



Report on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Georgia

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Social Justice Center
Partnership for Human Rights (PHR)
Women's Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG)
Georgian Network of (Ex-)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (GNUSP)
Platform for New Opportunities (PNO)
Equal Participation Center (EPC)
Families Against Discrimination (FAD)

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Introduction

1. The given shadow report is a joint initiative of human rights organizations operating in Georgia—Social Justice Center, Partnership for Human Rights (PHR), Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG), Georgian Network of (Ex-)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (GNUSP), Platform for New Opportunities (PNO), Equal Participation Center, Families Against Discrimination (FAD)—and aims to provide an alternative assessment of Georgia’s compliance with the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Focusing on ethnic minorities, conflict-affected populations, persons with disabilities (hereinafter “PwDs”), LGBTQ+ individuals, and children, the report is based on extensive research, strategic litigation, and contributions from national and international human rights organizations.

1. The status of social and economic rights of ethnic minorities

2. Minorities remain one of the most socially vulnerable groups in Georgia, which is caused by the systemic social exclusion and negligence of their specific needs and interests. The governments are usually reluctant to implement positive measure or policy on legislative and institutional levels that would improve minorities’ social and economic being. In its last evaluation report, Council of Europe Advisory Committee under Framework Convention on National Minorities¹ urged to the government to ensure effective, targeted and evidence-based measures to address inequalities faced by persons belonging to national minorities, the Armenians, Azeris, Kists and Roma in particular. Minorities’ socio-economic exclusion is doubled compared to the general population of Georgia due to the following reasons: 1) weak education policy and unequal access to quality education in minority groups; 2) excluding language policy and lack of proper access to state services; 3) weak support to the agricultural system, as minorities’ self-sufficient economy. Below-given data and information endorse this finding.

1.1. General data and context

3. While the data of the 2024 census are not still publicly displaced, we rely on the data of the 2014 census, according to which 13.2% of the total population were ethnic minorities, and Armenians and Azerbaijanis are the largest minority groups, composing 4.5% and 6.3% of the total population, respectively. Other small ethnic groups are Ossetians, Udis, Kists, Greeks, Assyrians, Yazidi, etc. The largest ethnic groups, Azerbaijanis and Armenians reside compactly in Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, and Samtskhe-Javakheti.²
4. Minorities’ political participation is extremely weak, which directly reflects on their social and economic status, as they cannot reflect their needs and concerns in the political agenda. The number of ethnic minorities in parliament has dropped dramatically to a mere 6 MPs since the 2020 elections (5 MPs after 2024 elections). In 2016, there were 11, and in 2012, 8. In 2017, when the percentage of MPs from ethnic minorities in parliament was the highest in recent years (7.3%), it was even then equivalent to a little over half the percentage of ethnic minorities among the general population (13.2 %).³ There is no special, positive mechanisms in our legal and political system (quotas, reserved seats, funding of political parties, etc.) that would increase the representation and involvement of ethnic minorities in elected bodies.
5. Minority employment in the public sector remains severely low. The first problem is related to the lack of statistical data and the absence of special supportive measures. According to the data received from the municipalities in minority regions in 2021, the following results are revealed: In Marneuli municipality, only 36% of employees belong to the minority community, while they comprise 91.4% of the total population. In Bolnisi municipality, only 14% of employees are from minority communities, while 69.1% of the Bolnisi population are minorities. 21.5% of Dmanisi municipality employees are minorities, while 66.9% of the Dmanisi population are minorities. This percentage is 22% in Tsalka, where minorities represent 53.5% of the total population.

¹ 4th Opinion on Georgia, Adopted on 7 February 2024, Recommendation for Immediate action, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/georgia>

² In Kvemo Kartli 41.8% of the total population is ethnic Azerbaijanis and 5.1% ethnic Armenian. The majority of the total population (57.7%) lives in remote rural areas. In this region, Marneuli and Bolnisi municipalities are most compactly resided with ethnic Azerbaijanis, composing 83% and 63.8% of the total population. As for the Dmanisi municipality, 65.5% are Azerbaijanis, while this number is 43.5% in Gardabani municipality. The Samtskhe-Javakheti region, in the Southern part of Georgia, is the second-largest region where ethnic minorities reside, 50.5% of the total population is ethnic Armenian. Most of the total population of the region (65.9%) here also lives in rural areas. The biggest composition of minorities in this region is in Akhalkalaki (93% are ethnic Armenians) and Ninotsminda municipalities (95% are Armenians). Also, in Akhaltsikhe municipality, 34.5% are ethnic Armenians. 10.2% of the total population in the Kakheti region, in the east part of Georgia, are also ethnic Azerbaijanis. Pankisi Gorge in this region is populated with ethnic Kists.

³ Social Justice Center, Critical Analysis of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration, 2021, p. 3, <https://cutt.ly/2wDnG0G8>.

6. These are several major indicators and tendencies that reveal minority social exclusion.⁴

- A comparison of household indicators reveals that minority families are larger than the families in the general population. While the share of households consisting of 1 member is 17.4% of the total number of households in Georgia, this indicator is significantly low in minority families (0.4%). On the other hand, the households comprising four members in minorities are 18.4%, while the general population is 15.3%.
- 53% of the general population has income that is below average, while this number is 68% for ethnic minorities. Income scarcity is particularly problematic for minorities in Kvemo Kartli, where 87% of minorities have income less than average.
- Unemployment in minority groups is higher compared to the rest of the population in Georgia – while the total level of unemployment is 18.5% according to the 2020 data from the Statistics Office, this data in minority groups is 53% (28.7% of minorities are economically inactive and 23.7% is temporarily unemployed).
- As for the employment places, 16.2% of ethnic minorities are engaged in agricultural activities, about a tenth (11%) are employed in the public sector (the largest part (47%) is employed in public educational institutions), and 6% are employed in the private sector.
- For most minorities (36%), the main source of income is the remuneration of their family members, for 28% - the pension, and 21% - income from agricultural activities.
- Low access to quality education remains key problem that causes numerous socio-economic problems. Few indicators from the quantitative research of Social Justice Center and ISSA prove the above statement: the number of preschool education facilities is 2.7 times lower in these minority regions compared to the rest of Georgia.⁵ The rate of enrolment of children in preschool educational facilities is 65%, and in the regions densely populated by ethnic minorities is 25.5%.⁶
- While 43.1% of the country's total population has attained a higher level of secondary education (secondary technical, higher, scientific degree), the same figure is 26.2% for ethnic minorities. Also, the share of ethnic minorities without complete secondary education is 23.2%, while the same indicator is 10.1% in the general population. Analysis of this data in the minority regions also reveals the asymmetry in access to quality education. The share of the population without complete secondary education is significantly higher in the case of the Azerbaijanis of Kakheti (54% of respondents), while the similar indicator is relatively low in other minority regions: Kvemo Kartli - 17.7%, Pankisi- 11.5%, and in Samtskhe-Javakheti - only 9.4%. Azerbaijani community in Kakheti is also distinguished by its low percentage of higher education in the households (12.2%).
- Correlation between the education and employment is inseparable, that was approved by the recent research on employment tendencies of Minorities who completed university studies on a bachelor level in addition to the one-year language course. The quantitative research⁷ shows that the almost half of the graduates are employed in the public sector and majority of them in education sector (local schools). Respondents also claim that political preferences and support to the government is an important element of employment in public sector. Only 21% of respondents are employed in private sector and rate of unemployment is 18%. 83% of graduates still consider language barriers to be a problematic for employment. Half of the respondents consider that discriminatory approaches and stereotypes still create critical obstacles for them.

