

## **Case of [www.reactor.ge](http://www.reactor.ge) - 2011-06-21**

In September 2013 Students of one of the leading private universities, Free University, have published a post on their problems on a students' blog, [www.reactori.wordpress.com](http://www.reactori.wordpress.com). The administrators of the blog received threats on both Facebook page and blog, were "advised" and demanded to remove the post as it was "incorrect" by one of the students of FreeUniversity. The blog-post has not been deleted.

## **Case of [www.studentebi.com](http://www.studentebi.com) - 2012-07-18**

There is a blog created by law students of Tbilisi State University about issues surrounding their university life and the student self-government [www.studentebi.com](http://www.studentebi.com). In spring of 2012 the vice-president of the student self-government at Tbilisi State University claimed that the blog did not have right accents, and that it created negative PR against student self-government. Consequently, two bloggers, Z.M. and T.U. were beaten in the office of the student self-government. The police was called and some measures were taken. During the following days, there were demonstrations in front of the university. The administration of the university was waiting for official response from the police and on its side had promised to punish those involved. However, there was no information on final decision from the Ministry of Interior. The students, who have fallen victims of violence, were further threatened. There were even calls to their families and finally they decided not appeal to court. Later, Facebook accounts of these two students and one more student, I.B. were hacked at Tbilisi State University. Therefore, they created a new blog.

## **Case of LEPL of the Ministry of Justice - 2010-02-12**

The dismissal of the head of a Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) of the Ministry of Justice has been largely covered by Georgian media. Following the dismissal, apparently reaction of the Ministry on an article published in an online magazine, two managers of the LEPL spread information in the social network, that they were threatened and pressed by the Ministry in response to their critical statuses about dismissal of their director. IDFI has conducted an interview with one of the managers. While the outcome of the process is not clear yet and further investigation is needed for drawing specific conclusions, we believe that the collected information may still

give interesting insights. The facts given below are based on the interview with one of the managers of the LEPL.

An online magazine published an article about the delay in signing by the Minister of Justice of the agreements for grant given by the one Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) of the Ministry of Justice to NGOs. In November 2013 the director of this LEPL was dismissed for “poor management”. Following this fact, two managers of the LEPL, T.A. and A.S. wrote critical statuses on their own Facebook pages. The next day these managers and five more employees were called to the Minister, who had their Facebook statuses printed out and called them “remnants of the previous government”. The new director told them that the General Inspection will consider the case as “action against the system”. Further, there was a suggestion, that unless they quit, they will not be able to find jobs elsewhere. Both T.A. and A.S. declined to voluntarily resign from their positions in exchange for less harsh report of the General Inspection. Now they expect to be effectively fired from their jobs as a result of reorganization process. In the meanwhile, after their remarks of Facebook, T.A. and A.S. were given no additional tasks. They were invited neither to strategic planning workshop, nor to regular management meetings. These two and one more assistant, who wrote similar Facebook post, did not receive the 13th salary, the annual bonus. They have already visited the Public Defender and a non-governmental organization Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA) for legal support, plan to write an open letter for NGOs and appeal to the court. Besides, T.A. said in the interview that self-censorship is very common among public service employees, even public officials, but nobody speaks about it openly.

## **Case of Natia Imnadze - 2014-11-22**

According to the information spread in the media, a case similar to the dismissal in the system of the Ministry of Justice has happened in the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia. The information given below is based on the media coverage and requires further investigation.

The Minister of Corrections and Legal Assistance of Georgia, Sozar Subari, has criticized the part of the report of Public Defender concerning prisoners with Tuberculosis, calling the recommendation of the Ombudsman on this issue “unprofessional” and questioned his obligation to have met prisoners in person. Following this critic, in April of 2013, the magazine Liberali has conducted an interview with the Head of Department of Monitoring and Prevention, Natia Imnadze. Imnadze has noted that

although no article obliges the Minister to meet the prisoners in person, such meetings would have been beneficial for gathering better information.

