



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

79th Session Submission for the Consideration of State Report

Social Justice Center

Partnership for Human Rights (PHR)

Georgian Network of (Ex-)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (GNUSP)

Independent Trade Union "Article 78 of the Constitution"

Introduction

1. This report is submitted by Georgian civil society organizations - Social Justice Center, Partnership for Human Rights (PHR), Georgian Network of (Ex-)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (GNUSP) and the Independent Trade Union “Article 78 of the Constitution” and provides a critical assessment of the implementation of the ICESCR in Georgia since the pre-session examination of the country by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
1. **Human Rights Crisis in Georgia: Brief Overview**
2. In recent years, Georgia has been experiencing an ongoing human rights crisis, which is characterized by the consolidation of power by the Georgian Dream party, democratic backsliding, the weakening of state institutions, the erosion of accountability mechanisms, and widespread human rights violations.¹ The ruling party has effectively captured key state institutions, including the judiciary and is striving to institutionally dismantle civil society organizations (CSOs) and independent media.²
3. The situation deteriorated particularly sharply following voter manipulation during the 2024 parliamentary elections and the Prime Minister’s decision to suspend Georgia’s EU integration process. During November-December 2024, around 500 peaceful protesters were detained. Furthermore, between 28 November 2024 and 28 January 2025, the Office of the Public Defender identified 282 alleged cases of ill-treatment of protesters.³
4. In parallel, the authorities have adopted a series of repressive legislative measures aimed at silencing independent actors. Notably, in 2024, after years of cultivating a hostile environment through verbal attacks, stigmatization, and pressure, the Parliament adopted the “Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence”, directly targeting independent CSOs and media outlets. In 2025, the Parliament adopted an even more restrictive law - the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), which introduces criminal liability for failure to register as a “foreign agent”. The law is interpreted and applied by the authorities in a manner that enables its use as a tool for the persecution of independent CSOs and media outlets. In addition, amendments to the Law “on Grants” require foreign donors to obtain prior government approval before issuing grants. These changes effectively deprive critical organizations of essential financial resources. **Concrete steps toward dismantling civil society** include, only one hand, the initiation of inspections in the summer of 2025 by the Anti-Corruption Bureau against several organizations (including the Social Justice Center) under FARA, and on the other hand, the freezing of bank accounts of 7 CSOs (including the Social Justice Center) in August 2025 within the framework of the so-called “sabotage case”. These measures have paralyzed the functioning of the targeted organizations.⁴
5. Extremely restrictive, disproportionate, and unjustified regulations have been introduced regarding **the exercise of freedom of assembly and expression**, which restrict even peaceful protests on sidewalks.⁵ Furthermore, obligations to ensure **the participation of civil society** in decision-making processes across various areas of governance have been removed. As a result, the ability of CSOs to participate in public decision-making and to hold the state accountable through transparent and participatory governance processes has been significantly curtailed.⁶ Additionally, under the pretext of formally protecting children’s rights, the authorities adopted the Law on “Family Values and the Protection of Minors”. In practice, this law has institutionally entrenched **discrimination against LGBTQ+ persons**, while effectively criminalizing gender-affirming care for transgender persons.⁷

¹ GYLA, SJC, PHR, DRI, GDI, GCRT, HRD, RG, ISFED, IDFI, WISG, Human Rights Crisis in Georgia Following the 2024 Parliamentary Elections, 2025, [link](#).

² Social Justice Center, “Dismantled, Captured, Abolished”: The Fate of Georgia’s Independent Oversight Institutions under Conditions of Autocratization, 2025, [link](#).

³ GYLA, SJC, PHR, DRI, GDI, GCRT, HRD, RG, ISFED, IDFI, WISG, Human Rights Crisis in Georgia Following the 2024 Parliamentary Elections, 2025, pp. 9-11, [link](#).

⁴ Social Justice Center, “Georgian Dream” continues its persecution of civil society organizations - Social Justice Center publishes the written explanation submitted to the Anti-Corruption Bureau, 2025, [link](#); Social Justice Center, Despite Asset Freezes and Repressions, Georgian NGOs Will Continue Our Work, 2025, [link](#).

⁵ Social Justice Center, A New Stage in the Criminalization of Freedom of Assembly: The Social Justice Center Assesses the Unconstitutional Restriction on Gathering on Sidewalks, 2025, [link](#).

⁶ Social Justice Center, “Georgian Dream” Deprives Civil Society Even of the Formal Opportunity to Participate in the Decision-making Process, 2025, [link](#).

⁷ Social Justice Center, Government against equality and freedom of expression - Extensive legal analysis of homophobic legislative initiatives, 2024, [link](#).

6. Human rights crisis has not been limited to civil and political rights. It also has a profound impact on the economic and social rights. Deepening poverty and growing social vulnerability have created fertile ground for the political instrumentalization of voters. In this context, demands for the realization of rights is increasingly framed by the authorities as an attack on state authority and is met with intimidation or repression. In parallel with attacks on independent media and CSOs, access to assistance, advocacy, and public visibility has been severely weakened. This isolation further aggravates the vulnerability of affected individuals.

2. Poverty and Social Vulnerability in Georgia

7. Poverty remains one of Georgia's most persistent and structural challenges. In 2024, 9.4% of the population lived below the absolute poverty line, which is the lowest rate recorded to date. Additionally, 18.9 % of the population lived in relative poverty (same number as it was in 2021).⁸ The statistical decline in absolute poverty statistics does not indicate a meaningful improvement in socio-economic conditions or living standards for the population.
8. Economic growth during the reporting period has not been translated into sustainable and decent employment opportunities. Growth was driven primarily by remittances from emigrants, tourism, and the export of used vehicles, rather than by productive sectors capable of generating stable jobs.⁹ As a result, socio-economic hardship has remained widespread.
9. Several structural factors likely contributed to the reported decline in poverty:¹⁰
 - Since 2012, Georgia has experienced net emigration of over 315,000 Georgian citizens, often as a survival strategy rather than voluntary mobility.
 - Social assistance programs temporarily lift household incomes above the poverty threshold without providing long-term economic security.
 - Remittances from abroad continue to play a crucial role, reaching 3.1 billion USD in 2024 (3.9 times higher than in 2010) and serving as an essential source of household income.

2.1. Shortcomings of the Targeted Social Assistance System

10. The Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) program remains the core pillar of Georgia's social protection system. It provides monthly cash benefits to families whose TSA score falls below the statutory threshold. The monthly allowance ranges from 30 - 60 GEL (9.6 – 19.2 EUR) for individuals over 16 years of age and 200 GEL (64 EUR) for children under 16. These amounts remain far below even the inadequately calculated subsistence minimum (288.4 GEL/92.2 EUR)¹¹ and are insufficient to meet basic needs.
11. Despite the reduction in the absolute poverty rate, dependence on social assistance continues to increase. As of November 2025, 706 552 individuals - 19.1% of the population, were receiving TSA, while more than 1.3 million people (35.3% of the population) were registered in the unified database of socially vulnerable households.¹² These figures only partially capture the depth and scale of socio-economic deprivation experienced by the population.
12. The TSA program fails to address the structural and root causes of poverty or ensure sustainable improvements in living conditions. By mid-2023, 47% of TSA recipients had been dependent on the program for more than five years, and over 61 000 individuals had been receiving benefits for more than 15 years. These figures indicate long-term dependency on this program rather than effective social inclusion and empowerment.¹³
13. A key structural weakness of the TSA lies in its reliance on Proxy Means Testing (PMT). The indicators used to assess household vulnerability frequently fail to accurately capture poverty, resulting in the exclusion of many eligible individuals. People experiencing homelessness are systematically excluded

⁸ National Statistics Office of Georgia, Poverty and Gini Coefficients, [link](#).

