

OPEN SOCIETY FORUM NEWSLETTER

1. The citizens' right to access environmental information has giving its results

The Open Society Forum has been implementing Strengthening the Right to Information for People and the Environment Project project in Zaamar soum of Tuv province, the 12th, 13th, and 14th khoroo of Khan-Uul district of Ulaanbaatar. These khoros belong to the territory of Tuul river basin, which is affected most by adverse human activities. The aim of the project is to assist the local citizens in obtaining environmental information, protecting and securing their rights to live in safe environment that has been seriously violated do to mining projects. Within the projects framework, the residents of Zaamar soum of Tuv province has united against the government's implementation of Gold-2 project by taking series of back to back measures resulting in minister of mining D.Sumyabazar to direct Mineral and Petroleum Authority to start the process of reversing its illegal decisions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spZ7d8F8-ig&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RP2bCogKZFg>



2. The Journalist's Club organized a discussion on election finance

Initiated by the Journalists' Club at the Open Society Forum, a "Journalists' Breakfast" meeting was held to discuss and exchange information on current political and electoral finance systems in relation to the Presidential Election on May 5, 2017. More than 30 journalists participated in the meeting.

<http://eagle.mn/r/28733>

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3. A civil society consultation to support budget transparency and accountability

Open Society Forum held a workshop from November 21st to November 23rd of 2017 in collaboration with civil society organizations to improve budget transparency and accountability. At that conference more than 40 civil society representatives gathered from 21 provinces including 9 districts of Ulaanbaatar city. The participants at the workshop discussed the transparency of procurement, budget, and finance at city, province, and districts levels in talks of improving and planning fiscal responsibility within two years. Representatives of civil society organizations who participated in the consultation successfully monitored the implementation of the Glass Account Act.

<http://eagle.mn/r/37232>



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4. Monitoring of the Presidential Election

Civil society coalition for fair election carried out joint monitoring and observation of the 2017 Presidential election. The monitoring team comprised of several NGOs focused their scrutiny on three areas: media coverage of election campaign, preparation of the automated election systems, and election campaign finance. Results of the monitoring were widely distributed through media outlets throughout the election period.

<https://www.facebook.com/OpenSocietyForum/posts/1231557653636656>

<https://www.news.mn/?id=3196>



5. Public awareness activities upon the 1st Anniversary of the General Administrative Law

On June 19th of 2015 the Parliament of Mongolia approved the General Administrative Law to govern the relations of individuals or legal entities with public authorities in their performance of executive powers and to ensure citizens' meaningful participation in administrative decision making. The law became effective on July 1st of 2016. Marking its one-year anniversary the Forum organized dialogues, developed and disseminated series of documentaries on the result of relevant monitoring activities conducted throughout the country in order to increase public awareness and knowledge of the Law.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CfUusxXWsBw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83rAcZh9Gxl>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5mO-V1Vv3E>

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6. Gobi-Altai province held the first public hearing under the 2016 Public Hearing Law

In 2017 Open Society Forum invited non-governmental organizations, professional associations and local self-governments to participate in trainings aimed to equip them with hands-on information about how public hearings can be used as a tool to engage citizens in decision-making and monitoring government performance. Following these trainings, the first public hearings were successfully organized in Gobi-Altai, Khuvsgul, Dornod provinces and Baganuur district of Ulaanbaatar city.

http://forum.mn/index.php?sel=content&obj_id=5338

7. LAUNCH OF THE EXTRACTIVE CONTRACTS DATABASE (www.resourcecontracts.mn) AND SIGNATURE TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON CONTRACT TRANSPARENCY

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in June 2017 by the Forum, the Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry, and the Secretariat of Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), aimed at collaborating for contract transparency in the natural resources sector. As a result OSF efforts since 2014 to enhancing contract transparency in the extractive sector, the online database of resource contracts www.resourcecontracts.mn has been established and publicly launched in June 2017. Total of 400 contracts, recently exist in Mongolia's extractive sector are expected to be posted in the database and disclosed for public scrutiny.

<https://www.facebook.com/OpenSocietyForum/posts/1225934927532262>



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8. PRO BONO INSTITUTIONAL LAW MEETING

Open Society Forum organized the first ever Lawyers' Pro Bono Conference on 8 December, 2017 in collaboration with the Mongolian Bar Association, aiming to promote Pro Bono culture among legal society and to build the collaboration between CSOs and lawyers in defending public interests.

