

The Report of the State Security Service of Georgia
01.01.2017-31.12.2017



Tbilisi

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Ensuring national security and forming a safe environment for a peaceful coexistence of society is the main priority of the State Security Service of Georgia.

Due to the rapid changes in security environment worldwide, international terrorism and radicalization, as foreign intelligence services become more active and modern technologies develop the impact of international events increases on the internal security of the country.

Currently, the challenges Georgia faces, are linked to the threats arising from the occupied territories by the Russian Federation, international terrorism, the activities of foreign intelligence services, corruption and malfeasance, the possible proliferation of weapons and materials of mass destruction and etc.

The Service operates based on Georgia's constitutional order, sovereignty, territorial integrity, military and economic potential, internal and foreign security objectives.

In its activities, the State Security Service is guided by the principles of legality, protection and respect of fundamental rights and freedoms, the combination of open and covert forms of activities, proportionality and political neutrality.

The activities of the SSSG are focused on identification, prevention and deterrence of potential threats, as well as within its competence to carry out relevant measures established by the law, in order to fully protect the State's national interests as well as the safety of each citizen.

During the reporting period, the Service paid a significant attention to the development of institutional capacities, improvement of operational and analytical activities, effective management of human resources, modernization of material-technical base, intra-agency and interagency coordination and deepening of international cooperation.

Occupied Territories

The main threats to Georgia are the occupation of the territories of Georgia and the presence of the Russian armed forces in the occupied regions. The ongoing unofficial annexation process of occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region by the Russian Federation, increasing militarization, deliberate isolation of the occupied territories, illegal detentions and ethnic discrimination of the Georgian population remain as the main challenges for the State Security Service of Georgia.

The 22nd February incident caused by the Russian Federation in occupied Tskhinvali region followed by the death of Mr. **Archil Tatunashvili** and detention of two citizens of Georgia have once again revealed how difficult situation is on the occupied territories. The State Security Service will use all leverages at its disposal to establish the truth and bring all the persons responsible for the death of Mr. **Tatunashvili** to justice.

The processes developed in the occupied territories of Georgia show that Russia is gradually implementing unofficial annexation policy of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region. Clear examples of this process are the steps taken for practical implementation of the so called treaties on alliance signed by Russia with de facto Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region. In this regard, the establishment of joint “Information-Coordination Center” of the Ministries of Internal Affairs of Russia and de facto Abkhazia in 2017, opening of the so-called Specialized Custom Point under the Russian Federal Customs Service on 1st of November 2017, in Sokhumi and the incorporation of de facto Tskhinvali Armed Forces into the Russian Armed Forces are notably. As a result of the illegal “referendum” held in occupied Tskhinvali region on 9th of April 2017, the name of the “republic” has been changed and it is now called – “Republic of South Ossetia-State Alania” like one of the federal subjects of the Russian Federation (“Republic of North Ossetia-Alania”). The up mentioned process aims to strengthen the integration of Tskhinvali region with Russia and to fully eliminate Tskhinvali region from the statehood of Georgia.

The situation in occupied regions indicates that at the institutional level Russia is gradually abolishing so called sovereignties of de facto Sokhumi and Tskhinvali. It is obvious that strategic goal of official Moscow is to establish effective and full control over so called agencies and functions (so-called border protection, customs service, functioning of “law-enforcement” and “defense” agencies) of de facto authorities.

High degree of financial dependence of the occupied territories on Russian central budget should be analyzed in the context of annexation policy. According to the data, during the reporting period, the share of financial assistance received from the Russian Federation in the de facto budgets were approximately 48% (USD 88 million) in Abkhazia and approximately 90% (USD 121 million) in Tskhinvali Region.

The situation on the occupied territories provides fertile ground for illegal financial operations. On this point, recently increased activities of de facto leaders of Tskhinvali region in Ukraine, in particular, cooperation with the breakaway Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics should be admitted. In this regard, representatives of the Russian banking sector operating in Tskhinvali region are noteworthy as, according to information, they are most probably involved in the above mentioned illegal financial operations.

The Russian military contingent mobilized in large numbers in occupied territories, increasing militarization process and intense military drills on the ground are threats of such a scale that threatening not only Georgia, but entire South Caucasian region. The subdivisions of the 7th and 4th military bases of the Russian Southern Military District illegally deployed in occupied territories conducted more than 100 different types of military exercises in 2017.

Russian occupational forces and de facto authorities openly conduct deliberate discrimination of ethnic Georgians living in occupied territories by restrictions on free movement and access to education in the native language, by detentions for so-called illegal border crossing reasons and compelling to pay increased so called fines.