Besides, Imnadze spoke about the lack of professionalism of some people and spontaneous and fast changes of new management in the penitential system and increased power of some prisoners. In November of 2013 Imnadze and her deputy Otar Kvatchadze were dismissed. Imnadze said that one of the reasons of her dismissal may have been her critic of the penitentiary system earlier in an interview with Liberali. She also said that after the interview in April, her contact with the media was limited, since she first had to obtain a permission from the Press Centre and the Public Defender. The representative of the Office of the Public Defender claimed that the Office cannot publicize grounds of dismissal because of the law on personal data protection. The Public Defender himself stated that Imnadze was dismissed because of Intentional failure to perform duties. Following the dismissal, three more employees of the same department have left their positions voluntarily. Natia Imnadze and Otar Kvatchadze regarded their dismissal as illegal and were going to appeal to the court.

## **Case of [www.TSpress.ge](http://www.TSpress.ge) - 2015-02-17**

Another case widely covered by the media refers to an article by a journalist, followed by publication of her personal information and physical violence. The facts below are based on the information spread in the media.

On July 17, 2012 Iza Salakaia, a journalist of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Information Centre ([TSpress.ge](http://www.TSpress.ge)) wrote an article about internal confrontations in Poti office of the Coalition Georgian Dream regarding Majoritarian candidate Eka Beselia. After the publication of that article, one of the visitors Sh.M. posted a copy of chat between Iza Salakaia and Z.M. as of July 4, 2012. A few days afterwards Sh. M. attacked Iza Salakaia in the street. The journalist addressed a non-governmental organization Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) for legal assistance, Investigation was launched. In April of 2013, Poti Police, having finished investigation, awarded Iza Salakaia with a victim's status, but did not publicize information about the case and the alleged perpetrator.

## **LEPL at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia - 2009-07-21**

On August 22, 2014 an employee at LEPL of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia, Agency of Protected Areas wrote a Facebook post about her own opinion on participation of Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili in Ice Bucket Challenge, as well as Wikipedia article about rules of the challenge. In two hours she was called with request to delete the post. She deleted the post about Prime Minister of Georgia. However, soon one of the employees of the department of the Ministry has requested from her to delete the second post (Wikipedia article) too.

## **Detention of Rasul Jafarov - 2014-08-02**

Human rights activist Rasul Jafarov was sentenced to 6 years and 6 months in prison. He was arrested on August 2, 2014 on charges of illegal entrepreneurship (Article 192 of the Criminal Code), tax system (Article 213) and abuse of office (Article 308). His detention term was extended by three months on October 23. On December 12, additional charges were brought against him under Articles 179.3.2 (embezzlement allegedly causing damage to third parties identified as "victims" by the investigative body) and 313 (service forgery). In addition to his imprisonment term, Mr. Jafarov had to cover the cost of 350 Manat (approx. 310 Euros) for court expertise.

International observatory delegation, created by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), observing the trial against Rasul Jafarov declared that "the trial was based on trumped-up charges and that there is no evidence of Mr. Jafarov's guilt". Consequently, the observatory delegation called for the immediate release of the human rights activist and all the other arbitrarily detained defenders.

It is noteworthy that Rasul Jafarov actively participated in the "Sing for Democracy" and the "Art of Democracy" movements ahead of the Eurovision song contest in Baku in May 2012, and was planning a campaign called "Sports for Human Rights" prior to the European Games which took place in Baku in June 2015. Mr. Jafarov is also the HEAd of the "Human Rights Club", established in December 2010. Despite repeated attempts to register his NGO with the Azerbaijan government, registration was refused several times by the authorities.

## **Case of Emin Huseynov - 2014-08-11**

Director of "Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Security" (IRFS), Emin Huseynov, has been forced to hide at the Embassy of Switzerland in Baku since August 11, 2014. He has sought refuge after the office of IRFS was searched on August 8, 2014 by law-enforcement agencies of Azerbaijan. As a result of the search an inventory of documents and office supplies of the organization was made, and the office was sealed. The web-site of the organization was also suspended.