1.2. Informal Employment in the Field of Agriculture (Right to Work and Decent Employment)

7. As mentioned above, employment and mostly self-employment in agricultural sector is the key source of income for rural minorities, however challenges in that direction remain unanswered by the state: complicated land ownership/registration, dilapidated irrigation systems, agricultural practices that do not meet modern standards, lack of skills necessary to master modern technologies, and poorly organized sales (the farmers look for buyers themselves). Regardless of these systemic challenges, minority regions are still leaders in the production of key agricultural products in Georgia, e.g. Samtskhe-Javakheti is a leading region in potato production, according to the statistical data of the last 7 years, while Kvemo Kartli has been a front-runner in production of milk products,

⁴ based on the latest quantitative research conducted in collaboration of the Social Justice Centre and the Institute of Social Studies and Analysis (ISSA): Social Justice Center, Teona Piranishvili, Zaza Barbakadze, Social and Economic Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities, 2022, <https://cutt.ly/OwDnZuIU>.

⁵ 4th Opinion on Georgia, Adopted on 7 February 2024, Recommendation for Immediate action, para 127.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "Problems and Barriers in the Employment of Graduates of the '1+4' Educational Program", Analytical Report of Quantitative and Qualitative Research, Social Justice Center and ISSA, 2025.

animal husbandry products and vegetables.⁸ However, the state support to these regions in agricultural activities is still weak.

8. The ratio who applied to the state-funded economic-agricultural programs is drastically low. 85% of minorities have never applied to the programs such as “Produce in Georgia,” “Introduce the future,” agro-insurance program, preferential agro-credit, etc. The lack of accessible information about the program was the main reason for non-participation. Also, the level of awareness in the minority villages about the rural assistance program is severely low (29%).⁹
9. Unfair and discriminatory distribution of land resources since the 90s and recent malpractice of arbitrary appropriation of agricultural lands by state authorities and affiliated persons, deprives minority families of vital resources.¹⁰ Land registration problems were also highlighted by the Advisory committee in its last report.¹¹
10. The labor situation of minority women is further acute. Self-employment of minority women in unpaid agricultural activities is higher, compared to men, but land ownership is lower.¹² Those belonging to ethnic minority groups spend 20 more hours (1,202.9 minutes) per week on unpaid work than ethnically Georgian women. Advisory Committee highlighted that the authorities should provide targeted support for minority women and youth to ensure their effective participation in social and economic life.¹³
11. Severe drawbacks of regional infrastructure in minority regions also hinder their economic activities and in general, significantly lower the standard of living in remote areas. Access to drinking and irrigation water (almost all villages in minority regions name this as a most severe and historical problem), absence of paved village roads, and insufficiency of kindergartens and other vital infrastructure hinder minorities’ economic and daily activities.¹⁴

1.3. Language Policy, as a major structural barrier to the access to social protection services

12. Language-related barriers became inseparable from minority social, economic, and political exclusion.¹⁵ While international¹⁶ and national legislative¹⁷ framework obliges the state to use minority languages in administrative proceedings in minority regions.¹⁸ Administrative authorities in minority regions continue to ignore the need of communication with local population in their native language, in rare cases they provide translation resources, but communication with self-government administration is particularly problematic in Kvemo Kartli region and Sagarejo municipality (where ethnic minorities compactly reside). The systemic problems in the minority educational system have resulted in various education-related problems, including low state language knowledge.¹⁹ State language knowledge is directly connected to employment since only 9% are employed by those with low knowledge of the Georgian language, and 26% are employed in the public or private sector who know Georgian well.²⁰ This also indicates that not only language knowledge determines employment but other social and educational-related factors as well.
13. As advisory Committee emphasizes social and economic problems are exacerbated by the state language-related barriers, resulting in hampered access of persons belonging to minorities to several social and healthcare programmes. It was reported that persons belonging to national minorities do not have access to information on the vacant employment possibilities since vacancy notices are not available in minority languages.²¹ Committee also highlighted importance of disaggregated data absence of which hampers implementation of special programmes on different spheres of economy, employment, healthcare, access to social and state services, agriculture and others.

⁸ National Statistics Office of Georgia, Regional Statistics, <https://cutt.ly/qwDfzKGO>.

⁹ Social Justice Center, Teona Piranishvili, Zaza Barbakadze, Social and Economic Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities, 2022, p. 14.

¹⁰ Social Justice Center, Kamran Mammadli, Bare Labor - Non-dominant ethnic groups in agriculture, 2022, <https://cutt.ly/ZwDnZAVY>.

¹¹ 4th Opinion on Georgia, Adopted on 7 February 2024, Recommendation for Immediate action, para 167.

¹² UN Women, Time to care: Unpaid work and gender inequality in Georgia, 2022, <https://cutt.ly/swDnXFgo>.

¹³ 4th Opinion on Georgia, Adopted on 7 February 2024, Recommendation for Immediate action, para 174.

¹⁴ Social Justice Center, Review of ethnic Azerbaijani’s needs in Sagarejo Municipality, 2023, <https://cutt.ly/awDfcnEg>.

¹⁵ Social Justice Center, The government continues to ignore the linguistic needs of ethnic minorities, 2022, <https://cutt.ly/IwDfvUoz>.

¹⁶ CoE Framework Convention on Protection of national minorities, Art. 10.

¹⁷ Organic Law of Georgia on State Language, Arts. 9, 11 and 12.

¹⁸ Thematic Commentary No. 3 The Language Rights of Person Belonging to National Minorities Under the Framework Convention, 3.

¹⁹ 63% of minorities read badly or very badly in a state language, 60% can badly or very badly communicate in a state language, and 85% badly or very badly understand the content of the text in Georgian.

²⁰ Social Justice Center, Teona Piranishvili, Zaza Barbakadze, Social and Economic Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities, 2022.

²¹ 4th Opinion on Georgia, Adopted on 7 February 2024, Recommendation for Immediate action, para 167.

1.4 Access to social protection schemes by non-nationals

14. Another problematic issue for ethnic minorities historically, culturally, and socially firmly connected to Georgia is access to Georgian Citizenship. More than ten thousand ethnic Armenians living in the Samtskhe Javakheti region, who lost Georgian Citizenship due to severe social conditions and the necessity for work migration, can now not return to Citizenship.²² A similar problem is relevant to ethnic Ossetians who lost Citizenship after forced migration in the chauvinist waves of the 90s, repatriated Muslim Meskhetians, and Chechen refugees. Citizenship laws are insensitive towards the social and historical challenges that these groups went through; the requirements related to the knowledge of the Georgian language and strict influences of security authorities on citizenship attainment processes restrict them from gaining/returning Georgian Citizenship. Without Georgian citizenship, these communities do not have access to social protection mechanisms and state-funded services/programs, which makes them further vulnerable, socially, and economically.

Recommendations:

- To adopt targeted affirmative measures to address socio-economic inequalities affecting ethnic minorities, state must ensure evidence-based policy relied on the ethnically disaggregated data, specifically given in the minority-populated regions.
- Increase funding in preschool, secondary, and vocational education in minority-populated areas, expand access to higher education, and implement special measures to reduce school drop-out rates among minority children and youth.
- Eliminate language barriers in access to employment, public services, and social protection: Guarantee the use of minority languages in administrative proceedings in regions of compact minority settlement and ensure that information on public employment, social benefits, and healthcare services is available in minority languages.
- Introduce temporary special measures to enhance minority participation in elected bodies and public administration, particularly in municipalities where ethnic minorities constitute the majority of the population.
- Improve access to state-funded agricultural programs through multilingual outreach, simplify land registration procedures, rehabilitate irrigation infrastructure, and prevent discriminatory land appropriation.
- Revise citizenship laws and practices to address historical displacement and migration and guarantee access to social protection schemes and essential public services for long-term residents without citizenship.

