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# DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN SECURITY: ENHANCING SAFETY AND WELL-BEING IN GEORGIA'S COMMUNITIES

**A CONSOLIDATED REPORT ON SIX MUNICIPALITIES OF GEORGIA**



**EKATERINE GAMAKHARIA**

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## A CONSOLIDATED REPORT ON SIX MUNICIPALITIES OF GEORGIA

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research conducted by the Women's Fund "Sukhumi" assessed the level of human security across six target municipalities<sup>1</sup>, engaging a diverse population that included men and women of various ages and statuses: internally displaced persons (IDPs), local residents, socially vulnerable individuals, people with disabilities, single mothers and mothers of many children, teachers, doctors, entrepreneurs, community leaders, students, elderly people, youth, and local experts. The primary goal was to examine the different dimensions of human security—economic, public, food, personal, health, and ecological—to assess the overall sense of security among the population. This study also aimed to identify the problems and challenges faced by these groups, develop effective response strategies, and advocate for positive changes at both local and central levels.

Overall, the sense of security across different categories and dimensions of human security in the studied municipalities is at a middle point. Most participants rated their sense of security at level 3 on a 5-point scale, indicating moderate perceptions of safety and well-being. This comprehensive research highlights the nuanced interplay between various factors shaping human security.

**Economic Security:** Economic stability remains a significant concern for the population, particularly regarding access to income sources and participation in economic activities, with a notable disparity between the local population and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Consequently, ensuring stable employment, fair wages, and equitable access to financial resources for all groups is essential to meeting the community's needs.

**Food Security:** High food prices, poor product quality, and limited access to grocery stores are prominent issues. Environmental factors such as pesticide use and climate change further jeopardize food quality and availability, underscoring the need for improved regulation and support programs for local agriculture.

**Environmental Security:** Environmental threats include poor waste management, limited access to clean drinking water or inadequate water quality, and the impacts of climate change. These challenges highlight the urgent need for robust environmental policies and sustainable practices as key measures to mitigate existing risks.

**Health Security:** Concerns about health security include high medical costs, poor-quality services, and limited access to healthcare facilities. The financial burden of medical expenses and widespread mistrust in healthcare systems underscore the urgent need for policy improvements and better healthcare regulation.

**Public Security:** The deteriorating crime situation, the growing prevalence of substance abuse, and the heightened level of aggression in society are major issues that significantly threaten public safety. These concerns are further compounded by inadequate road and public transport infrastructure and a declining public trust in law enforcement agencies, necessitating a comprehensive approach to enhance public safety.

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<sup>1</sup> Kutaisi, Tskaltubo, Khoni, Senaki, Zugdidi, and Tsalenjikha municipalities.

**Personal Security:** Concerns about personal security encompass rising migration driven by economic instability, limitations on freedom of expression, and pervasive domestic violence. Women are particularly affected by these threats, underscoring the gendered nature of personal safety and the urgent need for targeted interventions to protect vulnerable populations.

To effectively address these human security issues, a holistic and multifaceted approach is required, involving active engagement from different ministries, municipalities, CSOs, and international organizations. Detailed recommendations are provided at the end of this report to enhance Human Security across all dimensions.

## INTRODUCTION

The country is currently facing a complex mix of unresolved and protracted conflicts, a volatile internal political climate, and significant socio-economic challenges. These factors collectively contribute to the population's vulnerability, lack of stability, and hinder development. The population faces low levels of human security, characterized by precarious working conditions, income instability, insufficient health protections, severe environmental pollution, and increasing rates of domestic violence. These conditions erode the psycho-emotional well-being of the population, leading to aggression and impeding societal development, thereby threatening country's peace and stability.

To navigate these challenges, it is crucial to continuously assess the human security levels of the population and their sense of safety and security. Human security encompasses various dimensions including economic, social, food, personal, health, educational, and ecological aspects. Understanding these dimensions is vital for creating effective policies and interventions that enhance overall well-being and stability.

The research conducted by the Women Fund «Sukhumi» evaluated the level of human security across six target municipalities, involving men and women of various ages and social statuses. This inclusive approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the unique challenges and needs faced by different groups within the population.

**The primary purpose of the research is to examine various dimensions of human security—including economic, public, food, personal, health, and environmental aspects—and to assess the population's overall sense of safety and security. The study also seeks to identify underlying risks and specific needs that heighten feelings of danger and instability within the community.** Based on the findings, comprehensive recommendations were developed, strategies for addressing these challenges were outlined, and plans to advocate for positive changes at local, national, and international levels were formulated.

Central to this effort is the Gender-Responsive Conflict Early Warning System (GREWS) developed by the Women Fund "Sukhumi." GREWS aims to gather and analyze data on anticipated conflicts or crises, identify threats, and formulate timely response strategies. The system emphasizes addressing the specific needs and interests of both women and men. For GREWS to be effective, it must be rooted in the priorities of local communities, with its success dependent on their active and direct involvement in information gathering, data analysis, and the development of specific recommendations.



## PART I: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

### 1.1. METHODOLOGY:

Women and young leaders from local communities in six target municipalities were actively involved in the data collection process. The research employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. A structured questionnaire was developed for the quantitative research, consisting primarily of closed questions related to various aspects of human security. The quantitative survey was conducted online, allowing respondents to select multiple options from the given answers or to provide alternative opinions.

The quantitative research engaged 945 individuals, including 628 women and 317 men, who participated in the survey through an online questionnaire. The qualitative research engaged 189 participants, comprising 151 women and 38 men, and was conducted through 24 focus group discussions and 24 in-depth individual interviews using a pre-designed structured questionnaire.

**Overall, the study engaged 1,134 citizens, including 779 women and 355 men.** Participants represented a diverse cross-section of society, including IDPs, conflict-affected populations, locals, socially disadvantaged and disabled individuals, single mothers, doctors, entrepreneurs, community leaders, students, pensioners, young adults, local self-government representatives, and experts.

**The research covered the populations of six municipalities in Imereti and Samegrelo regions: Kutaisi, Tskaltubo, Khoni, Zugdidi, Senaki, and Tsalenjikhi.** Respondents were selected based on various socio-demographic characteristics, ensuring the data's generalizability. The research was conducted from February to March 2024.

### 1.2. THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS:

**In terms of gender composition** of the respondents of quantitative survey, 66.5% of the respondents were women, and 33.5% were men. The age range of the interviewees spanned from 18 to 65 years old, with 23.3% aged 18-30 years, 35.8% aged 31-45 years, 30.4% aged 46-65 years, and a relatively small segment, 10.6%, over 65 years old.

**Regarding socio-demographic status**, 54,9% of the respondents are local residents, out of which 6.6% live in villages adjacent to conflict-dividing line, and 45,2% are displaced people, with 5% of them residing in the villages in proximity of conflict-dividing line.

**Analyzing the type of employment**, the majority of respondents, 29.3%, are unemployed. Of the employed respondents, 27.3% work for the state, 15.1% are engaged in private business (either as entrepreneurs or self-employed), 11.6% are students, 11.6% are pensioners, and 5% are employed in the civil sector.

An in-depth analysis of the data reveals a gender disparity in unemployment: 33.1% of men are unemployed compared to 27.4% of women. Additionally, among the unemployed, displaced people predominate at 36.1%, compared to 23.7% of local residents. This highlights the persistent economic challenges faced by IDPs and their limited access to stable employment opportunities.

In terms of state employment, local residents are more frequently employed by the state, with 35% of locals working in state-employed jobs. In contrast, only 17.3% of IDPs are employed by the state, indicating a disparity in access to state-funded employment opportunities.

**A notably high unemployment rate is particularly striking among the population residing in the villages of Zugdidi and Tsalenjikha municipalities,** situated around the conflict dividing line. Although the number of respondents was nearly equal across municipalities, averaging 151 per municipality (except for Kutaisi, which had 180 respondents), there were significant variations in unemployment rates. In Tsalenjikha municipality, 46.3% of respondents were unemployed, while in Zugdidi, the figure was 36.4%. The unemployment rates in the other municipalities were as follows: Khoni at 29.1%, Senaki at 28.4%, Tskaltubo at 23%, and Kutaisi at 15%.

The notable disparity underscores how the proximity to conflict zones in Tsalenjikha and Zugdidi hinders economic opportunities and job availability, exacerbating elevated unemployment rates. Residents in these areas contend with unique challenges such as restricted market access and disrupted economic networks, further compounding their difficulties. In contrast, Kutaisi’s lower unemployment rate at 15% indicates a more stable economic environment, likely due to better infrastructure and fewer conflict-related disruptions. The unemployment rates in Khoni, Senaki, and Tskaltubo, ranging from 23% to 29.1%, reflect moderate levels of economic stability but still face significant employment challenges compared to Kutaisi. This data underscores the need for targeted economic interventions in conflict-affected municipalities like Tsalenjikha and Zugdidi. Improving employment opportunities in these regions through vocational training, support for local businesses, and conflict-sensitive economic policies is crucial for enhancing human security and fostering long-term stability.

## PART II: KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 2.1. THE LEVEL OF POPULATION’S SENSE OF SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security are fundamental aspects of well-being for any population, crucially impacting daily life and societal stability. However, the research reveals a varied perception of security among citizens.

**The survey used a 5-point scale** to assess the population’s perception of security, **where 1 represents very poor security and 5 represents excellent security.** The results reveal that a significant majority of respondents chose the neutral midpoint, rating their sense of security at level 3 (39.8%). Additionally, 7% and 12.9% of respondents selected levels 1 and 2, respectively, indicating lower security, while 27.6% rated their security slightly higher at level 4, and 12.7% opted for level 5 (see Diagram #1)

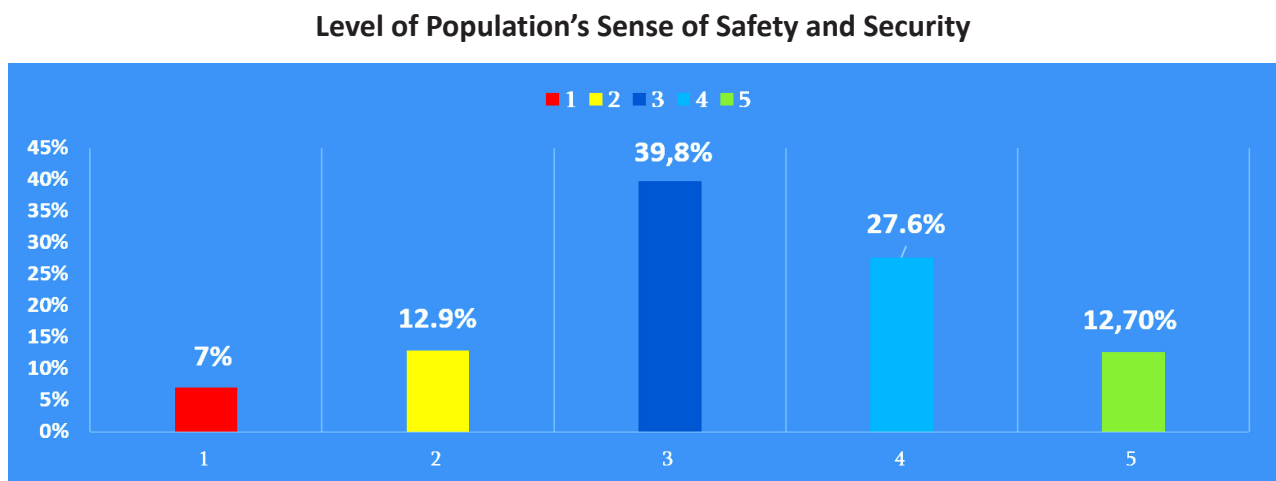


Diagram #1

When examining responses by gender, both men (40.1%) and women (39.3%) predominantly rated their security at level 3. However, a notable gender difference emerges at the lower end of the scale: 22.7% of men indicated feeling least secure (choosing levels 1-2), compared to 18.5% of women. The gender disparity in security perceptions, where a higher percentage of men feel less secure compared to women, highlights the nuanced impact of gender on subjective feelings of safety. This disparity is significant in light of the higher unemployment rate among men, which can exacerbate feelings of insecurity and vulnerability. Men, who face higher unemployment rates across the surveyed municipalities, may perceive greater economic instability and social vulnerability. This can contribute to their heightened sense of insecurity compared to women.

Analysis by territorial-municipal belonging reveals significant disparities in perceived security levels (refer to Table #1):

- **Tsalenjikha municipality** (villages Pakhulani, Tskoushi, close to conflict dividing line) reported the highest sense of insecurity, with 37.1% of respondents choosing very low levels 1-2;
- Senaki followed with 18,5% feeling insecure, while Tskaltubo and Khoni reported almost similar figures at 17,2%-17% (levels 1-2);
- **Kutaisi and Zugdidi municipalities**, had the lowest percentage of respondents indicating feelings of insecurity, with only 15% and 15.7% respectively choosing levels 1-2 on the security scale.

This data indicates that proximity to conflict zones significantly impacts perceived insecurity in Tsalenjikha municipality. However, a larger municipality like Zugdidi, where several villages are also located near the ABL (Administrative Boundary Line), may benefit from better infrastructure and resources, leading to higher perceived security among its residents. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that residents living closest to the conflict-dividing line predominantly rated their security levels as 1-2 (35.7%) and 3 (35.8%), reflecting a notably low sense of security in these areas.

There is a notable **correlation between employment status and the sense of security**. The majority—73%—of those who rated their level of security as “5” on the scale are employed. For example, out of the 120 respondents who marked ‘Scale 5,’ 87 individuals are employed.

The Sense of Security according to Municipalities							
Low	Municipalities	1	2	3	4	5	High
	Tsalenjikha	19,9%	17,2%	41,7%	13,25%	7,9%	
	Zugdidi	2,6%	13,1%	39,2%	31,4%	13,7%	
	Senaki	4,6%	13,9%	46%	27,8%	7,3%	
	Khoni	7,3%	9,9%	44,4%	29,8%	8,6%	
	Tskaltubo	4,4%	12,58%	25,8%	36,5%	20,7%	
	Kutaisi	3,9%	11,1%	41,6%	26,7%	16,7%	

Table #1

## 2.2. DEFINING SECURITY IN THE EYES OF THE POPULATION

Quantitative research highlights that the majority of respondents perceive security through several primary lenses: economic stability (38.6%), absence of the threat of war and stability within the country (30.2%), and family welfare (28.9%), access to education and healthcare, access to basic needs such as food and accommodation (25%), and political stability and good governance (23.3%). The less frequently mentioned aspects were social justice and equal rights (14.9%), absence of physical violence or the threat of such violence (14.6%), emotional stability (12.2%), and ecological sustainability (11.1%). These concerns underscore what the population considers essential for their sense of security (refer to Diagram #2).