The illegal process of "Borderization" along the occupation line led by the representatives of the Russian Federal Security Service remains as challenge. The reporting period has clearly shown that the process is well coordinated with de facto authorities and aims to involve the Government of Georgia in the process of „delimitation“ and „demarcation“ of the so called borders.

According to the information of the State Security Service of Georgia, in 2017 towards occupied Tskhinvali region 126 illegal detentions by the Russian occupational forces for so-called illegal border crossing reasons were registered, and 52 illegal detentions - towards occupied Abkhazia.¹

In 2017 the closure of two additional so-called crossing checkpoints ("Khurcha-Nabakevi" and "Orsantia-Otobaia") aimed at restricting the freedom of movement of local population from occupied Gali district to the territory controlled by the central Government of Georgia and interactions between local communities.²

Restriction on granting "residence permits" to ethnic Georgians residing on occupied territories, partial prohibition of education on mother tongue in Georgian schools located in occupied Gali district and Tskhinvali region, also deliberate demolishment of houses in Tskhinvali region owned by the Georgian IDPs (villages: Eredvi, Berula, Argvitsi and Phrici) in 2017 – should be considered as the gross violation of the fundamental human rights and continuation of discriminatory policy.

¹ The Margin of error in detentions for so-called illegal border crossing reasons registered by the central Government of Georgia towards Tskhinvali region is approximately 5%, as towards occupied Abkhazia the illegal detentions identified by the central Government of Georgia is about 10-15% of the total numbers.

² In April 2016 two so called crossing checkpoints ("Muzhava-Lekukhona" and "Tagiloni- Shamgona") out of six "crossing checkpoints" existing along the occupation line were abolished.

Severe criminal situation and the absence of the international monitoring missions in occupied Abkhazia remains as one of the most significant challenges on the ground.

The State Security Service of Georgia was constantly monitoring the situation on the ground, regularly cooperating and providing information to the State Agencies of Georgia as well as to the International Partners in order to identify the threats coming from the occupied territories, to dispel the threats and to hinder the annexation processes coming from the Russian Federation.

The State Security Service of Georgia, in cooperation with other responsible agencies, was coordinating security measures on the ground and using all the available means in order to protect human rights and guarantee the security of civilians along the occupation line.

The State Security Service is actively involved in the Geneva International Discussion Format (four rounds of discussions were held in 2017 – 39th, 40th, 41th and 42nd). The Special representative of the State Security Service of Georgia delivers the report regarding the security challenges in the occupied regions as well as in the adjacent areas of the occupation line in order to objectively provide information in line with the ongoing situation on the ground to the International mediators, co-chairs and other participants at the First Working Group of the GID, where the security issues are discussed.

The State Security Service of Georgia is the leading agency from the central Government of Georgia at the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism Format (IPRM), where actively presents and discusses cases and incidents that are problematic for the occupied regions of Georgia. Including, incidents such as illegal detentions for so called illegal border crossing reasons, “the process of Borderization”, restrictions on freedom of movement, illegal military drills and etc.

During the reporting period, 10 IPRM meetings were held in occupied Gali district, while 11 IPRM meetings took place toward occupied Tskhinvali region (in village Ergneti). During the meetings the case of brutally murdered **Mr. Giga Otkhзорia** and the case of **Mr. David Basharuli** who died in uncertain circumstances in the occupied Tskhinvali region were constantly discussed.

As the matter of constant negotiation and active involvement of the SSSG at the IPRM meetings, two illegally detained persons **Mr. Giorgi Giunashvili** and **Mr. Giorgi Lukava** were released. Both had been “sentenced” for 20 years of “imprisonment”.

During the reporting period, the “Hot Line” mechanism, established under the GID and IPRM formats, still remained as a 24/7 communication tool in order to regulate and prevent potential as well as registered incidents. Overall, in 2017 the “Hot Line” was activated 1645 times.

The State Security Service pays special attention to the cooperation with the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia, which is the only International Observing Mission in Georgia. Despite the fact that the EUMM is restricted in the implementation of its full mandate

within the occupied territories by the Russian occupation Forces, it (together with the relevant units of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia and the State Security Service of Georgia) remains as one of the main contributors in maintaining the peace and stability on the ground.

The State Security Service of Georgia attaches great importance to the cooperation with the representatives of the United Nations, the OSCE and the CoE in the process of conflict resolution. The Security Service is cooperating with the International Criminal Court (ICC) that is investigating crimes of August 2008 war.

The State Security Service is participating in so called triparty meetings format organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Project aims to search for missing persons during 90s conflicts and during August 2008 war.

