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Institute for Development
of Freedom of Information

Survey of the Knowledge and Attitudes of the Population of Georgia Towards Prosecutor's Office

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The survey is part of the Promoting Prosecutorial Independence through Monitoring and Engagement (PrIME) project implemented by the Institute for Development of freedom of Information (IDFI) in partnership with CRRC-Georgia and Studio Monitor with the financial support of the European Union (EU).

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Survey of the Knowledge and Attitudes of the Population of Georgia towards Prosecutor's Office

Summary of the survey results

The Caucasus Research Center (CRRC-Georgia) conducted a telephone survey of the adult population of Georgia on the knowledge and attitudes towards Prosecutor's Office within the framework of the project "[Promoting Prosecutorial Independence through Monitoring and Engagement](#)" (PRIME) implemented by the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) in cooperation with the CRRC-Georgia and „Studio Monitor“. The survey was conducted from March 30 to April 12, 2020. 1017 completed interviews were conducted. The survey covered the following topics:

1. Evaluation and attitude of the population of Georgia towards the Prosecutor's Office and prosecutors;
2. Study of the knowledge of the population about the goals and activities of the Prosecutor's Office;
3. Experience of population with the Prosecutor's Office;
4. Application and assessment of communication channels of the Prosecutor's Office.

The survey revealed that the **population trusts the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia in general and names fighting crime as its goal most often**. The work of the Prosecutor's Office is most often assessed by the population as average, and when assessing the work done over the last five years, the population most often states that the work of the Prosecutor's Office has not changed in the last five years. Despite the public's trust in the Prosecutor's Office, **one third of the population believes that the Prosecutor's Office is not free from political influence**.

The public trusts prosecutors as well as positively assesses them. **More than half of the population claims that prosecutors are professionals and independent**. However, at the same time, about one-fifth of the population does not know how independent or professional the prosecutors are in Georgia. It is noteworthy that the population finds it difficult to answer questions about the attitude towards the Prosecutor's Office and the assessment of prosecutors and often answers "I do not know". The indicator of this response increases even more when it comes to questions about knowledge about the Prosecutor's Office.

According to the results of the survey, **64% of the Georgian population does not know who the Prosecutor General is**. Slightly more than a third do not know whether the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia is subordinated to any ministry or is an independent agency. **A little over a third of the population thinks that the Georgian Prosecutor's Office is subordinated to the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Internal Affairs**. Nevertheless, the perceptions of the population are closer to the truth on issues related to the duties of the Prosecutor's Office.

According to the results of the research, 6% of the population of Georgia has had contact with the Prosecutor's Office during the last 5 years. This figure is quite small and is not enough to determine the statistical significance of any impact of the experience with the Prosecutor's Office on the attitude of the population towards the agency.

The survey revealed that **population almost never uses Prosecutor's Office related communication channels, such as website of the Prosecutor's Office, Facebook page and hotline**. In addition, the awareness of the population about the existence of the Witness and Victim Coordinator Service is low. As it turned out, **only 6% of the population stated that they heard about the Witness and Victim Coordinator Service**.

Introduction

PRIME is the European Union funded project and aims to support the increase of an external and internal independence of the Prosecution Service of Georgia for ensuring impartiality and fairness in the Georgian prosecution and investigation systems.

Within PRIME the survey of the population of Georgia on the knowledge and attitudes towards Prosecutor's Office was conducted from March 30 to April 12, 2020. The project originally intended to conduct a face-to-face survey of the population, but due to threats and restrictions related to the spread of coronavirus, the survey method was replaced by telephone interviews. 1017 persons were interviewed in total. The results are representative for the adult population of Georgia.

The survey studies the general attitude of the Georgian population towards the Prosecutor's Office, the knowledge about the Prosecutor's Office, the experience of relations with the Prosecutor's Office, the evaluation of prosecutors, the attitude towards them and the use of the Prosecutor's Office communication channels. The present report follows these topics and analyzes the results of a survey of the Georgian population. It briefly reviews the research methodology and then presents the results of the survey according to the following chapters: (1) Attitude towards the Prosecutor's Office and prosecutors of Georgia; (2) Knowledge about the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia; (3) Experience with the Prosecutor's Office; (4) Application of communication channels of the Prosecutor's Office and their evaluation. Attached to the report are the charts of the results of the survey and charts of the results of the multinomial logistic regression used in the analysis.