Diagram #2

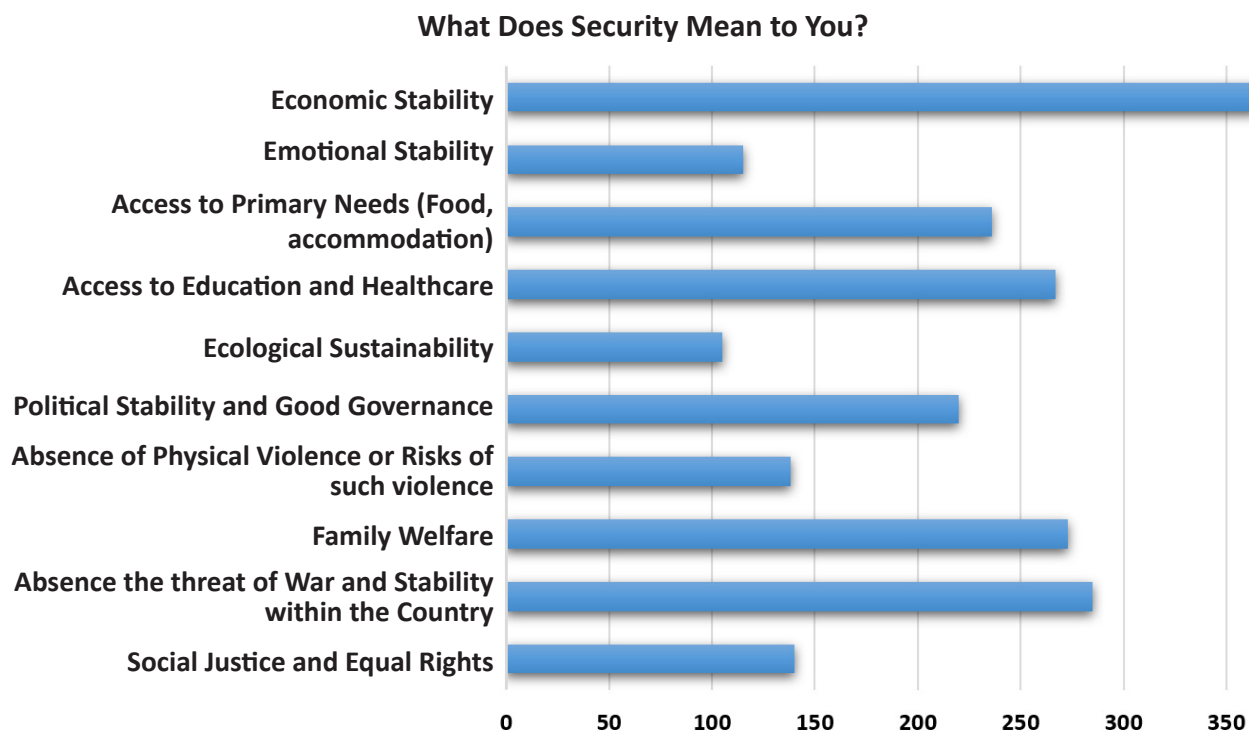


Diagram #2

**Economic Stability (38.6%)** emerges as the most significant aspect of security. Stable employment and reliable income are crucial for meeting basic needs and ensuring financial security. Respondents emphasize that economic stability is foundational to their overall sense of security. Qualitative data supports this view, as articulated by a participant of one of the focus-group interview: *“A high degree of security for me means the environment where I am employed, there are healthy relationships, we are provided with food and the impact of the environment is less dangerous. In my opinion, a completely safe environment is an environment where there is no danger of losing the job in the near future, nor will any economic crisis affect you and your family, but there are no solid guarantees in this regard.”* - T. Ch, 49 years old, Teacher, Tsalenjikha municipality

**Absence of the Threat of War and Stability within the Country (30.2%)** is the second most significant concern. Ongoing regional conflicts and geopolitical uncertainties, such as Russia’s aggression in Ukraine and tensions in Karabakh, Azerbaijan contribute significantly to the population’s fears. Frequent discussions by political leaders about the risks of conflict and the possibility of a “second front” opening in Georgia can exacerbate these fears, particularly as the country navigates a complex geopolitical landscape. Continuous media coverage of regional instability and political tensions keeps the population acutely aware of potential threats, reinforcing a sense of insecurity. Gender-segregated



data reveals that this issue concerns women more (33.7%) than men (22.4%). Qualitative data underscores these concerns: *“The war in Ukraine finally broke our peace, as if that was not enough. Now Israel’s war has also been added, the whole world seems to be sitting on a minefield. There is chaos everywhere. No one knows where the conflict will take place tomorrow. I’m afraid, I’m very afraid, what we have to hope for! I lost my calm.”* - M.D., 62 years old, Tskaltubo municipality

*“I have already been through one war [in Abkhazia], but then I had another fear. The war already happened and I was trying to survive. Now I have another fear, the fear of starting a war. After so many years, I couldn’t imagine if this danger still existed. There is no war now, but I am afraid of war. Do you see what is happening in the world, huge countries are unable to avoid war, what should we hope for.”* - T. c., 68 years old, IDP from Abkhazia, Tskaltubo municipality.

**Political Stability and Good Governance (23.3%)** is highlighted by a significant portion of respondents. The current tense political environment and divisive rhetoric contribute to fears of instability. High political polarization and upcoming elections increase the population’s concerns about political stability: *“There has never been such a division in society. Sometimes I’m afraid to speak up at work. I avoid discussing politics with those close to me out of fear of being on the opposite side politically. This division has made people more aggressive and tense, and politicians might find this situation advantageous. There seems to be no resolution in sight, hindering our progress and amplifying our vulnerabilities”* - T.D., 49 years old, employed in state service, Tskaltubo

**Family well-being and access to education and health care (28.3%):** Family well-being, encompassing economic stability, health, and education, is a crucial factor in overall security and quality of life. Survey data reveals that many respondents are particularly concerned about financial stability and the availability of quality education and healthcare services.

*There is a difficult financial situation in my family. I work seasonally on vegetable trays, while my husband is forced to work for daily wages. The uncertainty of tomorrow’s income is unsettling. We live day to day, unsure if we will have enough to meet our needs.”* - F.T., 38 years old, mother of many children, socially vulnerable, Tskaltubo municipality.

*“Georgia is in the last five according to the quality of education, which quality should we talk about? Without training with tutors, you will not be able to get into the University. There are lack of exchange programs to go somewhere and get to know the experience of countries with high standards in terms of education.”* - M.D., 20 years old, student, Tskaltubo municipality.

The data underscores significant issues faced by young professionals, particularly the **challenges in finding employment within their field** due to either a scarcity of jobs or employers unwilling to provide dignified salaries - *“I am a psychologist by profession, I love my profession very much. I had completely different plans and goals. I graduated from the institute and what then... now I work in the market and I desperately expect that someday maybe my profession will be needed somewhere. There are such requirements for a psychologist, but where I went, they don’t have the money to pay me a salary.”* - T.K. 27 years old, woman, Tskaltubo municipality.

Additionally, students often struggle to afford living expenses, forcing them to take night jobs alongside their studies, which can lead to adverse health effects and interrupted education - *“I studied very well, I trained for a year with a tutor. I got a 50% grant, but then it was very difficult for me. The apartment rent became so expensive that my parents could not cover so many expenses, I was forced to start working in the night shift. I could not last long, my health prevented me, I needed an operation. Finally, I had to stop studying. I don’t know how long I will have a time-out. This is the hardest for me. The institutes do not have dormitories and this creates a problem for many students.”* - D.N., 21 years old, young man, student, Senaki Municipality.

## 2.3. ECONOMIC SECURITY

**Economic security** is a fundamental component of human security, encompassing the ability of individuals and families to meet their basic needs, while ensuring financial stability and opportunities for economic advancement. This chapter explores critical aspects of economic security among the population, including how individuals rate their economic situation, the primary sources of income, and the biggest threats to their economic stability. It also examines what is deemed most necessary to ensure economic security, evaluates awareness of state programs designed for economic empowerment, and investigates the main sources of information about these programs.

### 2.3.1. ASSESSMENT OF LEVEL OF THE ECONOMIC SECURITY

The assessment of economic security in the quantitative research was conducted using a 5-point scale, where 1 represents very bad and 5 represents very good. The data reveals a significant concentration of respondents in the middle of the scale (refer to diagram #3), with the majority (49%) rating their economic security at the 3rd level. This suggests that nearly half of the respondents perceive their economic situation as moderate, neither particularly secure nor insecure.

22.4% of respondents report that their economic security is **extremely low**, with 5.9% rating it as 1 point and 16.5% rating it as 2 points. This highlights the severe financial difficulties and economic vulnerability experienced by a substantial portion of the population.

28.6% of respondents rate their economic security at the **higher end of the scale** (4 or 5 points), with 23% rating it as 4 points and 5.6% rating it as 5 points. This indicates that less than a third of respondents experience a high level of economic well-being.

**Assessment of Level of Economic Security**

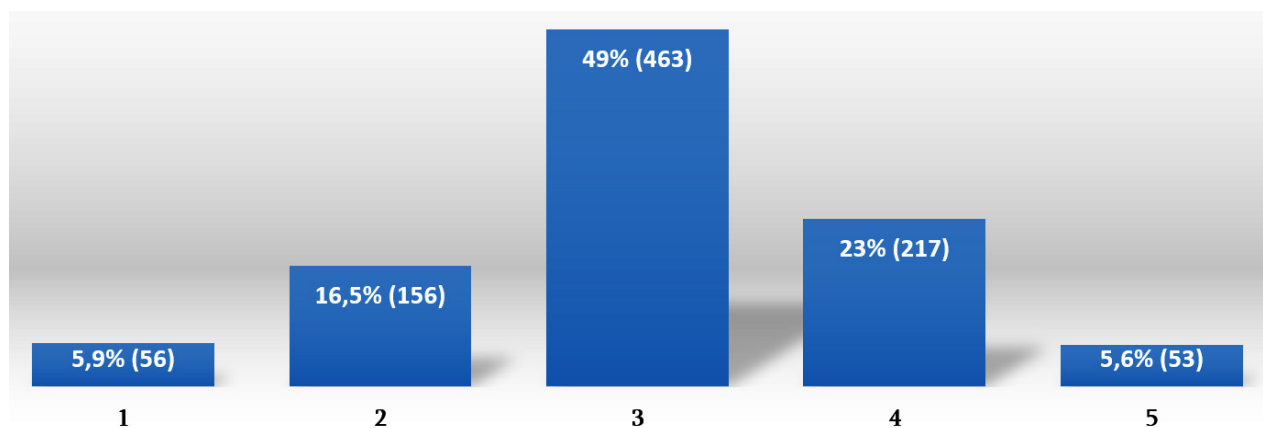


Diagram #3

### 2.3.2. POPULATION'S MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME

**Analysis of Main Income Sources and Economic Vulnerability:** The data reveals that salary is the primary source of income for 41.3% of respondents and their families. However, it is significant to note that those who identified salary as their main source of income also rely on additional sources, such as pensions, help from relatives, remittances from abroad, and allowances for displaced persons. This indicates that the current salary is often insufficient to meet families' livelihood needs, necessitating the mobilization of supplementary cash resources.

The insufficiency and inadequacy of salaries, along with the necessity of mobilizing additional financial means, is highlighted by this experience: *“I am employed in public service, my salary is 700 GEL. My wife receives 600 GEL. This is the total income of my family. I have three children. How to live with this income, how to support a family? We barely make it from month to month. We are the poorest intelligentsia.”* - L. P., 49 years old, employed in state service, Senaki municipality.

**Disparities Between Local Residents and IDPs:** The data highlights a disparity in income sources between local residents and internally displaced persons (IDPs). A majority of wage earners are local residents (52.1%), whereas the share of IDPs relying on salaries is significantly lower (28%). Instead, IDPs constitute a larger proportion of social assistance recipients (for poverty), with 16.8% of social assistance recipients being displaced persons, compared to 10% of local residents. This suggests a higher reliance on social allowances among IDPs, pointing to their poor integration into the local labor market and economic systems. Most of the IDPs underscore that their main income source is the IDP allowance (57%), which constitutes GEL 45, further emphasizing their economic vulnerability. Such reliance naturally increases their vulnerability and risk of instrumentalization of IDPs.

Additionally, only 18% of IDPs receive income from family farming, compared to 27.4% of local residents. This indicates that IDPs are less likely to own land and participate in agricultural activities, which is a vital source of income and food security for many families. Moreover, locals are more involved in business activities (15.6%) compared to IDPs (10.7%), further highlighting the economic integration challenges faced by displaced persons.

### 2.3.3. MAJOR THREATS TO ECONOMIC SECURITY

The biggest threat to economic security for the population is unemployment, as identified by 43.7% of the respondents. This is followed closely by lower employment prospects and inflation, with 40% of respondents each highlighting these issues as significant concerns. Other critical threats include poverty (37.8%), low wages (34.6%), high-interest loans and credits (26.3%), job loss (19%), growing work migration abroad (16.7%), and the scarcity or non-availability of state programs for economic empowerment (12.2%) – (refer to Diagram #4).

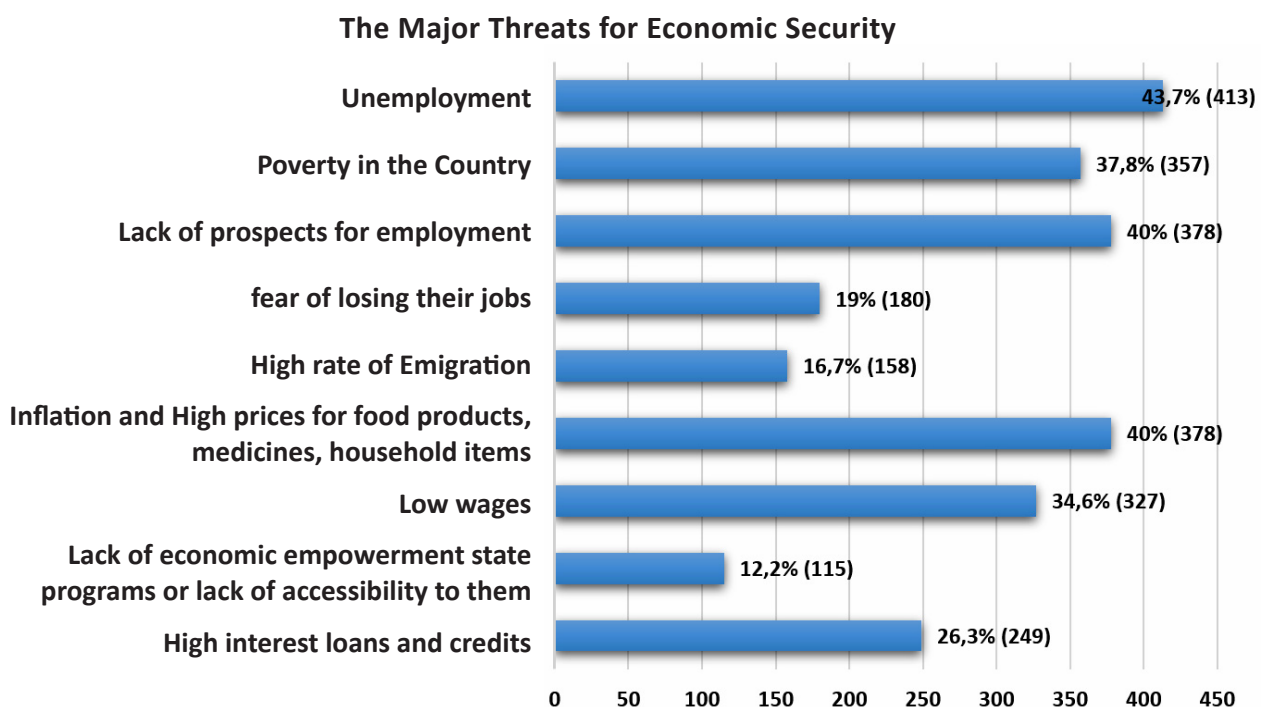


Diagram #4

### Qualitative Data Analysis by Municipality

The qualitative data reveal significant economic insecurity driven by unemployment, low wages, and limited job opportunities. Respondents report being unable to meet basic needs due to insufficient income, leading to poverty, migration, and an outflow of the working population, which threatens demographic stability. **Many individuals, including young people, migrate abroad to find work.** This often leads to families being separated, with children and other family members remaining behind. This migration trend depletes local human resources and creates a cycle of dependency and vulnerability. **Inflation, high-interest loans, and unstable economic conditions** exacerbate these challenges, making it difficult for residents to plan for the future.

