

Another Round of Unconstitutional Amendments – Police Prior Authorization Procedure Introduced for Organizing Protest Rallies

20.12.2025

- **Content of the Amendments**

Following an expedited three-day review, the “Georgian Dream” parliament adopted another set of unconstitutional [amendments](#) to the Law of Georgia “On Assemblies and Manifestations.” Under GD interpretation of these changes, holding an assembly in public space - including on sidewalks - now requires prior notification to and consent from the police. The police have also been granted the authority to determine the time, place, or route of a demonstration themselves. Failure to comply with these requirements entails administrative detention of 15 or 20 days.

The [explanatory note](#) to the draft law states that the current legislation grants participants in assemblies and manifestations unconditional priority “at the expense of unjust restrictions” on other rights and freedoms. Accordingly, the aim of the amendments is to ensure a “fair balance” between, on the one hand, freedom of assembly, and on the other, the rights of persons who live, work, or conduct business in areas where an assembly or manifestation takes place. Ensuring this balance has been entrusted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), which, given the ministry’s established practices, excludes the possibility of maintaining a genuine balance between rights or exercising the fundamental right to assembly within constitutional limits.

- **Instead of a Prior Notice, Prior Police Authorization for Organizing a Protest Introduced**

Under the amendments, the mechanism for controlling freedom of assembly is transferred from local self-government bodies to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, while the repressive mechanisms for violations are further tightened. Specifically, the amendments introduce a requirement of prior notification to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia if an assembly or manifestation is held in a place intended for pedestrian movement or obstructs public movement. The responsible person must submit a duly signed notice to the Patrol Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia no later than five days before the event.

In the case of organizing/holding a spontaneous assembly or manifestation, a notification must be submitted to the Patrol Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia immediately, within a reasonable time after the responsible person becomes aware of the organization/holding of the spontaneous assembly or manifestation.

Artificially blocking areas, including sidewalks, becomes prohibited unless required by the number of participants in the assembly or manifestation. However, the law does not define what constitutes obstruction of movement on pedestrian areas or sidewalks, partial or full blocking of them, leaving the MIA broad discretion for bad-faith application of the law.

In practice, the repressive effect of these amendments has already been implemented. On December 16, 2025, [citizens gathered on the sidewalk](#) in front of the Parliament building were told by the police that, as per new legislation, the assembly was unlawful. The organizer of the protest, who had submitted a notification to the Patrol Police Department five days in advance, was told by the police that submitting a notification alone was not sufficient and that, **without [prior police authorization](#), a protest organized on the sidewalk constituted an unlawful assembly.**

Such an interpretation of the law is clearly unconstitutional, as Article 21 of the Constitution establishes that organizing a demonstration does not require prior authorization and that only in certain exceptional cases may an obligation of prior notification to relevant authorities be introduced.

- **Police Granted the Authority to Determine the Time, Place, or Route of a Demonstration**

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia has been granted the authority to determine for organizers an alternative time and/or place or route for holding an assembly or manifestation. Despite the use of the word “proposal,” the substance of the amendment is imperative.

The police were also authorized not only in advance, but also during an ongoing protest, to determine themselves the expediency of changing the time and/or place or route of an assembly or manifestation and to issue binding instructions to organizers and/or participants - in writing, or orally in the case of a spontaneous assembly or manifestation. Accordingly, the MIA will be able to decide for citizens how they may express their protest. Although the law establishes conditions under which the MIA is granted this authority - namely, when an assembly or manifestation poses a real threat to public safety and order or to the rights and freedoms of others - in practice, measures restricting state overreach do not function effectively.

Such binding instructions may be appealed in court; however, filing an appeal does not suspend their enforcement.

- **15 and 20 Day Detention for Peaceful Protest on Sidewalks**

In cases of partial or full blockage of pedestrian areas (including sidewalks), the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia is authorized, 15 minutes after issuing a warning, to declare the assembly or manifestation unlawful and to decide on its termination.

For violations of the above rules, administrative detention of up to 15 days is prescribed, and up to 20 days if the offender is the organizer of the protest.

To suppress the ongoing continuous protests, the one-party parliament continues to impose unjustified restrictions on constitutional rights and guarantees through the adoption of new laws. These amendments amount to the creation of a non-democratic legislative framework that is foreign and unacceptable to Georgia's legal system, constitutional principles, and human rights standards.