After Huseynov went into hiding, he was accused of various criminal charges including tax evasion, illegal business and abuse of authority. Admittedly, this was not the first fact of Huseynov's controversy against the Azerbaijani authorities. Emin Huseynov had major health problems in the past, some of them originating from beatings by the police in 2003 and 2008, which had severe consequences for him.

In July, 2015 after spending 10 months sheltering in the Swiss embassy, Emin Huseynov flew out of Azerbaijan on the plane of Switzerland's foreign minister, Didier Burkhalter, after months of negotiations with the Azeri government.

## **Case of Khadija Ismayilova - 2014-12-05**

Investigative journalist and contributor for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Khadija Ismayilova was arrested on December 5, 2014. She was accused of provoking a man to attempt suicide. She was sentenced to two months of pre-trial detention on the charge of Article 125 of the Criminal Code, accused of inciting her former colleague Tural Mustafayev to suicide. She has been secretly videotaped, publicly smeared, threatened, imprisoned, and accused of treason.

In April 2015, Mustafayev revealed in an interview that he no longer wished to pursue a case against Ismayilova for allegedly inciting him to suicide. He stated that beginning in December 2014, he had contacted the Office of the Attorney General asking to withdraw his original complaint which he had filed while "going through psychologically difficult times". He denied being pressured by a third party into filing it, but did briefly mention that he was "detained" back in December soon after leaving a message on his Facebook page in which he expressed his intent to withdraw the complaint. Mustafayev's request was ignored, and he refused to comment on the reasons for this refusal.

On July 24, 2015 after seven months in jail, Khadija Ismayilova went on trial in Baku to face charges of libel, tax evasion, illegal business activity, and abuse of power.

Her arrest was condemned by several international organizations and institutions such as Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the U.S. Department of State, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House, etc.

## **Rasim Aliyev was beaten to death - 2015-08-09**

An Azerbaijani journalist, Rasim Aliyev died in a Baku hospital on August 9 after being beaten the previous day. He was allegedly attacked and beaten by supporters of a local soccer player, Cavid Huseynov. It is believed that the attack was carried out in retaliation for criticism of Huseynov that Aliyev posted on his Facebook page.

While being in hospital, Aliyev told Meydan TV that after his Facebook posting he received a call from someone claiming to be Huseynov's cousin, who yelled and swore at him on the phone. Afterwards, he received another call, the same person apologized for his earlier phone call, and said the two should discuss the situation over tea. Aliyev eventually agreed to meet and drove to see the man. After getting out of his car to shake his hand, Aliyev said he was suddenly attacked from behind and knocked to the ground. He said he was then kicked and beaten by six men for about 40 seconds. Aliyev said they took his phone and wallet and ran away in different directions. He was then taken to the hospital where doctors said he had four broken ribs, an ear injury, but was said not to have any damage to his internal organs. His condition worsened overnight and doctors operated to remove his spleen. They said they also found an injury to a lung.

The Interior Ministry said a criminal case on intentional infliction of bodily harm leading to death had been opened and an investigative team was looking into the case. It added that the case is under the close supervision of the ministry and the prosecutor-general. Ali Hasanov, an aide to President Ilham Aliyev, said the case "is being closely investigated and the perpetrators will be found."

## **Imprisonment of Nijat Aliyev, editor-in-chief of azadxeber.org - 2012-12-09**

On December 9th Baku Court on Grave Crimes announced verdict sentencing editor-in-chief of azadxeber.org news website, Nijat Aliyev to 10 years in prison. Nijat Aliyev was arrested on 20 May 2012. The journalist later reported that he was tortured.

## **Detention of civic activists - 2010-06-10**

Civic and political activists, organizing protests, have been detained even before the protests have started (e.g. on the day of Vladimir Putin's arrival to Yerevan). Since these protests have been scheduled and discussed in advance on social networks.

