisation of illegal stay of a Georgian citizen in a foreign country by a person, and/or
2. Facilitation/organisation by a person of submission of false information by a Georgian citizen on violation of his/her rights or freedoms for obtaining international protection in a foreign country

The sentence for this crime is fine or imprisonment for a term of two to four years. In case of an aggravated circumstances the liability can be increased up to seven years. A legal person shall be punished by liquidation or deprivation of the right to carry out activities, and/or a fine.[19]

The aim of the legislative amendment is, *inter alia*, prevention of illegal migration of Georgian citizens abroad that is one of the contributing factor for Human Trafficking.

[19] Article 344^2 of the Criminal Code of Georgia available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/16426?publication=209

Government of Georgia also acknowledges that positive effects of labour migration can be increased by developing temporary (circular) labour migration schemes. Such schemes help bring migratory flows into legal frames; are adjustable to the interests of the countries of origin and destination, and of labour migrants themselves, and, most importantly, they simplify/facilitate return to the home country. Circular migration improves Georgian citizens' economic opportunities, professional skills and migration experience and reduces illegal migration and related risks (including cases of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation); Within the framework of bilateral agreements in the field of circular migration, the Georgian side is in constant contact with the partner states in order to successfully implement the agreements and ensure the rights and obligations set out in it.

Apart from It, the State Procurement Agency of Georgia has elaborated new draft law on Public Procurement, which was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in February 2023. New law is fully in line with EU directives and will come into force from 2025. Among numerous novelties, the new law has special provision on fighting against human trafficking. Subsequently, an economic operator shall be the subject to being registered in the Black list in the cases of human trafficking, child trafficking and enjoying the service of the victim of trafficking.

Above provision is also subject of exclusion of economic operator from public procurement. Namely, a contracting authority shall exclude a candidate/tenderer from participation in a procurement procedure in the cases of human trafficking, child trafficking, enjoying the service of the victim of trafficking.

12. How do your country's law and policies to discourage demand that leads to THB address particular vulnerabilities and groups at risk of THB?

Article 143[1] of the Criminal Code of Georgia prohibits human trafficking. The criminal sanction for this crime varies imprisonment from seven to twenty years, which depends on the aggravating circumstances.[20] It should be noted that in 2014 respective articles of Criminal Code of Georgia were refined aimed at having more unambiguous and clear provisions in order to make their application considerably easier for investigatory as well as judicial bodies.

The Criminal Code also prohibits trafficking against minors. The sanction for this crime varies imprisonment from eight years to life imprisonment, which depends on the aggravating circumstances.[21]

Liability of legal person for trafficking in human beings is also regulated under Criminal Code of Georgia. Namely, legal person will be punished by deprivation of the right to pursue its business or by liquidation.

The Criminal Code also criminalizes use of the service of the trafficking victim. Sanction for this crime is the deprivation of liberty up to 4 years or imprisonment from 3 to 5 years. If the crime is committed in aggravating circumstances the sanction increases up to 15 years.[22]

Furthermore, since the THB analysis shows that most of the young women are exploited in Georgia by engaging them in prostitution. Prostitution is an administrative violation in Georgia. It is not criminalized, however, since 2018 pimping has been criminalized under article 254, paragraph 1 of

[20] Article 143[1], https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/16426
[21] Article 143[2], Criminal Code of Georgia https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/16426
[22] Article 143[3], Criminal Code of Georgia https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/16426

the Criminal Code of Georgia. The sanction for pimping is fine or imprisonment up to 2 years. In case of aggravated circumstances (e.g. committed against minor) the perpetrator will be sanctioned by imprisonment up to 20 years. One of the main aims of introduction of this crime was prevention and protection of women and children from involvement in prostitution and sexual exploitation.

The above-mentioned legal framework and measures aimed at identifying the crime or preventive measures carried out at the institutional level discussed in the previous questions serve discouraging demand for THB crime.

13. How do your country's legislation and practice ensure that there is an individual assessment of protection needs at the borders prior to any refusals of entry or expulsions?

The representatives of the Patrol Police Department of the MIA working at the border checkpoints of Georgia, when carrying out visa control procedures, adhere to the Law of Georgia "On the Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons" and the rules prescribed by the order N99 of the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia "On Identification of the Request for International Protection by Alien or Stateless Person at the state border of Georgia and On the Approval of the Rules for exchanging information between the Migration Department, Patrol Police Department and the Subbordinate State Agency - the Border Police of Georgia."

While checking the persons at the borders, the border police officers and customs officials use detailed guidelines on THB with special indicators typical to THB victims. These guidelines were adopted by THB Council back in 2017. In case of any suspicion, the allegec case of THB is referred to MIA and in case of a minor, to the State Care Agency as well.

The border police and customs officials are permanently trained on THB crime elements, recent trends, indicators of (presumed) victims etc. by Georgian and foreign experts. In particular, patrol-inspectors (border guards-controllers) and border guards of the Land Border Defense Department of the Border Police of Georgia are trained in order to identify victims and criminals. In 2020-2023, 253 employees of the MIA were trained on trafficking issues within the framework of the Educational Course for Qualifying the Border Guard-Controller and 70 employees were trained within the Special professional educational program for training border guards of the Land Border Defense Department of the Border Police of Georgia. In every 2 years, in close cooperation of IOM and financial support of EU border police and customs officials are also trained on THB. In 2020-2023 up to 50 officers participated in the trainings.

14. What measures are taken to prevent THB in sports? What sectors and categories/groups of people have been identified as being at risk?

The regulations and mechanisms in force in the state aim to eliminate crime in any field, including sports.

The analysis of the cases of the past and current years shows that no trafficking crime has been detected in the field of sports.

15. Have you identified online practices that may increase the risk of becoming a victim of THB for different forms of exploitation? What mechanisms have been developed to prevent the misuse of information and communication technology for THB purposes? What is the practical effect of their implementation?

To identify the cases of trafficking online, the representatives of the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA of Georgia are conducting operational measures, such as, processing information, checking, detecting and investigating particular cases. In 2021-2022, several criminal cases were investigated by the relevant unit of the Department and several individuals were charged. Also, various websites were blocked/removed and similar sites were afterwards processed/researched. In addition, the Communications Commission was notified of the similar sites promoting prostitution and was requested to block them.

In order to prevent crime in the online space, special attention is paid to awareness raising and qualification raising measures:

- In 2021, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, with the support of the Council of Europe, introduced for the first time HELP training course - "Fight against trafficking and protection of victims". The training course consisted of international and national part and was conducted remotely for 3 months.

- On April 27-28, 2021, the OSCE organized an online meeting on technology-facilitated human trafficking with a focus on Central Asia.

- On June 3, 4 and 17, 2021, within the framework of the Council of Europe and the European Union joint project on the fight against cybercrime and cyber-resilience in the Eastern Partnership countries, meetings were held on combating online child sexual exploitation and child abuse.

- On July 26-27, 2021, with the support of the United States Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a training on **optimizing the fight against sexual exploitation using modern technologies** was held, during which the participants were introduced to the use of modern technologies, programs and applications against sexual exploitation on the Internet, the specifics of the activities of foreign countries and the latest trends. With the help of the same organizations and same expert investigators and prosecutors were also trained on **Recruiting Children for Trafficking in Human Beings through Digital Platforms and Social Media** on 11-12 December, 2023.

- In 2022, a training was held on the topic - "Combating child exploitation - the perspective of law enforcement agencies". The training encompassed the following topics: human trafficking - child trafficking in Georgia: overview of the general and legal framework, general and specific aspects of child exploitation, identification of child victims, child exploitation on the internet, practice of investigating online child sexual exploitation, Georgian and Moldovan experiences on children living and working in the streets.

- Within the framework of EU funded project Prometheus II, 5 day training course on methodologies of investigating human trafficking was held. Participants were presented with the following information: trafficking prevention, labour, sexual and online exploitation, exploitation of women and children, child pornography and sexual exploitation, cyber exploitation, investigative methodologies, techniques on how to conduct an interview, collection and storage of evidence and more.

- In 2023, within the framework of the Council of Europe project "Ensuring child-friendly justice in Georgia: preventing and protecting children from violence, including in the digital environment", training was conducted on the topic - Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (OCSEA). Within the framework of the training, local and international experts provided

the participants information on the following issues: online exploitation and behavior trends of children; Identification of online sexual exploitation and abuse of children; criminal law procedure regarding child exploitation; Budapest Convention; Proactive investigation methods; methods and means of online investigation; electronic evidence; victim-centered approach; Suspect interviewing methods and other important issues.

- In partnership with European Union and International Organization for Migration, training course on 'Recruiting children for exploitation purposes via social platforms and social media' was held. The training aimed to demonstrate how children are at risk of sexual and other forms of exploitation through digital technologies and social media, as well as to build capacity of Georgian law enforcement officers to combat this type of trafficking by using an effective counter-strategy. The following issues were discussed in course of the training: sexual and other forms of exploitation of children; the role of the internet and utilizing technology for trafficking purposes; online recruitment; the importance of strategic collaboration in online investigation. In addition, the participants were actively involved in various practical exercises and discussed international and national practice.