**Tsalenjikha Municipality:** The qualitative data from Tsalenjikha reveals that economic stability is severely undermined by the **lack of jobs and low wages**. Respondents report being unable to meet basic needs due to insufficient income. Unemployment leads to poverty, migration, and an outflow of the working population, which in turn threatens the demographic stability of the region. The **pervasive issue of migration** is driven by unemployment, with many men and women leaving the village to find work abroad, often leaving children behind. As one resident stated, *“There is an outflow of young people abroad, and the village is becoming empty. Young people do not see any development perspective here, and consequently, the country cannot develop either.”* - Sh.Sh., female, 48 years old, Pakhulani, garden manager, entrepreneur.

**Zugdidi Municipality:** In Zugdidi, the **scale of migration** is also significant, driven by the need to secure basic livelihoods. Respondents highlight the risk and uncertainty involved in migrating for work but feel compelled due to the dire economic situation. *“Not a month goes by without a neighbor going to another country to earn money. They emigrate to find Lukmapuri, to support their families, despite the risks.”* - I.Z., woman, 39 years old, teacher, Didi Nedzi. **Unemployment and low wages are critical threats to economic security**, with many respondents emphasizing the lack of job opportunities and the reliance on limited agricultural income - *“Only laurel and hazelnuts are the main income of our region, and these hazelnuts and laurels are no longer sufficient and enough. There are no physical jobs, and no other means of employment are available, no matter how educated people are.”* - N.T., woman, 44 years old, Tsatskhvi village, civil servant.

**Senaki Municipality:** In Senaki, economic insecurity is a pervasive issue, exacerbated by high unemployment and low social and economic backgrounds. A significant number of respondents identify **poverty as a major barrier** to economic security, as well as the **high rate of migration abroad**, which further undermines economic stability - *“I want to work as long as I can, while I’m young and my health allows me. First I raised the children, when they grew up and I decided to work, I did not earn anything. I am ashamed to say this. But there is no work. There is one market in Senaki and how many people should be employed? I was looked down upon in the supermarkets because of my age. Where can I work more?”* - E.P., 36 years old, female, displaced, unemployed.

**Migration is a particularly pressing issue**, frequently discussed in focus-group discussions. Respondents express concern over the outflow of young strong, and intellectual individuals to European countries, which depletes local human resources. This outflow not only affects the local economy but also creates a cycle of dependency and vulnerability. There is a pressing need for the state to **invest more in economic programs specifically designed for emigrant women to facilitate their return and support their reintegration into the local economy** - *“Young boys, strong, intellectuals leave the country and spend their resources elsewhere. The state should pay more... There should be economic programs for immigrant women. This will stop many women here. For those who return, their chances of employment are minimal. If they have support, it will stop the migration at least a little and we will be able to save some families.”* - T.F., 53-year-old man, employed in public service.



The discussions also revealed the importance of making **economic programs accessible to mothers of young children by offering flexible work arrangements and opportunities to work from home**. This approach can significantly help mothers balance their work and family responsibilities more effectively. *“I want a job, but the fact that the kindergartens only operate until six o’clock is a problem for me. I can’t afford a private kindergarten, so I’m forced not to consider working.”* - M.P., 24-year-old woman, mother of three children.

**Tskaltubo Municipality:** Tskaltubo’s qualitative data underscores the challenges posed by **inflation, high-interest loans, and migration**. Respondents express concerns about the unstable economic environment and the difficulty in planning for the future due to fluctuating prices - *“During inflation, you cannot determine the risks, you cannot rule out the consequences, and you cannot plan for the future. Inflation hits the middle class the hardest. That’s why fluctuating prices are the biggest threat.”* - M.B., 62 years old, expert, member of the city council. The high interest rates on loans are particularly troubling for respondents, who feel that the banking policies are exploitative and exacerbate their financial struggles.

**Kutaisi Municipality:** In Kutaisi, respondents describe their economic security as average, with significant concerns over low wages and the disparity between the living wage and the minimum wage offered by employers. One respondent highlighted the impracticality of current employment offers: *“They were with us from employment and offered employment for 300 GEL. How should someone accept this job if 250 GEL is the living wage? When you leave home, you need a minimum of 200 GEL for expenses (transport, food), so does it mean you go for GEL 100? Is this employment?”* – N. Z., woman, a/o member of INER Georgia.

Additionally, concerns about the lack of job security and issues like nepotism in employment were noted - *“If I were to leave this job, even of my own free will, I have no guarantee that I will get a new job. There are no jobs, and where there are, it is mostly pre-determined who should be hired.”* – S.S., 28-year-old, NGO representative, women rights defender. This environment of favoritism and limited opportunities further hinders the economic stability of residents.

**Khoni Municipality:** According to Khoni municipality data, there is disparity between incomes and expenses, driven by low pensions and wages, and a disordered market economy. Excerpts from the speeches of the vulnerable population vividly highlight these difficulties and reflect the daily struggles for survival: *“Salary is enough for 3 days, exactly.”; “There are 11 people in the family, and we will live until the end of the month.”; “It is difficult for us, but who understands us...”; “I don’t have a pension yet, and I don’t have a job. Who in this country would hire me? My health does not allow me to go abroad to work, so I suffer and work hard here...”*

#### 2.3.4. POPULATION'S INSIGHTS ON ENSURING ECONOMIC SECURITY

To address economic insecurity, both quantitative and qualitative data highlight several critical measures that can promote inclusion in economic activities and create favorable environmental conditions.

##### Quantitative Data Insights

According to the quantitative data, respondents emphasized several key areas necessary for ensuring economic security: **Availability of Credits:** 51.6% of respondents indicated the need for more accessible credit options. This suggests that many individuals and families require financial support to start or expand businesses, manage expenses, and secure economic stability. **Small Business and**

**Agriculture Promotion Programs:** 44.8% of respondents stressed the importance of introducing programs that support small businesses and agriculture. These programs can provide the necessary resources and training to promote entrepreneurial activities and sustainable agricultural practices. **Economic Empowerment Programs by Local Self-Government:** 30.9% highlighted the need for local self-government to offer economic empowerment programs. Localized initiatives can be more attuned to the specific needs of the community and can effectively address regional economic challenges. **Grant Programs for Economic Empowerment:** 36.6% of respondents called for more economic empowerment grant programs. Grants can provide the initial capital needed for starting businesses and implementing innovative projects that drive economic growth. **Information Dissemination:** 22.2% of respondents identified the need for more information about existing economic programs. Ensuring that the population is well-informed about available resources and opportunities is crucial for maximizing participation and benefit. **Child Care Services and Work Schedule Adaptation:** 13.4% of respondents emphasized the importance of developing child care services and adapting work schedules for working mothers. This is essential for enabling mothers to participate fully in the workforce. **Consulting Services for Business Plans:** 10.4% of respondents suggested offering consulting services to help beneficiaries draw up business plans, particularly for those with no prior business experience. This support can enhance the success rates of new businesses and entrepreneurial ventures (refer to Diagram #5)

#### What do you think is most needed to ensure economic security?

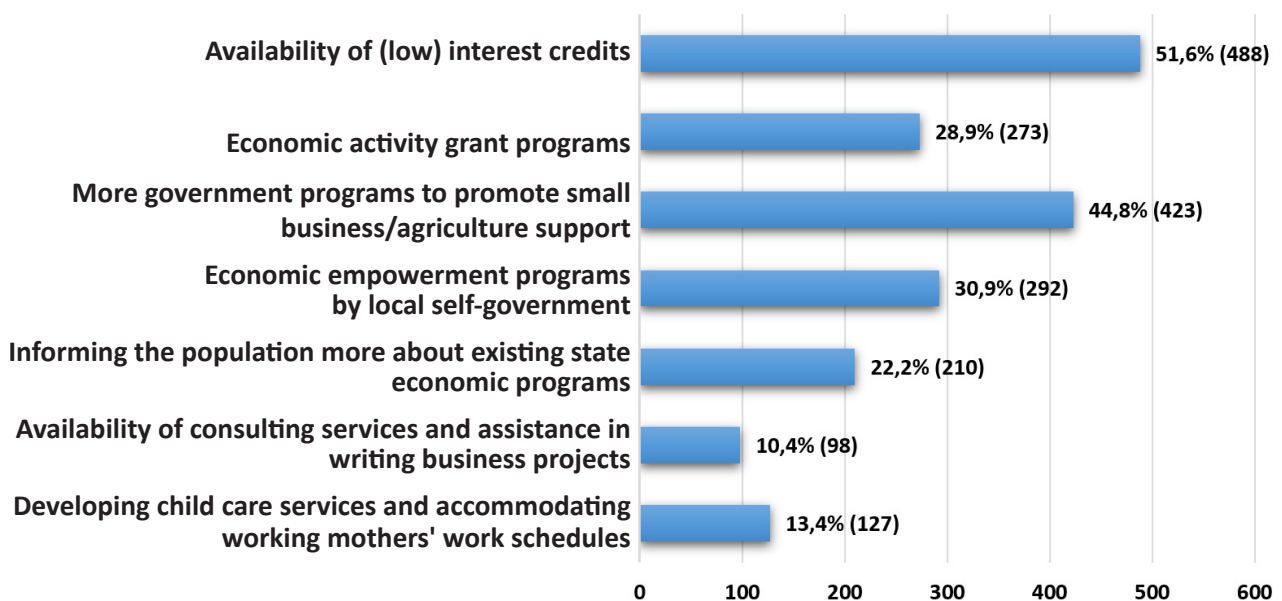


Diagram #5

#### Qualitative Data Insights

The qualitative data provides deeper insights into the practical strategies and approaches the population believes are necessary to overcome challenges and obstacles faced by the population in achieving economic security:

**Training and Skill Development:** Participants stressed the importance of free training courses focused on developing entrepreneurial skills, **particularly for women**. These courses are seen as essential for empowering women to start their own businesses and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

**Support for Women and Mothers:** Ensuring economic programs are accessible to mothers of young children is crucial. Flexible work arrangements and opportunities to work from home can significantly help mothers balance work and family responsibilities more effectively.

**Agricultural Support:** Respondents emphasized the need for substantial investment in agricultural development. This includes financial support, continuous monitoring, and assistance with modern farming techniques, which are critical for enhancing productivity and economic stability in rural areas.

**Improved Banking Policies:** There is a strong call for more favorable banking and credit policies to support small businesses and farmers. High-interest loans are a significant barrier, and more accessible loan conditions could encourage entrepreneurial activities.

**Local Economic Programs:** Participants highlighted the necessity of local economic programs that support job creation, municipal transport, and internal road infrastructure maintenance. These measures are seen as vital for improving the economic environment of the community.

**Addressing Migration:** Economic insecurity-driven migration is a recurring theme. Respondents noted the importance of creating local job opportunities and improving living conditions to reduce the need for individuals to seek work abroad. This outflow of labor depletes local resources and creates a cycle of dependency and vulnerability.

**Government Support and Information Dissemination:** There is a need for increased government support in terms of economic empowerment programs and better dissemination of information about these programs. Many respondents were unaware of existing resources, indicating a gap in communication and outreach.

**Practical Challenges and Barriers:** Some respondents shared specific challenges they faced when trying to utilize economic empowerment programs. The financial burden of co-financing and other costs can demotivate individuals from participating in these initiatives. This highlights the need for a more tailored approach that considers the financial capacities of potential beneficiaries: *“I decided to grow laurel and turned to the relevant organization that promised to help. However, the co-financing requirement was a significant share. The seedlings were expensive, and they demanded a laboratory test of the soil, the funds for which were beyond my reach” T.M. 38 year-old, woman, Tsalenjikka municipality*

### 2.3.5. AWARENESS OF ECONOMIC STATE PROGRAMS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION

#### Awareness of Economic State Programs

Given the high rate of unemployment and the scarcity of job opportunities, it might be anticipated that there would be a high level of interest in state economic programs. However, the data reveals a different reality: only **35.7% of respondents reported having information** about these programs, **while a significant 46% are completely unaware of them**. Additionally, **18% of respondents are not interested in these programs at all**, reflecting a potential lack of confidence in their accessibility or effectiveness. This indicates that access to state programs, or their overall effectiveness, is unsatisfactory.

A qualitative data supports this view, with a local expert noting the presence of economic support programs but emphasizing their limited scale and impact: *“I wouldn't say that we are lacking in this*

*area. There are economic support programs that are very welcome. These state programs have also been implemented in self-governments, including in Senaki municipality. However, these programs are small, and it is difficult to see significant results. We aim to increase the economic programs in the local budget, which will give us the opportunity to address many issues and create a sense of stability for people.”* - M.L., Woman, local expert, self-government representative, Senaki municipality

The low level of awareness, despite the existence of economic state programs, underscores a critical issue in information dissemination and outreach efforts. It is essential to address this gap to ensure that the intended beneficiaries are adequately informed and can take advantage of available resources to improve their economic security. Expanding the scale and impact of these programs, as suggested by the local expert, could also help alleviate the skepticism and increase engagement with state initiatives.

### **Sources of Information about Economic State Programs**

The primary source of information for the majority of the population is traditional media, with **61% of respondents citing “television and radio”** as their main channels for learning about state programs. This reliance on conventional media highlights its continued relevance in information dissemination, particularly in regions where other forms of media may not be as accessible.

**Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a significant role in disseminating information, as indicated by 35.4%** of respondents. This demonstrates the trust and reach that NGOs have within communities, acting as vital intermediaries between the government and the population. **Municipality websites** are also a crucial source of information, with 33.7% of respondents indicating they rely on these platforms. This points to the importance of local authorities in providing information and the population’s interest in and access to online information through these localized channels. **In contrast, only 19.7% of respondents highlighted the central government’s online platforms as a source of information**, indicating a gap in the central government’s outreach effectiveness compared to local authorities. “Neighbors and acquaintances” are considered a significant source of information for 33.1% of respondents. This underscores the role of social networks and community relationships in information dissemination, reflecting a communal approach to spreading awareness.

**Direct meetings with government representatives were identified as the least likely sources of information.** Meetings with local government representatives (16.7%), mayor’s representatives in communities (13.9%), and central government representatives, including ministries (10.1%), were all cited infrequently. Additionally, information leaflets and boards were mentioned by 12.7% of respondents. This suggests that direct, interpersonal communication channels are underutilized or less effective in reaching the broader population.

### **Qualitative Data Insights**

Qualitative research reveals that the practice of informing the population online has significantly improved. Respondents noted that social networks and state agency web pages have become useful tools for finding and receiving information about programs. However, there are still significant barriers to online access for certain segments of the population, including socially vulnerable groups, the elderly, and rural residents, who often face challenges due to weak Internet coverage, lack of appropriate technologies, or limited digital literacy.

Therefore, while online platforms are beneficial, they are not universally accessible. For these populations, information leaflets, booklets, and direct meetings with government representatives remain preferred and more effective forms of communication. This finding is supported by the quantitative data, which shows a continued reliance on traditional and direct forms of information dissemination.



