



Monitoring Results for Shelters of Human Trade (Trafficking) and Domestic Violence Victims



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Introduction

The present document constitutes the special report of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia on the monitoring results of a study of the existing situation in shelters for victims of domestic violence and human trade (trafficking) victims.

In 2016, the Gender Equality Department of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia, with the support of UN Women, carried out a monitoring of all state shelters for domestic violence and human trade (trafficking) victims located in Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi, Gori and Signaghi.

The monitoring aimed to assess the situation in the shelters, as well as their compliance with human rights guarantees provided by international standards.¹ The monitoring carried out by the Public Defender was unscheduled, without prior agreement from the shelter's administrations.

Within the framework of the monitoring, the physical environment, the situation in terms of food supply and the quality of service provision were examined in the shelter. The needs of beneficiaries and the rights and responsibilities of personnel was also studied. Special attention was paid to the assessment of the conditions of mothers and children, and both personnel and beneficiaries were interviewed.

Research Methodology

According to Article 18 of the Organic Law of Georgia on the "Public Defender of Georgia,"² when conducting an investigation, the Public Defender of Georgia may freely enter any state or local self-government body, enterprise, organisation or institution including, military units, prisons and confinement facilities, and other places of detention and restriction of liberty. Consequently, the employees of the Public Defender's Office, based on this special mandate, carried out a monitoring of shelters for victims of domestic violence.

During the monitoring, the Gender Equality Department of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia was guided by the following documents:

- Guiding Principles on the Monitoring of Shelters for Victims of Domestic Violence;³
- Regulations of the Kutaisi/Gori/Tbilisi and Signaghi shelters of the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking;⁴

¹ Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, available at: <http://www.supremecourt.ge/files/upload-file/pdf/aqtebi9.pdf>

²Organic Law of Georgia on the "Public Defender of Georgia," Edition of 20 January 2017, available at: <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/1/1176.pdf>

³ Guiding Principles on the Monitoring of the Shelters for the Victims of Domestic Violence, the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia, 2014.

- Order N183/n of the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia/ 28 July 2008/ Tbilisi/ on the Development of Necessary Minimum Standards for Arrangement of Shelters of Domestic Violence Victims and Rehabilitation Centers;⁵ and
- Decree N437/ 18 July 2006/ Tbilisi/ of the President of Georgia on Approval of the Statute of the Legal Entity of Public Law - the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking.⁶

The beneficiaries and administrations of the shelters were determined to be the major target groups of the monitoring. Therefore, assessment of the service quality and existing conditions in the shelters was based on an examination of the physical environment and the beneficiaries. Situations of children placed together with parents were also studied during the monitoring and their needs were assessed.

Semi-closed-ended questionnaires were used to interview the beneficiaries of the shelters, which simplified answering of the questions. The closed-ended questions gave the Public Defender the opportunity to obtain voluminous amounts information in a short period of time and reduced the risk of inflicting additional trauma on the victims of violence. However, use of closed-ended questions also limited the content of the answers to some extent. The list of possible answers was given under each question, which helped in the collection of comprehensive responses inasmuch as was possible.

Questionnaire A was intended for individuals who were newly arrived to the shelters (first two weeks) and asked for information about their expectations, first impressions and problems. Afterwards, individuals who had not been placed in a shelter for more than a month were interviewed. This examination revealed the expectations and first impressions of individuals during their initial placement in a shelter and inquired as to what type of services they would like to receive.

Questionnaire B was used to examine those beneficiaries who have been using shelter services for a long time. It included a description of the results of being placed in a shelter and difficulties that the beneficiaries encountered in the shelter, such as conflict with other beneficiaries or incompatibility with rules of the shelter. This questionnaire assessed their experiences, to what extent their expectations were met, and what needs exist following provision of initial aid at the shelters.

⁴ Shelter for the victims of domestic violence of the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, available at: <http://atipfund.gov.ge/geo/list/35/odjakhshi-dzaladobis-mskhverplta-tavshesafari>

⁵ Order N183/n of the Minister of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia/ 28 July 2008/ Tbilisi/ on the Development of Necessary Minimum Standards for Arrangement of the Shelters of Domestic Violence Victims and the Rehabilitation Centers, available at: <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/78928>

⁶ Decree N437/ 18 July 2006/ Tbilisi/ of the President of Georgia on Approval of the the Statute of the Legal Entity of Public Law - the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, available at: <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2246470>

Monitoring was carried out in five state shelters: Kutaisi, Gori, Signaghi, Tbilisi and Batumi. The shelters in Kutaisi, Gori and Signaghi directly provide services to female victims of domestic violence, while the shelters in Tbilisi and Batumi are intended for both victims of domestic violence and trafficking. In order to obtain comprehensive information for this report, additional information was requested from the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking. The shelters for victims of violence constitute subordinate institutions of the above Fund. In order to study existing trends, statistics on admission-outflow for the last two years were requested. All beneficiaries placed in shelters during the time of the monitoring were interviewed (20 adults in total). Therefore, the representativeness of the monitoring results is limited. It should be noted that the information obtained for this research is based on personal experiences of the respondents and may thus be a result of personal interpretation. Additionally, not all respondents wished to provide comprehensive information.

Brief Description of Shelter Services and Key Findings

A shelter is a service centre for the protection, assistance and rehabilitation of victims of domestic violence and human trade (trafficking). Its objective is to offer its beneficiaries an adequate, safe and protected living environment. In addition, a shelter ensures the protection of their rights and legal interests, the protection of the health of the beneficiaries, their psycho-social rehabilitation and re-integration in family and society.

According to General Recommendation N19 of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, victims of domestic violence should be provided with access to services that ensure security and integrity, including shelters, legal assistance and rehabilitation programs. It is also important to ensure access to protective measures including shelters, legal assistance, rehabilitation programs and services for the assistance of victims of gender-based violence or those who are facing threats of such violence.

In addition, according to the 2011 Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, the parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to provide for the setting-up of appropriate, easily accessible shelters in sufficient number so as to provide safe accommodation for and to proactively reach out to victims, especially women and their children.

According to international standards, shelter services should be accessible to victims of gender-based violence, and their specific space needs should be considered.⁷ It is noteworthy that shelters for victims of domestic violence are not gender-segregated in Georgia.

⁷Victim Oriented Approach. UN Women, available at: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/652-survivor-centred->

Shelters for victims of domestic violence provide beneficiaries with the following services: a daily shelter (in the shelter); psychological/social rehabilitation; organizing and receiving of medical services; legal assistance; if necessary, with the services of an interpreter; and other services⁸ that meet international standards⁹ on shelter services. Nevertheless, flaws have been identified in the practical use of these services, which might be preventing the functioning of shelters in conformity with these standards.

Placement of an adult victim of domestic violence (together with their dependants) in a shelter is only possible with the victim's consent, and in case of a minor victim (without a victim of domestic violence, a victim parent or a legal representative), with the application of the body of guardianship and custody. In order to provide shelter services, an agreement on the use of shelter services is signed between the Fund and the victim of domestic violence (hereinafter- agreement) for the duration of 3 months, which is the duration of victim status, except for cases of victims of domestic violence who are under 14 years of age (victims of domestic violence without a parent/legal representative).

Generally, the interviewed beneficiaries positively assessed the work of shelter administration and personnel and feeling safe in shelters. They did not express any complaints in terms of the existing infrastructural environment or nutrition. During the investigation, they noted that they generally feel protected in shelters, that they feel support and care from the administration, that psychological consultations help them, and that they like living in the calm environment provided by the shelter.

It should be noted that the shortcomings identified as a result of interviewing shelter beneficiaries are primarily related to the use of relevant services by victims of domestic violence outside the shelter. Some of the respondents repeatedly noted inadequate responses from police in situations where victims victims, before entering shelters, have to constantly call patrol police and wait in order to get a proper response. According to the victims, the procedures for issuing a restraining order are also problematic as police often refrain from using the existing mechanism and as a result, victims experienced feelings of mistrust and insecurity and often refrain from addressing relevant authorities in cases of repeated violence.

During the survey of the beneficiaries, stereotypical attitudes from society, such as blaming victims or considering domestic violence a “family matter”, were also identified as problematic. The above complicates the prevention of violent cases and promotes their intensification. These attitudes primarily stem from low public awareness about domestic violence, violence against women and

[approach.html](#)

⁸ Regulations of the shelter of the LEPL State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, available at: <http://atipfund.gov.ge/geo/list/35/odjakhshi-dzaladobis-mskhverplta-tavshesafari>

⁹ Standards and Regulations of the Shelter, UN Women, available at: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1391-standards-and-regulations.html?next=1392>

women's rights in general. As a result, victims often blame themselves and do not address relevant authorities for assistance or addresses them at a later stage.

In relation to violence, economic factors are important, as such factors may force victims to endure violence. In a number of cases, women do not have their own income, meaning that they depend on their husbands and his family members, and often do not have the support of their own families. Given this, despite placement in a shelter, it is difficult for victims to find a job or housing where they will be able to live safely in a short period of time. Consequently, shelters should do more to ensure the employment and empowerment of victims. Generally, it is important that shelter administration take all necessary measures to ensure that victims of domestic violence and their dependants receive comprehensive and effective assistance.

It is necessary to provide victims with services that will ensure their psycho-social rehabilitation and will support their re-integration in society. Besides promoting social activism, which involves seeking employment opportunities for victims, shelters should take care to empower victims in terms of their education. Despite the fact that the majority of respondents did not express any complaints in terms of lack of rehabilitation measures, the general lack of such activities and, in some shelters, their complete absence was striking.

