

**CULTURAL CENTER OF
THE CAUCASUS YEZIDIS**



**SUBMISSION
TO THE 130TH SESSION OF THE
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE
GEORGIA**



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This report reflects the position of the "Cultural Centre of the Caucasus Yezidi" (hereinafter- CCCY), which works in the field of protection of rights and freedoms, protection of the cultural heritage of the Yazidi community in their countries of residence.

2. This salary is dedicated to the situation 2012 – 2020 years, i.e. the period covered by the Georgian report.

3. The Authors of the CCCY report welcome the official report of Georgia and share many of its assessments and conclusions. We agree that the government of Georgia is committed to following the country's international obligations in the field of the protection of national minorities in several ways, and that there have been some positive changes in national legislation and domestic policy in recent years.

4. The CCCY report, however, is an alternative to the official one. From the outset, we did not consider confrontation with the government's position or the refutation of official information and official conclusions as our goal. The task of the report was to present a different from the official view of the situation with the involvement of other sources of information. At the same time, we tried, as far as possible, to avoid duplication of general information contained in the government report. This kind of description is intended, in our opinion, to promote a more versatile and deeper understanding of interested international organizations about human rights problems in Georgia, in particular among national minorities, as well as meaningful and constructive discussions on these topics within the country.

5. Georgia is a multi-ethnic state, which building democratic institutions and forging relationships of citizenship. However, the country's success in supporting ethnic minorities, in particular the Yazidi community of Georgia, is insignificant. The Yazidi community of Georgia, which mainly resides in the capital of Georgia Tbilisi is subject to widespread domestic discrimination, hidden and veiled forms of discrimination and xenophobia.

6. Participation of Yazidis in all areas of public life in the country remains very limited, especially they are insufficiently represented in representative bodies, in the field of science, sports, and culture. The level of participation and representation of representatives of the Yazidi community in the socio -political and cultural life of the country is alarmingly low. Due to the lack of real dialogue with the Yazidi community, the feeling of discrimination and alienation is growing in the communities. The problems of the Yazidi community are rarely mentioned.

7. In Georgia, the Yazidi community is being forced to emigrate to Europe, Greece, Russia and other CIS countries. The emigration of young people is very relevant due to the current practice of veiled discrimination, which leads to the stimulation of youth emigration at a very high rate. In turn, youth and student emigration provides a significant impetus for the overall emigration of families of the Yazidi community, parents try to be closer to their children. In general, several reasons have been identified in relation to the Yazidi community in Georgia that encourage them to leave Georgia. The country's authorities explain this only by the presence of economic

difficulties that have arisen throughout the country. The CCCY has identified several factors that encourage emigration: the existence of a form of veiled discrimination, limited access to education, and artificially limited representation in public and cultural political life. Most of the population of the Yazidi community of Georgia believes that they have no future in Georgia due to their belonging to ethnic minorities.

8. The main common feature of minority-related legislation and its implementation practices is the great distance between symbolic and instrumental policies, in other words, between the rhetoric and actions of the authorities.

The part of Georgian legislation that is terminologically and meaningfully related to ethnicity is quite mosaic and complex, both in structure and content. In addition to international treaties, which, according to the Constitution, are part of the country's legal system, the sources of law in this area are the Constitution of Georgia itself, other normative legal acts (in particular, presidential decrees and Government resolutions).

9. Georgia's legislation in the field of protection of the rights and freedoms of ethnic minorities, despite having many General and declarative formulations, is nevertheless still characterized by isolation from democratic law enforcement and effective practical implementation. Although the basic principles of protection of ethnic minorities are expressed in the Constitution of Georgia of 1995. The country has not yet adopted a law directly and fairly regulating the rights and obligations of minorities and defining their status.

10. Despite the development of democratization processes in Georgia, officials (in the rank of advisers or Ministers, heads of committees, heads of agencies), dedicated to problems of ethnic minorities and civil integration are not sufficiently effective in such matters, as are representatives of the executive and cannot, on the basis of their status, to maintain complete independence and impartiality.

