



**MONITORING REPORT ON COURT HEARINGS
AGAINST CIVIL ACTIVISTS AND
ON PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS**

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Monitoring Report on Court Hearings against Civil Activists and on Protest Demonstrations



The document is prepared by
HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER (HRC)

AUTHOR: KARLO SHERAZADISHVILI

EDITOR: ALEKO TSKITISHVILI

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ADDRESS:

0160, Tbilisi, 11a Gakhokidze St. III floor.

Tel: (+995 32) 237 69 50, (+995 32) 238 46 48

Email: hrc@hrc.ge

Online publications on human rights: www.humanrights.ge

Website: www.hrc.ge

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Introduction

This report reflects the results of monitoring of ongoing court trials against civil activists and human rights defenders from April to June 5, 2025. It also outlines the key findings from the observation of both organized or spontaneous gatherings and demonstrations held by public movements or groups in Tbilisi. In addition to the monitoring results of Human Rights Center, the report is also based on the information and documents obtained from public sources.

The purpose of the report is to review the violations identified in the exercise of the right to fair trial and the freedom of assembly in Georgia, to assess them from a legal standpoint and to analyze the compliance of the observed trends with national legislation and international standards.

According to the assessment of Human Rights Center, during the reporting period, numerous facts of restrictions of freedom of assembly and expression were identified. These include threats, violence, and blackmail against the participants of the demonstration; the use of force by police without legal grounds and in violation of established procedures; illegal administrative detentions, and disregard of the procedural rights of the detained persons, including the right to access to a lawyer. Additionally, a noticeable trend was the deployment of a disproportionate number of police officers and unidentified law enforcement agents during the facilitation of assemblies. In some cases, representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs reportedly issued verbal threats or insults toward protest participants.

In addition, the tendency of disproportionate number of police officers and mobilization of unidentified law enforcement officers in the facilitation process was noticeable, and in a number of cases, verbal threats or insults by representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs towards the participants of the demonstration were observed.



Continuous Protest

On November 28, 2024, after the leading party “Georgian Dream” violated the Constitution¹ of Georgia and suspended negotiations² on Georgia's integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures, Georgian citizens across the country have been protesting daily and continuously throughout Georgia³. Although the protests have been essentially peaceful each time, and vast majority of the protesters have been protesting within the framework of the law, the “Georgian Dream” government has confronted the demonstrators without warning, with excessive police force and special means⁴.

Since November 28, 2024, the state has systematically resorted to various forms of mistreatment and violence to suppress the protests. According to the information provided by the Public Defender of Georgia, between November 28, 2024, and January 28, 2025, the Public Defender’s office has identified a total of 282 alleged cases of ill-treatment. Of these, the Office recorded 81 cases based on information disseminated through the media⁵.

Testimonies from victims of violence, evidences disseminated by media outlets and collected by human rights organizations clearly indicate systemic torture by the state - involving severe physical and psychological violence aimed at punishing and intimidating the protest participants⁶.

1 Constitution of Georgia, Article 78.

2 Radio “Liberty” - Georgian Dream Refuses to Open EU-Parliamentary Negotiations until the End of 2028. 28.11.2024. link to the article: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33219304.html> - 27.05.2025.

3 TV "Pirveli" – 150th day of continuous protest. 26.04.2025. Available at: <https://tvpirveli.ge/ka/siaxleebi/politika/99828-utskveti-protestis-150-e-dge-rustavelis-gamziri-dgesats-gadaiketa> - 31.05.2025.

4 TV "Pirveli" – 150th day of continuous protest. 26.04.2025. Available at: <https://tvpirveli.ge/ka/siaxleebi/politika/99828-utskveti-protestis-150-e-dge-rustavelis-gamziri-dgesats-gadaiketa> - 31.05.2025.