## **The website of Channel 13 internet television was hacked - 2015-01-24**

On January 24, the website of Channel 13 internet television was hacked. Director of the television, Anar Orujov told IRFS that the hacker left a message on the website, which blamed Channel 13 for propaganda of homosexuality and offended the leadership of the website.

## **Website of State Ministry for Reconciliation Hacked - 2015-08-18**

The State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality said its website was hacked on August 18, 2015.

The homepage was replaced by a page showing animated image of a nose-picking anime character with messages in English, among them: "Hacked by Error 7rB" and "No System Is Safe Access to the Site Was Easy".

The state ministry said that it temporarily took down the smr.gov.ge website; it was not accessible as of Tuesday evening.

Georgian government websites have been hacked before. Early last month website of the State Ministry for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration

was hacked with message on its page reading: "Hacked By Cyber Islamic State". Agriculture Ministry's website has been hacked twice since December; websites of Environment Ministry and State Ministry for Diaspora were hacked last March and this January, respectively. Website of Parliament came under cyber attack in January, 2014.

Source: [Civil.Ge](http://Civil.Ge)

## **Why two activists from Amnesty International prevented to enter Azerbaijan? - 2015-10-08**

Two activists from Amnesty International Georgia were restricted entrance to Baku, allegedly due to violation of migration legislation. Levan Asatiani and Natalia Nozadze were both active on social media networks, reporting on the human rights situation in the region. In Baku, such endeavor has been met with disapproval and described as biased. Azerbaijani newspaper AzVision claimed that these two activist were of Armenian origin and that this was their main motivation for not reflecting the truth about the human rights situation in Azerbaijan. Such precedents come in a period were Azerbaijani opposition and human rights activists are jailed or intimidated on an unseen scale.

## **Turkey orders media blackout as Facebook and Twitter 'blocked' - 2015-10-11**

In the wake of the recent suicide bomb at a Pro-Kurdish rally in Turkey's capital Ankara that killed at least 95 and injured 300, the country's media watchdog has temporarily banned social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter in order to minimize the spread of the images of the attack. The Turkish government feared that these images would "create a feeling of panic". [more](#)

## **Russia's Top Internet Censor Threatens YouTube Block Over Copyright Violations - 2015-07-23**

Russia's Roscommandzor, the country's top internet regulator, has warned



YouTube of a possible block. The government wants YouTube to remove unauthorized copies of Russian TV shows, as it was violating Russian copyrights. [more](#)

## **Teen Arrested for 'Insulting' Erdogan on Facebook - 2015-10-22**

A 14 year old schoolboy was arrested by Turkish officials because he insulted President Erdogan on facebook. He was later released due to the fact that he was one year too young to be charged a criminal offence. Presumably, the teenager violated Article 299 of the penal code making insults to the office of the president punishable by multiple years in prison. [more](#)

## **The Kremlin Cracks Down on Internet in Russia, But Sites Are Finding Loopholes - 2015-10-07**

Editor, Galina Timchenko felt proud when the news website Lenta.ru reached 3 million readers; however, when the government agencies found out about this they were horrified. A news website with such a wide audience has to be controlled by the Kremlin is what the government representatives thought. As a result, Galina Timchenko was fired and a Kremlin associate was given the authority to manage the website. [more](#)

## **Russia 'will block' Google, Twitter and Facebook if they withhold blogger data - 2015-10-28**

Russia will block any web-site that does not comply with the Russian internet regulation. These regulations require sites that have more than 300 000 readers a day to register their bloggers and submit this and more

information to the appropriate government agencies. [more](#)

## **Massive Internet Outage Hits Azerbaijan - 2015-11-16**

On November 16, Azerbaijan was hit by a major internet outage caused by a fire. An internet landline of Data Telecom was affected by the fire and caused the outage of the internet in parts of the country. The outage affected online banking systems and caused banks to suspend operations as it became impossible to make financial transactions. Internet access was restored once the landline was restored. [more](#)