⁹ Social Justice Center, Potemkin Growth: Why Are Georgian Citizens Rushing to Leave the Country Amid Rising GDP, Growing Exports, and Decreasing Unemployment? 2025, [Link](#).

¹⁰ Ibid., National Statistics Office of Georgia, Migration, [link](#); Social Justice Center, The Impact of Migration on a Country's Socio-Economic Well-Being and Labor Force, 2024, [link](#).

¹¹ National Statistics Office of Georgia, Subsistence Minimum, [link](#).

¹² LEPL – Social Service Agency, Statistics, [link](#).

¹³ Social Justice Center, Targeted Social Assistance in Georgia: Social Impact of the Program and Potential of Poverty Alleviation, 2024, pp. 18-21, [link](#).

from the system altogether. Others face significant procedural barriers to appeal, including a mandatory one-year waiting period for reassessment.¹⁴ However, because the TSA score is also used to determine eligibility for various municipal social services, such as free meals and medical assistance, exclusion from TSA often results in broader marginalization and denial of access to essential support services.¹⁵

14. Given the scale of the TSA, as well as the lack of transparency, and beneficiary selection criteria, the risk of objectivization and political instrumentalization is significant. Available data indicate a correlation between the share of votes received by the ruling party and both the number of TSA beneficiaries, and the volume of financial assistance allocated in specific areas.¹⁶

2.2. Public Employment Program and Its Termination

15. In 2022, the Government introduced the Public Employment Program with the stated aim of reducing long-term dependence on TSA by engaging socially vulnerable individuals in paid work. Between 2022 and 2024, approximately 40 000 socially vulnerable persons participated in the program, receiving remuneration of up to 300 GEL (95.9 EUR) per month.¹⁷ However, the program offered low-paid, temporary jobs, lacked skill-building or reintegration components, and its objectives and terms remained unclear to participants.¹⁸
16. Upon approval of the 2026 state budget, the Government decided to discontinue the Public Employment Program. The reasons cited for this decision included, on the one hand, its duration (the sub-program was designed to operate for four years) and, on the other hand, labor shortages in the labor market amid high economic growth. Although the program was temporary in nature, its termination will likely lead to a deterioration of the socio-economic conditions of beneficiaries and expose them to extreme social vulnerability.¹⁹
17. This decision also violates the principle of foreseeability. Program participants were not informed about the limited duration of the sub-program, which further deepened their vulnerability. Moreover, an analysis of state budgets from previous years did not indicate that the initiative would be discontinued; on the contrary, there was a clear expectation that the number of beneficiaries would increase. Notably, the 2025 state budget envisaged the allocation of 100 million GEL for the public employment sub-program not only for 2025 and 2026, but also for 2027-2028. Even the initial draft of the 2026 state budget included funding for this sub-program. As a result, until very recently, beneficiaries had expectations that the initiative would continue.
18. Government statements provide no clarity regarding the future of individuals employed under the public works program and their families. There is no information about the immediate alternatives that would be offered to enable a less harmful transition following the program's termination. The budget merely contains general references to supporting socially vulnerable individuals "to facilitate employment in the open labor market" and mentions the development of various unemployment support mechanisms (including unemployment insurance), without specifying their content or timelines for implementation - processes that can take years.

2.3. Social Protection for Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups

19. Besides the TSA, there are a range of additional social protection measures in place in Georgia. However, these do not form a coherent or comprehensive system capable of ensuring adequate protection. Additionally, the social protection framework lacks key mechanisms such as unemployment insurance.²⁰ At the municipal level, social services are highly fragmented and vary significantly by region, with no

¹⁴ Ibid., Social Justice Center, Access to Targeted Social Assistance System and Mechanisms for Protecting the Rights of People Living in Poverty, 2024, [link](#).

¹⁵ Social Justice Center, The Role of Targeted Social Assistance in the Social Protection System and Its Connection with Other Social Support Services, 2024, [link](#).

¹⁶ Social Justice Center, Targeted Social Assistance Program in Georgia and Its Link to Electoral Outcomes, 2024, [link](#).

¹⁷ Social Justice Center, The termination of the public works employment program will have extremely severe consequences for the socially vulnerable population, 2025, [link](#).

¹⁸ Social Justice Center, Anatomy of the Public Employment Program - Program costs, objectives and results in one year, 2023, [link](#).

¹⁹ Social Justice Center, The termination of the public works employment program will have extremely severe consequences for the socially vulnerable population, 2025, [link](#).

²⁰ Social Justice Center, The Role of Social Assistance in Protecting People Who Have Lost Their Jobs and Its Relation to Unemployment Insurance, 2024, [link](#).

uniform standards. These services are largely limited to one-off cash payments and function primarily as short-term emergency relief rather than as part of a sustainable social protection strategy.

20. At the national level, various cash benefits are available for specific population groups; However, these benefits remain minimal and insufficient to meet basic living costs. In 2025, monthly pensions for the elderly ranged from 350 GEL (111.9 EUR) to 450 GEL (143.9 EUR) and were inadequate to cover essential expenses such as food and medication. Conditions are even more severe for internally displaced persons (IDPs), whose allowance remains at just 45 GEL (14.4 EUR) per month – 6.5 times lower than the already inadequate subsistence minimum.
21. One of the most acute challenges concerns the social package for persons with disabilities. In 2025, monthly benefits ranged from 190 GEL (60.8 EUR) to 425 GEL (135.9 EUR). These amounts cannot cover wide range of disability-related expenses. Additionally, the system excludes individuals denied status of persons with disabilities due to the persistence of an outdated medical model of assessment, as well as older persons with disabilities who are prevented from receiving both a pension and disability-related assistance.
22. Although both the old-age pension and the social package for persons with disabilities increase annually, their amounts remain consistently insufficient to meet the needs of these groups and to ensure even a minimum standard of a dignified life.

Recommendations:

- Develop a comprehensive social protection policy based on the real needs of the population and introduce important social protection mechanisms, such as unemployment insurance.
- Develop uniform national standards for municipal social services to reduce regional disparities and move beyond one-off emergency assistance toward sustainable social protection.
- Increase old age pensions, disability- and IDP-related cash benefits to reflect the actual costs of living.
- Replace or substantially revise the PMT system to ensure accurate identification of poverty and removal of disproportionate procedural barriers, including excessive waiting periods for reassessment.
- Ensure that beneficiaries are clearly informed in advance about the duration, conditions, and possible termination of social programs, and avoid policy changes that increase vulnerability of the population.
- Provide immediate and concrete transitional support for beneficiaries of a public employment program to prevent sudden income loss and extreme precarity.