Methodology

The telephone survey on the knowledge and attitude of the Georgian population towards the Prosecutor's Office was conducted from March 30 to April 12, 2020.

The survey included several stages. First of all, the research topic was defined and a questionnaire was developed in close cooperation with the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia and IDFI. Then random selection of phone numbers (through random digit dialing method) were selected and survey started. The data obtained from the study were processed (the database was cleaned and weighed according to the distribution of respondents in demographic groups) and analyzed.

The study included the country's adult Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani-speaking population, except population living in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. 1,017 people in total were interviewed by telephone. The

sampling was representative for Georgia (except for ethnic minority settlements and occupied territories), as well as for the population of the capital, other cities and villages. List of phone numbers generated through random digit dialing was used at sampling. The average error rate on a country level is 2.1%.

Survey outcomes

The outcomes of the survey of the adult population of Georgia are analyzed according to the following topics: attitude towards the Prosecutor's Office and prosecutors, knowledge about the Prosecutor's Office and its activities, experience in relations with the Prosecutor's Office and use of communication channels of the Prosecutor's Office.

Attitude towards the Prosecutor's Office and prosecutors of Georgia

One of the tasks of the telephone survey was to reveal the attitude of the people towards the Georgian Prosecutor's Office and prosecutors. It should be noted that the respondents often do not have answers to the questions that serve to reveal the attitude towards the Prosecutor's Office and the prosecutors.

According to the results of the survey, a large part of the adult population of Georgia (44%) states that they are interested in the activities of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia. However, at the same time, **more than half of the population (54%) says they are not interested in the activities of the Prosecutor's Office.**

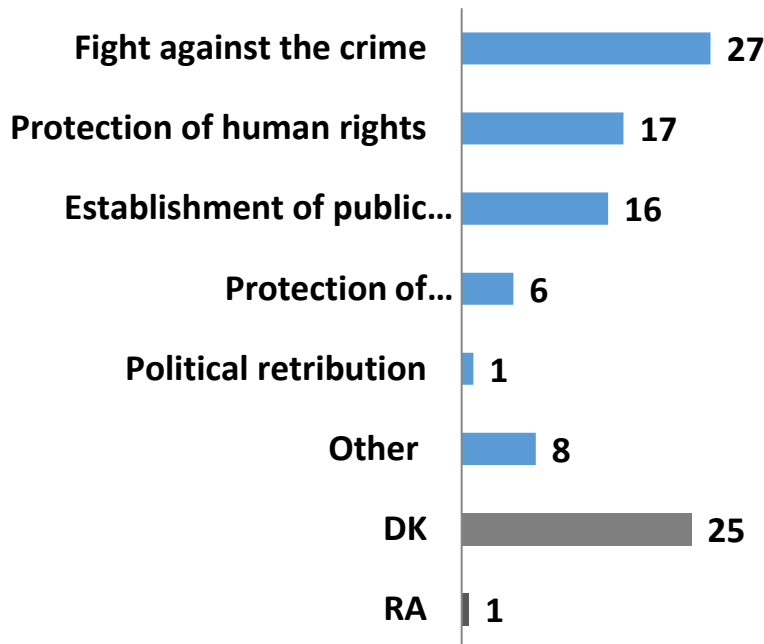
¹

When asked what the purpose of the Prosecutor's Office is in Georgia today, the population most often answers that it serves to fight crime. The second most frequent answer is human rights protection (17%). Almost the same share of the population claims that the Prosecutor's Office serves to establish public order today. A small part says that the Prosecutor's Office serves the interests of the government. It should be noted that slightly over one-fifth of the population does not know the purpose of the Prosecutor's Office in Georgia today. (See diagram 1)

¹ Data presented is summed up. Answer options "Interested" and "Tend to be interested" were summed up in one options of the answer "Interested"; and "Not interested" and "Tend not to be interested" were summed up in an option of the answer "Not interested".