## **Turkey: YouTube block breached human rights law - 2015-12-01**

Turkey violated the European human rights law by blocking access to YouTube for more than two years. The European Court of Human Rights called it "*a violation of Article 10 (freedom of expression) of the European Convention on Human Rights.*" The court found that the applicants, Serkan Cengiz, Yaman Akdeniz and Kerem Alt?parmak, all academics in different universities, had been prevented from accessing YouTube for a lengthy period of time and that, as active users, were denied the right to receive information and ideas. The court also observed that YouTube was a single platform which enabled information of specific interest, particularly on political and social matters, to be broadcast and citizen journalism to emerge. [more](#)

## **Popular Blogger Mehman Huseynov Has Been Jailed - 2017-01-09**

On 9 January police kidnapped and held Mehman Huseynov for several hours driving him around and torturing him. They covered his head with a sack of restrict his breathing and schocked him with a stun gun. After holding him overnight the authorities fined him 200 manat and released

him. He then openly spoke about his torture and detention to the press and directly to the public through blogging and his work with IRFS. Because he reported the torture the authorities proceeded to charge him with criminal defamation. Between Mehman's report of torture and the actual court case for criminal defamination, Mehman continued his work and produced a satirical video asking the average citizen if they would appoint their spouse to be vice president of their company. This was an obvious reference to the fact that the president of Azerbaijan appointed his wife to the newly invented position of First Vice President. After this report went viral the court sentenced Mehman to two years in prison after it originally seemed they would not be too harsh on him. [more](#)

## **YouTube and WordPress got blocked - 2016-03-11**

The latest cases of blocking of international platforms, such as YouTube and WordPress demonstrated once again that the country necessitates regulations of filtering, blocking and takedown of illegal content. Some crucial aspects should be highlighted with regard to the mentioned cases. The entire WordPress platform was blocked for a short period in November 2015, as a response to the release of the threatening videos by pro-Islamic State group. The State Security Service failed to restrict access to a particular content and instead, blocked the entire platform. All websites hosted by WordPress were unblocked after Georgian activists contacted the administrators of WordPress.com through Twitter to resolve this issue. Thereafter, the company corresponded with the Georgian government. GNCC representatives stated that they were not involved in this process. With regards to courts, PR department of Tbilisi City Court could not confirm whether State Security Service of Georgia referred to the court for a request to block suspicious websites. Later, authorities blocked YouTube twice, following the release of video recordings of sexual content depicting Georgian politicians. The first incident lasted for 20 minutes on March 11, 2016, and affected only Caucasus Online users. Three days later, YouTube was inaccessible again for about an hour for users of Caucasus Online and Silknet. Local human rights defenders suspected that the government restricted access through Georgian Internet service providers.

## **Baku Court orders closure of previously blocked websites - 2017-03-27**

On 12 May, the Baku City Sabali District Court sustained a lawsuit filed by the electronic Security Center (ESC) under the Ministry of Communications

on the closure of five independent online-resources: azadliq.info (The Azadliq newspaper), azadliq.org (Radio Azadliq'), "azerbaycansaat.com", meydan.tv, as well as Azerbaijan saati (Azerbaijani Hour) and Turan TV channels.

The defense lawyer, pointed out that the Communication Ministry's decision made on 27 March on blocking the aforesaid websites violated the European Convention on Human Rights, the Strasbourg-based Court's ruling over blocking certain websites in Turkey, as well as the 2016 resolution of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, under which a website can't be blocked and the restrictions should apply only to a certain information.

