

# **The Acute Human Rights Crisis in Georgia**

## **Overview of the Human Rights Situation in the Country in 2025**

Tbilisi  
2025

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## Introduction

On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, the Social Justice Center traditionally presents an overview of the main trends and cases of human rights violations in Georgia during 2025. It is evident that this overview is not exhaustive and primarily reflects assessments related to issues encountered in the organization's work.

The accelerated and aggressive process of autocratization in Georgia took alarming forms in 2025. “Georgian Dream,” in addition to fully capturing state institutions—including the systems of general courts and the Constitutional Court—has, through unconstitutional and unlawful mechanisms, significantly weakened the political opposition, institutionally dismantled civil society, pushed the media to the brink of financial crisis and collapse, and substantially restricted citizens' civil and political rights. Through legislative changes adopted by a parliament suffering from a crisis of legitimacy, the depletion of the legal system from human rights standards and its growing degradation have assumed rapid and extremely arbitrary forms. Even a cursory review of amendments to legislation on assemblies and demonstrations, freedom of speech and expression, and the Code of Administrative Offenses clearly demonstrates the authorities' deliberate intent to restrict and weaken the level of recognition and protection of civil and political rights in the country. Correspondingly, the sharp increase in the duration of administrative detention and fines, restrictions on various forms of expression at assemblies, the criminalization of road blockages, and the removal of safeguards protecting freedom of expression in cases of insult and defamation have emerged as grave examples of the institutional persecution of dissenting opinions.

Alongside dramatic institutional and legal changes, the process of authoritarian entrenchment was accompanied by mass violence manifested during the spring and autumn protests of 2024—violence that remains uninvestigated to this day. Even a comparison of data provided by the Public Defender regarding violence used during different protest periods reveals an unprecedented escalation of brutality in Georgia. Specifically, among individuals detained during the June 20–21, 2019 protests and visited by Public Defender representatives, 30.2% reported ill-treatment; during the March 7–9, 2023 protests—20.8%; during the April–May 2024 protests—51.1%; among those visited between November 28, 2024 and March 1, 2025—60%; during the first days of the dispersal of winter protests (November 29–December 2, 2024)—79.5%; and among 25 individuals visited on February 2–3, 2025, 22 persons, or 88%, reported ill-treatment.

In the process of consolidating authoritarian governance, “Georgian Dream” has aggressively employed strategies of disinformation, propaganda, polarization, and the cultivation of hatred, undermining social cohesion and creating internal social and cultural hierarchies. The legal situation of specific groups designated as hostile by the regime has deteriorated sharply. Particularly noteworthy is the effective abolition of the rights of LGBTQI people in Georgia and the normalization of political homo/bi/transphobia.

It is evident that the authoritarian context and logic of governance inflict harm and suffering not only on political opponents but on the broader population as well. Throughout the year, there was a clear

tendency by “Georgian Dream” to demonstratively ignore (for example, the protests of residents of Balda, Chiatura, and those evicted from Tvalchrelidze Street) and repress social grievances. Anti-democratic legislative changes will ultimately have severe consequences for all social groups and strata.

## **1. Severe Deterioration of the State of Civil and Political Rights**

### **1.1. Torture and other forms of police violence**

The large-scale demonstrations that began on 28 November 2024 continued throughout 2025. Accordingly, the authorities once again [resorted](#) to ill-treatment of protest participants and other forms of systemic police violence in order to suppress protest actions.

On 28 November and in the days that followed, the use of disproportionate force by law enforcement agencies reached a critical threshold. Video footage disseminated by media outlets and citizens [shows](#) that, in many cases, the force used against individuals lacked any legal basis or legitimate aim and served solely punitive, retaliatory, and intimidating purposes. The actions committed by law enforcement officers, in numerous instances, by their nature, intensity, and brutality, amounted to torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This is attested to both by individuals detained during protests and by the [Public Defender of Georgia](#). The same findings are reflected in [reports](#) by international non-governmental organizations. According to the Public Defender’s report, during the period from 28 November 2024 to 1 March 2025, 60% of individuals visited by Public Defender representatives [reported](#) ill-treatment, while among those visited between 29 November and 2 December, 79.5% reported such treatment.

As a result of joint documentation conducted by civil society organizations, within which 117 protest participants were interviewed, the gravest forms and patterns of torture and ill-treatment were [identified](#). The dispersal of protests involved the arbitrary detention and [beating](#) of demonstrators by special police units. Detainees were taken beyond police cordons, away from media presence, where violence [intensified](#), particularly inside punitive minibuses. Members of special units beat victims collectively using special gloves, kicks, and, in some cases, batons or other tools, deliberately targeting the head and face. Physical violence was [accompanied](#) by confiscation of personal belongings, verbal abuse, humiliation, and threats, including threats of rape. Beatings—often occurring in several episodes—continued inside minibuses, during transportation, and at police stations. The violence was accompanied by anti-European and homophobic rhetoric characteristic of government narratives. Ill-treatment also included the punitive use of special means against demonstrators. After beatings, victims were transferred to patrol or criminal police officers, who escorted them to police stations and drew up falsified detention records.

Police officers involved in the dispersals did not wear [identification](#) numbers or other identifying insignia, in blatant violation of international standards. This practice prevents the identification of perpetrators, guarantees impunity, and renders the restoration of violated rights impossible. All circumstances indicate that the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs deliberately created conditions preventing the identification of special unit members and other officers, which itself bears elements of criminal conduct.

Despite the scale of documented police violence, investigations into alleged crimes committed by law enforcement officers have been extremely [ineffective](#), and to date not a single responsible individual has been identified. Investigations were initially conducted by the Special Investigation Service and later transferred to the Tbilisi Prosecutor’s Office under Article 333(3)(b) of the Criminal Code, which concerns

abuse of official authority, despite the fact that victims were subjected to degrading and inhuman treatment or torture—offenses covered by Articles 144<sup>1</sup> and 144<sup>3</sup> of the Criminal Code. Although the Special Investigation Service conducted certain investigative actions, fundamental deficiencies were identified. Notably, mid-and high-level police officials were not [questioned](#), including the head of the Special Tasks Department and officials responsible for the operation, who may have possessed critical information regarding decision-making. Additionally, data from mobile phones and computer equipment of senior Ministry officials were not examined.

Furthermore, the investigation failed to obtain key electronic evidence, as state institutions and police units claimed that surveillance cameras, onboard computers, and radio communication systems malfunctioned during assemblies. Investigative authorities did not conduct additional examinations to verify these claims.

## **1.2. Violence by Private Actors**

In 2025, incidents of violence against activists and protest participants by private individuals—so-called “titushki”—continued to be documented. These cases remain uninvestigated and illustrate a severe picture of selective justice.

On the morning of 11 February 2025, Lasha Gabitashvili shared a video on social media depicting the aftermath of an attack against him. Gabitashvili stated that he was assaulted near his home by three masked individuals. In early May, poet Zviad Ratiani [became](#) a victim of violence for the third time. Previously, on 28 November 2023, he was physically assaulted by officers of the Special Tasks Department, and on 12 December he was attacked again near his apartment entrance. In May 2025, Ratiani reported that he was assaulted on a bus but did not contact the police, fearing he would be held responsible himself. On 5 May, activists Nutsa Makharadze, Ketj Jananashvili, and Salome Sarishvili were attacked in a residential building. The attacker sprayed them with pepper spray in an elevator and then with brilliant green dye. Several days later, on 11 May, protest participant Taia Tsekvava was attacked: two unknown men approached her on the street, sprayed her with pepper spray, and threw her to the ground, explicitly stating that the violence was linked to her active participation in protests. On 24 May 2025, politician [Grigol Gegelia](#) was also physically assaulted. The most recent case became known on 9 December, when [Roman Akofov](#), an active protest participant, reported being beaten near his home in the presence of his minor child.

To date, no one has been held accountable for violent incidents in 2024, including the attack on Giorgi [Mumladze](#) or the abduction and assault of Gori-based activist [Vakhtang Fitskhelauri](#). Journalists covering protests that began in the winter of 2024 were also repeatedly attacked. Those responsible for assaults on journalists Maka Chikhladze and Giorgi Shetsiruli remain [unidentified](#). Even attacks occurring in the immediate presence of police officers—such as the assault on journalist [Mindia Gabadze](#)—were not effectively investigated. Despite observing the incident, police did not pursue the attackers or take adequate measures to identify them.

The June 2024 attack on activist [Niko Managadze](#) also remains uninvestigated, despite clear footage identifying the attackers. Around the same period, activist [Kote Abdushelishvili](#) was assaulted on Melikishvili Street in Tbilisi, an area equipped with numerous surveillance cameras. No perpetrators have been identified in any of these cases. Similarly, [ambush-style attacks](#) against politicians and politically active individuals during the spring 2024 protests remain uninvestigated. All of the above strongly suggests that perpetrators committed these crimes within a coordinated campaign, under a guarantee of impunity.