2. Social and economic conditions of conflict-affected communities in Georgia

2.1. Realization of Social and Economic Rights in the Occupied Territories of Georgia -Gali and Akhalgori

15. As mentioned in our previous report, Gali and Akhalgori are the regions in occupied Abkhazia and South Ossetia, compactly resided by ethnic Georgians. The residents of both regions are victims of systemic discrimination by de-facto administrations and the Russian Federation. Ongoing oppression has several dimensions: the ethnic Georgian residents of Gali and Akhalgori are not allowed to get an education in their native language; Freedom of movement is the most acute human rights issue that concerns both regions, restriction of freedom of movement is interlinked to various other restrictions, like access to quality healthcare, social services, education, family and economic relations. Furthermore, Gali residents are not allowed to receive de-facto “Abkhazian citizenship”, which restricts their access to basic civil and political rights, including the right to property, the right to vote, etc.²³

16. Barriers to exercise the freedom of movement, arbitrary detentions and ad-hoc closure of crossing points significantly affect access to basic social and economic needs.²⁴ While there were 6 crossing points from Abkhazia/Gali to the controlled territory of Georgia (in 2013-2016 years), since 2016 only two points have been functioning. Gali residents have problems getting the necessary documents for movement. There are four crossing points in the direction of Tskhinvali region, but they open and close arbitrarily, based on the decision of de-facto authorities. “Travel documents” are also problematic for Akhalgori residents. Dozens of tragic cases of people

²²Social Justice Center, Thousands of people waiting for citizenship, 2021, <https://cutt.ly/GwDfGlJd>.

²³Ibid, 22-25.

²⁴Ibid., pp, 18-20, 27, 48-52.

trying to reach controlled territory for healthcare needs illustrate the above-described context, these cases were particularly frequent during the pandemic lockdown.²⁵

17. Apart from systemic discrimination and denial of basic civil and social rights, the central government of Georgia also has not elaborated any targeted programs and policies, including for social and economic welfare, for its citizens living in the occupied territories. A recent study²⁶ revealed that in the situation of protracted conflict, where the Gali and Akhalgori residents' basic civil and political rights are violated, their social and economic conditions are also vulnerable. Gali and Akhalgori residents have severely restricted access to quality healthcare and social services. Social and economic vulnerability often reveals to public when tragic events occur, like the one happened in 2024 in Gali, village Saberio: 5 kids were burnt into the house while parents were trying to "cross the border" in Georgia for medical needs.²⁷
18. Medical infrastructure and service in Gali and Akhalgori cannot meet the basic standards, which leaves locals without proper access to quality healthcare and their transfer to Georgia-controlled territory is critical and, in some cases, has vital importance. The hospital in Akhalgori is practically destroyed, left without medical staff and infrastructure and the hospital in Tskhinvali is also in poor condition and in urgent cases, Akhalgori residents cannot get proper medical service there. Public Defender in his last report confirms that transfer of patients from Akhalgori to Tbilisi-Controlled-Territory is complicated, requires several steps and approvals from the Tskhinvali de-facto security officials and various artificial obstacles, that hinders access to quality and quick healthcare.²⁸
19. The central government does not foster measures and initiatives specifically focused on them, which, beyond the status of citizens of Georgia, would be manifested in additional positive measures and approaches. Today, the same programs are provided to the population of Gali and Akhalgori in several policy directions (with minor exceptions), as to the rest of the citizens of Georgia, and the state does not properly conceptualize the multi-layered challenges related to the protracted conflicts and non-recognition.
20. Gali and Akhalgori residents claim that the special healthcare referral mechanism, that provides free medical care for the people living in occupied territories, does not apply to them, as they are considered citizens of Georgia and ordinary programs apply to them. According to the official data, in the past 6 years, 6264 people living in the territory of Abkhazia have benefited from the free healthcare program and only 328 who live in the Gali region of Abkhazia. As for the Tskhinvali region, over the past 6 years, 1,639 people have benefited from this program, and 65 who live in the Akhalgori region of South Ossetia.²⁹
21. The right to quality education is also violated for Gali and Akhalgori residents as they are deprived of the opportunity to get an education in the native Georgian language. This practice has continued for more than a decade. The forced transition of the teaching process in Gali and Akhalgori schools into Russian language started in 1998 and 2017 respectively and was finalized in both regions in 2022, when all classes of all schools in these regions became Russian language. Following the deterioration of the quality of education and the process of Russification, the number of students in Gali schools is decreasing, if in 2015-2016 this number reached 4,500, as of 2024 it is less than 3,300.³⁰ Number of kids in pre-school education facilities also reduced in one year from 500 till 410 (comparing data of 2023 and 2024).³¹ Forced transition to Russian language teaching affected the quality of education in general since neither students nor teachers had enough knowledge of Russian language to teach or study various school subjects. Those schools that were already accommodated to the system now have the problem of proper knowledge of the Georgian language since students from Gali and Akhalgori basically continue their university studies in Georgia-controlled territory.³²
22. State social assistance programs do not work in Gali and Akhalgori since the state cannot evaluate the economic and social situation of each family (due to the absence of access). To balance this drawback, the state has not elaborated any alternative social support policy.

2.2. Realization of Social and Economic Rights of Persons Living Near the Administrative Border Line (ABL)

²⁵ Social Justice Center, EMC Responds to the Humanitarian Crisis in Akhalgori, 2019, <https://cutt.ly/OwDfBxk8>;

²⁶ Social Justice Center, Double Exclusion Places: Human Rights and Social Challenges in Gali and Akhalgori, 2022.

²⁷ Public Defender Annual Report, 2025. pg. 19.

²⁸ Ibid, pg. 27

²⁹ Social Justice Center, Double Exclusion Places: Human Rights and Social Challenges in Gali and Akhalgori, 2022. 30.

³⁰ Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2024, p. 24.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Social Justice Center, Access to Quality Education in Gali and Akhalgori, 2023, p. 7, <https://cutt.ly/PwDfMRpK>.

23. According to the national census of 2014, there are 116 villages near the administrative border line, where 46000 people live.³³ While this community is under daily security-related risks (illegal detentions, abductions, so-called borderization process)³⁴ they face economic challenges, unemployment, drawbacks in access to social services, etc.³⁵ Unfortunately, these problems are not responded by the central government with targeted treatment and programs.
24. In ABL villages the population decreased by 33%, which is twice more compared to the total migration rate in Georgia.³⁶ People are forced to leave their homes due to unemployment, severe social and economic conditions, lack of access to basic services and social infrastructure; only 33% of the population living close to the ABL have water pipes and only 73% of them have access to drinkable water; in 38% of villages no medical service is available; only 39% of local households have enough food; only 30% of the border settlements have a kindergarten, 90% of villages does not have a pharmacy; 86% of villages does not have a library, 58% of the population has problems with electricity, etc.³⁷
25. ABL communities of South Ossetia/Tskhinvali region declare that there is no hospital or medical care center in their villages. 86% of ABL residents name that their major source of income is a pension, for 73% - state social aid, and for 60% - the income received from family agriculture activities.³⁸ Salary as an income source was named only by 29% of the local population. ABL communities are not even properly informed on the state-funded programs that support economic activities.³⁹ Also, 72% of locals in South Ossetia/Tskhinvali regions lost access to pastures, 56% on forests, 31% - on arable lands, 25 lost access on irrigation water, and 21% on gardens.⁴⁰ 68% of IDPs and 65% of people living nearby Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia declare that they have not received compensation for damage and loss as a result of conflicts (except monthly assistance (15 Euro) in case of IDPs).
26. The only social support system provided by the state derives from the Law on Mountainous Areas, which provides preferential treatment to those who live in mountainous areas of Georgia (e.g. lower utility costs, free higher education, etc). However, the law is not applicable to many of the ABL villages (particularly in the direction of Abkhazia) and the state does not have a unified social policy towards ABL communities as such. The women living in the villages nearby the ABL are one of the most vulnerable conflict-affected groups, who remain without proper access to medical, legal and social services, their economic vulnerability hardens existing social life in the context of instability, insecurity and continuous threats towards their safety due to proximity to the occupation lines.⁴¹

2.3. The Social and Economic Rights of IDPs

27. The legal status of IDPs, as well as their rights, duties, legal, economic and social guarantees are determined by the law of Georgia on internally displaced persons from the occupied territories of Georgia. According to the law, an IDP is entitled to receive IDP allowance and social and other assistance, in accordance with the procedure and terms established by the legislation of Georgia and to use proper living accommodation on the territory of Georgia until returning to their permanent place of residence, except when he/she has been provided with a long-term living accommodation.
28. However, the social and human rights situation of internally displaced people remains challenging. Half of the total amount of IDPs (approximately 96 130 IDP families) are still left without housing and families continue to live in communal residential buildings that do not meet basic standards of living and are dangerous for life and health. 43 792 IDP families are waiting for permanent housing.⁴² According to official data, there are up to 500 IDP families who live in life-threatening accommodation facilities. The number of families that were resettled from the collapsing buildings has not changed since last year, which means that none of the families were taken

³³ UN Women, The Needs Assessment of the Population Residing Along the Administrative Boundary Lines in Georgia, 2019, p. 18, <https://cutt.ly/0wDn0Hnj>.