3. Right to Labour and Employment

23. The realization of labour rights in Georgia remains in critical contradiction with international human rights and labour standards, including the right to just and favorable conditions of work, freedom of association, collective bargaining, and protection against unjustified dismissal. Additionally, the state has not formed an unemployment insurance scheme and/or minimum wage that would guarantee minimal protection of thousands of workers. During the reporting period, labour rights violations occurred systematically across multiple sectors and were increasingly used as a tool of political retaliation amid backsliding of democracy and the rule of law.

3.1. Mass Dismissals and Political Retaliation in the Public Sector

24. One of the gravest labour rights violations during the reporting period has been the mass dismissal of public sector employees. Beginning in December 2024 and continuing throughout 2025, hundreds of civil servants were dismissed after publicly expressing dissent against the government's decision to suspend Georgia's European integration process.²¹ Employees participated in protests, signed joint statements, or otherwise exercised their freedom of expression and assembly. It is estimated that between 800 and 1,200 public servants from positions within the central and municipal government bodies were dismissed during this period.²² These dismissals constitute political retaliation and violate the principles of merit-based public service, non-discrimination, and protection against arbitrary dismissal.

²¹ Social Justice Center, We call on the International Labour Organization to establish a commission of inquiry into the ongoing mass dismissals in the Georgian civil service, 2025, [link](#).

²² JamNews, One year on: What changed in Georgia since start of pro-EU protests? 2025, [link](#).

25. Common forms of retaliatory dismissal included: non-renewal of fixed-term contracts, particularly following the expiration of existing contracts; and Institutional reorganization or liquidation, used as a pretext for dismissals. A notably high number of dismissals occurred at the National Agency of Public Registry, where more than 200 employees were reportedly dismissed. Similar practices followed the liquidation of the Parliamentary Research Center, the abolition of the Civil Service Bureau, and the reorganization of the Ministry of Defense, which resulted in the dismissal of approximately 150 employees.²³ The liquidation and reorganization primarily affected departments working in international direction (e.g., the International Relations Department in the Tbilisi City Hall was dissolved), also, Information Center on NATO and the European Union and agencies working in the direction of EU integration were abolished. The government also recalled civil servants who were working abroad in the framework of EU projects.

26. Beyond the civil service, dismissals and pressure were also reported against employees of Tkibuli mining Company (“Saknakhshiri”), Georgian Public Broadcaster, state universities, schools, theatres and other public institutions, further demonstrating the systemic use of employment termination as a mechanism of punishment for dissent.²⁴

27. The mass dismissals in the public sector did not occur in a legal vacuum but were enabled by a series of regressive legislative amendments that substantially weakened employment security and procedural guarantees for public servants. These amendments represent a deliberate departure from the principles of stability, political neutrality, and merit-based public administration, which are integral to the realization of labour rights and the rule of law. Amendments first adopted to the Law “on Public Service” at the beginning of 2025, and later to the Law “on Fighting Corruption” in October, simplified dismissal procedures for a broad category of public servants, including mid-level managerial staff and significantly weakened the legal guarantees of public servants, while the abolition of the Public Service Bureau further entrenched political control over the public service.²⁵

3.2. Obstacles to Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining

28. The realization of workers’ rights to organize and bargain collectively has been increasingly obstructed. Independent trade unions have faced administrative barriers, intimidation, and criminal-law pressure. The union of civil servants, “Article 78 of the Constitution”, was formed in response to mass politically motivated dismissals. Between December 2024 and June 16th, 2025, Union faced 8 rejections from the Public Registry of the Ministry of Justice of Georgia while attempting to register, each time for unfounded and arbitrary reasons. Following a 7-month struggle and persistent compliance with numerous obscure demands, the Union was finally registered on the ninth attempt. Since 2024, the union has provided legal advice to approximately 1,800 civil servants and filed lawsuits in court to protect the interests of 234 dismissed civil servants.

29. One of the clearest indicators of the persecution of the independent trade unions was conducting a search of the office of the independent trade union “Labor” (trade union of agriculture, trade and industry) and the home of its chairperson. The search was carried out within the framework of an investigation initiated under provisions of the Criminal Code - Article 182 (misappropriation or embezzlement committed on a large scale) and Article 362 (forgery of documents). These actions lacked substantiated evidence and were accompanied by procedural violations, including restrictions on recording the search.²⁶ As “Labor” has organized or co-organized approximately 20 strikes in Georgia in

²³ Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association, Statement: Assessment of Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association regarding dismissal of employees from the Ministry of Defense, 2025, [link](#).

²⁴ Social Justice Center, the dismissal of nearly forty miners in Tkibuli is not only unlawful but also suggests signs of retaliation against dissenting opinions, 2024, [link](#); Social Justice Center, Another Wave of Political Persecution at the Public Broadcaster: Nino Zautashvili and Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani Were Unlawfully Dismissed by Management, 2025, [link](#); Social Justice Center, The Dismissal of Davit Doiashvili from the “New Theatre” is Seen as a Punishment for his Civic Activism, 2025, [link](#); Social Justice Center, Dismissal of professors from Telavi State University on discriminatory grounds sets a dangerous precedent of persecution in the academic sphere, 2025, [link](#); Publika, A teacher says she were dismissed from Kutaisi Public School No. 6 for participating in protest rallies, 2025, [link](#).

²⁵ Social Justice Center, The Politicization of Public Service and the Dramatic Weakening of Labor Guarantees for Public Servants is Alarming - Critical Analysis of the Amendments in the Law of Georgia on Public Service, 2025, [link](#); Social Justice Center, The abolition of the Civil Service Bureau aims to strengthen political control over the public service, 2025, [link](#).

²⁶ Social Justice Center, The Signatory Organizations Express Our Concern Over the Search of the “Labor” Office and Condemn the Persecution of the Independent Trade Union, 2025, [link](#).

recent years and was an active subject in this field, the search can be considered as it aimed at marginalizing professional unions and removing them from public and civic processes. Prior to these events, “Labor” was expelled from the Georgian Trade Unions Confederation (GTUC) following a non-transparent and biased internal process, which demonstrated that the chairperson of “Labor” was targeted for openly criticizing GTUC for its problems, including its close contact with the government.