5 Letter No. 25/1280 of the Public Defender's Office of Georgia dated February 15, 2025.

6 Center for Social Justice - Human Rights Crisis in Georgia After the 2024 Parliamentary Elections. 14.05.2025. Available at: <https://isfed.ge/geo/angarishebi/adamianis-uflebebis-krizisi-saqartveloshi-2024-tslis-saparlamonto-archevnebis-shemdgom> - 30.05.2025



Restrictive Legislation on Assembly and Expression in Georgia, New Trends

Despite the violent dispersal of peaceful protests and the use of excessive force against demonstrators, the protest mood in the country has not weakened. In response, the ruling party, “Georgian Dream,” has introduced repressive legislative amendments, including administrative detention extended to up to 60 days and administrative fines equated with criminal liability⁷. Notably, these legislative amendments increased administrative penalties specifically for those violations⁸ that law enforcement agencies most frequently and arbitrarily apply against peaceful demonstrators.

The frequency and arbitrary nature of these fines indicate that their sole purpose is to suppress protest and intimidate citizens with different views and protest organizers. Moreover, the practice of imposing disproportionately high fines contradicts international human rights standards. According to the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR⁹, disproportionate sanctions, including severe fines, may violate the right to freedom of assembly and have a chilling effect that discourages individuals from participating in future assemblies and demonstrations.

The legislative amendments were also criticized in a report prepared by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe¹⁰. Based on the findings of the visit to Georgia in January 2025, the Commissioner noted that “the violent dispersal of pro-European rallies and the mass violations of human rights require the government to take a number of necessary measures”, which means that it should be possible to identify law enforcement officers involved in the facilitation of protests in order to strengthen accountability; there should be effective and independent investigations into ill-treatment by law enforcement officers, including unlawful detention and other cases of violence. The report also emphasized that the actions of law enforcement agencies, particularly „in the context of restricting the right to peaceful assembly, did not comply with the principles of legality, necessity, and proportionality.”

Between November 28, 2024, and March 2025, the total amount of fines issued against certain protest participants has reached tens of thousands of GEL¹¹. Due to the lack of

7 Radio "Liberty" - "Georgian Dream" Parliament approved amendments restricting freedom of assembly and expression. 06.02.2025. Available: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33305712.html> - 31.05.2025.

8 Code of Administrative Offenses of Georgia, Article 166, Article 173, and Article 174¹

9Institute for the Development of Freedom of Information - Assessments of the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR on Repressive Changes Restricting Freedoms of Assembly and Expression. 20.03.2025. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/H5JJI> - 30.05.2025

10 Report of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/JTP1U> - 29.05.2025.

11 “Euronews Georgia”. 19.03.2025. Available at: <https://euronewsgeorgia.com/2025/03/19/jarima-5000/> - 20.05.2025

official data disclosed by state institutions, according to various reports, the total amount of fines imposed on participants of the "pro-European protests" has reached 2,000,000 GEL (approximately 720 835 USD)¹². The intensive fining of protest participants has been facilitated by widespread use of facial recognition cameras at protest sites by the Ministry of Internal Affairs¹³. This practice is perceived not only as a threat of retaliation and repression against peaceful demonstrators, but also as a harmful violation of the right to privacy and the illegal obtaining of personal data, the purpose of which is to intimidate citizens and control the future behavior of protest participants, potentially producing a chilling effect and leading individuals to self-restriction of the right to peaceful assembly.



Trial Monitoring

According to the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, "the arrest, detention, or subsequent administrative penalty of protest participants may, in the future, deter individuals from taking part in similar assemblies."¹⁴ "A chilling effect persists even when enforcement measures are later changed - for example, if fines are annulled later by the courts or if detained individuals are released."¹⁵ The chilling effect is particularly prevalent in the context of political gatherings, as their suppression generally hinders organizers and participants from planning or engaging in protests or from participating actively in opposition politics. The systematic application of such measures inevitably creates a barrier that discourages citizens from joining protests against government actions and, in general, from openly expressing oppositional views.¹⁶

Court monitoring conducted by Human Rights Center has revealed several notable trends and violations in judicial proceedings. Particularly concerning are the court decisions in administrative offense cases, which were issued without a thorough examination of the facts and were not supported by reliable evidences. Defense side frequently lacked full access to case materials, or were granted only minimal time to review them. Additionally, lawyers were often unjustifiably denied motions, which indicated subjective circumstances in decision-making.

12 GYLA, "Data from the NGO Legal Aid Network", 19.03.2025. please see:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1073876964784325&set=a.485094683662559> -24.03.2025.