<http://forum.mn/index.php>

<https://twitter.com/>



9. Nationwide monitoring on police activities

From 2015 to 2017 the Forum organized two-staged capacity building trainings for local NGOs on the monitoring of law enforcement activities and criminal justice reform process. A total of 150 NGOs from all 21 aimags participated in the training, out of which 67 were provided grants by the Forum and took part in the nationwide monitoring of police activities. The best teams from the 4 aimags involved were further engaged in a study trip organized in Ulaanbaatar City, which allowed them to share their experiences, visit Law enforcement agencies and national NGOs. A short documentary was also produced.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEnj4UVfEVg>

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10. Human rights defenders united under the slogan “Let’s include everyone in prosperity” for the International Human Rights Day

During the International Human Rights Day and Human Rights Defenders Day, the Human Rights NGO Forum organized its third peaceful assembly in the Central Square of Ulaanbaatar uniting the National Human Rights Commission, local NGOs and citizens under the slogan “Let’s include everyone in prosperity”. Human rights defenders have amplified their voice against violations in relation to poverty, unemployment, inadequate livelihood, lack of implementation of labor laws, poor access to health care and education, air pollution, irresponsible mining, insecurity of food and other issues the society is facing.

<http://forum.mn/index.php>



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11. 10th ANNIVERSARY OF CIVIL SOCIETY DAY

A decade has passed since the Government of Mongolia officially declared January 31st as the Civil Society Day. Marking its 10th anniversary on January 30th of 2018, the Human Rights NGO forum organized a public event “Human Rights Information Market” and disseminated information related to the mid-term implementation of UPR recommendations to the general public through media. During the day petition signatures were also collected to demand decision makers to create a favorable legal environment for the civil society.