The Flow of Victims into Shelters

All victims of domestic violence who have such needs are admitted to shelters. According to the regulations of the shelter, a person who has suffered physical, psychological, sexual, or economic violence, coercion or negligence is considered a victim of domestic violence. The victim status should be determined by the relevant unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, a court (meaning protective or restraining orders) or the group tasked with determining the status of victims of domestic violence. The victim identification group works by the Inter-Agency Council for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and periodically gathers to discuss the issue of granting victim status to victims of domestic violence.¹⁰

According to internal regulations, victims of domestic violence (together with their dependants) are admitted to shelters regardless of race, color, language, sex, age, nationality, origin, place of birth, place of residence, property or social status, religion or faith, national, ethnic or social origin,

¹⁰ Ordinance N684 of the Government of Georgia, dated 18 December 2014, on Approving the rules for identification and status determination by the Group for determining the status of a victim of domestic violence (status identification group), working together with the Inter-Agency Council for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, available at: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2637810>

profession, marital status, health, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, political or other opinion, or any other status.¹¹

Individuals suffering from infectious diseases and drug abusers are not admitted to the shelter, which is clearly problematic. Presumably, individuals are not admitted to the shelter who openly state their health condition or dependency. As the monitoring revealed, in the majority of shelters, the beneficiaries are not subject to a health examination for infectious diseases immediately after their placement. Consequently, this practice might encourage concealing of information or knowledge about the existence of disease/infection by the beneficiary during their placement in the shelter, which could result in the disease spreading to other beneficiaries or personnel. Therefore, the practice clearly needs to be changed in this regard.

Certain obstacles were also revealed in terms of placing individuals with disabilities in shelters and provision of services to them, since the shelters are not accommodating for all kinds of disabilities.

It was revealed during the monitoring that according to age group, women between the ages of 24-44 utilize services most often. According to shelter administration, the shelters have the following capacity: Gori 20, Kutaisi 20, Tbilisi 20, Signaghi 12 and Batumi 10 individuals.

The statistical data on admission-outflow of beneficiaries in 2015-2016 is as follows:

2015-2016 Admission-Outflow	Registered 2015	Removed 2015	Registered 2016	Removed 2016
Adult (Victim)	47	45	56	56
Juvenile (Victim)	3	3	6	3
Dependent	80	89	81	89
Total	130	137	143	148

Information on the grounds for admission to shelters was interesting, particularly information on where beneficiaries learned about the existence of shelters, which gives the government a foundation for proper dissemination of information about existing services. As the monitoring revealed, the main sources of information regarding shelters for victims of domestic violence are NGOs and employees of the Social Service Agency.

¹¹ Internal Regulations of the Shelter of the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, available at: <http://atipfund.gov.ge/geo/list/35/odjakhshi-dzaladobis-mskhverplta-tavshesafari>

We also requested information from the Fund on reasons for leaving shelters and the location that the beneficiaries moved to after the shelter. In the majority of cases, the beneficiaries move out of shelters to live on their own. The reason for leaving the shelter is unknown in only three cases. The data is as follows:

The Reason for Leaving the Shelter	2015	2016
Integrated in biological family (with parents)	10 (including one minor victim)	16 (including 3 minor victims)
Integrated in own family (with a spouse)	11	10
Moved out to live on their own	20	20
Moved to another institution	4 (including 2 minor victims)	5
Unknown	1	2
Internal Referral	2	6

It was revealed during the monitoring process that no person was denied service due to a lack of space. In the shelters, personnel could not even recall any case where a beneficiary was denied admission to a shelter for any reason whatsoever.

Personal Information Protection and Documenting Procedures

According to the internal regulations of shelters for victims of domestic violence of the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, confidentiality of personal data/ information of the beneficiaries should be protected by shelters, and shelter employees are responsible for its protection.

Personal information includes: correspondence with the beneficiary, phone conversations, electronic mail, private meetings, information received during the use of medical, psycho-social, and legal services, etc. In addition, they are obliged to keep secret and not disclose the address of shelters, except in cases envisaged by legislation.¹²

¹² Regulations of the shelter of the LEPL State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, available at: <http://atipfund.gov.ge/geo/list/35/odjakhshi-dzaladobis-mskhverplta-tavshesafari>

According to the international standards,¹³ individuals enjoying the services of shelters are entitled to not have their personal data disclosed and their confidentiality must be maintained. It is very important for shelter administration to have the informed consent of the beneficiary when information needs to be shared,¹⁴ so that their data is used while utilizing other services. It is desirable to obtain informed consent in writing. Before sharing information, beneficiaries of shelters should be informed of the following issues:

- Why it is important to use their personal information;
- In what form and for what purpose will the disclosed information be used;
- Who will have access to the disclosed information;

During the monitoring, interviews with the shelter staff revealed that beneficiaries can choose not to provide their personal information to shelter administration. However, from the day of their arrival to a shelter, the beneficiaries are fully informed of the benefits of using their personal information, which is needed to utilize different services. The Shelter administration explains to beneficiaries that it is best to disclose information in order to receive comprehensive services. Therefore, there were no cases when a beneficiary refrained from sharing their personal information.

Stemming from internal regulations, the following procedures are mandatory in relation to admission of victims of domestic violence and documentation keeping: interview; placement in a shelter; providing information on the living conditions, services, internal regulations and other regulations of the shelter; and executing an agreement with the beneficiary within 72 hours of admission to the shelter.

The shelters keep the personal cases of their beneficiaries according to special forms approved by the relevant order of the Fund director.¹⁵ Each beneficiary has a personal case file, which contains the documentation granting victim status, a copy of their ID and other important information. Personal case files are kept in the working rooms of administration and are not available to third parties or other beneficiaries.

Attitude and Assessment of Shelter Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries interviewed as part of the monitoring feel safe and protected in all five shelters. The majority of beneficiaries positively assessed the work of shelter administration and personnel. The

¹³ Protection of Personal Information, UN Women (2017);

¹⁴ On the Need for Requesting Informed Consent, UN Women, (2017);

¹⁵ Contract form (Form 1); agreement on the extension of the contract term (Form 2); Form of the admission to the shelter (Form 3); Form regarding the health condition (Form 4); Form on the health condition of a dependant (Form 5); Case management plan (Form 6); Review/assessment of the case management plan (Form 7); Form of leaving the shelter (Form 8); One-year monitoring form after leaving the shelter by a victim of domestic violence (Form 9).

beneficiaries did not express any complaints in terms of the existing infrastructural environment or nutrition.

It is important that shelters have an environment in which the beneficiaries are protected from discrimination, violence and negligence. When violent acts do occur in shelters, shelter administration should immediately respond and seek to resolve all such cases against beneficiaries. In general, not a single case exists which indicates any kind of discrimination or violence has occurred against the beneficiaries.

The services a beneficiary might need or has already received during placement in a shelter were assessed during the monitoring. The existing information was examined based on a pre-determined set of criteria and questions, which were asked to beneficiaries living in the shelters:

Criteria	3= I received all types of the assistance that I needed	2= I received some of the assistance that I needed	1= I needed this particular assistance, but I did not receive it	0= It does not concern me; I do not want or need this type of assistance
For my safety	19			
For the safety of my child(ren)	14			3
So that I better understand my possibilities and choices	17	1		
In order to know more about domestic violence	9	8	2	
So that my children receive an education	11		1	4
In order to better understand the child protection system	9	5	1	2
To overcome stress	13	6		
To find my favorite place of residence	6	3	1	7
To be able to take care of my children	12	2		3
Support from other women	15	1		1
To find a job	8	3	2	4

Psychological assistance for myself	13	4		
To overcome my health-related problems	13	4	2	
To heal the wounds of violence	16	3		

The analysis clearly demonstrates that the perception of safety of the beneficiaries is guaranteed at the shelters. They know about their possibilities and choices and psychologists are providing assistance to beneficiaries to help them overcome stress and heal the wounds of violence; however, beneficiaries experience difficulties in terms of finding housing and a job.

Despite uniform regulations, the physical environment and personnel are different in each shelter. The information received as a result of the monitoring from individuals placed in shelters and their attitudes are as follows:

During the visit to the **Gori** shelter, only 5 adults and 9 minor beneficiaries were present in the shelter. They noted that when they arrived to the shelter, they felt support and a calm environment. The majority noted that they would advise a friend to use the shelter; however, the location of the shelter is not secret and almost everyone in the town knows where it is located, which, according to them, constitutes a big challenge. The majority of the respondents were not aware of the existence of a complaints box.

In the **Sighnaghi** shelter, only 1 adult beneficiary was there during the visit, whose examination could not be carried out according to the pre-drafted questionnaire. However, the beneficiary stated during the verbal interview that the environment of the shelter is very warm and reliable. The beneficiary expressed gratitude towards the administration and characterized them as very attentive. Due to the lack of beneficiaries, it was difficult to assess their needs.

During the visit to the **Batumi** shelter for victims of trafficking, only 2 adult victims of domestic violence and 2 minor beneficiaries were present in the shelter. The interviewed beneficiaries noted that they felt safe and protected in the calm environment of the shelter, which helped them to heal past wounds.

As a result of the monitoring, 5 adults were interviewed in the **Kutaisi** shelter. The majority of individuals placed in the shelter positively assessed their treatment by the administration and they felt calm. Only one beneficiary expressed a complaint in terms of the infrastructural environment and nutrition at the shelter.