³⁴ From 2016 to 2022, 624 people were detained along the occupation line in the direction of Tskhinvali, and 337 people were detained in the direction of Abkhazia. (statistics from the annual reports of the State Security Service).

³⁵ Public Defender 2024 annual parliamentary report, pg 28.

³⁶ UN Women, The Needs Assessment of the Population Residing Along the Administrative Boundary Lines in Georgia, 2019, p. 25.

³⁷ Ibid, pp.12-14.

³⁸ Ibid p. 31.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 33.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 29.

⁴¹ Social Justice Center, The needs and challenges of women living close to the ABL, 2022, <https://cutt.ly/0wDf7FR0>.

⁴² Public Defender 2024 Annual Report, pg 368.

out from the life-threatening conditions.⁴³ Furthermore, governments plan to finish construction of new accommodations in 5 cities by 2025 is not foreseeable as only one accommodation facility in Kutaisi is ready to receive IDP families by that time. More than 35.000 families have applied and are in waiting list.

29. The monthly support of displaced persons remains only 45 GEL/15 EUR, which is much less than the subsistence minimum⁴⁴ (252 GEL/85 EUR as of November 2023).

30. IDPs have less access to quality health services and economic empowerment programs. Namely, the lack of employment, as well as access to healthcare and transportation pose important problems.⁴⁵ On the other hand, the participation of IDPs in decision-making is low on both, central and local levels.⁴⁶ Poverty, lack of access to social services, low income and unemployment often becomes the reason of immigration.⁴⁷

Recommendations:

- Develop and implement special programmes addressing healthcare, social assistance, education, and livelihoods that reflect the specific vulnerabilities arising from occupation and restricted freedom of movement.
- Develop sustainable, alternative and distance education mechanisms, provide Georgian-language learning support, and ensure equal access to higher education for students affected by forced Russification.
- Establish special social and economic programmes for ABL villages to compensate for conflict-related risks, loss of livelihoods, restricted access to land, and security-related vulnerabilities.
- Ensure access to drinking water, healthcare facilities, kindergartens, pharmacies, electricity, and transportation, with priority given to the most depopulated and isolated settlements nearby the ABL.
- Provide targeted livelihood assistance, compensation for conflict-related losses, and accessible information on state-funded economic programmes, including agricultural support.
- Accelerate provision of permanent, adequate and safe housing for all IDPs and prioritize resettlement of resettlement of families living in life-threatening conditions and ensure transparent, time-bound housing solutions for those on waiting lists.
- Raise monthly IDP allowances to at least the subsistence minimum and ensure regular indexation.
- Strengthen mechanisms for IDP participation at local and national levels in policies affecting housing, social protection, and durable solutions.

3. The Human Rights Situation of Persons with Disabilities

3.1. Legal and Policy Frameworks

31. The primary structural barrier to the realization of the rights of PwDs remains the dominance of the medical model of disability. This approach contradicts the CRPD, as it frames disability as an individual impairment rather than recognizing societal barriers, discrimination, and the autonomy of PwDs. Although policy reform was formally initiated in 2023, several core activities planned for 2023-2024 were never launched.⁴⁸ At the same time, recent legislative changes⁴⁹ aimed at creating a unified information database of persons with mental health conditions, alcoholism, drug addiction, and toxic substance dependence are clearly grounded in the medical model of disability and raise serious concerns as to whether a genuine transition to the social model is being pursued at all.

32. This outdated model also distorts data collection. As of December 2025, only 134,676 PwDs (approximately 3.6% of the population) are officially recognized as PwDs and recipients of a social package. According to WHO estimates, at least 15% of the global population lives with disabilities, suggesting that a significant number of PwDs in Georgia remain unidentified and unsupported.

33. The Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities remains challenging. It fails to regulate several core areas, including the right to adequate housing, deinstitutionalization, legal capacity and support in decision-making, and

⁴³ Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2024, p. 370.

⁴⁴ National Statistics Office of Georgia, Subsistence Minimum, <https://cutt.ly/rwDf2hzp>.

⁴⁵ Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, 10 Years After the August War - Victims of the Situation in Georgia, 2019, <https://cutt.ly/KwDgjr9i>.

⁴⁶ Special Report of the Public Defender of Georgia, Mobility barriers of Internally Displaced Women and its impact on women's economic empowerment, 2022, p. 7, <https://cutt.ly/7wDgkkm>.

⁴⁷ Special Report of the Public Defender of Georgia, Mobility barriers of Internally Displaced Women and its impact on women's economic empowerment, 2022, p. 7.

⁴⁸ Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia, 2024, p. 241, [link](#).

⁴⁹ SJC, "Georgian Dream" Continues to Stigmatize and Exclude People with Mental Health Problems, 2025, [link](#).

minimum standards of social protection. Additionally, despite a clear legal obligation, Georgia has not adopted a dedicated national strategy for the implementation of the CRPD. Instead, the rights of PwDs are addressed only superficially within the Human Rights Strategy (2021-2030) and the Human Rights Action Plan (2024-2026). These documents were developed without the meaningful participation of PwDs and OPDs. Civil society was given only one week to submit comments, and the Strategy was publicly presented on the same day the deadline expired. Although the Strategy contains a separate section on PwD rights, it omits or only vaguely references key issues such as social protection, legal capacity, poverty reduction, and participation in decision-making.

34. An inter-agency coordination committee for the implementation of the CRPD was established under the Government Administration in 2021, seven years after Georgia ratified the Convention. However, it has remained largely ineffective due to a lack of financial resources, staffing, and expertise.⁵⁰ The participation of PwDs and OPDs in this and other coordination mechanisms has significantly declined, particularly amid the broader human rights crisis. Notably, the Committee did not convene at all in 2024 and met only once in 2025. In response to ongoing human rights violations and the inhumane treatment of protesters, including PwDs, several OPDs and activists withdrew from the Committee's Consultative Council.⁵¹
35. The number of OPDs, as defined by the CRPD, remains limited. Many disability-focused organizations primarily function as service providers, which restricts their representative role. Independent OPDs require sustainable core funding and capacity-building support. The ongoing human rights crisis has had a direct and negative impact on the disability community. Restrictive legislation, including the "Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence," the "Foreign Agents Registration Act," and amendments to the "Law on Grants," poses serious threats to OPDs, particularly in the regions. These organizations face risks of closure, forced registration as "agents," or even criminal liability. Independent OPDs are increasingly under-resourced, and some have already been forced to cease operations. It is noteworthy that PwDs and disability rights activists participating in protests have increasingly become targets of repression. Documented cases include ill-treatment, violence, and disproportionate and unjustified fines.⁵²

