

Information on the Ongoing Repression of Protesters, Civil Society, Media, and Political Opponents in Georgia

Part VII (April 1 – July 1, 2025)

This report has been prepared by **Georgia's European Orbit** and the **Human Rights Center of the University of Georgia**. The document serves informational purposes and presents the consolidated findings and legal assessments of human rights lawyers based on the evidence collected.

Please access the databases on the Victims of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, journalists targeted with violence or intimidation, cases of individuals imprisoned on politically motivated grounds here: [\[Link\]](#)

- **Violence Against Participants in the Ongoing Pro-European Protests in Georgia**

For the past seven months, Georgia has witnessed [continuous and sustained](#) pro-European protests, which began on November 28, 2024, following the announcement by the ruling party, *Georgian Dream*, of its intention to abandon the country's [European integration path](#).

The Georgian Dream regime has employed a wide range of [repressive measures](#) against protest participants, including [torture of detainees](#), degrading and humiliating treatment, violent assaults, unlawful imprisonment, dismissals from employment, asset seizures, and severe financial sanctions.

Despite the scale and severity of repression, citizens continue to gather daily in Tbilisi and across other cities, **demanding** the restoration of Georgia's European course, the conduct of new and fair elections, and the release of political prisoners.

According to the 2024 Parliamentary [Report of the Public Defender of Georgia](#), during the period from November 28, 2024, to March 1, 2025, **60%** of detainees reported being subjected to ill-treatment. Between November 29 and December 2, 2024, **79.5%** of the detainees visited by the

Public Defender's Office alleged ill-treatment. During the visits conducted on February 2–3, 2025, 22 out of 25 detainees - **88%** - reported similar abuse.

- **Impunity of Perpetrators**

Despite the systemic nature of [torture](#), degrading treatment, physical assaults, destruction of property, and the violent dispersal of demonstrations through excessive force and [unidentified chemical irritants](#), not a single law enforcement officer or perpetrator has been held accountable.

- **Excessive Financial Sanctions for Participation in Peaceful Protests**

Courts have systematically imposed **finer of 5,000 GEL** (approximately 1,600 EUR) on individuals for participating in peaceful protests. These fines are applied in a conveyor-belt manner and often repeatedly. Given the economic context - where the average monthly salary in Georgia is approximately 500 EUR and social assistance is around 100 EUR - these sanctions are **equivalent in severity to criminal prosecution**.

As of March 2025, the total amount of fines imposed on protesters [exceeded 2 million GEL](#), placing an unbearable financial burden on those exercising their constitutional right to peaceful assembly.

In many cases, protesters' personal property has been **seized or frozen** by court orders due to non-payment of these fines. Moreover, recent legislative amendments now allow for **up to 30 days of administrative detention** for those who continue to participate in protests while fines remain unpaid - further deepening the cycle of punishment.

The situation has worsened following the decision by the Prosecutor's Office to [freeze the assets of charitable foundations](#) that had been assisting fined individuals with covering these excessive financial penalties. This action was taken under the pretext of a politically motivated and legally unfounded investigation into alleged "sabotage," effectively criminalizing solidarity and support for protest participants.

- **Detentions and Excessive Financial Penalties for Criticism of Authorities**

Under the newly adopted provisions, verbal insults directed at public officials - including those expressed on social media - are now subject to legal sanctions.

[Individuals have been fined 4,000 GEL](#) (approximately 1,300 EUR) **for Facebook posts** critical of political leaders, including the use of phrases such as "traitor," "modern-day Bolshevik,"

“servant of Russia,” “brainless,” “imp”, etc. These fines amount to nearly sixteen times the official [subsistence minimum](#) in Georgia, rendering them excessively punitive and financially devastating.

In addition to financial sanctions, administrative [detentions](#) ranging from **10 to 14 days** have been imposed on [protesters](#), including [student girls](#). Failure to pay the imposed fines has resulted in the freezing of personal bank accounts and seizure of property, including [residential homes](#).

The deliberate and disproportionate application of these financial penalties and detention measures constitutes a clear attempt to [silence dissent](#) and impose a chilling effect on freedom of expression and civic activism in Georgia.

- **Arrests of Pro-Western Opposition Leaders**

In the past month alone, six current and two former [leaders of pro-Western opposition parties have been arrested](#) in Georgia. Criminal proceedings are ongoing against [several other opposition figures](#), who are also expected to face detention in the nearest future.

Formally, the justification for these detentions is the alleged failure to appear before a so-called "parliamentary investigative commission" - a body established by the *Georgian Dream* party. The opposition leaders refused to appear in protest, citing the commission's illegitimacy and its use as a political tool rather than a constitutionally mandated investigative mechanism.

Despite the political nature of their refusal, opposition politicians are being sentenced to seven to eight months of imprisonment for contempt of this commission. In a further troubling development, those already sentenced are being summoned again, raising concerns that [new cases may be fabricated](#) to prolong their detention arbitrarily.

Meanwhile, in at least one case, a politician who did appear before the commission is [facing criminal prosecution](#) on unrelated grounds, suggesting a coordinated campaign of legal harassment designed to intimidate and dismantle opposition leadership.

- **Attacks Against Critical Media**

According to [Mapping Media Freedom data](#), since November 28, 2024, at least 13 journalists have been detained, and more than 246 have been subjected to physical assaults, obstruction of professional activities, legal harassment, administrative fines, or discrediting campaigns. [28 journalists were fined](#) 5,000 GEL (approximately 1,600 EUR) for allegedly blocking roads while covering pro-European protests. Some journalists were fined multiple times.