The culmination of [violence](#) by private individuals closely linked to the ruling party occurred on Melikishvili Avenue. On 8 September, a group of party activists mobilized near Kakha Kaladze's campaign headquarters attacked protest participants and media representatives, injuring several people, including journalists. The Ministry of Internal Affairs initiated an investigation under Articles 126 (group violence), 187 (damage or destruction of property), and 162<sup>1</sup> (violence during pre-election campaigning) of the Criminal Code. However, the investigation has been extremely ineffective, and two individuals initially detained were soon released on the grounds that victims failed to cooperate with investigators.

### **1.3. Searches and Police Control**

In 2025, the practice of arbitrary police searches and detentions of citizens remained widespread in Georgia. These practices were directed not at protecting public safety but served as tools of intimidation and political pressure.

During assemblies, particularly near Rustaveli and Freedom Square metro stations, police officers [mass-stopped](#) citizens, checked them, and effectively searched their personal belongings without individualized legal grounds. Exceeding the scope of superficial inspections, police demanded that citizens open their bags, often targeting protest-related attributes.

On 31 March, police arbitrarily [detained Luka Kintsurashvili](#) on Vazha-Pshavela Avenue in Tbilisi. Prior to detention, police demanded to search his bag, which he allowed. Officers then demanded access to his private Telegram chats on his mobile phone without providing legal justification. After Kintsurashvili attempted to consult a lawyer, police confiscated his phone and detained him administratively. He was denied contact with his family and lawyer for six hours.

On 6 April, journalist [Saba Sordia](#) was detained in Tbilisi. His detention followed a demand by police to present identification, after which officers requested to search his bag. Although he complied, a dispute arose when police attempted to open another compartment, and Sordia stated that he was willing to open it himself. This exchange resulted in his detention.

It is evident that searches conducted at assembly locations or based on protest-related attributes have a chilling effect on the exercise of the right to assembly and create an environment of intimidation and pressure.

### **1.4. Administrative Detention as a Tool to Restrict Freedom of Assembly and Expression**

Against the backdrop of resistance that began in November 2024, the administrative justice system became a central instrument for controlling and punishing protest. Detentions were typically arbitrary, collective, and punitive, aimed not at preventing individual offenses but at suppressing peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.

Between 19 November 2024 and 28 February 2025, the legal aid network of non-governmental organizations [received](#) information regarding 1,084 individuals subjected to administrative proceedings. Of these, 486 were administratively detained; 405 were placed in temporary detention facilities; 55 were hospitalized due to police violence; and 26 were released on written undertakings. Many individuals

detained during protests near Parliament in Tbilisi were transferred to detention facilities in other cities (Marneuli, Sagarejo, Gurjaani, Signagi, Mtskheta, Dusheti), significantly restricting access by family members and lawyers.

In 2025, police [continued](#) mass detentions of protest participants near Rustaveli and Freedom Square metro stations. Grounds for detention most often cited disobedience to lawful police orders; in some cases, demonstrators were [detained](#) for allegedly obstructing traffic.

### **1.5. Degrading Practice of Forced Strip Searches**

Since November 2024, police have institutionalized the practice of forced strip searches of individuals detained during protests, serving purposes of intimidation, humiliation, and punishment. This practice [became](#) an integral component of state repression.

In March 2025, the leader of the “Coalition for Change,” Elene Khoshtaria, [publicly](#) disclosed that during admission procedures at a temporary detention facility, police officers forcibly stripped her and subjected her to a metal detector search. She was fully undressed, handcuffed behind her back, and laid on a bed while officers passed a metal detector over her naked body for an extended period. This physical humiliation was compounded by denial of medical assistance, as she was not allowed to take medication despite suffering from high blood pressure.

Forced strip searches were also documented in the case of civic activist Gela Khasaia. Court hearings revealed that during a personal search, law enforcement officers unjustifiably forced him to fully undress twice. Female activists [Nutsa Makharadze](#) and [Nancy Vollandi](#) reported similar experiences.

### **1.6. Criminalization of Freedom of Assembly and Repressive Practices**

In 2025, the Georgian Dream government adopted numerous repressive legislative amendments that effectively dismantled the legal guarantees of freedom of assembly.

Amendments [adopted](#) on 13 December 2024 increased fines from GEL 500 to GEL 5,000 for violations of the Law of Georgia “On Assemblies and Demonstrations,” including holding assemblies within a 20-meter radius of law enforcement buildings, blocking building entrances during assemblies, and artificially blocking roadways when not required by the number of participants. Administrative detention of up to 15 days remained an alternative sanction. The same amendments [prohibited](#) covering one’s face with masks or other means during assemblies, punishable by a GEL 2,000 fine.

On 6 February, further restrictive amendments were adopted under [expedited](#) procedures. Changes to the Criminal Code increased penalties for public calls to violence (Article 239<sup>1</sup>) and for resistance or violence against police officers or state representatives (Articles 353 and 353<sup>1</sup>). Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses increased the maximum term of administrative detention for assembly- and expression-related violations from 15 to 60 days. Mandatory warning requirements were imposed for spontaneous protests and road occupations; assemblies in enclosed spaces were banned without written consent of owners; protest and picketing spaces were severely restricted; tents and temporary structures were effectively prohibited; and participation in assemblies terminated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs became a separate offense.

July [amendments](#) mandated automatic administrative detention for failure to pay fines, removing judicial discretion and eliminating individualized sanctions.

October amendments further tightened [penalties](#). Covering one's face during assemblies—previously punishable by a fine or up to 7 days' detention—became punishable exclusively by administrative detention of up to 15 days. Possession of firearms, explosives, pyrotechnics, or other dangerous items at assemblies became punishable by up to 60 days' detention. Fines for road blockages were abolished entirely, leaving imprisonment as the sole sanction.

One of the most alarming developments was the effective criminalization of participation in peaceful assemblies. Amendments adopted on 16 October fundamentally altered Article 347 of the Criminal Code. Whereas previously criminal liability applied only to organizers whose actions resulted in serious consequences, participation in assemblies dispersed by police, road blockages, mask-wearing, installation of temporary structures, or carrying tear gas—if committed by individuals previously sanctioned for the same acts—now triggers criminal liability punishable solely by imprisonment.

The culmination of restrictive [initiatives](#) occurred on 8 December, when another amendment was initiated to prohibit even the artificial blocking of pedestrian pathways, including by vehicles, structures, or objects, except where necessitated by the number of participants.

#### ***1.6.1. Use of Facial Recognition Technologies for Mass Fining of Protest Participants***

Amid continuous demonstrations, Georgian Dream widely [deployed](#) video surveillance and facial recognition technologies against protesters, particularly after December 2024, when fines for road blockages were sharply increased. Dozens of surveillance cameras, including Chinese-manufactured systems capable of identifying individuals, were installed along Rustaveli Avenue near Parliament. These systems enable mass processing of biometric and other sensitive data and have become the primary tool for identifying and fining hundreds of demonstrators.

Authorities used exceptionally severe sanctions to make examples of protest participants. A stark illustration is the case of [Gota \(Giorgi\) Chanturia](#): between 11 February and 29 September 2025, the Ministry of Internal Affairs fined him 73 times for road blockage-related offenses, issuing penalties totaling GEL 365,000, of which GEL 315,000 has already been upheld by the Tbilisi City Court. Such massive fines and biometric surveillance severely restrict freedom of assembly, create a chilling effect, and deter participation in protests.

#### ***1.6.2. Criminalization of Blocking Motorways as Another Restriction on Freedom of Assembly***

Ahead of a peaceful protest planned for 2 February near Tbilisi Mall, the government [amended](#) the list of strategic facilities on 31 January to include international highways, thereby triggering criminal liability. On 4 February, the Ministry of Internal Affairs announced criminal proceedings against eight individuals for “attempted group blocking of a strategic facility.” Article 222 of the Criminal Code, under which they were charged, does not define what constitutes a strategic object or specify that such a list is determined by government decree. Thus, the executive branch unilaterally created new grounds for criminal liability without legislative involvement. This action violated principles of legality, foreseeability, and general applicability: conduct became criminal solely through a government decree, contrary to the *nullum crimen*



*sine lege* principle; the amendment targeted a specific announced protest rather than a general need; and participants lacked prior access to clear information that their actions would constitute a criminal offense.

### 1.7. Politicized Justice in Criminal Cases Related to Protest

The year 2025 was marked by an unprecedented level of political justice. More than 100 individuals are currently imprisoned on protest-related or politically motivated charges. In the so-called “[4 October case](#),” criminal proceedings were initiated against 73 individuals: 61 were detained, 10 released on bail, and two declared wanted.