Diagram 1

In your opinion, what is the purpose of the Prosecutor's Office today in Georgia? (%)



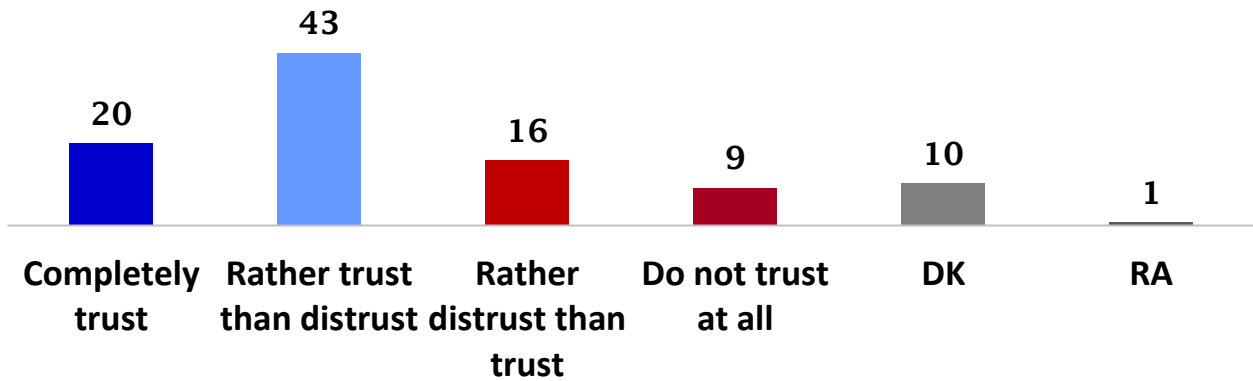
During the survey, respondents were asked to rate their trust in several institutions and professional groups (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Prosecutor's Office, prosecutors, court, lawyers, investigators, judges). According to the survey results, the population trusts each institution or professional group. However, it should be noted that the public trusts the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Internal Affairs the most (77%; 73%)².

As for the Prosecutor's Office, the public opinion in Georgia is inclined to trusting it. **One-fifth of the population says they fully trust the Prosecutor's Office, while about twice as many say they more likely trust them than otherwise.** It is noteworthy that one tenth of the public has no answer to the question. (See diagram 2).

² Data presented is summed up. Answer options "Trust greatly" and "Tend to trust" were summed up in one options of the answer "Trust"; and "Distrust greatly" and "Tend to distrust" were summed up in an option of the answer "Distrust".

Diagram 2

To what extent do you trust or distrust the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia?(%)



The results of the regression analysis³ showed that trust in the Prosecutor's Office is influenced by demographic characteristics such as settlement and employment status. The probability that residents of other cities, especially rural areas, will show confidence in the Prosecutor's Office compared to the capital is higher. It is also more likely that compared to the unemployed, employed respondents will state that they trust the Prosecutor's Office.

In addition to the demographic characteristics, the trust in the Prosecutor's Office is also influenced by the factor of whether the population is interested in the activities of the agency. In the case of those who claim to be interested in the activities of the Prosecutor's Office, there is a higher probability that they will express their trust than in the case of those who are not interested in the activities of the Prosecutor's Office.

It is noteworthy that those who think that the Prosecutor's Office is currently under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Internal Affairs are less likely to trust the Prosecutor's Office than those who choose the right answer that the Georgian Prosecutor's Office is currently an independent body. In addition, in the case of those who do not know whether the Prosecutor's Office is a subordinate body or an independent agency, there is a higher probability that they will not know whether they trust the Prosecutor's Office or not compared to those who say that the Prosecutor's Office is an independent