30. The right to collective bargaining was further neglected in the context of the Chiatura mining crisis, when hundreds of miners were dismissed on unjustified grounds. In March 2025, the government established a working group under the Tripartite Commission of Social Partnership. However, miners themselves were excluded from the process, which itself disregards their right to organize and is a direct violation of international labour standards.²⁷

3.3. Crisis in the Mining Sector and the Situation in Chiatura

31. The mining sector, particularly in Chiatura municipality, illustrates the cumulative impact of labour rights violations, state neglect, and the suppression of workers’ collective action. “Georgian Manganese”, one of the largest mining companies in the country, has for years been associated with systemic violations, including unsafe working conditions, unlawful dismissals, non-payment of wages, and lack of consultation with workers.
32. From 31 October 2024 to 1 March 2025, “Georgian Manganese” operated under a so-called special regime and suspended mining operations. Instead of resuming work, the company announced the complete cessation of underground manganese extraction. This decision left approximately 3,500 workers and their families without any source of income and exposed them to an imminent risk of hunger. Numerous workers reported that they did not receive even the reduced salary promised for the period prior to March (equivalent to 60% of their full wage), which represents a blatant violation of their labor rights. Many miners were already struggling with bank loans, and the accumulation of penalties due to unpaid instalments plunged their households into severe and unsustainable financial distress. Despite the clear and escalating harm faced by affected families, the state failed to take meaningful action to protect workers or provide adequate support to the local population.²⁸
33. In May 2025, following a reorganization process overseen by a management figure closely affiliated with the ruling party, approximately 1,200 miners, many of whom had participated in protests, were declared permanently dismissed.²⁹ Several miners have challenged the legality of the reorganization and dismissals before the courts, but no decision has been made yet.
34. The above-mentioned situation escalated into a broader social crisis. Protest actions included manifestations and hunger strikes, with some workers resorting to extreme forms of protest (one miner, Mirza Loladze, sewed his mouth shut). In April 2025, in relation to an incident with the director of the Shukruti mine, several protesting miners (Merab Saralidze, Achiko Chumburidze, Giorgi Neparidze and Tengo Gvelesiani) were arrested and charged with criminal offense (organizing collective violence), carrying lengthy prison sentences (they face prison sentences ranging from four to six years and six to nine years). At the time of reporting, they remain in pre-trial detention.³⁰

3.4. Labour Rights Violations in the Private Sector: Evolution Georgia and Other Cases

35. Mass violations of labour rights were also documented in the private sector. In July 2024, hundreds of employees of Evolution Georgia, an online gaming company, initiated a strike in response to unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, unfair wages, excessive working hours, and insufficient rest periods. The strike has continued with sustained worker participation.
36. State oversight bodies, including the Public Defender and the Personal Data Protection Service, found that Evolution Georgia committed multiple violations, including interference with trade union activities; discriminatory practices; and unlawful video surveillance in the workplace. In response to these

²⁷ Social Justice Center, Chiatura Miners Should be Given the Opportunity to Participate in the Working Group Addressing the Chiatura Crisis, 2025, [link](#).

²⁸ Social Justice Center, The state must immediately allocate funds to support the Chiatura miners, 2025, [link](#).

²⁹ Social Justice Center, “Georgian Manganese” Continues to Severely Violate Miners’ Labor Rights, 2025, [link](#).

³⁰ Social Justice Center, Extreme injustice and oppression have once again forced the miners of Chiatura to resort to the most extreme form of protest and severe acts of self-harm, 2025, [link](#).

violations, complaints were submitted to international accountability mechanisms, resulting in recommendations calling for improved occupational safety, fair remuneration, and meaningful dialogue with employees. This document once again confirmed the extremely harsh conditions faced by hundreds of workers.³¹

37. Similar labour disputes were reported at the Rustavi Metallurgical Plant, where approximately 300 workers protested hazardous conditions, wage stagnation, and retaliatory pressure against protest participants.³²
38. The Labour Inspection Office is mandated to play a central role in preventing and addressing labour rights violations. However, its operation remains ineffective. Moreover, in recent years, despite repeated requests from civil society organizations, including the Social Justice Center, the Office has ceased disclosing information on inspections conducted in specific enterprises, making independent evaluation of its performance impossible.

3.5. Occupational Safety and Hazardous Working Conditions

39. Violations of occupational health and safety standards remain widespread. Workplace deaths and injuries continued to represent one of the most acute labour rights challenges. Between 2021 and 2024, 139 workers died, and 1187 workers were injured at their workplaces.³³ These cases indicate ineffective enforcement despite the formal existence of a labour inspection.
40. Media documented fatal incidents across multiple sectors, particularly construction, mining, and heavy industry.³⁴ The construction sector also remained particularly dangerous, as demonstrated by the recent death of four workers during the construction of the Kvesheti–Kobi Road. These incidents underline systemic deficiencies in oversight, prevention, and accountability of state authorities and employers.

Recommendations:

- Immediately stop politically motivated dismissals in the public sector and ensure protection of civil servants against retaliation for the exercise of freedom of expression, assembly, and association.
- Review all dismissals carried out since December 2024, ensure effective judicial remedies, and guarantee reinstatement or adequate compensation in cases of unlawful termination.
- Repeal or amend regressive legislative amendments to the Law on Public Service and the Law on Fighting Corruption that weaken the security of public service employees.
- Refrain from intimidation, pressure, or harassment against independent trade unions and their members.
- Guarantee for meaningful participation of workers and their representatives in collective bargaining mechanisms, including within the Tripartite Commission of Social Partnership.
- Take measures to protect the livelihood and social security of miners in Chiatura, including payment of compensation and provision of social assistance.
- Guarantee fair trial of detained miners and ensure that criminal proceedings are not used to suppress labour protests.
- Ensure effective enforcement of labour standards in high-risk and large-scale enterprises and sectors.
- Implement effective state inspection, supervision and enforcement measures to eradicate widespread violations of labour rights in different sectors.
- Investigate workplace deaths and injuries promptly and effectively.
- Establish labour market protection mechanisms, including an unemployment insurance scheme and a minimum wage that would be in line with international labour and human rights standards.

³¹ Social Justice Center, The Swedish National Focal Point calls on Evolution to resume dialogue and engage in constructive negotiations with striking employees, 2025, [link](#).

³² Social Justice Center, The Labour Inspectorate must immediately carry out an inspection of the Rustavi Metallurgical Plant, 2025, [link](#).

³³ Labor Inspection Office, Statistics, [link](#).

³⁴ Social Justice Center, The Social Justice Center responds to the death of a worker in Zugdidi, 2025, [link](#).

