

# THE IMPACT OF REPRESSIVE LAWS ON GEORGIAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



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# **The Impact of Repressive Laws on Georgian Civil Society Organizations**

Social Justice Center

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## Research Design and Methodology

**Research Objective:** To study the impact of the hostile, repressive, and undemocratic laws adopted by the “Georgian Dream” government on civil society organizations, and to identify their current state and future plans.

**Type of Research:** Quantitative sociological research.

**Research Method:** Online survey.

**Sampling:** Convenience Sampling. An electronic questionnaire was sent via email to relevant individuals.

**Sample Size:** 100 respondents - 100 individuals with representational authority from civil society organizations.

**Research Instrument:** Semi-structured questionnaire.

**Fieldwork** was conducted from November 24 to December 16, 2025.

**The Method of Data Statistical Processing/Analysis:** Univariate and bivariate analysis methods will be used to statistically process the data.

- *Univariate:* Frequency distribution of data.
- *Bivariate:* Correlation - examining how the situation of organizations differs according to their primary characteristics: budget size, number of employees, geographical area, organizational type, and funding source.

*The research findings demonstrate quantitative trends identified based on the information received from the respondents, and they cannot be deemed statistically representative.*

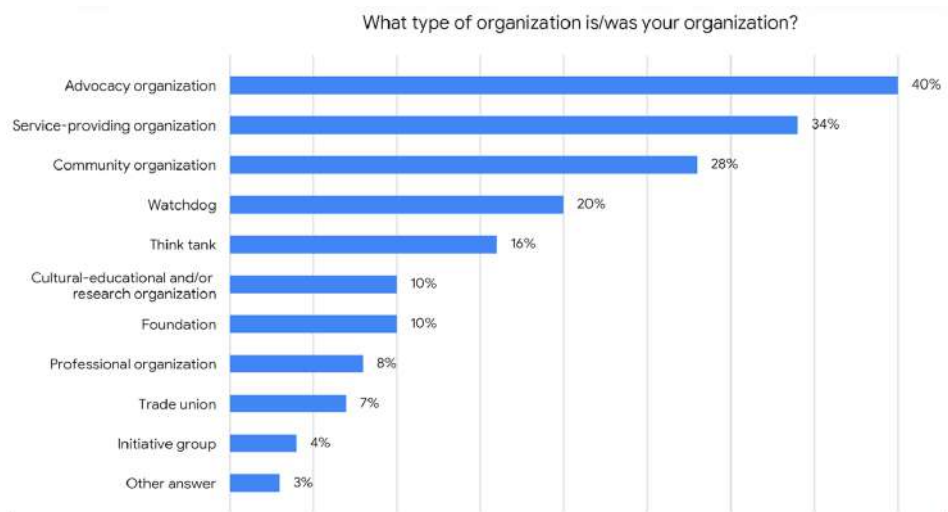
## Profile of Civil Society Organizations

As of the first half of 2024, prior to the enactment of the repressive laws adopted in 2024-2025, the annual budget of 77% of the civil society organizations participating in the research did not exceed 500,000 GEL. The annual budget of 11% of the organizations ranged from 500,000 to 1 million GEL, while 12% had a budget exceeding 1 million GEL. The majority of respondents (82%) note that the number of employees in their organization was fewer than 20; 14% indicate having between 20 and 50 employees, while the smallest fraction (4%) states that their number of employees exceeded 50.

The activities of the civil society organizations participating in the research fully cover Tbilisi and the regions of Georgia. Among the surveyed organizations, the largest proportion (30%) operate in Tbilisi, while 29% indicate the entirety of Georgia as their geographical area of work. Civil society organizations are more widely represented in Western Georgia, specifically in Imereti (19%) and Adjara (16%). In Eastern Georgia, the regions of Shida Kartli (15%), Kvemo Kartli (15%), and Kakheti (14%) are the most prominent. It should be noted that several organizations also operate internationally (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Central Asia, Eastern Europe).

