



## **Illegitimate Government Continues Punishment, Torture and Inhuman Treatment of Protest Participants**

**The Union of Human Rights Defenders – Human Rights Center calls on the illegitimate government of Georgia to respect the right to freedom of assembly and ensure absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatments.**

**It is alarming that illegitimately elected so-called President Mikheil Kavelashvili signed repressive laws on his first day in the office, which were adopted by the illegitimate parliament to punish protest participants. The laws create grounds to punish the citizens, who participate in protest demonstrations.**

Rigged Parliamentary Elections of October 26, 2024 and the November 28, 2024 announcement of the de-facto Prime Minister to stop EU integration process of Georgia was followed by large-scale and non-stop protest demonstrations in Tbilisi and in almost every region of Georgia. The government opposed the public resistance and protest with disproportionate power, terror, demonstrative and violent arrests of protest participants. Unprecedented violence was used by police forces against the protesters, journalist, activists and political opponents. Facts of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment of the detainees in the moment of detention, or/and after detention, while they were transported to the temporary detention settings, were particularly alarming. Public Defender, local and international human rights organizations reported about these facts.

The patterns of human rights violations observed during the monitoring of protest demonstrations, mass violation of the right to peaceful assembly and expression create well-grounded assumption that the Georgian Dream government committed systemic violence against protesters, and almost all units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs participated in it.

In accordance with the reports of the defense lawyers, big part of the detainees were ruthlessly beaten. According to media, the detainees were physically abused during and after detention. Some of them stated that their beating continued in temporary detention settings too. The victims reported that after being detained, they were beaten in special minibuses, where dozens police officers were beating them until they fainted. In parallel to physical abuse, police officers were insulting them, threatened (among them with sexual violence) and degraded detainees. Most detainees had injuries in the heads and faces that proves systemic violence. In this light, the actions of law enforcement officers aimed to punish demonstrators instead eradication of incidents.

The Union of Human Rights Defenders – Human Rights Center evaluates the amendments introduced into the Administrative Offences Code and the Law of Georgia on Assembly and Manifestation as alarming. In accordance with the amendments, the repressive provisions of the laws makes realization of the rights to freedom of assembly and manifestation impossible, violates the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of Georgia. Illegitimately elected President Kavelashvili automatically, without any consideration, signed the laws, which aim to punish protest participants and stop resistance.