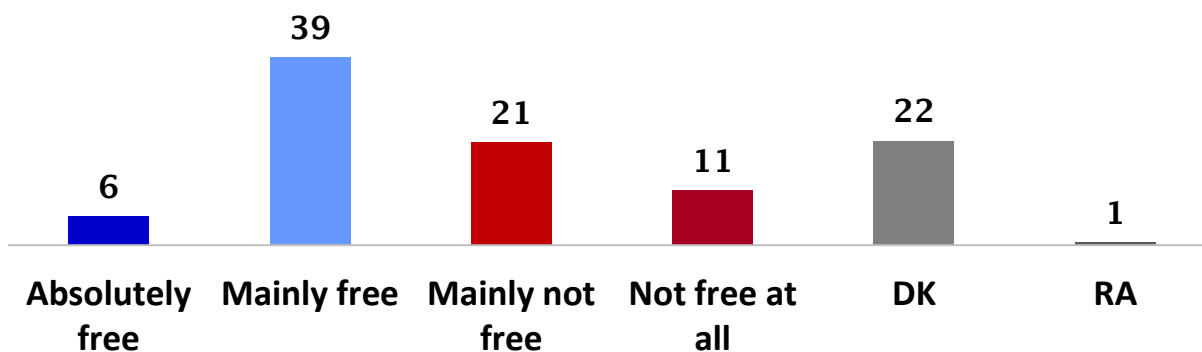
³ Multinomial logistic regression is used for analysis.

body. Similarly, those who do not know who the Prosecutor General is, are more likely to say that they do not know whether they trust the Prosecutor's Office.

Despite the public's trust in the Prosecutor's Office, the public's opinion divides when it comes to political influence on the Prosecutor's Office. About a fifth of the population states that the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia is not free from political influence. **A relatively large share of the population believes that the Prosecutor's Office is mainly free from political influence**, and about one-tenth state that the Prosecutor's Office is not at all free from political influence. It is noteworthy that slightly more than one-fifth of the population has no answer to the question (see diagram 3).

Diagram 3

Please tell me, how free or not free is the Prosecutor's office from political influence? (%)



According to the results of the regression analysis⁴, the age of the respondents, the level of education and the type of settlement have an impact on the opinion of the respondents on how free the Prosecutor's Office is from political influence. It is more likely that, compared to young people⁵, people aged 35-54 will rarely say that the Prosecutor's Office is free from political influence. Persons with secondary education or lower, are less likely to state that the Prosecutor's Office is not free from political influence compared

⁴ Multinomial logistic regression is used for analysis.

⁵ Young people implies persons of 18-34 age category.

to people with higher education. And, rural residents, compared to residents of the capital, are more likely to state that the Prosecutor's Office is free from political influence.

Results of the regression analysis also shows that those who do not know which statement is true – *the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia is currently under the Ministry of Justice, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia is currently under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia is currently an independent body* – are more likely to rarely state that the Prosecutor's Office is free from political influence. In addition, those, who do not know which statement is true, are more probable to state that they do not know how free the Prosecutor's Office from the influence is. (See Annex B, Chart 2).

It was also interesting for the survey to determine how the population evaluates the work of the Prosecutor's Office. According to the results of a telephone survey, **44% of the population say that the Prosecutor's Office works well**, slightly less - 39% of the population evaluates the work of the Prosecutor's Office as average, and almost a tenth of the population says that the Prosecutor's Office works poorly (9%). Also, about one-tenth (8%) does not have an answer to this question.⁶

Regression analysis⁷ results show that demographic characteristics such as respondents' sex, age, settlement, employment status, and level of education have an impact on the evaluation of the work of the Prosecutor's Office.

It is more likely residents of cities, and especially villages, are more likely to report that the Prosecutor's Office is working well compared to the residents of the capital. It is also more likely that people with secondary technical/special education state that the Prosecutor's Office is working well compared to persons with higher education. People over the age of 55 are more likely to report that the Prosecutor's Office is working poorly compared to young respondents. In addition, there is a greater chance that women and employed persons will rarely report that the Prosecutor's Office is working poorly. (See Annex B, Chart 3).