13 GYLA- The Ministry of Internal Affairs uses facial recognition technologies for total control against peaceful demonstrators. 12.03.2025. Available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/saxis-amomcnobi-kamerebi-saia> 19.05.2025.

14 *Balçık and Others v. Turkey*, no. 25/02, §41, 29 November 2007.

15 *Nemtsov v. Russia*, 2014, §§ 77-78.

16 *Nemtsov v. Russia*, 2014, §§ 77-78.

The Administrative Case of Vakhushti Menabde: According to the offense report presented at the court hearing, the Ministry of Internal Affairs accused human rights defender Vakhushti Menabde of artificially blocking the road on Kostava Street, near the "Amirani" cinema in Tbilisi, on December 28, 2024, thereby violating Article 174¹, Part 4 of the Code of Administrative Offenses¹⁷.

As explained by a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs during the court hearing, a protest rally was taking place on Kostava Street at 8:00 p.m. on December 28, 2024. According to the representative, the number of participants did not require blocking of the roadway; however, despite police instructions, the protesters artificially blocked the road, thereby violating the Law on Assemblies and Manifestations.

According to the defendant, even if the road was indeed artificially blocked during the protest, responsibility would lie with the organizer of the protest, not with individual participants. Once the organizer receives a request from the police or a relevant municipal authority, they must be granted the 15-minute period defined by law to adjust the form of the assembly or manifestation. An individual protest participant is not in a position to assess whether or not they have the legal right to block a street. Moreover, according to the Constitutional Court, the necessity of blocking a roadway should not be assessed solely on the basis of rigid administrative norms, but also through objective criteria and with consideration of the specific characteristics of the street infrastructure.

Additionally, the defendant addressed the factual circumstances and explained that several hundred people participated in the protest march on Kostava Street. Given the specific infrastructure of that street (with sidewalks measuring three meters at the widest on one side, and only 1-2 meters on the other side, beyond which no sidewalk exists for about 10 meters) this number of participants was sufficient to cause disruption to traffic. Furthermore, the protesters were carrying long banners, and the purpose of the demonstration was to convey their message to the public through these banners and their shouts.

In his closing statement, Vakhushti Menabde argued that the available evidences did not demonstrate that he had violated the rules for holding assembly and manifestation. He further stated that the Ministry of Internal Affairs' demand for the protesters to cease the demonstration and refrain from exercising their rights constituted a violation of the principle of proportionality. Hence, less restrictive means could have been applied instead of imposing fines, such as police assistance in managing the flow of the protest and determining its direction.

The court heard the arguments of both parties and, after a one-day deliberation, found Vakhushti Menabde guilty of committing an administrative offense. Since the offense was committed prior to the amendments to the law (under the previous version of Article

¹⁷ Georgian Code on Administrative Offenses, Article 174¹, Paragraph 4.

174¹, Paragraph 1 of the Administrative Offenses Code, the applicable sanction was either a 500 GEL fine or 15 days of detention), the judge imposed a 500 GEL fine.

The Administrative Offense Case of M.G. concerns the artificial blocking of the roadway in front of the Parliament on January 27, 2025. According to a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, protesters gathered near the Parliament failed to comply with police instructions to use pedestrian walkways and instead, artificially blocked the road. The representative further stated that, in the context of a peaceful assembly, the number of participants did not justify the need to block traffic. By the decision of Judge Lela Mildemberger, M.G. was found to have committed an administrative offense and was fined with 5,000 GEL.

The Administrative Offense Case of G.N. The Ministry of Internal Affairs accused the citizen of artificially blocking the roadway on Rustaveli Avenue on February 2, 2025. According to G.N., prior to the road being blocked, he was standing on the sidewalk, which is also visible in the video evidence submitted by the party. G.N. also stated that due to the repressive policy implemented by the “Georgian Dream” government against protest participants, he uses the underground crossings even when the road is blocked. Following a deliberation held at the hearing, the judge announced the operative part of the decision on the spot, finding G.N. guilty of an administrative offense and issuing a verbal warning.

The Administrative Offense Case of L.Sh. The offense concerns events that took place on March 28, 2025, on “April 9” street near the Parliament of Georgia. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ report, during a rally held in front of the Parliament building, L.Sh. prevented law enforcement officers from detaining another individual accused of an administrative offense. Despite multiple warnings from police officers, L.Sh. did not comply with a lawful police request, after which he was detained.