4. The Failure of the State to Ensure the Right to Adequate Housing

4.1. General Policy Issues

41. The right to adequate housing remains one of the most neglected human rights issues in Georgia. It is not explicitly guaranteed by national legislation, apart from the general principle of a social state enshrined in the Constitution. There is no reliable data on the scale, causes, or forms of homelessness, nor on the needs of homeless persons.³⁵ Also, Georgia has not ratified key international instruments that would strengthen the protection of this right, including the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR, Article 31 of the Revised European Social Charter, and its Additional Protocol.
42. Despite promises to improve housing legislation (primarily within the framework of a Social Code that has never been developed or adopted), no tangible results have been achieved. While the 2024 - 2026 Human Rights Action Plan and the 2024 - 2025 Open Government Partnership Action Plan envisage³⁶ reform of housing legislation, no substantive progress has been made. Neither the general public nor organizations working in this field have been informed of any concrete steps taken or planned. As a result, the existing legislative framework remains fragmented, deficient, and inconsistent with international standards, failing even to formally recognize the right to adequate housing or to define the minimum obligations of state authorities.
43. Despite the urgent need, the Government has failed to develop a national housing strategy or action plan. Moreover, it has not only failed to fulfil the commitments contained in the 2014-2020 National Human Rights Strategy but has also entirely omitted the issue of housing from the 2022-2030 National Human Rights Strategy. This omission further demonstrates the lack of political will to address the housing crisis in a meaningful way.
44. The absence of a coherent housing policy has also resulted in a weak and ineffective institutional framework. No public authority has been assigned primary responsibility for ensuring the right to adequate housing. Consequently, municipal housing policies remain fragmented, uncoordinated, and largely ineffective, failing to respond even minimally to the scale of the housing crisis.
45. Housing policy failures disproportionately affect vulnerable groups. As of the end of 2024, 96 130 IDP families were registered, with 43 792 still awaiting resettlement. The slow pace of housing provision is particularly dangerous for families living in structurally unsafe buildings; 29 such facilities continue to house 491 families.³⁷ Eco-migrants face similar challenges, as only 37.2% (4 489 families) had been provided with housing by the end of 2024. Funding allocated for both long-term and temporary resettlement remains insufficient.³⁸ Other groups, including children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ individuals, face additional barriers in accessing adequate housing. In some cases, prolonged state neglect has led to tragic outcomes, such as the self-immolation of Zamir Kvekvekiri in January 2025 in front of the Agency for Internally Displaced Persons.³⁹ Despite such incidents, the full resettlement of IDPs appears unlikely to be achieved in the foreseeable future.
46. State policy toward homelessness remains one of the most problematic aspects of housing governance. Although the Law on Social Assistance defines a homeless person as “a person with no specific and permanent place of residence who is registered as homeless by a local self-governing body,” this definition is vague and inadequate. It excludes multiple categories of homeless persons, including those living in non-conventional or inadequate housing, individuals temporarily staying with friends or relatives, and persons with disabilities living in institutions. As a result, the definition is rarely applied in practice. As of December 2025, only 25 out of 64 municipalities had adopted special rules for the registration of homeless persons and the provision of housing.⁴⁰ However, registration criteria are neither uniform nor aligned with the essence of the right to adequate housing, leading to unequal treatment of individuals with comparable needs across different municipalities. The constitutionality of these regulations is currently being challenged before the Constitutional Court of Georgia.

³⁵ Social Justice Center, Challenges of Creating a Unified Housing Policy: An Overview of Existing Barriers and Opportunities, 2023, [link](#).

³⁶ 2024-2026 Human Rights Action Plan, Activity 12.1.2, [link](#); Open Government Georgia, Action Plan for 2024 – 2025, Activity 7.1, [link](#).

³⁷ Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia, 2024, pp. 288 - 290, [link](#).

³⁸ Ibid, pp. 291 – 292.

³⁹ Social Justice Center, “He was asking to speak, asking for someone to meet with him” – the silent protest of displaced persons and the struggle for survival, 2025, [link](#).

⁴⁰ Municipalities of Tbilisi, Sagarejo, Senaki, Samtredia, Tetritskharo, Gori, Zugdidi, Rustavi, Vani, Ambrolauri, Kharagauli, Martvili, Dusheti, Bolnisi, Adigeni, Dmanisi, Chokhatauri, Batumi, Gurjaani, Khoni, Mestia, Sighnaghi, Baghdati, Kazbegi and Lanchkhuti.

47. In the absence of adequate regulation and policy, housing-related services are largely limited to short-term and unsustainable measures, such as emergency shelters, social housing, and rent allowances, which are provided by only a small number of municipalities. These services frequently fail to offer pathways to independent living, leaving beneficiaries trapped in prolonged dependency.⁴¹ Persistent problems in social housing include severe overcrowding, lack of accessibility for persons with disabilities, and limited access to essential social services. These issues are particularly acute in Gori, Rustavi, and Ozurgeti municipalities. In Gori, structural damage to social housing buildings poses serious risks to residents' lives and health, underscoring the urgency of state intervention.⁴²
48. The housing crisis is further worsened by the absence of a public housing stock and the growing financial inaccessibility of housing, especially in major cities such as Tbilisi and Batumi.⁴³ As a result, individuals facing affordability challenges are often left with precarious choices: living on the streets; temporarily staying with relatives or friends; renting substandard housing at the expense of other basic needs, such as heating; or resorting to self-help measures, including squatting in extremely poor conditions. Informal settlements represent another form of self-help measures. The largest such settlements are in Batumi's so-called "Dream City" and Tbilisi's "Africa Settlement". In Batumi, the government pledged to gradually relocate residents to newly constructed apartments nearby; however, serious safety violations have resulted in the deaths of two minors in "Dream City" in 2025.⁴⁴
49. Another critical issue is the widespread presence of dilapidated and unsafe residential buildings, particularly in large urban areas. In the summer of 2025, the collapse of the roof of a residential building near Station Square resulted in the deaths of two individuals.⁴⁵ Despite prior awareness of the building's hazardous condition, the municipality failed to take timely measures to protect residents. The scale of the problem is alarming: according to the 2014 population census, approximately 21% of buildings in Tbilisi were constructed before 1960, while according to a statement by Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze in March 2025, up to 10 000 unsafe buildings and structures had been identified in the capital alone.

4.2. Evictions and Demolitions of Housing

50. One of the most serious obstacles to the realization of the right to adequate housing in Georgia is the deeply flawed eviction legislation and practice, which fail to comply with international human rights standards. The existing legal framework does not provide effective safeguards before (eviction prevention), during (procedural guarantees), or after (providing necessary support, such as alternative housing or social assistance) eviction.⁴⁶ As a result, evictions frequently lead directly to homelessness.
51. Although eviction cases are formally subject to judicial review, court practice remains narrowly focused on the protection of property rights. Courts primarily assess ownership and contractual obligations while systematically disregarding the right to adequate housing of persons facing eviction. Critical factors, such as the risk of homelessness, the presence of children or older persons, and the socio-economic vulnerability of affected households, are rarely taken into account.
52. The use of excessive force during evictions has become an alarming pattern. In January 2024, the eviction on Kekelidze Street (Tbilisi) was conducted in particularly aggressive manner: a family was forcibly removed from their home during winter, disproportionate force was used, and several activists were detained.⁴⁷ In July 2025, families living on Tvalchrelidze Street (Tbilisi) were evicted using excessive force, leaving elderly persons, women, and children on the street.⁴⁸ Despite the evident and urgent need, the state refused to resettle those affected and failed to provide adequate housing or effective assistance.

⁴¹ See, Social Justice Center, Practice of Providing Housing for Homeless Groups - What are the Special Needs of Women? 2022, [link](#).

⁴² Ibid; Public Defender of Georgia, Implementation of Housing Services in the Context of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2022, [link](#).

⁴³ GALT & TAGGART, Tbilisi Residential Real Estate, February 2025 Update, [link](#); GALT & TAGGART, Batumi Residential Real Estate – 2024 Overview, [link](#).

⁴⁴ Social Justice Center, The State is Responsible for the Deaths of Children in "Dream City", 2025, [link](#).

⁴⁵ Social Justice Center, The state is responsible for the tragedy that occurred near Station Square, 2025, [link](#).

⁴⁶ Social Justice Center, The Right to Adequate Housing - the Analysis of Basic Challenges, 2018, pp. 72-83, [link](#).

⁴⁷ Social Justice Center, The Social Justice Center responds to the forced eviction on Kekelidze Street and urges the state to promptly cease the planned evictions for this week, 2024, [link](#).

⁴⁸ Social Justice Center, The violent eviction of families on Tvalchrelidze Street is yet another manifestation of the state's anti-social policy, 2025, [link](#).