3.2. Realization of Social and Economic Rights of the PwDs

36. The realization of social and economic rights by PwDs remains highly problematic. In addition to insufficient legal and policy frameworks, the absence of political will, and limited prioritization of disability rights, the inaccessibility of the physical environment, information, services, and communication continues to pose a major barrier to independent living. Despite the urgency of the issue, Georgia has yet to adopt a unified accessibility plan.
37. As of November 2025, 71 380 PwDs were registered in the socially vulnerable registry. Of these, 36 365 received minimum targeted social assistance (TSA)⁵³. However, the proxy means-testing (PMT) system used to assess household poverty contains significant inclusion and exclusion errors, leading to the under-identification of people in need. As a result, many PwDs living in poverty remain undetected by the state.
38. Beyond TSA, other social protection mechanisms remain deeply inadequate. The social package (one of the key monthly support tools for PwDs) continues to fall below the subsistence minimum. In 2025, persons with significant disabilities received 230 GEL (73.5 EUR) per month, while persons with moderate disabilities received 190 GEL (60.8 EUR). The official subsistence minimum as of November 2025 is approximately 288 GEL (92.2 EUR). Although children and persons with severe disabilities received higher monthly assistance of 425 GEL (135.9 EUR), this amount remains arbitrarily defined, as it is not based on an assessment of the additional costs of disability and is insufficient to cover the actual needs of the community. Although the social package increases annually, amounts remain consistently insufficient to ensure even a minimum standard of a dignified life. Existing regulations exclude PwDs who receive an age-related pension, as current discriminatory rules require individuals to choose between the disability-related social package and the age-related pension.
39. Municipal social services also remain fragmented, underdeveloped, and disconnected from evidence-based planning. Services are not harmonized across municipalities, are often limited to one-off or minimal material

⁵⁰ Collective statement, The Government Still Fails to Provide Guarantees for the Functioning of the Implementation Mechanism of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2021, [link](#).

⁵¹ Statement by PwD Activists and Organizations on Leaving the Consultative Councils for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2024, [link](#).

⁵² Civil.ge, Disability Community Addresses International Human Rights Defenders About Deteriorating Rights, 2025, [link](#).

⁵³ 30 - 60 GEL/9.6 - 19.2 EUR per month per person over the age of 16, and 200 GEL/64 EUR per month per child under 16

assistance, lack sustainability, and fail to ensure empowerment.⁵⁴ PwDs face significant barriers to municipal services due to inaccessibility, lack of information, linguistic obstacles and a continued reliance on the medical model of disability. Discriminatory language and limited participation of PwDs in decision-making further undermine effective and inclusive social protection.

40. In 2025, significant changes were expected - the introduction of the personal assistant service at the municipal level. However, as of August 2025, the service had not been launched in several municipalities outside Tbilisi⁵⁵ or was available only to a very limited number of PwDs.⁵⁶ If the situation remains unchanged, there is a risk that the program will fail to be implemented nationwide, causing significant harm to the community.
41. The lack of support services and employment increases PwDs' dependence and exposure to violence. The absence of specialized services for parents with disabilities leaves mothers who experience violence unable to live with their children, with related litigation currently pending before the Tbilisi City Court.
42. The implementation of the inclusive education policy also faced major setbacks in 2025. Without consultation with or participation of the community, the Ministry of Education and Science abolished the Inclusive Education Division, which had been responsible for coordinating state policy in this area. It remains unclear how the limited progress achieved in inclusive education will be sustained.

3.3. Situation concerning Deinstitutionalization

43. One of the most severe human rights challenges facing persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities in Georgia is their continued institutionalization due to the lack of community-based housing and support alternatives. Georgia lacks a national housing policy and legislation that would guarantee the right to adequate housing, even at minimum standards. Mainstream housing programs, such as social housing, rent subsidies, and emergency shelters, are severely underdeveloped and often provide substandard conditions. As a result, many individuals remain confined in psychiatric institutions, boarding houses, and large shelters, where they are exposed to violence and inhumane treatment, including physical and chemical restraints. This practice denies them the right to independent living and full participation in community life.
44. Despite an increase in state funding for mental health over the years (reaching more than 47.5 million GEL in 2025), its share within overall healthcare spending remains only 2.6%. Moreover, 67.5% of the mental health budget is allocated to psychiatric inpatient institutions rather than community-based services. A national deinstitutionalization strategy exists; however, it does not specify timelines for the closure of institutions, and its implementation remains inadequate.⁵⁷
45. Unfortunately, instead of recognizing mental health as a critical public issue and developing comprehensive interventions, it has increasingly been instrumentalized for political purposes.⁵⁸ In recent months, the practice included usage of stigmatizing rhetoric, spreading misinformation related to mental health and threatening activist (Nino Datashevili) of up to 20 days of forced inpatient psychiatric expertise, apparently aimed at her punishment and intimidation. Against this background, legislative amendments adopted at the end of 2025 pose serious human rights risks, particularly through the creation of a unified information database of persons with mental health conditions, alcoholism, drug addiction, and toxic substance dependence, disregards a human rights-based approach, violates personal data confidentiality, and enables discrimination, stigmatization, and potential political misuse of sensitive health information. Additionally, the introduction of the concept of "procedural incapacity" into criminal legislation contradicts the CRPD by undermining legal capacity, allowing vague and discretionary assessments that may lead to forced hospitalization, compulsory treatment, and the risk of indefinite deprivation of liberty.

⁵⁴ Coalition for Equality, The main challenges of the Social Protection System for various vulnerable groups in Georgia, 2022, p. 36, [link](#).

⁵⁵ including Zugdidi, Akhaltsikhe, Vani, Terjola, Tianeti, Mtskheta, and Oni

⁵⁶ e.g., Gardabani Municipality - 1 person; Dmanisi and Kutaisi Municipalities - 12 persons; Batumi Municipality - 29 persons.

⁵⁷ Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia, 2024, pp. 242-243, [link](#).

⁵⁸ SJC, The ordering of a psychiatric examination of Nino Datashevili appears aimed at discrediting the activist and reinforces stigma surrounding mental health, 2025, [link](#); SJC, "Georgian Dream" Continues to Stigmatize and Exclude People with Mental Health Problems, 2025, [link](#); SJC, Through the Legislative Amendment, "Georgian Dream" Refuses to Recognize Persons with Psychosocial Needs as Independent Subjects, 2025, [link](#).

Recommendations

- Repeal legislation that restricts the activities, funding, or independence of OPDs and those defending their rights. Take measures to ensure a safe, supportive, and non-discriminatory operational space for their work.
- Ensure full transition to the human rights - based model of disability.
- Amend the Law “on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” to explicitly regulate core rights, including the right to adequate housing, legal capacity, and minimum standards of social protection.
- Ensure a well-resourced national mechanism to implement the CRPD with meaningful participation of OPDs.
- Adopt and implement a unified national accessibility plan.
- Reform social services for PwDs to be unified, rights-based, empowering and evidence-driven; Expand and adequately fund independent living supporting initiatives, including personal assistance services.
- Urgently carry out deinstitutionalization, shift to community-based living with individualized support, and halt investment in large-scale residential institutions.
- Promote employment mechanisms and inclusive education for PwDs based on individual needs and reasonable accommodation.
- Develop and implement a policy to support mothers with disabilities, including those who are victims of violence, to safely raise and care for their children.