16. What measures are taken to raise awareness of the risks of technology-facilitated THB, including among children, parents, teachers, child care professionals and social workers? What technology-based initiatives exist in your country to disseminate information to groups/communities at risk of THB?

Georgia considers public awareness raising campaigns on trafficking as one of the essential crime-preventing measures. For the effective implementation of the preventive measures, Inter-Agency Council adopted Common Information Strategy on combating trafficking with specially identified vulnerable target groups, regions and implementation means on February 12, 2014 which is quite unique in our region.

Within the framework of the Strategy information meetings with different target groups such as pupils, students, children in street situations, journalists, employees and employers, minorities and rural population is organized every year throughout Georgia.

TV and radio shows and advertisements are frequently devoted to THB issues and information leaflets (on Georgian, English, Russian, Azerbaijanian, Armenian and Turkish languages) are largely being disseminated in big cities and rural areas, at state borders and consular units.

Moot court competition on Trafficking in Human Beings for students is also annually organized by Ministry of Justice in close cooperation of relevant Governmental Agencies and International Organizations (EU, ICMPD). In 2020-2023 a total of 4 moot competitions were held and more than 200 students participated in thematic awareness-raising trainings organized within the project.

In 2021-2023, in order to prevent the facts of trafficking, A-THB Council member agencies held 47 information meetings with the target groups of the general public defined by the unified information strategy for the fight against trafficking, in which more than 1 500 people participated.

These preventive measures are dedicated to the THB and among others, discusses the risks of online human trafficking.

More than 10,000 information brochures were distributed at border crossing points and the Migration Department of the MIA in the direction of distribution of informational materials on the dangers of trafficking and means of protection against it.

In order to raise public awareness, the Strategic Communications Department of the MIA is constantly conducting various types of information campaigns. Additionally, since 2020, information campaigns are being carried out against organized crime, in particular, against cybercrime and trafficking in human beings.

17. How do you cooperate with ICT companies and Internet service providers, including content hosts and social media, in preventing THB?

Georgian authorities have established robust cooperation practices with many of the multinational online service providers ("OSPs"). Law enforcement cooperation with OSPs mainly entail the disclosure of data for criminal investigation purposes. Georgia has enjoyed high disclosure rates from many providers thanks to the quality of its requests (e.g. according to the Meta transparency report 2023(1/2), Georgia was among world's top 5 countries in data request success rates). OSPs also regularly report emergency incidents to the 24/7 points of contacts of the Government of Georgia (police and the Office of the Prosecutor General). Similarly, OSP law-enforcement relations officers have been cooperative with the government to remove explicitly illicit content (chiefly, CSAM and intimate images).

Office of the Prosecutor General is the designated national point of contact for foreign providers ("POC"). While all of the data requests must be transmitted through the POC, in emergency situations police or other investigative authorities may reach the providers directly. Georgia's national point of contact for OSP cooperation has prepared data request templates and national guidelines for the law enforcement officers. The point of contact has also provided regular trainings to the law-enforcement.

Additionally, the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA actively cooperates with the Communications Commission of Georgia. They are provided with an information about the accessible websites promoting prostitution in the Internet space of Georgia and are requested to block them - activity, which the Communications Commission carries out within its competence.

18. How are policies and practices aimed at preventing THB informed by the experiences of victims and at-risk individuals?

Within the framework of systematic identification and registration of the institutions with a high risk of trafficking the mobile groups of the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA complete demographic data of the owners, managers and persons working within said institutions containing the risk of human trafficking, including those directly involved in prostitution, are determined and the verification/studying process of them is carried out.

In addition to the mentioned above, in order to detect the cases of labor exploitation, the mobile groups of the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA and the representatives of the Police Department of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara are identifying risk-bearing institutions and vulnerable groups, interviewing them and informing them about the crime of trafficking.

Also, as mentioned above, the representatives of the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA systematically conduct a survey of citizens deported from foreign countries, in order to identify the facts of possible trafficking committed against them and also to pinpoint the specific persons who took those Georgian citizens over the border and employed them abroad. Through providing surveys and checks, children are protected and prevented from their further exploitation during travel and tourism.

Labor inspectors also identify the labor sectors where risks of the forced labor and labor exploitation are higher, interview there the employees and employers and in case of any doubt, refer the case to the MIA.

The law enforcement not only identify the risk places and vulnerable groups by their institutional activities, but also there are Victims' and Witness' coordinators functioning in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia and Office of the Prosecutor General. The functions of the coordinators are to provide psycho-emotional support of the witness/victim in the process of litigation, prevent their re-victimization and secondary victimization, ensure their awareness raising during the investigation, inform them regarding the services available within the state, as well as, to promote effective relations between citizens and law-enforcement structures. Coordinators also support the victims and witnessed to communicate with the investigators and prosecutors based on their needs.

Apart from the law enforcements, the State Care Agency which is responsible to provide various services to the victims and statutory victims, elaborates individual plans tailored to the needs of victims and statutory victims how to work with them aiming at their effective reintegration with the society.

Apart fromt it within the framework of the State Program for Social Rehabilitation and Child Care, there is a sub-program for providing shelter for homeless children, within which 6 mobile groups are currently functioning (4 in Tbilisi, 1 in Rustavi and 1 in Kutaisi). The mentioned mobile groups consist of a social worker, a psychologist and a Peer-teacher. Peer-teachers, in the most of the cases, are people who underwent resocialization and rehabilation processes themselves.

Social workers of mobile group work with children living and working on the street and provide contact with children, identifying their needs and counseling; arranging identification documents for them; Finding the child's biological family and assessing the social environment, if any. The activity of the mobile group is coordinated by an appropriately authorized social worker of the LEPL State Care Agency.

The agency has a "24-hour response mechanism for emergency cases", the purpose of which is to implement an urgent, quick and effective response to cases of child abuse or homeless children by the relevant authorized persons of the agency, 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays. Effective and quick response is based on both a proper internal departmental system and a coordinated mechanism of interdepartmental cooperation.

All these above mentioned measures, as well as annual analysis of the profiles of the THB victims and statutory victims and individual approach towards each victim and witness, help governmental agencies to base their policy and efforts on the vulnerability and be more preventive than reactive.

II. IDENTIFICATION OF VICTIMS AND PROTECTION OF THEIR RIGHTS (Articles 10, 11, 12, 14 and 16)

19. Among the victims of THB identified, were any subjected to exploitation on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity (LGBTI+: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex), especially teenagers and young adults? If yes, did any of them report on police misconduct?

In the reporting period, as a result of the analysis of hate crime and human trafficking cases, no facts of trafficking based on the victim's sexual orientation and/or gender identity have been recorded.

20. What specific measures are taken to ensure that trafficked persons who are migrant workers, including in an irregular situation, are identified as victims of THB and have access to the rights provided for in the Convention? Is there cooperation with specialised NGOs, trade unions, and employers to enhance the identification and protection of potential victims within these at-risk groups?

While detecting the THB cases and identifying the victims of THB law enforcements are following to the detailed instructions provided under National Referral Mechanism on Human Trafficking (Referral Mechanism). The Referral Mechanism was adopted upon a Governmental Decree N284 on Identification of a Victim and Granting a Status of THB and foresees the detailed instructions how to identify the potential victim, to refer to the relevant institution and to provide the victim with assistance in accordance with his/her individual necessity.

In order to efficiently combat THB among migrant workers a number of activities are conducted by the Georgian authorities: The mobile groups of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on a regular basis proactively monitor: persons and organizations which offer employment in or outside of the country; organizations which ensure transportation for persons leaving the country; travel agencies; enterprises which employ foreigners, organizations and persons provided visa assistance. The mobile groups of the Ministry of Internal Affairs interview those persons which have been employed outside of the country through employment agencies operating in Georgia.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, according to the law on Labor Migration those individuals and entities who assist a person to be employed abroad are obliged to get the certification on recruitement and placement in labor markets outside of Georgia. There is also a mandatory registration of labor immigrants by the employers in Georgia and Mandatory minimal requirements for labour contracts; regulations also provide penalties and administrative responsibility within its jurisdiction. Supervision on fulfillment of these requirements is upon the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Protection and its LEPL Labor Inspection Office. LIO uses special guidelines on THB to identify the victims among employees, including labor migrants.

Labor Inspection Office actively cooperate with private sector to prevent the risks of forced labor and labor exploitation, inter alia, among labor migrants. They permanently meet the employers as well employees and raise their awareness on the risks of labor exploitation.

Notably, upon the initiative of the Ministry of Justice, in close cooperation of ICMPD and with the help from subsequent expertise the legislative and institutional framework on the role of business sector in Georgia was analyzed. The analysis will be used for a basis for further development of cooperation is private sector.

Apart from it, border police and costoms officials have special guidelines and permanent capacity building activities to identify the presumed victims among the migrants and refer the case to the relevant authorities. Information brochures on THB are permanently distributed in the Migration Department accessible for migrants.