In order to inform the international community appropriately, during the reporting period, the State Security Service, within its mandate, was providing with the information regarding the situation along the occupation line and on occupied territories to the high governmental representatives of the partner countries, the international organizations and media. In 2017 the Service organized 45 visits of high officials and media representatives to the occupation line.

Counterintelligence Activities

During the reporting period, the SSSG conducted counterintelligence activities within the scope of its competence defined by the law and revealed areas of interest of foreign countries' intelligence services, undertook countermeasures, provided respective agencies and persons with preceding information regarding existing threats, protected state secrets and the state security regime, as well as provided counterintelligence to the Armed Forces.

Foreign intelligence agencies adopt various clandestine activities (diplomatic, cultural, humanitarian, religious, commercial and etc.), constantly try to penetrate state agencies and state security authorities, to obtain desired/classified information in order to create/expand their spy network. Their goal is to influence Georgia's political, social, military and economic developments.

As a response to those challenges, during the reporting period, the SSSG has been detecting and preventing intelligence activities of the foreign intelligence services operating on the territory of Georgia, their plans, forces and means, the forms and methods of their activities, individuals being in contact with them and their connections, also actions directed against the interests of state.

Analysis of information, obtained as a result of counterintelligence activities, discloses foreign intelligence services' major objectives in Georgia. Their key interests are: to encourage anti-Western sentiments in Georgian society; to damage Georgia's as reliable partner's image on international level; to stimulate distrust, uncertainty, hopelessness and nihilism in society; to create destabilizing

base on ethnic and religious grounds, with the aim to cultivate disintegration processes throughout the country and to promote the polarization of Georgian society.

To fulfil their tasks, the intelligence services of various countries still actively use the “hybrid war” tactic. Trying to achieve the desired goal through that tactic, they use the propagandist media campaign and the disinformation components, cyber operations and certain cyberattacks, destructive political groups and socio-populist unions.

Under the “hybrid war” the foreign intelligence services apply to energy and economic resources as an influence tool, they promote organized crime, corruption and biased NGOs through covert special measures to meet the anticipated purpose.

Throughout the reporting period, the special attention was paid to activities of those foreign intelligence services, which are actively engaged in “hybrid warfare” against Georgia. The tactics they use are distinguished by their diversity and are directed against Georgia’s national interests, democratic values, institutions and the rule of law.

As a result of counterintelligence measures undertaken, the efforts of foreign intelligence services operating on the territory of Georgia were exposed, aimed to strengthen and expand political influence infrastructure in the country: so called lobby groups, political unions, public organizations, foundations, to manipulate with economic and energy leverage.

Foreign intelligence services attempt to establish expert scientific-research centers and agencies, to affect public opinion and disseminate disinformation. Within those communities, they develop tangible topics and deliver them to the public in their own interests.

During the reporting period, the complex measures envisaged by law have been conducted to reveal the forces involved in activities against Georgia and their financing sources; also to identify the persons whose actions contained signs of possible connections with foreign intelligence services.

The individuals have been identified in Georgia and in other countries, who endorse the idea to endanger country’s security and territorial integrity. In order to neutralize the threats arising from them, relevant procedures have been taken.

The foreign countries’ intelligence services put a special effort into obtaining information that belongs to state secrets. They try by their means to create channels of receiving information in state agencies, commercial, scientific, educational institutions and strategic objects.

With the aim to protect the state secrets, the active work has been done to thwart and detect operative and technical infiltration of foreign countries’ intelligence services, to prevent threats and leakage of information, to increase security measures and to raise the awareness of personnel.

In abovementioned direction, 182 organizations and institutions have been granted security clearance to state secrets (permission form №4), 10 organizations and institutions have been denied to grant access to that information, taking into consideration the factual circumstances, low level of reliability and trustworthiness.

With the aim to grant security clearance to state agency/legal entity, 184 organizations were subject to commission scrutiny in the protection of secret regime and conducting secret document processing.

The vetting procedures towards approximately 7000 persons desiring individual security clearance have been carried out. The expediency of access to NATO classified information was defined regarding up to 900 individuals; More than 500 individuals from various organizations and institutions have been provided with methodological organizational assistance in the fields of secret document processing and secret regime protection.

Through the reporting period, The Counterintelligence Department has launched investigation on 11 criminal cases. 5 persons have been convicted.

The SSSG pays particular attention to the protection of objects containing the high risk for the state security and their unimpeded functioning. In the process of counterintelligence activities, the complete inspection and examination has been conducted on the subjects containing the high risk for the state security as approved according to the law “on State Security Service of Georgia”.