[Monitoring](#) conducted by the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA) of first-instance court proceedings in politically motivated protest-related cases during 2024–2025 documented serious procedural violations.

One of the most severe examples of politically motivated prosecutions is the case of Mzia Amaghlobeli, founder and director of Batumelebi and Netgazeti. On 18 November, the Court of Appeal upheld her sentence of [two years’ imprisonment](#). As is publicly known, Mzia Amaghlobeli is serving a prison sentence for slapping the Head of the Batumi Police, Irakli Dgebuadze. Her criminal detention was preceded by an administrative arrest on 11 January 2025 for placing a sticker on a building’s exterior façade. According to the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA), which [represents](#) Amaghlobeli’s interests, the police drew up a fabricated administrative offense report against her under Article 173 of the Code of Administrative Offenses, containing entirely false information, including misinformation regarding the identity of the arresting officer. Following her placement in a penitentiary facility, Amaghlobeli’s eyesight deteriorated significantly and has reached a critical and alarming level. [Despite multiple requests](#), she was not provided with the medical examinations necessary to plan appropriate treatment and was denied adequate medical consultations, which were essential for making an informed decision regarding treatment aimed at preserving her vision. According to GYLA, the request to conduct examinations at a selected medical clinic was granted only on 8 [December](#).

On 10 September, a 23-year-old student, Megi Diasamidze, was criminally detained on Melikishvili Avenue for allegedly [damaging](#) an election banner. The investigation was initiated under Article 187 of the Criminal Code, which establishes criminal liability for damage to or destruction of another person’s property only if significant damage is caused. For the purposes of this provision, damage is considered “significant” if the value of the property exceeds GEL 150. Established judicial practice defines destruction as rendering property completely unusable or non-existent, whereas damage presupposes that the item still exists but not in its original condition and is capable of restoration. Video footage disseminated by the media shows that the inscription “Russian Dream” written on Kakha Kaladze’s campaign banner was easily removed; members of the Georgian Dream campaign staff promptly cleaned it, and it is clearly visible that the banner itself was not damaged. Megi Diasamidze was released subject to [bail](#) as a preventive measure.

On 19 October, following a sharp deterioration in her health, another detained woman, Nino Datashvili, was [released on bail](#). She had been charged under Article 353<sup>2</sup>(3) of the Criminal Code, which concerns an attack on court bailiffs during the performance of their official duties, classified as an attack on a public servant.

On 23 June 2025, poet [Zviad Ratiani](#) was arrested. The Prosecutor’s Office accused him under Article 353<sup>1</sup> of the Criminal Code for allegedly slapping a police officer, an offense classified as an attack on a police officer and punishable by four to seven years of imprisonment. On 9 October 2025, the court reclassified the charges and sentenced Ratiani [to two years’ imprisonment](#).

On 3 November 2025, the Prosecutor’s Office initiated criminal proceedings for repeated road blockages. Within this case, charges were brought against 61-year-old [Zurab Menteshashvili](#), accused of artificially blocking a roadway despite the fact that the number of participants did not necessitate such an action and that he had already once been subjected to an administrative sanction for road blocking as a participant in an assembly. On the same day, the Tbilisi City Court granted the prosecution’s motion and unjustifiably imposed the most severe preventive measure—pretrial detention.

On 6 November 2025, the Prosecutor’s Office initiated criminal proceedings against eight opposition political leaders for crimes allegedly committed against the state, including charges of so-called “sabotage.” Of these [eight politicians](#), six—Mikheil Saakashvili, Giorgi Vashadze, Nika Gvaramia, Nika Melia, Zurab Japaridze, and Elene Khoshtaria—were already imprisoned at the time, while the remaining two—Mamuka Khazaradze and Badri Japaridze—were released subject to multi-million-GEL bail. The charges carry potential prison sentences ranging from two to fifteen years.

It should also be noted that another opposition leader, [Giorgi Gakharia](#), has been charged in absentia under two separate criminal provisions: – in connection with the events of the so-called “Gavrilov Night,” under Articles 25 and 117(3)(m) of the Criminal Code, for the intentional infliction of bodily harm against more than two persons; and in relation to the opening of a checkpoint in Chorchana, under Article 333(2) of the Criminal Code, for abuse of official authority.

## **1.8. Civil Society and Freedom of Association**

The year 2023 proved exceptionally difficult for independent civil society organizations. The draft law “on foreign influence,” which “Georgian Dream” withdrew in 2023 following mass protests, was reintroduced to the agenda in 2024 and ultimately adopted despite broad public resistance. In 2025, the legislative framework governing civil society continued to become progressively more restrictive. It became evident that the central aim of the legislative policy was to dismantle the organizational infrastructure of the civil sector in its entirety and to weaken it irreversibly.

In 2025, “Georgian Dream” moved to a new stage in the legislative persecution of civil society organizations, independent online media, and, more generally, all persons who carried out their activities with the support of foreign partners in the form of grants. Specifically, in the first half of the year, the “Georgian Dream” parliament adopted—almost simultaneously—the “Foreign Agents Registration Act” (FARA), introduced amendments to the Law on Grants, and, at the same time, removed from virtually all legislative acts the provisions requiring the mandatory participation of civil society in the process of staffing law-making or democratic bodies.

The “Foreign Agents Registration Act” is, in its wording, an almost exact analogue of the U.S. “FARA” (Foreign Agents Registration Act). However, [unlike the U.S. law](#) adopted in 1938—which regulates the activities of agents acting on behalf of a hostile foreign power and whose real content and limits are delineated through court decisions within a precedent-based legal system—its Georgian analogue was introduced to restrict and control independent public-interest and media organizations and the

individuals working within them. Unlike the “Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence,” the so-called “Georgian FARA” applies to natural persons and to any association in an organizational-legal form recognized by law (entrepreneur, corporation, LLC, etc.). A “foreign principal” is defined as any other state (and not only a hostile one), a political party of another country, an organization, or a natural person. Under the law, an “agent of a foreign principal” is a person who acts under the influence of a foreign power and in accordance with its instructions, while simultaneously engaging in “political activity.” The latter is defined broadly to include any activity aimed at influencing public opinion. The body responsible for enforcement is designated as the Anti-Corruption Bureau; moreover, unlike the so-called “Transparency Law,” “Georgian FARA” provides for criminal liability—either a fine or imprisonment for up to five years—for refusal to undergo mandatory registration.

As for the [amendments](#) to the Law on Grants, the initial changes introduced a requirement that, when a foreign organization issues a grant, prior approval from the Government must be obtained. In practice—given the absence of clearly prescribed statutory prerequisites—this confers unfettered discretion on the Government. Oversight of the issuance and receipt of unauthorized grants was assigned to the Anti-Corruption Bureau, including, in cases provided by law, through the imposition of attachment on property and bank accounts. Acceptance of a grant in violation of the law triggers liability for the recipient in an amount equal to double the value of the grant. Subsequent [amendments](#) to the same law further expanded the list of grant-issuing entities, broadened the definition of “grant,” and added technical assistance provided by foreign grant-issuing actors to recipients. This made it clear that “Georgian Dream” sought to ensure that no form of cooperation between domestic civil society and media organizations and international partners would remain beyond its control.

In 2025, through amendments to a range of laws, “Georgian Dream” also [abolished](#) the obligation to involve the civil sector in decision-making processes across various areas of governance. This restricted the ability of citizens interested in accountable and transparent governance to participate in public decision-making. By content, these restrictions fell into three main directions: (1) limiting participation in governance processes (e.g., excluding civil society from the processes of forming the High Council of Justice and the Prosecutorial Council); (2) abolishing the mandatory participation of civil society representatives in the selection of specific office-holders (e.g., the Head of the Special Investigation Service, the Head of the Personal Data Protection Service, the Head of the Anti-Corruption Bureau, and candidates for membership of the Board of Trustees of the Georgian Public Broadcaster); and (3) abolishing opportunities for civil society organizations to engage in consultative processes (e.g., consultations with the Public Defender aimed at improving the human rights situation).

After establishing this repressive legislative framework, “Georgian Dream” subsequently moved to the enforcement phase of harassment against independent civil society and media organizations.