Based on the information provided by the defendant and on video evidence presented at the court hearing, it was established that during the period of time when the MIA is accusing L.Sh. of obstructing the police in the arrest of another person, L.Sh. was already in police custody. Despite insufficient evidence, the judge announced the operative part of the decision immediately after deliberation and found L.Sh. guilty of an administrative offense, imposing a fine of 2,000 GEL.

The Administrative Offense Case of L.D. The Ministry of Internal Affairs accuses L.D. of violating Article 173, Part 2 of the Administrative Offenses Code¹⁸. According to the violation report, on April 21, 2025, a protest rally was taking place at Freedom Square near No. 2 Leonidze Street. Protesters attempted to block the road and verbally insulted the police. The police called on the demonstrators to clear the roadway. Although the

¹⁸ Georgian Code of Administrative Offenses, Article 173, Paragraph 2.

roadway was cleared, verbal insults from some protesters continued, which resulted in the administrative detention of L.D.

The defendant did not agree with the violation report and argued that the evidence presented in the case did not prove that L.D. had committed any offense. Moreover, L.D. consistently complied with police instructions and stepped off the roadway each time, which is also acknowledged by the officer who drafted the report. The arrest occurred solely because L.D. expressed concern to the police that protesters were being crushed due to the crowd pressure. In response, one of the police officers reportedly replied, “You’re talking too much,” after which L.D. was detained. A court decision on the case has not yet been issued; the case is being reviewed by Judge Koba Chagunava at the Tbilisi City Court.

The Administrative Offense Case of L.S. At the court hearing, both parties acknowledged the presented evidence as undisputed. During the explanation stage, L.S. admitted the fact of committing the alleged administrative offense and stated that on March 10, 2025, when the police were detaining his brother, he attempted to prevent the arrest and resisted law enforcement officers. Judge Manuchar Tsatsua announced the decision immediately after deliberation, finding L.S. guilty under Articles 173¹⁹ parts 1 and 2 of the Administrative Offenses Code and imposed a fine of 5,000 GEL.

The Administrative Offense Case of R.D. According to the violation report prepared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a protest rally was taking place in front of the Parliament on April 7, 2025. For approximately two hours, Rustaveli Avenue was completely blocked. After the majority of the people left, about 20 people remained at the site. The police used a loudspeaker to call on the remaining participants to empty the roadway and move to the sidewalk. Later, an individual warning was issued specifically to R.D. According to the MIA representative, some individuals did not comply with the lawful order, and proportional force was used to move them to the sidewalk. During this process, one person was detained, who was verbally insulting the police. At that moment, R.D. attempted to hinder the detention process. Despite police instructions to leave the area, R.D. did not comply with the lawful order and continued to obstruct the police with physical force.

According to the Defendant’s explanation, video footage clearly shows the exact location where R.D. was detained, which is also confirmed by witnesses. According to the lawyer, R.D. did not stand on the roadway even for a minute. He was standing on the Parliament steps, from where he was dragged away by the police. Moreover, the only evidence in the case consists of false testimonies by police officers. The case is being reviewed by Judge Zviad Tsekvava of the Board of Administrative Affairs and is currently at the stage of decision announcement.

19 Georgian Code of Administrative Offenses, First part of the Article 173, Paragraph 2 of the same Article.



Harmful Practice of Criminalizing Peacefull Assembly and Groundless Criminal Charges

During the reporting period, the use of criminal justice mechanisms against demonstrators became one of the forms of repression. Numerous criminal cases are actively being reviewed in court, related to civil activists detained during the November-December 2024 protests.

The use of criminal detention in response to protest activities has, in fact, criminalized peaceful protest and restricted the freedom of assembly. In relation to the protests held between November 2024 and February 2025, the unfounded accusations brought against the protest participants, the measures taken against them and the harsh criminal policy indicate the political persecution by the Georgian Dream government against individuals with different opinions and positions, which serves to suppress public protest²⁰.