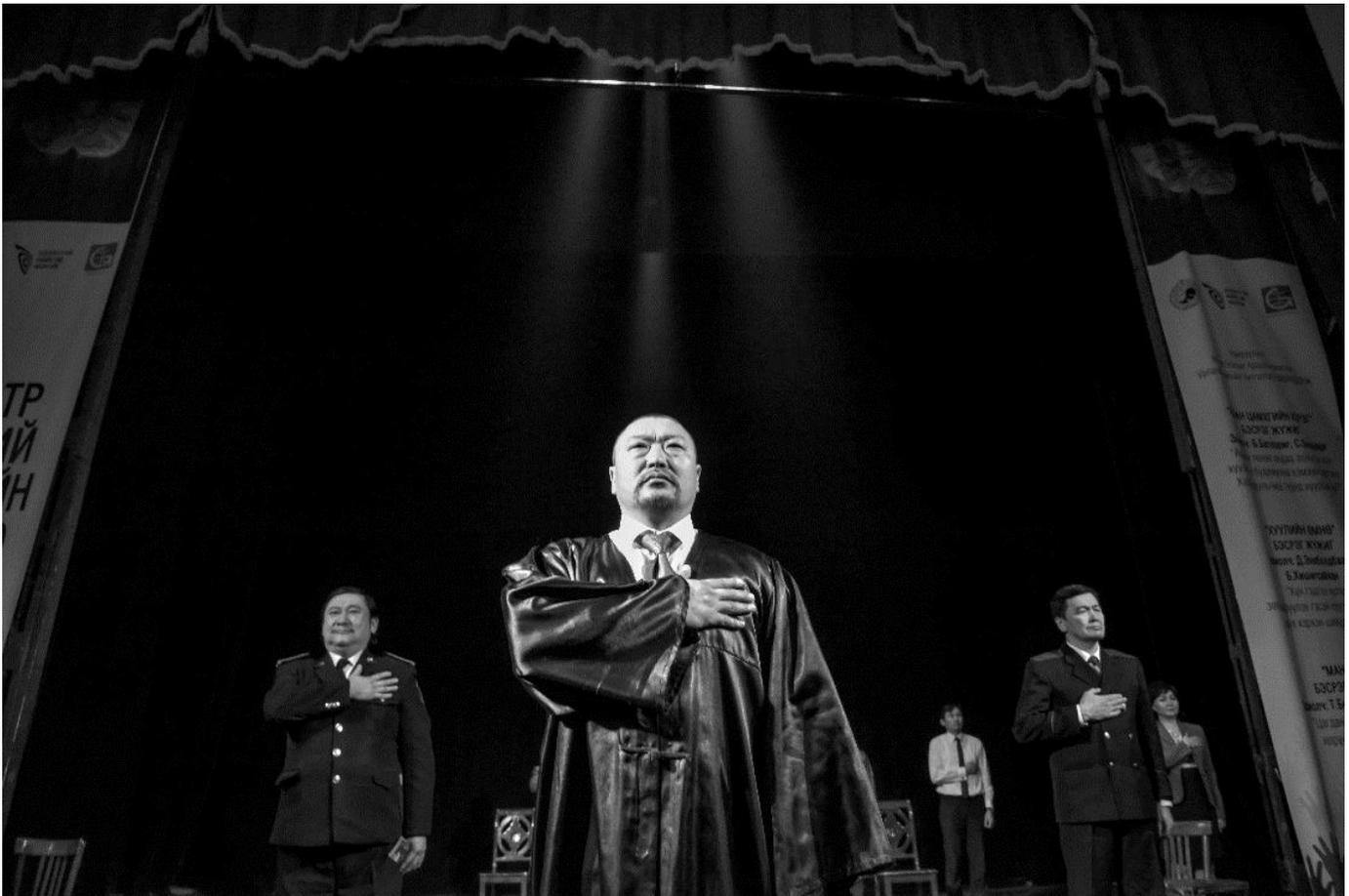


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12. “THEATER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS – 2018”

The Forum, in cooperation with the State Drama Theater and Globe International NGO, has annually organized the event “Theater for Human Rights” since 2014. The highlight of this year’s event was the three dramas aimed at introducing new regulations on Criminal Procedure Code. These staged readings received good reviews from the audience, and was a success, as an innovative way, in educating the public on the details of legal procedures and regulations through arts, culture and performance.

http://forum.mn/index.php?sel=content&menu_id=6&f=one&obj_id=5395



13. UPR Mid-Term Implementation Report and National Consultations

The Human Rights NGO Forum started drafting of UPR Mid-term report in October 2017 and requested respective parties for their input. On February 2nd of 2018, The Forum, in cooperation with Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organized a National Consultation meeting on the implementation of the UPR recommendations. In addition, the Forum organized discussions in all 21 aimags together with the NHRC of Mongolia, received and included local voices in the UPR Mid-term report.

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14. Release of Monitoring Findings on Disclosure of Public Expenses

In June, the Open Society Forum released findings of monitoring on disclosure of public expenses. The Forum has been facilitating coordinated nationwide monitoring of the implementation of the Glass Accounts Law since 2015 to push for increased budget transparency. Findings of the 2017 round of monitoring by more than 30 CSOs for 6 months have been aggregated and disseminated nationally and locally monthly to create more impact. The monitoring reveals improvement of disclosure of public expenses in May. Joint and continuous efforts of the CSOs based in all provinces to monitor and report on the enforcement of the Law, has contributed to its enforcement and served as an advocacy which resulted in the adoption by the government of a decree making it a prerequisite for budget entities to fulfill all fiscal disclosure responsibilities to be eligible to receive budget transfers at the end of the year.

Findings can be downloaded at http://forum.mn/index.php?sel=project&menu_id=28&obj_id=5333

15. Release of Local Budget Transparency Assessment

To determine the current state of enforcement of fiscal transparency related laws and regulations the Forum conducts bi-annual comprehensive assessments of disclosure of budget information by local governments. We launched findings of the third round of assessment in November. The assessment of budget transparency nationwide including all 21 provinces, the Capital City and its districts, undertaken in collaboration with local CSOs, reveal some improvement compared to previous results.

(Report is found at http://forum.mn/index.php?sel=project&menu_id=28&obj_id=5362)

16. Information on 2018 state budget disseminated for public

To help raise public participation in budget process, we extracted simplified information from 2018 state budget enacted in November. The citizen-friendly visualized information was produced by sectors and issues requiring urgent attention and disseminated widely. (Download information at http://forum.mn/index.php?sel=project&menu_id=28)

17. Open Society Forum Releases the 2017 Mongolia Open Budget Survey

In January, 2018, the International Budget Partnership (IBP), USA, launched the 2017 Open Budget Survey (OBS), the world's only **independent, comparative** assessment of **public budget transparency, oversight and public participation**. The sixth round of biennial **independent, comparative** assessment included 115 countries. As a partner institute of the IBP, Open Society Forum released 2017 Mongolia Open Budget Survey in February, 2018. The 2017 survey shows that level of disclosure of key budget documents by the Mongolian government remains largely the same as in 2015. The Forum's researchers undertook the Mongolia Survey with guidance of the IBP.

(Download the Mongolia Open Budget Survey at http://forum.mn/index.php?sel=project&menu_id=28&obj_id=5399)