The most common types of civil society organizations involved in the research are: advocacy organizations (40%), service-providing organizations (34%), and community organizations (28%). Additionally, other types also emerge, including “Watchdogs” (20%), “Think tanks” (16%), cultural-educational and/or research organizations (10%), and foundations (10%). Professional organizations (8%), trade unions (7%), and initiative groups (4%) are the least represented. The “other answer” category encompasses environmental and media organizations.

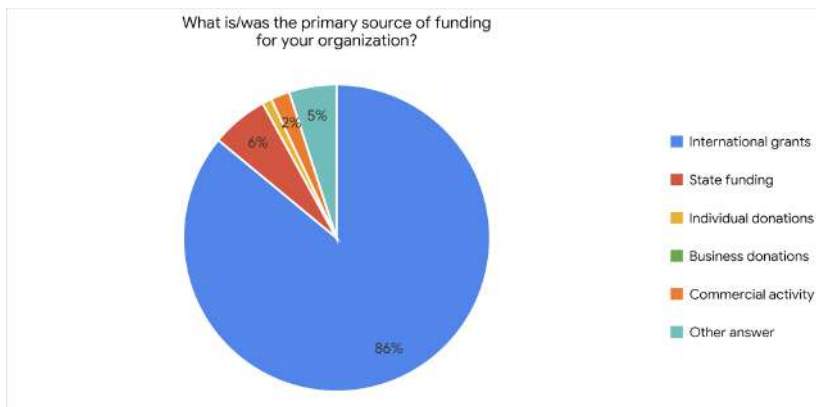
**Table 1.1.**



*Note: Each respondent could select more than one answer; therefore, a single organization may be represented in multiple response categories.*

The vast majority (86%) of civil organizations involved in the research cite international grants as their primary source of funding. A small proportion relies on the following alternatives: 6% of the organizations receive state funding, 2% depend on income generated from commercial activities, and 1% rely on individual donations. Furthermore, 5% of the organizations indicate an “other” source, which encompasses income derived from volunteer activities and/or membership fees. It is noteworthy that not a single organization (0%) names business donations as a funding source.

**Table 1.2**



## Key Findings of the Quantitative Research

The quantitative research reveals that the repressive laws adopted in 2024-2025 have placed civil society organizations in Georgia before a systemic and comprehensive crisis. The analysis of data from the 100 surveyed respondents shows that the vast majority of organizations, regardless of their annual budget, size, or geographical area of operation, face severe challenges.

According to the research results, the vast majority of the surveyed civil society organizations are small and medium-sized: the annual budget of 77% of the organizations does not exceed 500,000 GEL, and 82% employ fewer than 20 people. Furthermore, 86% of the organizations rely on international grants, which has further increased their level of vulnerability in the current legal and political environment.

Following the enactment of the repressive laws adopted in 2024-2025, only 7% of the surveyed organizations are fully functioning and planning to continue their activities regularly, while 93% point to a substantial negative impact from the new laws and a reduction/suspension of their activities. Exactly half of the surveyed organizations (50%) state that their activities are currently reduced and their vision for the future is vague.

We observe an acute financial crisis within civil organizations - 96% of the respondents indicate a deficit in financial resources. Among them, 39% have no financial resources left whatsoever. An interesting fact emerges regarding organizations with state funding. Out of the 100 surveyed organizations, only 4 receive state funding, and all four organizations continue to work regularly and/or expect an increase in their activities in the future. Organizations receiving state funding proved resilient under the conditions of the repressive laws.

The financial crisis is accompanied by a sharp reduction in the scale of activities, noted by 94% of organizations. Only 6% manage to maintain or increase their activities. The research shows that the changes affected not only the volume of activities but also their content. 61% of organizations indicate a change in the direction or suspension of their activities, with only 33% continuing their activities with unaltered content.

The resilience of organizations under the current crisis differs according to organizational type, activity content, and working profile. Community organizations found themselves in a particularly dire situation. Out of 27 organizations, 23 are working at a reduced capacity or are no longer functioning at all. Out of the community organizations participating in the research, only three are attempting to continue working by implementing alternative infrastructure. Conversely, it is interesting that fully functioning organizations are predominantly service-providing organizations.

