

# Human Rights Situation in Georgia

## 10th Periodic Review

*This brief was prepared by [Georgia's European Orbit](https://europeanorbit.ge) and is based on publicly available sources.*

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**Please find the databases of victims of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, journalists targeted by violence, and individuals detained on political grounds at the following link: <https://europeanorbit.ge/enq/news/39>**

- **Dynamics of the Protest movement**

Public protests in Georgia have been ongoing continuously for one year and four months, following the Georgian Dream government's decision on November 28, 2025, to [suspend](#) the country's European integration process.

Despite repression against protest participants - including physical attacks, enormous financial fines, asset seizures, dismissals from employment, and even imprisonment for standing on sidewalks - the protests have not stopped; rather, they have transformed. In recent months, alongside daily protests, citizens have been organizing large [marches](#) every Saturday evening to express their resistance to growing authoritarianism and democratic backsliding.

- **Political Prisoners and Politically Motivated Prosecution of Politicians**

As of today, 52 individuals remain imprisoned in connection with the pro-European protests of 2024-2025. Additionally, 61 individuals arrested during the October 4, 2025 protest remain in pre-trial detention, and two individuals have been sentenced to pre-trial detention in absentia.

Criminal prosecution is currently ongoing against leaders of almost all opposition parties, some of whom remain in detention. Currently imprisoned opposition leaders include Nika Melia (Coalition “Akhali”) and [Elene Khoshtaria](#) (Coalition “Droa”), who was sentenced to 1.5 years in prison for writing a protest message with a marker on a campaign banner of a Georgian Dream mayoral candidate.

Other political leaders — Giorgi Vashadze (Strategy Aghmashenebeli), Nika Gvaramia (Akhali), Zurab Japaridze (Girchi – More Freedom), Mamuka Khazaradze and Badri Japaridze (Lelo) — were released after their detention periods expired in December-January, but were subsequently charged again and released on bail for new criminal charges carrying sentences of 2 to 15 years. Some of these politicians are also prohibited from leaving the country without notifying investigative authorities and have had their passports confiscated.

Former Prime Minister and now opposition leader [Giorgi Gakharia](#) (Party “For Georgia”) has been charged and sentenced to pre-trial detention in absentia, facing two criminal charges carrying up to 13 years of imprisonment.

- **Repression Against Citizens Involved in Protests**

Repression against protest participants is increasing and includes extreme legislative restrictions on freedom of expression; [arbitrary arrests](#) at peaceful protests; [imprisonment](#) for standing on [sidewalks](#) or [protesting](#); [imprisonment](#) and [violence](#) against women; humiliating practices such as [forced full stripping](#) after detention; [10-day imprisonment](#) for Facebook comments; fines and imprisonment for protest inscriptions; forced and allegedly [falsified drug tests](#); declaring protests illegal without prior police permission, among others.

- **Freedom of Assembly Is Severely Restricted**

Georgian Dream continues to adopt unconstitutional legislative amendments unilaterally and through expedited procedures. In practice, the constitutional right to [freedom of assembly](#) has been severely restricted, and [prior permission](#) is now required to organize a protest. Gathering in public spaces - including on sidewalks - requires prior notification and approval from the police. The police are also authorized to determine the time, place, and route of demonstrations. Failure to comply with these requirements carries penalties of 15 to 20 days of imprisonment.

Several of these restrictions - including a blanket ban on covering one’s face and the introduction of criminal liability - have been challenged in the Constitutional Court by the [Public Defender](#).

- **Criminalization of NGOs and Restriction of Electoral Rights**

On March 4, 2026, Georgian Dream adopted another package of [repressive amendments](#) affecting six legislative acts. Under these amendments, if an organization or individual receives foreign funding without government approval, they face criminal prosecution. Organizations registered abroad that work on Georgia-related issues must also obtain permission from the Georgian government. Penalties include up to 6 years of imprisonment, and in some cases 9 to 12 years.

These [unconstitutional amendments](#) also prohibit citizens who receive foreign funding from being members of political parties and therefore strip them of passive electoral rights for 8 years (two electoral cycles).

Due to legislative and financial pressure, leading Georgian NGOs are entering [crisis mode](#), suspending operations, or [shutting down entirely](#). Restrictions have also extended to the private sector, where [business entities](#) may face criminal liability for involvement in public-political issues.

- **Independent Media on the Verge of Closure**

Due to a deliberately created repressive environment, harassment, and severe financial pressure, independent media outlets are operating [on the verge of closure](#).