During the visit to the **Tbilisi** shelter, only 5 adult and 4 minor beneficiaries were in the shelter. Out of the 5 adult beneficiaries, only 2 were present to be interviewed. A juvenile, non-Georgian-

speaking girl was also interviewed in the shelter; unfortunately, due to the language barrier, it was almost impossible to communicate with her. Also, one other juvenile girl (13 years old) was interviewed, who was placed in the shelter together with her sister.

Due to the possible shortcomings caused by the unification of shelters,¹⁶ the Gender Equality Department of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia re-visited the Tbilisi shelter in order to examine the issues that needed improvement, the cause of which was said to be due to reorganization. Three individuals were interviewed during this additional visit.

Overall, the reliable environment in the shelters, which is very important and necessary for the beneficiaries, can be discussed. Use of services was necessary and timely for the majority of respondents. A large number of beneficiaries indicated that, as a result of the time spend in the shelter, their children feel better. They also feel more support and they like the caring environment and respect that the shelter administration express towards the beneficiaries.

The services received in the shelter were assessed as useful by 18 beneficiaries. The same number noted that in a time of need, they would advise a friend to go to the shelter. The reason for being willing to refer a friend is to escape a violent environment, and the sense of security, calm environment and support in the shelters, both from shelter personnel and from other female beneficiaries of the shelter.

During the monitoring of the Tbilisi shelter for victims of domestic violence and trafficking, problems related to providing services to non-Georgia-speaking beneficiaries were revealed. The interview with the non-Georgia-speaking beneficiary was carried out in English and she managed to provide some information about her needs. It was revealed during the interview that she was not able to utilize the service of a psychologist and that she did not have books available to her in her native language. Provision of medical services was also problematic. Consequently, the shelter is only able to guarantee the above individual with a safe physical environment, while other services, such as psycho-social rehabilitation and care for her development, are not available. Communication between the shelter's administration and the beneficiary was mainly conducted in English, despite the fact that the beneficiary does not really speak this language. The administration contacts a translator only in cases of misunderstanding or urgent need.

Assessment of General Conditions of Dependants Placed in Shelters

While assessing the conditions of beneficiaries living in shelters together with their children/dependents, it was important to understand how protected the beneficiaries and their

¹⁶ Since September, the shelters for the victims of trafficking and domestic violence were merged and the administrative personnel became common for the victims of both categories.

dependents felt, and to what extent their common interests and needs are taken into consideration within the framework of the available services.

It is noteworthy that for mothers, who have escaped violent environments, the safety and protection of their children is of critical importance. Consequently, shelters, which do not have conditions oriented towards children, constitutes an important barrier for women with children accessing these shelters.

Most of the dependents placed in shelters have experience residing in abusive environments, which are then followed by the alienating environment of the shelters for children. Of particular importance are children between the ages of 2-5, since their violent experiences are often reflected in their difficult behavior. Cases of seclusion and isolation are frequent in children of school age, since they have to change schools, adapt to new environments and handle a number of other problems. Moreover, they often blame themselves for what happened in their families and feel guilt.¹⁷

Rehabilitation measures are especially important for dependents placed in shelters, especially those who are minors. According to internal regulations of the shelters, a nanny carries out entertainment and cognitive activities for children and takes care of their informal education. During the monitoring of each shelter, a nanny was helping children with their lessons when needed.

According to information provided by the psychologist during the monitoring of the Gori shelter, a case of psychological and physical violence of a mother against her child was revealed. Analysis of the provided information allows us to conclude that attention is paid to such cases in shelters. It is necessary to work with mothers to change their behavior through a multidisciplinary team (psychologist, social worker, nanny), during which time a special strategy should be developed that considers the best interests of the mother and the child.

In the shelters, it is extremely important to have child-oriented infrastructure. It was clear during the monitoring that the existence of proper environments for children constitutes a big challenge. A lack of toys, entertainment items and activities for children were observed. In addition to the visual examination, dependent individuals placed in shelters were interviewed. During the interviews, they expressed dissatisfaction due to a lack of entertainment activities relevant to their age, and they wished for more leisure and cognitive programs in the shelters.

Shelter Administration

¹⁷ Women and Children, UN Women, available at: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1395-women-with-children.html?next=1396>

According to internal regulations of the shelters for victims of domestic violence, the compulsory composition of each shelter's staff includes: the head of the shelter, a lawyer, a social worker, a psychologist, a nurse, a nanny, an accountant, a driver and a guard.

According to the international standard,¹⁸ it is important for each person employed in the shelters to have clearly defined job descriptions, obligations and responsibilities. Trainings/seminars should be constantly provided to employees in order to improve their professional skills and therefore, the services they provide. It is desirable that each staff member attends a 40-hour training on domestic violence and violence against women. The administration should be constantly informed about legislative or other programs that will enhance their consciousness and professionalism.

In addition, according to the recommendation of the Council of Europe on minimum standards for support services for combating violence against women, it is important that service provider personnel are experienced, externally sensitive and trained in issues related to violence against women. Also noteworthy is the recommendation that if is possible, it is desirable that personnel in the shelters for women be female.¹⁹

Provision of effective services to the beneficiaries depends on the diversity of the obligations and responsibilities of shelter employees.²⁰ The shelter personnel should possess relevant communication techniques, should positively use body language, should be able to listen and in times of need, utilize effective problem solving skills. Shelter personnel should be able to manage and facilitate conflict situations through using negotiation and mediation techniques. It is extremely important to maintain confidentiality and to treat each beneficiary with care and respect, regardless of cultural, ethnic, or age differences.

Special importance is given to the professionalism of personnel, and their skills and experience in communicating with victims. Given the diversity of victims placed in the shelters, it is possible that the shelters do not constantly have personnel with relevant qualifications; however, the shelters should make an effort to provide the beneficiaries with a wide variety of services. Of no less importance is the shelters' cooperation with non-governmental or international organizations and working on strategies to seek support from these organizations.

It is clear from the results of a general survey that the shelter administration, within the framework of their responsibilities, seeks to satisfy the primary needs of individuals placed in the shelters. Nurses have the most frequent communication with the beneficiaries, since they work in a 24-hour shift at

¹⁸ Regulations and Standards of Shelters for the Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse, Illinois, 2014, available at: <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=70181>

¹⁹ Minimum Standards For Support Services Offered to the Victims of Violence, Council of Europe, 2008, available at: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/EG-VAW-CONF%282007%29Study%20rev.en.pdf>

²⁰ Shelter Administration and Management, UN Women, available at: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1384-staffing-and-management.html?next=1385>

the shelter. In all shelters, security is ensured by guards (in times of need, patrol police are called), the confidential address and the registration of those entering and leaving the shelter. The Sighnaghi shelter was an exception, where cameras are also installed within the territory of the shelter.

Below is information on the number of employees and professionalism of the staff in each shelter:

15 individuals are employed in the **Gori** shelter: 4 guards, 4 nurses, a driver, the head of the shelter, an accountant, a psychologist, a social worker, a nanny and a technical assistant. It is noteworthy that the shelter does not have a lawyer. All employees, except the accountant, have been trained on the topic of domestic violence. Trainings are held annually,²¹ both by the Fund and various NGOs.

14 individuals are employed in the **Sighnaghi** shelter: 4 guards, 4 nurses, a driver, the head of the shelter, a social worker, a nanny, and a technical assistant. It should be noted that from the day of its opening, the shelter has not had a psychologist and cannot provide the beneficiaries with psychological assistance services. As the head of the shelter explained, an opening for a profession psychologist was announced several times, but it has yet to be filled. Given the above condition, the Fund decided that the psychologist from the Tbilisi shelter will work in the Sighnaghi shelter once per week. The director of the Sighnaghi shelter considers that the nurse has many functions and believes that it is important that the shelter hire a separate cleaner and a cook.

The nanny, the nurse, the head of the shelter, the lawyer and the social worker in the Sighnaghi shelter have been trained on the topic of domestic violence. The accountant, the driver and guard have not been trained. According to the administration, 3 trainings have already been held by the Fund and the NGO “Children of Georgia.” According to information provided by the head of the shelter, they often hold meetings between the social worker employed in the shelter and social workers of the LEPL Social Service Agency for the purpose of experience sharing.

In total, 15 individuals are employed in the **Batumi** shelter: 4 guards, 4 nurses, the head of the shelter, a lawyer, an accountant, a social worker, a psychologist, a nanny, and a technical assistant. The shelter does not have a driver. In times of need, the head of the shelter ensures transportation of the beneficiaries.

All employees have been trained on the topic of domestic violence. Trainings are conducted by the Fund at least twice per year. NGOs are also conducting trainings. The Batumi Shelter administration noted that they were permanently maintaining a connection with those beneficiaries who have left the shelter, which has been a successful practice.

15 individuals are employed in the **Kutaisi** shelter: the head of the shelter, 4 nurses, 4 guards, a social worker, a psychologist, an accountant, a nanny, a lawyer and a driver. It was noted by the shelter that

²¹ In 2016, 5 trainings were held for the employees of the shelter.

they have never had a non-Georgian-speaking beneficiary, but if needed, they can hire an interpreter.

The interview with the administration of the Kutaisi shelter for the victims of domestic violence²² revealed that all employees have been trained on the issue of domestic violence and that trainings are held by the Fund at least twice per year. A guard ensures the security of the shelter.

