**Statement by Ms. Tamar Zubashvili**

**Head of International Relations, Analytics and Strategic Development Department of the State Inspector’s Service of Georgia**

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On behalf of the State Inspector’s Service, it is my honor and privilege to provide you information regarding the activities of the Service in respect of the fight against ill-treatment.

The State Inspector’s Service was created in 2019 to address the challenges related to investigating ill-treatment cases.

It was established as a legal successor of Personal Data Protection Inspector’s Office and in addition to controlling personal data processing, was authorized to conduct independent and effective investigation of specific crimes committed by law enforcement officers and civil servants. The Service’s jurisdiction extends to crimes committed after 1 November 2019.

The Service is an independent body and accountable to the Parliament.

Our mission is to create a system whereby human rights of each individual are guaranteed.

The Service is staffed with qualified investigators who were selected through an open and transparent competition with the participation of civil society representatives. They are specialized in juvenile justice and trained in hate crimes.

Crime reports are submitted from different sources. To ensure receiving notifications immediately, a twenty-four-hour hotline operates through which the Service receives information concerning crime incidents. The Service is committed to provide prompt response to each allegation. We have active communication with alleged victims and their involvement in the investigation process is guaranteed from the start of investigation.

To ensure transparency and public accountability which are the core values of the Service, we actively cooperate with civil society and the Public Defender’s Office.

For crime prevention we have communication with all public agencies.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic having caused obstacles, the Service spared no effort to conduct effective investigation.

From November 2019 to January 2021, the Service launched investigation into 335 cases and 6 law enforcement representatives were charged.

Although a lot has been achieved in a short period of time, there are challenges currently faced by the Service impeding effective investigation.

To make the Service and the fight against ill-treatment more efficient, additional legislative guarantees are needed to further strengthen Service’s independence and to authorize it with the power to conduct all investigative actions independently and have unimpeded access to information stored in other public agencies as well as to closed institutions.

As regards the other function of the Service – controlling personal data processing, in 2019 the Service prepared a draft law on personal data protection which was submitted to the Parliament. It is important that the law which brings Georgian legislation in compliance with the European standards, be adopted.

Last year the Government of Georgia initiated the signing procedure of the Protocol amending the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data. We hope that this process will soon be finalized and Georgia will become a party to the modernized 108+ Convention.

Thank you for your time and attention!