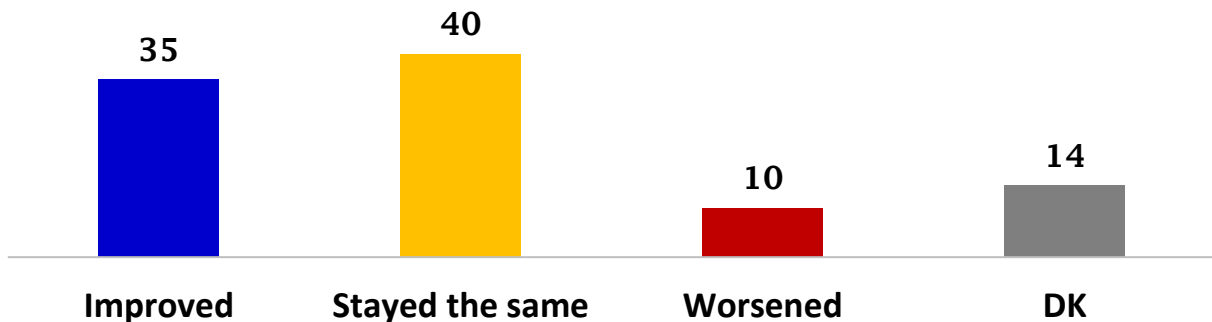
As for the evaluation of the work of the Prosecutor's Office for the last five years, 40% of the population say that the performance of the Prosecutor's Office has not changed. Slightly more than a third of the public believe it has improved, and a tenth thinks the work of the Prosecutor's Office has deteriorated over the past five years. (See diagram 4).

⁶ Data were grouped from a 5-point scale to a 3-point scale. Answer options "Very well" and "well" were summed up in one options of the answer "Well"; and "Very poorly" and "Poorly" were summed up in one options of the answer "Poorly". Answer option "Average" remained the same.

⁷ Multinomial logistic regression is used for analysis.

Diagram 4

In your opinion, during the last 5 years the work of Prosecutor's office improved, remained the same or worsened? (%)



Those who think that the performance of the Prosecutor's Office has improved will attribute this improvement mainly to more transparency and prompt work of the Prosecutor's Office. And those who think that the work of the Prosecutor's Office has deteriorated cite biased investigation conducted by the Prosecutor's Office as the reason. (See Annex A, Chart 9; 10).

Attitude towards prosecutors

In order to study the attitudes of the respondents, the questions concerned not only the Prosecutor's Office in general, but also the prosecutors in particular.

According to the results of the telephone survey, **the majority of the public (61%) trust prosecutors**. Slightly over a quarter (27%) of the population do not trust them, and about a tenth (11%) do not know whether they trust prosecutors in Georgia⁸

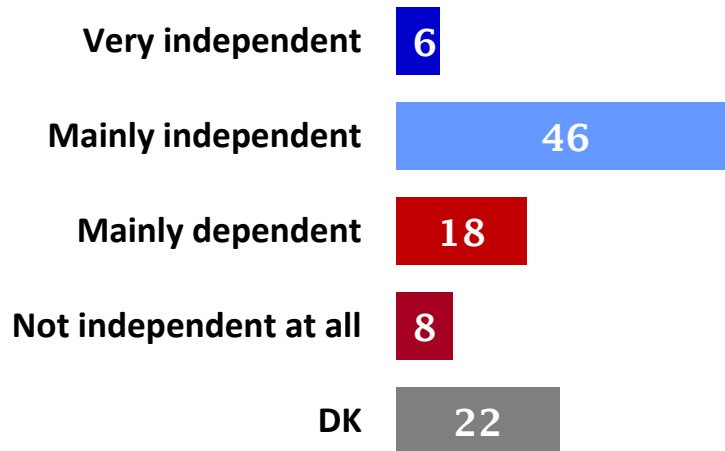
⁸ Data presented is summed up. Answer options "Trust greatly" and "Tend to trust" were summed up in one options of the answer "Trust"; and "Distrust greatly" and "Tend to distrust" were summed up in an option of the answer "Distrust".

It is noteworthy that the population is even more indecisive and about one-fifth of them are unable to answer the question when it comes to evaluating prosecutors directly.