16 individuals are employed in the **Tbilisi** shelter: the head of the shelter, a coordinator of economic affairs, a psychologist, a social worker, 4 nurses, a nanny, an accountant, a cleaner, a driver and 4 guards. During the visit, the director of the shelter, the nanny (who also functions as a social worker), a nurse, the accountant and the cleaner were interviewed during the visit. It is noteworthy that only the Tbilisi shelter for victims of domestic violence and trafficking has a cleaner position.

As it was revealed during the interview with the head of the shelter, since 20 August 2016, the psychologist of the shelter has been on maternity leave and the shelter has not had a psychologist since that date. The above service was not being provided to the beneficiaries during the monitoring;²³ however, according to the head of the shelter, a psychologist will be hired in the near future.²⁴

It was also revealed during the visit to the shelter that the social worker was on maternity leave for about 3 months and in the meantime, the nanny was performing her functions. According to the head of the shelter, the nanny has sufficient education and experience in order to combine her functions with those of a social worker. As for the nanny's duties, as the interview with the administration and beneficiaries of the shelter demonstrated, this function is being performed by shelter personnel who are free in the moment of need. According to the information provided by the shelter head, the functions and responsibilities of the personnel are very flexible in the shelter, which, is generally welcomed; however, there is still a risk of providing unqualified or less qualified services. When the shelter personnel replace each other in their duties, it is necessary that their skills and experiences are assessed and considered.

It is noteworthy that the shelter does not have a separate position for a lawyer. If needed, shelter beneficiaries are provided with legal assistance from a hotline lawyer (this individual was in the crisis

²² On the day of the monitoring, the head of the Kutaisi shelter was on maternity leave, while her acting replacement was in Tbilisi at the official meeting.

²³ The monitoring was conducted on 13 September and the second monitoring on 30 September.

²⁴ During another visit to the Tbilisi shelter, the provision of psychological services was improved. The shelter had ensured the selection of an employee. It should also be noted that during the second monitoring visit, the psychologist was not at the shelter; however, the victims confirmed that they had met with the psychologist.

center during the visit; that lawyer also works there) and lawyers of the legal department of the Fund's central office.

As for the protection of hygienic norms and cleanliness, despite the fact that the position of a cleaner is only in the Tbilisi shelter, which, compared to the other shelters, simplifies the ensuring of hygienic norms and cleanliness, significant violations were revealed in the Tbilisi shelter in this regard during the monitoring. The above might be due to the reorganization occurring at the shelter. In general, interviews with the shelter personnel and beneficiaries during the monitoring demonstrated the beneficiaries are primarily responsible for the cleanliness of the shelter and in a number of cases, this causes conflict among them.

According to the regulations and a joint standard for the shelters, a nurse is responsible for ensuring sanitary conditions in many of the shelters, including the disinfection and cleanliness of kitchens and the shelter's yards. Due to the fact that a nurse can be responsible for preparing dinner and for taking care of the health care issues of the beneficiaries, it is important to add the position of a cleaner to the shelter staff, similar to the Tbilisi shelter, in order to solve the above problem and guarantee hygienic conditions in the shelter to the maximum extent possible.

In addition, provision of psycho-social services to the beneficiaries is not regulated in the Signaghi shelter, since the invited psychologist performs this task only once per week, which is insufficient to meet the needs of the beneficiaries placed in the shelter and stemming from the problem, has a formal nature. Consequently, considering the specificity and needs of the shelters, provision of psychological services in the Signaghi shelter should be immediately ensured and a proper, qualified employee should be found.

Noteworthy is the fact that shelter administration has focused on issues related to unnecessary formalities and bureaucracy, which makes shelter services less flexible. Despite this, the interviews with shelter personnel revealed that they are less likely to apply to the Fund for various needs and technical issues in order to avoid delays in solving problematic issues due to bureaucratic difficulties. It is important that the Fund and shelter administration have a closer connection and communication.

On the question of what needs improvement in the shelters, shelter administration emphasized the rehabilitation programs, infrastructure of shelters and improvement of the yards. In addition, they discussed issues related to toys for children, the lack of cognitive activities and the improvement of libraries.

In the end, the Fund's efforts related to constant training of personnel employed in the shelters should be emphasized. It is very important that the staff understand the specifics of domestic violence and have gender sensitivity in relation to this issue.

Recommendations:

To the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking:

- Take appropriate measures, including improvement of the legal framework, by clearly defining the rights and obligations, and by establishing a clear system of accountability in order to increase the responsibility and role of shelter administration in the process of ensuring human and material-technical resources;
- Add cleaner positioning to each shelter in order to ensure cleanness and protection of sanitary-hygienic norms to the maximum extent possible;

To the Administration of Shelters for Victims of Human Trade (Trafficking) and Domestic Violence:

- Identify, in a timely manner, shortcomings related to the administration of services and for their improvement, communicate regularly and effectively with the Fund.

Norms of Behavior in the Shelter and Other Rules

Shelter life is governed by the certain regulations, including those that govern issues related to activities of the shelters, such as protection, assistance, psycho-social rehabilitation, organization/receipt of the medical services and protection of legal interests of victims of domestic violence (together with their dependents). Regulations also determine the rights and obligations of shelter employees and beneficiaries and the types of disciplinary responsibility.

According to the internal regulations, employees of the shelters are obliged to act professionally at work; to protect the rights and interests of the beneficiaries; to not infringe upon the honor and dignity of the beneficiaries; to protect the inviolability of the beneficiaries' private life; to not allow the use of violence, threats of violence, or mocking/offensive statements against the beneficiary or the disclosure of any form of discrimination; to come to work in a timely manner; to have positive relations with other employees; to protect safety norms in the workplace in order to create a secure environment for the beneficiaries, themselves and others; to take care of shelter property and to inform the administration in case of any damage; to comply with other regulations of the Fund/shelter; and to protect the privacy of the shelter location.²⁵

According to the internal regulations of the shelters, the contact information of the Emergency and Operative Response Center "112", the unit of monitoring, evaluation and project design of the Fund, the body of guardianship and custody, and the Office of the Public defender of Georgia should be posted in a visible area within the territory of the shelter.

²⁵ Shelter for the Victims of Domestic Violence of the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, available at: <http://atipfund.gov.ge/geo/list/35/odjakhshi-dzaladobis-mskhverplta-tavshesafari>

The monitoring revealed that information on existing rules is posted in every shelter, and that a complaints box, information on the State Fund and the hotline of the monitoring unit are placed on walls within the shelters. In addition, the contact information of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia is posted in the shelters. During the visits, shelter administration was asked to add information about the Public Defender's hotline.

The monitoring demonstrated that cases of important violations of internal regulations are not frequent in the shelters; however, minor violations were revealed in certain instances. According to information provided by the administration, most often, the beneficiaries do not comply with the so-called "curfew".

Information provided by shelter personnel was also checked with the beneficiaries during interviews about problems related to the rules, if any. As it turned out, the "curfew", which regulates the time of leaving and entering the shelter, was not problematic for the majority of respondents. In addition, in the majority of cases, going to work and school was regulated, beneficiaries are able to visit family and friends and it was not problematic for them, and there were no complaints in relation to nutrition. All interviewed beneficiaries noted that there was not a single occasion when they felt a lack of respect from the personnel. As for child discipline and monitoring, only one beneficiary declared that it constituted a problem, which was later solved.

The terms of stay in the shelters are individually extended to each beneficiary, taking into consideration their needs and conditions. Religious rituals can be carried out in the shelter and no violation has been revealed in this regard.

Procedures for Feedbacks and Complaints

According to internal regulations of the shelters for victims of domestic violence, beneficiaries and shelter employees are allowed to express their opinions and/or concerns on any matter in verbal or written form. During the examination of the beneficiaries within the framework of the monitoring, it was checked as to what extent the beneficiaries were informed of the procedures for expressing their opinions or complaints.

In every shelter, the above issue is regulated through a complaints box and a feedback journal, where it is possible to express an anonymous complaint against shelter personnel or on any other problematic issue. In addition, besides being informed of their existence, it is important that the feedback journal and complaints box are placed in a visible location that is accessible to everyone. According to the established procedure considered in the regulations, the complaints box is to be opened by a representative of the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking.

The Public Defender's Office has additionally requested information from the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking about the number of complaints from beneficiaries to the Fund's administration and the number of satisfied complaints during 2016. We were informed that in 2016, the beneficiaries did not address the Fund or shelter administration in written form, and they also did not use the complaints box.

We were also informed that the beneficiaries, in cases of misunderstanding or dissatisfaction, can call the monitoring group. According to the Fund, only one beneficiary used the above service in 2016.

This same practice was confirmed by the information provided by the beneficiaries. The majority of interviewed beneficiaries knew about the existence of a complaints box and a feedback journal in the shelters; however, it is noteworthy that no comments have been recorded in any of the journals. According to shelter beneficiaries, they mainly solve problems through direct verbal communication.

According to the all of the above-mentioned, it is clear that a feedback procedure through anonymous questionnaires is not well-established in the shelters. We consider that the current practice is not sufficient to protect the anonymity of the beneficiaries and to provide effective feedback.

It is important that shelter administration makes an effort effort to develop a simple and consistent practice for expressing feedback and complaints, which will be equally accessible to individuals of all nationalities, abilities and skills. Thus, it is necessary to establish conditions of anonymous feedback from the beneficiaries about the structure and content of shelter services.

Recommendations:

To the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking:

- Ensure effective functioning of feedback and appeal mechanisms and the possibility of submitting anonymous feedback to all branches of the Fund.

