



Information Regarding Inhuman and Degrading Treatment, Unlawful Detentions, Ongoing Political Repression in Public Offices, and Anti-Democratic Legislation Targeting Participants of Pro-European Demonstrations in Georgia

Part V

(January 20 – February 10, 2025)

This document was prepared by “Georgia's European Orbit” and the Human Rights Center of the University of Georgia using publicly available sources, including media coverage, victim testimonies, and statements from civil society organizations and state agencies. It is intended for informational purposes and presents the findings of human rights lawyers based on those sources.

For 75 consecutive days, protests have been ongoing in Tbilisi and various other cities across Georgia. The primary demands of the demonstrations include restoring Georgia’s pro-European course, calling new elections, and releasing citizens who have been detained during the protests.

Please see the updated database on victims of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, and violence against protesters here: [link #1](#)

Please see the updated database of crimes committed against journalists here: [link #2](#)

Please see the updated database of protest participants detained on criminal charges here: [link #3](#)

1. Violence Against Demonstrators

Police continue to engage in unlawful and violent acts against protest participants, including beatings, degrading treatment, verbal abuse, threats, and illegal detentions.

Particularly brutal conduct by police was reported on February 2 near Tbilisi’s main entrance, where thousands of citizens had gathered. Masked and otherwise unidentifiable officers:

- [Used force](#) against and arrested peaceful protesters [standing on the sidewalk](#);
- [Attacked journalists](#) engaged in their professional duties, resulting in the hospitalization of [one reporter](#);
- Subjected detainees to [group beatings](#), aiming blows at their heads and faces and [kicking them](#);
- Following arrests, five to six masked and unidentifiable police officers physically assaulted detainees inside a police minibus ([see the video evidence provided](#));

- The Head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Special Tasks Department, Mr. Zviad Kharazishvili, personally participated in these [assaults by kicking](#) one of the detainees and then verbally abusing protesters [through a loudspeaker](#);
- Police demonstrated especially aggressive behavior [toward women](#), subjecting them to [obscene insults](#) based on their gender, issuing threats, [physically assaulting](#) them, and forcibly detaining them.
- Men were also beaten for [defending women](#);
- Police physically assaulted and detained two minors, who sustained concussions and other bodily injuries as a result of the beatings.
- Law enforcement continues to [engage in looting](#). Detainees, including minors, report that officers stole their mobile phones, wallets, and other personal belongings.
- Police also targeted [vehicles](#) that signaled in solidarity with protesters;

It is noteworthy that, two days prior to the demonstration scheduled for February 2, the government amended its own decree to declare holding the protest at the announced location a criminal offense. As a result, out of the **31** individuals detained during that protest, **8** have been charged with criminal offenses and now face up to **four years** in prison.

On February 4, the police [used force against journalists](#) covering a peaceful protest. They physically assaulted three journalists, one of whom required medical treatment. Two individuals were arrested during the demonstration.

2. The practice of inhuman and degrading treatment of detainees, including women and minors

As a result of the disproportionate use of force by police during the peaceful demonstration on February 2, [seven individuals](#) required hospitalization, having sustained facial injuries, concussions, and bruises on various parts of their bodies.

According to the [Public Defender's](#) Office, of the 25 detainees interviewed by its representatives, 22 reported instances of ill-treatment by law enforcement, with 11 of those detainees visibly showing physical injuries, primarily to the face.

According to [politician Nika Melia](#), on February 2, while he was in custody at a police station, the deputy head of the Isani-Samgori police department, Giorgi Chokhuri, kicked him as he sat handcuffed in a chair.

Female protesters have publicly begun to speak out about being [forcibly stripped naked](#) and made to squat under the pretense of a “search”, a clearly disproportionate measure that constitutes unlawful, degrading treatment and violates human dignity.

3. Heavy Financial Penalties and Prison Sentences for Participating in Protests

The practice of imposing administrative detention and unjustifiably high fines on protest participants without proper justification continues, serving as a repressive tool against freedom of expression.

Despite a lack of evidence on false police statements, courts are arbitrarily fining protesters 5,000 GEL (approximately USD 1,800). Given that the average monthly salary in Georgia is around USD 500, and social assistance for an entire family is USD 130, a fine of USD 1,800 for participating in a protest is tantamount to a criminal sanction in terms of its severity.

As of February 7, administrative proceedings have been initiated against more than [1,600 protesters](#). At this stage, the total amount in fines imposed on demonstrators exceeds 600,000 GEL (approximately USD 215,000), a figure that continues to rise dramatically each day.

