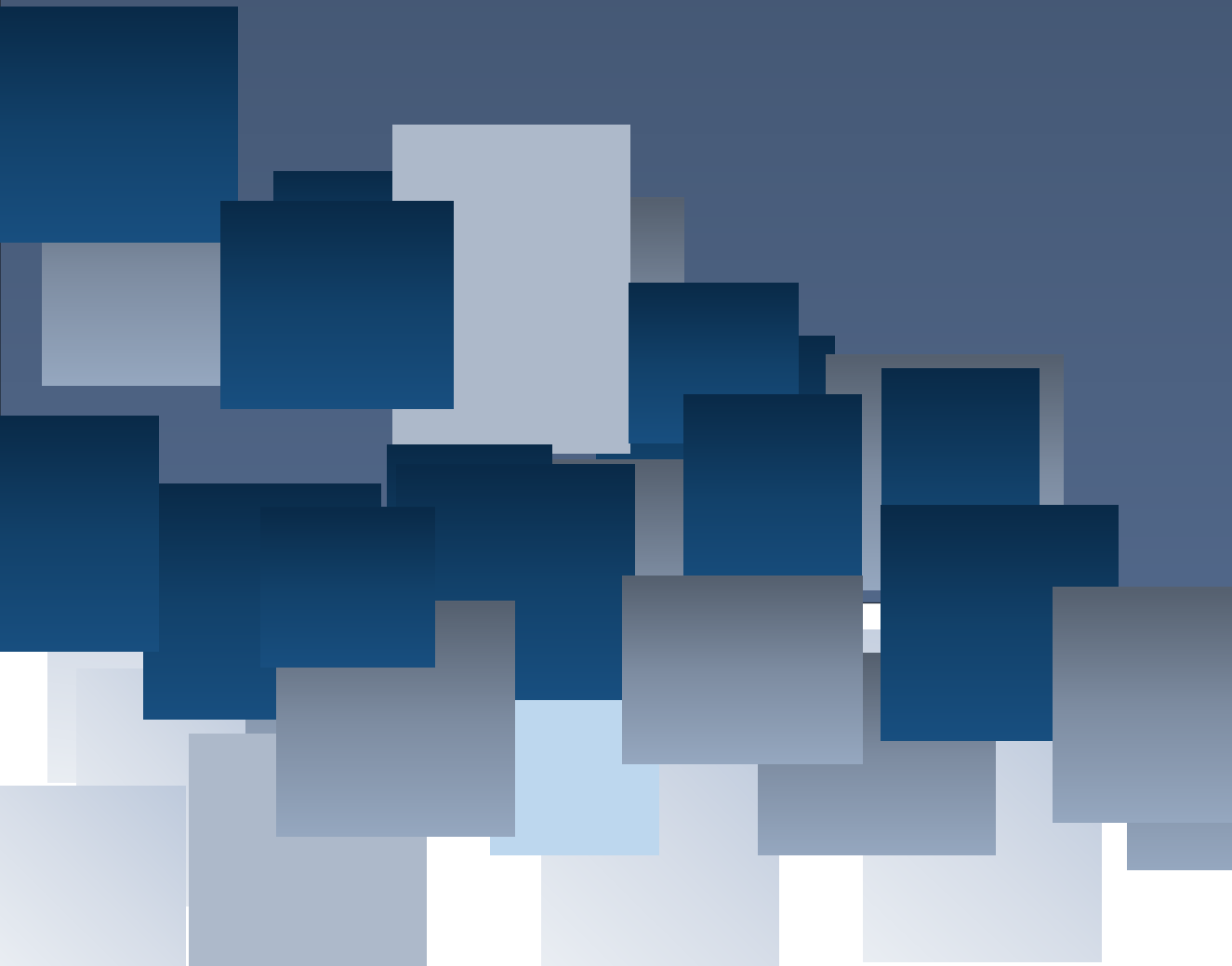


**STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN
AUTHORITARIAN GEORGIA, 2025**



HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER (HRC)



Editor: Aleko Tskitishvili, Ucha Nanuashvili

HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER (HRC) - was established on December 10, 1996, in Tbilisi. The objectives of HRC are to strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to promote peace processes in Georgia.