Legislative changes have further restricted media freedom: foreign funding of media outlets has been banned, self-regulatory mechanisms have been weakened, and the powers of the Communications Commission - an institution under de facto control of the ruling party - have been significantly expanded. As a result, the media landscape in Georgia has deteriorated in a systemic and coordinated manner.

The ruling party, *Georgian Dream*, has filed legal [complaints against independent and critical television](#) channels for journalists' use of terms such as “**regime’s prisoners**”, “**illegitimate Parliament**”, “**pro-Russian political regime**”, “**Oligarch’s regime**”, etc. - phrases that question the government's legitimacy. These complaints, brought before a politically aligned Communications Commission, exemplify strategic lawsuits against public participation (**SLAPPs**). Rather than addressing actual legal violations, these actions are designed to intimidate the media, interfere with editorial independence, and [silence dissenting voices](#).

- **State Policy to Dismantle Civil Society**

In the past two months, the *Georgian Dream* party has adopted a series of laws that deliberately and systematically **prohibit and criminalize the work of human rights and anti-corruption CSOs** in Georgia.

During the legislative process, members of Parliament from the ruling party openly declared that the goal of these laws was to [halt the activities of specific organizations](#), including [Transparency International Georgia](#) and [Georgia’s European Orbit](#).

The newly adopted legislation prohibits civil society organizations from receiving **foreign funding without prior government approval**, and mandates that organizations and their contractors register as “**foreign agents**” if they receive any such funding. Non-compliance is punishable by **criminal prosecution**. As a direct consequence, [international donors](#) have suspended funding, and many Georgian NGOs have been forced to close or cease operations.

Enforcement of these repressive laws has been delegated to the Government’s [Anti-Corruption Bureau](#), which has already begun implementing politically motivated legal persecution of Georgian civil society actors. In a troubling development, the Bureau - acting without legal justification, has obtained court approval to demand confidential personal and professional data from eight NGOs, covering the period from January 1, 2024, to June 10, 2025. [These demands include](#) access to **attorney-client privileged information and beneficiaries’ personal data**, such as ID numbers, photographs, and contracts.

[In a joint statement](#), the affected organizations firmly **declared their refusal to comply** with these unlawful and unconstitutional requests, pledging not to betray the rights of their beneficiaries or the principles of democracy. As a result, **they now face the threat of criminal prosecution** for non-compliance.

- **Political Purge in the Public Sector**

A large-scale political purge is underway in Georgia's public sector, targeting individuals perceived as politically unreliable by the ruling *Georgian Dream* party - particularly those who support Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration. This campaign is unfolding at both the central and local levels of government.

According to independent public sector trade unions, up to [700 public servants have been dismissed](#) due to their expressed or perceived support for European integration. This figure likely underrepresents the true scale of the purge. For example, approximately [150 employees](#) have reportedly been dismissed from the Ministry of Defense alone.

Government-aligned propaganda media outlets no longer attempt to conceal the politically motivated nature of these dismissals. On the contrary, [they openly state](#) that the individuals removed from their posts were supporters of the so-called "radical opposition" or active participants in pro-European protests - implying that such political engagement is grounds for dismissal.

- **Political Justice and Political Prisoners in Georgia**

Criminal proceedings have been initiated against approximately 70 individuals on fabricated or politically motivated charges. As of now, around 60 persons remain in custody, including two women - one a journalist and the other a teacher.

Court hearings in many of these cases are held behind [closed doors](#) or in courtrooms [too small to accommodate observers](#), denying access even to family members and thereby violating the principle of public hearings. In several cases, the courts have interfered with defendants' fundamental rights, including the [right to choose legal counsel](#), and have ignored clear evidence of [false testimony](#) by police officers.

Citizens attending court hearings of political prisoners have been subjected [to aggression and violence](#) by court security officers at the Tbilisi City Court. These officers have physically [assaulted attendees](#) - particularly [targeting women](#) - inflicting injuries such as bruises and fractures.

On June 30, the *Georgian Dream* majority passed expedited legislative amendments that [prohibit media recording of court proceedings](#). Journalists are now barred from reporting or filming in court corridors and outdoor areas. The amendments also revoked legal guarantees that had previously protected individuals from having their mobile phones, computers, or other recording devices confiscated upon entering court premises.

- **International Response**

To date, more than **200** individuals affiliated with the ruling party have been subjected to [international sanctions](#), with the identities of **119** individuals publicly disclosed. The remaining sanctions consist of anonymous visa restrictions imposed by partner countries.

In the United States, the House of Representatives passed the bipartisan MEGOBARI Act, a legislative initiative that mandates the imposition of sanctions on *Georgian Dream* officials. The Senate has also introduced the MEGOBARI Act with bipartisan support, reflecting a strong consensus across U.S. political lines regarding concern over developments in Georgia.

In response to the adoption of legislation that undermines democracy and human rights in Georgia, the Council of the European Union has [suspended visa-free travel privileges for Georgian Dream officials and diplomats](#).

In parallel with the imposition of international sanctions, the *Georgian Dream* government has [dismissed several high-ranking sanctioned officials](#), including the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor General, and the head of the State Security Service. Significant personnel changes have also taken place within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, suggesting an effort to mitigate the impact of international scrutiny while maintaining systemic control.