Case of Participating in Group Violence

The case involving a group of civil activists charged with committing group violence during the protest rally in November 2024, is currently at the substantive hearing stage at the Tbilisi City Court. The case involves Andro Chichinadze, Onise Tskhadadze, Rezo Kiknadze, Guram Mirtskhulava, Luka Jabua, Jano Archaia, Ruslan Sivakov, Giorgi Terashvili, Valeri Tetrashvili, Sergei Kukharchuk, and Irakli Kerashvili. The case is being heard by Judge Nino Galustashvili of the Tbilisi City Court.

The Prosecutor's Office accuses the defendants of committing a crime under Article 225² of the Criminal Code²¹ - participation in group violence. The case concerns a large-scale protest held on November 28, 2024, in response to an unconstitutional decision by Georgian Dream's Prime Minister, Irakli Kobakhidze. According to the prosecution, "the defendants were present at the protest near the Parliament building and actively participated in the actions of a violent group, throwing various objects at law enforcement officers and thereby endangering their health."

20 Social Justice Centre- "Human Rights Crisis in Georgia After the 2024 Parliamentary Elections". 14.05.2025. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/cO8fS> - 30.05.2025.

21 Criminal Code of Georgia, Article 225²

The case is being intensively examined in court, where the evidence of the prosecution is being examined. Around ten police officers, recognized as victims in the case, have been questioned as witnesses. Despite the prosecution's active efforts, none of the police witnesses have been able to confirm that any specific defendant caused them harm²². In some cases, the witnesses were injured after some of the defendants had already been detained, or it is clearly proven that certain defendants were not even present at the protest on that day.

Furthermore, the evidence presented so far does not meet the necessary requirement for the presumption under this criminal provision, namely - for a charge of a crime committed as a group, it must be established that the individuals were connected and acted with the same intent. The prosecution is obligated to indisputably prove the connection between the defendants. However, based on the case materials, the prosecution has not presented any evidence confirming that the defendants had any agreement regarding illegal actions or even stood next to each other during the protest. The defendants only met each other during the court proceedings.



Case of Organizing, Leading, or Participating in Group Violence

Another criminal case is being considered at the Tbilisi City Court. The prosecution accuses civil activists Zviad Tsetskhladze, Vepkhia Kasradze, and Vasil Kadzlashvili of organizing group violence, while five others are charged with participating in it. At the pre-trial hearing, Judge Irakli Khuskivadze sentenced all of them to imprisonment as a preventive measure.

The case is at the substantive hearing stage, and the court is examining the prosecution's evidences. At the first substantive hearing, the defense lawyers submitted a motion to change the preventive measure and release the detainees²³. According to the defense, "the judge should not be bound by the circumstances that there are no new circumstances in the case, since the judge's decision at the pre-trial hearing to use imprisonment as a preventive measure was unfounded and illegal."

22 Radio "Liberty" - "I haven't seen, I do not remember" - What the witness police officers (didn't) say in court. 07.05.2025. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/CJJ31> - 30.05.2025.

23 Radio "Liberty" – "Judge Mchedlishvili left Zviad Tsetskhladze, Vepkhia Kasradze and the remaining 6 defendants in custody." 02.05.2025. Available: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33402914.html> - 30.05.2025.

According to the lawyers, the prosecution has not presented a single undisputable piece of evidence confirming that the defendants committed any crime, nor has it been established that the defendants organized or participated in a violent group.

Police officers who testified at the court hearings on behalf of the prosecution could not confirm that organized criminal groups were identified during the protest actions, whose unlawful acts caused their injuries. The witnesses also failed to recognize the defendants. Nevertheless, Judge Tamar Mchedlishvili rejected the defendants' motion to review their pre-trial detention.



New Standards of Restricting Freedom of Expression

Amidst the ongoing protests, the Georgian Dream party continues to impose repressive restrictions on freedom of thought and expression in Georgia. On December 13, 2024, the Georgian Dream-led Parliament passed a legislative amendments package in its third reading, according to which covering the face with a mask or by any other means became an administrative offense, punishable by a fine of 2,000 GEL.²⁴ Human rights organizations have assessed this initiative as yet another step against human rights, aimed at facilitating the use of repressive mechanisms against participants of peaceful protests.