4. The Human Rights Situation of the LGBTQ+ Community

4.1. General Overview

46. LGBTQI+ persons in Georgia continued to face widespread discrimination, stigma and violence, with direct impacts on access to work, social protection, housing, health care and education. The reporting period was marked by legislative and policy regression that entrenched hostility toward LGBTQI+ persons and curtailed access to information and inclusive services, including through the 2024 legislative package framed as ‘family values and protection of minors’⁵⁹ and subsequent initiatives that weakened equality language and practical protections.⁶⁰ The April 2025 amendments removing ‘gender identity’ from protected grounds under anti-discrimination legislation further eroded the legal foundation for protection.⁶¹ At the same time, restrictive regulation toward Civil Society Organisations created a chilling effect on service provision and rights monitoring, with disproportionate impact on LGBTQI+ persons who rely on community-based services for shelter, legal aid, psychosocial support and health navigation.⁶² The Commissioner for Human Rights warned that the law ‘provides a legal footing for discrimination against LGBTI people and appears to be at variance with the European Convention on Human Rights’.⁶³
47. Limited coordination with the civil sector, coupled with the disregard for the principle of inclusiveness while policy-making, has led to the disappearance of LGBTI topics from the strategic documents of national importance - “National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights of Georgia for 2022-2030” adopted in 2023 and respective Human Rights Action Plan for 2024-2026 ignores LGBTI community providing no entry points for addressing SOGIESC-based discrimination and/or violence.⁶⁴

4.2. Non-discrimination and equality

48. In the immediate aftermath of the adoption of anti-LGBTI legislative measures in September 2024, serious incidents of violence were reported against transgender women, including the killing of a well-known trans public

⁵⁹ Law of Georgia on the Protection of Family Values and Minors. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6283110?impose=translateEn&publication=0>; Venice Commission, Opinion on the Draft Constitutional Law on Protecting Family Values and Minors (CDL-AD(2024)021, 25 June 2024). [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2024\)021-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2024)021-e)

⁶⁰ ILGA World; Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group; Tbilisi Pride; Equality Movement, ‘State of Human Rights of LGBTI people in Georgia (2021–2025)’ (UPR 45th session stakeholder submission), July 2025. §5-9 <https://wisi.org/Data/docs/publications/report/2025/UPR2025-HR-of-LGBTI-people-Georgia-21-25.pdf>

⁶¹ Ibid., § 9.

⁶² Civil.ge, ‘Georgian Dream’s FARA Takes Effect’, 31 May 2025. <https://civil.ge/archives/684669>

⁶³ Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Letter to Mr Shalva Papuashvili, Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, CommHR/MOF/sf 095-2024, 6 September 2024.

⁶⁴ National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights of Georgia for 2022-2030. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/5757268?publication=0>; Action Plan for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia for 2024-2026. <https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6053557?publication=0>

figure next day the “any-LGBT” law was enforced and a separate assault on a transgender community activist resulting in injury. These incidents occurred amid heightened public hostility and State-linked anti-transgender rhetoric, and in a longer-standing context in which effective prevention, protection and accountability for bias-motivated violence against transgender persons have been repeatedly questioned by civil society⁶⁵.

49. Contradicting the decline in official state statistics of investigation,⁶⁶ the continued prevalence and systemic nature of hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation or gender identity remains one of the most pressing challenges faced LGBTI community in Georgia⁶⁷. A mismatch between the official statistics and reality usually is induced by the obstacles hindering the effective prevention and investigation of SOGI-based hate crimes - such as delays in launching investigations, granting victims the status of ‘aggrieved party’, or properly qualifying criminal cases, combined with the lack of sensitivity and awareness among police officers, prosecutors, and investigators.⁶⁸
50. Civil society monitoring consistently indicates significant under-reporting of SOGI-based violence and discrimination due to fear of secondary victimization, lack of confidence in law enforcement and concerns about confidentiality. Official statistics record minimal prosecutions for intersectional discrimination,⁶⁹ which represent a fraction of documented incidents and suggest significant under-identification of bias motivation.
51. A joint CSO report documents homophobic rhetoric and hate speech accompanying physical and psychological abuse, torture, and sexual threats by police and special forces against protesters during the November–December 2024 rallies, including targeted violence against “less masculine” individuals and minors. According to the report, the homophobic hate speech was also actively used against minors while beating, humiliating, threatening them, and taking their personal belongings away.⁷⁰
52. The State has not adopted effective targeted measures to prevent and address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against LGBTQI+ persons, including training and clear guidance for public officials, service providers and institutions on non-discrimination obligations and respectful service provision.⁷¹
53. The European Court of Human Rights has repeatedly found that Georgia’s authorities failed to ensure equal protection and effective investigations in cases of SOGI-motivated violence and abuse—including in **Identoba and Others v. Georgia**⁷² (failure to protect peaceful demonstrators from homophobic violence and to investigate effectively), **Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group and Others v. Georgia** (similar failures concerning the 17 May 2013 events),⁷³ and **Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v. Georgia** (discriminatory police misconduct and lack of an effective inquiry into homophobic/transphobic motives).⁷⁴ The Committee of Ministers’ **Interim Resolution CM/ResDH(2025)31** confirms the persistence of a **structural problem**: failures to protect persons from homophobic or religiously motivated attacks during assemblies, instances of official acquiescence/connivance, police abuse committed with homophobic/transphobic or religious bias, and the absence of effective investigations.⁷⁵ Despite over a decade of supervision, investigations remain incomplete, with

⁶⁵ ILGA-Europe, Annual Review of the Human Rights Situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex People in Europe and Central Asia 2025, Brussels, 2025, Georgia chapter.

⁶⁶ 2021 – gender identity: 48; sexual orientation: 58 | 2022 – gender identity: 38; sexual orientation: 36; gender & sexual orientation: 2 | 2023 – gender identity: 25; sexual orientation: 17; sexual orientation & gender identity: 6; gender & sexual orientation 1; race & sexual orientation 1 | 2024 – gender identity: 14; sexual orientation: 11; race & sexual orientation: 3; gender & gender identity: 1; sexual orientation & political or other view 1.

⁶⁷ National Statistics Office of Georgia, Unified report on statistics of crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance and discrimination, 2021, https://www.geostat.ge/media/43558/diskriminacii-niSniT_2021.pdf; National Statistics Office of Georgia, Unified report on statistics of crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance and discrimination, 2022, https://www.geostat.ge/media/51737/diskriminacia_2022.pdf; National Statistics Office of Georgia, Unified report on statistics of crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance and discrimination, 2023, https://www.geostat.ge/media/60697/diskriminacia_2023.pdf; National Statistics Office of Georgia, Unified report on statistics of crimes committed on the grounds of intolerance and discrimination, 2024, https://www.geostat.ge/media/68742/diskriminacia_2024.pdf

⁶⁸ Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Georgia, An “alternative report” as a commentary on the Fifth Periodic Report by Georgia. 135 th Session Human Rights Committee Review of the fifth periodic report by Georgia, ECOM, Equality Movement, Tbilisi Pride, 2022, https://equality.ge/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/INT_CCPRI_CSS_GEO_48904_E.pdf

⁶⁹ UN Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Report on visit to Georgia, A/HRC/41/45/Add.1, 15 May 2019, p.147–148: In 2023, prosecution was launched against only 5 individuals on grounds combining gender with sexual orientation, gender identity, or other characteristics (out of 1,169 prosecutions for gender-based intolerance); in 2024, only 7 such prosecutions were initiated

⁷⁰ Human Rights Crisis in Georgia Following the 2024 Parliamentary Elections, 2025, https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/HUMAN%20RIGHTS%20CRISIS%20IN%20GEORGIA%20-%20final.pdf

⁷¹ Social Justice Center; Partnership for Human Rights; Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG); Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association (GYLA), ‘Report on the Implementation of the ICESCR in Georgia’ (CESCR, 74th Pre-session Working Group submission), 2023

⁷² Identoba and Others v. Georgia, no. 73235/12, 12 May 2015, §§ 94–100.

⁷³ Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group and Others v. Georgia, nos. 73204/13 and 74959/13, 16 December 2021, §§ 61–72.

⁷⁴ Aghdgomelashvili and Japaridze v. Georgia, no. 7224/11, 8 October 2020, §§ 35–51.