Taking into account the threats, the scientific-research institutes and certain organizations, which operate in Georgia and work on secret projects, industrial and military materials’ production, purchase, storage, realization, utilization, transportation and import-export, are subject to operative control.

As migration flows are increasing, migration channels are under permanent monitoring. The growing tendency of foreigners willing to stay in Georgia with various statuses has been observed. They, either with help of compatriots or citizens of Georgia, manage to prepare the relevant documents and on the pretext of investing money request the permanent investment residence permit and work residence permit, and on the basis of marriages with citizens of Georgia – the permanent residence permit.

During the monitoring of migration processes, the increased number of foreign citizens with student status has been identified. Some of them try to settle in Georgia.

Throughout the reporting period, 36 citizens of Georgia, their registered companies and audit firms have been revealed, which prepare recommendations, organize possibly fake marriages, register companies, issue fictive labor contracts, in order to acquire residence permits for foreign citizens.

Currently, the work on exposing links of individuals who assist foreign citizens and on identifying possible facts of violations in their actions is undergoing.

The counterintelligence activities have been intensively undertaken, to examine persons temporarily or permanently residing in Georgia, possessing permanent residence or dual citizenship, who can possibly be connected to foreign intelligence services.

As a consequence of scrutinizing the respective materials and operative measures carried out, certain categories have been identified, who were denied granting residence permit in Georgia. More than 3500 cases of presenting fake documentation have been revealed.

The SSSG monitored in 24-hour regime the movement of foreign countries' citizens at the border crossing points in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi international airports, in order to reveal the probable operatively considerable persons and their connections.

Combating Terrorism

Fight against terrorism is one of the main challenges for the State Security Service of Georgia (SSSG). During the reporting period the SSSG was working actively to detect constantly changing threats of international terrorism and to improve ways of responding to them. Throughout 2017 the terrorist threats in our region and in other countries across the world have not been decreased. In the same period some activities of the members of international terrorist organization and their supporters have been detected in Georgia as well.

In 2017, the terrorist organization "Islamic State" changed its operational strategy that led to new arising challenges for the modern world. For the time being, the "Islamic State" poses threats to the civilized world in different directions. The "Islamic State" fighters from Syria and Iraq may return to their home countries including the western countries and create local terrorist cells therein. Because of geographical proximity and common ideologies of the conflicts that are taking place in the Middle East, terrorist fighters might regroup in other conflict regions. Supposedly, the "Islamic State" will strengthen its ideological efforts and by the use of modern technologies, including social media, the terrorist organization will attempt to radicalize and recruit more individuals. Unlike recent years when the "Islamic State" carried out massive military operations, the trend in 2017 has shown that terrorist attacks became a major tool of the terrorist organization.

In the reporting period, unlike the "Islamic State", "Al-Qaeda" and "Taliban" have not experienced heavy losses. Throughout the last year, "Al-Qaeda's" Syrian affiliate was trying to strengthen by recruiting fighters from the ranks of weakened "Islamic State". In Afghanistan and Pakistan, confrontation between the "Islamic State" local affiliates and "Taliban" took place. The latter has actively carried out terrorist attacks, some of them against international military missions.

In 2017, Georgia faced some significant and to some extent critical challenges. The facts of attempts of financing terrorism, supporting extremist and terrorist ideas and radicalizing certain citizens of Georgia took place.

As part of the global trend, the amount of “Islamic State” supporters and their influences have been reduced in Georgia. The youth refuse to become members of groups supporting “Islamic State” ideology and influential leaders once supporting the organization leave their ranks. Apart from the ideological crisis the “Islamic State” faces financial problems which are caused by significant restrictions on free travel of its fighters and on fundraising activities of the terrorist organization. It is noteworthy, that like in other countries, in Georgia the “Islamic State” might have certain supporters who will act according to the orders of the terrorist organization, if needed.

On November 21-22 2017, the SSSG conducted a counterterrorism operation against the international terrorist Ahmed Chatayev and his well-organized terrorist group. According to the information, the aim of the group was to carry out terrorist attacks in Georgia. After the operative-searching and investigative activities conducted by the SSSG the group was tracked down and preventive measures were carried out against its members. While confronting Ahmed Chatayev and his so called security members, an officer of the SSSG Ivane Golashvili died and 4 law-enforcement officers were injured. The casualties among civilians were prevented.

Later, other suspects linked to Chatayev’s terrorist group were also identified. On December 26, in Tbilisi and Akhmeta Municipality, special operations were conducted in order to detain suspects and five persons were arrested. One of them died later as a result of injuries received during the special operation.