To the Administration of Shelters for Victims of Human Trade (trafficking) and Domestic Violence:

- Establish a simple and consistent practice of receiving feedback and complaints, which is equally accessible to victims of violence, regardless of their nationality, capacities and abilities.

Protection of Health of Individuals Residing in Shelters

The health conditions of the beneficiaries of the shelters are examined during admission to the shelter (based on an interview with the beneficiary, a special form on their health condition is completed) and when health complaints are reported. Prescribed medicines are provided according to

their symptoms based on a doctor's prescription. The issue of children's immunization is considered by the shelter and children are taken to the relevant planned vaccinations. Medicines are placed in the medical room and a nurse ensures their provision according to prescription.

The monitoring revealed that the obligatory scheduled examination of the beneficiaries' health conditions was not conducted in any shelter, which constitutes an unacceptable practice. It is necessary to carry out a planned examination of each victim immediately after their admission, in order to exclude the existence of contagious infectious diseases (HIV, Hepatitis B and C, etc.). The above is mainly conducted in times of need, when a disease or a complaint is detected. It is noteworthy that from the time of entering the shelter, the Sighnaghi shelter checks the beneficiaries through a blood test in order to prevent and eliminate the spread of any kind of contagious disease and/or infection.

Every shelter has a separate special room for nurses where first aid supplies and medicines are kept. The nurses keep an expenditure sheet, including a list of medicines received by the beneficiaries according to their symptoms and their prescriptions. Medicines are registered, indicating the date of receipt, term, validity, etc. When needed, additional medicines are purchased in "Aversi" pharmacies according to the agreement. In addition, some of the medicines are kept in the pharmacy to ensure that they are adequately protected.

In the shelters, it is possible to receive beneficiaries with mental health problems, as long as it does not threaten the other beneficiaries. However, what is meant by a "threat" is unclear and requires more clarification to establish a uniform practice.

In the **Gori** shelter, under the Fund's initiative, all beneficiaries are vaccinated for the flu. The following clinics provide medical services to the beneficiaries: Gormedi, Aversi, and Iavna. In the **Sighnaghi** shelter, the clinic Arqimede provides beneficiaries with medical services. In the **Batumi** shelter, the beneficiaries are guaranteed medical services from the referral hospital and the clinic Evex. In the **Tbilisi** shelter, procedural difficulties, such as insurance, were named as a challenge. If the universal health care finances 70% of medical costs, the Fund finances the additional 30%. Since both cases are compensated from the state budget, shelter administration believes that it is better to simplify the procedures and to reimburse the entire service from the universal health care program. According to information provided by the Tbilisi shelter, one beneficiary was diagnosed with tuberculosis in an active, contagious form, which was initially unknown to shelter administration (and the beneficiary as well). After identifying tuberculosis, all beneficiaries were checked; a case of transmitted disease was not detected. In the **Kutaisi** shelter, problems were revealed in terms of providing health care services. It turned out that the beneficiaries are not guaranteed dental services.

Accordingly, if we consider the risk and threat of spreading any type of contagious disease during the placement of beneficiaries in the shelters, it is important that the shelters pay more attention to the

health-related issues of the beneficiaries. Like the Sighnaghi shelter, it is necessary to carry out regular, planned check-ups of the beneficiaries and to subject them to relevant tests immediately after their admission to the shelter in order to reduce the risk of spreading various infectious diseases.

Recommendations:

To the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking:

- Conduct a comprehensive examination of the health conditions of the beneficiaries and their dependents immediately after their admission to the shelters in order to avoid the spread of possible diseases/infections and ensure their timely treatment.

To the Administration of the Sighnaghi Shelter for Victims of Human Trade (Trafficking) and Domestic Violence:

- Take relevant measures in order to provide the beneficiaries with comprehensive psychological services.

Physical Environment, Security and Sanitary Conditions

In regards to the shelters, great importance is given to their location and security issues, so that beneficiaries and their dependents feel safe to the maximum extent possible. It is essential that the shelters are located in a secret place that also meets standard requirements.

All state shelters operating in Georgia are located in cities, which might cause problems with women residing in villages in terms of their accessibility and mobility. The same problem is highlighted by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović, in her 2016 report.²⁶

Considering international standards, it is best to build a building specifically for the purpose of being a shelter, since it enables one to take into account concrete standards and requirements from safety, design, etc.²⁷ In addition, the evacuation plan should be posted in a visible place. During the monitoring, the above issue was regulated in every shelter.

Given the safety standards, it is necessary that the shelter has a fence and is protected from unwanted visitors. Also, access to water and proper functioning of heating and air conditioning systems is

²⁶ Dubravka Šimonović, Report of a Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Human Rights Council, 2016, available at: <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/3/3867.pdf>

²⁷ Tracy Gierman and Arla Liska, Shelter for Women and Girls at Risk of or Survivors of Violence, available at: <http://www.sheltersafe.ca/>

important. The shelter location should be convenient for the beneficiaries to use services such as: clinics, police, legal agencies, schools, markets, public transportation, etc.²⁸

Considering the risks and threats victims of domestic violence face, the shelters may develop different security strategies. For instance, the shelters should be in close cooperation with law enforcement authorities in order to know when an abuser leaves a detention facility. In addition, in case of early marriage or a crime “committed against dignity,” the shelters should have a special agreement with state institutions, which takes care of the well-being of children and does not return them to abusive families. In addition, considering the security of victims of trafficking, the shelters should work closely with police, in order to ensure the protection of victims from groups that initially sought to involve them in prostitution or other types of trafficking.²⁹

During the monitoring, great attention was paid to the physical environment and living conditions in the shelters. Visual inspection, examination of sanitary-technical conditions, compliance with a sanitary regime by the beneficiaries and shelter personnel, the level of protection of the shelter’s safety, comfortable environment in the psychotherapist’s room, whether the environment in the shelter is as close to family conditions as possible, etc. was inspected during the monitoring.

The comfortable environment similar to a family environment has a great influence upon victims of domestic violence. It is important that the beneficiaries not only feel safe and protected, but that they also have a sense that they are taken care of, meaning that everything is done so that they feel comfort.

The fact that not a single shelter is adapted for persons with disabilities constitutes a challenge. For the beneficiaries with a physical or other kind of disability, placement in shelters constitutes a double barrier, since their access to various services is related to additional challenges. They have less access to information and there are not special programs that work particularly with beneficiaries with disabilities.³⁰ It is noteworthy that, to date, not a single beneficiary with disabilities has been placed in a shelter.

It should be noted that until September 2016, the service establishments for victims of domestic violence and trafficking in Tbilisi were functioning in one building. The service agency for victims of trafficking was operating on the first floor and the shelter for victims of domestic violence was on the second floor. In September 2016, the shelters for victims of trafficking and domestic violence united and the administrative personnel for both categories of victims became unified.

²⁸ Shelter Standards and Regulations, International Migration Organization, 2007.

²⁹ Protection Strategies in Shelters, UN Women, available at: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1412-security-strategies-and-features-in-shelter-facilities.html?next=1413>

³⁰ Women with Special Needs, UN Women, available at: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1397-women-with-disabilities.html?next=1398>

The shelter administration named the improper use of resources as a reason for merging the services. According to the information provided by the administration, victims of domestic violence and trafficking have almost the same needs. In addition, there were usually fewer beneficiaries in the shelter for victims of trafficking and hence, this floor is now also being used for victims of domestic violence.

We would like to provide extensive information on the physical environment in the shelters:

The location of the **Gori** shelter is problematic, since it is located on the street and it is almost impossible to use the yard. According to information provided by the shelter administration, due to the lack of confidentiality, abuser husbands and relatives often go to the shelter. Despite the shelter guards and the assistance of the police in such cases, a tense environment is created for beneficiaries of the shelter. In order to change the existing situation, the administration has long requested for a tall fence to be built, which will be tall enough so as to make it impossible for people to see into the building from the street.

There is a room for people with disabilities on the first floor; however, they have never had a beneficiary with such needs. During the monitoring, the room was being used as a storage room, where strollers and beds for children were kept. Also, the windows are quite high, meaning they are inaccessible for persons with disabilities.

There are 9 rooms on both floors of the shelter, 1 room for persons with disabilities, and one living room. The residence rooms are equipped with necessary furniture; however, the size of some rooms is not large enough for the beneficiaries residing in them. The heating system on the second floor is out of order in the shelter, meaning the beneficiaries heat their individual rooms with an electric heater. The curtain-blinds attached to the windows require repair. There is little furniture in each room, and what is there is largely damaged and in need of repair.

There was a lack of hygienic norms and cleanliness in the shelter kitchen, bathroom/ toilet and corridor. According to information provided by the head of the shelter, the beneficiaries themselves take care of the shelter's cleanliness. The shelter has two storage rooms, one for hygiene supplies and clothing and the other for nutrition supplies. The shelter has a large balcony which is used for drying clothes. The social worker and psychologist's room is equipped with sufficient inventory. There are some toys for children in the room, but there is no library in the shelter.

There are two toilets and one bathroom on the first floor of the shelter. One of the toilets is for the administration. On the second floor, there are two toilets and one bathroom. Currently, only the first floor bathroom is functioning. It should be noted that a lack of cleanliness and a lack of hygienic norms were observed in the toilet. There were no hygiene items in the toilets and the taps were not working. In the Gori shelter, there is a kitchen on the second floor, which is better equipped;

however, it is not used due to dampness and cold. In this part of the second floor, there also are 2 bedrooms and a meeting room, which are in better condition compared to the other rooms; however, these rooms are not used due to the lack of heating.