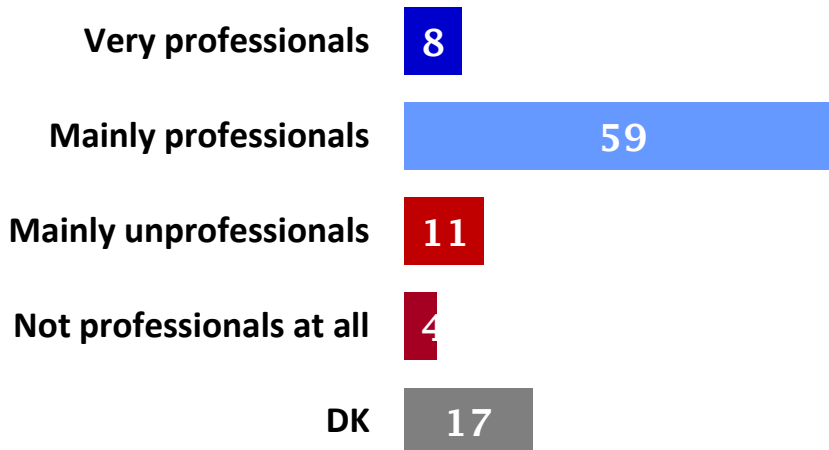
About half of the public says prosecutors are mostly independent. About a fifth of the population says the opposite. As for the professionalism of prosecutors, **the majority of the population claims that prosecutors are mostly professionals.** One-tenth believe that they are mostly unprofessional. (See diagram 5).

Diagram 5

Please tell me, how independent are prosecutors in Georgia? (%)



Please tell me, how professionals or unprofessionals are prosecutors in Georgia? (%)



There is a difference between the opinions of rural residents and residents of the capital on the independence and professionalism of prosecutors. Compared to the residents of the capital, the residents of the village more often say that the prosecutors are independent and professional.

Knowledge about the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia

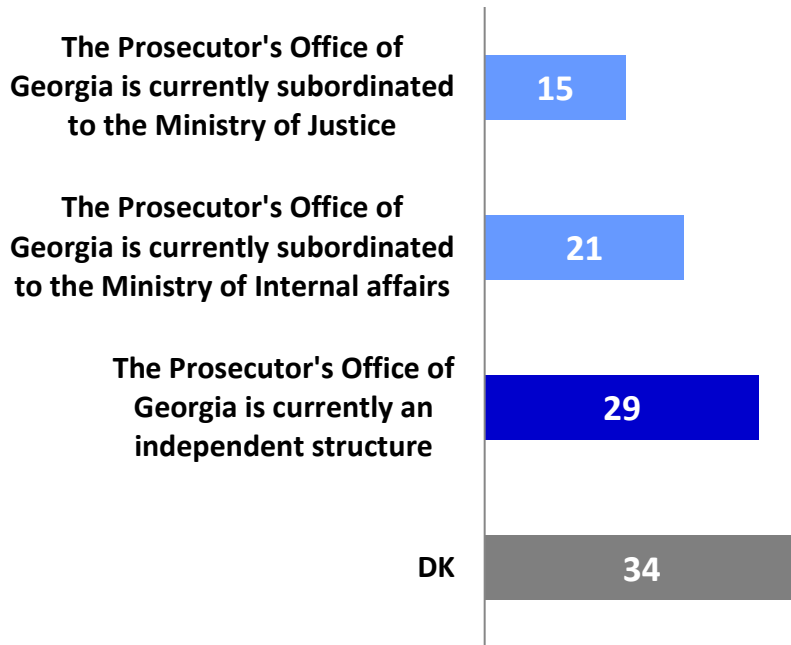
In addition to revealing general attitudes towards the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia and prosecutors, the survey allows us to assess the population's knowledge of the Prosecutor's Office to some extent. It is noteworthy that, like in revealing the attitude towards the Prosecutor's Office and prosecutors, the population often does not have the answers to the questions when assessing knowledge about the Prosecutor's Office.

The majority of the adult population of Georgia (64%) does not know who the Prosecutor General of Georgia is today. Almost a third (31%) correctly and the rest (4%) incorrectly name the Prosecutor General.

During the survey, respondents were given several statements about the Prosecutor's Office and were asked to answer which of them was true. **29% of the population correctly answers that the statement - *the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia is currently an independent body* - is true.** About one-fifth think that the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia is currently under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, while 15% think that the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia is currently under the Ministry of Justice. About a third of the population states that they do not know which of these three statements is true. (See diagram 6).