As for the protection part and the services, it should be clarified that the Referral Mechanism ensures two possible ways in order a person to be involved in state run services. Georgian law differentiates status of victim of trafficking and status of statutory victim of trafficking. The status of victim of trafficking is granted to the person by Permanent Group (consists of 3 local NGOs and 2 international organizations (IOM and ICMPD) of Inter-Agency Council within 48 hours based on the special questionnaire of mobile group of the LEPL State Care Agency while the status of statutory victim of trafficking is granted by law enforcement authorities in accordance with Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia. A person enjoys the services of Agency for State Care after he/she is granted the status of victim or statutory victim.

The aim of the two statuses is to ensure victim-centered approach and in case he/she does not want to cooperate with law enforcements, to offer different way/procedures for enjoying the state funded services.

Regardless to the difference in the procedure of granting the status, there is no difference between their rights during the process of investigation, prosecution and/or protection.

The state funded services (legal aid, psychological and medical assistance, shelters, crisis centers, one-off state compenstation, rehabilitation-resocialization programs) are equally distributed among the (presumed) victims and statutory victims without any ground of discrimination, including the nationatily, legal status, etc.

21. What measures are in place to encourage victims of THB to report their situation to the authorities and/or civil society organisations?

There are two hotlines serving for reporting the alleged case of human trafficking – one is based on MIA and another one is operated by the LEPL State Care Agency.

In MIA, 24/7 Hotline operates in Georgian, Russian and English languages, while the hotline of the LEPL State Care Agency is also available for 24/7 and operates in 9 languages (Georgian, English, Russian, Turkish, Azeri, Armenian, Ukrainian, Arabic and Persian languages). Everyone is able to take professional consultations from qualified operators.

In addition, there is a 24/7 emergency hotline -112, which operates in 4 languages (Georgian, English, Russian, Turkish).

The hotlines are actively publicized through information materials (leaflets, brochures, bags, T-shirts, banners, videos, etc.) distributed during the awareness raising activities.

For the purpose of immediate detection of and prompt response to the facts of trafficking hotline, e-mail and the postal boxes located in the system of the Ministry of Defence are functioning.

There is no specific THB hotline operating under any NGO or international organization working on THB or THB -related issues (e.g. migration, domestic violence, etc.). However, each organization has its contact number. In case they are reported about the alleged case of THB, they refer the case LEPL State Care Agency and MIA.

It should be noted, that since the first contact with the presumed victims of THB relevant law enforcements or social services inform the presumed victim that he/she has a right to reflection and recovery period up to 30 days. This information is provided to THB (potential) victims in written form, as well as orally during the first interview.

There is clear and explicit instruction in the Guidelines for law enforcements that (presumed) victim has 30-day recovery and reflection period aiming the (presumed) victim to decide whether he/she wants cooperation with law enforcements. The law enforcements are also given clear instruction during the trainings that they are obliged to explain the (presumed) victim about the right to the recovery and reflection period. If he/she does not want to cooperate with law enforcements, a (presumed) victim can apply to the Permanent Group under the THB Council for being granted the status of victim and the services of the Agency for State Care.

Apart from it, presumed victims are informed about their right to be discharged from liability for committing any illegal act if they had to behave so because of their being victims or statutory victims of human trafficking (Article 15 of the Law on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings[23]).

[23] Available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/26152?publication=9

Presumed victims are also informed about the services and benefits available to the victims of THB.

All these measures contribute to the encouragement of victims of THB to report their case to the law enforcements, social services or private sector.

22. What specific measures are taken in your country to detect/identify and refer to assistance possible victims of THB at the borders? What measures are taken in your country to identify victims of THB during the examination of asylum applications and prior to the return of persons whose applications are rejected?

As mentioned above, the Migration Department of the MIA represents the responsible agency for the expulsion of irregular migrants and the implementation of asylum procedures.

According to existing practice and relevant legislation, identification of the victim of the human trafficking is implemented at several stages during the asylum procedure. Particularly, a victim of the trafficking can be identified when a person makes a request for international protection, when his/her request is registered, as well as during the profiling and status determination interviews, or while assessing and analysing the materials related to the aforementioned procedures. Relevant employees of the Migration Department are permanently trained on human trafficking issues.

In addition, the alleged victim of trafficking can be identified while implementing expulsion procedures, including while interviewing irregular migrants.

If the Department reveals an alleged victim of the trafficking while conducting administrative procedures, it immediately notifies the responsible units of MIA and LEPL State Care Agency.

On top of that, it is noteworthy to mention that at the border checkpoints of Georgia, during the interview and check procedures conducted by the border guard-controllers of the Patrol Police Department of the MIA, based on the evaluation of the responses, behaviour, and actions of the passenger, in cases where is a reasoanable doubt of trafficking, the passenger is separated, interviewed and referred to the relevant agencies. While conducting the screening, border police officers use special guidelines with detailed indicators typical for THB victims.

23. What measures are taken in your country to identify victims of THB in immigration detection centres and prisons?

The Migration Department of the MIA represents the responsible agency for the expulsion of irregular migrants from Georgia and the management of the Temporary Accommodation Center (TAC) for irregular migrants.

The alleged victim of trafficking can be identified during administrative procedures, which include interviewing irregular migrants. Additionally, the protection of the rights of the foreigners accommodated in the TAC is ensured by the Quality Assurance and Monitoring Service of the Migration Department. Within its competence, the service conducts regular and upon-request interviews with the detainees. In addition, a psychologist is available at the TAC upon request/necessity.

Furthermore, brochures on human trafficking are distributed and available in various languages on information boards at the TAC.

There are three mechanisms in Georgia for identifying and responding to criminal actions within Penitentiary Institutions. The Monitoring Department of the Special Penitentiary Service (SPS) is responsible for identifying and investigating minor misconduct committed by SPS staff. More serious crimes, subject to criminal liability, committed by a representative or official of a law enforcement agency (including SPS staff) fall under the mandate of the Special Investigation Service of Georgia. Cases involving allegations of crimes committed by prisoners within Penitentiary Institutions are within the purview of the General Inspection of the Ministry of Justice. The mandate of the General Inspection of the Ministry of Justice in this context is to identify and initiate investigations into criminal actions among prisoners.

24. What services are available in your country to provide specific assistance to particularly vulnerable victims, such as:

a. persons with disabilities;
b. LGBTI+ persons;
c. victims with children;
d. victims with severe mental and physical trauma;
e. homeless persons;
f. other.

LEPL State Care Agency provides the following services to victims of human trafficking in shelters and crisis centers:

- psycho-social assistance/rehabilitation;
- receiving/organizing medical services;
- Providing legal assistance (representation in law enforcement agency and court);
- Interpreting services, if necessary;
- Facilitation of family and community integration;
- Provision of accommodation in the shelter (for victims/presumed victims and their dependents, which includes food, hygiene, etc.)
- Provision of food, hygiene products, etc. to the presumed victims and their dependents in the crisis centers.

Apart from that, the one-off state compensation in the amount of 1000 GEL remains an available service, together with the other services provided by government for victims/statutory victims of trafficking in human beings. The legislative amendment with regard to the one-off State Compensation came into force on April 14, 2021 simplifying the procedures for granting the State compensation. According to the amendment made in the Article 16 of the Law of Georgia "On Combatting Trafficking in Person",[24] victim/statutory victim of trafficking can get the one-off compensation directly without referring to the court. Before the amendment, victims/statutory victims of human trafficking had the right to request one-off compensation from the Agency of State Care and Assistance to (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking in case it was impossible to get compensation from the offender through the court. The new rule also applies to those victims and statutory victims who were granted the status before the adoption of amendment. After the legislative amendment a total of 13 victims/statutory victims received one-off state compensation.

On 17 September, 2020 Government of Georgia approved the concept of a psychological-social service center for children victims of violence. The concept of the service center ensures the establishment of the center where all kind of services are available for children victims of violence in

[24] Available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/26152?publication=9

one place (so-called barnahus model). During 2021 the service center operated in a pilot mode and its goal was to prevent secondary victimization of a child victim of sexual abuse, incuding sexual exploitation in the best interests of the child. The project was implemented with the financial and technical support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Since 2022 the service center is already operational in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Moreover, services of specialized foster carers are provided for children with disabilities, as well as specialized family-type homes for children with severe and profound disabilities or health problems. Community organizations provided by the " State Program of Social Rehabilitation and Child Care" are functioning for adults with disabilities.

It should be noted that while enjoying the services of the State Care Agency, the latter identifies the needs of the certain (presumed) victims and statutory victims, drafts the individual rehabilitation plans and provide the services tailored to their needs.

All the above mentioned services are equally distributed among the (presumed) vicitms and statutory victims without any ground of discrimination.

It should be noted that in 2020-2023, Agency for State Care provided the services to 26 victims of Human Trafficking based on their will.Among them, 11 were minors who were placed in state care, in particular, in foster care. The minors also received the services of a crisis center psychologist.

In addition, the Witness and Victim Coordinator Service, which was established in 2019 to support citizens engaged in legal procedures, safeguard affected persons' rights, and increase the quality of the investigation, was effectively functioning during the reporting period. The work of Witness and Victim coordinators is coordinated by the Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department of the MIA. The witness and a victim coordinator is tasked with psycho-emotional support of the witness/victim during legal procedures, prevention of revictimization and secondary victimization, providing information to them during the course of the investigation, providing information regarding the services available in the State, and supporting effective cooperation between the law enforcement structures. The witness and victim coordinator primarily works with minors.

