

## Six Years' Imprisonment and Disqualification from Political Rights for Recipients of Foreign Funding -

### Analysis of the New Repressive Amendments Initiated by the Georgian Government

27 February, 2026

- **Overview and Stated Purpose of the Amendments**

On 28 January 2026, the ruling party “Georgian Dream” announced another [package of restrictive legislative amendments](#) affecting six different laws.

The amendments criminalize the activities of organizations receiving foreign funding without prior government approval. They also prohibit individuals employed by such organizations from joining political parties and therefore from exercising their passive electoral right (the right to stand for election) for a period of eight years.

Once these amendments enter into force, even organizations registered abroad will require prior authorization from the Government of Georgia if their activities involve work on issues related to Georgia. Failure to obtain such authorization may result in criminal liability of up to six years' imprisonment.

Although the declared aim is to “protect the country from unrest, violence, and revolution”, the practical effect appears to be the suppression of independent civil society and media organizations through the threat of criminal prosecution.

The amendments have already been adopted in two readings and are expected to enter into force in early March.

- **Receiving Material or Expert Support from Abroad Without Government Approval is a criminal offence**

The amendments significantly expand the legal definition of a “grant” and introduce criminal liability of up to six years’ imprisonment for receiving a grant without prior government authorization.

A grant now includes funds or in-kind support, technical assistance, sharing of specialized knowledge, skills or expertise, services, or any other form of assistance provided by a foreign state, foreign citizen, or foreign legal entity, if such support is intended or believed to influence the Government of Georgia, state institutions, or any segment of society in shaping, implementing, or changing domestic or foreign policy.

This definition is so broad that virtually any cooperation or assistance received from a foreign organization or individual may require prior government approval. Even hiring an expert in Georgia by a foreign organization may qualify as a grant requiring authorization.

Foreign-registered organizations whose activities substantially relate to Georgia will also require prior approval.

- **Eight-Year Ban on Passive Electoral Rights**

The amendments introduce a new employment-based restriction on political participation.

An individual will be prohibited from joining a political party for eight calendar years from the year in which they last received income from an organization deemed to advance “foreign interests.”

For example, if a person worked four years ago for a civil society organization funded by an international foundation, they would be barred from joining a political party for the next four years and therefore unable to exercise their constitutionally guaranteed right to stand for election.

Monitoring of party members' financial activities will be conducted by the State Audit Office, which will be authorized to request personal, financial, and sensitive data from public and private entities, including payment service providers.

- **Public and Political Activity Treated as Political Party Activity**

The amendments introduce the concept of a “person with a declared party-political objective.”

This includes any entity that is not registered as a political party but whose activities and public actions substantially resemble those of a political party, including participation in shaping and expressing citizens' political will.

As a result, individuals working on public policy issues, whether environmental, educational, economic or otherwise, as well as individuals publicly speaking on matters of public concern, may become subject to strict regulatory oversight and financial scrutiny.

- **Ban on Political Expression by Commercial Entities**

Entrepreneurial legal entities are prohibited from engaging in public political activities that are not directly related to their core commercial activities.

Political activity is defined broadly as any activity aimed at influencing government institutions or public policy.

Sanctions include a fine of 20,000 GEL for a first violation, up to three years' imprisonment for repeated violations, and up to four years' imprisonment for multiple violations.

Liability may apply not only to the legal entity itself (through fines or liquidation), but also to responsible individuals, such as company directors.

- **New Criminal Offenses and Retroactive Liability**

The Criminal Code introduces a new offense: violation of the Law on Grants and unlawful cooperation with foreign entities, punishable by up to six years' imprisonment.

Receiving or using a grant without government consent may result in imprisonment for individuals and fines or liquidation for legal entities.

The amendments may apply retroactively. If a grant that was lawful at the time of receipt requires consent under the new law, the recipient must apply for approval within one month of the law's entry into force. Until consent is granted, or if consent is denied, using the funds may constitute a criminal offense.

- **Criminalization of Declaring the Government Illegitimate**

A new offense entitled "Extremism against the Constitutional Order of Georgia" is introduced.

It may be punishable by up to three years' imprisonment for public and systematic calls for mass disobedience to state authorities, creation of alternative governmental bodies, or unauthorized public presentation as a government representative, if such conduct promotes the perception that constitutional bodies are illegitimate and harms or creates a real risk of harm to Georgia's interests.

In the context of concerns regarding judicial independence, this provision could potentially be applied broadly against political opponents.