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PRESS RELEASE

Georgian NGO blocked from UN Anti-Corruption conference

The UNCAC Coalition is very concerned about reports that the Russian Federation has taken steps to block attendance of a Georgian NGO at an upcoming UN meeting on corruption. The same Georgian group, [the Transnational Crime and Corruption Center-Caucasus Office](#), had been accredited to attend the two previous meetings of the Conference of States Parties for the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) that took place in 2006 and early 2008.

The meeting, held biennially, brings together governments signatory to the UNCAC to discuss follow-up activities and processes. The next one will take place in Doha from 9 to 13 November 2009. No NGO has ever been excluded from the Conference of States Parties due to an objection from a government.

“If this objection stands, it will set a dangerous precedent” said Vincent Lazatin of the Transparency and Accountability Network in the Philippines, a Coalition organisation that was a target of a government objection, which was subsequently withdrawn, ahead of the first conference on the Convention. “It would suggest that arbitrary objections could be made.”

The collective global efforts to fight corruption envisaged by UNCAC are seriously threatened by any political or otherwise unfounded objection to the attendance of a particular civil society organisation. UNCAC's Article 13 specifically recognises an important role for civil society and NGOs in the fight against corruption and calls for their involvement as well their access to government information.

The rules of procedure adopted by governments for intergovernmental UNCAC meetings allow objection by a state party. No reason has to be given nor does the UN have to reveal which government is objecting. This is at odds with a convention that calls for transparency, accountability and civil society participation in anti-corruption efforts.

The Coalition calls for the objection to be withdrawn and for steps to be taken to ensure that NGOs will not be excluded on the basis of arbitrary objections. The Coalition will be writing to governments to obtain views on this subject.

Note to Editors: The [United Nations Convention against Corruption \(UNCAC\)](#) is the most comprehensive global legal framework for combating corruption. It is a binding agreement [ratified by 141 states](#) on standards and requirements for preventing, detecting, investigating and sanctioning corruption. The adoption of an effective review mechanism at the upcoming Conference of States Parties is essential for the success of the UNCAC.

The UNCAC Coalition was formed in 2006 and is composed of more than 100 civil society organisations in more than 60 countries. Its goal is to promote ratification, implementation and monitoring of the UN Convention against Corruption. More information can be found at www.uncaccoalition.org