Accordingly, a number of infrastructural and sanitary problems were identified in the shelter: the shelter building is damp and therefore, in need of renovation; a bathroom, a toilet and the kitchen need renovation; the duties assigned to shelter staff on cleanliness and hygiene need to be explicitly states; of the available equipment, only the refrigerator is used; the dishwasher needs to be installed; and the shelter does not have enough plates and dishes. According to the head of the shelter, renovations of kitchen are planned.

The **Sighnaghi** shelter is located in a private house with its own yard. In the courtyard there is an playground for children, where swings are mounted and playing sand is spread. Only the Sighnaghi shelter has video control. Since the shelter is new, it is newly renovated and accordingly, in good condition.

On the first floor of the shelter there is a room for people with disabilities and a toilet and a bathroom that is equipped with appropriate equipment. However, it should be noted that the entrance threshold is high and it might prevent the movement of a person with disabilities.

There is a kitchen, a living room and 2 bathrooms on the first floor of the shelter. The kitchen and the living room are equipped with all inventory and technical equipment. The bathrooms are isolated and privacy is protected. The shelter has central heating. The bathroom has washing and drying machines. One living room, 4 residence rooms, 2 toilets and 1 bathroom are situated on the second floor of the shelter. The living room has relevant furniture. Like the other shelters, the issue of a library and toys for children is also problematic in this shelter.

The residence rooms are equipped with proper furniture. All rooms include central heating and air conditioning. In the entrance, there is a complaint box and a beneficiary journal, where the movement of beneficiaries is recorded.

Due to the fact that the Sighnaghi shelter is newly built and renovated, the issues of physical environment and safety are the most regulated within it. The shelter is equipped and maintained.

The **Batumi** shelter is located in a building, where other services are also available; therefore, the confidentiality of its beneficiaries is not protected.

The shelter is partially adapted for people with disabilities, which adaptations only include the entrance to the building and a bathroom/toilet. The toilet and shower are equipped with the appropriate inventory; however, it should be noted that the doors open towards the inside, which is not in line with standards. A separate room in the shelter is not assigned to persons with disabilities.

It is also possible to admit beneficiaries with mental health problems to the shelter, so long as they do not pose a threat to the other beneficiaries.

The shelter has 5 rooms and it is possible to place up to 15 beneficiaries in it. The building has 1 lavatory and 2 bathrooms, the privacy of which is not protected.³¹ The washing machine and an ironing table are located in the shelter. The residence rooms are properly equipped with furniture. The building has central heating; however, it was not working during the monitoring. According to information provided by the head of the shelter, the system was damaged and its renovation was planned in the near future. The walls of the shelter are damp and also require renovations. As for the kitchen, it has a sufficient number of household items.

The living room of the shelter has a TV and a computer with proper furniture. The shelter has one room with no windows or other means of ventilation. According to information provided by the beneficiaries, this room is designed for children to do schoolwork. The shelter does not have a library. Hygiene items and clothing supplies are stored in a special room. Food supplies are stored in the same room. The complaints box and a journal, where the movement of beneficiaries is recorded, are kept in the kitchen.

It is important that the Batumi shelter be better adapted for those with disabilities, technologically better equipped, and to ensure confidentiality, the shelter should be moved to a separate building.

In terms of infrastructural problems, the lack of a yard was observed at the **Kutaisi** shelter. In addition, the location of the shelter was not reliable for some beneficiaries, which is a big challenge. It was noted that many people are moving in and out throughout the day and are aware of the purpose of the building.

The physical environment for persons with disabilities needs improvement. In particular, the shelter is only partially adapted for victims of domestic violence who use wheelchairs. For instance, a person using a wheelchair will not be able to use the toilet independently. The shelter is not adapted for persons with other types of disabilities.

In some of the rooms, there is no air conditioning. The problem of privacy in the bathroom was revealed, because the shower is not isolated. It should be noted that the number of bathrooms does not meet standards for when the shelter is filled to capacity.³² Currently, 5 adults and 8 minors are using the washrooms on the second floor. During the visit, there was disorder in the bathroom. The infrastructure was damaged and the relevant hygiene items were not in place in the bathroom. The shelter administration explained that all beneficiaries have their own hygiene items and they keep them in their own rooms.

³¹ A bathroom did not have a door and was isolated with a thin curtain. In some cases, even the curtain was not hung.

³² According to the standard, 2 washrooms should be designed for 10 persons.

During the visit to the **Tbilisi** shelter, disorder and untidiness were observed due to the merging and reorganization of the shelters. In the building, various items, products and inventory of the stock were being moved around. Also, small works were being carried out: during the monitoring, a few handymen were present in the shelter, which were repairing the door locks in the rooms.

There are 10 residence rooms and one living room on both floors of the shelter. Residence rooms are equipped with the necessary furniture. The living room also has some furniture, the majority of which is damaged. The walls and floor need to be renovated. In addition, there was a lack of hygiene norms and cleanliness, which are not related to the reorganization. Air conditioning was only available in the living room. In the merged shelter, there are 3 bathrooms and 4 lavatories in total. One of the toilets is for the administration. Currently, only 2 bathrooms are functioning; however, the victims only use one bathroom. According to information provided by the victims, the time to use the bathroom is divided among them so that there will be no queue. It is noteworthy that if the shelter is at full capacity (20-22 individuals can be placed in the shelter at the same time), the number of existing washrooms does not correspond to the established standard. It should be noted that the dryer is located within the bathroom, which is not recommended and needs improvement.

It is worth mentioning that the bathrooms and toilets of the shelter require improvement and inventory renewal. The furniture in the common room is outdated and needs replacement. As noted by the administration, the victims do not have a sense of ownership of the property, and thus they do not take care of the items and the need for inventory renewal is frequent.

According to the head of the shelter, a renovation was conducted in the shelter in 2006. Since then, the building has not been renovated. Therefore, we welcome the information that from January 2017, a renovation is planned with the support of the US embassy.³³

Information about the shelter rules is posted in the corridors of the establishment. The complaints box and a feedback journal are also there, allowing the victims to express complaints and opinions anonymously.

The shelter's living conditions are as satisfactory as is presently possible, but there a number of infrastructural problems were identified: in the shelter, the first floor of the building is damp and therefore the walls need renovation; the building is not adapted for persons with disabilities, despite the ramp at the entrance of the building; the bathroom needs renovation, where one out of two washrooms is not functioning; the shower rooms are only isolated from each other with a curtain; the space in the bathroom is sufficient, however, this space is also used for washing, drying and ironing clothes.

³³ The head of the shelter provided us with information on the above issue; however, s/he was not aware of additional details.

We conclude that all of the shelters should make efforts to provide living conditions and physical environments for the beneficiaries that are as close to home conditions as possible. In addition, we should also consider the fact that beneficiaries should not experience a sense of insecurity due to the shelter's location. The confidentiality of the shelter's location and the private space of its beneficiaries should be properly protected. It should be noted that the issue of a yard for children and beneficiaries was problematic almost in every shelter, except for the Sighnaghi shelter. Every shelter has the problem of full adaptation for persons with disabilities, which needs special attention so that everyone can access the shelter. Additionally, the issue of heating and private bathrooms should be regulated, which is necessary for the creation of a space similar to a family environment.

Recommendations:

To the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking:

- Pay more attention to the issue of creating shelter yards and infrastructure oriented towards children;
- Improve the physical environment in order to serve persons with disabilities through adapt the buildings and harmonizing with obligatory standards to the maximum extent possible;
- The shelter location should be selected so as to ensure the confidentiality, personal space and safety of persons residing in the shelter;
- Renew the shelter inventory and pay attention to the proper functioning of the heating system;
- Create/renew the library and a reading/working space in the shelters.

Nutrition

The monitoring also focused on the issue of nutrition. Compliance of the daily menu with the food in storage, the dates of validity of products, storage-rooms in the shelters and the cleanliness of the nutrition areas were checked. Below is detailed information on the shortcomings and trends revealed in each shelter:

The products and the storage room were examined in **Gori**. The daily menu corresponded to the existing food in storage. According to information from the head of the shelter, food supplies are delivered once per week, on Wednesdays. There were no dairy products in the shelter. The expiration date was not indicated on the butter and hence, it was impossible to check its validity. The supply of vegetables, meat and cereals was sufficient. The only fruit available from seasonal fruits was apples. As for the children's nutrition, nutrition norms of the establishment are set in line with nutrition standards for pre-school institutions. Infants are fed by artificial formula, which is supplied by the shelter.

Due to the fact that beneficiaries were not present in the **Sighnaghi** shelter (there was only one beneficiary in the shelter), they had no dairy products except cheese in storage. The supply of vegetables and meat was sufficient for one beneficiary. In addition, they did not have fruits or jam. Sufficient amounts of cereals were stored in the shelter.

Out of dairy products, they did not have milk or sour cream in the **Batumi** shelter. The vegetables were supplied in accordance with the season. Only chicken and fish were stored in the refrigerator. As for fruits, there was not a supply of fruit in the shelter. They also did not have jam, honey, peas or beans in the shelter.

Certain problems related to nutrition were revealed in the **Kutaisi** shelter. It turned out that during the monitoring, the daily menu was formally drafted and some food provided on the menu was not present in the shelter's storage.

During the monitoring, some food in the refrigerator was not placed in closed containers. Questioning of the beneficiaries revealed that the majority of them are content with the nutrition. According to them, if you wish you can get an additional portion. Only one beneficiary had a complaint in terms of the nutrition, who stated that the portions are equally distributed; however, when she wishes for an additional portion, she cannot get it.