On 17 and 19 June 2025, seven civil society organizations—Transparency International Georgia, Sapari, the Civil Society Foundation, the Economic Policy Research Center (EPRC), the Future Academy of Georgia, the Media Development Foundation, and the Social Justice Center—received court orders issued by judges of the Administrative Cases Chamber of the Tbilisi City Court. Under these [orders](#), the court granted the motion of the Anti-Corruption Bureau and requested from commercial banks registered in Georgia, as well as from the Revenue Service and the named organizations themselves, all information of a legal, technical, and financial nature concerning activities carried out since 2024. Notably, the legal bases [cited](#) in the court’s decisions were the Organic Law on Political Associations of Citizens, the Law of Georgia on Grants, and the Law of Georgia on Fighting Corruption—but not the Foreign Agents Registration Act (so-called FARA)—and, in addition, the cited grounds were absolutely irrelevant to the scope of the request

and to the activities of these organizations. After unsuccessful appeals against these decisions, some organizations responded to the Bureau by letter and, without submitting additional documentation, referred to information about their activities available in public sources; another part, including the [Social Justice Center](#), provided only limited information, which did not include personal or sensitive data relating to the organizations' beneficiaries.

Subsequently, on the basis of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), the Anti-Corruption Bureau [initiated inspections](#) against civil society organizations, including the Social Justice Center, Sapari, the Civil Society Foundation, Transparency International Georgia, the Media Development Foundation, and the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED). The Bureau demanded written explanations as to why these organizations had not registered as foreign agents, notwithstanding that the law provides for criminal liability in the event of non-compliance. Soon thereafter, from 8 September onward, approximately [100 non-governmental organizations](#) received letters from the Anti-Corruption Bureau notifying them of the initiation of monitoring under the Law on Grants. The Bureau—headed by Razhden Kuprashvili—requested extensive information across various categories concerning the organizations' activities for the period after 16 April 2025.

On 27 August, within the framework of an investigation in the so-called “sabotage case,” the Prosecutor's Office froze the assets of seven civil society organizations, including the Social Justice Center, the Civil Society Foundation, the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Democracy Defenders, the Georgian Democratic Initiative (GDI), and Sapari. Within the same case, in March 2025, the accounts of several charitable organizations were also frozen, including the Human Rights House. As later became known, the prosecution accuses civil society organizations of [“coordinated financing of participants in protest demonstrations,”](#) citing as evidence the purchase by some of these organizations of physical safety equipment for their staff required for protest monitoring (masks, protective goggles, pepper spray, etc.)—items the procurement of which is not merely a right but is also envisaged as an obligation under international law for organizations engaged in monitoring. In the days that followed, the [heads](#) of these organizations were also questioned before the court within the framework of the ongoing investigation. At present, the organizations whose accounts were frozen continue—within the limits of their capacities—to [carry out](#) their work in a restricted manner, on a voluntary basis, and to provide assistance to citizens.

One of the clearest signals of Georgia's authoritarian turn was the 2023 attempt to adopt the so-called “Russian law,” which targeted independent civil society and media organizations. After years of fostering a hostile environment and verbal attacks against these organizations, their persecution through legal mechanisms, the dismantling of their organizational infrastructure, and their severe weakening became the first major step taken by “Georgian Dream” on the rapid and painful path toward consolidating authoritarianism. Unfortunately, this trajectory was not altered even by unprecedentedly critical political reactions and legal assessments at the international level; instead, it was followed by the adoption of multiple legislative initiatives destructive to the civil sector. It is evident that this process affects not only civil society organizations themselves but, first and foremost, the individuals and communities to whom these organizations have provided services and support for years. At the same time, the weakening of the institutional component of civil society sharply deteriorates the state of pluralism and democracy and leaves citizens alone in the face of state violence and neglect. Its impact will be particularly devastating for various vulnerable social groups, whose has historically received insufficient support from the state and who have often remained without protection.

Despite this, it is vital and essential for Georgian society that these organizations continue to demonstrate resilience and, under extremely severe legal and financial constraints, sustain their critical work and provide assistance to people harmed under “Georgian Dream” governance.

### **1.9. Freedom of Association and the Banning of Political Parties**

In the accelerated process of the authoritarian consolidation of power by Georgian Dream, one of the principal targets has been the opposition political spectrum. Alongside the criminal prosecution of opposition party leaders on various legal grounds and the imprisonment of the majority of them through a system of politicized justice, Georgian Dream actively began in 2025 to construct a legislative framework to fulfill one of its pre-election promises—the formal prohibition of opposition political parties.

On 27 March, draft amendments were [introduced](#) in Parliament to the Organic Law On Political Associations of Citizens and the Organic Law On the Constitutional Court of Georgia. Under these amendments, the Constitutional Court was granted the authority to ban a political party whose declared objectives and/or the substance of its activities (including its personal composition and/or the composition of party lists submitted to the relevant election commission) substantially replicate the declared objectives and/or the substance of the activities (including the personal composition) of a party previously banned by the Constitutional Court under paragraph one of the same article. In departure from the general rules of constitutional adjudication, the time limits for reviewing party bans were significantly shortened: a decision on banning a party must be issued no later than nine months from the submission of the constitutional claim, while a decision on banning a “similar” party must be issued within a maximum of two weeks.

The declared objective of Georgian Dream was to prohibit the participation of the so-called “collective United National Movement” in elections. However, shortly after the initiation of these amendments, the mandate and duration of the Temporary Parliamentary Investigative Commission—established by Georgian Dream within a parliament affected by a crisis of legitimacy—were extended. Its mandate was broadened to include the examination of the activities of current and former officials affiliated with political parties from 2003 to the present, and its findings were intended to serve as the substantive basis for the constitutional claim to be submitted by Georgian Dream to the Constitutional Court. As a result, opposition parties were [formally](#) allowed to participate in the 2025 local self-government elections, an opportunity utilized by only two parties: “Strong Georgia – Lelo” and “Gakharia – For Georgia.”

Shortly after the local elections, on 8 October, another [package](#) of legislative amendments to the same laws was introduced under expedited procedures. These amendments provided for severe restrictions on the fundamental political rights of “relevant persons” associated with a political party declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. Specifically, such persons were prohibited from establishing political associations, engaging in any form of activity within a political party, or holding party membership; their passive electoral rights and the right to hold public office were restricted, and their mandates in representative bodies were subject to termination. These individuals were also barred from making donations to other political parties. Additionally, the Criminal Code established liability— in the form of fines— for political parties that fail to comply with or obstruct the enforcement of relevant Constitutional Court decisions.

On the basis of these amendments, on 31 October, [a constitutional claim submitted](#) by 88 members of the Georgian Dream parliamentary majority was registered with the Constitutional Court, seeking a ruling on the constitutionality and prohibition of the activities of “Unity – United National Movement,” “Coalition for Change: Gvaramia–Melia–Girchi–Droa,” and “Strong Georgia – Lelo, For the People, For Freedom!” The case is to be examined by the Court’s First Chamber. The claim formally requests only the

banning of the political parties, not the prohibition of individual political activity. However, the submission is accompanied by the report of the Temporary Parliamentary Investigative Commission on the activities of the 2003–2012 regime, its political office-holders, and current and former officials affiliated with political parties from 2003 to the present. To date, a preliminary hearing in this case has not yet been scheduled by the Constitutional Court. Nevertheless, given that, at present, all democratic institutions in the country—including the Constitutional Court—are effectively captured by Georgian Dream, and that a legal position faithful to constitutional principles and critical of Georgian Dream’s legislative reforms exists only within a minority of judges, the expectation that the Constitutional Court will grant the above-mentioned constitutional claim is extremely high.

As a result of the implementation of politicized justice against political party leaders and the construction of a repressive legislative framework, it is evident that Georgian Dream seeks to completely eliminate undesirable political opponents from the political arena. This not only dismantles political pluralism and restricts citizens’ opportunities to participate in political processes, but also creates an environment in which law and justice serve political objectives. The ultimate aim of this approach is the further entrenchment of one-party rule and the final consolidation of authoritarianism in the country.

#### **1.10. Freedom of Expression and Media**

The rapidly intensifying reality of authoritarian consolidation in 2025 affected the Georgian media no less severely. The environment in which media outlets operated in Georgia during the year was marked by systemic violence at physical, legal, and institutional levels; the shrinking of civic space; the establishment of a restrictive legislative framework governing media activity; the creation of hostile and unsafe conditions for journalists; and, ultimately, the application of politicized justice.

During the continuous civic protests that began on 28 November of the previous year—following the statement by Irakli Kobakhidze announcing the suspension of negotiations on Georgia’s accession to the European Union—[numerous journalists became victims of physical violence](#). The majority of these incidents were perpetrated by law enforcement agencies, while others were allegedly committed by private violent groups linked to or directed by the ruling political party. To date, none of these cases have been effectively investigated.

A symbolic embodiment of politicized justice and the persecution of media in the country is the case of Mzia Amaghlobeli, founder and director of Batumelebi and Netgazeti. On 11 January, law enforcement authorities first detained her under administrative procedures and subsequently under criminal law on charges of attacking a police officer. Ultimately, the court reclassified the charge and sentenced Amaghlobeli to [two years’ imprisonment](#). Her case triggered unprecedented domestic and [international](#) criticism. During this period, the journalist’s health condition [deteriorated sharply](#). The Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA) filed an application in this case with the European Court of Human Rights. The case is currently [pending](#) before the Court.