⁷⁵ Committee of Ministers, Interim Resolution CM/ResDH(2025)31, Execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, Identoba and Others group against Georgia, 6 March 2025.

the Government's July 2025 action report indicating unwillingness to implement the Committee's recommendations.⁷⁶

4.3. Right to work and just and favorable conditions of work

54. LGBTQI+ persons face barriers to employment, including discrimination in recruitment, workplace harassment, pressure to conceal identity and lack of effective remedies. Transgender women are disproportionately excluded from formal employment and are pushed into informal and precarious work due to stigma and identity-document mismatches.⁷⁷
55. These dynamics increase poverty and undermine safe, dignified and equal working conditions. Georgia lacks SOGIESC-sensitive labor measures and has failed to address the structural exclusion of transgender persons from formal employment, contrary to the Covenant.⁷⁸

4.4. Social security and social protection

56. LGBTQI+ persons experience heightened social vulnerability due to employment discrimination, family rejection and violence. Barriers to documentation and institutional stigma contribute to exclusion from social protection schemes and impede access to benefits and services on an equal basis with others, particularly for transgender persons.
57. During crises, including public health emergencies, the absence of targeted and inclusive measures has resulted in gaps in support for LGBTQI+ persons facing housing and livelihood insecurity⁷⁹. In practice, LGBTQI+ organizations often provide last-resort support, but these arrangements are not sustainable and are vulnerable to restrictions on civic space.⁸⁰

4.5. Protection of family and protection from violence

58. LGBTQI+ persons face family rejection, forced concealment and lack of recognition of diverse family forms. Same-sex couples lack legal recognition, which can affect access to family-related benefits, housing stability and protection from violence. The Law of Georgia on the Prevention of Violence Against Women and/or Domestic Violence defines "family members" for protection in terms of relationships that, in practice, exclude same-sex partners⁸¹. As a result, LGBTI persons in cohabiting relationships may fall outside the statutory scope and face barriers to accessing core protection measures, including emergency barring orders, restraining orders and state-funded shelter accommodation.⁸² An exclusionary effect that is further entrenched by the Law on the Protection of Family Values and Minors, which the Venice Commission has assessed as incompatible with European human rights standards.⁸³
59. Community-based studies⁸⁴ show that parents who support LGBTQI+ children can themselves become targets of bullying, exclusion and threats, illustrating how stigma penetrates family life and undermines the protective functions of the family and community support networks. The State lacks accessible, non-discriminatory family support services and referral pathways, including counselling, psychosocial support and protection measures for families affected by stigma and violence.

⁷⁶ Joint Rule 9 Submission to the Committee of Ministers, EHRAC, WISG, GYLA, ILGA-Europe, and TGEU, Identoba group of cases, 7 November 2025, §§ 4–6.

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Social Justice Center; Partnership for Human Rights; Women's Initiatives Supporting Group (WISG); Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), 'Report on the Implementation of the ICESCR in Georgia' (CESCR, 74th Pre-session Working Group submission), 2023

⁷⁹ WISG, 'Eradication of LGBTQI+ Issues from State Policy: Challenges to Equality in Georgia', 17 May 2025. <https://wsg.org/Data/Eradication-of-LGBTQI-Issues-from-State-Policy-ENG.pdf>

⁸⁰ Civil.ge, 'Georgian Dream's FARA Takes Effect', 31 May 2025. <https://civil.ge/archives/684669>

⁸¹ Law of Georgia on the Prevention of Violence Against Women and/or Domestic Violence, Protection and Assistance to Victims of Violence, Article 4(6). <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/26422?publication=17>

⁸² Women's Initiatives Supporting Group, Third Shadow Report on Monitoring of Implementation of CM/Rec(2010)5 in Georgia, Tbilisi, 2024, p. 52. https://wsg.org/Data/docs/publications/report/2025/CM_2024-ENG_214-301.pdf

⁸³ Law of Georgia on the Protection of Family Values and Minors, adopted 17 September 2024, entered into force 2 December 2024. <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/6283110?publication=0>; Venice Commission, Opinion on the Draft Constitutional Law on Protecting Family Values and Minors, CDL-AD(2024)021, 25 June 2024, §§ 99–104.

⁸⁴ WISG, 'Transformed Parenthood: Voices of parents of queer persons – collective sorrow and power' (research study), PDF: https://wsg.org/Data/docs/publications/research-study/Wisg_Parents_ENG_WEB.pdf

4.6. Right to health - Legal gender recognition and trans-specific care

60. LGBTQI+ persons experience stigma, confidentiality concerns and discriminatory attitudes in health services, affecting access to primary care, sexual and reproductive health services and mental health support.⁸⁵ Trans persons face additional barriers due to the absence of national protocols and guidelines for gender-affirming and trans-specific care, limited provider competence, and lack of insurance coverage for trans health needs. Restrictions and hostile narratives have a chilling effect on health information, referrals and service accessibility.⁸⁶

61. In A.D. and Others v. Georgia, the European Court of Human Rights found that Georgia's failure to provide an efficient, transparent and accessible procedure for legal gender recognition violated article 8 of the European Convention.⁸⁷ Instead of establishing a clear, accessible LGR framework, Georgia adopted the Law on the Protection of Family Values and Minors (17 September 2024), which defines "biological sex" on the basis of "hereditary genetic characteristics" and prohibits indicating a person's sex in civil status records and state-issued identity documents in a manner that differs from "biological sex," including through changes to records.⁸⁸ The same law prohibits "surgery... or any other type of medical manipulation" aimed at assigning a person to a sex different from their biological sex, and associated legislative changes introduce criminal liability for performing such interventions, punishable by a fine and/or professional disqualification, or imprisonment of one to four years.⁸⁹ The CoE Committee of Ministers has noted that these developments raise serious concerns regarding compliance with Georgia's obligations to implement relevant judgments.⁹⁰ The Law on 'family values/minors' includes a complete prohibition of legal gender recognition and has been applied as a basis to restrict gender-affirming healthcare.⁹¹

62. Intersex women remain largely invisible in policies addressing violence against women, leaving specific risks insufficiently addressed. The lack of disaggregated data and monitoring hinders effective protection and implementation of Covenant obligations.⁹²

4.7. Right to education and academic freedom

63. The State has not ensured effective, evidence-based measures to guarantee safe and inclusive education for LGBTQI+ students, including comprehensive anti-bullying policies, training for teachers and school staff, and protection of academic freedom to research and teach about equality, health and human rights.⁹³

64. The legislative prohibition on dissemination of information regarding LGBTI issues in educational settings directly contravenes education on equality between women and men. The Venice Commission concluded that this provision 'deprives all pupils of comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education' and 'may increase bullying, harassment, and health risks'.⁹⁴ Article 8 of the Law on the Protection of Family Values and Minors prohibits sharing information 'aimed at the promotion of belonging of a person's sex different from biological sex' or 'promotion of a relationship expressed on the grounds of sexual orientation between individuals of the same biological sex', with violations subject to administrative fines and, for repeated offences, criminal liability.⁹⁵

Recommendations:

- Reinstate gender identity and sexual orientation as protected grounds in anti-discrimination legislation and repeal or amend laws and policies that legitimize discrimination or restrict access to information, services, and equality protections.

⁸⁵ Women's Initiatives Supporting Group, Third Shadow Report on Monitoring of Implementation of CM/Rec(2010)5 in Georgia, Tbilisi, 2024. p. 71-74.

⁸⁶ ILGA World; Women's Initiatives Supporting Group; Tbilisi Pride; Equality Movement, 'State of Human Rights of LGBTI people in Georgia (2021–2025)' (UPR 45th session stakeholder submission), July 2025. §14-18.

⁸⁷ A.D. and Others v. Georgia, no. 57864/17, 1 December 2022, §§ 56–64.

⁸⁸ Law of Georgia on the Protection of Family Values and Minors, adopted 17 September 2024, entered into force 2 December 2024, article 7

⁸⁹ Ibid., Articles 2(c), 6, and 7.

⁹⁰ Committee of Ministers, Interim Resolution CM/ResDH(2025)31, Execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, A.D. and Others v. Georgia, 6 March 2025.

⁹¹ EHRAC; WISG; GYLA; ILGA-Europe; TGEU, 'Rule 9(1) and Rule 9(2) submission to the Committee of Ministers concerning implementation of A.D. and Others v. Georgia', 25 July 2025, § 4.1. https://wisg.org/Data/docs/publications/report/2025/A.D.submission_25-July-2025-GYLA_ILGA_TGEU_EHRAC_WISG.pdf

⁹² ILGA World; Women's Initiatives Supporting Group; Tbilisi Pride; Equality Movement, 'State of Human Rights of LGBTI people in Georgia (2021–2025)' (UPR 45th session stakeholder submission), July 2025. §19.