During the monitoring, there were no expiration dates indicated on the dairy products (sour cream, cottage cheese) in the stock. Moreover, products were stored in the stock that expired several days previous. At the same time, when the available stock was checked, there were no significant products for feeding children (for instance cheese, milk, a variety of vegetables, etc.).

Products and a store-room were examined in the **Tbilisi** shelter. The daily menu was in compliance with the existing food in the storage. According to the shelter administration, food is supplied once per week.

Due to the merging of the shelters, the nutrition products in the shelter's storage were also merged. During the visit, expired dairy products were observed, which needed to be discarded. No expiration date was indicated on the butter, meat, fish and other certain products, including the milk powder. Therefore, their validity could not be checked. As noted by the administration, they receive these products by weight and later divide them into small parts and without indicate their expiration dates.

While checking the shelter's stock, it was found that vegetables such as cucumbers, beets and cabbage were old and mouldy. As for the children's nutrition, nutrition norms of the institution are established according to preschool institution nutrition standards. Infants are fed artificial formula, which is provided by the shelter. As far as children are concerned, they eat low-fat foods and porridges. As we were informed by the administration, the nutritionist gave a positive assessment to

the shelter's menu. It should be noted that during the second visit, nutrition-related problems were not identified in the shelter.

To conclude, the situation in terms of nutrition is satisfactory in the shelters. However, the shelter's administration should pay more attention to the need to have products needed for the daily menu items always present in the shelters. In addition, it is necessary that products are purchased in a way that makes it possible for shelter personnel to constantly control the production and validity of the products.

Recommendations:

To the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking:

- Improve the product purchase practice and purchase products on the basis of official documentation, in order to check the production and validity terms of the products.

Support for Social Activism and Access to Education

In addition to ensuring housing and safety, it is important that shelters provide victims of domestic violence with psychological help, which is crucial to the process of their psycho-rehabilitation.³⁴ The beneficiaries should be empowered in following directions:

- Regular consultations and programs oriented towards trauma reductions;
- Support to women's support groups and joint problem solving through sharing experiences (peer-based encouragement);
- Promotion of women's knowledge and skills through accident management plans, in order to increase the choices and possibilities of the beneficiaries (for example, legal, social, and economic), which will help them escape from violent environments and achieve their goals.

Studies have demonstrated that economic dependency is one of the strongest factors influencing victims' decisions to stay in shelters or return to their abusive partners. Given that the above factor contributes to the vulnerability of women in cases of violence, it is important that shelters provide economic assistance to beneficiaries to allow them to live independently after leaving shelters.³⁵

Besides financial security, which is often a challenge for shelters to provide due to limited budgets, shelters can offer victims various services in this direction. It may be possible for shelters to assist

³⁴ Tracy Gierman and Arla Liska, Shelter for Women and Girls at Risk of or Survivors of Violence, available at: <http://www.sheltersafe.ca/>

³⁵ Economic Development and Opportunities, UN Women, available at: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/1457-economic-development-and-opportunities.html?next=1458>

their beneficiaries in obtaining specific skills in job-searching, to engage in different programs and make access to such programs easier.

Due to the lack of financial resources, the shelters should work closely with the private sector to provide services that they cannot afford because of their absence of funds.³⁶

According to the job descriptions found within the internal regulations of shelters for victims of domestic violence,³⁷ a social worker is responsible for: implementing various measures to support the employment of beneficiaries; planning and implementing various activities for supporting integration of the beneficiaries into society; carrying out various activities; and, when needed, service communication with various organizations and specialists and coordination of services.

Stemming from the fact that the shelters plan for the position of a social worker, it was important to examine the challenges and needs of the beneficiaries in this regard.

A social worker primarily concentrates on beneficiary employment in **Gori** and helps them to register in the job seekers' database. According to the head of the shelter, there is no possibility to study any type of handicraft within the shelter. It was noted in the **Sighnaghi** shelter that the possibility of employment depends upon the personal contacts of shelter personnel, and this work mainly encompasses the positions of a cashier or a consultant. Beneficiaries in the **Batumi** shelter are registered in the job seekers' database of the Social Services Agency. In addition, the shelter searches jobs for the beneficiaries through its own resources (personal contacts). There have been cases when an NGO has provided trainings. It was revealed during the interview with the social worker that the beneficiaries frequently do not want to or are not ready for work. It should be welcomed that the issue of employment was best regulated in the **Kutaisi** shelter, as 4 out of the 5 beneficiaries of the shelter were employed. It was noted in the **Tbilisi** shelter that guaranteeing the beneficiaries employment programs is problematic, and one of the reasons for the above fact is that individuals placed in the shelters want to find a paid job and think less about developing various professional skills in this regard.

As for the existence of entertainment, including cognitive and other types of events for the beneficiaries, the above was checked during interviews with the beneficiaries and personnel.

Two beneficiaries interviewed by us in the **Gori** shelter could not remember a time when any activities were carried out through the initiative of the shelter. According to them, foreigners visited the shelter once, who carried out some activities for them. As for entertainment/recreational activities, the administration says they are mainly planned by the Fund and there was an event when

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Shelter for the victims of domestic violence of the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, available at: <http://atipfund.gov.ge/geo/list/35/odjakhshi-dzaladobis-mskhverplta-tavshesafari>

the beneficiaries were taken to Tbilisi. Beneficiaries are also taken to the theatre, New Year's and other events, and to recreational zones for walks. Almost every shelter personnel mentioned the problem of a well-equipped yard for children and the provision of cognitive entertainment for them. Minors go to sports, dance or other activities only if the shelter finds free courses and if a parent agrees.

The shelter plans various activities for the beneficiaries residing in the **Sighnaghi** shelter. For instance, beneficiaries (who wished to) helped plant flowers in the yard, and beneficiaries are also permitted to cook, if possible. As for entertainment events, we were informed by the administration that the beneficiaries rarely express a desire to attend such events.

Certain types of entertainment activities are carried out in the **Batumi** shelter, but only on rare occasions. The beneficiaries are taken to the cinema, or they might go for walks. When possible, beneficiaries are allowed to prepare food. Minors can go to sports for free in the Youth Center. Children have played rugby and boxing. There is a computer in the common room of the shelter.

The number of dependant minors in the **Kutaisi** shelter is high. The minors are of different age groups and implementation of relevant rehabilitation events is not ensured in the shelter. In addition, educational events for children are rarely held. A nanny is takes care of the children. When needed, shelter personnel help the nanny. Rehabilitation events are also rarely implemented for the adult beneficiaries. The beneficiaries remembered only one event when a writer woman carried out literature evenings for them. There is a TV and a library in the shelter. Internet access is not guaranteed for the beneficiaries.

During the second visit to the **Tbilisi** shelter, provision of psychological services was improved. The shelter has hired an acting psychologist. It should be noted that the psychologist was not present in the shelter during the visit. However, the victims have confirmed that they have met with and talked to the psychologist. The additional visit also revealed the lack of activities relevant to the interests of the adult victims.

A lack of rehabilitational-educational events was observed in every shelter, from both the employed personnel and the beneficiaries placed in the shelter/their dependants. Special emphasis is given to the absence of rehabilitation activities and infrastructure for children's development, which is a problem for all shelters and needs more attention.

The issue of setting-up libraries and working/reading spaces is also a challenge in the shelters. When we discuss the rehabilitation of victims, it is important to provide them with various means through which they will be able to self-develop and use their capabilities. In this direction, relevant psycho-social rehabilitational and educational activities clearly need to be planned and offered. To this end,

cooperation with various local and international organizations may be sought to find relevant programs or projects in which it will be possible to involve beneficiaries and their dependants.

Recommendations:

To the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking:

- Revise the psycho-social rehabilitation and educational programs of shelters and provide more time and resources to plan and implement rehabilitation programs and activities;
- Increase and deepen the shelters' cooperation with local non-governmental, governmental and international organisations in terms of further rehabilitation for victims and improving their employment prospects;
- The shelters should pay more attention to existing employment programs and should provide the beneficiaries with all possible resources in this direction;
- The shelters should provide thematic entertainment and cognitive activities, which will be directed towards the victims' involvement in decision making process and awareness rising.

The Role of Victims in Decision-Making and Policy-Making Processes

While interviewing the shelter personnel during the monitoring, one important aspect was revealed. It is often difficult for administration to persuade the victims to take advantage of various services, employment or educational opportunities. Thus, the involvement of victims in decision-making processes is reduced.

It is actually very difficult to convince victims of violence to participate in decision-making processes, even on matters that are directly related to them,³⁸ such as decisions related to extending their term of stay in the shelter or their plan after leaving the shelter. However, it is critical that the victims are directly involved in these processes and that the services suitable for victims are improved through sharing experience and knowledge.

According to the internal regulations of the shelters, for the case management of victims of domestic violence and their dependants, the following should be carried out:

- Interviewing the victims of domestic violence and assessing their needs (including their dependants' needs) within 5 working days of being placed in the shelter;
- Planning and implementing psychological, social, medical, and legal services;
- When needed, contacting various organizations/specialists and coordinating these services.

³⁸ Sara Feldman, Julie Freccero, Kim Thuy Seelinger, Safe Haven: Sheltering Displaced Persons from Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, California, Berkeley, 2013.

In addition, a multi-disciplinary team (social worker, psychologist, nurse, nanny, lawyer of the shelter) carry out the case management of the shelter beneficiaries, identify beneficiaries' problems and discuss ways and means of solving these problems.

