

Bringing justice to the world through the translated word

When the European Court of Human Rights delivered judgments on the first six Chechen cases against Russia in February 2005, the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC), which handled the cases, had a long list of individuals to thank, in particular the many volunteer translators who contributed a great deal towards achieving justice for the applicants.

'Human rights' is an area of international law that EHRAC and many others consider to be of great importance for the common good of people around the world. Translating legal documents relating to human rights violations not only offers the chance to use your foreign language skills, but is also rewarding on a personal level, for you will be helping to bring justice to the world. The documents you translate will be used for research for specific cases, and could even be sent to the European Court to support our submissions.

Seeking experienced Georgian translators

In 2006 EHRAC extended support to NGOs and lawyers in Georgia to take cases alleging human rights violations occurring as a result of hostilities with Russia and, after 2008, the armed conflict around South Ossetia's borders. The majority of our work to date has been carried out in collaboration with the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA). As the number of cases increases, we are seeking Georgian translators to support our work.

Your translation skills would be crucial in working towards the improvement of human rights standards and legal practice in Georgia.

We are looking for **experienced volunteer translators** for the translation of case documents. You may be based in Georgia, the UK, or elsewhere, and should have the **relevant skills to undertake translations of this calibre**, which may include legal, military and medical documents (see below). You will be required to sign a **confidentiality agreement**, and to **respect the inherent sensitivities** of accessing certain case materials. Translations should be to a high standard, as they will be used for litigation before the European Court.

If you are interested in being included on our roster of volunteer translators for **Georgian**, please send us your CV and a short covering email detailing your experience and motivations to Oksana Popova at: o.popova@mdx.ac.uk



The type of cases we take

Our recent work in Georgia has focused on submission of cases on a number of thematic issues, including LGBTI rights, violence against women and politically-motivated proceedings. We are jointly litigating two notable cases concerning treatment of LGBTI activists with our local partners. [Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v Georgia](#) questions State responsibility in the violent and discriminatory treatment of LGBT activists during a raid of their offices by the police. [Women's Initiative Support Group and others v Georgia](#) relates to the failure to investigate violence by counter-demonstrators against people holding a peaceful protest in support of the International Day Against Homophobia in 2013. With GYLA and the Partnership for Human Rights we are representing the case of [Salome Jorbenadze](#), who was 20 when her ex-husband, a police officer, shot and killed her with his police firearm on 25 July 2014. She is one of over 25 women killed in 2014 by their partners or former partners.



Counter-demonstrators attack WISG's minibus on 17 May 2013

In collaboration with Education and Monitoring Centre (EMC) we are litigating the case of [Mikeladze and others v Georgia](#). This case concerns discrimination against the Muslim community near Mokhe village, during demonstrations against Government plans to convert a building, allegedly an old Mosque, into a cultural centre. Some of the Muslim protesters were arrested, beaten, detained and subjected to hate speech on the basis of their religion by the police.

Together with a partner lawyer in Georgia, EHRAC is litigating cases against Georgia concerning criminal proceedings brought against opposition politicians. We recently won the case of [Ivane Merabishvili](#), the former Georgian Prime Minister, whose pre-trial detention was found to be politically motivated and “lacked reasonableness”; the case [has been referred to the Grand Chamber](#) of the European Court.

What kind of translation?

Legal documents and some evidence documents, for example post-mortem reports, contain highly specialised vocabulary and sometimes require extensive research on the part of the translator as well as linguistic, cultural and historical knowledge of the region. Other documents, for example witness statements, rarely contain technical vocabulary as the content relates mainly to descriptions of people, places and actions. There may be opportunities for translators with little legal experience to work with these types of documents. Sometimes unconventional documents such as Soviet-era passports, insurance receipts or school reference letters are used as evidence to support cases. When tackling old documents, which have been copied repeatedly, an understanding of the social, cultural and historic background of the Soviet Union in the 1980s will assist the translator.

Documents are usually scanned and sent to us by email and arrive in varying states of legibility, whether handwritten or typed. The subject matter of EHRAC's cases is varied – from armed conflict, to protests, to ethnic, sexual and gender-based discrimination.

When translating legal documents, the translator has to strive for precision. The translator may have to research the actual meaning of a particular term and then find the most suitable equivalent for terms and concepts, which may not exist in the second language. While legal dictionaries can be of great help, the translator will ultimately have to rely upon their own experience. The translator is expected to take great care in translating provisions of laws, names of institutions, references to specific incidents, or abbreviations.

EHRAC provides a glossary of terminology, which is distilled from international law-based institutions, to encourage uniform transliteration and translation of the documents – a benefit to translators wishing to enrich their legal vocabulary. Translating with EHRAC provides a solid experience of translating in the area of human rights law which can serve as a good foundation for any further work in this field. Over time the translator will build up a good understanding of the European Court systems, as well as domestic legal systems, even if they previously had no background in law or human rights.