

**Statement by Mr. Sozar Subari the Public Defender  
(Ombudsman) of Georgia  
On the current politics of intolerance towards Georgians in  
Russian Federation**

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Dear Delegates,

Let me convey the deepest concern regarding the persecution and oppression of ethnic Georgians in Russian Federation by the Russian Government. It must be noted that detention of four Russian officers in Georgia being accused of spying was followed by the deterioration of diplomatic relations between Russia and Georgia. Russian Government replied to this with the outrage of xenophobic politics. You would agree that deterioration of diplomatic relations must not become the reason for the violation of fundamental rights and freedoms of innocent individuals; it must not turn into evident discrimination.

I consider that entire international society; human rights defenders have not yet expressed adequate reaction to the events taking place in Russia against Georgians. The reason for that can be the lack of adequate information.

During the last days any ethnic Georgian in Russia is in danger of persecution, unlawful detention, oppression, trace, search, physical offence, and deportation regardless of his/her citizenship, age, profession and social status.

Even those citizens of Russia who had Georgian ancestors are persecuted because of their ethnic origin.

Russian Government directly sanctioned the attacks against ethnic Georgians and their property. Police departments in some regions, among them in Moscow, blocked up ethnic Georgian's enterprises, restaurants and stores.

Ethnic Georgians living in Russia who are either Russian or Georgian citizens do not even dare to leave their home places, being scared of search and illegal arrest by the representatives of the law enforcement authorities or attack by aggressive young people.

Russian Immigration Office decided that from this point on Russia will not issue resident permits and labor quotas to Georgians. This means that Russia officially prohibits the employment of the ethnic Georgians in Russia.

In the morning of 4 October some 80 Georgian school pupils along with their Georgian teachers were not permitted to enter the school which functions in Tbilisi under the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation. Teachers and pupils were not provided with any explanation. They observed a written statement placed on

the gate of the school that Georgians are not permitted anymore to enter the school. According to the information received by the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia, the management of the school was instructed to restrict the access of Georgians into the school.

Similar instructions were given to other Russian schools in Georgia - in Batumi and Akhalkalaki, though the instruction was never implemented in order to avoid the tensions.

In addition, Ministry of Interior of Russia has instructed the administration of secondary and high schools in Russian Federation to submit the lists of pupils and students with Georgian surnames.

The facts of arrest and deportation of ethnic Georgians from Russia as well as of Georgians who legally stay in Russia took a massive character. Wave of deportations and arrests concerns the juveniles as well. They were deported by cargo planes without seats.

It is worth to note that after the deterioration of diplomatic relations between the two countries no single fact of the violation of the rights of Russians staying in Georgia was reported.

Activities of the Russian Government contribute to criminal activities of fascistic groups, which killed a number of persons for their different ethnic and racial belongings. Skinheads and members of fascistic organizations permanently attack representatives of various ethnic and racial groups, and Georgians among them.

We have to note that number of Russia based Human Rights organizations and Russian citizens have openly condemned Politics of xenophobia and racism carried out against Georgians and other ethnic groups in Russia.

I was recently approached by Georgian citizen from Cheliabinsk, Russia. This person like other Georgians legally staying in this town was warned by the local police that they are ordered to deport all the Georgians, but police is not going to execute this order, because they know that the only problem with Georgians is their nationality. However, they will abstain from deporting Georgians until they do not face problems with their leadership.

Unfortunately, there are many opposite examples, and in case, the Russian government continues promotion of racial discrimination we will face much more horrible examples.

I think that all Human Rights defenders must react against racism and xenophobic politics. If we remain silent today, tomorrow we will have to live in Europe where hatred, racism and xenophobia against the representatives of any minority will be a

common practice. If we do not put an end to acts of persecution of ethnic Georgians currently taking place in the Russian Federation all national minorities will face it in the future.

Dear Participants, Dear human rights defenders,

I am sure that you will never tolerate the facts of racism and xenophobia supported by the Russian Government. I am confident that you will respond to the unlawfulness and contribute to putting an end to fascism and xenophobia. In such situation, your position is essentially important in order to protect Human Rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals without any distinction based on sex, race, color and membership of any particular social group.

Thank you for your attention,

Sozar Subari