HRC IS A MEMBER OF THE FOLLOWING INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS:

- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH); www.fidh.org
- World Organization Against Torture (OMCT - SOS Network - Torture); www.omct.org
- Human Rights House Network www.humanrightshouse.org
- Coalition of NGOs for the International Criminal Court (CICC); www.coalitionfortheicc.org



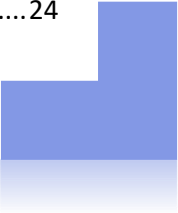
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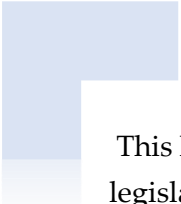


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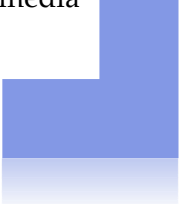
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ABOUT THE REPORT



This Report reviews the human rights situation in Georgia in 2025, legislative and institutional repressions carried out against civil society and independent media; unprecedented restrictions of citizens' freedom of assembly and expression; and politically motivated repressions against civic activists, media representatives, and political opponents.



REPRESSIVE LEGISLATION AGAINST CIVIL SOCIETY AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH

For years, the Georgian Dream government has been carrying out defamatory campaign against civil and media organizations; they actively used the state-sponsored propaganda media channels and pages in social media against them. The government sought to create a public perception that civil society organizations and independent media were engaged in anti-state activities in the country at the direct command of foreign powers, and that their sources of funding lack transparency¹.

First in 2023, the bills on Transparency of Foreign Influence and on the Registration of Foreign Agents were registered in the Parliament of Georgia, which aimed to punish CSOs and media for critical views. After large-scaled protest demonstrations and public criticism, Parliament dropped one of the bills at the second hearing and withdrew the second one². Nevertheless, exactly one year later, in April 2024, the Georgian Dream re-initiated the bill on Transparency of Foreign Influence (hereinafter the Russian law) and passed it on May 14.

Because of various reasons, among them were miscarriages and ambiguity in the Russian Law, the Georgian Dream government failed to effectively use it against the civil society organizations and independent media. To eradicate these miscarriages, in the beginning of 2025, Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) was registered in the Georgian Dream parliament, which, according to their allegation, was the analogue of the US FARA. In the end, on April 1, 2025, the Georgian Dream Parliament adopted the FARA, which went into force on May 31. Unlike the Russian Law adopted in 2024, the Georgian FARA imposes both

¹ Radio Liberty, “Prime Minister declares the campaign “This Affects You” to be directed against the state,” 2014. See [link](#)

² Interpresnews – the Parliament dropped the bill on the Transparency of Foreign Influence at the second hearing, 10.03.2023; see: [link](#)

criminal and administrative responsibilities on the leaders of CSOs and independent media, unless they get registered in the database of the Agents of Foreign Principles.³ The same criminal and administrative liabilities may be imposed on other employees of the organizations and physical persons.

The so-called Russian Law and Georgian FARA were not enough for the Georgian Dream government to finally prohibit the activities of CSOs and media organizations in Georgia and on April 17, 2025, the Georgian Dream Parliament introduced amendments to the Grants Law, based on which international donor organizations are obliged to initially obtain approval from the Government of Georgia to give grants to the local civil society and media organizations. Local CSOs and media organizations are also obliged to inform the authorities about the grant received. A local organization that receives a grant without prior approval of the Georgian Dream authorities shall be fined an amount equivalent to twice the value of the grant received.

Consequently, since April 17, 2025, it has become absolutely impossible for the CSOs and independent media organizations to receive foreign grants. As a result of the so-called Russian Law, Georgian FARA and the draconic amendments to the Grants Law, big part of the CSOs, particularly nongovernmental and community organizations operating in the regions, stopped functioning. By the time this report was prepared (December 2025), only 12 foreign principles and 12 agents of foreign principles had been registered in the database of the Anti-Corruption Bureau⁴. So, big part of the CSOs and independent media organizations do not plan to register as agents of foreign principles and continue their activities under this status.

³ Anti-Corruption Bureau, Foreign Registration Act, applications see [link](#)

⁴ Ibid

REPRESSIONS AGAINST CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Anti-Corruption Bureau and Administrative Proceedings against Civil Society Organizations

Anti-Corruption Bureau was established based on the legislative amendments to the Law of Georgia on the Fight against Corruption on December 15, 2022. The Bureau was established **to meet the requirements of the fourth priority identified by the European Commission for Georgia to secure the candidate status in the European Union**⁵.

According to the priority identified by the European Commission, Georgian authorities had to strengthen the independence of Anti-Corruption Agency and **to rigorously address high-level corruption cases**. Three years later, the main goal of the Agency became the persecution of civil society and independent media organizations. **In November 2025, the speaker of the Georgian Dream Parliament stated that based on the decision of the legislative body, from March 2, 2026, the Anti-Corruption Bureau will be abolished, and its functions will be fully transferred to the State Audit Office**⁶.

