Information on Unlawful Detentions, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment, Violence, and Political Repression Against Participants of the Pro-European Protests in Georgia
Part IV
(19 December, 2024 – 19 January, 2025)

This document was prepared by "Georgia's European Orbit" and the Human Rights Center of the University of Georgia, based on publicly available sources, including media footage, victim testimonies, statements from human rights NGOs and state agencies. The information presented is for informational purposes and reflects the findings of human rights lawyers derived from these sources.

- **Restrictions on the Freedoms of Assembly and Expression**

Protest rallies that began on November 28, 2024, have continued on a daily basis in Tbilisi and other cities throughout Georgia. Forms of protest include daily gatherings outside the Parliament of Georgia, marches, a "chain of unity," student protests, and strikes involving cultural institutions, higher education institutions, and businesses.

Starting in December, the police and courts began to enforce newly adopted blanket prohibitions, while also imposing significantly increased financial penalties (raised by 10 to 20 times) for violations and detaining individuals for up to 15 days. For instance, police have detained protesters for placing stickers on fences or covering parts of their faces. In addition, demonstrators have been subjected to disproportionately high fines for allegedly partially or fully blocking roads.

- **Police Violence and Degrading Treatment of Detainees**

Incidents of police violence and degrading treatment against detainees continue to be reported.

On January 11 in Tbilisi, the police forcibly detained human rights defender Gia Jvarsheishvili for the second time, following which he required hospitalization due to physical mistreatment. Notably, during his first arrest in December, Mr. Jvarsheishvili was subjected to torture and inhuman treatment.

Individuals detained by the Batumi police on January 11–12 also reported being subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment following their arrest. According to several detainees, the police physically assaulted them and subjected them to both physical and verbal abuse. Similarly, law enforcement officers used physical force against protesters detained on January 18 outside the police department.

- **Police Violence and Degrading Treatment of Female Detainees**

Incidents of police violence, as well as inhuman and degrading treatment of female detainees, continue. During the night of January 11-12 in Batumi, the Head of the Batumi Police, Irakli Dgebuadze, allegedly spat in the face of detained journalist Mzia Amaglobeli. The detainee was also reportedly denied access to drinking water and restroom facilities.

Additionally, one of the detainees' spouses, Nutsa Eremiani, publicly stated that she was subjected to police violence during the search of her home, which resulted in the termination of her pregnancy.

It is noteworthy that allegations of sexual harassment, inhuman treatment, physical abuse, and threats of rape reported by female detainees in November–December remain uninvestigated, with no individuals held accountable to date.

- **Physical Attacks on Protesters, Activists, and Politicians**

Violent groups and individuals attack protesters (including women) in Tbilisi and other cities. Many of these perpetrators have been identified, however, law enforcement agencies have failed to bring any suspects to justice.

A pattern of attacks against opposition politicians is evident. For instance, on the night of January 14 in Batumi, high-ranking officials of Georgian Dream assaulted Zviad Khoridze, a researcher at Transparency International Georgia; The same individuals reportedly attacked former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, who was subsequently hospitalized. This act of violence was publicly justified by Georgian Dream Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, who referred to the victim as a "spy" and stated that he should simply endure the consequences; On January 18, individuals armed with stones and knives attacked members of the political party Lelo. No arrests have been made in connection with these incidents.

- **Politically Motivated Justice in Ongoing Administrative and Criminal Proceedings Against Protest Participants**

Since November, **criminal charges** have been brought against 45 protesters, of whom 43 remain in pretrial detention. The ages of these individuals start at 19. Among those detained are approximately 10 students and one female journalist.

During the **criminal proceedings**, courts have imposed pretrial detention on all defendants, disregarding credible reports of inhuman treatment and torture at the time of arrest, as well as allegations of unwarranted and unlawful searches. In addition, inadequate courtroom facilities hinder the effective exercise of the right to defense, detainees often experience health issues, and interested parties (including detainees' family members) were frequently unable to attend hearings.

With regard to **administrative proceedings**, since November, around 500 individuals have been detained under administrative law. Full termination of proceedings has occurred in only two cases.

Courts systematically impose high fines or up to 15 days of imprisonment on those detained under administrative law. Such decisions predominantly rely on testimony from "false witness" police officers, while disregarding evidence presented by the defense.

- **Politically motivated dismissals and Repression in the Public Service**

On December 13, following a mere five-day review, Georgian Dream adopted amendments to the Law on Public Service, effectively transforming a system previously based on professionalism and neutrality into an instrument of partisan allegiance. To date, it is known that at least 70 public servants have been dismissed for signing protest statements, participating in protest rallies, or publicly, including on social media, criticizing acts of state violence against peaceful demonstrators.

It should also be noted that the Public Registry, without any justification or explanation, refused to formally register the independent trade union of Public Servants, which constitutes a gross violation of the right to freedom of association and labor rights.

- **Media situation**

Currently, Mzia Amaglobeli - founder of two longstanding, notably professional media outlets, Batumelebi and Netgazeti - remains in unlawful pretrial detention. The investigation accuses her of attacking a police officer. Following her arrest, Ms. Amaglobeli was subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment.

On January 12, police detained a cameraman from Batumelebi media, subsequently imposing administrative detention on him.

Since the start of pro-European protests on November 28, non-governmental organizations have documented over 90 instances of media rights violations. These include deliberate attacks, serious physical injuries, unlawful arrests, fines, intentional damage to equipment, illegal interference with journalistic activities, injuries sustained from gas, spray, and water cannons, as well as threats and insults.

Daily protests are held outside the Georgian Public Broadcaster, demanding changes in editorial policy and management. Although some employees of the Public Broadcaster have joined these demands, the station's daytime broadcasts remain closed to public and political discussions.

- **Impunity of Perpetrators**

Since the beginning of the protest rallies, **not a single act of violence committed by law enforcement officers or criminal groups against protesters, activists, or journalists has resulted in any individual being held criminally accountable**. According to the statement by

the Special Investigation Service, the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia has granted victim status to 52 persons. Forensic medical examinations have been ordered for 226 injured individuals.

- **International Sanctions Imposed on Georgian Dream Officials**

Due to gross human rights violations, the undermining of Georgia's democratic institutions, the advancement of the Kremlin's interests, and the deviation from Georgia's Euro-Atlantic trajectory, officials from Georgian Dream have been sanctioned by multiple countries. For instance, the U.S. Department of the Treasury has sanctioned Georgian Dream leader Bidzina Ivanishvili, as well as the Minister of Internal Affairs and other senior officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who were added to the Magnitsky List.

The United Kingdom has also sanctioned the Minister of Internal Affairs and four high-ranking officials within the Ministry. Furthermore, an initiative to sanction Bidzina Ivanishvili has been introduced in the House of Commons.

Similarly, the Baltic States and Ukraine have imposed sanctions, and Members of the European Parliament have called on the European Union and its Member States to enact personalized sanctions against those responsible for Georgia's democratic backsliding.

In response, Georgian Dream has put forward the sanctioned individuals for the Order of Honor and promised to compensate their sanction-related financial losses from the state budget.