11. The Yazidi community as an ethnic minority has been mentioned less and less in the media sphere of our country in recent years. For example, there are news programs in other languages of national minorities, but, for example, in Kurmanji (the language of the Yazidi community) isn't any information transmission. This indicates that the Georgian government is appealing to the larger scale of national minorities in Georgia. This leads to a feeling of austerity and the sense of inferiority in the world, what is possible when equally supported by covert forms of discrimination. This shows that the problems and aspirations of the Yazidi community are not on the agenda of any state structure, and even those structures, whose job is to protect the rights and freedoms of national minorities.

The level of participation of persons belonging to the Yazidi community in spheres of life can be considered as one of the indicators of the level of pluralism and democracy of the entire society. It should be noted with regret that the lack of proper participation of the Yazidi community in all spheres of life, without exception, leads the community nominalization.

Media coverage of the Yazidi community in Georgia creates general passivity in civil

society. The Yazidi youth are confused. On the one hand, they want to emphasize their identity, but face the problem of being ignored and manipulated by state institutions, which subsequently affects civil society as well. Yazidis face a dilemma -in order for them to climb the career ladder, they have the choice to either ignore their national identity or give it up for the sake of their career.

12. As with civil rights, the cultural rights of the Yazidi people in Georgia impose an obligation on the state, namely, the obligation to respect, protect and implement these cultural rights. The obligation to respect rights requires the state to refrain from interfering with the enjoyment and additional and intensive promotion in the enjoyment of cultural rights. The obligation to exercise rights requires the state to take appropriate legislative, administrative, budgetary and other measures for the full realization of cultural rights. The Yazidi community stands on the side-lines of these commitments.

The situation with respect to the rights to share and develop culture with other members of the Yazidi community in Georgia largely reflects the General situation with human rights and freedoms. Today in Georgia, the cultural rights of the Yazidi community are given secondary importance (sometimes not given at all). However, international experience and history have shown and proved the opposite. It is the availability and exercise of cultural rights, access to culture, that provides society with the basis for democratization and the establishment of a state governed by the rule of law. It was underdeveloped cultural rights and access to culture by ethnic minorities to ensure the awareness of the public and the establishment of a legal state. Considering the situation of cultural rights of the Yazidi community in Georgia, one can see an almost identical situation – the rights to culture of the Yazidi community are gradually dissolving and disappearing.

The state has reserved for them the right to enjoy cultural rights. But the Yazidi community does not have a real enough mechanism of protection and preservation, access to culture. The feeling of proactive connivance on the part of the state and the lack of political will does not justify the current situation and situation of the Yazidi community. The real possibility that the Yazidi community has access, development, and preservation of its characteristics, traditions, and culture is reduced to a minimum. In the future, it will go to zero.

The Yazidis of Georgia still have one main cultural centre, one “Sunday school”, which was created by the efforts of the community itself, but not by the state, and therefore functions in a limited framework. The Yazidi community is deprived of its theatre, and there is no encouragement or support for Yazidi cultural scholars, artists or other artists. In General, this can be described as follows: the Yazidi people are not given the opportunity to organize and shape their cultural life anywhere, do not encourage or support this initiative. In this case, the only hope is placed on their own organizations – their cultural experts, historians, their businessmen, on people who still value their Yazidi people, their culture, their history and the right of their children to a Yazidi future.

13. The Yazidi community of Georgia should participate in cultural, social, economic and socio-political life, thus integrating into the life of the entire society in the countries of residence. The Yazidi community of Georgia should not only have the right to their

own identity, culture and religion, but also have the right to a full-fledged education, which is unfortunately denied.

Representatives of the Yazidi community in Georgia note: "It is very important for us that the native language of the Yazidis is recognized and considered as part of the linguistic and cultural heritage where we live, whether in Germany, Russia, Georgia or Armenia. Today, we need the authorities of these countries to conduct an active and consistent policy in the field of education in order to protect our rights to a full education in our native language."