Independent online media - previously funded largely by international, mainly European sources - are particularly targeted by the new grant law amendments. The Speaker of the Georgian Dream Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, has publicly [attacked online media](#), accused them of criminal activity, and threatened them.

The advertising market is also being controlled to pressure media financially. According to [Transparency International](#) Georgia, there is a massive disparity in advertising revenue distribution between pro-government and critical broadcasters. Due to financial difficulties, 17 regional broadcasters were unable to resume broadcasting in 2025. The country's main critical broadcasters, Formula and TV Pirveli, are at risk of closure. Independent TV company Trialeti [stopped satellite broadcasting](#) due to systemic financial pressure from the authorities.

- **OSCE/ODIHR Moscow Mechanism Report**

On March 12, 2026, a report was published under the OSCE [Moscow Mechanism](#), initiated by 23 OSCE participating States, concerning developments in Georgia during 2024-2025.

According to the report, developments over the past two years can be assessed as systemic repressions against protesters, opposition representatives, and journalists. The report states that

treatment of detainees in some cases amounts to torture; violence by law enforcement remains unpunished; arbitrary detention and political persecution are being used; repression against dissent is ongoing; and there has been serious democratic backsliding.

Recommendations to the international community include calling on States Parties to the Rome Statute to consider referring the situation in Georgia to the International Criminal Court (ICC), in light of increasing cases of political persecution, torture, and other inhuman acts. The report also recommends that member states consider filing interstate applications before the European Court of Human Rights, imposing targeted sanctions on responsible individuals, and initiating investigations under universal jurisdiction.

- **UK Sanctions on Government Propaganda Channels**

On February 4, 2026, the [United Kingdom sanctioned](#) two pro-government propaganda TV channels - TV Imedi and PosTV - for their involvement in spreading Russian disinformation related to Ukraine. Representatives of Georgian Dream and the [Communications Commission](#) described the sanctions as an attempt to restrict fair competition and interfere with journalistic activities.

- **Possible Use of Chemical Weapons**

On December 1, 2025, a [BBC investigative report](#) stated that during the dispersal of mass demonstrations starting on November 28, 2024, a prohibited toxic chemical compound, “Kamite,” may have been used against protesters, which triggered strong [domestic](#) and [international reactions](#).

A few days after the documentary aired, the State Security Service declared the investigation [concluded](#), stating that the chemical substance used in water cannons was not Kamite, but chlorobenzylidene malononitrile. The State Security Service questioned BBC [respondents](#) and [doctors](#) whose medical findings were cited in the investigation. At the same time, the agency continues investigating the case under the charge of “assisting a foreign organization in hostile activities” and has issued a search warrant for a former high-ranking Interior Ministry official who spoke to the BBC.

Due to serious distrust toward investigations conducted by Georgian Dream agencies, civil society organizations [appealed](#) to the Director of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to consider sending a fact-finding or investigative mission to Georgia. OPCW has not yet commented publicly on this issue.

- **Repression in the Education System and Public Sector**

Georgian Dream continues to implement its announced unconstitutional so-called “education reform.” The reform introduces the concept of [“One City - One Faculty,”](#) meaning that within one

city, a specific faculty may exist at only one state university, with priority given to Tbilisi State University. As a result, Ilia State University would lose [92% of its programs](#). The reform is widely viewed by the [university itself](#) and by the international [academic community](#) as an [attempt to silence](#) critical voices, destroy institutional independence and establish control.

At the same time, public sector employees who express protest or support European integration continue to be dismissed at both central and regional levels, including in [Tetritskaro Municipality](#), the [Public Broadcaster](#), and the Ministry of [Education system](#).

- **International Reaction to Developments in Georgia**

The Council of Europe [Commissioner for Human Rights](#) called on the Georgian Prosecutor General to investigate police use of force against protest participants in November and December last year. The Commissioner also expressed concern about amendments to the [Law on Grants](#) and other legislative changes initiated by Georgian Dream that threaten the legitimate activities of civil society and urged Parliament to reject these amendments.

[Human Rights Watch](#) stated that Georgian authorities are using recently tightened protest restrictions and penalties to arbitrarily detain and harass protesters, making the exercise of the right to protest difficult and dangerous in Georgia.

The international academic community also reacted strongly negatively to the education reform. A group of [65 international professors](#) called on the Georgian government to reconsider the higher education reform concept.

The [Helsinki Commission](#) called on the U.S. government and its allies to verify BBC information that Georgian authorities may have used chemical weapons during the 2024 protests and to impose sanctions on those responsible.

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