The international practice has shown that detection and suppression of terrorist attacks on preparation stage while international terrorists and their local supporters organize them are related to significant difficulties.

Foreign nationals residing in Georgia who might be supporting terrorist organizations pose threat to the country. In most cases, those civilians are not linked to Georgia and the Georgian society, neither historically and culturally, nor ethnically and religiously that makes it easier for terrorist organizations to engage them in extremist activities.

In the reporting period a group of foreign students residing in Georgia has been identified, the members of this group were actively disseminating radical callings via social media. The SSSG has carried out the counter measures according to the law against this group of persons.

For the time being, about 30 citizens of Georgia are fighting in the ranks of various terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq. Throughout 2017, none of them has returned in Georgia. The SSSG pays considerable attention to the possible return of the citizens of Georgia fighting in the ranks of terrorist organizations and in case such fact takes place, the SSSG will act according to the law.

In the reporting period, active measures have been carried out to detect terrorism and extremism funding cases. Some terrorism related suspects were revealed who tried to make bank transactions in Georgia.

The threats coming from the Russian occupied regions represent significant counterterrorism challenge for Georgia. The situation in the occupied Tskhinvali and Abkhazia which is not controlled by the central Government of Georgia makes it possible for the special services of the Russian Federation to initiate or stage terrorist activities for its own operational, military and political intentions.

In the reporting period, the Counterterrorism Center of the SSSG has launched the investigation on 6 criminal cases. As a result of operative activities and in cooperation with international partners, several thousand foreign nationals have been identified, who might be linked to terrorism and may attempt to use Georgia as a transit. Appropriate measures envisaged by the law were carried out against those nationals.

In order to enhance counterterrorism capabilities, the SSSG was actively cooperating with its international partners. Operative and analytical information was exchanged.

In the reporting period, the active measures to enhance capabilities of response to terrorist threats were carried out, the security measures of high risk public places were assessed, and the process of official documentation of state strategic objects and risk assessment were also ongoing. The units responsible for counterterrorism activities were trained/retrained in the fields of tactical activities, demining, detection and suppression of means of mass destruction.

Fight against Corruption

The fight against corruption/corruption prevention in the state and public institutions is one of the main priorities of the State Security Service. Corruption in public agencies hinders the prospect of development of the state, also promotes the loss of confidence towards the state institutions among citizens, and impedes the country's democratic development and economic progress.

Additionally, public officials engaged in corruption, may be objects of interests of various criminal groups and/or foreign intelligence services. Considering the abovementioned, the State Security Service pays a special attention to fight against corruption and malfeasance, to carry out measures for revealing and preventing the facts of conflict of interest and signs of corruption in public services.

During the reporting period, the Service prepared the reports of first and second halves of 2017, on fulfillment of the Action Plan (for 2017-2018) of the National Anticorruption Strategy.

Through the reporting period, as a result of operative-searching and investigative measures undertaken by the SSSG, number of officials has been arrested. Among them, Tbilisi Municipality Isani District Majoritarian Member was arrested on the fact of bribe taking by extortion, the Chair of Ozurgeti Municipal Assembly – on the fact of bribe taking in especially large quantities, the First Deputy Mayor of Tianeti - on the fact assisting fraud by using the official position and committed by more than one persons with a prior agreement in large quantities, the Head of Education, Culture, Sport, Youth Affairs and Social Protection Service of Oni Municipality City Hall – on the fact of bribe taking.

Furthermore, the Senior Inspector of Georgia-Azerbaijan border crossing point of the Patrol Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was detained on the fact of bribe taking.

On March 7, 2017 as a consequence of operative-searching and investigative activities, the Chairman of Ozurgeti Municipality Assembly was arrested on the fact of bribe taking in especially large quantities (50 000 GEL).

On April 5, 2017, on the fact of demanding and taking bribe in especially large amounts, the Chief Specialist of Samgori District Municipality, who took 7500 USD in advance from the whole demanded 20 000 USD, was arrested.

On December 1st, 2017, on the fact demanding and taking bribe in especially large amounts, the Senior Specialist of Architectural and Supervision Service of Zugdidi Municipality City Hall, who took a bribe in amount of 10 000 USD in advance from the whole requested sum of 20 000 USD, was arrested.

On December 22, 2017 representatives and referees of the international category of the basketball club “Sokhumi” were arrested on the fact of commercial bribery committed by a group, who had been organizing the so called match-fixing. Totally, the bribe amount was 36 000 GEL.

