



Penal Reform International South Caucasus Regional Office



**Information Brochure
2013**

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South Caucasus Regional Office
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Penal Reform International (PRI)



“Penal Reform International” (PRI) was founded in 1989 and it is an independent non-governmental organisation that develops and promotes fair, effective and proportionate responses to criminal justice problems worldwide.

We promote alternatives to prison which support the reintegration of offenders, and promote the right of detainees to fair and humane treatment. We campaign for the prevention of torture and the abolition of the death penalty, and we work to ensure just and appropriate responses to children and women who come into contact with the law.

We currently have programmes in the Middle East and Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the South Caucasus, and work with partners in East Africa and South Asia.

PRI South Caucasus regional office was founded in 1999 in Tbilisi. Regional office operates in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Supporting criminal justice system development in the region covers introduction of international standards, sharing best practices, close cooperation with international experts, NGOs and governmental institutions working on penal issues.

Our Goal:

We want to see:

- A fair and efficient criminal justice system consistent with the rule of law and ensuring access to justice.
- A reduction in the use of imprisonment through greater use of non-custodial alternatives.
- Improvement of prison conditions and the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Child-friendly justice which recognises the right of children to special protection and only ever uses detention as a last resort.
- Proportionate and gender-sensitive responses to women offending, acknowledging the specific characteristics and needs of women in the criminal justice system.
- The abolition of the death penalty and the introduction of humane alternative sanctions.

To achieve our goals, we work as a catalyst for change through a smart mix of advocacy and practical programmes for reform. We work on four inter-connecting levels.

- We advocate criminal justice reform at national, regional and international levels, engaging with governments, authorities and inter-governmental organisations.
- Our regional offices deliver practical programmes, often in partnership with local civil society partners, promoting and implementing human rights and international standards.
- We develop and disseminate information and resources through our publications and this website.
- We build the capacity of local civil society organisations to address penal reform in their work and give them a platform to raise human rights issues with authorities.



Our Approach:

We are a specialist organisation which addresses the rights of suspects, of-fenders and prisoners in the context of the broader criminal justice system.

Constructive and flexible advocacy

We work in very diverse regions and countries with different political and social realities and sensitivities. We are responsive to these different contexts, and adapt how we work accordingly. Our approach is gender and culturally sensitive.

We have over 20 years' experience working in the field of criminal justice and penal reform at national, regional and international levels. This experience has shown us that engaging in constructive dialogue with authorities allows us to achieve change in often very politically sensitive environments.

Our independence and specialised expertise makes us a valued partner for both governments and civil society organisations. We have a reputation for staying the course in a field where progress can be slow and gradual.

Our working methods:

At the **national level**, our working methods include:

- raising awareness of regional and international human rights standards and norms, including through developing authoritative interpretations of these standards
- disseminating information about the implementation of regional and international human rights standards as well as examples of good practice from elsewhere
- championing the ratification of human rights treaties
- undertaking research
- assessing national criminal justice and penal systems according to their compliance with human rights standards, formulating recommendations for improvement, and developing projects to implement these recommendations
- providing training to build the capacity and skills of professionals such as prison staff, monitoring bodies, judges, social and probation workers
- Developing the capacity of partner organisations.

At **regional and international levels**, our working methods include:

- identifying gaps in existing regional and international human rights standards and raising awareness about them
- contributing to standard-setting initiatives
- developing training materials
- sharing our expertise and experience of working on country and regional projects
- engaging with inter-governmental and regional bodies through our consultative and observer status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

- cooperating with civil society actors in networks and coalitions; we are a member of the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice (IPJJ), the World Coalition against the Death Penalty and the OPCAT Contact Network
- Organising national, regional and international conferences, seminars and exchange visits, bringing together criminal justice and penal reform activists, specialists and government representatives.



Main directions of activity during the last decade in the South Caucasus Region (2003 – 2013)

- Promotion of the signature, ratification and implementation of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture; assistance to the establishment of the National Preventive Mechanism in Georgia, covering all places of detention and closed institutions.
- Training and technical assistance to local prison commissions of public control in order to increase transparency of the penitentiary system and safeguard human rights of prisoners in South Cauca-

sus, as well as secure humane imprisonment conditions. Lobbying existence of social monitoring.