Diagram 6

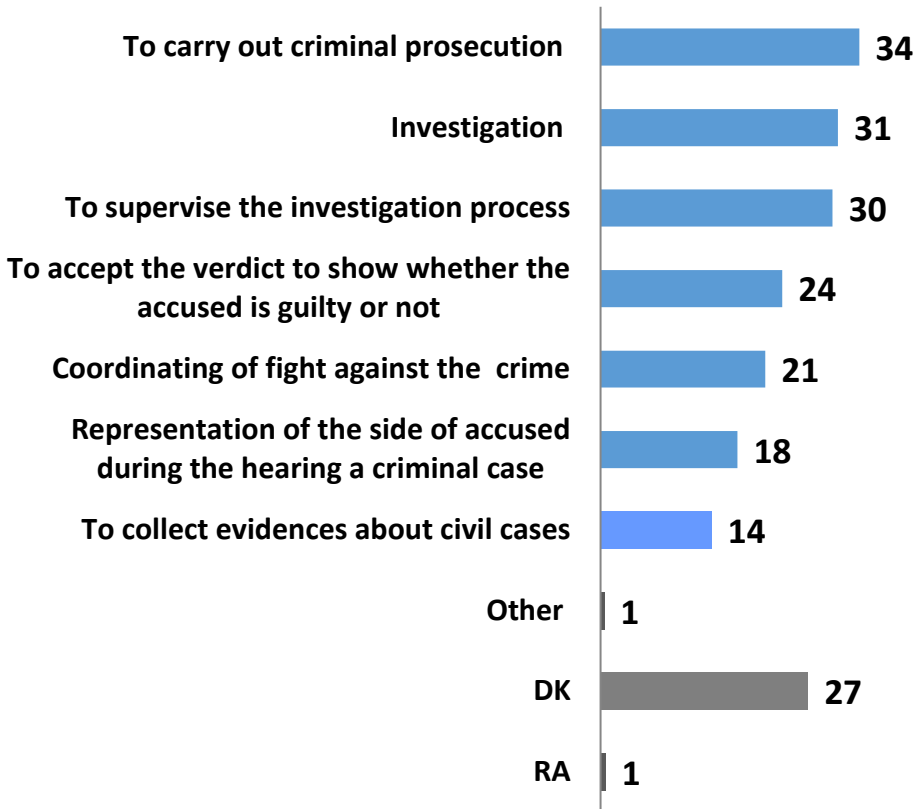
In your opinion, which of the following is true? (%)



As for the duties of the Prosecutor's Office, the population has more or less correct knowledge about them. During the survey, respondents were given a list of activities and asked to answer which of them were among the duties of the Prosecutor's Office. Prosecution, investigation and supervision of the investigation process are the most frequently named duties performed by the Prosecutor's Office. It is noteworthy that more than a fifth of the population thinks that the duty of the Prosecutor's Office is to issue a verdict on whether the accused is guilty or not. In addition, 15% say that it is the duty of the Prosecutor's Office to collect evidence on civil cases. At the same time, more than a fifth of the public does not know what activities are among the duties of the Prosecutor's Office. (See diagram 7)

Diagram 7

In your opinion, which of the following are the duties of the Prosecutor's office? (%)



Note: Respondents could name any answers. Thus indicators of the answers in percentages do not add up to 100.

Experience with the Prosecutor's Office

It was interesting for the study to identify the share of the population that has had any contact with the Prosecutor's Office in the last five years. This contact could have been personal of the respondent himself/herself or of a family member, a close friend, or a close relative of the respondent.

According to the survey, **only 6% of Georgia's adult Georgian-speaking population say they, their a family member or close friend have had any contact with the Prosecutor's Office in the past five years**, and their status was mainly of a victim. Out of those who had contact with the Prosecutor's Office, slightly more than a third states, that the case were resolved in their/their relative's favor; About half of the respondents say the case has not been resolved in their/their relative's favor and about a tenth refuse to answer the question. The share of respondents is almost equally divided when they evaluate prosecutors

in the process of working on their/their relative's cases. Part of them claims that the prosecutor worked professionally on the case, while part claims the opposite.

During the survey, respondents were asked if they had filed a complaint to the Prosecutor's Office against any of the prosecutors. As it turned out, almost none of the respondents complained to the Prosecutor's Office.