A grave situation also emerged within the Georgian Public Broadcaster, which has increasingly transformed into an instrument for transmitting the policies and propaganda of Georgian Dream. In parallel with refusing to allocate airtime to matters of public interest, the broadcaster [dismissed](#) journalists Nino Zautashvili and Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani on 11 April following disciplinary proceedings. The grounds for their dismissal were their critical public statements, including the public expression of solidarity with Mzia Amaghlobeli. Several additional employees were also dismissed.



Alongside physical and political harassment and the application of politicized justice, sweeping legislative changes posed an equally serious challenge to the very existence of Georgian media. The legal and institutional environment created by the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), and the severe amendments introduced to the Law on Grants became an existential threat to media organizations, as well as to civil society at large. Subsequent waves of amendments further endangered the substantive content of media activity itself.

In particular, on 24 February 2025, a [legislative package](#) introducing several alarming amendments to the Law of Georgia On Broadcasting was registered and ultimately adopted in April of the same year. These amendments further deteriorated the level of media independence and the standards of protection of freedom of expression in the country. They introduced a series of vaguely defined content-based restrictions relating to television and radio broadcasting standards, including requirements concerning factual accuracy and the right of reply; fairness and impartiality; respect for private life; the use of covert methods to obtain and disseminate information; coverage of armed conflicts, accidents, and other emergency situations; and certain aspects of the protection of minors. Many of these regulations were transposed from broadcasters' codes of conduct, compliance with which had previously been ensured through media self-regulation mechanisms. However, under the amendments, in addition to self-regulation, the National Communications Commission was granted authority to respond to violations of broadcasting standards by imposing a wide range of sanctions, including revocation of broadcasting licenses. This occurred against the backdrop of longstanding concerns regarding the independence of the National Communications Commission, given its record of decisions favorable to Georgian Dream and aimed at restricting critical expression. The inclusion of numerous vague provisions in the law conferred broad discretionary powers on the Commission in examining cases and adopting decisions.

The legislative amendments also addressed the financing of television and radio broadcasters, prohibiting them from receiving direct or indirect funding from foreign powers, with limited exceptions for commercial advertising, teleshopping, sponsorship, and product placement within programs. Furthermore, foreign powers were prohibited from purchasing services from broadcasters (with the exception of commercial advertising and product placement) or from directly or indirectly financing or co-financing the production or broadcast of programs.

Another set of legislative amendments restricting freedom of speech and expression, as well as media activity, was [introduced](#) into the Law of Georgia On Freedom of Speech and Expression. These changes entrenched restrictions on freedom of expression and censorship at the legislative level, drastically reducing the guarantees protecting freedom of expression and democracy in the country.

Specifically, the amendments altered the definition of defamation by eliminating the requirement to demonstrate actual harm resulting from the statement. The qualified privilege in defamation cases was abolished. At the same time, courts were authorized to impose obligations on defendants to compensate plaintiffs for pecuniary and non-pecuniary damage if the publication of a correction or retraction was deemed insufficient. The burden of proof in defamation disputes was shifted to the defendant. Additionally, regulation was extended beyond face-to-face insult to encompass insults in the public space more broadly. Finally, safeguards protecting journalistic sources and professional secrecy were abolished; refusal to disclose a source or professional secret could no longer serve as the sole basis for a decision in favor of the defendant. In balancing freedom of expression against the right to private life (even where public interest exists), priority was granted to the protection of private life. Moreover, procedural deadlines for adjudicating such cases were reduced from one month to ten days.

A third legislative package affecting media activity in 2025 concerned the [coverage of court proceedings](#). On 30 June, amendments introduced under expedited procedures to the Organic Law On Common Courts

entered into force, prohibiting photo, film, and video recording and broadcasting within court buildings, courtrooms, and court courtyards. Authorization for such coverage was reserved exclusively for the court itself or a “person authorized by the court.” Permission to cover proceedings is granted on a case-by-case basis through a decision of the High Council of Justice. Despite repeated appeals by media representatives, the Council has issued no official statements or responses. As a result, working in courts and covering judicial proceedings using the above-mentioned methods has become formally impossible for the media even at the legal level.

Media freedom constitutes a fundamental pillar of democracy. It is not merely a means of disseminating information, but a mechanism for controlling structures of power. The harassment of independent media and the concentration of informational power in the hands of the ruling party invariably result in the suppression of critical discourse and the acquisition of political and economic dominance. The existence of free and independent media enables the articulation of alternative discourses and narratives alongside dominant ideologies—discourses that challenge existing power structures and give voice to public interests and lived experiences. Accordingly, restrictions on media constitute not only violations of individual rights but also a destabilization of the democratic structure itself, undermining the possibility of public debate and facilitating the legal entrenchment of authoritarianism. The physical, legal, financial, content-based, and judicial attacks on independent media carried out throughout 2025 (and beyond), in fundamental contradiction with democratic and international human rights standards, form an integral part of the process of authoritarian consolidation in the country and are aimed at accelerating that process.

#### **1.11. Participation of Georgian Citizens Residing Abroad in Parliamentary Elections**

One of the most severe regressions in the protection of civil and political rights concerned the voting rights of Georgian citizens residing abroad. In particular, on 17 November, a draft of the revised Electoral Code was [registered](#) in Parliament. Under this draft, similarly to local self-government elections, citizens would be able to vote in parliamentary elections only within the territory of the Georgian state. As the official justification for the legislative amendments, *Georgian Dream* cited alleged risks related to the influence of “foreign jurisdictions and political environments” on Georgian emigrants, as well as “information manipulation,” arguing that abroad “the state is unable to prevent interference.” This initiative triggered dissatisfaction among citizens living in emigration, who launched a [petition](#) demanding the full preservation of the right to vote from abroad. At the time of writing, the draft law has been adopted at second reading.

This legislative initiative constitutes one of the gravest steps in Georgia’s democratic backsliding and the consolidation of authoritarianism in the country. Contrary to the Constitution and international human rights standards, and without adequate justification, it effectively abolishes the exercise of active electoral rights by Georgian citizens residing abroad, relying solely on conspiratorial and anti-Western propaganda narratives promoted by *Georgian Dream*. Given that, in the 2024 elections, *Georgian Dream* suffered a complete defeat at the limited number of polling stations opened outside the country, it is evident that this initiative is politically motivated and aims to exclude opposition-minded voters from future elections. Moreover, this initiative denies the crucial role of emigrant citizens in Georgia’s political and economic life and disregards the substantial difficulties emigrants face in host countries with respect to their legal status, labor conditions, and financial constraints. The overwhelming majority of Georgian citizens residing abroad have migrated due to economic vulnerability, rather than for reasons that would diminish their political, legal, or physical ties to Georgia.



## 2. Stagnation of Social Rights in the Country

### 2.1. Poverty and Social Vulnerability

Despite Georgian Dream's continued emphasis on economic growth and poverty reduction, the socio-economic situation of the population remained severe throughout the reporting year. Economic growth was driven primarily by remittances from emigrants, tourism, and the export of used vehicles, and [failed to generate](#) a sufficient number of stable and decent jobs for the population.

Notwithstanding a reduction in the absolute poverty rate (9.4% as of 2024), the number of people dependent on subsistence allowances and other social transfers continues to grow. [As of November 2025](#), 706,552 individuals—representing 19.1% of the population—were receiving subsistence assistance, while more than 1.3 million people (35.3% of the population) were registered in the database of socially vulnerable households. These figures only partially reflect the depth of the socio-economic hardship experienced by the population.

Against this backdrop, the Government decided to [discontinue](#) the Public Works Employment Program as of 2026. This program provided employment opportunities for socially vulnerable individuals and offered remuneration of up to GEL 300 per month. Between 2022 and 2024, approximately 40,000 socially vulnerable persons benefited from the program. No clear or concrete alternative to this scheme—if one exists—has been made publicly available.

Considering the everyday realities and challenges faced by people living in poverty and social vulnerability, as well as the overall framework of Georgia's social protection policy and available services, it is evident that both the design and implementation of the public works employment program, as well as the decision to terminate it, are incompatible with a human-rights-based approach. In the absence of adequate and realistic alternatives, the termination of the program will harm socially vulnerable individuals and place them in an extremely precarious situation. It remains unclear whether even minimal assistance will continue to be provided to them. According to a [statement](#) by Irakli Kobakhidze, more people receive social assistance than are officially living below the poverty line, which may indicate the Government's intention to reduce the number of subsistence allowance beneficiaries.