4. Draconian Laws Adopted Through Accelerated Procedure

On February 3, “Georgian Dream” initiated and, within just three days, rushed through [draconian legislative amendments](#) that designate many aspects of the fundamental rights to assembly and expression as offenses, imposing [severe sanctions](#) for their violation:

- The maximum period of administrative detention has been extended from 15 days to 60 days.
- Verbal insults or any other “insulting” conduct toward an official or public servant are now punishable by up to 45 days in detention. This effectively abolishes the right to criticize, given the vague definition of “insult”;
- Financial penalties for protest-related administrative offenses have been further increased;
- The burden of proof has shifted from law enforcement authorities to the individual citizen;
- Personal searches are no longer required to be conducted in the presence of a witness;
- Even spontaneous or unplanned rallies are now subject to a notice requirement. Because spontaneous gatherings typically lack a clearly identifiable organizer, there is a high risk that any protest participant could be held accountable for failing to submit notice, or that the gathering could be deemed illegal.
- Protests and any form of public criticism are now prohibited in enclosed spaces or buildings without the prior consent of the owner.
- Blocking highways, bridges, tunnels, overpasses, transport hubs, and railways is strictly forbidden.
- The use of temporary structures (such as stages or tents) during protests has been severely restricted.

“Georgian Dream” has also announced its intention to ban foreign funding for media outlets and to establish an oversight body tasked with monitoring media “objectivity.”

5. Politically Motivated Justice

In the spring of 2024, the courts delivered guilty verdicts against all [10 individuals](#) detained during protests against the so-called “Russian Law.” Seven of them received prison sentences. Prosecutor’s Office and the courts deliberately delayed ruling on the cases of those arrested during the spring protests until President Salome Zurbashvili’s term ended, thereby preventing her from issuing pardons to the convicted.

With respect to individuals detained during protests after November 2024, criminal proceedings have been initiated against 52 persons. Of these, 37 remain in pretrial detention, 14 have been released on bail, and one minor is under parental supervision.

6. Political Repression in Public Service

Amid the enactment of anti-democratic amendments to the “Law on Public Service” and the politically motivated dismissal of public servants, “Georgian Dream” has announced its decision to abolish the Civil Service Bureau. According to [Bureau employees](#), its liquidation is part of a repressive policy aimed at silencing dissent within the public sector.

Employees of the Parliament of Georgia’s Research Center have likewise been informed of the institution’s dissolution. [They assert](#) that this measure constitutes retaliation for their public criticism of the government’s decision to suspend negotiations on Georgia’s accession to the European Union until 2028.

Individual cases of dismissals in the [private sector](#) have also been reported, allegedly in response to employees expressing protest-related views.

7. Prisoners on Hunger Strike

Journalist [Mzia Amaghlobeli](#), who is being held in unlawful detention, has been on a hunger strike for 30 days. Another detainee, [Temur Khatamadze](#), has been on a hunger strike for 25 days in solidarity with Mzia Amaghlobeli and in support of Georgia’s European future. Both detainees report that they were subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment by the Head of the Batumi Police Department, [Irakli Dgebuadze](#), following their arrests.

According to Mamuka Mdinaradze, a leader of the “Georgian Dream,” “If Mzia Amaghlobeli starts eating, everything will be over.” In response to a journalist’s question about how a hunger strike might end, Mdinaradze commented that “a hunger strike [generally ends in death](#).”

8. Encouragement/Impunity for Police Brutality

Senior officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, who are responsible for acts of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, and the excessive use of force against demonstrators, have been [awarded](#) the “Order of Dignity” by “Georgian Dream” appointed President Mikheil Kavelashvili,

To date, [not a single law enforcement officer](#) has been held accountable for incidents of brutal violence.

9. International Response and Sanctions Imposed on Georgian Dream Officials

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted a [critical resolution](#) regarding the ongoing crisis in the country. PACE conditionally approved the credentials of Georgian Dream's delegation, on the condition that new elections are held, all political prisoners are released, and police brutality and human rights violations are immediately halted. In response, Georgian Dream [decided to suspend](#) Georgia's participation in PACE.

The [Council of the European Union](#) decided to suspend the visa-free regime for holders of Georgian diplomatic and service passports.

6 independent Experts (Rapporteurs) appointed by the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#) have called on Georgian Dream to investigate allegations of excessive use of force, torture, and other forms of ill-treatment by law enforcement and to take measures to prevent further violence.

Three senior officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs - responsible for the brutal crackdown on protests - have been sanctioned by the [Czech Republic](#). According to a statement by [Norway's Ministry](#) of Foreign Affairs, in light of the European Union's suspension of visa-free travel for Georgian diplomats, Norway is considering adopting parallel measures.