## 2.4. THE LEVEL OF FOOD SECURITY

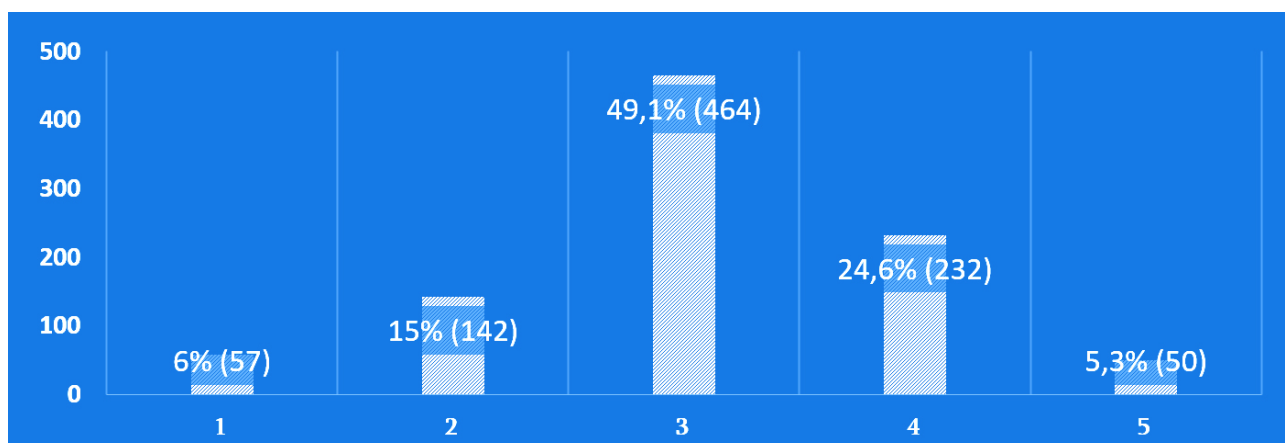
**Food security** is a critical aspect of overall well-being and stability, ensuring that individuals and families have reliable access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. This chapter focuses on two main issues to understand the current state of food security among the population: firstly, how the population rates and assesses their and their family's food security on a five-point scale, and secondly, the factors that pose the greatest threat to their food security. These insights will help identify key areas of concern and inform strategies to enhance food security within the community.

### 2.4.1. ASSESSMENT OF LEVEL OF FOOD SECURITY

On a five-point scale, the population generally assesses their food security at an average level, with 49.1% rating it as a 3 on the scale. A smaller portion of the population views their food security as very bad (1 on the scale) at 6%, and bad (2 on the scale) at 15%. On the positive end, 24.6% rate their food security above average (4 on the scale), and 5.3% consider it very good - 5 on the scale (refer Diagram #6).

According to disaggregated data, food security is equally problematic for both internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the local population, with 20.6% of IDPs and 21.4% of the local population rating their food security at the lowest levels (1-2 on the scale). Out of 199 people who marked 1-2 on the scale, the majority are from Tsalenjikha (46 people), followed by Khoni (40), Senaki (31), Kutaisi (34), Tskaltubo (26), and Zugdidi (22).

Assessment of level of Food security



(Diagram #6)

### 2.4.2. MAJOR THREATS TO FOOD SECURITY

The primary threat to food security, as identified by **61.1%** of respondents, is **insufficient financial resources to purchase quality and varied food products**. **The high price of food products** is considered a threat by **58.7%** of respondents. Additionally, 26.7% of respondents mention that **they do not have access to quality food products** (refer to Diagram #7).

**The absence of nearby grocery stores** is highlighted by 10.4% of respondents, particularly women living in rural areas and near the conflict dividing line, who must travel to cities for food and household products. This challenge is exacerbated by limited public transport infrastructure, often forcing them to use taxis, which significantly increases the cost of products and places them in a difficult economic situation. **Limited transport infrastructure to access markets and shops** is noted as a threat by 9.3% of respondents.

The negative impact of climate change on agriculture is seen as a threat by 13.1% of respondents, while 14.2% consider insufficient awareness about balanced and healthy nutrition as a threat to their food security. Limited access to drinking water is mentioned by 5.7% of respondents, with most of them from the municipality of Tsalenjikha (particularly residents of the village of Pakhulani-Tsoushi).

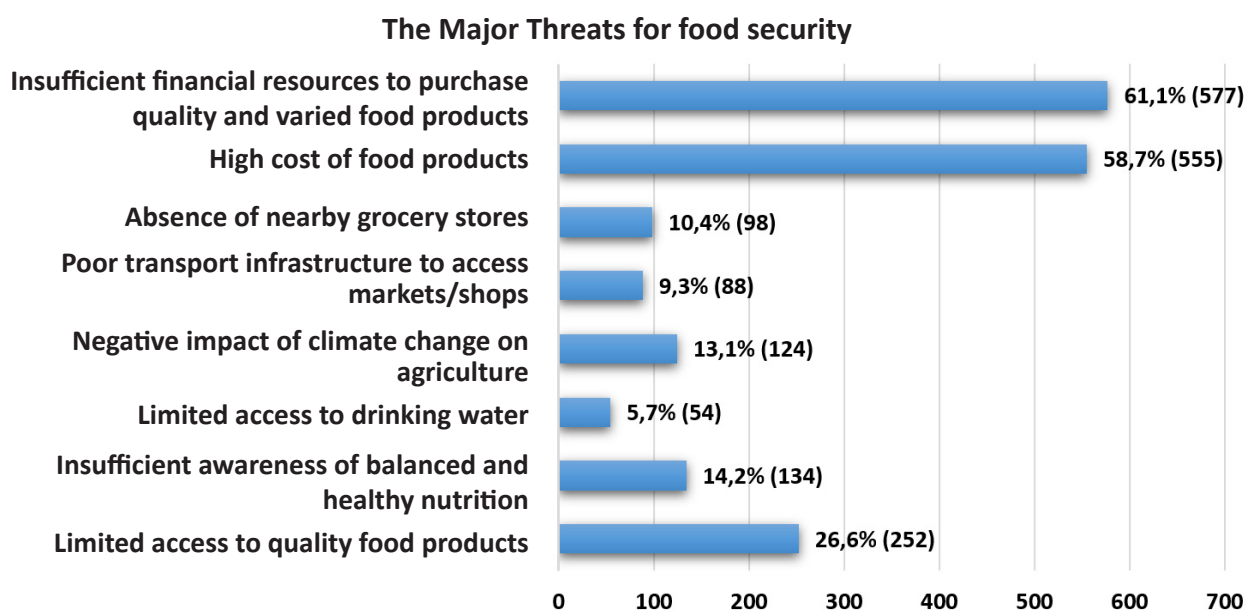


Diagram #7

### Qualitative Data Analysis on Food Security.

The qualitative data reveals diverse challenges across various municipalities, reflecting a range of issues impacting food security.

**Tsalenjikha Municipality:** Respondents generally rate the community’s food security as average. Limited number of grocery stores, high prices and poor product quality are significant concerns. Many residents must travel to cities for better options, incurring additional costs. As one of the respondent noted: *“In my village, there is no store nearby, so it is difficult to find and afford quality products. The high prices make it even harder. The most important thing is ensuring that the goods are well-cared for and that the products are processed naturally. People need to increase their knowledge to recognize quality. Food safety should be protected and meet high standards.”* - Sh. Sh., 48 years old, woman, manager of kindergarten, entrepreneur, local.

High prices and the absence of nearby stores exacerbate **food insecurity, especially for the elderly and those living near the conflict dividing line.** The elderly people are less mobile and often have health issues that prevent them from traveling to cities for affordable and quality products. Additionally, their pensions are often insufficient to cover the extra costs of transportation, leaving them vulnerable and without adequate access to necessities. Climate change, water availability, and pests further threaten agricultural productivity, impacting food security.

**Zugdidi Municipality:** In Zugdidi, food security is rated as average, with significant concerns over high prices and poor product quality. Many villages **lack grocery stores**, compelling residents to travel for basic necessities, which increases costs and reduces access to fresh food. *“Food security in our community is low; there is no store, and we have to go to the neighboring village or town to buy food”* - Ts. A., 65, woman, accountant, IDP, Koki.

**The use of pesticides and herbicides poses serious threats** to food quality and safety - *“Everything is saturated with pesticides and herbicides, and such fruits and vegetables have a devastating effect on our health.”* - E. Sh., 29 years old, man, teacher, Didi Nedzi.

Environmental factors, such as **ineffective pest control measures**, further exacerbate food insecurity - *“Living in a village does not mean we are provided with healthy fruits and vegetables. The state’s poisoning of Asian pheasants is having negative consequences; the poison affects both fruits and vegetables.”* - N.F., 38, woman, Didi Nedzi.

Moreover, **poor quality of locally grown produce** are major concerns for the residents - *“Last year, tomatoes were completely destroyed, as well as other vegetables that we had in the vegetable garden. The fruits are also of very poor quality and tasteless. I can’t say anything about hazelnuts, because they are of such low quality, it is not even worth picking, to hire labor and pick them”* - I.Z., 39, woman, Didi Nedzi.

**Senaki Municipality:** Climate change is a major concern in Senaki, particularly its impact on agriculture. High prices and the lack of grocery stores are significant issues. One respondent stated, *“People in the village cannot grow crops. We will sow the field, and we will calculate how many times you have to tend to one stalk of corn to make it yield. Summer will come, and it will pass without a single rain. Thus, the harvest is over. The climate has changed, and it seems to affect agriculture first. An insufficient and lack of harvest is coming. Everything that is scarce is expensive.”* - D.G., 57 years old, woman, employed in agriculture. Displaced persons in Senaki face additional challenges, including limited access to affordable grocery stores, forcing them to travel to larger markets for better prices.

**Tskaltubo Municipality:** High food prices limit access to quality products, and residents express concerns about freshness and safety. A mother of many children mentioned, *“Quality food is very expensive. If I start with just butter, it is so expensive, I have to buy only for the children as we are focused on giving the children relatively high-quality fruits and vegetables. . I usually buy cheap cheaper products for adults”* - M.B., 29, mother of many children. Another resident noted, *“There should not be a shortage of vegetables in Tskaltubo. Now this too is in short supply. To grow vegetables is expensive; you need a greenhouse. There is no buyer for expensive products because people prefer to buy imported and cheaper vegetables. Everyone knows that local vegetables are better, but there is no other way.”* - C.D., 48 years old, woman, employed in agriculture.

Trust in local stores is low due to frequent issues with **expired or poorly stored products**. A pensioner expressed his concerns, *“I always have a feeling of dread when buying products that one of them might be out of date. Fruits, frozen products, and fish are particularly concerning. Products and grocery stores should have frequent external controls.”*- D.B., 67 years old, man, pensioner.

**Khoni Municipality:** Respondents in Khoni highlight significant issues with food quality control, which lead to consumer vulnerability. High prices and the lack of effective quality control exacerbate these concerns - *“We really do not have a favorable situation in the food sector - there is no quality control, and we, the consumers, are absolutely vulnerable. We are forced to buy the product and then use it as food, and we are not sure how useful or, on the contrary, it is harmful to our body.”* – E. J, 39, local government servant.

This situation calls for increased competition in the food sector, more rigorous product testing, and stronger regulatory mechanisms to ensure food safety.

**Kutaisi Municipality:** In Kutaisi, food security is assessed poorly due to **high prices, weak quality control, and the presence of low-quality, pesticide-laden, and genetically modified products**. Respondents emphasize on unrealistically high food prices and the presence of harmful substances such as lead in toys and spices, and pesticides in food.

One of the respondent highlighted these concerns, stating, *“In some chain markets, the rules for checking expired products are very weak. Monitoring vegetables and fruits is crucial, but it is not reported what percentage of nitrates they contain. Watermelon, for example, is problematic as there is no effective state control. The price is high everywhere, but the quality is often inconsistent. Everything in the grocery store is beautified, but here you will find many violations.”* – S.S., 28 years old, woman, NGO, women rights defender.

Another respondent highlighted the growing health issues, saying, *“There is a high number of sick people: cardiovascular, autistic, and epilepsy patients, patients with malignant tumors. The rate is getting higher and higher, our nutritional value is low. We do not know how this or that product is checked at the customs, in stores, the quality of the products should be checked. It is necessary to tighten the control mechanism.”* – P. K., 52, Local Government official.

## 2.5. ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

**Ecological security** is a crucial aspect of human security, significantly impacting the safety, health, economic situation, and overall well-being of communities. Ensuring a stable and healthy environment is essential for sustainable development and the prevention of ecological crises that can threaten livelihoods. This chapter will cover the following key issues: Assessment of environmental safety in towns and villages; and identification of the most acute environmental problems in communities.

### 2.5.1. ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

According to the quantitative research, the degree of ecological safety is generally perceived as average, with 47.3% of respondents rating it at the 3rd mark on a five-point scale. Other ratings included 6.9% of respondents rating it as very poor (1), 15.3% as poor (2), 25.6% as good (4), and only 4% as very good (5) – refer to Diagram #8.

Assessment of level of Ecological Security

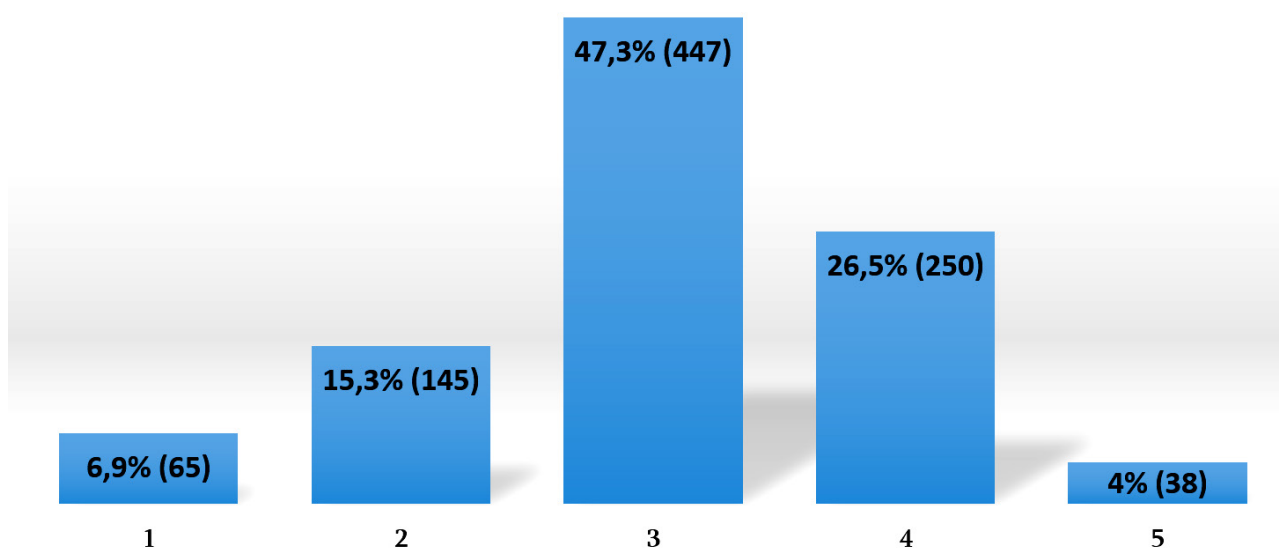


Diagram #8



## 2.5.2. THE MAJOR THREATS OF ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

When assessing ecological safety risks, the most significant concern was the absence or failure of **drainage pipes, posing a flooding danger**, highlighted by 49.9% of respondents. This was followed by the failure of **sewage systems**, noted by 40.8%, and the danger of polluted air, emphasized by 37.5% (Refer to Diagram #9). **Limited waste management practices, such as insufficient trash cans and inadequate recycling**, were pointed out by 30.9% of respondents. Additionally, the scarcity of parks and green spaces was a concern for 29.4% of respondents. The impact of **climate change**, including temperature rise and other climate-related challenges, was noted by 23.7%. **Chemical soil pollution**, due to the excessive use of pesticides and fertilizers in agricultural practices, was identified by 23.1% of respondents. Lastly, limited access to **clean drinking water** was a significant issue for 20.2% of respondents, particularly acute for those living near the dividing line in Tsalenjikha municipality.