### 2.2. Neglect of Children's rights

Despite the propaganda promoted by *Georgian Dream*, the consideration of children's rights and needs does not constitute a governmental priority. Under the pretext of protecting minors, the state has adopted [repressive](#) legislation, while in reality failing to ensure children's right to life, health, and well-being. This is evidenced by relevant statistical data, developments observed in 2025, and regulatory initiatives introduced by Parliament.

[As of November 2025](#), 277,599 children were receiving subsistence assistance—6,887 more than in November 2024—accounting for approximately one third of all children in the country. At the same time, 379,415 minors—12,788 more than in November 2024—were registered in the database of socially vulnerable households, representing 45% of the child population. Children living in poverty lack access to quality healthcare, education, and social protection, and their material and social deprivation cannot be adequately compensated by the provision of a monthly allowance of only GEL 200.

Tragically, throughout 2025, violations of children’s rights were directly linked to child fatalities. Despite the state’s comprehensive obligations to protect the right to life, it failed to ensure adequate protection and safety for minors. One such case occurred on 15 February in Batumi, in the informal settlement for internally displaced and homeless persons known as “*Dream City*”, where [two children died](#). The incident was preceded by the resettlement of local residents (582 families) into newly constructed apartment buildings. During the demolition of the former dwellings, excavation pits were left unfilled and the area was not secured. The children fell into one such pit and lost their lives. Representatives of *Georgian Dream* claimed that the incident occurred [outside the construction](#) zone and therefore denied state responsibility. Notably, even several weeks after the tragedy, safety risks in *Dream City*—including open pits and faulty electrical infrastructure—[remained acute](#), and hundreds of residents continued to live under hazardous conditions.

The state adopted a similar policy of denial in response to another tragedy that occurred in [January](#), when a child fell into a pit in Rike Park and died. Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze stated that the incident occurred on private property and therefore did not fall under state responsibility. Due to the absence of adequate safety measures and the lack of a protective barrier between the street and railway tracks, another tragedy occurred in [Batumi](#), where a child was struck by a passenger train and died at the scene.

A devastating [tragedy](#) unfolded in Gali, in the village of Saberi, where a fire claimed the lives of five minors. This incident once again highlighted the extreme vulnerability and lack of protection faced by residents of Georgia’s occupied territories, placing the lives and health of children in particular under immediate threat.

Instead of addressing the systemic risks and challenges children face on a daily basis, at the end of the year *Georgian Dream* MPs initiated a draft *Law On the Rehabilitation and Support of Minors in Conflict with the Law*, along with an accompanying legislative package—representing one of the most serious [regressions](#) in the protection of children’s rights. The legislative package targets children for whom, under the standard of reasonable suspicion, it is alleged that they committed a criminal offense under the Criminal Code before reaching the age of 14.

One of the most problematic aspects of the proposed amendments is the placement of children in rehabilitation and support homes. The regulations governing such placement contradict international [standards](#): they impose responsibility on minors as young as ten years old, allow for their indefinite isolation, deny them the right to leave the institution freely, and deprive them of access to education within the community. According to international [research](#), deprivation of liberty causes significant harm to children’s physical and mental health, development, and future life prospects. Despite this, *Georgian Dream* flagrantly disregards children’s needs, the principles of the Juvenile Justice Code, and international standards, and through its decisions harms children who—due to various systemic factors such as poverty or family trauma—have formally committed unlawful acts. At present, the draft law is undergoing second reading [procedures](#) in Parliament.

### **2.3. Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Context of Authoritarianism**

As in previous years, the situation of the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in 2025 continued to be characterized by serious systemic challenges. To date, Georgia has failed to transform its systems in accordance with human-rights-based approaches. Thousands of people with disabilities remain without

access to employment, quality healthcare, education, and effective social support mechanisms, which either deprives them of the possibility of independent living or severely restricts it.

In 2025, significant changes were expected for the disability community. In particular, under existing [legislation](#), personal assistant services were to be introduced at the municipal level. However, according to information obtained by the Social Justice Center, as of August, the service had not been launched in a number of municipalities (including Zugdidi, Aspindza, Akhaltsikhe, Vani, Terjola, Tianeti, Mtskheta, and Oni), or covered only a very limited number of persons with disabilities (for example: Gardabani Municipality – 1 person; Dedoplistskaro and Lagodekhi Municipalities – 5 persons; Telavi Municipality – 6 persons; Dmanisi and Kutaisi Municipalities – 12 persons; Batumi Municipality – 29 persons). If the situation remains unchanged, there is a serious risk that the program will fail to be implemented nationwide, causing significant harm to the disability community.

The implementation of inclusive education policy also posed a major challenge in 2025. Without the participation or involvement of the disability community, the Ministry of Education and Science [abolished](#) the Inclusive Education Division, which had been responsible for coordinating state policy in this field. It remains unclear how the limited progress achieved in inclusive education to date will be maintained.

It is also important to highlight the severe impact of authoritarian consolidation on the disability community and organizations representing persons with disabilities. Despite *Georgian Dream's* [claims](#) to the contrary, legislation restricting civil society has had a negative effect on representative organizations of persons with disabilities and their institutional sustainability. Legislative amendments labeled these organizations and actors working on disability rights as “foreign agents” and “conduits of foreign interests.” In light of the liabilities envisaged under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) and the amendments to the Law on Grants, independent organizations face a real risk of ceasing operations, and some have already been forced to do so.

Persons with disabilities and disability rights activists have actively [participated](#) in protests and publicly criticized Georgian Dream's policies. In response, they have become targets of attacks and repression. A clear example is the case of disability rights activist Gia Jvarsheishvili, who has been detained multiple times, fined tens of thousands of GEL, and subjected to [violence](#) and ill-treatment. Nino Kalandia, the mother of a child with a disability and a human rights activist, has likewise been fined tens of thousands of GEL for participating in protests (formally on the grounds of road blocking).

The case of Eva Shashiashvili is particularly severe. She was detained in connection with the 4 October protest case and placed in pretrial detention. Shashiashvili is an oncology patient, and her child is a person with a disability for whom she is the sole caregiver. As a result of her imprisonment and the absence of alternative support arrangements, her child has been forced to [remain](#) in a medical institution, which in itself constitutes a gross violation of the rights of persons with disabilities.

During the reporting year, the instrumentalization of mental health by representatives and supporters of Georgian Dream—using it as a tool of attack and stigmatization—was also particularly problematic. Such methods were employed against activist [Anuki Chrdileli](#), and were most starkly manifested in the case of [Nino Datashvili](#).

## 2.4. Systemic violation of right to adequate housing

As in previous years, the right to adequate housing and the legal situation of people experiencing homelessness did not constitute a state priority in the reporting year. To date, the country lacks policy documents, even a minimal legislative framework, or dignified services capable of providing support to the many groups in need of housing assistance.

In 2025, systemic violations of the right to adequate housing once again demonstrated how essential it is to live in a dignified, supportive, and safe environment. One of the most acute problems is the existence of dilapidated and unsafe residential buildings, particularly in large cities. In the summer of 2025, the collapse of the roof of a residential building in the vicinity of Station Square resulted in the deaths of [two people](#). Despite the municipality's prior knowledge of the building's hazardous condition, no immediate measures were taken to protect residents' lives and health. Particularly alarming is the scale of structural deterioration: according to a statement by Kakha Kaladze, as of March 2025, up to 10,000 unsafe buildings and structures had been [identified](#) within the territory of Tbilisi alone.

The importance of a safe housing environment became especially evident during the winter, when [heavy snowfall affected western Georgia](#). Despite the state's positive obligation to take immediate action to protect residents in Guria, Adjara, Imereti, and Samegrelo, who were left in severe conditions and cut off from the outside world, the authorities failed to implement adequate preventive and timely response measures.

Violations of the right to adequate housing were also evident in cases of forced evictions and demolition of housing. In July, families on Tvalchrelidze Street were evicted using unprecedented force, leaving elderly persons, children, and women [on the street](#). Despite the acute need, the state refused to resettle the majority of those affected and failed to provide housing to people in need. To date, some households continue to live in extremely precarious conditions. It is also alarming that dozens of families in Tbilisi alone remain at risk of similar evictions. Equally severe and problematic were the demolitions of informally built shelters carried out by Tbilisi City Hall in the areas adjacent to [Tbilisi Sea](#) and in the [Africa Settlement](#). The situation was further aggravated by the fact that demolitions were carried out in January and November, pushing newly homeless individuals into even harsher conditions during the cold season. Regrettably, acts of self-help aimed at survival continue to be punished harshly—through demolitions and fines—while urban development proceeds largely in accordance with the preferences of business and political elites.