Emin Milli, the director of Meydan tv, one of the blocked websites, believes that the court ruling was conditioned by the government's intention to shield the readers from critical materials. <https://jam-news.net/?p=37494>

## **Major internet access issues in Turkey as Cloudflare knocked offline - 2017-06-05**

The Turkey Blocks monitoring network has detected access failures affecting hundreds of websites hosted on the Cloudflare CDN including popular news sites Cumhuriyet, Diken, BirGun, several mobile apps and platform REST APIs as of 1:00AM local time. Service has been restored as of 2:15AM. The cause of the incident remains under investigation. Affected providers include TTNNet and TurkSat/UyduNet, two major landline providers, while mobile services and other ISPs remained unaffected. At the time of writing, connections exhibited severe latency, with a page taking around three minutes to load under testing conditions. The services remained available outside at multiple vantage points outside of Turkey, although it's unclear if other regions are affected; hence the extent of the outage and underlying cause is not yet known and the outage has not been attributed to any censorship scheme. Similar issues have previously been connected to attempts by authorities to block individual websites or filter specific content. [More](#)

## **Traffic of WhatsApp, Facebook and Skype blocked in Azerbaijan - 2017-05-18**

It's been couple of days already as the international traffic of services such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Skype has been blocked in Azerbaijan. No

official explanation has been made about the case. Osman Gundus, the head of Azerbaijan Internet Forum suggested that the decision was made by the government of the country, due to the security reasons right before the international contest of Islamiada. "Unfortunately the Ministry does not give any explanation however as the regulatory body in this field is the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies it's clear that without the permission of this department mobile operators and the backbone-providers themselves can't make such decision. [More](#)

## **Internet shutdown in Turkey's Southeast following mayor's detention - 2016-10-26**

A full internet shutdown lasting almost 12 hours has cut off Turkey's Southeast regions, following protests against the detention of Diyarbakir mayor and co-mayor Gültan Kışanak and Fırat Anlı on terrorism charges. Connectivity issues began at 10:30AM local time affecting cities including Diyarbakır, Mardin, Batman, Siirt, Van, Elazığ, Tunceli, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Kilis and Adıyaman. Internet connectivity started coming back at 10:00PM. Limited information coming from the region indicates that banks and point-of-sales terminals have all been rendered inoperable due to mobile and broadband internet shutdowns, with the incident ongoing as of early afternoon. [More](#)

## **People in Russia Getting Fined because of - 2017-04-13**

In Russia you can easily get sentenced because of your posts in media. It's common to get fined for that, be sent to jail or an asylum. Below are offered couple of cases when people got punished because of posting or writing in blogs and social media. Among them are: Liking a screenshot from the film "American History X"; adding an audio tracks of "Kiborg - Our Enemy" into the social network "VKontakte"; posting a photo of own garden from times of German occupation with a flag with Nazi symbolics; posting a photo of Putin and the swastika as a background and others. [More](#)

## **Russia banned VPN and TOR - 2017-07-21**

On Friday, July 21 the state Duma adopted a number of important laws with

a third sitting. Messengers will be blocked in case of refusal to identify the users by phone numbers. Also the proxy and VPN services will be required to restrict access to banned sites in Russia. However, in fact, the VPN services themselves, as well as the anonymous Tor network, might be banned. The law obliges owners of special programs and applications to restrict an access to the sites banned in Russia. The wording of the document is maximally blurred, so that all the proxy and VPN services, special browser extensions, and anonymous Tor network fall under this category. [More](#)

## **Russia blocked Georgian media source Sova.News - 2017-09-08**

The Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media in Russia blocked analytical media source Sova.News founded in Georgia. According to Sova.News the basis for the blocking was an article prepared on August 22, 2016 under the headline: "Military Minister of Islamic State Tarkhan Batirashvili Left a Will to Maidahs". The regulatory body blacklisted Sova.News based on the decision of the General Prosecutor's Office of Russia. The decision itself is based on the Law on Information, Information Technology and Information Protection in Russia. According to Sova.News, Russian legislation obliges mass media sources that each time when the terrorist group Islamic State is mentioned in the news it should be followed by the reference that the mentioned organization is prohibited in Russia. In the article prepared about Tarkhan batirashvili it was not mentioned.

"It is not clear for us why exactly this article became a reason for blocking, because in other articles of ours where the Islamic State was mentioned, no farther descriptions have been made either". [More](#)