As of today, some of these households continue to live in extremely precarious conditions, while dozens of families across Tbilisi remain at imminent risk of similar evictions.

53. An additional and particularly problematic aspect of eviction practice concerns the demolition of housing constructed through self-help measures. The removal of individuals from such dwellings, carried out under the guise of enforcing construction or urban planning regulations, is not legally classified as eviction. Consequently, affected individuals are deprived of even the most basic procedural guarantees. Rather than aligning policy with international standards, the state has chosen to criminalize unauthorized construction, which worsens the vulnerability of already marginalized populations.
54. These systemic shortcomings have resulted in repeated instances of demolition of houses carried out in a degrading and disproportionate manner. The demolitions in Tbilisi have frequently been executed during the cold season - most notably in December 2020 and November 2025 in the Africa Settlement, January 2022 in Orkhevi, and January 2025 near Tbilisi Sea.⁴⁹ The timing of these actions significantly increases risks to life and health, making survival and access to minimally adequate housing conditions even more difficult.

Recommendations:

- Reform the legal framework to guarantee the right to adequate housing in line with international instruments and establish reliable data collection systems.
- Adopt a national housing strategy and action plan that clearly defines the state's obligations to ensure the right to adequate housing for all individuals in need.
- Develop and implement initiatives aiming at repairing or replacing structurally unsafe buildings.
- Accelerate resettlement of IDPs, eco-migrants, and informal settlers.
- Standardize registration procedures for homeless individuals and households and ensure equitable treatment across all municipalities in line with the right to adequate housing.
- Develop a comprehensive, human rights-based housing programs, which will provide rehousing for homeless persons and ensure financial accessibility of housing for low- and middle-income households.
- Amend eviction legislation to reflect safeguards before, during, and after evictions.
- Ratify the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR, Article 31 of the European Social Charter, and its Additional Protocol.

5. Environmental Rights in Georgia and the Persecution of Environmental Defenders

5.1. Systemic Challenges in Examining the Environmental Rights

55. Environmental rights in Georgia continue to face serious and systemic challenges. These include violations of the right to a healthy environment and persistent shortcomings in procedural environmental rights, such as access to information, meaningful public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters.
56. The increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters have further exposed institutional weaknesses. The devastating landslides and floods in Racha and Guria in August - September 2023, as well as the February 2025 disaster, which together claimed nearly 40 lives, highlighted critical failures in disaster risk management. Inadequate early warning systems, insufficient evacuation planning, and poor communication left local populations unprepared and significantly increased human and material losses.⁵⁰
57. Exclusion of affected communities from environmental decision-making remains a recurring pattern, particularly in the context of large-scale infrastructure, extractive, and land privatization projects. Despite public attention raised by the 2021 protests against the Namakhvani Hydropower Project, authorities have continued to approve projects without complying with legal requirements for public participation.⁵¹ In

⁴⁹ Social Justice Center, Demolition of “illegal” houses by Tbilisi City Hall – repression against the homeless, 2022, [link](#); Social Justice Center, Georgian Dream continues its anti-social policies and the repression of homeless individuals”, 2025, [link](#); Social Justice Center, Tbilisi Municipality continues its repressive and anti-social policy toward citizens, 2025, [link](#).

⁵⁰ Social Justice Center, Civil Society Organizations Demand Effective Investigation of Natural Disasters in Shovi and Guria, 2023, [link](#); Social Justice Center, The state is responsible for protecting the lives and health of the population in regions affected by heavy snowfall, 2025, [link](#).

⁵¹ Social Justice Center, Violations, Inconsistencies and Unsubstantiated Concessions: A Brief History of Namakhvani HPP Project, 2021, [link](#).

several cases, environmental decisions were issued or licenses granted without prior notification or consultation with local residents.

58. Notable examples include mineral extraction projects in Kvemo Kartli⁵² and Racha (Shkmeri),⁵³ as well as the privatization and leasing of environmentally significant areas such as state forests and protected natural monuments in Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti.⁵⁴ These decisions were frequently implemented without transparency, leaving communities to discover the consequences only after operations had begun.
59. A similar issue arose in 2022, when the Agency for Protected Areas leased Balda Canyon in Martvili Municipality (a site designated as a natural monument under Georgian law) to a private company. The local population was not informed about this decision and only became aware of the privatization after the company began fencing and developing the area.⁵⁵ Residents of Martvili have been protesting for years against the transfer of Balda Canyon to a private investor. The movement established to protect the canyon demands the annulment of the lease agreement concluded between the state, represented by the National Agency of Protected Areas, and the private company. During the protests, community members have repeatedly faced harassment, insults, and defamation from company representatives and affiliated individuals. Recently, residents of Balda have intensified their demands for the termination of the lease and have been camping in protest. The contract, signed on 29 November 2022, required the company to complete the construction of tourist infrastructure within three years, by 29 November 2025. Despite this deadline passing, authorities have not addressed the company's non-compliance nor informed residents about the future of the protected area.
60. Chiatura represents a particularly acute intersection of environmental degradation and social crisis.⁵⁶ Prolonged mining activities have caused widespread damage to housing, agricultural land, water sources, and religious sites and created unsafe living conditions in Shukruti and Itkhvisi villages. Despite long-standing demands for compensation, residents have faced delays, denial, and increasing pressure rather than effective remedies.⁵⁷

5.2. Repression and Persecution of Environmental Defenders

61. In addition to structural violations of environmental rights, Georgia has witnessed a disturbing pattern of repression against environmental defenders. Individuals and communities who challenge environmentally harmful projects or demand accountability frequently face criminal prosecution, civil litigation, intimidation, and stigmatization.⁵⁸
62. Activists and human rights organizations working on environmental issues are often labelled as “enemies of national interests” or “foreign agents,” particularly when opposing large-scale projects such as hydropower plants.⁵⁹ The government has used these narratives to discredit activists, portraying them as threats to energy security and national sovereignty, as seen in the case of protestors against the Namakhvani Hydropower Project.⁶⁰
63. Criminal prosecution has been a common tool to silence dissent. Figures from Chiatura, including Giorgi Neparidze and Merab Saralidze, were imprisoned for activities related to their activism. In addition, private companies have resorted to civil litigation to suppress opposition - for example, a mining company successfully obtained a ban on protests and seizure of property against residents of Shukruti.⁶¹

⁵² Social Justice Center, Residents of Mushevan Village in Bolnisi Protest Open-Pit Mining and Appeal to the Authorities, 2022, [link](#).

⁵³ Social Justice Center, Social Justice Center (Former EMC) and Green Alternatives Appeal Manganese Mining Licenses in Shkmeri, 2021, [link](#).

⁵⁴ Social Justice Center, Revoke the Hunting License Issued for Forests in Racha and Ensure the Right to Peaceful Assembly of Protest Participants, 2023, [link](#).

⁵⁵ Social Justice Center, Local Residents and the Social Justice Center Demand Suspension of Ongoing Works at the Balda Canyon, 2023, [link](#).

⁵⁶ Social Justice Center, Social Crisis in Chiatura: Wage Arrears to Miners Must Be Compensated Immediately, 2025, [link](#).