Another acute housing-related problem concerns the [resettlement of internally displaced persons \(IDPs\)](#). Even decades after the conflicts, the state has failed to provide a significant portion of IDPs with dignified housing. Many individuals have remained in a state of uncertainty for over 30 years. In some cases, prolonged state neglect has led to tragedy. One such [example](#) is the self-immolation of Zamir Kvekvikiri in January 2025 in front of the Agency for Internally Displaced Persons. Despite such incidents, it is highly unlikely that the full resettlement of IDPs will be achieved in the coming years.

## 2.5. Announced Education Reform

Following its repressive policies in other spheres, *Georgian Dream* has identified the education system as its next major target. The announced changes affect both general (school) education and higher education.

In December, Irakli Kobakhidze and Givi Mikanadze publicly presented the concept of a general education reform. The concept envisages a number of [far-reaching changes](#), including the abolition of twelve-year compulsory education and the revision of school textbooks. The textbook reform, in particular, raises serious concerns. According to Mikanadze, within the next two to three years a single unified textbook will be introduced in all schools, and its content will be determined by the Ministry. Another problematic element is the strengthening of non-formal education through the involvement of the Patriarchate and law enforcement structures. At first glance, the general education reform appears to be based on a rigidly ideologized teaching and learning process, aimed at suppressing critical attitudes toward the authorities.

At the same time, reforms are underway in the higher education system. The vision for these reforms was presented by Irakli Kobakhidze in October of the reporting year, and Parliament is currently considering the draft legislative amendments. The concept provides for the redistribution of faculties among state universities [taking into](#) account “traditional profiles and historical experience”; the determination of state [quotas for academic programs](#) by the Government; and changes to the academic staff. The announced reform also introduces the principle of “one city – one faculty,” implying the allocation of different faculties to different cities. According to the concept, the university funding system will be completely revised: education at state universities will become free of charge, while state grants will no longer be available to private universities.

By their substance, the planned changes contradict the Constitution, which guarantees academic freedom and the autonomy of higher education institutions. They indicate an intent to retaliate against critically minded universities and to purge institutions of independent professors and lecturers, and they create significant risks that many prospective students will be excluded from access to higher education. Given that employment opportunities are concentrated primarily in Tbilisi and Batumi, the redistribution of faculties across different cities also creates the risk that students will be unable to secure even low-paid and precarious employment, which for many is essential to meet basic needs and ensure survival.

## **2.6. Realization of Labor Rights**

The current situation with regard to the realization of labor rights does not comply with international standards applicable in this field. As in previous years, violations of labor rights occurred across multiple dimensions, including breaches of occupational safety regulations, resulting in workers’ deaths and injuries, low remuneration, and other systemic problems. During the reporting year, mass unlawful dismissals were also used by the authorities as a tool of punishment, affecting a significant number of individuals.

Deaths and injuries at workplaces remained one of the most acute problems throughout the year. Media outlets periodically reported on fatal workplace incidents in [various regions of the country](#). According to the available information, workers employed in the construction sector are exposed to particularly heightened risks. One of the most [recent](#) and severe cases involved the death of four workers during the construction of the Kvesheti–Kobi road. These incidents once again demonstrate that, despite the formal existence of a labor inspection mechanism and a relevant legislative framework, oversight of occupational safety remains insufficient and ineffective.

Serious labor rights violations were also publicly raised by employees of the steel-smelting workshop of the Rustavi Metallurgical Plant, who perform [hazardous and physically demanding work](#). Approximately 300 workers demanded the protection of their labor rights, salary increases, the restoration of abolished

positions, the reinstatement of dismissed employees, an end to pressure against protest participants, and improvements in working conditions.

Another major labor protest concerned mass violations of employees' rights at Evolution Georgia. In July 2024, hundreds of company employees went on strike and publicly reported violations such as dangerous and unhealthy working conditions, unfair remuneration, insufficient rest periods, and other abuses. In response to these and other violations, the Social Justice Center submitted a complaint to the Swedish National Contact Point. In July of the reporting year, the authority published its [final assessment](#) and issued recommendations to the company regarding the guaranteeing of workers' health and safety, the provision of decent remuneration, and the establishment of continuous dialogue with employees. This document once again confirmed the extremely harsh conditions faced by workers.

### *2.6.1. Chiatura Crisis*

During the reporting year, mass violations of labor rights occurred in Chiatura, placing the entire municipality at risk of a humanitarian catastrophe. At the beginning of the year, miners [organized protests](#) and demanded meetings with government representatives. The protests were triggered by delays in salary payments. During the same period (from 31 October 2024 to 1 March 2025), Georgian Manganese was operating under [a so-called special regime](#) and had suspended mining operations. Instead of resuming work on 1 March, the company announced that it would cease underground manganese extraction altogether. This decision left approximately 3,500 people—and their family members—[without any source of income](#), exposing them to an [imminent risk of hunger](#). Some workers reported that they had not even received the reduced salary envisaged for the period prior to March (60% of their full wage), which in itself constitutes a gross violation of labor rights. Many miners were also burdened with bank liabilities, and penalties resulting from unpaid loans placed an overwhelming and [catastrophic financial burden](#) on their households. Despite the severity of the situation, the state failed to implement effective measures to protect and support the local population. Moreover, the participation of Chiatura miners [was not ensured](#) at the meeting of the Tripartite Commission for Social Partnership, further [excluding](#) them from decision-making processes directly affecting their livelihoods.

In April, the process of resuming and reorganizing mining production in Chiatura was placed under the leadership of [Mikheil Sotski](#), an individual closely affiliated with Georgian Dream. As a result of the reorganization, in May, Georgian Manganese officially declared approximately 1,200 miners—many of whom had participated in mass protests—to be permanently [dismissed](#) employees. A number of miners decided to challenge the legality of their dismissal and the reorganization process before the courts. The Social Justice Center is providing legal assistance in these proceedings.

In the context of systemic oppression, economic hardship, state neglect, and prolonged uncertainty, the conflict escalated further. In April, four miners who were participating in a hunger strike were arrested. They face prison sentences ranging from [four to six years and six to nine years](#). The detention of the leaders of the workers' resistance [sparked intense public protests](#). In solidarity and demanding the release of their colleagues, miners launched additional hunger strikes, and one miner—Mirza Loladze—sewed his mouth shut in an act of extreme protest. At present, all four detained miners remain in pretrial detention, and the court of first instance has yet to deliver a judgment.



As is well known to the public, for several years Georgian Manganese has been managed by a special administrator appointed by the state, who holds exclusive authority over the company's operations. Accordingly, direct responsibility for the profound labor, social, and environmental crisis in Chiatura lies with the state itself.

#### *2.6.2. Persecution of Workers in the Context of Authoritarian Consolidation*

Dismissal from employment as a tool of political retaliation was actively used against civil servants and employees across various sectors. Amendments adopted first to the [Law On Public Service](#) at the beginning of 2025, and later to the [Law On Fighting Corruption](#) in October, significantly weakened the legal guarantees of public servants, while the abolition of the Public Service Bureau further [entrenched](#) political control over the public service.

In recent months, hundreds of individuals have been dismissed from the public sector on the basis of their expressed dissent—including participation in protest actions or signing statements in support of European integration. According to the independent public servants' trade union "[Article 78 of the Constitution](#)", it is [estimated](#) that between 800 and 1,200 public servants were dismissed during this period. A significant portion of these dismissals was enabled precisely by regressive legislative amendments, which simplified the termination of mid-level managerial staff. On the basis of one-month prior notice of contract termination, numerous public servants were dismissed from their positions.

[Employees](#) of the Georgian Public Broadcaster were also subjected to pressure and dismissal, including Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani and staff members of the program "[Real Space](#)", as well as [David Doiashvili](#), personnel of [state universities](#), school [teachers](#), and workers employed in various other sectors.

Under conditions of authoritarian consolidation, the authorities also initiated persecution of independent trade unions. A clear manifestation of this occurred on 24 April, when law enforcement authorities conducted a search of the office of the independent trade union "[Labori](#)." The search was carried out within the framework of an investigation initiated under provisions of the Criminal Code—Article 182 (misappropriation or embezzlement committed on a large scale) and Article 362 (forgery of documents). The search was not grounded in adequate evidence and was aimed at marginalizing professional unions and removing them from public and civic processes.

### **2.7. Environmental Rights and the Practice of Persecuting Environmental Defenders**

In 2025, the authorities of Georgian Dream continued to restrict environmental rights and persecute environmental defenders. Across various regions of Georgia, local communities remain excluded from decision-making processes concerning their living environment, while, once resistance emerges, the authorities seek to suppress it through repressive measures.