The Major THreats for Ecological security

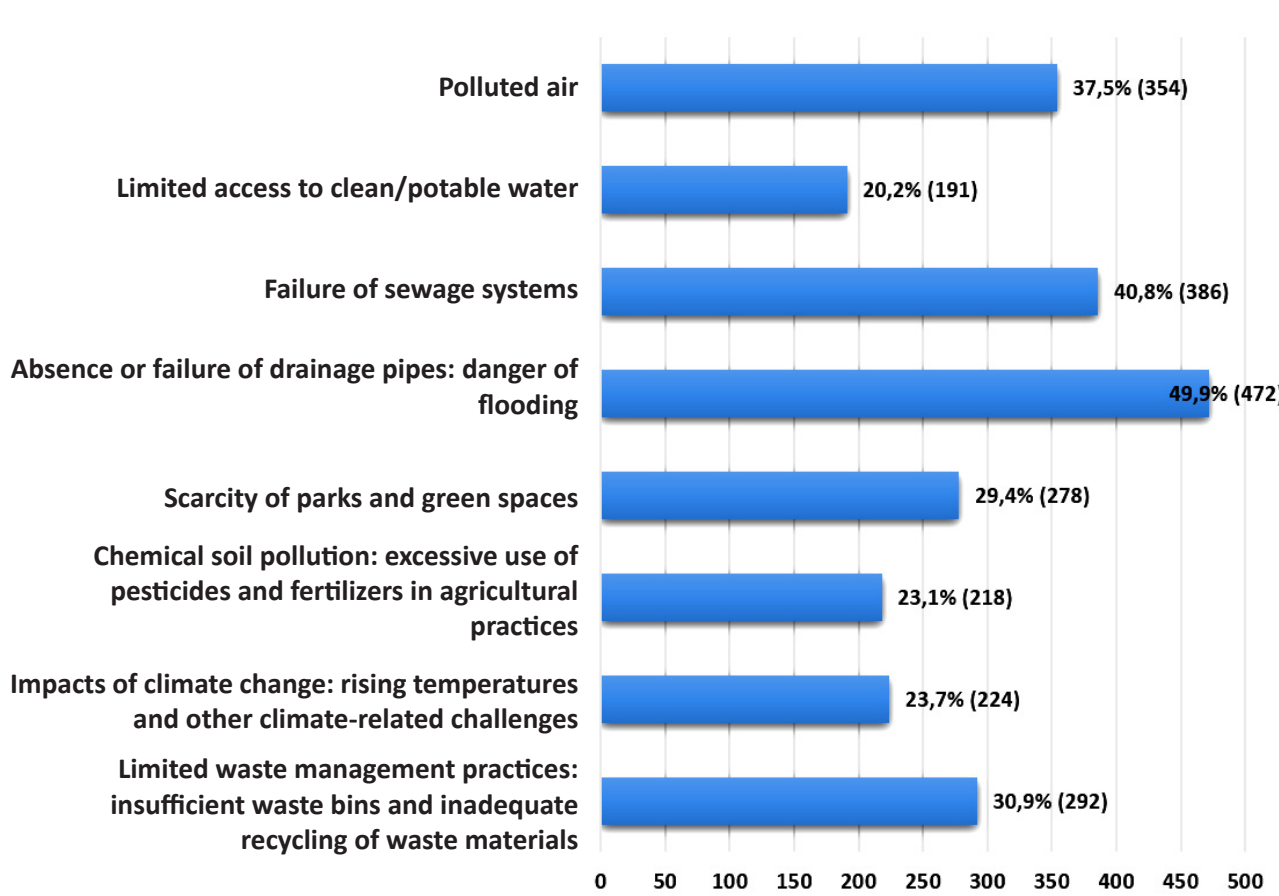


Diagram #9

### Qualitative Data Analysis of Ecological Security

**Tsalenjikha Municipality:** In Tsalenjikha, the qualitative data reveals that while the overall environmental safety is not deemed extremely alarming, several critical issues need addressing. One of the **most pressing concerns is the availability of quality drinking water**. Many communities rely on artesian wells, which often dry up in the summer due to climatic changes and uncontrolled logging. Residents lack information about the safety of their drinking water, as its quality is not regularly tested. A resident highlighted this issue, stating, *“Nowadays, we don’t know how clean the drinking water we use is. For example, we have a large tank filled with spring water, although no one has ever checked*

*its suitability. The only safety guarantee is that no one have been killed by it so far... although, we can assume that it may cause diseases.”* – C.H, 49 years old, woman, teacher, Pakhulani. Women are particularly affected by the lack of quality drinking water, as they are primarily responsible for domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, and washing, all of which require water. **Many women carry heavy buckets of water daily, increasing their workload and physical strain.**

Additionally, **poor waste management practices**, such as the burning of waste during spring work, contribute to air pollution and health hazards. *“We have not managed to prevent the burning of leaves and rotten nuts, which releases carcinogenic substances and pollutes the air,”* said N.G., 45 years old, woman, doctor, Pakhulani. Another significant concern is the **emergence of landslide-prone zones**, which threaten residential areas and require systematic geological monitoring.

**Zugdidi Municipality:** The respondents from Zugdidi municipality consider the level of ecological safety to be quite alarming. Climate changes have proportional effects on ecology, leading to polluted air, water, and soil, which decreases the yield and quality of agricultural products. **Floods have become especially frequent:** *“Floods have become especially frequent. It happened twice a year in the village of Orulu. It’s scary to even remember. The flood not only harms household equipment and animals but also includes the threat of many infectious diseases and worsens people’s health.”* - I.Z., 39 years old, woman, Didi Nedzi.

**The issue of drainage channels in the villages** was highlighted as a significant problem: *“There are no drainage channels in the village. Last September, our houses were flooded, and the water, full of garbage and sludge, destroyed everything on the first floor. I still have health problems and may need an operation. Properly designed drainage systems could have prevented such a disaster.”* - N.F., 38 years old, Didi Nedzi.

There are also concerns about the **quality of drinking water**, with wells often drying up in summer and the water quality being questionable. Respondents expressed the need for better infrastructure and state early warning system to ensure ecological safety - *“We are not used to predicting the climate yet; the technology and methodology are not developed at that level. In countries where this is calculated, the security level is higher with an early warning system. Appropriate responses can prevent risks and minimize the consequences of these cataclysms.”* - M.Q., 48 years old, woman, teacher, entrepreneur, mother of many children, Zugdidi.

Concerns were raised about the lack of state programs to ensure ecological safety in the village and the absence of studies conducted in this direction. **Proper waste management, maintenance of the forest fund, and provision of water supply were emphasized as essential measures for ensuring ecological security.**

**Senaki Municipality:** In Senaki, **the failure of the sewage system** is a significant issue, particularly in the IDP settlement, where temporary solutions have not addressed the long-term problem. *“There is a sewage problem in all of Senaki, but the IDP settlement has been suffering from this problem for years. This requires financial investment, which the local budget does not have.”* - V.N., 45 years old, woman, IDP.

**Air pollution** is another major concern, **exacerbated by the abundance of uncatalyzed cars and lack of green spaces** - *“The air is not suitable due to car emissions and the lack of green spaces.”* - M.D., 37 years old, man, employed. Respondents also highlighted the **lack of clean drinking water and the frequent flooding due to inadequate drainage systems.**

Residents are highly concerned about **chemical pollution** of the soil from excessive fertilizers and chemical additives. Focus groups highlighted **dangers of pesticide overdose** and the lack of market regulation, leaving consumers unaware of nitrate levels and the safety of **agricultural products**, including fruits, and vegetables.

**Tskaltubo Municipality:** Qualitative data from Tskaltubo Municipality highlights significant concerns regarding environmental hazards, including inadequate drainage systems, waste management, and air pollution.

**The lack of drainage pipes and fear of flooding** add to residents' stress. **The absence of effective waste management and recycling** processes further exacerbates ecological safety issues. **The failure of sewage systems** is another pressing issue, with both men and women equally concerned. **Local communities are more anxious compared to IDPs**, as the main part of the displaced population has already been provided with new housing where according to host population, sewage systems are less of a problem.

A local resident noted, *"I would rate the level of environmental safety in my community as very low. Since I live in a densely populated area, on the side of the road, and we are constantly disturbed by car exhaust, which creates an unfavorable environment in terms of ecological safety. We also suspect that the drinking water is not filtered properly."* - M.D., 52 years old woman, Tskaltubo.

**The need for better maintenance and renewal of green spaces** was also emphasized. - *"Tskaltubo is a green city, but the air is still polluted. Electric cars should be used to reduce pollution. Our green forest needs renewal and treatment for diseased trees."* - K.D., local expert, local government representative.

Polluted air is a major concern, as one respondent pointed out: *"Where there is no air, food products are in doubt. Where products are not suitable, human health is in question, including pregnant women. It turns out that our future is at risk. This chain is quite long unfortunately. That's why we have to start with air. The air should not be dirty, we should do everything for it."* - B.D., 63 years old, man, doctor.

**Khoni Municipality:** In Khoni, the qualitative data indicates a low sense of environmental safety, exacerbated by issues like uncontrolled logging, inadequate waste removal, and vehicle exhaust problems. Residents noted the destruction of windbreaks, which previously protected the population from strong winds - *"We live in an area where there was a windbreak that was destroyed, increasing the strength of the wind."* - Mixed focus group members.

To improve ecological safety, raising public awareness, increasing local funding, and providing information on environmental issues in schools are necessary. Residents also emphasized the importance of proper waste management and water supply systems.

**Kutaisi Municipality:** Kutaisi faces significant ecological challenges, including air pollution from a nearby metallurgical factory, which is linked to high blood lead levels in children. *"High blood lead levels in children have been directly linked to the presence of this factory. They do not use filters, and there is constant noise and pollution."* - S.S., 28 years old, woman, NGO, women rights defender.

Another critical issue **is the garbage dump** situated close to residential areas. This proximity poses severe health risks to residents, including the spread of infectious diseases, contamination of groundwater, and the emission of harmful gases. To mitigate these dangers, it is essential to relocate the dump to a safer distance, implement stringent waste management practices, and establish regular monitoring and maintenance protocols.

To ensure ecological safety, respondents suggested increasing public awareness, improving waste management and water supply systems, controlling logging activities, and implementing waste recycling practices.

## 2.6. HEALTH SECURITY

Health security is a fundamental aspect of human security, directly impacting the quality of life, economic stability, and overall well-being of individuals and communities. Ensuring health security involves access to quality healthcare services, effective disease prevention and control, and the ability to respond to health emergencies. This chapter examines the population's perceptions of health security, identifies major health threats, and explores how people manage and address health issues when they deteriorate. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing strategies to enhance health security and improve the resilience of communities.

### 2.6.1. ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH SECURITY

The majority of respondents in the quantitative research assessed their health security at an average level (45.7%) on a five-point scale (refer to Diagram #10). This indicates a general perception of moderate health security among the population. Additionally, 26.3% rated their health security at level 4, suggesting that a significant portion of respondents feel relatively secure about their health. However, only a small fraction (5.3%) reported very high health security, indicating that only a few feel completely confident in their health protection measures.

On the lower end of the spectrum, 6.2% of respondents rated their health security at the lowest level (1), and 16.4% rated it at level 2. These figures indicate that nearly a quarter of the population experiences significant health security challenges, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to address their concerns.

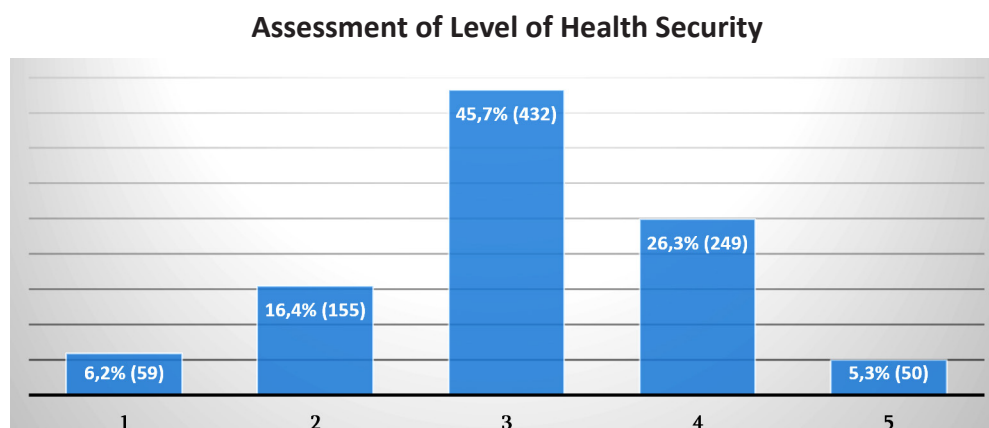


Diagram #10

### 2.6.2. THE MAJOR THREATS TO HEALTH SECURITY

The survey identified **“high prices for medicines”** as the most critical issue, cited by 73.4% of respondents (Refer to Diagram #11). This high percentage underscores the substantial financial barrier that medication costs pose to effective disease management and overall health maintenance. The inability to afford necessary medications can lead to deteriorating health conditions and increased mortality rates. Similarly, 64.1% of respondents indicated that the **high cost of medical services is a significant threat** to their health security. The financial burden of healthcare services can prevent individuals from seeking timely and adequate medical attention, exacerbating health problems and leading to severe health outcomes. **Low-quality medical services** were identified as a threat by 31.2% of respondents, reflecting dissatisfaction with the standard of care received. This concern can undermine trust in healthcare systems and deter individuals from seeking medical help. **The ab-**

**sense of free medical examinations** is also a notable issue, with 31.3% of respondents considering it a threat. Regular health screenings are crucial for early detection and treatment of diseases, and their absence can lead to undiagnosed and untreated health issues.

A significant portion of the population (27%) cited **inadequate information about free healthcare programs** as a problem. This lack of awareness can prevent people from accessing available health services and benefits, further compromising their health security. **Environmental factors** also play a role in health security, with approximately 16.4% of respondents considering a polluted environment a threat to their health. Exposure to pollutants can lead to various health problems, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, underscoring the urgent need for stricter pollution control measures and improved public health initiatives. **The insufficient number of primary ambulatory medical points** (10.7%) is particularly emphasized by those living near the dividing line and in rural areas. Limited access to primary healthcare facilities can delay treatment and increase the severity of health conditions. Other concerns include **low awareness of reproductive health** (9.8%), with the majority of these respondents being women. **The unavailability of mental and psychological services** (9.5%) is also a significant issue, reflecting the growing recognition of mental health as a critical component of overall health security. Lastly, **limited access to clean drinking water** (3.5%) and **poor sanitary conditions in housing** (3.7%) were reported as threats to health security.