The research presents quantitative data reflecting the organizations' decisions regarding registration in response to the requirements of the so-called Russian Law and the so-called FARA. The majority of the surveyed organizations (73%) have not registered under the requirements of either law. Notably, only 2% are registered under both laws. According to the requirements of the Russian Law alone, 14% of the surveyed organizations registered. 19% of the organizations, which are currently not registered under the FARA requirements and do not consider themselves subjects of the law, do not rule out changing their decision and registering if pressure upon them continues. These data reflect both distrust toward the legal environment and the difficult choice organizations face between adopting registration as a survival strategy and maintaining a principled stance.

Ultimately, civil society organizations' vision of the future is starkly pessimistic: 70% of respondents expect the situation to deteriorate further and organizations to transition to less visible forms of work. Only 4% see a prospect for positive change. Against the backdrop of the existing reality, civil society organizations are attempting to switch to survival mode: reducing the scale of their activities, changing the content of their work, or finding alternative forms of functioning.

Thus, the results of the research reveal that civil organizations in Georgia are in a deep, multifaceted crisis that encompasses financial, organizational, and functional aspects, and they require coordinated and strategic support at both local and international levels.

The bivariate analysis (disaggregated by budget size, number of employees, regions, and organizational types) does not show significant differences, which is conditioned by the universal nature of the crisis; the impact of the repressive laws is reflected almost equally severely across all subgroups.

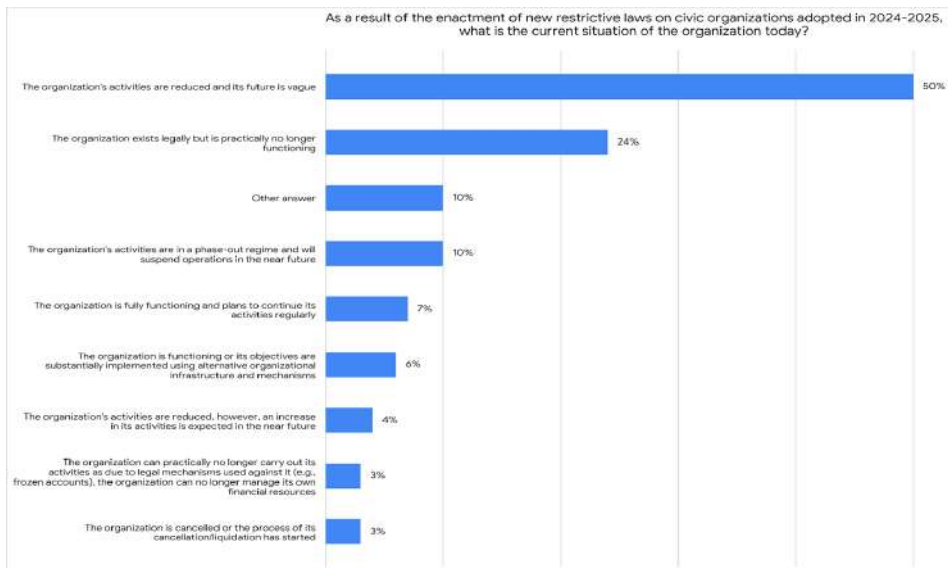
## Current State of Civil Society Organizations

Following the enactment of the repressive laws adopted in 2024-2025, the respondents evaluate the condition of civil society organizations as extremely severe. **Only 7% of organizations are fully functioning and continuing their work in a normal regime, while the remaining 93% point to the negative impact of the laws.**

Half (50%) of the organizations involved in the research note that their activities are reduced, and the organization's future is vague. The share of organizations that legally exist but are no longer functioning is also quite large (24%). The activities of 10% of organizations are in a phase-out regime and will suspend operations in the near future. 3% of the organizations cannot manage their finances (e.g., due to frozen accounts), and another 3% have initiated the process of cancellation/liquidation of the organization.

The number of organizations managing to utilize alternative organizational infrastructure and mechanisms is quite small (6%). In the “other answer” category (10%), respondents also indicate transitioning to volunteer work, reducing staff, implementing service provision and consulting directions, transitioning to commercial activities, accepting membership donations, etc.

