**Supreme Religious Administration of Georgia's All Muslims**

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The problems about educational issues.

The situation in the field of education is not sufficient in Georgia. The problems of religious

minorities in this field occur because of both cavity law and impatience against followers of religious minorities. Thus, the government and the church has the authority to carry out in joint programs in the field of education. The state allows work of church education institutions. On bilateral and equal basis between the Government and the church accept document of education, pensions, rank of appropriate educational institution, but though that state doesn't create good condition for Muslim educational institutions, along with it does not recognize the document of Muslim religious educational institution and doesn't accept their equality with others. The above-mentioned cavity law is still unsolved. So we sent a letter No. 21 dated January 22, 2016 to the government as “LEPL Religious Administration of Georgia's All Moslems” in the current year for permitting of activity of religious educational institution. In response to the letter dated 22 February 2016 was reported to us that only activity of religious education institutions which belong to the church are allowed. In addition, there is atmosphere of discrimination because of religious diversity. LEPL lost first phase of preceding and then applied to Court of Appeals. Second phase of preceding is in the process.

Cases of discrimination and intolerance

1.When we glance to the situation of Muslims in Georgia in the past five years we can see they are discriminated either by authorities or by local population in different forms. Restrictions are not for public order, health or morals, defense other peoples' rights and freedom, they have been introduced because of religious miniorities, especially silence and conservative interests of Muslim сommunity. On the other hand intolerance against muslims has been observed by followers of the christian religion, and now the situation continues as it was.

We will give several examples below: Chairman of the Union of Georgian Muslims Tariel Nakaidzenin talked about intolerance against Muslims in western Georgia in 2011, 2012 and 2013 years. He said that: “Orthodox priests obviously demonstrate aggression against other religious groups in the country. The facts of discrimination against other religions, -Islam and Catholic religions- often occurs in Georgia. Official statements made by the Office of the Patriarch mosques put forward the idea. In this approach, the Orthodox Church is trying to dislodge the Georgian muslim community by psychological pressure. Liturgy speech against built of the mosque in Batumi on march 4, 2011 is interpreted as discriminatory attitude on religious content. This event encouraged the Orthodox monks by Georgian Orthodox clergymen. It has created wave of xenophobic by graffiti writing form on the walls in Batumi – “Batumi without Turks”, “Adjara region without 17 mullah”. Religious intolerance become more open in October, november 2012. Orthodox clergymen made speech against the muslim community in Nigvziani, Tsinstkaro regions and Lantchuti district. Some locals of Nihviziani region with Orthodox clergymen protested Muslims come together to worship in the mosque on traditional Friday. Orthodox clergymen tried to stop meeting of Muslims in their private house which had been used as a mosque or meeting house with extreme intolerance and abusive action in 26 October and 2 December 2012. They entered the house by force, called people to leave, otherwise they said that they will fire the house and it will be dangerous for lives of Muslims. The same movement happened in Samtatskaro region Dedoplistskaro district in 24may 2013. Local Muslims gathered in the house where they would worship on Friday. Orthodox clergymen under the leadership of the head of the village who is named Gulo Nadirashvili forced the Muslims to leave the house where they had gathered. All Islamic literature and praying carpets were removed from the house. The worship of local muslim population and community was prevented for the next friday”.

Tariel Nakaidzenin continues to explain the issue: “Previous speeches were more religious in nature, so they were the heads of the Orthodox. But then the speeches attracted those who represent the social structure. The head of Dedoplistskaro informed that “There is no need to built a mosque here because most of the population of the village are christians. I can't not go against the wishes of the people, their wishes are important”. Speech of public figure made things worse. Mullah is Mullah occupies an important place in Islamic thought . The problem of Tsintskaro and Nigvziani region was resolved between two sides by negotiation. Though that some people had been questioned but the government did not did not show any legal position. But no one had been accused or convicted because of acts against muslim community”.

Tariel Nakaidze said referring to other aspects of intolerance: “A sense of impunity gave a boost to the situation of attack and violence which happened in April of current year and police took action against Muslim community. When the accident happened he police asked from those who passed there that if they are Muslim or Christian or if they carry the cross or not. People who was not bearing cross they were physically assaulted. Another problem was due to headscarfs what women wear. 2nd accident took place in May. One of them happened in Georgian-Turkish border checkpoint.