This implies, first of all, the need to learn the official language and at the same time, the availability of appropriate opportunities for teaching their native language or in their native Yazidi language. Unfortunately, we see that there is a lack of instruction in the state language due to the lack of instruction in the native language.

Today, education is a tool for preserving identity, including outside the areas of significant or traditional residence of the Yazidi community, whether in Germany, Georgia, Russia, Armenia or in the whole world. Education concerns not only the system of regular compulsory school secondary education, but also pre-school, higher and special education.

Representatives of the Yazidi community say at meetings: "it is very important for us that the native language of the Yazidis is recognized and considered as part of the linguistic and cultural heritage of Georgia".

Today, the Yazidi community has a great need for professional education, adult education, and training of professional groups, including lawyers, police, journalists, government officials, and even political and public figures.

It can also include educational activities outside of traditional schools, such as religious education classes or summer education camps. All this the Yazidi community is banal and devoid of.

The lack of access to secondary education in their native language creates a lack of competitiveness for the Yazidi community, makes the Yazidis very weak as a community, and this affects the real lack of representation in many spheres of social and political life.

Today, we can state the fact that the system of education in the native language of the Yazidis in Georgia has been gradually being destroyed, and this process has been going on for the past 30 years.

The reality is that in view of the importance of pre-school education in their native language, the country's educational system has ceased to take into account the language and culture of the Yazidis. From the Yazidi community in Georgia no preschool institutions, children's homes in their native English language.

Many Yazidis, Yazidi organizations and international organizations perceive such steps as assimilation. Many specialists, legal experts and human rights defenders consider this a restriction on the right to education, and this restriction makes itself felt in the future in the performance of students, during their studies they always face difficulties in obtaining education in their native language.

In places where Yazidis are dispersed, parents begin to think about sending their children to kindergartens in the language of the titular nation, and then to schools with a non — native language sector. All this is so interconnected and intertwined, but in the end, it comes down to one thing — the virtual disappearance of the right and opportunity of Yazidis to receive education in their native language.

It is important to note that we are talking about the existence of an international and constitutional right to receive education in their native language. When this right to opportunity disappears – it is already discrimination, and the whole Yazidi community is directed towards assimilation.

Today's children and entire generations before them from areas of compact housing in the majority do not know how to read or write in their native language, and they prefer not to speak in their native language. They were denied the opportunity to receive education in their native language.

If you look closely at the Yazidis today, they have features of blurring ethnic identity, there are features of assimilation. Naturally, the Yazidi community, the socially active part of the Yazidis, have a fear that this same method of education will continue in secondary schools and in the future, which will lead to the disappearance of the Yazidi identity.

Unfortunately, in Georgia in educational programs not included properly such subjects as national history, culture, etc. History and geography of the Yazidi people for children of the Yazidi community.

As noted, and stated by the overwhelming majority of Yazidi public organizations around the world, today the Yazidi community faces the threat that in the next 20 years the Yazidis will lose their language and identity.

The Yazidi community does not see any interest on the part of the state's educational structures in resolving the above-mentioned problems, or in training national personnel for pre-school institutions and secondary schools of the Yazidi community. It is becoming obvious that the States are not interested in training personnel and teachers for the educational system of the Yazidi community. This provision is contrary to international obligations and to the legislation of these countries themselves. Today, it is important for the Yazidi community to suspend practical actions aimed at passive assimilation of the Yazidi community.

14. As it was noted in the official report that the Ministry supports activities aimed at promoting the culture of representatives of ethnic minorities and intercultural dialogue. The Ministry of education, science, culture and sports (MESCS) supports ethnic minority theatres, museums and cultural centres. A program to support the culture of national minorities is also being implemented. However, unfortunately, all the above-mentioned processes passed by the Yazidi community, and nothing was done that could support the culture of the Yazidi community.

15. In its report, the government noted financial support for officially recognized religions in Georgia. financial support was provided to the Muslim community, the Roman Catholic community, the Armenian Apostolic community, and the Jewish community in

2014-2019. Unfortunately, even this time the Yazidi community was ignored and did not receive any support, which is also perceived by the community as discrimination.