In 2025, a new focal point of protest [emerged](#) in Vani Municipality in connection with the construction of the Sulori Hydropower Plant. A contract with the company was signed and research works commenced without any prior notification to local residents about the planned project. According to media reports, the power plant was owned by Bichiko Paikidze, a relative of Grigol Liluashvili, the former head of the State Security Service. Subsequently, also according to media sources, the contract for the construction of the hydropower plant was terminated, and [corruption charges were brought](#) against Paikidze in absentia.

Residents of Martvili Municipality have been [protesting](#) for years against the transfer of Balda Canyon to a private investor. The movement established to protect Balda Canyon demands the annulment of the lease agreement concluded between the state—represented by the National Agency of Protected Areas—and a private company. The decision to dispose of the canyon, which is of vital importance to the village, was made without the participation of local residents and in complete disregard of their interests. During the course of the protests, members of the local community have repeatedly been subjected to harassment, insults, and defamation by representatives of the company and individuals affiliated with it. In recent days, residents of Balda have once again [intensified their demands](#) for the termination of the contract concluded between the company and the National Agency of Protected Areas and have been spending nights in tents in protest. The agreement on the development of tourist infrastructure was concluded on 29 November 2022, under which the company undertook to complete the construction of the infrastructure envisaged by the contract within three years, i.e., by 29 November 2025. Despite the expiration of the contractual deadline, the relevant authorities have failed to respond to the company's non-compliance with its contractual obligations and have not informed local residents of the future of the protected area of Balda Canyon.

On 9 December 2025, Levan Nutsbidze, a judge of the Senaki District Court, [acquitted](#) Indiko Bzhalava, a member of the Balda movement. Indiko was arrested on 12 June 2024, accused by the police of threatening the spouse of a person affiliated with the investor company involved in the Balda Canyon project. Following his arrest, the Senaki District Court imposed pretrial detention as a preventive measure. However, after relevant evidence was collected and the case proceeded to substantive examination, his detention was replaced by bail, and he remained under a bail of GEL 10,000 until the conclusion of the proceedings. The circumstances of the case and the evidence obtained by the defense unequivocally confirmed that Indiko Bzhalava had not committed the alleged offense. During the substantive hearing, eyewitnesses to the incident confirmed that Indiko Bzhalava had not threatened anyone.

At present, Giorgi Neparidze, Merab Saralidze, Archil Chumburidze, and Tengiz Gvelesiani, who were [detained](#) in Chiatura, remain in custody. Their detention is linked to an incident that occurred on 28 April 2025 between participants of the Chiatura protests and the director of the Shukruti mine. On 1 May 2025, the court imposed pretrial detention on all four individuals on the grounds that there was a risk of reoffending, despite the defense's argument that the application of bail would have fully ensured the prevention of any further unlawful acts. It is noteworthy that the investigation in this case was initially initiated under Article 118(2) of the Criminal Code—intentional infliction of less serious bodily injury committed by a group. However, on 30 April 2025, the charges against Merab Saralidze and Giorgi Neparidze were aggravated under Article 225 of the Criminal Code, which concerns the organization of and participation in group violence and carries a sentence of six to nine years of imprisonment (for a detailed discussion of the causes and context of the protests, see the subsection on the Chiatura crisis).

### **3. Severe Deterioration of the Rights Situation Related to Equality**

The anti-democratic and anti-human rights dynamics that sharply intensified following the events of November 2024 have had an extremely negative impact on the state of equality in the country. The political trajectory characteristic of autocratic regimes has proven no different under the governance of *Georgian Dream*, and its consequences have been felt most acutely by some of the most marginalized groups in society, whose legal status has been the first to be targeted and undermined.



By the end of 2024, the situation regarding the protection of the rights of LGBTQ+ persons had become [extremely dramatic](#). On 2 December 2024, the Georgian Dream government enacted a fascistic, anti-LGBT law under the title “On the Protection of Family Values and Minors.” This law fundamentally undermines basic human rights and freedoms, the principles of human dignity and equality, and effectively abolishes the rights of LGBTQ+ persons at the legislative level, while institutionalizing their oppression. It is noteworthy that for years the authorities had tolerated violence and hate speech directed against LGBTQ+ persons, failed to respond effectively to homophobic crimes, and even removed the dedicated chapter on this group from the National Human Rights Action Plan. Ultimately, the persecution and legal marginalization of one of the most vulnerable groups were formalized at the legislative level. By its very content, the law does not address the systemic social and economic challenges faced by families in Georgia—such as prolonged poverty, economic inequality, growing migration, and the erosion of family structures—but instead defines the exclusion and deprivation of rights of LGBTQ+ persons as the central means of protecting the Georgian family and minors.

In March 2025, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which supervises the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in the Identoba group of cases against Georgia, called on the authorities to [immediately repeal the anti-LGBT law](#). This group of cases comprises judgments in which the European Court found violations by the Georgian state related to the prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment, freedom of assembly, and the right to equality of LGBTQI persons, as well as the manifestly ineffective investigation of violence committed against members of the community by private individuals. In addition to demanding the timely execution of the Strasbourg Court’s judgments, the Committee required, as a general measure, the repeal of legislation that obstructs their execution. The Committee also strongly criticized the encouragement of hate speech, discrimination, and hate-motivated crimes through the rhetoric of high-ranking public officials.

Due to multiple violations of human rights, the Venice Commission called for the repeal of the law. In particular, the law violates the right to respect for private life, as gender identity and sexual orientation constitute core elements of private life protected under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The law also grossly violates freedom of expression and introduces censorship, effectively prohibiting the dissemination of information related to LGBTQI+ issues. Most alarmingly, the ban extends to activist, creative, scientific, and academic activities. The law further restricts freedom of assembly, a right that has already been severely curtailed through multiple legal amendments and existing practices, but which has become even more inaccessible for LGBTQ+ persons.

With regard to the protection and integration of ethnic and religious minorities, the year 2025, as in previous years, showed no positive developments. The authorities took no steps to improve the participation of minorities in political and public life, nor to enhance their socio-economic conditions or access to education. In all these areas, the [Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe](#) issued recommendations under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, yet the actions taken by the authorities demonstrated regression rather than progress. Moreover, in February 2025, the government adopted legislation that [formally abolished civil society participation in decision-making processes](#), including the abolition of municipal councils, which had served as one of the few participatory mechanisms in regions compactly populated by minorities.

In addition, several incidents of [ethnic intolerance and violence](#) were recorded in 2025, once again pointing to the failure of integration policies and to existing systemic challenges in this area. These incidents were linked to conflicts arising from individuals’ lack of knowledge of the Georgian language. In

one such case, the son of the deputy chair of the Marneuli Municipal Council and an employee of the same municipality were implicated.

The legal situation of foreign nationals in Georgia also deteriorated in 2025. Through multiple legislative amendments, the process of expelling foreigners and banning entry into Georgia was simplified, procedures related to seeking asylum were tightened, and new criminal sanctions were introduced, including expulsion from Georgia and bans on re-entry for a specified period. These changes significantly worsen the situation of activists still residing in Georgia, including those who fled authoritarian regimes in Russia, Azerbaijan, and other countries. Should they express political opposition or participate in protests, they now face the risk of deportation and severe sanctions. Furthermore, the tightened international protection procedures have effectively eliminated the possibility of obtaining asylum in Georgia for activists, journalists, human rights defenders, and other individuals holding critical views.

Following the abolition of electoral gender quotas in 2024, another major setback for women's rights occurred in 2025. In February, Parliament introduced anti-gender legislative amendments providing for [the complete removal of the terms “gender” and “gender identity” from Georgian legislation](#), amending 16 legislative acts. Particularly alarming is the fact that, as a result of these amendments, the commission of a crime motivated by intolerance on the grounds of gender identity will no longer be recognized as an aggravating circumstance under the Criminal Code and will instead be replaced by the narrower category of intolerance based on sex (male/female). In line with the logic typical of authoritarian regimes, the Georgian Dream authorities have thus aggressively entrenched anti-gender policy at the legislative level.

Gender equality—inseparably linked to human rights, equality, and democracy—has become a direct target of authoritarian attack in the Georgian context as well. It is therefore no coincidence that, alongside the political instrumentalization of homo/bi/transphobia in the process of consolidating authoritarianism, clear elements of anti-gender policy have emerged, with far-reaching consequences for the legal status of large groups of women. The stated aim of the legislative amendments was the removal of the allegedly “foreign-imposed” concept of gender from the legal framework and the reinforcement of a legal model based solely on “equality between women and men.” These legislative changes contradict numerous universal human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Istanbul Convention, both of which Georgia ratified under Georgian Dream governance, thereby undertaking obligations to develop and safeguard policies on gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence. Over the past two years, however, the authorities have demonstrated not only a departure from Georgia's European path, but also a retreat from the very principles on which they originally came to power.