From January 1st - December 31th, 2017 the Anticorruption Agency of the SSSG launched an investigation on 62 criminal cases, among them, bribe taking – 37, bribe giving – 1, fraud – 6, commercial bribery – 3, abuse of official powers – 4, misappropriation or embezzlement – 2, neglect of an official duty – 1 and on other particular crimes. During the reporting period, 61 persons have been convicted in 41 criminal cases.

The SSSG intensively cooperates with international partners in order to enhance partnership in the field of fight against corruption, to get acquainted with modern challenges and approaches, as well as to share the best international practices in corruption prevention and suppression. The employees of the SSSG actively participated in local and international conferences, trainings, seminars and workshops.

Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Security, Fight Against the Proliferation of the Materials and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

With the latest events in the world and a number of certain countries continuing to modernize their WMD capabilities, it is vital for international community to keep close partnerships in nuclear nonproliferation and CBRN security overall.

Prevention and response to the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats is one of the main elements of the state security. Georgia is among the leaders in the East Europe for its achievements in CBRN threat reduction.

In the reporting period, the State Security Service, as a Chair agency of the Interagency Coordinating Council of Georgia for Combating CBRN Threats, continued to actively facilitate proper implementation of the CBRN National Action Plan (NAP) and made efforts towards intensifying the coordination at the national, regional and international levels.

On 5 July 2017, the SSSG organized an annual meeting of the CBRN Interagency Coordinating Council, where the member agencies presented and discussed NAP progress reports. In addition, several meetings of the working groups formed within the Council were conducted throughout a year to address ongoing issues.

Furthermore, on the initiative of the State Security Service, on 3 November 2017, a Donor Coordination Meeting on CBRN Safety and Security was held in Tbilisi, where the respective agencies of Georgia together with the foreign partners and donor organizations discussed the issues related to the national needs in the field of CBRN risk mitigation and current and future collaborations. Once again, international partners highlighted Georgia's significant role on the international arena and its efforts for the benefit of peace and security in the region.

The SSSG successfully continues to fight against illegal trafficking of nuclear and radioactive substances and materials. As a result of operative-searching and investigative activities, four persons were detained for illegal handling of radioactive substance. The factory-made smoke detector containing "Americium-241" source was seized as material evidence.

Besides, the State Security Service successfully continued to ensure technical and software functioning of radioactive control systems at the state borders. In 2017, the SSSG launched the updated version of the "National Communication System" that supported improved operational control, technical monitoring and data processing.

Over the last year, a number of table-top and field exercises were conducted in order to support capacity building process of Georgia's law enforcement and other relevant agencies to prevent and

respond to the CBRN incidents and accidents, strengthen intra- and interagency coordination and ensure effective chain of command for joint operations.

At the same time, Georgia was actively involved in international and global instruments such as “G7 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction” and “Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism”. With the aim to share the expertise of the SSSG, in 2018, Georgia will host a large-scale exercise on issues related to the suppression of smuggling of nuclear materials -“Lionshield” which will engage up to ten East European countries.

The State Security Service continues a close cooperation over the CBRN threat reduction issues with relevant agencies of the United States, Great Britain, European Union member countries, the EU Delegation to Georgia, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. Besides, the SSSG is the main partner in Georgia for the “European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative”.

Protection of Personal Data, Refining Legislative Basis, Access to the Public Information

In ensuring the state security, the Service pays a special attention to the personal data protection component. In order to advance the personal data protection mechanism, on March 27, 2017 on the basis of legislative changes, LEPL - Operative-Technical Agency of Georgia was established within the SSSG.

The Agency has an appropriate independence level and does not possess the investigative functions. As an independent body without professional interests, it guarantees conducting covert investigative activities and electronic surveillance measures when addressed by the relevant investigative, intelligence and counterintelligence agencies equipped with the appeal in line with respective legislative procedures and norms.

According to the new legislative regulations, the Personal Data Protection Inspector, the Parliament, the Prime Minister, the Court and financial-budget oversight mechanisms apply to the activities of the Agency. The Agency presents an annual statistical and general report of performed activities to the Prime Minister of Georgia and the Trust Group of the Parliament. The Trust Group is authorized to make a decision about assessing the activities of the Agency and inspect it no more than twice a year. The Trust Group elaborates recommendations to the Agency and in case of revealing signs of crime while inspecting, it is obligated to address the investigative body. In December 2017, the Agency presented its first report to the Prime Minister and the Trust Group.

In the reporting period, the Personal Data Protection Inspector has inspected the Agency three times. Through the inspection, relevant information has been requested from the Agency. The personnel of the Information-Technological Division of the Inspector's Office have examined the logging data of the technical system, while particular employees of the Agency made relevant explanations.