The Bureau started enforcement of the Georgian FARA and the amendments to the Grants Law in June, 2025. On June 11, five civil society organizations⁷ received a letter from the Anti-Corruption Bureau, where they were requested to send all grant agreements they had signed with foreign donors since January 1, 2024. Among the requested information was personal data: timeline of activities in the grant, invoices, delivery and acceptance acts, personal information of the project participants and beneficiaries (including personal numbers), photo and

⁵ European Commission, Opinion on the EU membership application by Georgia, June 17, 2022. See [link](#)

⁶ Radio Liberty, "Anti-Corruption Bureau will be abolished from March 2026," November 17, 2025. See [link](#)

⁷ The five CSOs, which received the letters from the ACB on June 11: Transparency International – Georgia, Safari, Civil Society Foundation, Economic Policy Research Centre and the Future Academy of Georgia.

video footage from the organized events, and other details. In parallel to that, the Bureau requested the commercial banks to provide information about all financial transactions of the five organizations from January 1, 2024 to June 11, 2025⁸.

The CSOs appealed the request of the Bureau in the Appellate Court. The latter did not satisfy their claim. Organization working on women's rights Safari appealed to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on behalf of their underage beneficiary against the unlawful request of the Anti-Corruption Bureau. The CRC satisfied the request of the underage applicant and requested that the State of Georgia refrain from disclosing, requesting, or transferring the beneficiary's personal data to any party, including the Anti-Corruption Bureau⁹. In the end, the CSOs sent only publicly available information to the ACB.

In September 2025, the Anti-Corruption Bureau widened the circle of the target civil society organizations and requested information from around 30 CSOs about the projects they had commenced since or/and were implementing during April 16, 2025. It is worth noting that the amendments to the Grants Law, which prohibits the donor organizations to give grants to organizations without prior approval from the Georgian Dream Government, were adopted on April 17.

In response to a letter from the head of the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Razhden Kuprashvili, the recipient organizations clarified in writing that the Bureau was violating the Grants Law and also informed him that, following the enactment of the repressive amendments to the law, they had not received any new grant agreements nor they had made any changes to existing agreements. Accordingly, initiating the monitoring process prescribed by the Grants Law against them was unlawful. The civil society organizations also requested access to the case

⁸ Radio Liberty, "Enforcement of the Russian Laws has started – what information is requested by the Anti-Corruption Bureau from CSOs," June 18, 2025. See [link](#)

⁹ Safari, Statement: The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has suspended the enforcement of the court order, July 18, 2025. See [link](#)

materials from the Bureau, but the Bureau did not provide them with this information. After the Bureau failed to obtain the desired information from the organizations, the ACB gradually submitted solicitations to the court. On September 17, the Tbilisi City Court issued an order concerning nine organizations, fully granting the solicitation of Razhden Kuprashvili's office and obliging the organizations to provide the Bureau with extensive information related to their activities¹⁰.

"The actions of the Anti-Corruption Bureau are part of a unified process of persecution and pressure on civil society organizations. Its goal is to prevent Georgian non-governmental organizations, which have served for decades to protect human rights and strengthen democratic institutions in the country, from continuing their activities effectively and from safeguarding the interests of society," reads the joint statement of CSOs, which is signed by 20 organizations¹¹.



Criminal investigation against civil society organizations

On February 8, 2025, the prosecutor's office started criminal investigation against charity funds and Georgian CSOs based on the complaint of the organization established by Vato Shakarishvili and Nana Kakabadze – United Neutral Georgia. The investigation is about "sabotage, attempted sabotage and assistance in activities hostile to Georgia's state interests."

In the frame of this investigation, in March 2025, the bank accounts of the Human Rights House Tbilisi were frozen. Human Rights Center is a founding member of the Human Rights House Tbilisi (HRHT). Furthermore, the accounts of the organization, which were frozen at the request of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, contained both donations collected to cover fines for individuals and grants transferred by international donors for the organization's other planned

¹⁰ Radio Liberty, Anti-Corruption Bureau requests information now from 30 CSOs – NGOs state the request of the Bureau equals repressions," September 22, 2025. See [link](#)

¹¹ Joint statement of CSOs, "Georgian Dream started a new stage of repressions against civil society, targeting up to 30 Georgian nongovernmental organizations," September 22, 2025, see [link](#)

human rights activities¹². It is worth noting that the HRHT used to transfer the money to pay the fines of citizens directly to the state budget only after the individual had submitted the ruling of the Appellate Court on his/her being fined.

As part of the ongoing criminal investigation against the HRHT, on April 29, 2025 executive director of Human Rights Center Aleko Tskitishvili and his house were searched¹³. The law enforcement officers seized his working computer, mobile phone and notes relating to the activities of Human Rights Center. The prosecutor's office had not returned the seized items by the time this report was prepared.