⁵⁷ Social Justice Center, It Is Alarming That Georgian Manganese's Responsibility for Itkhvisi Is Not Reflected in the Geological Report, 2022, [link](#); Social Justice Center, Social Justice Center and Green Alternative Assess Ongoing Developments in the Village of Shukruti, Chiatura Municipality, 2019, [link](#).

⁵⁸ Social Justice Center, The authorities' approaches to environmental opposition: disregard, discreditation, and repression, 2025, [link](#).

⁵⁹ Pirveli Arkhi, Irakli Kobakhidze: The Namakhvani HPP Project Was Well-Organized, but Protests Took Place, Strategic Facility Was Blocked with Foreign Funding and the Country Might Face Multi-Million Damages, 2 December 2024, [link](#).

⁶⁰ Ibid., Social Justice Center, Attack on Environmentalists by Authorities Has Become a Dangerous Trend, 2023, [link](#).

⁶¹ Mtis Ambebi, “Georgian Manganese” Sues Shukruti Residents and Demands Ban on Protest Near the Mine, 2024, [link](#).

64. In another case, Indiko Bzhalava, a participant in protests to protect Balda Canyon, was detained on charges of threatening the spouse of an individual affiliated with the investor company.⁶² The Senaki District Court initially imposed pretrial detention. However, evidence collected during the investigation and testimonies from eyewitnesses confirmed that Bzhalava had not committed the alleged offense. On 9 December 2025, Judge Levan Nutsubidze acquitted him.⁶³
65. Environmental defenders also face violence and harassment from non-state actors. Such attacks, often linked to activism, are intended to intimidate and deter protest. For instance, in 2024, two activists from Zodi were assaulted shortly before an environmental demonstration. Activists also experience personal harassment, including social isolation and dismissal from work; notable cases include Varlam Goletiani and Tsotne Tvaradze, who lost their jobs due to their activism.⁶⁴
66. Prominent experts have also been targeted through government-backed disinformation campaigns. Tea Godoladze, head of the Institute of Earth Sciences at Ilia State University, was subjected to a campaign launched in August 2023, which sought to discredit her professional assessments of the Shovi landslide by attacking her personal life. Such actions create a chilling effect on freedom of expression and continue to suppress public dissent on environmental issues.⁶⁵

Recommendations:

- Strengthen legal protections for environmental defenders to prevent criminalization, harassment, and retaliation related to their activism.
- Ensure transparent and participatory decision-making processes that actively involve local communities in environmental projects from the outset.
- Enforce environmental regulations and impose penalties on companies causing harm, while guaranteeing fair compensation and resettlement for affected communities.
- Introduce advanced early warning systems and strengthen disaster response planning to protect communities from environmental hazards.
- Enforce regulations and penalties for companies causing environmental damage and ensure fair compensation and resettlement for affected communities.

6. **Realization of the Right to Education and Substantial Risks Associated with the Planned Reforms**
67. The realization of the right to education in Georgia faces numerous challenges. For years, significant problems have persisted across all levels of education, including preschool, general, and higher education. At each of these stages, the population continues to encounter systemic obstacles, such as the physical accessibility of educational institutions, the quality of education provided, accessibility for children with disabilities and the quality of inclusive education, access to preschool and general education for children belonging to ethnic minorities and ensuring school safety in line with the best interests of the child.⁶⁶
68. The absence of school meal programs in general education institutions constitutes a particularly serious problem. According to a study conducted by UNICEF and Geostat, more than one-third of children (34.9%) never eat during school hours. This figure is even higher among children experiencing material and social deprivation, 44.9% of whom never eat during the school period. The reasons vary, but most commonly include the inability to purchase food at school or nearby, lack of financial resources, concerns about food quality, and other related factors.⁶⁷ Despite the evident need, a school meal program has not been introduced, and it remains unclear whether or when such a program will be implemented.

6.1. CSE Topics in the General Education System

69. Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) is poorly represented in Georgia's general education system. Despite the existence of the subject "Me and Society", comprehensive education about human sexuality

⁶² Social Justice Center, Social Justice Center Responds to the Release of Indiko Bzhalava, 2024, [link](#).

⁶³ Social Justice Center, Indiko Bzhalava, a member of the Balda Canyon movement, was found not guilty by the court, 2025, [link](#).

⁶⁴ Mtis Ambebi, Varlam Goletiani Was Dismissed from Kutaisi Traditional Music School, 2022, [link](#).

⁶⁵ Social Justice Center, Social Justice Center Expresses Solidarity with Tea Godoladze, 2023, [link](#).

⁶⁶ Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia, 2024, pp. 251 - 254, 276 – 279, [link](#); Social Justice Center, School Safety - Analysis of Safety Policy Planning and its Implementation in General Education Institutions, 2023, [link](#).

⁶⁷ UNICEF & Geostat, Child Wellbeing in Georgia, 2023, pp. 23-27, [link](#).

has not yet been implemented in schools.⁶⁸ Adolescents' knowledge about reproductive health and rights is still scarce, and students and adults lack information about their bodies, relationships, reproductive rights, and sexuality.⁶⁹

70. In 2024 Georgian Parliament adopted the law about "Protection of family values and minors", which completely prohibits the dissemination of sexually explicit information in educational institutions. All existing initiatives for the introduction of comprehensive education about human sexuality in schools are under threat. To the extent that the provision in question categorically denies students access to age- and development-appropriate, comprehensive sexuality education, as well as objective information on the diversity of sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and sex characteristics, it must be regarded as incompatible with the right to education guaranteed under international human rights standards.

71. Considering the importance of CSE and the link between the non-existence of CSE and the sexual crime rate against children, including children with disabilities, there are two pending cases⁷⁰ at the Tbilisi Court of Appeals regarding the implementation of CSE in the educational plan; however, all of them were unsuccessful in the Tbilisi City Court and were appealed by the claimant.

6.2. Announced Education Reform and Its Associated Risks

72. Following repressive policies in other spheres, the ruling party, Georgian Dream, has identified the education system as its next major target. The announced reforms affect both general (school) education and higher education and pose serious risks to fundamental rights and democratic principles. In December 2025, the concept of a general education reform was presented. The proposed changes are far-reaching and include, among other measures, the abolition of twelve-year compulsory education and the revision of school textbooks.⁷¹ The textbook reform raises particularly serious concerns. According to Givi Mikanadze (Minister of Education, Science and Youth), within the next two to three years, a single, unified textbook will be introduced in all schools, with its content determined centrally by the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth. Such centralization creates a high risk of political and ideological control over educational content. Another problematic component of the reform is the strengthening of non-formal education through the involvement of the Patriarchate and law enforcement agencies. Overall, the proposed general education reform appears to be grounded in a rigidly ideologized approach to teaching and learning, aimed at discouraging critical thinking and suppressing dissenting views toward the authorities.