The SSSG pays significant attention to advance the legislative basis. Aiming at the proper functioning of the Service, the process of elaborating and refining of legislative acts has actively taken place during 2017. In the reporting period, 220 new legal acts have been elaborated and adopted. The Service has also expressed its position on 253 draft legal acts elaborated by the other state agencies.

The SSSG is notably active in terms of relation with the common courts. In the reporting period, on the basis of appropriate court ruling, the Service unimpededly delivered necessary secret or open information/evidences for the cases to the common courts. In 2017, up to 500 information/evidence have been sent to the common courts. Herewith, the SSSG had participated in 26 court cases.

According to the legislation of Georgia, the SSSG, within its competence, ensured the issuance of public information. From January 1st to December 31st 2017, the Service received 84 applications on request of the public information, among them 69 applications have been satisfied, 3 – partially satisfied, 3 - have been sent for the further response and 9 applications have not been satisfied.

In the reporting period, 416 applications from citizens and different agencies/organizations have been responded. Moreover, the Service has systematically reacted to the information obtained via its hotline ("123").

Human Resources and Material-Technical Base

High professional human resources and modern material-technical base are the significant factors for the successful activities of the SSSG. For this reason, the SSSG pays a huge attention to the human resources policy, correct and effective management issues. The qualified and educated personnel in different fields, who undertake their professional duties faithfully and with high sense of responsibility, immensely contribute to ensuring the state security. Operatives, analysts, investigators, open and covert personnel, middle and high-level managers are making vast effort daily, to protect the state security.

One of the priorities for the SSSG is to acquire the best personnel, to motivate and assist them in professional career development, as well as to maintain the qualified staff. The job applicants have equal chances despite their national, ethnic, religious or gender affiliation. Herewith, the employees are guaranteed with the appropriate work conditions and proper social packages.

As of December 31st 2017, the Service has 3339 employees, including 423 women (12,6%), conscripts – 419, contracted employees (supernumerary) – 214.

In the reporting period, violation of ethics and disciplinary rules and inadequate fulfilment of duties, facts of unlawful activities have been revealed and appropriate measures have been conducted. 283 office inspections have been handled and 202 disciplinary measures have been taken towards the SSSG employees (including, firing – 8, demotion – 3, strict reprimand – 13, reprimand – 26, remark – 14, etc.).

The SSSG constantly cares for increasing professional levels of its employees, by ensuring their training according to the modern standards and enhancing their qualifications. Currently, the Service has all necessary conditions for its personnel to develop their professional skills and abilities and to mitigate the challenges facing the country more efficiently.

In order to train and enhance the qualification level, in 2017, the employees of the SSSG have regularly participated in special training programs and exercises, including: special training course for operative personnel, fire-arms and special means application program, training for Anticorruption Agency staff, training for admission to the SSSG and special program for training of conscripts.

Additionally, in 2017, different antiterrorist and counterterrorist trainings as well as sniper training and retraining programs have been conducted at the tactical training base of the SSSG Special Operations Department.

The SSSG employees are actively involved in the training courses conducted with support of the partner countries.

During 2017, representatives of the different structural entities of the SSSG participated in professional capacity building activities organized by the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) program of the US embassy.

The US Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR), together with the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU), organized two relevant study events in Georgia: operative planning course (July, 2017) and special operative forces integration course (September, 2017), where the representatives of the SSSG and the Ministry of Defense took part.

In order to effectively perform the tasks of the SSSG, together with the highly qualified personnel, it is necessary to acquire appropriate material-technical base and continually update it. In the reporting period, field training base infrastructure had been established, where the employees of the special divisions undertake tactical exercises and trainings. Moreover, by 2019, a new administrative building of LEPL Operative-Technical Agency of Georgia will be finished, to enhance its independence quality and to ensure its unimpeded functioning.

The Service will further continue improving its infrastructure and refining material-technical base in accordance with the modern standards.

Within the 2017 budget, the Economic Department of the Service has concluded 459 agreements, with total value of 24 111 447 GEL. In the reporting period, 18 contracts with total value of 1 690 785,37 GEL, have been signed with constructing companies for different construction-repair activities.

In the scope of 2017 budget, 305 tenders have been announced, while 247 contracts had been signed with the contenders of the tenders. The savings as a result of electronic tenders and simplified electronic tenders according to signed contracts, amounted 1 233 003 GEL.

Analytical Activity

Attaining accurate information on actual processes, assessment of situation, analysis of threats and precise forecasting of events has a superior importance in the process of ensuring the state security. A result-oriented analytical work provides an opportunity to develop an adequate action strategy and defines the efficiency of the Service.