### Major Threats to Health Security

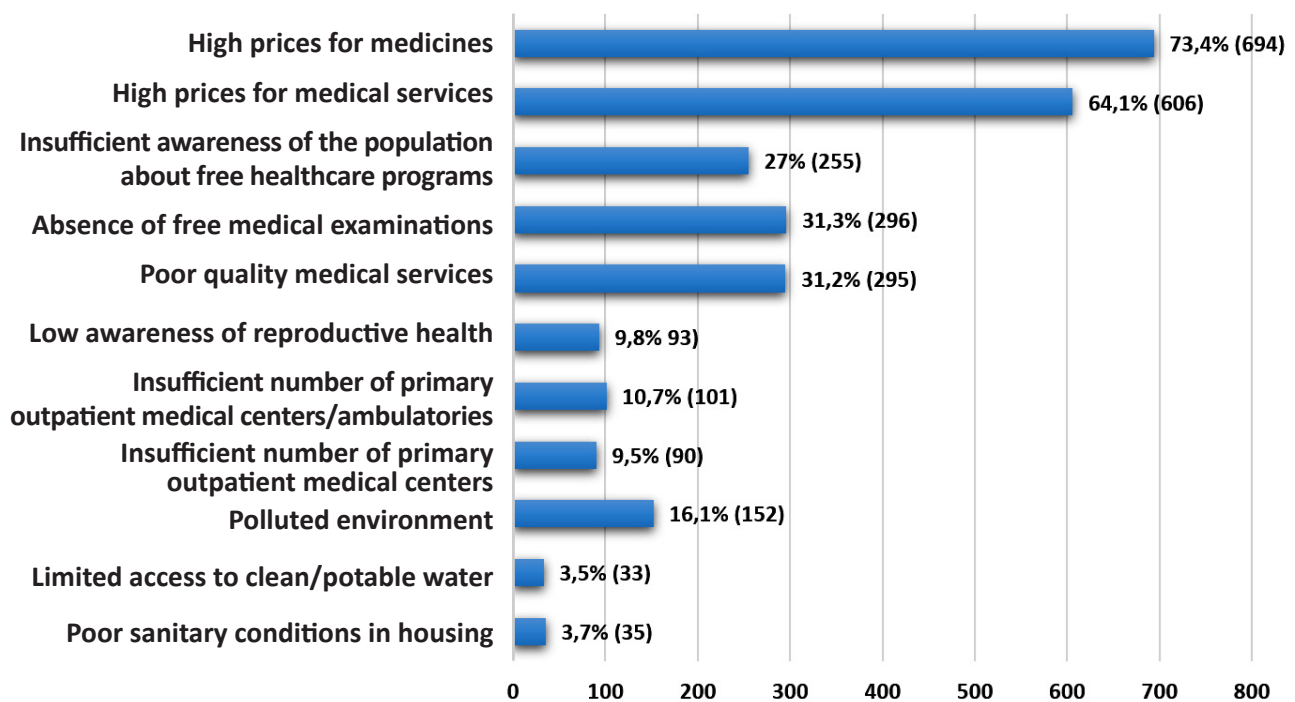


Diagram #11

### Addressing Health Deterioration: Methods and Challenges

When faced with health issues, respondents employ various methods to address their healthcare needs. The majority, 43.3%, **cover healthcare costs with their own funds**, indicating a significant reliance on personal savings and income. This highlights the financial burden of healthcare costs, potentially leading to economic strain and limited access to necessary medical services, ultimately affecting the population's health. **Universal healthcare helps** 27.3% of respondents by covering treatment costs, alleviating financial pressures and reducing anxiety levels. However, a concerning



16.1% resort to **self-medication at home**, often due to poverty and limited access to healthcare services. This risky practice underscores the need for more accessible and affordable healthcare options to ensure proper medical supervision and treatment.

Only 8.7% of respondents **use private insurance**, reflecting limited access to or affordability of private health coverage. A small fraction, 2.8%, turn to alternative medicine, **indicating a reliance on non-traditional treatment methods**. An even smaller group, 1.6%, **seeks medical services abroad**, suggesting that accessing healthcare abroad is not feasible for most individuals.

#### **Qualitative data per municipality:**

**Tsalenjikha Municipality:** In Tsalenjikha, the lack of pharmacies is a significant issue, forcing residents to travel to Zugdidi or Tsalenjikha for medications. This is particularly challenging for those allowed to use the state's affordable medication programs, as transportation remains a barrier. Even with the availability of low-cost medications for the chronically ill, pensioners, and the socially vulnerable, accessing these medications on time is difficult due to transportation issues: *"Citizens face a problem here as well. We have a good program for the chronically ill, pensioners, and the socially vulnerable, they get their medicines free of charge, but they also need transportation to go and get them. If they fail to take the prescribed medicine on time, the prescription expires after ten days."* - N. G., woman, village doctor, Pakhulani.

**Dental services** are also inaccessible, adding to the community's health burden. **High medication prices** remain a critical challenge, with respondents suggesting regulation and control of price limits as a solution. While there is satisfaction with outpatient services and the qualifications of village doctors, the physical distance of clinics presents serious issues, especially in emergencies or for bedridden patients. **Proximity to the conflict-dividing line increases the social load on these clinics** - *"The outpatient clinic (ambulatories) also serves patients who moved from Abkhazia, in particular from Saberio. That is why it is important for the outpatient clinic to have the ability to provide more medical services."* - N. G., village doctor, Pakhulani. Another resident shared: *"We live near the conflict-dividing line, and having first aid services available in our community is crucial. If it were possible for individuals in emergency situations to stay overnight and receive the necessary care, it would be incredibly helpful"* - Kh.G., IDP, 31 years old, woman, Gali village Saberio - unemployed, socially vulnerable.

**Zugdidi Municipality:** In Zugdidi, healthcare access is primarily affected by financial situation of population, with high costs for medicines and services preventing timely and adequate medical care. This economic barrier often leads residents to avoid seeking medical help until it is absolutely necessary, which can exacerbate health issues - *"People don't have money. Until a person falls and needs to be transported by ambulance, they can't visit a doctor because of lack of funds. Then there are very high prices for medicines, which is why they cannot afford the full treatment."* - N. T., woman, 44 years old, village Tsatskhvi, civil servant. Several communities in Zugdidi lack local pharmacies and outpatient clinics/ambulatories, making it difficult for residents, especially the elderly and those without transportation, to access necessary medical services - *"There are no on-site pharmacies, so a pensioner or an elderly person cannot go and buy medicine. There are also no outpatient clinics, for example, the village of Tsatskhvi does not have its own outpatient clinic."* - T., woman, 44 years old, village Tsatskhvi, civil servant.

Despite these challenges, **there are some positive aspects**, that have been mentioned by the respondents, such as **the availability of free thyroid examination programs and other screening programs for diseases like cervical and breast cancer, rectal and prostate screening, and hepatitis C elimination programs**. However, the overall quality of services remains low, with discrepancies between diagnostic tests conducted locally and those done in more advanced or better-equipped

medical centers - *“Often, these conducted analyses do not coincide with more expensive examinations.”* - N. T., woman, 44 years old, Tsatskhvi village, civil servant.

**Increasing the number of doctors in rural areas and enhancing access to free primary care medications at outpatient clinics** are crucial for ensuring healthcare security- *“It is positive that an outpatient clinic is being built in the village; however, family doctors need to better meet the needs of the village population. The state should ensure the full-time employment of doctors in rural areas rather than assigning them to clinics for only two or three days a week. Most importantly, primary care medications should be provided free of charge at outpatient clinics and be readily accessible to the population.”*- Z. G., civil servant, Koki.

The population sees a need for better regulation to control the prices of medications and to neutralize the monopolization of the medical market. The state medication program, which increased access to necessary medications for many people, was positively assessed. However, there remains a significant need for improvements in healthcare access and quality to ensure the health security of the community.

Senaki Municipality: Senaki residents struggle with high medical costs, which often leads them to self-medicate or avoid follow-up consultations. The absence of primary ambulatories and a lack of awareness about reproductive health further exacerbate these issues. Although affordable medications are available for pensioners, many essential medications are not included in these programs. One resident expressed frustration: *“The list of affordable medications for pensioners is limited, and the medications I need are not included. This is a problem for many like me.”* - S.N., 66 years old, IDP, pensioner. Some respondents also expressed mistrust towards medical research: *“We should not have to go to another country to find out the correct diagnosis. Many people avoid going to the doctor because there is no trust; this field has turned into a business.”* - M.J., 41 years old, woman, socially vulnerable. “

Tskaltubo Municipality: The population of Tskaltubo is also concerned about the disproportionately high prices for medical services and medications, which can hinder patients from receiving complete treatment or limit timely access to healthcare, thereby significantly increasing health risks - *“I will start by saying that medical services are very expensive. A single visit to the doctor starts at 50 GEL, and if you don’t have the money, you won’t be accepted. Then there’s the issue of medication prices: the stronger the medicine, the more expensive it is. As a result, many people are forced to buy only part of the necessary medication, which is not effective. Consequently, you might have to quit treatment prematurely because you cannot afford to continue, rendering your spending ineffective as your health does not improve”*- M.A., 64 years old, woman, pensioner, socially vulnerable.

It was also emphasized that there is a **critical need to provide free diagnostic services for pensioners and for local authorities to enhance healthcare programs to better support vulnerable populations**: *“Researches should be free for pensioners. If they could have an examination once a year, it would be a very good concession for them. The pension is so little and they can’t feed themselves with medicines alone. The City Hall does not have anything similar to help you, there is a real need for this.”* — T.L., 38 years old, self-employed woman.

Khoni Municipality: In Khoni, health security is compromised by the high cost and low quality of medical services, insufficient pharmacy services, and a lack of professional medical staff. The local hospital’s limitations to providing only first aid functions pose a significant threat to residents’ health - *“The biggest problem in Khoni is that the hospital is limited to first aid functions, which is a threat to human health.”* – V. B., teacher, director of a public school. The need for a fully functional hospital with comprehensive medical services is pressing to ensure better health security for the community.

Kutaisi Municipality: Kutaisi Municipality faces several challenges in its healthcare system, including the low quality of medical services, frequent incorrect diagnoses, and high medication costs. Some respondents also expressed concern about the perceived relationship between doctors and pharmaceutical companies, which may lead to the prescription of unnecessary medications for personal gain. This situation significantly undermines trust in healthcare providers. As one respondent noted: *“Medical service in Kutaisi is inadequate. I spend money on medications that often turn out to be unnecessary or inappropriate for my health issues. As a result, I have to travel to the capital. Medical services in Tbilisi are far superior—diagnoses are more accurate. In Kutaisi, even a basic blood test can yield misleading results.”* — S.S., 28 years old, woman, NGO, women’s rights defender. These issues highlight the urgent need for improved medical services, better diagnostic accuracy, and fair pharmaceutical practices to enhance health security.

## 2.7. PUBLIC SECURITY

Public security is a fundamental aspect of human security, directly influencing the quality of life and the overall well-being of individuals and communities. It encompasses protection against crime, violence, social unrest, and other threats that can disrupt daily life and create a sense of fear and instability. Effective public security promotes a safe environment where people can freely pursue their economic, social, and personal goals. This chapter assesses the community’s perception of public safety using a five-point scale and identifies the most significant threats to their security today. Addressing these concerns is essential for developing effective strategies to improve public security and ensure a safer, more resilient society.

### 2.7.1. ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC SECURITY

The quantitative data indicates a moderate perception of public safety within the community. Approximately 44.3% of respondents rated their safety at an average level (3 on a five-point scale). A notable portion (31.1%) feels relatively secure (rating of 4), while smaller groups express higher levels of security (4.6% rating their safety at 5). Conversely, 20% of the surveyed population feels very insecure, giving ratings of 1 and 2 (refer to Diagram #12).

Despite these overall perceptions, deeper issues and threats significantly impact public safety and the overall sense of security within the community.

Assessing the level of Public Security

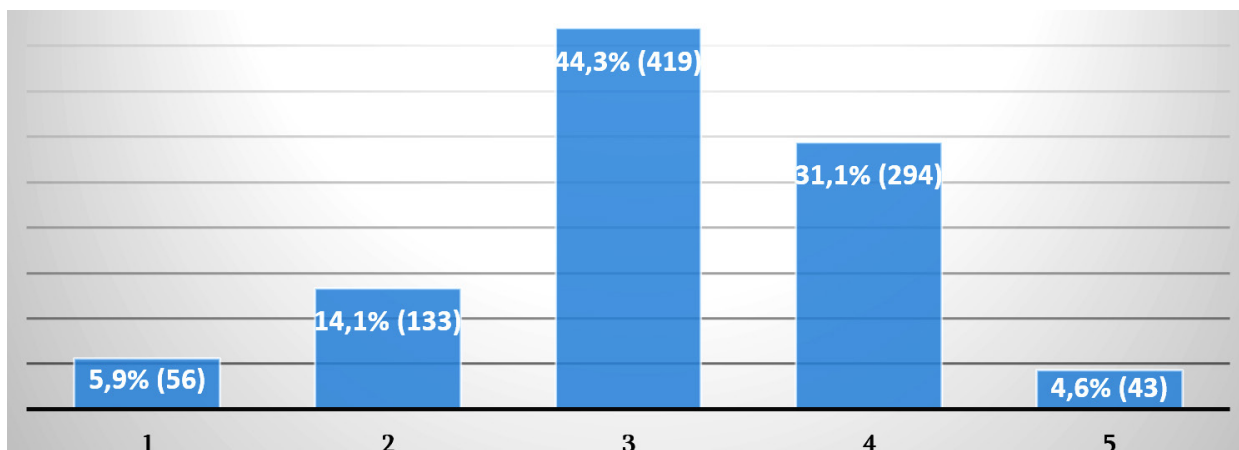


Diagram #12

## 2.7.2. THE MAJOR THREATS FOR PUBLIC SECURITY

Among the most pressing threats identified by the population is the **increase in crime**, cited by **46.9%** of respondents. This concern highlights the need for stronger law enforcement and community policing to ensure residents' safety. The prevalence of crime not only endangers lives but also erodes trust in public institutions, fostering an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. Another significant concern highlighted by **41.6%** of respondents is the **high levels of alcoholism and drug addiction**. These issues not only contribute to crime but also endanger the social fabric and health of the community. The **26.8%** of respondents express concern over the **potential escalation of conflicts and hostilities**. This fear is heightened by the current political climate, marked by public opposition to anti-democratic measures imposed by the ruling political party such as the recent abolition of women's quotas, the adoption of the "Foreign Agent Law", so called "Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence," the government's anti-Western propaganda, and the departure from the European trajectory. Additionally, the government's frequent appeals to the global war narrative and constant claims that they have saved the country from war further exacerbate these fears. This rhetoric contributes to a tense and volatile environment, heightening public anxiety and creating a sense of impending conflict. The repeated emphasis on threats and the portrayal of the government as a bulwark against war not only stokes fear but also polarizes society, deepening divisions and fostering an atmosphere of uncertainty and mistrust. **Intolerance and aggression in society** are also noted by **26.8%** of respondents. The political polarization, intolerance, and high level of public tension indicate a society with deep divisions. The government's recent actions and the political climate have intensified these fears, leading to heightened public tension and a pervasive sense of insecurity (refer to Diagram #13).

