

Program Description

Remote Conference to Facilitate Communication Among Civil Society Stakeholders in Response to Targeted Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction for Political Outcomes in Georgia

Description: On behalf of the U.S. Department of State's Office of Cooperative Threat Reduction, CRDF Global will facilitate a remote conference for non-governmental professionals with expertise in national security, applied sciences, and public communications on countering the targeted use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) for targeted political outcomes. Recent events in Eastern Europe have highlighted the real threat of targeted WMD attacks perpetrated by state actors. Alongside policymakers and law enforcement, civil society experts have an integral role to play in identifying, attributing, and responding to such attacks. CRDF Global's team of leading experts on counter-WMD strategies and international partners will highlight key WMD threats and equip Georgian civil-society stakeholders with a common understanding of the formal and informal roles they may play in supporting investigations and countering misleading public narratives. Participants will be encouraged to disseminate these best practices and lessons learned among their colleagues, resulting in an increased level of preparedness against potential WMD attacks among civil society stakeholders.

Audience: Participants will include Georgian analytical laboratory scientists from public- and private-sector organizations and non-governmental national security experts, including former government officials. Individuals who may be called upon to support official investigations into targeted WMD attacks based on their expertise and access to specialized equipment are particularly encouraged to participate, as are thought leaders who may be in positions to clarify narratives following a suspected WMD attack. Due to their important role in informing the public, journalists and other media stakeholders will also be included.

Trainers and Partner Organizations: Leading counter-WMD experts will provide an introduction the science of chemical and radiological agents, as well as international peers of the participants. Experts will speak authoritatively about coordinating with government stakeholders.

Conference Structure and Participant Expectations: The conference will take place on September 28 and 29, 2021 from 6:00-8:00am ET/14:00-16:30 Georgia Standard Time. The event will be conducted entirely remotely using a secure Zoom meeting space. The conference will comprise one 150-minute session each day. The sessions will include presentations by CRDF Global experts and discussion and question-and-answer sessions. Participants will also take part in an interactive table-top exercise designed to simulate a targeted WMD attack. The exercise will focus on coordinating and information-sharing between non-government experts and government agencies and reinforcing factual narratives through public communication channels in the aftermath of a targeted WMD attack. Participants will be required to register for this conference using a link provided by CRDF Global.

Registration Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/f5YF0cQzfX>

Topics: Conference topics will include:

- The Science and history of Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Weapon Threats
- Strategic Communication: Lessons Learned and Best Practices
- Case Studies: Role of Civil Society Following a WMD Assassination Attempt
- Coordinating and Sharing Expertise with Government Partners
- Leveraging International Partnerships to Encourage Counter-WMD Preparedness and Accountability



- Contributing to Credible and Fact-Based Public Communication Around WMD Assassination Events
- Understanding Russian Strategy and Objectives
- Interactive Tabletop Exercise: Coordinating with Government Stakeholders Reinforcing Factual Narratives Following a WMD Assassination Event

Point of Contact:

Ms. Abigail Stowe-Thurston
Project Lead, CRDF Global
astowe-thurston@crdfglobal.org