The Information-Analytical Department of the SSSG, under the enhanced coordination within the agency, provides systematization and processing of information gathered from the open and secret sources, fact assessment, and analysis of the whole picture of state security, timely delivery of the information and the relevant documentations on the national security issues to the leadership.

Caring for analysts' professional development and personnel training is an irreversible process, which gives a solid basis for the successful work of the SSSG in the short and long-term perspective. The analysts regularly attend training courses and are involved in various training programs with the support of international partners. The abilities of the information-analytical team are even more broadened by introducing with the specifications of analytical work in the European and American security sectors and by sharing the foreign experience. At the same time, a great attention is devoted to use the analytical resources beyond the Service through close cooperation with the partners.

International and Interagency Cooperation

Enhancement of the interagency and international cooperation is crucial in the process of ensuring state security. Contributing to the formation of the world security architecture represents the long-term objective of the State Security Service of Georgia, achievable through comprehensive interagency and close international cooperation.

Throughout the reporting cycle, the Service has had close cooperation with state authorities, participated in the scope of events of the various interagency councils, commissions, and working

groups. The experts of the Service are actively involved in the activities of the working group established to elaborate AML/TF risk assessment document. The Service appointed permanent representative/expert to Joint Maritime Operations Center, who is involved in the Center's activities within his competence. The representatives of the Service have participated in joint interagency exercises and trainings conducted in defense and security fields.

The State Security Service of Georgia attaches particular importance to deepening cooperation with strategic partners, friendly countries, and international organizations. The Service has an active collaboration with international partners within the scope of bilateral and multilateral formats.

Throughout the period of January 1st, 2017, until December 31st, 2017, through active cooperation with international partners, significant steps have been taken regarding strengthening legal framework in law enforcement and security spheres. By the initiative of the State Security Service of Georgia 4 international agreements have been signed during the year, including, the Agreement between the Government of Georgia and the Government of the United States of America for the Exchange of Terrorist Screening Information.

The Service has processed/responded to 106 international draft agreements initiated in various fields. Legal analysis has been carried out in connection with the mentioned drafts reflecting the vision and the course of activities of the Service, including the drafts on the Exchange and Mutual Protection of Classified Information/Cooperation in Law Enforcement area, on migration issues, defense matters, and cooperation within the scope of international organizations and etc.

The State Security Service of Georgia has active cooperation with security attaches and the representatives of diplomatic missions of various countries accredited in Georgia. Information is exchanged, and multiple training courses and seminars are being organized by the mentioned countries through effective cooperation mechanisms on a systematic basis.

The State Security Service attaches particular significance to partnership relations and cooperation with the United States of America. The Service has an active collaboration with the US Embassy to Georgia across the various formats and with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on security and counterterrorism issues. Within the scope of bilateral cooperation, support of the FBI, the Department of State, the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Bureau, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) of the Department of Defense, The Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS), Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), as well as of other programs in terms of enhancing professional capacity of the personnel is especially noteworthy.

The representatives of the Service have actively participated in the US-Georgia Strategic Partnership Commission's high-level Working Group on Defense and Security which took place in the US.

Within its competence, the State Security Service has participated in the events conducted in the scope of the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy and has been

engaged in the activities envisaged by the Visa Liberalization Action Plan. The Service within its competence participated in the implementation of the national action plan and relevant documents of EU Association Agreement and Association Agenda, including elaboration process of the revised draft of EU Association Agenda. The representatives of the Service took the active part in the 1st meeting of the EU-Georgia Strategic Dialogue.

Moreover, significant steps have been taken in terms of strengthening cooperation between Georgia and EUROPOL in the field of security and counterterrorism. In the field of fight against crime the Agreement on Operational and Strategic Cooperation between Georgia and the European Police Office was concluded.

The State Security Service of Georgia is engaged in multilateral cooperation formats in the security field. During the reporting period, the representatives of the Service have participated in the activities conducted within the scope of Global Coalition against Daesh. INTERPOL capacities are actively employed in terms of information exchange and sharing experiences.

The Service is engaged in 24/7 cooperation network of national contact points, established by Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism. Within the scopes of the Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER), the experts of the Service have participated in the process of elaboration of the international documents in the field of fight against terrorism. The Service was involved in the activities organized by the OSCE on the issues of the fight against terrorism.

The Service has actively participated in Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP) implementation process and in the activities carried out within the scope of Annual National Program (ANP).

As regards the cooperation with the UN, during the reporting period, UNSC resolutions, documents adopted by the Secretary-General as well as other relevant documents on the issues within the competence of the Service have been examined/analyzed on a regular basis.