So police officer demanded opening the hijab from Georgian muslim woman. Otherwise, he threatened he will put a ban for entering the country. The conflict ended with the intervention of other police officers. A similar incident took place in a private company where Georgian muslim woman was working. She was dressing suitable for work during working hours, but after the work she was tying hijab according to Islamic habits. İn May 2013 manager had forced her came back to the office and took of her hijab by force and informed that they will free work if she continues to wear hijab. There are also many problems with public schools. Most of teachers demonstrate physical and moral pressure to pupil who are not Orthodox christian. As a result of religious intolerance teacher cut through the ear of catholic christian pupil in school in Akhaltsikh. At one of the publich school of Batumi one pupil incurred to physical violence in the confession day which called “Adventists of the 7the day”. Childrens of muslims are called tatar, children of other christian beliefs are called "sects" or other names. At the same time teachers demonstrate pressure to pupil who speak in other language. For example, some teachers say that "Religion of Islam was spread by force and no one can be a Muslim in Georgia".

2. Chala village: There was attempted to demolish the minaret of mosque by people belonging to the government in 2013 in Chala village of Adıgeni region of Samtsxe-Cavaxeti district. For to avoid thisinitiative muslims were not allowed to enter to the courtyard of the mosque and at the result there was confrontation between police and local residents and 20 persons were caught .

3. Kobuleti: Intolerance and violation of the law against muslims continued in 2014 too. So on 10th September 2014 local residents who have christian beliefs protested opening dormitory of muslim children which is situated in Kobuleti, Lermantov street N 13. Instead they cutted pig that growing and eating has been forbidden in Muslim culture and hang his head on the door of the dormitory at the entrance. The protests did not end in next days again. They blocked the road which leads to the school and they did not let pupils to go in 15-16 September, 2014. According to the Georgian legislation opening of dormitory does not need special permit or license because of its purpose and content, at the same time it is not general education and not need authorization or accreditation.
Batumi City Court declared three residents of Kobuleti - two women and a man guilty of religious discrimination and they will have to pay a symbolic amount for moral damages in 1 GEL. However, community accepted it as an insult and by their opinion the abuse price of religious minorities in Georgia is 1GEL.

4. Moxe village: On october, 2014 Moxe village of Adigen happened another inexcusable religious event. Muslim residents of the village demand to get the disputted building (local muslims say that it was mosque and holy place in ancient times) which is situated in the same village for many years. But the building has been property of self-government unity since 2007. On may, 2014 local muslims appealed Adigen municipality by the request giving the building to Georgian Muslims organization. In September 2014 electronic bidding was declared about the sale of rehabilitation works of Moxe village club. The company that won the tender began repair on October 18, 2014.

Local Muslims protested construction and rehabilitation work carried out by the company on

October 22. Patrol - police officers were attended to that place where accident had happened and confrontation took place. At the result 14 Muslim protesters was arrested and 11 of them was found guilty for the administrative offense by the decision of Akhaltsikhe region court. By the decision of court of appeals of Georgia (608) were released from administrative punishment. Despite the release of detainees law and crime persecution did not end against them. On 2nd December 2014 criminal law case was taken against police officer with the fact of crime signs by the first part of 333rd items of Criminal Code of Georgia. According to the information given by Tolerance of the Diversity Institute (TDI) One of the problems is that often experienced by representatives of the

Muslim community that to encounter with obstacles when passing from Georgia Sarp border checkpoint.

6. One of the other facts of intolerance was recorded between christian and muslim Georgians in Adigeni region in Samsxe-Cavaxeti district in this year. The cause of confrontation and intolerance by christian Georgians are allocatation spaces for cemeteries of muslim community by the State Agency on Religious Affairs. 3 muslims were beaten in the confrontation.

7. At present one of the other discrimination cases is plunging crosses made of iron in Muslim villages. We can say as an example Marneuli region of Kvemo Kartli territory. Especially Down Saral, Shulaver and Guschu villages.

Recommendations:

1. To adapt national legislation in the country to the Georgian Constitution according to the international norms and the Human Rights Convention.

2. To remove giving priority to other religions and religious communities by the government by indicating exactly borders between the state and religion in democratic countries.

3. To pay special attention to the discrimination of followers of religious minorities and religious community by representatives of the state and people.4. To create special events for preserving culture and religious monuments of muslims who are regarded as the biggest community among religious minorities who live in Georgia.

5. To ensure the development of a dialogue between the authorities and religious communities.

6. To form respect against pluralism, tolerance, cultural diversity and to form deep culture of thinking by taking into account the cultural diversity of religious minorities and religious majority, promoting the importance of respect for different cultures and religions and for that purpose to organize special courses for employees of government agencies at the integration process for what the state is working hard.