In the end of August 2025, the prosecutor's office of Georgia widened the scope of the ongoing criminal investigation and froze bank accounts of additional 7 CSOs based on the court ruling¹⁴. Prosecutor's Office summoned their leaders, among them the head of the Human Rights Center Aleko Tskitishvili, to be interrogated as witnesses. Based on their request, all CSO leaders were questioned in front of the magister judge in the Tbilisi City Court.

Pursuant to the statement of the Prosecutor's Office, "The investigation concerns act of sabotage, attempted sabotage under aggravating circumstances, assisting a foreign organization and a foreign-controlled organization in hostile activities, and mobilizing funds for activities directed against the constitutional order and national security of Georgia. The criminal investigation established that leaders of the opposition political parties and representatives of some foundations and nongovernmental organizations actively participated in planning and organizing the violent protest demonstrations in front of the Parliament of Georgia and at other locations across the country during 2024. These circumstances and collected evidence in the criminal case files became the

¹² Union of Human Rights Defenders – Human Rights Center, "Investigative and Procedural Measures Employed for the Punishment of Civic Solidarity, 2025." p. 9-10. See [link](#)

¹³ Ibid, p. 13

¹⁴ The CSOs, whose bank accounts were frozen: Civil Society Foundation, ISFED, IDFI, GDI, Democracy Defenders, Safari and Social Justice Center

grounds to freeze the bank accounts of 12 legal entities – foundations and NGOs that restricted their possibility to unreasonably spend their financial resources.¹⁵”

The prosecutor’s questions to the director of the Human Rights Center during his interrogation in the court mostly referred to the purpose of the funds transferred by individuals to the HRHT’s bank account to support the fined citizens; the prosecutor also asked questions about the past and ongoing activities and projects of the Human Rights Center.

More than 50 non-governmental organizations signed joint statement to express their solidarity with the organizations whose bank accounts were frozen in the end of August. According to the statement, “the punitive measures taken against Georgian non-governmental organizations, resembling those of the Russian authorities, demonstrate that Ivanishvili’s government is determined to completely eliminate critical voices and pro-European groups in Georgia.¹⁶”



Administrative proceedings against individuals launched by the Anti-Corruption Bureau

In September 2025, the Anti-Corruption Bureau requested individuals to provide information about their financial income and transactions.

Anti-Corruption Bureau petitioned the court to give access to the bank transactions of civil activists. Human Rights Center defends their legal interests in the court. Judge Nino Gergauli at the Gori District Court did not satisfy the petition of Razhden Kuprashvili, head of the ACB, but later, Judge Tamar Oniani at the Tbilisi Appellate Court annulled the decision of the Gori district court and

¹⁵ Statement of the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia, September 1, 2025, see [link](#)

¹⁶ Joint statement of civil society organizations, August 28, 2025. See [link](#)

granted the Anti-Corruption Bureau access to the bank transactions of the civil activists over the past two years.¹⁷

In this case, the petition of the Anti-Corruption Bureau was based on its authority to monitor the financial activities of people with a declared electoral purpose¹⁸. However, the Bureau did not submit to the court any evidence that the civil activists had declared electoral purpose¹⁹. The Tbilisi Court of Appeal broadly interpreted the concept of a “person with a declared electoral purpose,” went beyond the definition established by legislation, did not require the Bureau to present additional evidence, and granted it access to the bank accounts of individuals.

The order of the Tbilisi Appellate Court and the standard established by that order, under which, in the absence of any evidence and based on an overly broad interpretation of legal provisions, a state authority is unjustifiably granted access to the personal and financial information of the individuals. It constitutes a serious violation of the rights to a fair trial²⁰, respect for private and family life²¹, and fair administrative proceedings²², as guaranteed by both the Constitution of Georgia and the European Convention on Human Rights. Under this standard, the request for personal information from an individual completely undermines the Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection and creates a practice whereby a public authority may, at any time, request the personal information of any person.

¹⁷ Publika, “Appellate Court annulled the decision of Judge Nino Gergauli of the Gori district court,” October 8, 2025, see [link](#)

¹⁸ Law of Georgia on the Fight against Corruption, Article 20¹⁵ Part I – h

¹⁹ Organic Law of Georgia on Political Union of Citizens, Article 7¹

²⁰ Constitution of Georgia, Article 31, Part I; European Convention on Human Rights, Article 6

²¹ Constitution of Georgia, Article 15, Part I; European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8

²² Constitution of Georgia, Article 18, Part III

REPRESSIONS AGAINST CIVIL ACTIVISTS

Statement of the Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze on November 28, 2024, about the suspension of the negotiations with the European Union until 2028 caused mass astonishment of the population of Georgia and resulted into large-scaled nonstop protest demonstrations. To subdue the protest demonstrations, the State systematically used ill-treatment and various forms of police violence. According to the information provided by the Public Defender's Office of Georgia, their office had identified 282 facts of alleged ill-treatment from November 28, 2024, to January 28, 2025²³.