Application of communication channels of the Prosecutor's Office and their evaluation

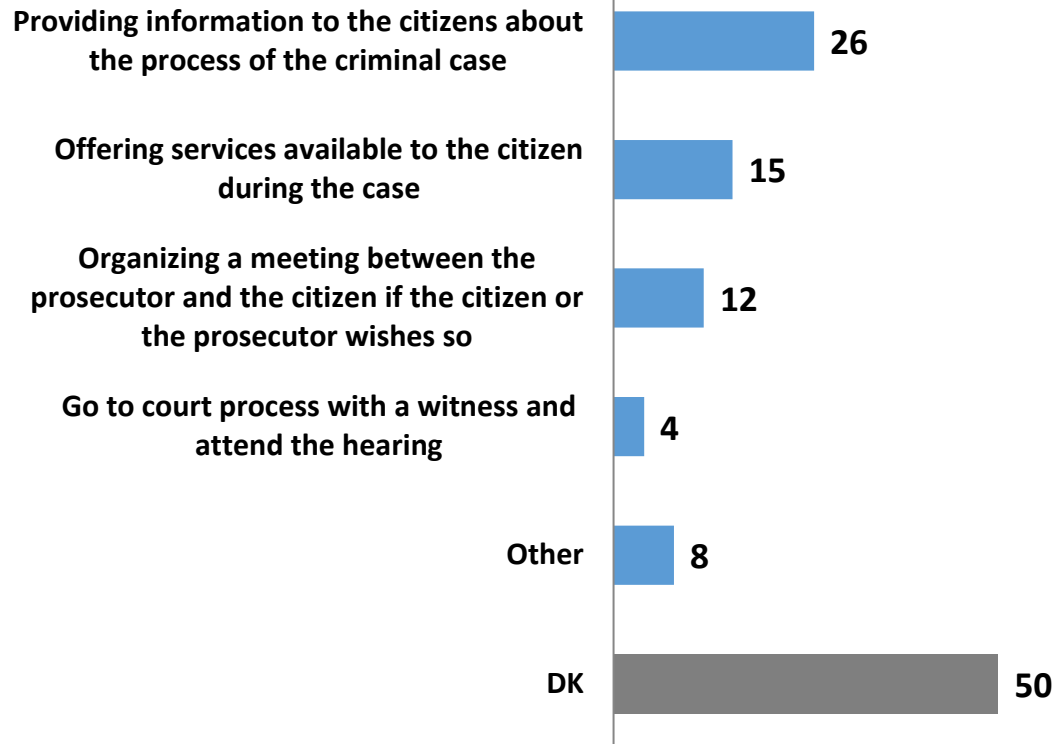
It was also interesting for the study to find out how actively people use the communications and information means related to the Prosecutor's Office and whether they see any flaws in them.

According to a telephone survey, **only 1% of the population used the Prosecutor's Office website and Facebook page.** 2% stated they were unaware that the Prosecutor's Office had a website or a Facebook page, while the rest of the public said they did not use the Prosecutor's Office website or Facebook page. **Most of those who have used the website of the Prosecutor's Office, say it is easy to find information on the website.**

As for the hotline of the Prosecutor's Office, like in case of the website and Facebook pages, **there is very little share of people (1%) who state to have used the hotline of the Prosecutor's Office.** 7% said they were unaware of the existence of a hotline at the Prosecutor's Office; 91% say they did not use the hotline. **Most of those who have used the hotline of the Prosecutor's Office are satisfied with the service.** A small number of those who are dissatisfied with the hotline service name not receiving desired information as a reason for dissatisfaction.

During the survey, respondents were asked if they had heard of the Witness and Victim Coordinator Service. As it turned out, **6% of the population had heard of the Witness and Victim Coordinator Service** and mostly they state that the function of the Coordinator Service is to provide information on prosecution to the citizens, to offer available services to citizens during case proceeding and in case a citizen or a prosecutor wishes so, to arrange a meeting of a prosecutor and a citizen,

In your opinion, which functions does Witness and Victim Coordinator Service have? (%)



Note: Respondents could name any answers. Thus indicators of the answers in percentages do not add up to 100.