- In cooperation with a partner NORLAG, support civil society initiatives in carrying out small projects to develop prisoner/probationer activities targeting the rehabilitation and re-socialisation of offenders.
- Working on the issues of legislation on torture prevention and promotion of international instruments.
- Increasing involvement of civil society in the process of criminal justice policy review;
- Assisting probation reform and capacity building of the probation service of Georgia; promoting the use of non-custodial sanctions. Supporting alternatives to imprisonment in Georgia;
- Providing expertise on penal legislation and action plan for penal reform;
- Promoting effective Juvenile Justice System in Georgia and Armenia; managing pilot schemes for the rehabilitation of juvenile probationers and children in conflict with the law;
- Supporting re-socialization of women prisoners by establishing various vocational and educational rehabilitation programs in co-operation with local NGOs; promoting United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules); Conducting research on the issues of women prisoners;
- Researching the use of life imprisonment and conditions of the prisoners with this sanction.

“Penal Reform International” is represented in the Inter-agency Coordinating Council on Criminal Justice Reform of the Ministry of Justice, as well as in the Board of Corrections and Juvenile Justice Reform Working Group. The organization is also involved in the working processes of the Interagency Council working on measures against torture.

Our partner organizations are:



Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA)



Georgian Centre for the Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture (GCRT)



Association “Women in Business” (GAWB)



Georgian Harm Reduction Network (GHRN)



Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture “Empathy”



Youth for Justice - Georgia (YFJ)



Article 42 of the Constitution



Public Defender of Georgia



Civil Society Institute (CSI) – Armenia



Children's Support Centre Foundation (CSCF-FAR) – Armenia



Armenian Helsinki Committee – Armenia



Institute of Democracy



Human Rights Centre – Georgia



Anti-violence Network of Georgia (AVNG)



Georgian Bar Association

Global Initiative in Psychiatry (GIP) – Georgia

Human Rights Centre, Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan Committee Against Torture - Azerbaijan

Women's Club PEONI

Prison Watch Azerbaijan

Our donors are:



European Union/European Commission;



Open Society Foundations (OSF);



Eurasia Partnership Foundation (EPF);



The Norwegian Mission of Rule of Law Advisers to Georgia (NORLAG);



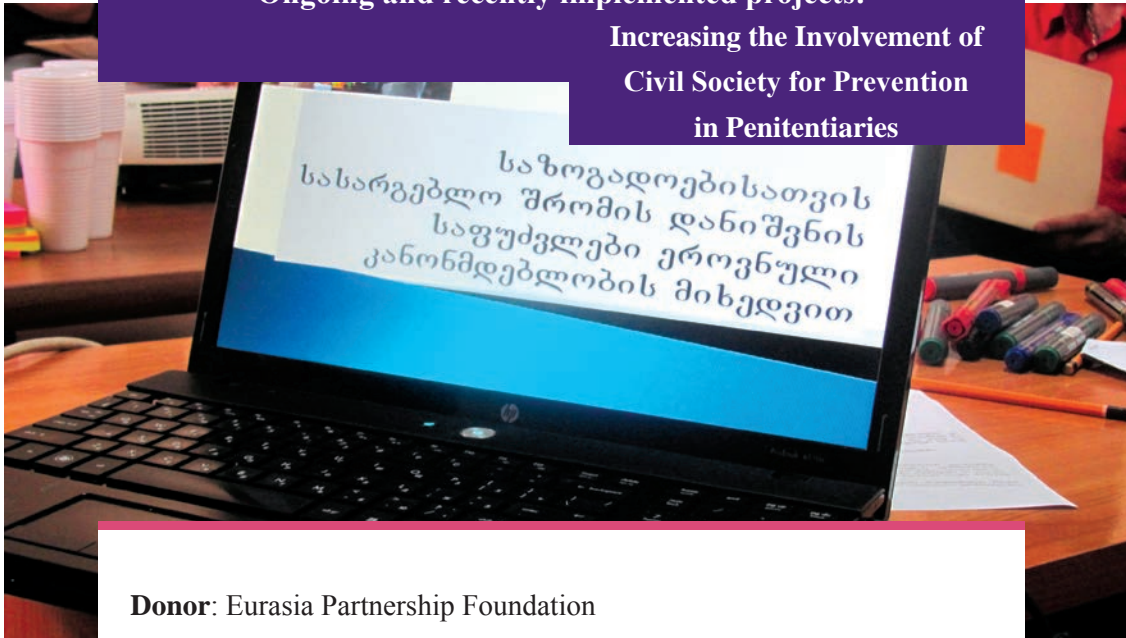
British Embassy;



The Netherlands Embassy

Ongoing and recently implemented projects:

Increasing the Involvement of Civil Society for Prevention in Penitentiaries



Donor: Eurasia Partnership Foundation

Budget: GEL 21, 437

Duration: 5 month (June – October 2013)

Project Overall Objective: Improving and promoting international standards of human rights of prisoners in penal institutions.