In 2025, with the aim of restricting the rights to freedom of assembly and expression, the Georgian Dream Parliament adopted a series of amendments to the Administrative Offences Code, as a result of which participation by citizens, civil activists, and human rights defenders in protest actions, even the wearing of a face mask, has been classified as a serious administrative offence. For such an "offence," individuals face up to 60 days of administrative detention, while a repeated "violation" entails criminal liability and a prison sentence of up to one year.

On February 6 2025, Article 173¹³ was added to the Code of Administrative Offences of Georgia, which defines as an administrative offence the verbal insult, abusive language, offensive harassment, and/or any other insulting act directed at a political officeholder, civil servant, a person equal to a civil servant, and/or a public official, committed in the course of the performance of official duties or in connection with the performance of official duties or activities. The sanction is a fine ranging from 1,500 to 4,000 GEL or administrative detention for up to 45

²³ Joint report: Human Rights Crisis in Georgia Following the 2024 Parliamentary Elections," p. 41, 2025. See [link](#)

days. In the case of a repeated offence, the sanction is a fine ranging from 2,500 to 6,000 GEL or administrative detention for a period of 5 to 60 days.

On June 11, 2025, civil activists, TV presenters, journalists, and opposition politicians were almost simultaneously summoned to the Tbilisi City Court for the administrative offence proceedings scheduled on June 12, 2025²⁴. The cases concerned critical statements (so-called posts) made by the individuals at various times on social media directed at MPs and officials of the Georgian Dream. The judges of the Tbilisi City Court found all of them guilty of administrative offences and, as a penalty, imposed fines of 4,000 GEL on most of the defendants.

It is noteworthy that to date, no administrative charges have been brought against any Georgian Dream official, supporter, or law enforcement officer affiliated with the ruling political party for making obscene remarks, direct insults, or threats in public spaces or on social media. In this context, the initiation of administrative proceedings against civil activists, TV anchors, journalists, and opposition politicians clearly confirms that the amendments made to the Administrative Offences Code serve to punish and suppress undesirable and unacceptable opinions²⁵.

In addition to the repressive Administrative Offences Code, criminal justice mechanisms are actively used against demonstrators and civil activists. Most of the charges brought against detained activists include crimes such as organizing or participating in group violence and causing harm to a police officer. Notably, judges impose pre-trial detention on all defendants without taking individual circumstances into account. In making these decisions, the courts completely disregard the defendants' behavior, age, health status, family or financial situation, and other circumstances. Among the detained protest participants and civil activists are students, poets, doctors, actors, teachers, journalists, individuals under the age of 21, members of socially vulnerable families, the sole

²⁴ See Interpressnews, "Journalists, opposition members and activists state they are summoned to the court because of their posts about Georgian Dream members," June 11, 2025; see [link](#)

²⁵ Human Rights Center, "Statement of the Human Rights Center Regarding the Mass Restriction of Freedom of Expression on Social Media," June 12, 2025. See [link](#)

breadwinners of their families, or the only caregivers for family members with health conditions. The majority had no prior criminal record, not even for administrative offences.

At the same time, to date, not a single law enforcement officer or a member of violent groups has been held accountable for crimes committed against protesters with particular brutality, including acts of violence and torture.

Moreover, from July 1, 2025, by a resolution of the Georgian Dream Parliament, the Special Investigation Service was abolished, and the authority to investigate crimes committed by law enforcement officers was transferred to the competence of the Prosecutor's Office.²⁶



STATE OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA

Alongside civil society organizations, independent media organizations were the direct targets of the repressive foreign agents' laws adopted in 2024-2025. Consequently, they were also banned from getting foreign grants, and as the independent media already had very limited access to advertising market, many of them, particularly operating in the regions, had to cease their activities.

According to the Alliance of Regional Broadcasters, because of financial difficulties, in 2025, 17 out of 21 regional broadcasters could not produce daily news. Among them, in the beginning of the year, after a years-long operation, TV Companies – *Borjomi and TV 25* (in Adjara), as well as Akhaltsikhe based TV station *Ninth Channel – Akhaltsikhe*, completely stopped their broadcasting. At the

²⁶ See Social Justice Center, "Assessment: The dissolution of the Special Investigation Service constitutes the formal institutionalization of impunity for law enforcement officers", July 21, 2025. See [link](#)

same time, because of disagreements among the owners, one of the country's leading critical TV Channel, *Mtavari Arkhi*, first temporarily suspended broadcasting in February 2025 and then shut down completely in May, 2025²⁷.