The Witness and Victim Coordinator Service was expanded in 2020 to cover all police units of the Ministry. According to the amendment made to the Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia on June 22, 2021, the investigator of the MIA was given the authority to involve a witness and victim coordinator in the criminal case by his own decision, before the case is brought before the court.

In order to ensure access to justice for the victims and witnesses, including the most vulnerable, PSG also has the Service of Witness and Victim Coordinators. According to the guidelines, witness and victim coordinators are involved in all relevant cases and the prosecution party inform social services in cases of neglect from legal guardians or family.

The Witness and Victim Coordinator Service of the PSG has been functioning since 2011 with the main goal of facilitating the participation of witnesses and victims in the legal process, reducing stress caused by crime, preventing re-and secondary victimization and informing them during investigation and trial.

Victim and Witness coordinators of the PSG are participants of the criminal proceedings according to the Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia. They ensure full legal service (consultation, drafting documentation and representation in court) for victims/alleged victims of domestic violence, irrespective of their finances. They can be involved in hate crime cases and offer psychological help to the victims in order to make their communication with the law enforcement agencies more

convenient. Guidelines implemented for the coordinators define that hate crime cases are highly prioritized and important and the coordinators are actively engaged in them to support the victims considering their specific needs. Coordinators apply referral mechanisms for victims in relevant cases.

Guidelines on Standards of Working with Witnesses, Victims and Defendants with Disabilities and on the Standards of Working with Minor Witnesses, Victims and Defendants with Disabilities, approved by the order of 23 March 2021 of the Prosecutor General of Georgia, ensures application of age-appropriate approaches.

Methodology of interviewing and carrying out investigative and procedural activities provided by the guidelines apply to persons with disabilities, as well as children with special needs and persons who have not obtained a status of a person with disability but exhibit special physical, mental, sensory or intellectual needs that may cause barriers for them to have equal access to justice.

Guidelines instruct the investigators and prosecutors to prepare before the investigative and procedural activity. Lack of the testimony of the victim and witness with disability does not provide sufficient grounds to terminate investigation on the case. Preventing stigmatization and jeopardizing the person with disability involved in criminal cases and their reports and testimonies related to the alleged crime is priority of the guidelines.

PSG ensures respecting the right to privacy of the persons with disabilities. To secure this right, the guidelines implement the principles of confidentiality on the health conditions and disability status of the person with disabilities. Sole purpose of collecting information about the disability is to identify special needs of the person and provide reasonable accommodation.

Accurate consideration is given to the characteristics of the legal representative who is engaged in the case to represent and support the persons with disabilities.

Importance of an interpreter and sign language is highlighted in the guidelines. The guidelines perceive women and girls with disabilities as particularly vulnerable and instruct the investigators and prosecutors to apply all available means to ensure their safety, their access to justice system and provide unbiased, non-discriminative approach, giving priority to investigating cases involving persons with disabilities. In cases of gender-based violence, domestic violence and sexual violence prosecutors apply relevant guidelines to ensure gender-appropriate approaches in the criminal proceedings. Considering the fact that sexual violence against women and girls with mental and intellectual disabilities are particularly challenging, specific guidelines on Investigating and Prosecuting Crimes against Sexual Freedom and Inviolability provide recommendations on handling cases involving persons with disabilities.

25. How do you support the (re)integration of victims of THB? What processes are in place in your country to provide assistance to victims of THB exploited abroad after their return?

Services of the LEPL State Care Agency described in previous questions LEPL State Care Agency are applicable to the victims exploited abroad.

In order the victims exploited abroad to be returned safely to Georgia the Consular staff of Georgia use special Manual on Trafficking in Human Beings. The Manual was developed by IOM, with the support of EU and under close cooperation with the Consular Department of the MFA Georgia. The instructional document is designated for the consular officers of Georgia posted abroad and implies the following topics: nature of THB crime, legal framework, referral mechanisms, detailed description of protocol activities, etc. The Manual was approved for service use by the Order of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on May 26, 2020.

Furthermore, in 2022 the practical manual for consular officers "Human Rights" was developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia with support of GIZ. The instructional document is designated for the consular officers of Georgia posted abroad and implies wide range of issues from the sphere of human rights, including those related to migrants' rights and protection from THB. The Manual was approved for service use by the Order of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on April 1, 2022.

THB topics are included in consular preparatory (pre-rotation) courses at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, where one lecture is fully dedicated to "Anti-Trafficking Mechanisms and Obligation of the State". The MFA makes sure that the consular officials are aware of legal proceedings concerning trafficking before their departure. Furthermore, THB topics are regularly discussed during the annual meetings of consular officers of Georgia posted abroad. Consular officials abroad also permanenly receive up-to-date information regarding laws and regulation related to THB and protection of human rights.

26. If there is a provision in your country's law that provides for the possibility of issuing a residence permit owing to the victim's personal situation, how is this interpreted in practice? Please provide examples.

According to the Law of Georgia on "Legal Status of Foreigners and Stateless Persons", special residence permit might be granted to a foreigner if there is a reasonable suspicion he/she might be a victim of human trafficking. Particularly, a foreigner who is assumed to be a victim or statutory victim of human trafficking, shall be granted a special residence permit for the term of maximum 6 years. The term can also be expanded for the same time. The special residence permit is issued by the the LEPL Public Service Development Agency of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia.

The statistics on issued residence permits are provided below, in part III dedicated to statistics.

27. What measures are in place to ensure that the identity, or details allowing the identification, of a child victim of trafficking are not made publicly known?

According to the Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection[25] Article 3, subparagraph "b", the special category of data is defined as a data that is connected to the status of a statutory victim in a criminal process, data in connection with recognition a person as a victim of human trafficking or recognition of a person as a victim of a crime pursuant to the Law of Georgia "On Violence against Women and/or Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection, and Support of Victims of Violence".[26] During the processing of such data, the guarantees envisaged by the law should be observed.

Moreover, it is noteworthy to mention that according to the Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia, a limited number of people are allowed access to the criminal case materials.

In addition, according to the Police Code of Ethics,[27] a police officer must not allow his case to be made available to other persons for information, and must not conduct confidential conversations in the presence of other persons.[28] In conversations with friends and family members, police officer shall be moderate and cautious whilst discussing work-related issues. Furthermore, Police officer shall

[25] Available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/1561437
[26] Article 9[1];https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/26422?publication=18
[27] Available at:
https://police.ge/files/pdf/etikis%20kodeqsi/Georgian%20Police%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20English%20final.pdf
[28] Chapter 2, para. 2.3

not use official or personal data for private purposes as well as for satisfying the personal interests of close persons.

To ensure the confidentiality of information about a minor, the Juvenile Justice Code[29] establishes additional guarantees. Article 24 of the Juvenile Justice Code determines measures for the protection of a minor witness/victim. One type of protection measure is the closure of a court hearing, which provides an opportunity to avoid the disclosure of the child's identity and details of the case at the stage of adjudication of the case.

In a trafficking case, where the victim is a minor, the court hearings are closed and are conducted only with the participation of the parties.

To protect children from secondary victimization, their privacy, and personal life in the legal proceedings, it is ensured that investigative/procedural actions involving children are conducted in a child-friendly environment. The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia creates child-friendly spaces that have an independent entrance from the common space, which avoids a child's meeting with other people. Certainly, such space protects a child so that no information about them is made public. Expanding the child-friendly concept is a strategic direction for the prosecutor's office. According to the 2022-2027 strategy of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, child-friendly interview rooms will be opened in at least 5 territorial units of the Prosecutor's Office. It should be noted, that crimes committed against minors throughout Tbilisi are investigated by a special unit of the MIA of Georgia, the Juvenile Division, which exclusively investigates cases of minors and creates an additional guarantee of ensuring the confidentiality of a criminal case.

Furthermore, the technical regulations approved by the Resolution N66 of the Government of Georgia of January 15, 2014 - Child Care Standards provide for the privacy protection standard. According to the mentioned standard, the protection of the right to privacy of the beneficiaries' personal information is ensured in the institutions, and the beneficiary/his legal representative are informed about the confidentiality of their personal information and the cases when the confidentiality of personal information may be violated.

It is not allowed to take photos/videos during the services without the consent of the beneficiary or his/her support person (if any).

28. What measures are in place aimed at encouraging the media to protect the private life and identity of victims?

The unified information strategy on human trafficking considers media representatives as one of the important target audiences for knowledge concealment. It is for this purpose that the 2023-2024 NAP envisages the training of media representatives and the holding of an informational meeting with them.

Georgian National Communications Commission does not have any special regulation regarding human trafficking, establishing detection or removal of content. Such content might be subject to the general regulation of the distribution of inadmissible production (illegal content) by the electronic communications service providers. According to the "Regulations in respect to the Provision of Services and Protection of Consumer Rights in the Sphere of Electronic Communications"(approved by the Resolution No. 3 of Georgian National Communications Commission of 17.03.2006) electronic communications service providers are obliged to adopt appropriate measures in order to eliminate

[29] Available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2877281?impose=translateEn&publication=21

transmission of the inadmissaible production(illegal content) if its transmission is prohibited by any legislative act.