It is clear from the management plans that we requested from the shelters operating in Georgia that the involvement of victims of violence in developing and managing those plans is minimal. This cannot be explained by a lack of motivation on the part of the victims. It is desirable that shelter beneficiaries, with the assistance of shelter staff, be actively involved in preparing plans for post-shelter living shortly after being placed in shelters. The above requires beneficiaries to identify possible options, resources and allies in their communities and to plan specific steps for after leaving the shelter.

In addition, the beneficiaries' conditions should be constantly monitored after they leave the shelter. According to internal regulations, this obligation is the responsibility of the social worker. This can be monitored through telephone calls and visits to the new place of residence. To this end, it is possible to involve the beneficiaries after they leave the shelter in a number of events/services/activities in which they previously participated, which could ensure that there is no gap in terms of psychological assistance or participation in trainings.

When talking about victim participation, it is important to mention the 2016-2017 Action Plan for fighting violence against women and domestic violence and measures for the protection of victims (Decree N341 of the Government of Georgia, dated 21 July 2016). According to the Action Plan, direction IV implies ensuring participation of victims of domestic violence in policy development processes. For implementation of the above direction, the Government of Georgia has appointed the Public Defender's Office as the leading institution.³⁹

Recommendations:

To the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking:

- Ensure effective, constant monitoring of the conditions of shelter beneficiaries after they leave the shelter.

To the Administration of Shelters for Victims of Human Trade (Trafficking) and Domestic Violence:

³⁹ In order to achieve the above, besides shelter monitoring, within the framework of activities foreseen by the Action Plan, the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia plans involvement of victims in the process of policy revision/development in the first part of 2017. To this end, it is planned to organize focus groups and to draft recommendations for policy formation.

- Consider the opinions of beneficiaries to ensure their involvement in the decision-making process.

Monitoring of Shelters for Victims of Human Trade (Trafficking)

The monitoring of shelters for victims of human trade (trafficking) was conducted in the Tbilisi and Batumi shelters and aimed to reveal strengths and weaknesses of the provision of services. Also, the needs of the beneficiaries were assessed. The Tbilisi and Batumi shelters for victims of human trade (trafficking) constitute a structural unit of the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking.

During the monitoring, the focus was on the following issues, which are regulated by internal regulations of the shelters for victims of human trade (trafficking):

- Sanitary-technical conditions of the establishments;
- Nutrition/food facilities;
- Medical services;
- Relations between the beneficiaries and administrative staff of the shelters;
- Internal appeal mechanisms;
- Psychological and social rehabilitation of the beneficiaries;
- Legal and medical assistance;
- Protection measures.

A special survey paper was prepared in order to obtain general information from shelter administration. The interviews revealed shortcomings and positive aspects that are demonstrated in management processes. In addition, a visual inspection and inspection of sanitary-hygienic conditions was conducted. To obtain comprehensive data, additional information was requested from the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking. The shelters for victims of human trade (trafficking) are subordinate institutions of the above Fund.

Admission of victims of trafficking into both shelters is based on their recognition as a victim and their being granted the status of a victim of trafficking. It is noteworthy that there was not a single victim of trafficking during the monitoring at both the Tbilisi and the Batumi shelters. Therefore, the information provided by shelter administration could have been biased. Consequently, it is difficult to assess the level of service provision from the perspective of the beneficiaries. As we were informed, no victims of trafficking have been refused a place within the shelters. More often than not, victims of domestic violence use the shelter meant for victims of trafficking.

According to data from 2016, only 1 victim of trafficking used the services in the **Batumi** shelter and for only 1 day. Last year, there was also one beneficiary whose term of stay was not extended, as she had a baby and returned to her own country.

According to data from 2015, the **Tbilisi** shelter for victims of trafficking was used by 4 victims of trafficking, of which 2 were dependants. Among them, cases of labour exploitation were revealed in 3 cases, and 1 was a case of sexual exploitation. In 2016, only 1 beneficiary was admitted to the Tbilisi shelter. Additionally, 2 beneficiaries admitted in 2015 continued receiving services in 2016.

2015-2016 Admission-Outflow	Registered 2015	Discharged	Registered 2016	Discharged 2016
Adult (Victim)	6	7	1	2
Juvenile (Victim)	0	5	0	0
Dependant	2	0	0	0
In total	8	7	1	2

According to information provided by the head of the shelter, only those people who have housing problems are requesting to extend the terms of their stay in the shelter. After expiration of the 3 months period, the term can be extended based on the decision of members of the multidisciplinary team (the head of the shelter, social worker, psychologist, etc.), considering the individual management and revision plans. As we were informed, in 2015, only 1 beneficiary requested that the administration extend their term. According to information provided by the shelter administration, they inform the beneficiary of their decision at least 2 weeks before they are scheduled to leave the shelter.

Reason for leaving the shelter	2015	2016
Moved out to live alone	4 adult beneficiaries and 1 dependant	1 adult beneficiary
Moved to another institution	0	0
Returned to homeland (repatriation)	1 adult beneficiary and 1 dependant	1 adult beneficiary

A nanny is found in both shelters and an interpreter is brought to the shelters as needed. Unlike the Tbilisi shelter, which cannot provide services to persons with physical disabilities, the Batumi shelter is adapted for persons with disabilities who use a wheelchair.

In the Tbilisi shelter, people with infectious diseases can be placed in isolation and when needed, a bathroom can also be used, which will then be disinfected by a nurse. According to the provided

information, if needed, a person can also be placed in the hospital. This issue is settled in the Batumi shelter in the following way: if a person is a threat to the other beneficiaries and is at risk of spreading disease, s/he will be redirected to a hospital or a non-governmental organization.

As for the training of personnel on the topic of trafficking, all employees in both shelters have undergone trainings on domestic violence and trafficking.⁴⁰ Trainings are held by NGOs and the Fund. Matters related to the rules of the shelters are regulated in both shelters. Not a single case of beneficiaries or personnel violating internal regulations was revealed. There were only minor issues, such as the desire to watch different TV programs, which were solved through involvement of the psychologist.

In both shelters, beneficiaries from religious minorities can carry out their rituals in their own rooms. In terms of security rules, we were informed that the security of shelter residents is ensured by: the confidential address, guards and registration of those entering and leaving the shelters. The shelter administration cannot forbid the beneficiaries to go outside; therefore, the beneficiaries are warned about possible risks. In addition, the shelter beneficiaries are not required to disclose their personal information; although, the administration explain that in order to get the full benefits of certain services, it is best to provide the shelter with their information.

In the Batumi shelter, the rehabilitation-reintegration plans of the beneficiaries include psychological, legal, health and social issues. The activities are defined by time and are implemented according to the plan. Later, new needs may be revealed. The shelter psychologist works with the beneficiaries through conducting individual and group meetings. Previously, a beneficiary could be busy learning a handicraft, such as felting, composing bisers, etc. If a beneficiary does not have a profession, then the shelter may try to teach them something so that they can make an independent living.

At the Tbilisi shelter, a psychologist determines the schedule of work with beneficiaries and conducts individual and group meetings. According to information provided, in terms of psychological rehabilitation and reintegration into society, psychological therapy is conducted, and a social worker assists with employment of the beneficiaries, their training, finding temporary housing, and registering their children in kindergarten/schools. The shelter also helps victims in terms of restoring contact with their families, providing legal assistance and helping with documentation.

The beneficiaries' rehabilitation plan is set up in 2 stages. Initially, the beneficiaries' needs are identified and then ranked to ensure the resolution of the most urgent needs. The measures outlined in the plan are implemented within a certain period of time and are specified from the very beginning. The beneficiaries are involved in various activities according to their age. For instance,

⁴⁰ According to information provided by the shelters, trainings for staff are held at least twice per year.

there is instruction in career consulting, handicraft work, etc. Through the initiative of various organizations, a meeting was held with a writer, and the beneficiaries visited a theatre and a children's entertainment center several times, etc.

Minors are involved in informal education based on the consent of their parents. We were informed by the Tbilisi shelter's administration that when consent is received, a juvenile is registered in classes (first –payment is 50 GEL, which is provided by the Fund). Based on information provided by the head of the shelter, parents are often lazy and as a rule, they do not register children on their own. It is noteworthy that the victims often share knowledge and experiences with handicrafting with one another.

In legal matters, victims are assisted in both shelters by a lawyer from the Fund in terms of preparing for lawsuits and preparing documentation. When needed, court representation is also ensured. As a rule, the question of compensation for damages arises due to the crime. Most often, beneficiaries who are victims of trafficking need court representation.

In addition, it was revealed during the interview with the Tbilisi shelter's administration that procedures for restoring documents are problematic, since legislation indicates that there is a different rule for victims of trafficking. However, as practice reveals, victims of trafficking receive relevant documents according to the same rule and therefore, there is a need for interpretation of this norm. In addition, it is true that victims of violence are guaranteed all services by the Fund during the course of their stay at the shelter; however, provision of small material assistance is also important, as sometimes a victim does not even have enough money to get to work.

The monitoring revealed that the shelters make all efforts to ensure that victims of trafficking feel that they are in a protected and reliable environment. Nevertheless, it is clear that certain measures should be taken, which will contribute to the development and improvement of services. It is especially important to improve and develop rehabilitational and educational events that will enable victims to be more integrated into society.

Recommendation:

To the State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking:

- Guarantee beneficiaries the timely and qualified services of a translator.