Project Specific Objectives:

Strengthening the role of civil society in the prevention of torture and inhuman or ill-treatment or prevention of disease in prisons;

- Identification of prisoners' problems, increasing social awareness and responsibility of the governmental bodies on the existing conditions of penitentiary establishments;
- Advocacy of development of alternative/social monitoring mechanisms and supporting NPM activities;
- Giving recommendations on improving prisoners' conditions based on international charters and best practices to governmental

institutions.

The aim of the monitoring is a comprehensive inspection of penal institutions and identification of those factors that have a significant impact on the legal status of the prisoners. During the monitoring legal problems of the prisoners, internal appeal mechanisms of punishments practice, right to family visits, communication with the outside world, living conditions, health care quality, and more will be examined.



Programme Partnership Agreement (PPA)

Donor: Department for International Development (DFID)

Overall (Global) Project budget: 1, 243, 584 British Pounds

Implementation Period: 2011-2013

PPA is the programme supporting penal reform in six global regions (Central Asia, former Soviet Union countries, Eastern Asia, North Africa and Eastern Africa), among them in South Caucasus and in particular, in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

In the frameworks of the programme, PRI is **working on the following**:

- Supporting decrease of prison overcrowding and increase use of alternative measures;
- Advocacy of torture prevention and abolition of death penalty;
- Promoting activities based on the use of restorative justice for the juveniles in conflict with the law;
- Improvement of conditions and treatment towards women and girls in the criminal justice system.

Within the project PRI South Caucasus Office has implemented a variety of activities, arranged meetings, round tables with the participation of various regional and local government agencies, no governmental/international organizations and civil society representatives, who work and are interested in criminal justice issues.

During the programme implementation following **publications** were prepared and published:

- Prevention of the use of life sentences and implementation of long-term sentences Georgia;
- Review of the laws and policies on prevention and elimination of violence against children in police and detention facilities in Georgia;
- Index of Compliance with the United Nations Rules on the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), which reflects the standards of women's imprisonment in the penitentiary systems in South Caucasus;
- Characteristics of women offenders based on the implications of detention on them and their children, as well as current trends, problems, and women's criminal behaviour-related factors, social reintegration needs of response efficiency review of "treatment of women prisoners' and non-custodial measures," in accordance with the UN Bangkok Rules.

Strengthening institutions and building civil society capacity to combat torture in 9 CIS countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine)



Donor: The European Union

Duration: 36 months (October 2010 – October 2013)

Budget: 1, 413 657 EUR

The overall objective of the project: to contribute to the eradication of torture in prisons and other places of detention (including police cells, psychiatric institutions, juvenile centres, homes for the elderly and military detention facilities).

The project has three specific objectives:

- Strengthening, supporting and developing a range of mechanisms and institutions to combat torture including where appropriate bodies designated as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM);
- Developing and strengthening civil society to monitor places of detention and closed institutions and to interact effectively with relevant Government bodies including NPMs;
- Advocating for holistic and comprehensive programmes of rehabilitation based on existing models of international good practice.

Partners: Association for the Prevention of Torture, Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

Target groups: relevant government ministries, departments, officials and agencies (including those responsible for oversight of and/or working directly with persons deprived of their liberty and places of detention) and local civil society including academic and research groups, NGOs, professional associations, medical professionals, journalists, etc.

Final beneficiaries: both direct and potential victims of torture

Estimated results:

- Evidence based advocacy for developing a range of mechanisms and institutions to reduce the scale and scope of torture in the region
- OPCAT signed and ratified where this has not happened (6 out of 9 countries)
- NPMs established (Where needed) and functioning effectively



- Increased levels of interaction between government and civil society in the area of torture prevention
- Strengthening capacity of civil society to monitor places of detention including prisons
- Promotion of best practice models of rehabilitation
- Increased access to support services for most vulnerable groups of prisoners and detainees.

Main activities:

- Mapping exercise, development of methodology and research
- Publishing, disseminating and promoting recommendations and research
- Review of international and regional torture prevention guidelines
- Training on the issues of rehabilitation and torture prevention
- Training of trainers on the issues of rehabilitation
- Establishing online community facility for developing and sharing legislation on NPMs and other information
- Assessment of national modules of rehabilitation and promoting good practices
- Administering a small-grants scheme

Civil Society Contributing to the Humanization of Criminal Justice System

Donor: European Union

Budget: EUR 94, 995

Duration: 30 Months (December 2010 – June 2013)

Partner: Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

Overall objective(s):

The overall objective of the action would be to contribute to the criminal justice reforms in Georgia and, in particular those that challenge the punitive approaches, by also involving the civil society.