29. Have there been cases of diplomatic households (of your country's diplomats abroad and of foreign diplomats in your country) employing domestic staff in conditions which could be forced labour or human trafficking? If yes, how was the issue of diplomatic immunity addressed? How were the victims identified, assisted and protected?

In the reporting period, no facts of trafficking or forced labor on the part of a person with diplomatic status in Georgia or on the part of Georgian diplomat outside the borders of Georgia has been recorded.

30. What specific steps are taken in your country to identify victims of THB amongst persons recruited and exploited by terrorist/armed groups?

The State Security Service of Georgia is a lead agency in the unified system of the country's fight against terrorism, ensuring detection, prevention, suppression and investigation of terrorist crimes. The SSSG coordinates the activities of the other agencies involved in the fight against terrorism through its structural entity – the Counterterrorism Center. The Center is directly responsible for ensuring implementation of counter-terrorist measures.

The Counterterrorism Center of the State Security Service of Georgia conducts active work towards all possible criminal activities, which might be related to terrorism and so far, no links between terrorism and trafficking in human beings were identified in Georgia due to the effective measures taken by the Government of Georgia in preventing and combatting terrorism as well as trafficking in human beings.

Regarding the Defence sector, as mentioned above, for the purpose of immediate detection of and prompt response to the facts of trafficking hotline, e-mail and the postal boxes located in the system of the Ministry of Defence are functioning.

In addition, during the participating in Peace Operations (EUTM RCA) the personnel of the Georgian Defence Forces, within the pre-deployment preparation courses, were trained on anti-trafficking topics.

Courses on combating trafficking are included in curricula of higher educational programs of the first degree and junior officers' preparation school at the LEPL David Aghmashenebeli National Defence Academy of Georgia. The curriculum includes the following topics: types and forms of human trafficking, mechanisms to protect and assist victims of human trafficking, identification of human trafficking by the governmental agencies and individuals, domestic and international legal frameworks and etc.

31. Are there requirements in your country's legal framework for the detection and removal of THB-related Internet content, and what are the sanctions for non-compliance? Is there a code of conduct for providers? If a person is detected as a presumed victim of THB in the process, how is this person referred to assistance?

As mentioned above, Georgian National Communications Commission does not have any special regulation regarding trafficking, establishing detection or removal of content. Such content might be subject to the general regulation of the distribution of inadmissible production (illegal content) by the electronic communications service providers. According to the "Regulations in respect to the Provision of Services and Protection of Consumer Rights in the Sphere of Electronic Communications" (approved by the Resolution No. 3 of Georgian National Communications Commission of 17.03.2006) electronic communications service providers are obliged to adopt appropriate measures in order to eliminate transmission of the inadmissaible production (illegal content) if its transmission is prohibited by any legislative act".

In case of detection of THB-related Internet content, a request for removal is lodged with the LEPL Digital Governance Agency, and the Agency blocks the requested websites.

If a person is detected as a presumed victim of THB in the process, the person is referred to the MIA or in case a person does not want to cooperate with law enforcements, to the State Care Agency for further assistance and getting the status of victim of THB by the Permanent Group (Referral Procedure is discussed in details above).

III. INVESTIGATION, PROSECUTION, SANCTIONS AND MEASURES (Articles 4, 18, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28 and 30)

32. Is the abuse of a position of vulnerability part of the human trafficking offence in your country's law? How are the concepts of "vulnerability" and "abuse of a position of vulnerability" defined in law? Have they been subject to judicial interpretation? If yes, please provide relevant case-law.

As mentioned under Q12, Article 143^1 of the Criminal Code of Georgia prohibits human trafficking. The abuse of a position of vulnerability within the objective composition of the crime is considered as one of the means of its commission.

Commission of the THB crime knowingly by the offender against a a helpless person or a person who financially or otherwise depends on the offender is also an aggravated circumstance for both trafficking in adult and minor. In such case the liability can be increased up to fourtneed years of imprisonment in case of trafficking in adult and up to 15 years of imprisonment in case of child trafficking.

Law of Georgia on Combating Human Trafficking,[30] namely its Article 3 defines vulnerability as "state when a person is materially or otherwise dependent on another person; when a person is not able to realistically assess the existing situation due to his/her physical or mental defect; and when a person has no option other than to obey violence used against him/her".

In the reporting timeframe no judicial interpretation on the topic has been issued.

33. Is the special vulnerability of the victim considered as an aggravating factor for the offender's sentence?

As mentioned above Articles 143^1 and 143^2 of the Criminal Code of Georgia includes committing a crime knowingly by the offender against a helpless person as an aggravating factor.

[30] Available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/26152?publication=9

34. According to national case-law, what forms of vulnerability are mostly abused by offenders in human trafficking cases? Please provide specific examples that show how the concept of "abuse of a position of vulnerability" is used in practice. What are the challenges in its application? Is it sufficient to prove the existence of a position of vulnerability of the victim, or must it also be proven that the defendant knew or should have known of the victim's vulnerability, and intentionally manipulated the victim on this basis?

The helpless state of a person implies a situation where a person is materially or otherwise dependent on the perpetrator, the person cannot appropriately assess and/or percieve the current situation due to his physical and/or mental condition, the person has no other real means and/or ability to resist the unwanted situation, other then to obey.

"Helpless situation with prior knowledge" refers to the situation when the perpetrator is aware of the above-mentioned situation of the person, due to which they are unable to opose someone or realize what is happening to them, and a defendant abuses the said situation and exploits the person.

Case №1: - *[removed for confidentiality purposes]*

Case №2: - *[removed for confidentiality purposes]*

Further information on vulnerable groups are provided under Qs 1 and 3.

Given that a child, due to their physical and mental immaturity, requires special protection as they are susceptible to external influence and at risk of falling victim to trafficking crimes, the legislation delineated the trafficking of minors as a distinct norm and did not categorize it as one of the qualifying (aggravting) circumstances of human trafficking. Consequently, the courts address the trafficking of minors under the purview of Article 143^2 of the Criminal Code of Georgia, not that of Article 143^1. Moreover, it's notable that the legislator does not differentiate between the ages of minors, however, in the qualifying circumstance outlined in Article 143^2 of the Criminal Code of Georgia - "with prior knowledge of the offender against a person in a helpless situation," this encompasses minors who, due to their young age, lack the capability to act differently or physically resist the offender to evade the situation.

35. Is the concept of "abuse of a position of vulnerability" addressed in criminal justice training? Is there any specific guidance on applying this concept? Please provide copies of guidance and/or training materials that shed light on how this concept should be applied in practice.

Yes, the concept of "abuse of a position of vulnerability" addressed in criminal justice training. FUrthermorel, in 2017, the THB Council approved the revised Guidelines for Law Enforcement on the investigation and prosecution of THB cases and handling of victims of THB. The guidelines determine the application of the notion of a state of helplessness and provide recommendations for prosecutors and investigators on appropriate legal qualifications.

Several activities were devoted to the topic within the law-enforcement agencies:

- Electronic course on Fighting against Trafficking was developed at the MIA Academy in 2023. The course aims at re-training the representatives of the Central Criminal Police Department, Patrol, and Criminal Police Territorial Bodies of the MIA of Georgia in new trends regarding trafficking case investigation, identification of victims/persons affected by the crime, and methods to improve working with them. Furthermore, within the framework of the course, the issues of ways to persuade victims and methods to involve people in trafficking were highlighted.

- Within the framework of the "Educational Course for Qualifying the Border Guard-Controller (BCP)" and the "Special Professional Educational Program for Training Border Guards of the Land Border Defense Department of the Border Police of Georgia", with the other related issues of human trafficking, the subject of vulnerability towards trafficking is also covered.
- The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia prioritizes strengthening the professional skills of prosecutors and investigators and their continuous training. In the reporting period (2021-2023), through active cooperation with various donor organizations, with the involvement of the employees of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, 30 training activities were conducted on the issues of human trafficking (trafficking), including on trafficking committed against helpless persons, as a result of which 100 prosecutors and 37 interns were trained.

36. What procedures and measures exist in your country to take into account the specific needs of vulnerable victims at the different stages of criminal proceedings?

During the reporting period, the Witness and Victim Coordinator Service, which was established in 2019 to take into account specific needs of vulnerable victims during various stages of criminal procedures, was functioning effectively. One of its key priorities is to simplify involvement in the investigation process for affected persons/victims. The witness and a victim coordinator is tasked with psycho-emotional support of the witness/victim during legal procedures, prevention of revictimization and secondary victimization, providing information to them during the course of the investigation, providing information regarding the services available in the State, and supporting effective cooperation between the law enforcement structures.

In 2021, legislative amendments were introduced into the Criminal Procedure Code and Juvenile Justice Code of Georgia, according to which the investigator of the MIA was given the authority to involve a witness and victim coordinator in the criminal case by his own decision before the case is brought before the court. The witness and victim coordinators are primarily involved in the cases of violence against women, domestic violence and violence against minors.