During the protest demonstrations, media representatives usually become direct targets of the law enforcement officers and violent group members. Since November 28, 2024, tens of journalists and cameramen received injuries during the dispersal of protest demonstrations.

On October 1, 2025, the Centre for Media, Information, and Social Research published a brief report stating that over the past year in Georgia, 434 incidents were documented in Georgia that targeted journalists, media outlets, and civil society organizations working on media rights. In several cases, a single incident encompassed multiple forms of violations (e.g. detention coupled with physical violence)²⁸. Violations against journalists surged sharply following the beginning of pro-European protests. Since November 28, a total of 181 media representatives has been affected while covering these demonstrations alone²⁹.

To present, **Mzia Amaglobeli**, the founder of the newspapers *Batumelebi* and *Netgazeti*, remains in unlawful detention. Her criminal case is a clear demonstration of the politically motivated justice currently present in the country. In this case, the evidence presented by the prosecution does not meet the standard of a well-founded suspicion required for criminal charges.

Mzia Amaglobeli was initially detained in Batumi under administrative law for placing a protest sticker. She was later released on personal guarantee. Shortly after her release, the journalist was re-arrested, this time under criminal law, on charges of violence against the head of the Batumi Police Department, Irakli Dgebuadze. Following her arrest, Mzia Amaglobeli was subjected to ill-

²⁷ Transparency International Georgia, "Media Environment by February 9, 2025," October 8, 2025. See [link](#)

²⁸ Center for Media, Information and Social Research (CMIS), Cases of Violations of the Rights of Independent Media Representatives in Georgia (October 2024 – September 2025)", October 1, 2025, see [link](#)

²⁹ Ibid

treatment by the head of the Batumi Police, both in the police yard and inside the police building. Prior to being taken inside, Dgebuadze repeatedly verbally insulted her in the yard. Inside the building, the police chief attempted to physically assault her but was restrained by other police officers. For some time, Mzia Amaglobeli was denied drinking water and was not allowed to contact her lawyers. In August 2025, the Georgian Dream controlled court sentenced Mzia Amaglobeli to two years of imprisonment. In recent months, her health and eyesight have deteriorated dramatically.



POLITICAL PRISONERS IN GEORGIA

According to the October 24, 2001 (SG/Inf) document of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe,³⁰ “a person deprived of his or her personal liberty is to be regarded as a “political prisoner”: a. if the detention has been imposed in violation of one of the fundamental guarantees set out in the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocols (ECHR)– in particular freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and association; b. if the detention has been imposed for purely political reasons without connection to any offence; c. if, for political motives, the length of the detention or its conditions are clearly out of proportion to the offence the person has been found guilty of or is suspected of; d. if, for political motives, he or she is detained in a discriminatory manner as compared to other persons; or, e. if the detention is the result of proceedings

³⁰ Authors: Stefan Trechsel – former President of the European Commission of Human Rights; Evert Alkema – member of the Council of State of the Netherlands and former member of the European Commission of Human Rights; Aleksandar Arabadjiev – former judge of the Constitutional Court of Bulgaria and former member of the European Commission of Human Rights.

which were clearly unfair and this appears to be connected with political motives of the authorities.”³¹

In recent years, the anti-democratic steps taken by the Georgian Dream government have further restricted freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly in the country. To criminalize the exercise of fundamental rights, the Georgian Dream Parliament repeatedly amended the country’s legislation in an accelerated manner, fully disregarding international legal standards. As a result, any form of criticism can potentially be punished administratively or treated as a criminal offense.

Despite numerous critical assessments by international human rights organizations and institutions regarding the state of human rights, the Georgian Dream government continues to persecute opponents and critically thinking citizens through politically motivated justice.

According to recent data³², there are over 100 political prisoners and prisoners of conscious in Georgia. As a result, there are more political prisoners in Georgia per capita than in Russia³³.

Alongside other mechanisms of persecution, criminal procedures are actively used against demonstrators and civil activists. The charges brought against the detained activists include organizing or participating in group violence and injuring a police officer. It is noteworthy that in all cases, the court grants the prosecutor’s petition to impose pretrial detention and does not consider individual circumstances such as the defendants’ character, occupation, age, health, family or financial situation, and other factors. Among the detainees are students, poets, doctors, actors, teachers, journalists, young people under 21, elderly individuals over 70, and members of socially vulnerable families. Some of them are the sole breadwinners of their families or the only caregivers for

³¹ Human Rights House Tbilisi, Open Society Foundation Georgia, “Manual about the Political Prisoners in Georgia,” 2012, p. 11 see [link](#)

³² See online platform www.politpatimrebi.ge

³³ Interpressnews: “Elina Valtonen – Georgia has more political prisoners per capita than Russia – this is not the European way.” October 10, 2025, see [link](#)

family members with health problems. Most of them have no prior criminal or administrative offenses. Nevertheless, the prosecutor's request for pretrial detention was based on general risks, including the risk of absconding, destroying evidence, or committing a new offense.