The Major Threats for Public Security

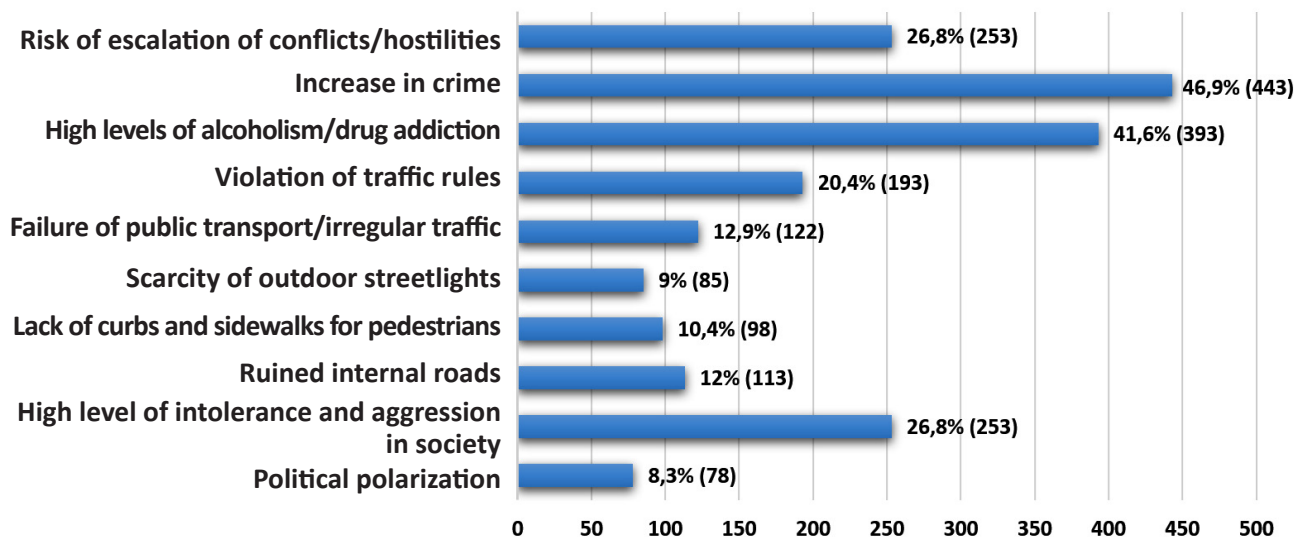


Diagram #13

### Qualitative data analysis of the Public Security

According to qualitative data results, across all municipalities, **alcohol and drug addiction** emerge as the most prevalent threats, leading to increased crime and heightened aggression in the society. Respondents consistently highlighted these issues as major concerns, reflecting their significant impact on community safety and well-being.

**Tsalenjikha Municipality:** According to the qualitative research, the main concerns for respondents in Tsalenjikha include the scale of **alcoholism and drug addiction and the increase in crime**. Recently, the number of people addicted to drugs has significantly increased, causing serious concern within the community. Alcohol addiction is also alarming, leading to health issues for young people and increased aggression and conflicts within families: *“Terrible things are happening among young people; they can easily access any drugs. How can anyone feel safe in such an environment?”* said G.S., a 20-year-old male student and IDP.

*“Many young people lost their health due to alcohol addiction, causing increased aggression and conflicts in families.”* - N. G., village doctor, Pakhulani.

The proximity to the dividing line of the conflict and the constant tension it creates also impact the public climate. *“As our village is close to the conflict zone, there is always a risk of confrontation. The emotional background is periodically high, and families living close to the dividing line try to relocate if they can.”* - T. Ch., woman, 49 years old, teacher.

When discussing public safety issues, local concerns such as **old trees** posing a threat to citizens' health and safety were highlighted. *“There are many old trees in the street with roots on the surface. Earlier, there was a storm, trees fell, and the streets were paralyzed.”* - I. S., woman, 52 years old, teacher, village Lia.

Zugdidi Municipality:

Zugdidi faces heightened public safety risks due to its proximity to the conflict zone, raising fears of **smuggling, criminal activities, and terrorist acts** - *“The public safety risk of my community is high, because the village is adjacent to the dividing line of the so-called administrative border of Abkhazia. Therefore, there is a risk that it will not become a place for smuggling, activities of criminal groups, terrorist acts and drug transit,”* noted Z.G., a civil servant. **Increased crime, alcoholism, drug addiction, and social intolerance** are significant concerns. Unemployment is linked to idleness and substance abuse, leading to family violence and high aggression - *“Due to fewer jobs, there is widespread alcoholism and even drug addiction among rural youth. The latter in a small dose, but still a problem. As a result, there are cases of violence in the family, high manifestation of aggression, which leads to tragic consequences,”* explained N. F., a 38-year-old woman, Didi Nedzi.

The issue of **stray dogs attacking residents** and students also poses a safety threat.

Senaki Municipality: Senaki respondents perceive increased crime as a significant danger, often reflecting on the national situation rather than just local incidents - *“Crime has increased and we hear about it on television. Terrible information is coming, someone was killed, raped. My son is a student in Tbilisi. At such times, I am afraid, I worry, I imagine my own son in the place of the murdered person, I think about the bad,”* shared M.L., a 54-year-old mother of three.

**In addition, the population is concerned about traffic rule violations**, which are leading to frequent **accidents and a rising death toll**: *“Georgia has one of the highest traffic death rates in Europe. I'm always afraid, I'm always afraid. I am afraid when my child goes to school, when my husband drives to work, I am still afraid. I am afraid of driving. So many accidents scare me, make me crazy, I have terrible stress. I don't understand why it can't be regulated.”* - M.Z., 62 years old, local.

Tskaltubo Municipality: In Tskaltubo, high levels of **alcoholism and drug addiction** are major threats, particularly among adolescents - *“Neither the parent nor the child knows what marijuana causes. They say they are smoking ‘some grass’ as if we are dealing with really harmless grass. You have no idea what harm this herb does to the minds of adults,”* said M.D., a 62-year-old doctor. The use



of marijuana among youth is a prevalent issue, with both parents and teachers expressing serious concerns.

Many respondents emphasized that their sense of insecurity is heightened by rising crime, social intolerance, societal conflicts, and political polarization—*‘Political polarization scares me,’* remarked one respondent.

Violations of traffic rules and faulty public transport were also identified as significant safety threats.

**Khoni Municipality:** Khoni respondents evaluated public safety as low to average, with main concerns including **faulty road infrastructure, increased aggression, and substance abuse. Issues such as inadequate transport, faulty drainage, and old buildings pose significant threats.** The high level of aggression among teenagers is attributed to family dynamics, particularly the migration of women for work, leaving children without a nurturing environment.

One respondent highlighted the **urgency of addressing youth substance abuse:** *“The state should investigate the causes of drug and alcohol addiction. The government needs to approach this issue differently and implement multiple control mechanisms. If the teenage generation has already become dangerous, we are all individually guilty,”* stated G. Z., a 55-year-old mathematician. This underscores the collective responsibility in addressing these challenges and the need for increased awareness and education among teenagers to mitigate substance abuse effectively.

**Kutaisi Municipality:** In Kutaisi, public safety is rated as low to medium, with significant concerns about **political polarization, aggression, and traffic violations.** The high number of individuals with substance and gambling addictions, along with inadequate mental health support, exacerbate public safety concerns - *“I don’t feel safe... I feel very nervous when I send my child to school. I’m 39 now, and things were different when I was growing up. Kids today are easily influenced, and that makes me feel unsafe. Drug addicts can be so affected that it’s hard to comprehend... The environment poses a real threat.”* said D. D., a 39 year-old, displaced woman.

*“There are many mentally unstable people around us whose behavior is uncontrollable, and insufficient attention to this problem creates a danger,”* F.Kh., a 52-year-old, female local civil servant.

## 2.8. PERSONAL SECURITY

Personal security is a fundamental aspect of human security, focusing on the protection of individuals from violence, human rights violations, restrictions on freedoms, and other threats to their well-being. Ensuring personal security is essential for creating a safe and stable environment where individuals can thrive without fear. It involves safeguarding people from physical harm, psychological distress, and socio-economic challenges that disrupt their lives and hinder their potential.

This chapter delves into the population’s perception of personal security and identifies the major threats they face.

### 2.8.1. ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF PERSONAL SECURITY

Respondents of the quantitative research evaluated their own personal safety primarily between normal and good, with most identifying their safety level at 3 (41.2%) and 4 (33.4%) on a 5-point scale. A small proportion rated their safety as very good (7.4%), while 16.6% found it alarming, scoring it at 1 or 2 (Refer to Diagram 14). This distribution suggests that while a majority feel relatively secure, a significant portion of the population experiences a notable degree of insecurity.

### Assessment of Level of Personal Security

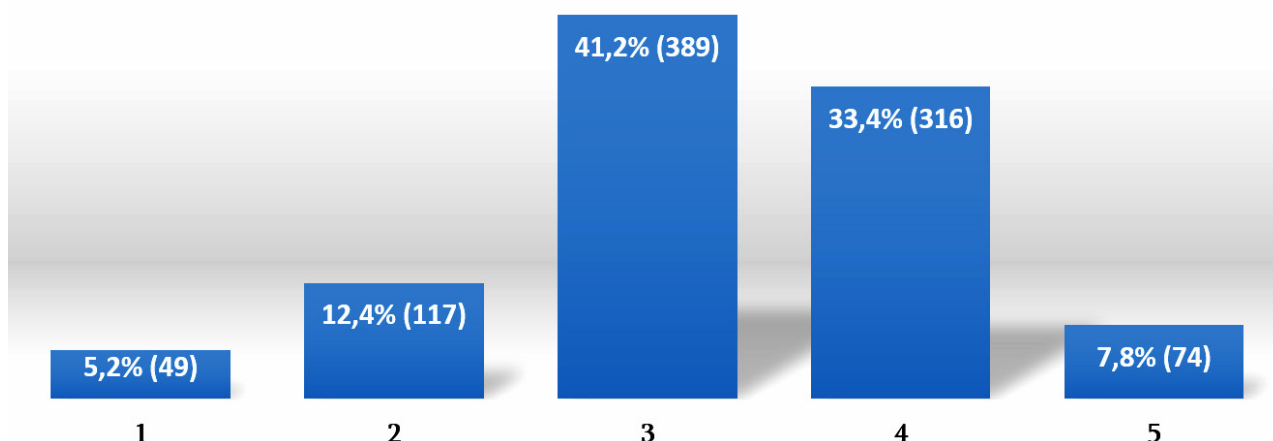


Diagram #14

#### 2.8.2. THE MAJOR THREATS TO PERSONAL SECURITY – QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

**Increasing Desire to Migrate** is considered a significant threat by 19.9% (188 respondents). This desire is notably gendered, with 124 women and 64 men expressing this concern, indicating that women are more likely to feel compelled to migrate, often to save their families from economic hardship. This trend is particularly pronounced in **Tsalenjikha, Tskaltubo, and Zugdidi** municipalities, where the economic situation and other security components are significantly concerning, driving this sense of insecurity. A village doctor from Tsalenjikha municipality emphasized the adverse effects of migration on youth, stating, *“First of all, I want to touch on migration, which has become increasingly evident in the community lately. As a family doctor, I interact with each family and have noticed clear psychological issues in children. These problems manifest differently in teenagers, such as self-isolation, aggression, and depression.”* The migration of parents leaves children without adequate emotional support, leading to various psychological issues.

**Restriction of Freedom of Speech and Expression (14.2%)** and **Discrimination due to Different Political Views (10,6%)** were also highlighted as threats. This reflects concerns over civil liberties and the ability to freely express opinions without fear of retribution. The current political climate, marked by anti-democratic measures and political polarization, exacerbates these fears. A number of respondents expressed concern about a polarized society and the resulting social alienation. One respondent noted, *“I am very worried about political polarization. I am under absurd pressure because of it. I am an apolitical person, deliberately avoiding politics to not make anyone uncomfortable, yet I had problems on political grounds in terms of employment.”* – woman, civil servant, Zugdidi municipality. This highlights how political tensions can impact individuals’ professional and personal lives, leading to social alienation.

**Distrust of Law Enforcement Agencies** is identified by 13.2% of respondents as a significant threat. This distrust was also mentioned by interlocutors in focus groups, who reported situations where the police took the side of the aggressor in cases of domestic violence, leading to double victimization for women and impacting their trust in law enforcement. This is further exacerbated by the perception of increased crime and the use of disproportionate force against the population during the recent protests. Such incidents undermine confidence in the institutions meant to protect citizens.

**Domestic Violence** is considered a major threat by 10.2% of respondents (96 respondents), with a significant gender dimension: 71 women versus 25 men cited this as a concern. This stark difference highlights that women are more vulnerable to domestic violence, facing physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence within their homes.

A resident from Zugdidi Municipality emphasized the ongoing challenges: *“I have met many people, ladies who claimed that they are not protected, and are often victims of domestic violence, victims of gender discrimination.”* This statement underscores the lack of protection and safety for women. The prevalence of domestic violence is further supported by a respondent from Khoni, who stated, *“Every second woman in Georgia is a victim of domestic violence. The facts of murder are also frequent... To address this issue, we need to tackle problems such as alcoholism, drug abuse, lack of self-realization, economic hardship, and avoidance of responsibilities”* - K.K., 63 years old, philologist, Khoni.

One respondent’s perspective from Khoni reinforces the need for societal change: *“I support divorce in cases of domestic violence. According to earlier traditions, which is still perpetuated, a woman was obliged to endure everything and dedicate herself to maintaining her family, which is unhealthy, and detrimental for women, children, families and society in general”* - S. C., 49 years old, doctor. This highlights the importance of changing traditional norms that have historically kept women in abusive relationships.

The respondents stressed the need for societal change and greater support for women to break free from the cycle of abuse. By challenging outdated traditions and providing the necessary resources and support, society can help women achieve personal security and contribute to a safer, more stable community.

The overall analysis shows that personal security concerns are deeply intertwined with socio-economic and political factors, with significant gender dimensions influencing perceptions and experiences of insecurity. Community education and awareness work is cited as a key means of dealing with these challenges.

**The Major Threats to Personal Security**

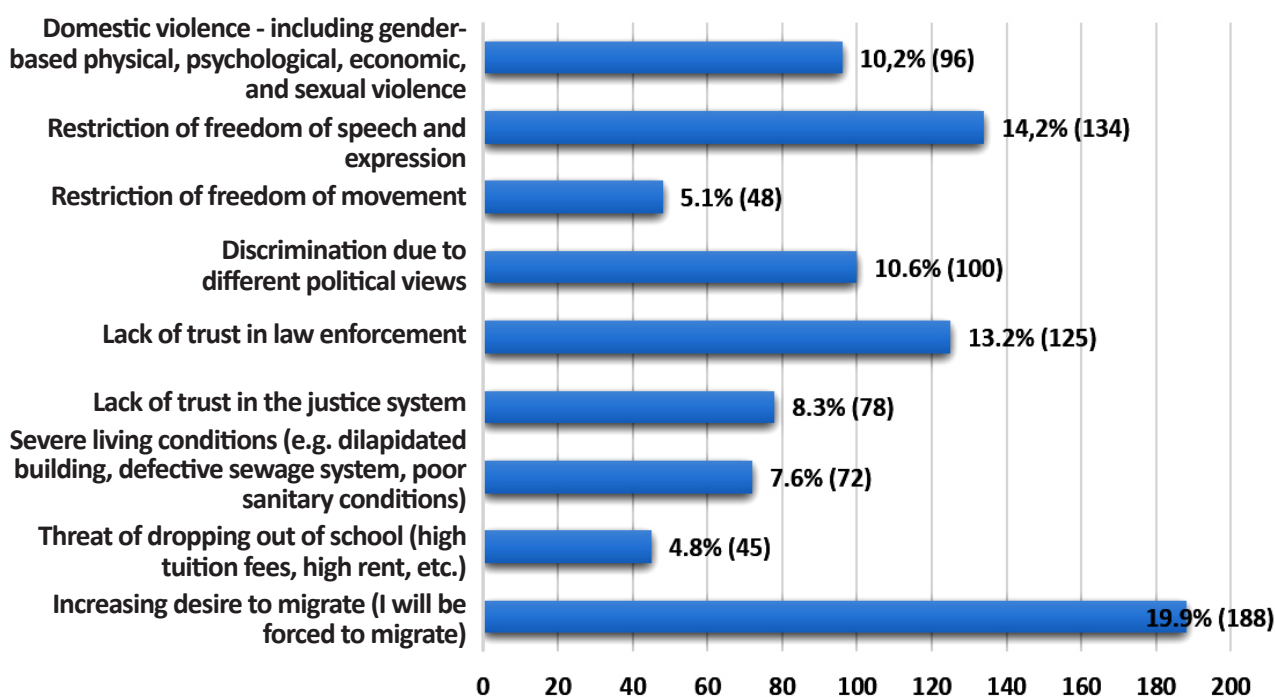


Diagram #15

## 2.9. IMPACT OF INCREASED SECURITY RISKS ON THE POPULATION

### 2.9.1. NEGATIVE IMPACT OF INCREASED HUMAN SECURITY RISKS

Weak human security and a diminished sense of safety can have profound impacts on individuals and communities. When people feel insecure, it affects their physical and mental health, disrupts their daily lives, and hampers their ability to thrive. Chronic insecurity can lead to increased stress, psychological issues, and health problems, while also exacerbating social tensions and conflicts. In such environments, individuals may experience heightened fear, anxiety, and a sense of hopelessness, further compounding the adverse effects on their well-being.

