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PRESS RELEASE

Georgia: Journalist Receives Death Threats from Authorities

ARTICLE 19, together with other human rights organisations, urges the Georgian government to stop pressurising and intimidating prominent Georgian investigative journalist Vakhtang Komakhidze.

Komakhidze reported receiving death threats from the Georgian authorities on 10 February. He had recently returned from a visit to South Ossetia where he has been producing a documentary examining the 2008 Russian-Georgian conflict.

ARTICLE 19 has issued a joint statement with the South Caucasus Network of Human Rights Defenders, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, the Human Rights House Foundation, and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee.

The organisations condemn the use of threats against Komakhidze, and call upon the Georgian government to ensure his safety and to cease harassment of journalists. The joint statement also calls for a prompt, effective, thorough, independent and impartial investigation into the incident and the creation of an environment safe and conducive to diverse voices.

“The use of intimidation and scare tactics to silence dissent is unacceptable, and the lack of investigation by the Georgian government calls into question its commitment to freedom of expression”, comments ARTICLE 19 Executive Director Agnès Callamard.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- For more information please contact: Rebecca Vincent, rebecca@article19.org or +44 20 7324 2500.
- The full text of the joint statement is available at: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/georgia-life-threats-against-a-leading-georgian-journalist.pdf>
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.