In order to prevent the re-traumatization and secondary traumatization of the victim, the coordinator gains their trust through an individual approach to the victim and determines whether the defendant is exerting any illegal influence on the victim and/or whether there is any possible risk/threat of re-traumatization of the victim. The coordinator immediately provides this information to the prosecutor, for further response and to ensure the security of the victim.

The witness and victim coordinators of the prosecutor's office and MIA possess the professional skills and knowledge to establish trust-based communication with persons with special needs, obtain information from them, identify their needs and provide appropriate support.

The Prosecutor's Office of Georgia has developed a guidelines for the witness and victim coordination service. The guideline determines crimes and categories of vulnerable persons, in which case witness and victim coordinators are involved as a priority. In particular, the coordinator is mainly involved in domestic crimes, domestic violence, crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability, human trafficking cases, also in cases where the victim and/or witness is a minor or a disabled person, the victim/witness sustained serious physical or mental harm as a result of a crime and/or stress caused by a crime complicates communication with the victim/witness.

In addition, to protect the rights of a victim representing a vulnerable group and to ensure their effective access to justice, the following guidelines have been developed for prosecutors and investigators of the prosecutor's office:

1. On the effective investigation of a hate crimes (guidelines on the application of Article 53¹, §3 of the Criminal Code of Georgia as an aggravating circumstance of liability);

2. On the legal qualification of the crime committed with religion-based intolerance motive;
3. On the investigation of cases involving persons with disabilities;
4. On the investigation and procedural guidance of crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability;
5. Standards and methods of working with disabled witnesses, victims and defendants;
6. Standards and methods of working with a disabled minor witness, victim and defendants;
7. On juvenile justice;
8. On the mechanism of effective enforcement of judgments against Georgia in cases of gender-based violence against women;
9. On the procedural guidance of the investigation on the crimes prescribed under articles 11^1 (domestic crime) and 126^1 (domestic violence) of the Criminal Code of Georgia;
10. On the elimination of imperfections identified through monitoring of cases involving disabled victims;
11. On the elimination of imperfections identified through monitoring of hate crime cases.

37. If you have criminalised the use of services of a victim of THB, how is this provision applied in practice? Please provide any relevant case-law.

According to the Criminal Code of Georgia, Article 143^3, the abuse of services of a victim of (a person effected by) human trafficking is criminalized. In particular, knowingly using the services rendered by a victim of or person affected by a crime human trafficking (trafficking) and child trafficking, which, according to the mentioned Code constitutes exploitation, shall be punished by restriction of liberty for up to four years with imprisonment for a term of three to five years. In case of aggravated circumstances the liability can be increased up to 15 years of imprisonment.

A person who committed a crime under this Code shall be released from criminal liability if he/she voluntarily provided informationa about this to the investigative authorities in writing or by using any technical means of communication, contributed to the conduct of investigation and his/her actions do not contain elements of any other crime.

During the reporing period, no cases of abusing a victim services have been identified in practice.

38. What technology-based tools and initiatives exist in your country to support investigations and enhance prosecution of THB cases? What training is provided to law enforcement officials, prosecutors and judges on THB facilitated by information and communication technology?

As we have already mentioned, the representatives of the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA of Georgia conduct operational measures, data processing, check, detect information and investigate in order to identify online human trafficking. Moreover, in case of detection of facts of online exploitation, the Communications Regulatory Commission will be informed about similar sites promoting prostitution and a request will be submitted to block them.

In addition to the above, the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA actively cooperates with other states in terms of sharing information on issues of combating the crime of human trafficking. In particular, the Division for Combatting Human Trafficking and Irregular Migration under the Main Division for the Fight against Organized Crime of the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA joined the Interpol ICSE Database (Child Sexual Exploitation International Database) since June 2021.

The employees of the relevant units of the MIA are permanently trained/retrained on the issues of technology-facilitated trafficking:

The topics included in the training programs covers the following fields:

- ✓ Trafficking and identification of victims trafficking participants;
- ✓ Trafficking in human beings and smuggling;
- ✓ Drivers and causes of Trafficking;
- ✓ Phases and methods;
- ✓ Competencies of state agencies;
- ✓ Trafficking within the state;
- ✓ Route used by traffickers;
- ✓ Identification of the possible victim;
- ✓ Indicators and interviewing process;
- ✓ Referral mechanisms for victims of trafficking.

In 2020-2023, representatives of the Central Criminal Police Department, the Migration Department, the Patrol Police Department, the Human Rights Protection and Investigation Quality Monitoring Department, the Police Department of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara and other units of the MIA systematically participate in national and regional meetings/trainings, as well as, in international events/trainings implemented by donor organizations on the topic of THB.

In particular, representatives of the MIA participated in trainings on issues of human trafficking organized by organizations/donors, such as: the International Organization for Migration (IOM), INTERPOL, the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD); Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of US Embassy (INL); "Training and Operational Partnership against Organized Crime (TOPCOP)"; OSCE; European Union; project "Joint Action against Human Trafficking" funded by US State Department Bureau International Narcotics and law enforcement affairs (INL), etc.

The trainings covered such issues as: online sexual exploitation of children; international legal aspects of the fight against trafficking; identification of victims of trafficking; child trafficking; aspects of communication with the victim; practical exercises; psycho-social support of victims/effected persons of trafficking; psychological aspects of child exploitation; illegal migration; protection of state borders (airports, ports and border crossing points) in terms of human trafficking; forms of child exploitation in the online space; child interrogation/interviewing techniques and effective investigation for crimes committed against children; current trends and challenges in the direction of human trafficking; drivers, contributing causes and factors for trafficking; identification and profiling of trafficking victims and perpetrators; methods of committing crimes; best practices for combating trafficking; issues of national and international legislation and cooperation, etc.

A total of 246 representatives of MIA were trained on the above-mentioned topic within the above-mentioned activities.

Information on the technology-facilitated training is provided under Q15.

39. In what ways, if any, does your country utilise provisions from the Council of Europe Cybercrime Convention (Budapest Convention) to fight THB? If not, why is that the case?

Georgia has intensively employed variety of tools provided for in the Budapest Convention. Seeking disclosure of data from multinational service providers pursuant to articles 18 and 32 of the Convention is the most utilised one.

As of December 31, 2023, over 10 providers cooperated with Georgia. With many of them Georgia has enjoyed very high cooperation success rates. E.g. In 2023, Georgia achieved 94% success rate from Meta Inc, making it to the 5th place globally. In THB cases Georgia has

successfully obtained disclosure of data from Meta, PayPal, TikTok. Cooperation also included proactive disclosure and removal of CSAM (Child Sexual Abuse Material).

In addition, since 2021, the Anti-Trafficking and Illegal Migration Division of Main Division of Combating Organized Crime of the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA and the Cybercrime Division of the Central Criminal Police Department of the MIA have joined to the Interpol ICSE Database (International Child Sexual Exploitation Database).

In order to detect online trafficking, operational processing of online sites, information verification, crime detection and investigation processes are systematically carried out.

In addition, Georgia closely cooperates with partner states in terms of detection and investigation of crimes regarding lewd act against minors online.

Part II – Country-specific follow-up questions

40. Please provide information on measures taken in your country in respect to the following recommendations made in GRETA's previous reports:

- establish an independent National Rapporteur or designate an already existing independent mechanism for monitoring the anti-trafficking activities of state institutions;

A-THB Council described under Q1 is on one hand main coordinationg body of the policy against THB and on the other side it serves as monitoring mechanism for anti-THB activities. Every two years Secretariat of the A-THB Council evaluates national measures against THB, draws up NAP implemtation reports and issues recommendations to A-THB Council member agencies.

- adopt measures to facilitate and guarantee access to compensation for victims of THB;

According to the amendment made in Article 16 of the Law on Combatting THB, THB victim/statutory victim can get the one-off compensation directly without referring to the court. Before, victims/statutory victims) of human trafficking had the right to request one-off compensation from the State Care Agency in case it was impossible to get compensation from the perpetrator through the court. This amendment also applies to those victims and statutory victims who were granted the status before the new regulation came into force. Based on the mentioned amendment, on 28 April, 2021 A-THB Council adopted the Rule on granting a THB victim and statutory victim one-off compensation.

In 2020-2023 a total of 18 victims/statutory victims were granted one-off state compensation.

- take additional measures to ensure that THB cases lead to effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions;

Training modules on using effective and proportionate sanctions are systematically conducted for the representatives of Prosecutors Service of Georgia. Furthermore, the guidelines described under Q36 cover topic of proportionate sanctions.

Additionally, a training program on human trafficking is offered annually to judges and court officials by the High School of Justice. The quantity of trainings is growing annually following their needs.

Practical examples:

In 2021, 5 individuals were prosecuted under Article 143¹ of the Criminal Code of Georgia. At this stage, 3 defendants were convicted as charged: 2 defendants were sentenced to imprisonment with the term of 5 years, and 1 defendant - imprisonment with the term of 12 years; 2 individuals were prosecuted under Article 143² of the Criminal Code of Georgia. Both defendants were convicted as charged and sentenced to imprisonment with the term of 15 years.