The Georgian Dream government actively applies the political justice against opposition politicians too.

In 2025, the Georgian Dream parliament established temporary investigation commission, which had to examine, since 2003 to present, the activities of the regime ruling the country in 2003-2012, political officials of this regime and acting and former government officials of the political parties. 8 leaders of opposition parties were sentenced to imprisonment for not appearing in front of the commission. 4 of them had not been engaged in politics before 2012 and were not members of the United National Movement. The Prosecutor's Office requested imprisonment for all of them, a measure that was neither justified by law nor by public interest³⁴. Before the municipal elections in 2025, the Georgian Dream's president pardoned the leaders of the political party Lelo – Mamuka Khazaradze and Badri Japaridze, who were released from prison on September 5.³⁵

On September 15, leader of the political party Droa, Elene Khoshtaria was arrested for writing "Russian Dream" on the election banner of Kakha Kaladze, the Georgian Dream's candidate for the Tbilisi City Mayor in the municipal elections. Two months after the detention, on December 6, three more charges were brought against her: Sabotage, assisting a foreign country in hostile activities, and supporting actions aimed against the constitutional order. This charge carries a prison sentence of up to 15 years³⁶.

³⁴ Human Rights Center, "Intensified punishment and repressions against civil activists, persecution of political opponents, fines for facebook posts and the court closed for media – Monitoring Report of Human Rights Center," 2025. P. 17. See [link](#)

³⁵ Radio Liberty, "Mamuka Khazaradze said his and Badri Japaradze's pardoning was "unexpected" and "bargaining with people," September 5, 2025, see [link](#)

³⁶ Radio Liberty, "Interview with Elene Khoshtaria from prison," November 24, 2025. See [link](#)

On September 11, 2025, the State Security Service (SSS) detained Levan Khabeishvili, chairman of the political council of the United National Movement, in the yard of the TV company Formula. According to the SSS's initial statement, Levan Khabeishvili was accused of giving a bribe to commit an illegal act, which carries a prison sentence of 4 to 7 years (Article 339, Part 2 of the Criminal Code). Specifically, the SSS stated that "Levan Khabeishvili, through social networks and television, was addressing and promising bribes to law enforcement officers if they would have refused to perform their duties during protests against the authorities." On September 13, Levan Khabeishvili was additionally charged with Article 317 of the Criminal Code for calling for the overthrow of state authority. On September 15, his right to visits, correspondence, and telephone conversations was restricted for 2 months, which was further extended by 2 months on November 14.³⁷



ELECTIONS IN GEORGIA MOVING TOWARDS DICTATORSHIP

On October 4, 2025, municipal elections were held in Georgia. Most opposition political parties boycotted the elections and did not take part in them. Besides Georgian Dream, 16 political parties participated in the municipal elections, including Alliance of Patriots, Strong Georgia, Gakharia – For Georgia, and Girchi.

³⁷ Publika, "SSS restricted Khabeishvili's right to visits, correspondence and phone calls [in the prison]," September 16, 2025. See [link](#)

The electoral process was conducted without observation by independent local election monitoring organizations or international observation missions. However, according to the Central Election Commission (CEC), the electoral process was observed by representatives of 28 international and 27 local organizations. Among the international observers were representatives of various countries' embassies, as well as international organizations and electoral administrations from 21 countries, including Bulgaria, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Slovakia, Montenegro, Türkiye, and Moldova³⁸. Later, information emerged that the October 4 elections were observed under the status of an international observer by a French cemetery manager who, in reality, had come to Georgia to study funeral traditions and, for this purpose, met the Minister of Agriculture and Environmental Protection³⁹.

According to the Central Election Commission of Georgia, only 1,438,116 voters out of 3,513,818 registered voters participated in the elections, representing 40.93% of the electorate. In some municipalities, only Georgian Dream had nominated candidates, and accordingly, their candidates received 100% of the votes.

In Tbilisi, only 324,281 voters out of 1,043,482 registered voters participated in the elections, accounting to 31.08% of registered voters⁴⁰. This means that in the capital, the ruling party's candidate received support of less than 25% of the registered voters and took the office of the Tbilisi City Mayor for the third consecutive term.