*Table 2.1.*



*Note: Each respondent could select more than one answer; therefore, a single respondent/organization may be represented in multiple response categories.*

An analysis of the current situation by organizational types shows<sup>1</sup> that community organizations are in a particularly dire situation. In total, out of the 27 community organizations participating in the research, 23 are working at a reduced capacity or are no longer functioning. Only 4 community organizations are attempting to continue their activities by utilizing alternative organizational infrastructure, while 3 have transitioned to volunteer work. Twelve community organizations exist legally but are not working, the activities of 3 community organizations are in a phase-out regime and will stop in the near future, the activities of 6 organizations are reduced and the prospect of their continued existence is vague, and 2 are cancelled and/or in the process of liquidation.

Against this backdrop, fully functioning organizations (7%) exclusively comprise service-providing organizations (5), foundations (2), and a trade union (1), which points to differing resilience based on organizational type under the current crisis. The budget of three of these organizations is less than 500,000 GEL, while the rest fall within the range of 500,000 to 1,000,000 GEL. The majority of these organizations have fewer than 20 employees; only two organizations have up to 50 employees. It is noteworthy that the funding source for 3 organizations is international grants, for 3 it is state funding, and for 1 it is membership fees. Only two organizations operate in Tbilisi, while the rest operate in various regions.

An interesting fact emerges regarding organizations with state funding. Out of the 100 surveyed organizations, only 4 are recipients of state funding, and three of them note that they continue their activities regularly and do not expect changes. All three are service providers. The fourth organization (a professional organization) notes that its work is currently reduced, though it expects growth in the future. It follows that organizations dependent on state funding feel more protected and are more resilient.

As for the organizations attempting to implement alternative infrastructure (6%), their budget is less than half a million GEL, and their number of employees is fewer than 20. Their geographical area covers all of Georgia - 2 organizations work in Tbilisi, while the rest are in the regions. The spheres of activity are also diverse. By organizational type, this group includes: a think tank, a commu-

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<sup>1</sup> Data provided by respondents in the 'other answer' category are excluded from the correlational analysis.

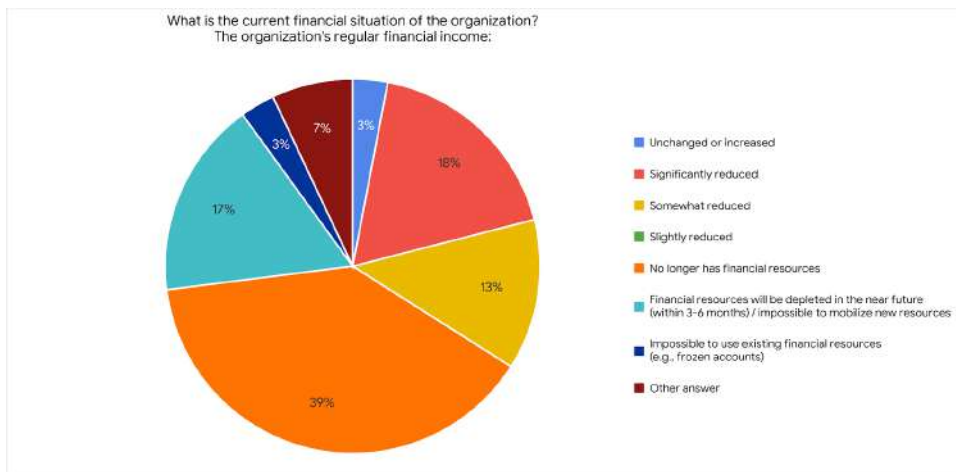
nity organization, a service-providing organization, an advocacy organization, a trade union, and an initiative group. The funding source for 5 out of the 6 is international grants, while for 1 it is commercial activity.

A general trend also emerges, indicating that organizations with an annual income of up to 500,000 GEL proved to be more vulnerable and are more heavily represented in almost all categories of responses describing the severe current situation.