⁹³ European Commission, Staff Working Document 'Georgia 2024 Report' (SWD(2024) 697 final), 30 Oct 2024. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52024SC0697>

⁹⁴ Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Letter to Mr Shalva Papuashvili, Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, CommHR/MOF/sf 095-2024, 6 September 2024. §§ 63–68.

⁹⁵ Law of Georgia on the Protection of Family Values and Minors, adopted 17 September 2024, entered into force 2 December 2024, Article 8.

- Guarantee prompt, impartial, and bias-sensitive investigation and proper legal qualification of of hate crimes; and provide mandatory training for police, prosecutors, judges, and penitentiary staff on SOGIESC-based violence, including intersectional discrimination.
- Adopt SOGIESC-sensitive labor policies, including workplace anti-harassment standards, effective complaint mechanisms, labor inspection guidance, and targeted measures to address the exclusion of transgender persons from formal employment.
- Remove administrative and discriminatory barriers to social assistance, ensure access to benefits irrespective of family status or identity documentation, and establish sustainable, state-funded support mechanisms for LGBTQI+ persons facing homelessness, poverty, or family rejection.
- Repeal restrictions on education and information dissemination on sexual orientation and gender identity and protect the freedom to teach and research equality, health, and human rights.

5. The Realization of Social and Economic Rights of Children

5.1. The Realization of Social and Economic Rights of Children

65. Children remain one of the most vulnerable groups in Georgia. Despite the existence of a formal legislative framework, reflected, *inter alia*, in the Code on the Rights of the Child, thousands of children and their family members do not receive adequate support from the state, and their needs are largely overlooked. Georgia still lacks a holistic, child-sensitive social protection system capable of helping families cope with socio-economic shocks and strengthening their resilience. Significant gaps persist in child-centered legislation and policies, monetary benefits, and social services. Many vulnerable children and families remain left behind, particularly children with disabilities, victims of violence, children belonging to ethnic minorities, and children from low-income households.

66. Children are the age group most affected by poverty. According to National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat), as of 2024, 9.4% of Georgia's population lived below the absolute poverty line. However, poverty rates varied significantly by age group: 12.1% among children, 9.3% among adults aged 18–64, and 6.7% among persons aged 65 and above. These figures demonstrate that, despite a reduction in absolute poverty (which does not necessarily reflect satisfactory socio-economic conditions), children continue to represent the most vulnerable segment.

67. TSA remains one of the most widespread social benefits for children and families with children. As of November 2025, 277 599 children were receiving subsistence assistance, meaning that approximately one in three children (33.1%) is classified as socially vulnerable. Of these, 250 113 children under the age of 16 receive a monthly benefit of 200 GEL, while upon reaching the age of 16, their benefit is reduced to the level provided to adults (30–60 GEL per month). At the same time, 379 415 children - 45% of the total child population - are registered in the socially vulnerable database. These data reflect both the high prevalence of social vulnerability among children and families with children and the inadequacy of existing benefits, which are insufficient to cover even minimum needs.

68. A study conducted by UNICEF and Geostat reveals alarming levels of material and social deprivation among children. Only 36.3% of children experience no form of deprivation, while 37.8% experience three or more types of deprivation. Among children living in rural areas, this figure rises to 47.1%. The study shows that 5.6% of children experience deprivation in fruit and vegetable consumption and 24.4% in meat consumption; 13.9% lack books; 15.2% lack proper footwear; and 14.3% lack new clothing. Furthermore, 21.3% of children face difficulties accessing adequate heating at home, and 31.2% lack toys. Access to early childhood education also remains unequal: 6.2% of children (12.4% of children in rural areas) do not attend kindergartens. In addition, 12% of children are unable to fully or partially access necessary medical services, primarily due to lack of insurance coverage or financial constraints, while 11.4% of materially deprived children were unable to obtain prescribed medication at least once for the same reasons.⁹⁶

69. Although child rehabilitation services formally exist at the central level, their geographical coverage and quality remain among the most pressing challenges. In 2024, the guardianship and care system employed 278 social

⁹⁶ UNICEF & Geostat, Child Wellbeing in Georgia, 2023, [link](#).

workers and 30 psychologists. While this is an increase compared to previous years, the number of professionals remains insufficient to meet existing needs.⁹⁷

70. Of particular concern is the absence of community-based services tailored to the individual needs of children with disabilities, including children with severe and significant intellectual disabilities. This increases the risk of long-term institutionalization of children, including placement in psychiatric institutions, and is contrary to the principle of the best interests of the child.
71. On 27 June 2024, the UNCRC found Georgia in violation of its obligations to protect children's rights, as the State failed to take timely and effective measures to prevent systematic physical and psychological abuse of children in a boarding school under the authority of the Georgian Orthodox Church. The Committee instructed the State to ensure effective redress for the victimized children, including compensation and rehabilitation, to issue a public apology, and to conduct independent investigations and prosecute those responsible. Implementation of the Committee's decision remains largely unfulfilled: only the reassessment of children who were under state care at the time of the decision has been carried out. Regarding compensation, with legal support from PHR, 11 children/patients filed claims in court; however, for over a year, two cases have remained pending, with substantive review nearly complete but no judgments issued. As for investigations, no progress has been made since the Committee's decision.⁹⁸
72. The direct link between social well-being, the right to an adequate living environment, and the right to life became particularly evident in 2025, when several children lost their lives due to the state's failure to ensure safe living conditions.⁹⁹ On 15 February in Batumi's informal "Dream City" settlement, two children died after falling into an unsecured excavation pit left during demolition works; despite partial resettlement, the area remained unsafe and the State denied responsibility, as it did after a similar fatal incident in January 2025, when a child fell into a pit in Tbilisi's Rike Park. Further child deaths—caused by a passenger train in Batumi and a house fire in Saberio, Gali district that killed five children—highlight the acute vulnerability of children in informal settlements and occupied territories and the State's failure to ensure basic safety and protection.
73. Instead of addressing these systemic risks and daily challenges, at the end of 2025, the Parliament adopted the Law on the Rehabilitation and Support of Minors in Conflict with the Law, along with an accompanying legislative package. This law represents one of the most serious regressions in the protection of children's rights in recent years.¹⁰⁰ The law targets children suspected of offences committed before age 14 and allows placement in rehabilitation and support homes under provisions that contradict international standards, including responsibility from age ten, indefinite isolation, restricted movement, and exclusion from community education. By disregarding children's best interests and the harms of deprivation of liberty, the authorities further harm children already affected by poverty, social exclusion and family trauma.

Recommendations

- Develop and implement a holistic, child-sensitive social protection system that prioritizes prevention and early intervention, with a particular focus on children in vulnerable situations.
- Increase monetary social benefits for children and families with children to at least the subsistence minimum and regularly adjust them to inflation and the real cost of living.
- Strengthen the guardianship and care system by significantly increasing the number of social workers and psychologists and improving working conditions, training, and supervision.
- Ensure safe and adequate living environments for children by enforcing safety standards in public spaces, settlements, and housing projects, and by establishing effective oversight and accountability mechanisms.
- Acknowledge and address state responsibility in cases where failures to ensure safe living conditions result in child fatalities or serious harm, and ensure prompt, transparent investigations and effective remedies.
- Repeal the adopted legal provisions that provides for the deprivation of liberty for children below the age of criminal responsibility and ensure that any measures applied prioritize restorative justice principles, community-based support, and the best interests of the child.

⁹⁷ Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia, 2024, p. 250, [link](#).

⁹⁸ Decision of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child of 24 May 2024, No. CRC/C/96/D/144/2021.

⁹⁹ Social Justice Center, The Acute Human Rights Crisis in Georgia - Overview of the Human Rights Situation in the Country in 2025, p. 18, [link](#).

¹⁰⁰ Social Justice Center, Children's Rights are in Danger in Georgia - Analysis of Another Repressive Legislative Amendments Initiated by "Georgian Dream", 2025, [link](#).