Specific objectives:

Advocating for and supporting the improvement of the system of early release (parole and other forms of early release) and its increased use;

- Promoting and supporting the increased use of alternatives to imprisonment (community sanctions); also alternative measures in Juvenile Justice (diversion, mediation, educational measures of coercion).
- Supporting the increased engagement of the civil society in Criminal Justice reform processes, particularly in terms of advocacy and policy dialogue to challenge the punitive approaches.



Challenging the Overuse of Imprisonment in Georgia and contributing to the Decrease in Prison Population

Donor: Open Society Foundations

Budget: USD 118, 000

Duration: 36 months, 2 stages (June 2010 – June 2013)

Project Overall Objective: Challenging the Overuse of Imprisonment in Georgia and contributing to the Decrease in Prison Population

The overall objective of the project is to address the situation of heavy overcrowding problem in Georgian prisons as well as the disproportionately high number of prisoners, caused by excessive use of imprisonment by judges, of lengthy sentences and inadequate system for managed release of prisoners.

Project Specific Objectives:

- To promote the increased use of community service as an alternative to imprisonment throughout Georgia;
- To assist the establishment of more effective system of early conditional release (parole);



Partnership projects:

Harm reduction - Repressive or evidence-based interventions: supporting community empowerment, awareness raising and informative policy in Georgia



Donor: European Union

Budget: 99, 500 Euros

Project duration: 18 months (January 2012 – June 2013)

Project overall objectives:

- Increasing respect towards fundamental human rights and freedoms in those regions with significant risk factors;
- Strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in supporting the group interests in peaceful reconciliation and consolidation of political participation and representation.

Project specific objectives:

- Strengthening drug user communities for advocating their integration into society;
- Awareness raising of the society about drug users, as healthcare issue;

- Supporting dialog among policy makers, civil society and stakeholders, promoting evidence-based policy to develop responses in connection with the drug use in Georgia.

As the project partner, PRI has implemented various activities within the project framework.

Legal analysis of the drug policy was developed, which reflects the period from 2006 through July 2012. The project has also prepared a **study on the social and economic impact of the policy on injecting drug users in Georgia**.

Supporting the Re-socialisation of Women Prisoners

Implementing organisation:

Georgian Association “Women in Business”

Donor organization: European Union

Duration of the project: 24 months (December 2011 – December 2013)

Location of the project: Rustavi, Georgia, Kvemo Kartli Region

Project partners: Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance, Penitentiary Department, Prison administration, Penal Reform International, Women’s Club PEONI, Georgian Professional Association of Psychologists

Project Objectives: To facilitate the re-socialisation of women prisoners and the provision for their gender-specific needs, through raising awareness about gender specific needs of women in prison custody and topical issues they face, supporting the preparation of women inmates for release, assisting women inmates with the resolution of various social issues facing them, building the capacity for decision-making about the release and preparation for the

release of women prisoners, supporting the protection of rights and liberties of women inmates.

Target groups: Women prisoners who are eligible for parole or pardon, Prison staff.

Final Beneficiaries: Women prisoners, their families, Ministry of Corrections and Legal Assistance, society at large.

Estimated results: Improved provision for the social, labour and other rights of women prisoners; Convicted women inmates assisted and prepared with the release from prison; Decision-making improved about release of women prisoners in consideration of their gender specificities; Social, psychological and legal assistance rendered to women inmates in need; Awareness raised about gender specific needs of women in prison custody

Main activities: Job skills training, vocational and basic business courses for women prisoners; Organizing visits to the women's prison of potential employers; Provision of social, psychological and legal assistance to women prisoners; Training for inmates and prison



staff on the UN Bangkok Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners; Training for prison authorities (parole board) on risk and needs assessment in decision-making about release of women prisoners given their gender specific needs; Awareness raising activities, including a round table on women's imprisonment issues.

The project aims to contribute to the ongoing reforms in the criminal justice system of Georgia, specifically, in terms of assisting the rehabilitation and re-socialisation of a particular group within the Georgian penitentiary system, and further advancement to International and European human rights standards (including the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, The European Prison Rules, The Bangkok Rules, etc).