## The Impact of Repressive Laws on the Financial Situation of Organizations

Respondents evaluate the current financial situation of the organizations. According to the obtained data, the absolute majority of civil organizations involved in the research - 96% in total- point to an acute deficit of financial resources and the difficulty of mobilizing new resources. Specifically, 39% of organizations no longer have financial resources, the financial resources of 18% are significantly reduced, and for 13%, they are somewhat reduced. The share of organizations whose existing financial resources will be depleted in the near future (within 3-6 months) and for whom mobilizing new resources is impossible is also high (17%). Furthermore, for 3% of organizations, it is impossible to manage their own financial resources as a result of legal mechanisms (e.g., frozen accounts). Only 3% note that their financial resources remain unchanged or are increasing. The “other answer” category (7%) encompasses issues such as resource depletion in the coming weeks, covering minimal expenses through membership donations, etc. From the “other” responses, only one organization indicates having financial resources for a duration of 12 months.

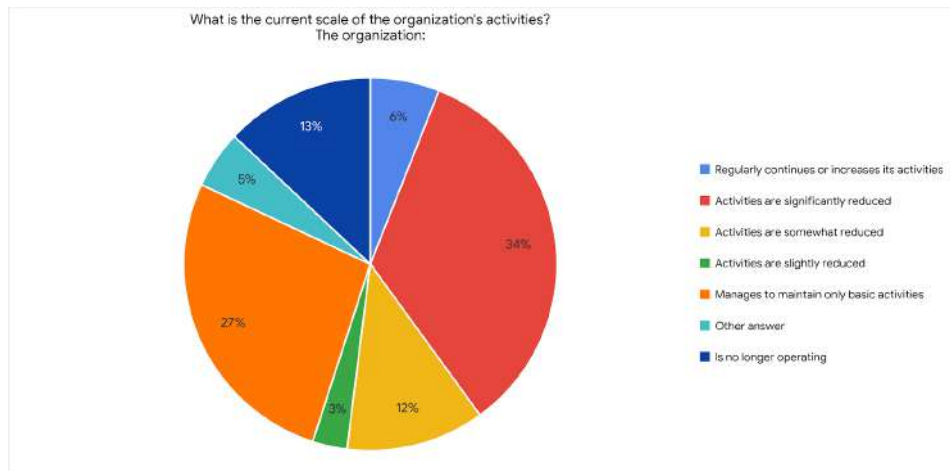
Table 2.2



## The Impact of Repressive Laws on the Scale of Organizations' Activities

Respondents evaluate the current scale of the organizations' activities. The absolute majority of the organizations involved in the research - 94% - indicate a reduction in their activities. Specifically, the activities of 34% of the organizations are significantly reduced, while 27% are focused solely on maintaining basic activities. The share of organizations that are currently no longer operating is quite high (13%). Furthermore, respondents note that their organizations' activities are somewhat reduced (12%) and slightly reduced (3%). The "other answer" category (5%) encompasses issues such as continuing activities on a volunteer basis, maintaining connections, employee departures from the organization, etc. Only 6% indicate the regular continuation and growth of their activities.