#### Analysis of Data:

Quantitative research data clearly demonstrates the negative impact of rising human security risks on the population. When asked about this impact, the majority of respondents emphasize **increased stress and psychological problems** (61.4%), indicating significant mental strain and anxiety. **Health-related problems** emerged for 51.1% of respondents, suggesting a direct link between insecurity and physical health issues.

**Increased risk of domestic conflicts and violence** was noted by 46.9%, reflecting how external stressors exacerbate familial tensions. An **increased sense of insecurity** was felt by 41%, contributing to reduced community engagement and social cohesion. **Nihilism and hopelessness** were reported by 32%, indicating a decline in societal morale and future prospects. Lastly, 31.1% highlighted an **increased risk of societal conflicts**, pointing to growing concerns about social stability.

The Impact of Increased Security Risks on Population

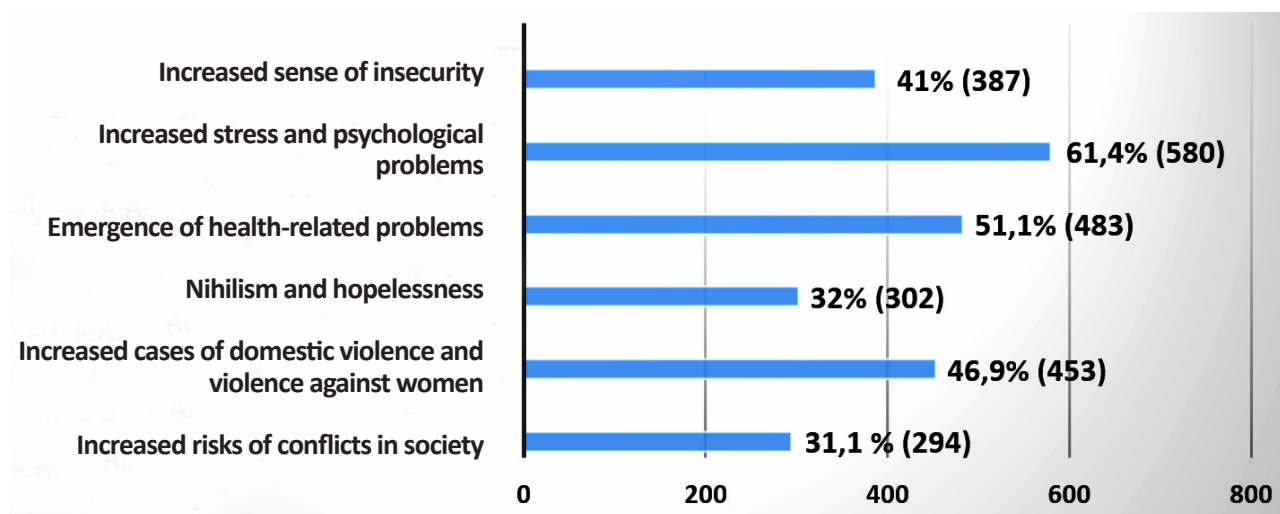


Diagram #16

### 2.9.2. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO HUMAN SECURITY CHALLENGES AND PUBLIC TRUST

This subchapter examines the population's perception of the government's response to human security risks and whether individuals seek assistance from government agencies when facing problems.

**Effectiveness of Government Response:** The data reveals a critical view of the government's effectiveness in addressing human security issues:

- **45.1%** of respondents rate the system as “average effective.”
- **28.4%** believe it is “not effective at all.”
- **21.4%** find it difficult to respond, indicating uncertainty or lack of awareness.
- Only **5.2%** consider the government’s response “effective.”

This highlights a general dissatisfaction and skepticism about the government’s ability to handle human security risks effectively.

**Public Trust and Assistance Seeking:** A significant portion of the population expresses distrust towards government agencies:

- **69.7% of respondents do not seek help from the government**, with 22.8% not seeking assistance because they do not believe their issues will be addressed or resolved
- **30.4%** have sought help, indicating that a portion of the population still turns to government agencies despite widespread skepticism.

This data underscores the need for improving public trust and the effectiveness of government responses to human security issues, as a large proportion of the population remains reluctant to seek governmental assistance due to perceived inefficacy.

## CONCLUSION

This comprehensive research on human security across various municipalities reveals a multifaceted and nuanced picture of the population’s sense of safety and well-being. The findings underscore the complex interplay between economic, social, political, and environmental factors that collectively shape human security.

To effectively address human security issues, a holistic and multifaceted approach is required. This involves the active engagement of various actors, including government and relevant ministries, municipalities, civil society organizations (CSOs), and international organizations. The list of recommendations provided below outlines targeted strategies to enhance human security across different dimensions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

### Economic Security

- ✓ **Support for Small and Medium Enterprises:** Implement training courses and business development grant programs, focusing on women’s economic empowerment. Create a favorable business environment, including tax exemptions for the first year of business, and maintain social status and financial incentives for new businesses;
- ✓ **Consulting and Information Services:** Establish consulting service centers in municipalities to inform and assist population in understanding and accessing state or local economic programs. Provide detailed explanations of competition conditions and practical assistance in application processes; Strengthening the role of Women’s Rooms and expanding access for the population, including those in remote geographic areas, to information and consulting services;



- ✓ **Child Care Services:** Develop and expand day and evening child care centers, as well as extended and summer groups in kindergartens and schools, especially to stimulate women's employment;
- ✓ **Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship:** Encourage and support social entrepreneurship, co-operatives, and business incubators. Increase the role of municipalities in promoting these initiatives.
- ✓ **Vocational Training and Employment Programs:** Implement vocational training programs to enhance skills and employability, particularly for youth and women. Collaborate with local businesses to create job opportunities and support economic stability.

### Mitigating migration by creating local economic opportunities

- ✓ **Risk Group Identification and Support:** Identify and provide targeted support to risk groups prone to migration, such as young people and families facing economic hardships. Offer tailored programs to address their specific needs and challenges;
- ✓ **Business Grants for Returnees:** Introduce business grants and support programs for returnees to help them reintegrate into the local economy. Provide mentorship and resources to ensure their businesses succeed;
- ✓ **Community Development Programs:** Implement community development programs that create local job opportunities and improve living conditions. Focus on infrastructure development, public services, and quality of life improvements to reduce the push factors for migration;
- ✓ **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of economic programs and migration trends.

### Food Security

- ✓ **Food Safety Regulations:** Strengthen food safety regulations and enforcement mechanisms to ensure food products meet health standards. Increase transparency in food production and distribution;
- ✓ **Support for Agricultural Development:** Provide financial and technical support to local farmers to improve agricultural practices and increase food production. Promote sustainable farming methods;
- ✓ **Infrastructure Improvement:** Ensure the presence of grocery stores in all villages and improve public transport infrastructure to facilitate access to food markets. Enhance transportation services to make it easier for residents, especially those in rural areas, to access food and other essential services;
- ✓ **Nutritional Education:** Conduct educational campaigns to raise awareness about healthy eating habits and balanced nutrition.

## Ecological Security

- ✓ **Environmental Monitoring and Management:** Enhance monitoring systems for landslide-prone zones and other environmental hazards. Implement regular assessments and develop early warning systems to mitigate risks;
- ✓ **Improving Sanitary Conditions:** Maintain and upgrade sewage systems and drainage pipes to prevent flooding during heavy rainfall. Increase the number of garbage cans and garbage trucks to enhance waste removal efficiency.
- ✓ **Waste Management and Recycling:** Promote proper waste management practices through community education and the establishment of recycling programs;
- ✓ **Water Quality:** Allocate resources for regular laboratory testing of water quality and improve water supply systems to ensure safe drinking water for all communities;
- ✓ **Green Spaces and Urban Forestry:** Invest in the creation and maintenance of green spaces and urban forests to improve air quality and provide recreational areas for the community.
- ✓ Develop and implement climate change adaptation strategies to protect agricultural productivity and reduce the impact of environmental changes on food security;
- ✓ **Community Education on Environmental Issues:** Expand and intensify educational and awareness campaigns on environmental protection and sustainability.

## Health Security

- ✓ **Accessible Healthcare Services:** Expand access to primary healthcare services, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas. Establish mobile medical units to provide healthcare services in rural areas and villages near conflict-affected regions;
- ✓ **Affordable Medication Programs:** Implement programs to reduce the cost of essential medications and provide free or subsidized medicines to vulnerable populations, including the elderly and those with chronic conditions;
- ✓ **Health Education and Awareness:** Expand health education campaigns to increase awareness about reproductive health and available healthcare programs;
- ✓ **Mental Health Services:** Enhance access to mental health services by establishing counseling centers and integrating mental health care into primary healthcare services. Provide training for healthcare providers on mental health issues;
- ✓ **Disease Prevention and Control:** Implement disease prevention and control programs, including regular health screenings, vaccination campaigns, and public health initiatives to combat communicable diseases;
- ✓ **Informing Women about Reproductive Rights and Issues:** Conduct comprehensive educational campaigns to inform women about their reproductive rights, family planning options, and available healthcare services, in both urban and rural areas;
- ✓ **Campaigns on Substance Abuse Dangers:** Implement targeted information campaigns to raise awareness about the dangers of substance abuse, including alcohol and narcotics, focusing on prevention and early intervention; Partner with schools, community centers, and local media to disseminate information and provide resources for individuals and families affected by substance abuse, promoting healthy lifestyles and support services.

## Public Security

- ✓ **Traffic Safety Measures:** Install smart cameras and speed bumps near schools, kindergartens, and densely populated areas. Enhance the municipality's responsibility for monitoring and enforcing traffic safety measures, for instance, by conducting regular inspections, ensuring timely maintenance of traffic control devices, and coordinating with relevant authorities to address safety concerns;
- ✓ **Combating Substance Abuse:** Conduct educational campaigns on the harmful effects of alcohol and narcotic substances, targeting teenagers and young people. Promote healthy lifestyles through special municipal programs;
- ✓ **Crime Prevention Programs:** Implement community policing and crime prevention initiatives. Increase the visibility of law enforcement in rural areas and villages near to conflict-dividing line;
- ✓ **Emergency Response Systems:** Enhance emergency response systems and ensure timely and effective assistance during crises. Provide regular training and drills for both emergency personnel and the general population to improve preparedness and response;
- ✓ **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Conduct public awareness campaigns on safety measures and community vigilance. Encourage residents to engage in neighborhood watch programs, where they can work collaboratively to monitor their surroundings, report incidents like domestic violence or other forms of abuse, and support each other in maintaining community safety;

## Personal Security

- ✓ **Preventive Measures Against Domestic Violence:**
  - **Community Policing and Law Enforcement:** Establish community policing initiatives to ensure early identification of potential perpetrators through regular visits to neighborhoods by district inspectors and community officers, and strengthen cooperation with local residents. Increase law enforcement sensitivity to domestic violence and ensure consistent follow-up on reported cases;
  - **Secure Communication Channels:** Set up secure and confidential communication channels for reporting possible domestic violence cases to district inspectors or community officers;
  - **Early Intervention - Behavior Change Programs for Perpetrators:** Implement behavior change programs for perpetrators at an early stage. Ensure potential perpetrators are included in these programs to address and change their behavior before it escalates;
  - **Mutual Support Groups:** Establish mutual support groups for perpetrators, facilitated by professional psychologists, focusing on behavior change and prevention of future violence;
  - **Awareness Campaigns:** Launch awareness-raising campaigns on gender stereotypes and domestic violence, emphasizing zero-tolerance and the importance of reporting incidents. Target these campaigns at the general population, with a focus on vulnerable families;
  - **Training for Referral Entities:** Continuously train referral entities on their role and importance in identifying and responding to domestic violence;

✓ **Increasing Availability of Assistance Programs:**

- **Access to Support Services:** Increase access to support and assistance services for victims of domestic violence by expanding both the geographic coverage of services and the availability of online consultations;
  - **Improved Coordination:** Promote coordinated cooperation among all referral system actors to develop and implement a unified strategy. This should include social workers, healthcare providers, education institutions, and law enforcement, municipalities working together to provide comprehensive support to victims and their families.
  - **Strengthening the Work of the Municipality's Children's Rights Protection Departments:** Increase the involvement of social workers and psychologists within the municipality's Children's Rights Protection Department to better identify and support vulnerable families. Ensure these departments maintain regular communication with representatives of kindergartens, schools, and parents on issues of violence against women and domestic violence;
  - **Primary Health Care Sensitivity:** Increase the sensitivity and involvement of primary health-care representatives in addressing violence against women and domestic violence. Train healthcare providers to recognize signs of abuse and to refer victims to appropriate support services.
- ✓ **Community Engagement and Participation:** Promote active community participation in local governance and decision-making processes. Encourage the formation of community groups and volunteer organizations;
- ✓ **Youth Programs and Spaces:** Develop sports grounds, art and culture programs, and address infrastructural issues in libraries. Create youth spaces in villages where young people can gather, spend their free time productively, and receive informal education.



Women Fund "Sukhumi"

Author of Consolidated report –

**EKATERINE GAMAKHARIA**

The data systematization -

**EMA KAMKIA, NINO KORINTELI, KHATUNA GOGUA**

Layout - **LIA KOSTAVA**

**Address:**

#6 Mgaloblishvili str. Kutaisi, Georgia  
Office space #2, #29b, A. Mitskevich str. Tbilisi, Georgia

E-mails:

[womansukhumi@gmail.com](mailto:womansukhumi@gmail.com)  
[fundsukhumitbilisi@gmail.com](mailto:fundsukhumitbilisi@gmail.com)

Web page:

[www.fsokhumi.ge](http://www.fsokhumi.ge)

Facebook accounts:

[www.facebook.com/fsokhumi/](http://www.facebook.com/fsokhumi/);  
<https://www.facebook.com/WFSTbilisiOffice>