In 2022, 4 individuals were prosecuted under Article 143¹ of the Criminal Code of Georgia. All 4 defendants were convicted as charged and they were sentenced to imprisonment with the term of 10 years and 6 months, 12 years, 14 years, 17 years and 6 months; 1 individual was prosecuted under Article 143² of the Criminal Code of Georgia. The defendant was convicted as charged and sentenced to imprisonment with the term of 8 years.

In 2023, 10 individuals were prosecuted under Article 143¹ of the Criminal Code of Georgia. At this stage, 2 defendants were convicted as charged and they were sentenced to imprisonment with the term of 8 years each; 4 individuals were prosecuted under Article 143² of the Criminal Code of Georgia. All 4 defendants were convicted as charged. 2 defendants were sentenced to imprisonment with the term of 8 years and other 2 defendants were sentenced to imprisonment with the term of 7 years; 1 individual was prosecuted under Article 143¹ and 143² of the Criminal Code of Georgia. At this point, the case is being examined on merits in the city court.

- increase efforts to proactively identify victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation.

Driven by international obligations and recommendations, the Parliament of Georgia implemented significant changes to its labour legislation during the reporting period. These changes included:

- In 2020 - Labour Code and Labour Inspection Law: Amendments to the Labour Code and the introduction of the Law on Labour Inspection established the Labour Inspection Office (LIO) as a legal entity under public law. This empowered LIO to conduct unannounced inspections, day or night, as a preventive or reactive measure against labour rights violations, as authorized by the Law on Occupational Safety, the Labour Code, and the Public Service Law. Additionally, LIO gained the mandate to supervise critical issues like discrimination, sexual harassment, forced labour, and unsafe work environments.
- In 2023 - Labour Migration Law: Amendments to the Labour Migration Law expanded LIO's mandate to oversee and enforce the law's regulations. This includes imposing administrative fines for violations such as unregistered economic activity, failure to submit reports, obstructing LIO inspections, and breach of contracts by intermediaries or local employers.

In 2021 in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, a guidance document for labor inspectors has been developed. Its purpose is to assist the labor inspector in combating one of the most common forms of the crime of trafficking - forced labor and labor exploitation. The guide is based on the International Labor Organization conventions and recommendations, THB related treaties Georgia is a party to and EU regulations.

Apart from the legislative changes, to address the challenges with regard to detection of labor exploitation and child forced begging cases, a special working group is also functioning under the Office of the Prosecutor General of Georgia. The working group is composed of all relevant Governmental Agencies, including Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs (Labor Inspection Office and Agency of

State Care). Every year the group holds the meetings and identifies the future actions dealing with the forced labor and labo exploitation.

Furthermore, since children in street situations are one of the most vulnerable group for THB crime, especially for forced begging the A-THB Council has finalized the Governmental Strategy on Protection of children living and/or working in the street from Violence, including Human Trafficking. Finalized document has been approved by A- THB Council member agencies. For that aim special working group has been actively working consisting of the representatives from Ministry of Justice of Georgia, the MIA of Georgia, Office of the Prosecutor General, Ministry of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Science and Youth, LEPL National Agency for Crime Prevention, Execution of Non-custodial Sentence and Probation. The Strategy and Action Plan was shared to NGOs, IOs, US Embassy for Georgia, as well as Public Defender's office and other stakeholder for comments. The draft Strategy covers the years of 2024-2030 and will be approved by the Government of Georgia in the nearest future.

41. Please provide information on developments in your country since GRETA's third evaluation report concerning:

- emerging trends of trafficking in human beings;

There were no major changes in trafficking trends.

Slight change is that in 2022-2023, the facts of the sale of an adult people were revealed, which represents a new trend compared to previous years. In detected cases of human trafficking, the victims were transported to Iran under the false promise of well-paid jobs.

Further details on forms of exploitation is provided in the Part III.

- the legislation and regulations relevant to action against THB;

Changes for different legislations and regulations has already been discussed under Qs 2-b; 7 a and c; 36 and 40.

Legislative and regulatory changes not mentioned in the previous parts of the questionnaire include following:

- On March 17, 2020, Law of Georgia „On Combating Crimes Against Sexual Freedom and Inviolability" was adopted, on the basis of which the court, on the basis of judgement of conviction, was granted the authority to deprive certain civil rights to persons, convicted for crime against sexual freedom and sexual inviolability, including for the human trafficking crimes. For instance, a person may be restricted the right to work in an educational institution, an early and pre-school upbringing and educational institution, a shelter/crisis center for victims of violence against women or domestic violence, as well as the right to practice medicine and to transport passengers including using public transport, as well as, the right to be in a library for minors, in a children's entertainment center, in an institution providing any kind of educational/learning/upbringing services for minors, etc.
- According to the joint order №258/№73 of the Minister of Finance of Georgia and the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia "On the implementation of appropriate markings in travel documents when crossing the state border of Georgia and the procedure for indicating information in the automated database of the MIA of Georgia" dated August 29, 2019, in

certain cases (for example: the presence of information about the possible commitment of a crime by a person) when a person is crossing the border the employees of the customs checkpoint authorized for passport control procedure or agency under the MIA of Georgia, may take a photo of the person along with the passport control procedure. On June 22, 2023, the aforementioned order was amended and it was determined that further processing of the photograph is allowed for the purpose of prevention and response to the offence, crime prevention, investigation, criminal prosecution, execution of punishment, as well as for reasons of state and public safety. The purpose of the mentioned amendment is to ensure the efficient performance of the tasks assigned to the MIA and the Customs Authority and the effective investigation of crimes, including crimes of human trafficking, through the identification of victims.

- Under the Defence Code of Georgia (adopted in 2023):

A Person aged from 18 to 27 being registered for and having no grounds to be released from the conscription or to enjoy deferment from the conscription, shall be subject to recruitment into naional military service of conscripts; at the same time a person from the age of 18 can be enlisted into the professional military service. A person at the age of 17 persons may become students of a military institution with the consent of his/her parents.

Persons from the age of 18 may become volunteers in the defence field. Volunteering is the voluntary, unpaid training of a person and, if necessary, the use of his/her skills in the field of defence and security. Volunteering shall not be considered and utilized as substitution for paid employment or cheap labor. A Person under the age of 18 may become a member of a volunteer organization (without being granted the status of a volunteer) with the consent of his/her legal representatives or guardians, if the membership in a volunteer organization does not conflict with the interests of this person, does not harm his/her moral, physical and mental development and does not limit his/her right and opportunity to receive compulsory primary and basic education.

- the institutional and policy framework for action against THB (co-ordinating bodies, specialised entities, national rapporteur or equivalent mechanism, involvement of civil society, public-private partnerships);

Information is provided under Q1.

- the current national strategy and/or action plan for combating trafficking in human beings (objectives, main activities, budget, bodies responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of results);

On December 21, 2022, the Interagency Coordinating Council for the Implementation of Measures Against Human Trafficking approved a new 2023-2024 Action Plan on Action against THB.

The action plan also pays a lot of attention to the development of policies to combat human trafficking based on analysis and research, to the component of raising public awareness on the topic of trafficking, and to conducting professional trainings to raise the qualifications of persons working on human trafficking issues.

The THB NAP is based on 4P principles and reflect most of EU, US, UN and CoE treaty body & special rapporteurs' recommendations.

NAP 2023-2024 includes following objectives:

1. Prevention of THB;
2. Improvement of mechanisms for detection of THB crime and conducting effective criminal prosecution;
3. Facilitation of reintegration into society of victims/statutory victims of THB;
4. Improvement of the policy on combating THB through strengthening coordination and cooperation mechanisms.

NAP consists of 50 activities divided into above-mentioned 4 objectives.

Budget for 52% of the activities are prescribed under European Union projects, through the cooperation with International Organization on Migration and International Center for Migration Policy Development. Other activities are covered by administrative budget.

The NAP is available at the official website of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia https://justice.gov.ge/files/6VpU8Z8N7J2G.pdf

- recent case-law concerning THB for different forms of exploitation.

Practical examples:

Case №1: *[removed for confidentiality purposes]*

Case №2: - *[removed for confidentiality purposes]*

Case №3 – *[removed for confidentiality purposes]*

Part III - Statistics on THB

42. Please provide the following statistics, per year starting with 2020, where available disaggregated as indicated below:

- Number of identified victims of THB in the sense of having been recognised by a state institution or mandated NGO as bearers of rights to services provided for by the Convention (with breakdown by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation, internal or transnational trafficking, and body which identified them).

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Victims	6	8	3	16
Details	5 females and 1 male; 3 minors and 3 adults; 3 Georgians; 1 Uzbek; 1 Turkmenistan; 1 Kyrgyz	6 males and 2 females; 5 adults and 3 minors; 4 – Georgians; 3 Armenians and 1 – Russian;	2 males and a female; 2 adults and a minor; 2 – Azebaijanis; 1 – Georgian; 1- Forced criminality; 1	10 males and 6 females; 10 adults and 6 minors; 4 -Moldovans; 4 Azerbaijanis; 3 – Russtians; 3 – Thais; 2 - Georgians

	3 – sexual exploitation; 2 – forced begging; 1 – labor exploitation	5 – labor exploitation; 3 – forced begging	– sale; 1 unlawfull transaction	11 – labor exploitation; 3 – sexual exploitation; 2 - sale

All cases were internal.