73. At the same time, substantial reforms are being advanced in the higher education system. The vision for these changes was presented in October 2025. The proposed reform envisages the redistribution of faculties among state universities based on so-called "traditional profiles and historical experience," the determination of state quotas for academic programs by the Government, and changes to academic staff policies. A key element of the reform is the introduction of the principle of "one city - one faculty," which implies assigning different academic fields to different cities.⁷²

74. The reform also proposes a complete overhaul of the university funding system. Under the announced model, education at state universities would become free of charge, while state grants would no longer be available to private higher education institutions. In practice, this approach risks undermining the diversity of the higher education system and limiting students' freedom of choice. The draft legislative amendments were adopted by Parliament in December 2025 through an expedited procedure.⁷³

75. By their substance, the changes contradict the Constitution of Georgia, which guarantees academic freedom and the institutional autonomy of higher education institutions. The reforms indicate an intention to exert political control over universities, retaliate against critically minded academic institutions, and purge universities of independent professors and lecturers. Furthermore, they create significant risks of

⁶⁸ Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Visit to Georgia, A/HRC/41/45/Add.1, 2019, par. 84.

⁶⁹ Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia, Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations, Updated Edition – Part II, 2021, pp. 47 – 48, [link](#).

⁷⁰ Administrative Case #3b/3196-25; administrative case #3b/3378-24.

⁷¹ Radio Liberty, Eight key changes under Georgian Dream's general education reform, 2025, [link](#).

⁷² Publika, The government will determine student quotas and academic programs – amendments to the Law on Higher Education, 2025, [link](#).

⁷³ Parliament of Georgia, The Parliament Approved the Legal Package on Higher Education Reform, 2025, [link](#).

exclusion from higher education for many prospective students. Given that employment opportunities are concentrated primarily in Tbilisi and Batumi, the redistribution of faculties across different cities also increases the likelihood that students will be unable to secure even low-paid and precarious employment, which for many is essential to meeting basic needs.

Recommendations:

- Address systemic barriers to education at all levels by improving geographical accessibility of educational institutions, strengthening inclusive education, ensuring equal access for children belonging to ethnic minorities, and guaranteeing school safety in line with the best interests of the child.
- Establish a state-funded school meal program in general education institutions.
- Introduce CSE into general education curricula, work with teachers and heads of schools concerning implementing CSE and abolish the laws that undermine children's rights to receive CSE.
- Halt reforms that undermine academic freedom and the autonomy of higher educational institutions.
- Refrain from introducing mechanisms that create risks of ideological influence over general education.

7. Realization of the Right to Health

76. The realization of the right to health in Georgia is associated with several significant challenges. Ensuring the quality of healthcare services, their physical and infrastructural accessibility, and safety remains problematic, particularly in rural areas.⁷⁴ Affordability of healthcare services and medication also continues to be a major concern, as health-related spending and the resulting financial hardship remain acute. This burden is disproportionately concentrated among the two poorest income quintiles.⁷⁵

7.1. Right to Health and Vulnerable Groups

77. Failures within the healthcare system disproportionately affect various vulnerable groups. **Women with disabilities** face heightened vulnerability due to the lack of accessible reproductive health services, which leaves many without adequate medical care. **Children and persons with disabilities** with psychosocial or behavioral difficulties face serious barriers in accessing healthcare services, particularly emergency medical care. Medical institutions frequently refuse to provide emergency services to these patients due to stigma and the lack of preparedness and training. Such practices amount to discrimination on the grounds of disability. The absence of disability-inclusive emergency care protocols for somatic health conditions further aggravates this problem and reflects the State's failure to comply with its obligations under international human rights standards.⁷⁶ **Children living with Duchenne muscular dystrophy** also face serious challenges, as they continue to demand state funding for critically important medication that remains financially inaccessible for them. These demands have so far gone unmet.⁷⁷ In addition, **persons with Down syndrome** have been waiting for more than two years for the state approval of health monitoring and care protocols for both children and adults.⁷⁸

7.2. Mental Health Amendments and Human Rights Risks

78. The field of mental health remains one of the most overlooked areas by the government. Despite annual increases in funding, serious problems persist regarding the availability, accessibility, affordability, and quality of community-based mental health services.⁷⁹ Social stigma toward persons with mental health problems remains deeply entrenched.

79. Instead of addressing these problems, the legislative amendments adopted by Parliament at the end of 2025 further worsen the human rights situation of persons with mental health conditions. One particularly problematic change concerns the creation of a unified information database of persons with mental health

⁷⁴ Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia, 2024, p. 216, [link](#)

⁷⁵ WHO, Can people afford to pay for health care? New evidence on financial protection in Georgia, 2021, p. 45, [link](#).

⁷⁶ Appeal of Partnership for Human Rights (PHR) to the Public Defender of Georgia, August 21, 2025.

⁷⁷ Radio Liberty, 'What is my child supposed to do alone?' - On World Down Syndrome Day, we spoke with mothers of children with Down syndrome, 2025, [link](#).

⁷⁸ Radio Liberty, Parents of children with rare genetic disorders held a protest at the Ministry of Health, 2025, [link](#).

⁷⁹ Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia, 2024, pp. 238-239, [link](#).

conditions, alcoholism, drug addiction, and toxic substance dependence, which was developed and adopted without consultation with organizations of persons with psychosocial disabilities or professional associations. Under the amendments, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons, Labour, Health and Social Affairs is required to establish this database by 1 March 2026, with data supplied by medical institutions and accessible to state bodies in legally defined cases (the scope of which is unclear to the public). While the stated aim is public safety, particularly regarding weapons licensing and driving permits, the amendments disregard a human rights-based approach, establish discriminatory policies based on a history of receiving professional mental health services, and violate the principle of personal data confidentiality. Private services and diagnoses received abroad will probably not be included, which also constitutes discrimination based on the economic status of the family. Therefore, the changes will mostly affect people who have been using the State Mental Health Program, will further stigmatize and exclude them and increase the danger of political misuse of sensitive health information.⁸⁰ Additionally, the introduced changes open the possibility of expanding the sharing of health information without the person's consent beyond persons with psychosocial disabilities to other groups of persons with disabilities.

80. Another deeply concerning amendment is the introduction of the concept of “procedural incapacity” into criminal legislation, referring to defendants who, due to mental health problems, are deemed unable to participate in procedural actions requiring their personal involvement. These amendments contradict international standards, particularly Article 12 of the CRPD, which guarantees equal recognition before the law and legal capacity for PwDs.⁸¹ The changes are vague and allow for abuse of power, including forced hospitalization and compulsory treatment. The most severe risk associated with these amendments is the possibility of indefinite deprivation of liberty.

Recommendations:

- Develop disability-inclusive emergency care protocols for somatic health conditions and health monitoring and care protocols for both children and adults with Down syndrome.
- Ensure state funding for critically important medication for children living with Duchenne muscular dystrophy.
- Ensure accessible reproductive health services for women with disabilities.
- Develop concrete policies to ensure the affordability of healthcare services and medication, especially for low-income people.
- Ensure the development of accessible, high-quality, and rights-based community mental health services.
- Abolish discriminatory database based on the history of use of mental health services and prevent the political instrumentalization of mental health information.
- Repeal legislative provisions that introduce the “procedural incapacity” term and allow forced hospitalization, compulsory treatment, deprivation of legal capacity, or indefinite detention.

⁸⁰ Social Justice Center, “Georgian Dream” Continues to Stigmatize and Exclude People with Mental Health Problems, 2025, [link](#).

⁸¹ Social Justice Center, Through the Legislative Amendment, “Georgian Dream” Refuses to Recognize Persons with Psychosocial Needs as Independent Subjects, 2025, [link](#).