Parallel to the municipal elections, a large-scale protest was held in Tbilisi. Citizens from Tbilisi and the regions, who refused to participate in the local elections organized by Georgian Dream, gathered at Freedom Square at 4:00 p.m. on October 4. One of the protest organizers, opera singer and politician Paata Burchuladze, addressed the people and called on them to march toward the

³⁸ Central Election Commission, Elections of Municipal Bodies, 2025. See [link](#)

³⁹ TV Company Pirveli; "Who is the Georgian Dream's observer, who is fencer in reality?" October 16, 2025; see [link](#)

⁴⁰ Batumelebi, "According to CEC 1 438 116 voters participated in the elections," October 5, 2025. See [link](#)

Presidential Administration on Atoneli Street. Several protesters breached the metal fence of the administration and entered the yard. Police forces dispersed the demonstrators gathered at the site. On October 5, the Ministry of Internal Affairs arrested the organizers of the protest: Paata Burchuladze; members of the opposition party United National Movement Irakli Nadiradze and Murtaz Zodelava; Paata Manjgaladze, a member of the Strategy Aghmashenebeli party; and retired colonel Lasha Beridze. They were charged with calling for the violent overthrow of Georgia's constitutional order or government, as well as organizing, leading, and participating in group violence. If convicted, each of them faces up to nine years in prison⁴¹. Besides organizers, the Ministry of Internal Affairs detained approximately 50 more individuals in connection with the October 4 protest, including 71-year-old pediatrician Giorgi Chakhunashvili. This incident prompted the protest of the medical community. Giorgi Chakhunashvili was released from detention a few days later under bail.

A day before to the municipal elections in Georgia, the international human rights organization *Amnesty International* released a statement, where they stated that "local elections are taking place amid severe political reprisals against opposition figures and civil society."⁴²

The EU High Representative, Vice-President of the European Commission Kaja Kallas, and the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Marta Kos, issued a joint statement regarding the October 4 municipal elections, according to which the elections in Georgia were held "in an environment of widespread suppression of dissent."⁴³

⁴¹ Civil.ge; "Police arrested organizers of October 4 demonstration after the turmoil on the election day," October 5, 2025. See [link](#)

⁴² Amnesty International; "Elections marred by severe reprisals and risk of further violence," October 3, 2025; see [link](#)

⁴³ European Union External Action, "Statement by High Representative/Vice President Kallas and Commissioner for Enlargement Kos on Georgia," October 5, 2025; see [link](#)

The 2025 elections were followed by critical assessments from senior representatives of EU member states and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR)⁴⁴.



ASSESSMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON DEMOCRACY BACKSLIDING AND WIDESPREAD HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Many international organizations reacted to the rapid democratic backsliding and widespread human rights violations in Georgia. They have called on the Georgian Dream government to stop restricting citizens' rights to assembly and freedom of expression, to halt the country's democratic decline, and to cease attacks on independent civil society and media organizations. One of the main demands in their statements and resolutions is the repeal of the so-called foreign agents' laws and the alignment of national legislation with international human rights standards.

In March 2025, the Council of Europe published a memorandum on the state of human rights in Georgia, in which the Human Rights Commissioner assessed serious systemic violations committed during the dispersal of protest actions, the impunity of violent law enforcement officers, repressive legislative changes, attacks on independent media and civil society, and other issues. The Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner called on the Georgian authorities to respect the work of human rights defenders and civil society organizations, to

⁴⁴ Civil.ge "International Reactions about October 4 Elections," October 6, 2025. See [link](#)

investigate all incidents of attacks against them, and to repeal the so-called “foreign agents” laws⁴⁵.

On July 9, 2025, the European Parliament published a report on Georgia, stating that democratic backsliding and the autocratic consolidation of power continue in the country. Considering this, the Parliament called on the European Commission to review Georgia’s visa-free travel agreement. Members of Parliament expressed concern over the sharp shift in Georgia’s foreign policy, which is leading the country toward self-isolation, and warned that the repressive regime of the Georgian Dream is worsening instability in the South Caucasus and Black Sea region. According to their assessment, if Georgian Dream continues this path, Georgia could become a vassal state of Russia, like Belarus⁴⁶.

On March 27, 2025, the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) published a report on alarming cases of torture, ill-treatment, and human rights violations during protest actions in Georgia. Together with the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), the Independent Forensic Expert Group (IFEG), and Georgian human rights organizations (including the Human Rights Center), OMCT conducted a fact-finding mission in Tbilisi from December 17–24, 2024. Dozens of victims of the protests were interviewed, and their injuries were documented⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ CoE Human Rights Commissionaire, “Memorandum on the State of Human Rights in Georgia,” March, 2025; see [link](#)

⁴⁶ European Parliament, “Report on Georgia,” July 9, 2025; see [link](#)

⁴⁷ OMCT, Report on Georgia, March 27, 2025; see [link](#)