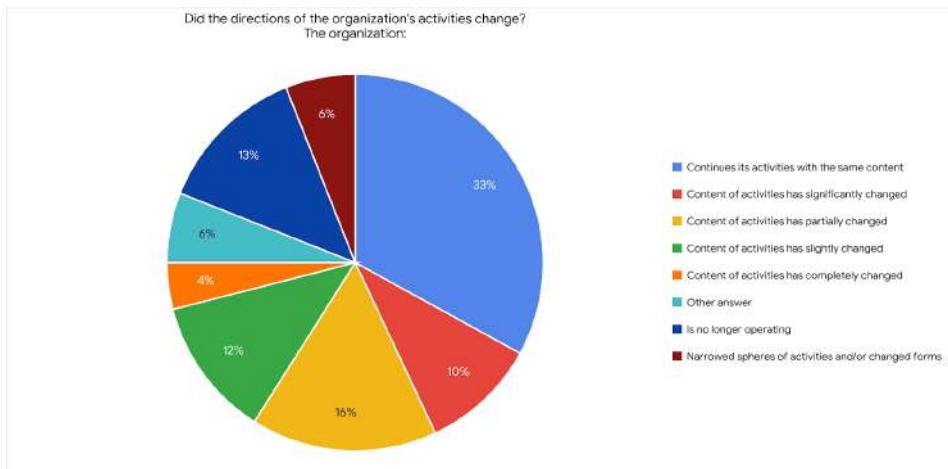
*Table 2.3*



## The Impact of Repressive Laws on the Directions of Organizations' Activities

The respondents involved in the research evaluate the directions of civil society organizations' activities, assessing the extent to which the content of their activities has changed or been maintained. The majority of organizations (61%) indicate a change in the direction of their activities and/or the suspension of their operations. Specifically, 10% have significantly changed, and 4% have completely changed the content of their activities. A total of 34% of organizations indicated a partial or slight change, as well as a narrowing of their spheres of activity. Currently, 13% of civil society organizations are no longer functioning. It is noteworthy that, against the backdrop of the enactment of repressive laws, 33% of organizations manage to continue their activities with the same content. The "other answer" category (6%) encompasses issues such as volunteer work, a vague future, the search for new strategies, etc.

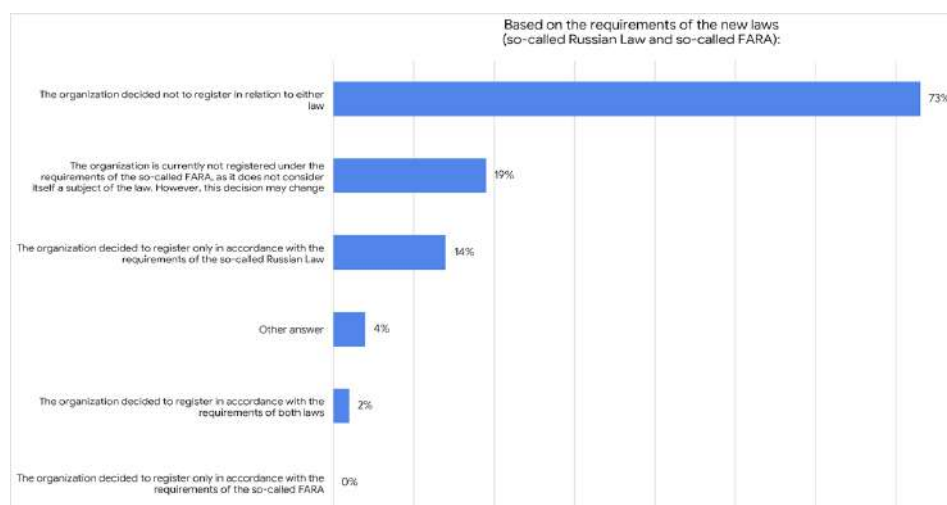
**Table 2.4**



## The Issue of Registration Based on the Requirements of Repressive Laws

The research presents quantitative data reflecting the organizations' decisions regarding registration based on the requirements of the so-called Russian Law and the so-called FARA. The majority of the surveyed organizations (73%) have not registered under the requirements of either law. It is noteworthy that only 2% are registered in accordance with both laws. 19% of the organizations, which are currently not registered under the FARA requirements and do not consider themselves subjects of the law, do not rule out changing their decision and registering if pressure on the organizations continues. 14% of the respondents registered only under the requirements of the Russian Law, and not a single organization registered solely according to the FARA requirements. The "other answers" category encompasses issues such as appealing the repressive laws in the European Court and, based on the specific nature of the organization, continuing to function by bypassing the registry of the aforementioned laws.

*Table 2.6..*



*Note: Each respondent could select more than one answer; therefore, a single organization may be represented in multiple response categories*

The types of organizations that registered based on the requirements of both laws are: Think tank, community organization, service-providing organization, and advocacy organization.

## Vision of the Future

The vision for the near future among civil society organizations is as follows: the vast majority, 70%, believe that the overall picture will deteriorate even further in the future, making it impossible for organizations to exist in their current organizational form and leading the civil sector to continue working through relatively invisible ways and forms. 17% of respondents think that the current political crisis will persist in the near future; however, public organizations will be able to maintain their organizational form and continue their work. A small minority of participants, only 4%, believe in positive change in the future and that the current situation of public organizations will improve. Other answers (9%) imply a further worsening of the situation due to deepening polarization, dependence on global and regional trends, and a vague future.

Table 2.7