In 2020, 3 Victims were identified by permanent group under A-THB council, other statutory victims were identified by state agencies.

- Number of victims of THB identified as part of the asylum procedure (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).

During the reporting period, there has not been identified the alleged victim of the human trafficking during the asylum procedure.

- Number of victims of THB who received assistance (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).

2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
7	6	2	11
6 females and 1 male; 3 minors and 4 adults; 4 Georgians; 1 Uzbek; 1 Turkmenistan; 1 Kyrgyz 3 – sexual exploitation; 3 – forced begging; 1 – labor exploitation	5 males and 1 female; 3 adults and 3 minors; 3 – Georgians; 2 Armenians and 1 – Russian; 4 – labor exploitation; 2 – forced begging	1 male and a female; an adult and a minor; 1 – Azebaijani; 1 – Georgian; 1- Forced criminality; 1 unlawfull transaction	2 males and 9 females; 7 adults and 4 minors; 4 -Moldovans; 4 – Azerbaijanis; 3 – Thais; 8 – labor exploitation; 3 – sexual exploitation

- Number of child victims of THB who were appointed legal guardians.

2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
3	3	1	6
1 – sexual exploitation; 2 – labor exploitation	3 - labor exploitation	1 – forced criminality	6 - labor exploitation

- Number of victims of THB granted a recovery and reflection period (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).

As already mentioned above, according to the Georgian legislation, the reflection period starts from the moment of applying to the Agency to State Care, Shelter or law enforcement agency. Since the first contact of the presumed victim/statutory victim of human trafficking with the law enforcements, they clarify all his/her rights including the right to reflection period. This information is provided to THB (presumed) victims in written form, as well as orally during the first interview.

All victims/statutory victims before granted the official statute of the victim/statutory victim were informed about the reflection period. During the reporting period 1 statutory victim of labor exploitation (forced begging) (41 years old woman, Georgian citizen) officially enjoyed the recovery and reflection period. As for the rest identified victims, they did not officially enjoyed this period, however, in practice there were cases when at first the statutory victims did not want to cooperate with the law enforcements, but after their referral to the Shelter and getting the psychological assistance, they expressed the will to cooperate.

For example:

- In 2019, 16 years old girl, Georgian citizen was sexually exploited by 3 persons by her engagement in prostitution;
- In 2021 45 years old man, Georgian citizen was exploited by his engagement in forced begging;
- In 2022 14 years old girl, Georgian citizen was exploited by her engagement in criminal activities and forced begging.

- Number of victims of THB granted a residence permit, with an indication of the type of the permit (for the purpose of co-operation in the investigation/proceedings, on personal grounds, other) and its duration (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).

Years	Number of permits	Sex	Age	Citizenship	Duration
2020	5	Female -2 Male - 3	From 0 to 10 years old - 1; From 11 to 20 years old – 1; From 21 to 30 years old – 1; From 31 to 40 years old – 2;	Turkmenistan-1; Kyrgyzstan-1; Uzbekistan- 1; Greece- 1; Stateless- 1;	1 year
2021	1	Male	From 51 to 60 years old	Armenia	1 year
2022	1	Male	From 11 to 20 years old	Greece	1 year

- Number of persons given refugee status or subsidiary/complementary protection on the grounds of being victims of THB (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation).

During the reporting period, refugee or humanitarian status has not been granted on the bases of the above-mentioned ground.

- Number of victims of THB who claimed compensation, who were granted compensation and who effectively received compensation (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality, form of exploitation, with an indication of whether the compensation was provided by the perpetrator or the State, and the amount awarded).

Statistics in the table below reflect number of victims/statutory victims who received one-off state compensation.

2020	2021	2022	2023
3	6	1	8
2 females and 1 male; 3 adults (31, 33 and 40 years olds); 1 Uzbek; 1 Turkmenistan; 1 Kyrgyz 2 – sexual exploitation; 1 – labor exploitation	5 males and 1 female; 4 adults (19, 25, 45 and 53) and 2 minors (9 and 12); 3 – Georgians; 2 Armenians and 1 – Russian; 4 – labor exploitation; 2 – forced begging	1 male; an adult (21); 1 – Azebaijani; 1 unlawfull transaction	2 males and 6 females; 7 adults (20, 28, 36, 38,38, 42, 42) and 1 minor (13); 2 - Moldovans; 2 – Azerbaijanis; 3 – Thais; 1 - Georgians 5 – labor exploitation; 3 – sexual exploitation

- Number of victims of THB who received another form of financial support from the State, with the indication of the amount received.

No development for the reporting period.

- Number of victims of THB who received free legal aid.

2020	2021	2022	2023
7	6	2	11

- Number of victims of THB who were returned or repatriated to/from your country (disaggregated by sex, age, country of destination, form of exploitation).

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number	0	0	0	3
Country of Destination	-	-	-	Thailand (3) Georgia (1)
Sex	-	-	-	Female (3), man (1)
Age	-	-	-	36; 38; 38; 35
Form of Exploitation	-	-	-	Sexual Exploitation (in case of Tai

				nationals); Sale of a human being (in case of Georgian citizen)

- Number of investigations into THB cases (disaggregated by type of exploitation, with an indication of the number of victims concerned).

2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
15	19	16	17
8 – sexual exploitation (1 – against minor); 5 – labor exploitation (4 - against minor); 2 – sale of a minor	9 - labor exploitation (3 - against minor); 6 – sexual exploitation (1 – against minor); 2 – sale of a minor; 2 – forced criminal activity	5 - labor exploitation (3 - against minor); 7 – sale (2 – against minor); 3 - sexual exploitation; 1 - forced criminal activity (minor)	7 – sexual exploitation (1 – against minor); 6 - labor exploitation (3 - against minor); 4 – sale (1 – against minor)

- Number of prosecutions in THB cases (disaggregated by type of exploitation, with an indication of the number of victims and defendants concerned).

Year	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Prosecutions	2	5	4	7
Victims	3	7	4	16
Defendants	4	7	5	15

- Number of convicted perpetrators of THB (disaggregated by sex, age, nationality).

2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
29	5	2	7
21 females and 8 males 27 Georgian nationals; 1 US national and 1 Australian national	5 males 5 Georgian nationals	2 males 2 Azerbaijan nationals	5 females and 2 males 4 Moldova nationals, 2 Azerbaijan nationals and 1 Georgian nationals
Ages: 58, 34, 35, 38, 40, 37, 30, 37, 30, 37,	Ages: 28, 33, 33, 27, 41	Ages: 23, 23	Ages: 22, 34, 35, 21, 52, 22, 25

37, 34, 60, 44, 22, 34, 22, 35, 33, 50, 34, 42, 35, 29, 36, 37, 37, 31, 33			

- Number of convictions for THB, with an indication of the form of exploitation, whether the victim was adult or child, the type and duration of the penalties, and whether they were effectively enforced or suspended.

Year	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Quantity	5	4	2	3
Description	1. 20 adult perpetrators convicted for case of child pornography; 2. 1 adult perpetrators convicted for case of child pornography 3. 1 adult perpetrator convicted for case of forced begging 4. 2 adult perpetrators convicted for case of forced begging; 5. 3 adult perpetrators convicted for case of child pornography	6. 1 adult perpetrator convicted for case of forced begging; 7. 1 adult perpetrator convicted for case of labor exploitation; 8. 1 adult perpetrator convicted for case of forced begging; 9. 2 adult perpetrators convicted for case of labor exploitation	2 Cases of unlawfull transactions against 2 adults	1. 4 adult perpetrators convicted for Labor exploitation; 2. 2 adult perpetrators convicted; 3. 1 adult perpetrator convicted for Labor exploitation

Sanctions	1. 10 years of imprisonment, fine; 20 years of imprisonment (2); 7 years of imprisonment and 5 years of provisional sentence (3); 5 years of imprisonment and 5 years of provisional sentence (11); 17 years of imprisonment (2); 3 years of imprisonment and 2 years of provisional sentence. 2. 20 years of imprisonment; 3. 4 years of imprisonment and 5 years of provisional sentence 4. 20 years of imprisonment; 20 years of imprisonment.	6. 15 years of imprisonment; 7. 12 years of imprisonment; 8. 11 years of imprisonment; 9. 5 years and 6 months of imprisonment and 20 000 GEL fine.	10. 7 years of imprisonment; 11. 5 years and 6 months of imprisonment	1. 5 years of imprisonment and 3 years of provisional sentence; 5 years of imprisonment and 3 years of provisional sentence; 4 years of imprisonment and 3 years of provisional sentence; 4 years of imprisonment and 3 years of provisional sentence. 2. 14 years of imprisonment; 3. 4 years of imprisonment and 4 years of provisional sentence.

	5. 6 years of imprisonment and 5 years of provisional sentence; 5 years of imprisonment and 5 years of provisional sentence; 5 years of imprisonment and 5 years of provisional sentence			

All convictions are effectively enforced.

- Number of judgments in THB cases resulting in the confiscation of assets.

No judgements resulting in confiscation of assets were delivered in the reporting period.

- Number of convictions of legal entities for THB.

No legal entities were convicted for THB in the reporting period.