In addition to the ban on face masks, a new offense has been introduced into the Administrative Offenses Code²⁵ in a form of Article 173¹⁶ - which criminalizes the verbal insult, abuse/curse, insulting and/or committing other offensive actions directed at a high-ranking political official of Georgia, a political officials, a state/public servant, a person equated with a public servant, and/or a civil servant during the performance of their official duties or in connection with their official duties or activities (except for cases already covered by the Criminal Code of Georgia). This offense is punishable by a fine ranging from 1,500 to 4,000 GEL or administrative detention for up to 45 days. If a person already penalized for this offense commits another offense under the same article, it will result in a fine ranging from 2,500 to 6,000 GEL or administrative detention for a period of 5 to 60 days²⁶.

24 GYLA- Through banning the wearing of masks during the assemblies, the “Georgian Dream” attempts to make people further vulnerable to the very terror it aims to establish, in order to suppress legitimate and peaceful protest - 17.12.2024. Available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/nigbis-akrdzalva> - 30.05.2025.

25 Article 173¹⁶ of the Administrative Offenses Code of Georgia.

26 Article 173¹⁶ of the Administrative Offenses Code of Georgia, Paragraph 2



Persecution of Civil Activists

Three months after the legislative changes, the Ministry of Internal Affairs initiated administrative proceedings against civil activists Lika Lortkipanidze, Magda Mamukashvili, and Tatia Apriamashvili, requesting their detention for allegedly insulting Mariam Lashkhi, a member of the Georgian Dream parliament²⁷. The case concerns an incident that took place on May 17 in a restaurant, where activists caused discomfort to Georgian Dream MPs by shouting “Freedom to the regime’s prisoners”, “Down with the rotten Russian Empire”.

Judge Manuchar Tsatsua of the Administrative Cases Chamber at the Tbilisi City Court sentenced Tatia Apriamashvili to 12 days of administrative detention. Notably, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had requested a 45-day sentence for the student. During the court hearing, the judge explained that while the words used by the students were not offensive in themselves, the context and tone in which they were delivered were considered a form of insult²⁸.

A 12-day administrative detention was also imposed on another civil activist, Lika Kavtaradze, for the same incident of insulting Georgian Dream MP Mariam Lashkhi. This case was reviewed separately by another judge of the Tbilisi City Court, Davit Tetradze, and the decision was announced on May 30²⁹.

Judge Nino Enukidze of the Tbilisi City Court sentenced Tornike Skhvitaridze to 5 days of administrative detention and fined Ani Kavtaradze 5,000 GEL. The Ministry of Internal Affairs accused them of insulting police officer Mirian Kavtaradze in the court hallway on April 17. Mirian Kavtaradze was questioned by the court as a witness during the hearing of the case of imprisoned activist and member of the “Akhali” party, Saba Skhvitaridze. During the interrogation, Tornike Skhvitaridze was in the courtroom, while Ani Kavtaradze was in the hallway. After the officer’s testimony ended, Saba Skhvitaridze’s supporters formed a so-called “corridor of shame” for Mirian Kavtaradze. In video footage released by media, shouts can be heard, including: “Slave,” “Shame in the Kavtaradze family,” “Coward,” “bastard.”³⁰

27 "Netgazeti" – "The Ministry of Internal Affairs demands the imprisonment of the activists who were sued by Mariam Lashkhi." 27.05.2025. Available at: <https://netgazeti.ge/news/775274/> - 28.05.2025.

28 TV "Pirveli" – "Tatia Afriamashvili was released by Judge Tsatsua to 12 days in custody." 30.05.2025. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/C9BGc> - 31.05.2025.

29 Radio "Liberty" – "12 days of imprisonment were imposed on a student who was sued by MP Mariam Lashkhi." 30.05.2025. Available at: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33429548.html> - 31.05.2025.

30 The court sentenced Tornike Skhvitaridze to imprisonment and Ani Kavtaradze to a fine. 30.05.2025 Available at: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33429529.html> 31.05.2025

Zugdidi District Court fined activist Mariam Sichinava with 4,000 GEL. The case involved an incident at a restaurant in Zugdidi, where she allegedly caused discomfort to the Georgian Dream MP Irakli Zarkua by shouting slogans. In connection with the same case, another activist, Keren Esebua, was fined with 3,500 GEL by Judge Nino Chabukiani of the Zugdidi District Court. In this case, the activists also addressed the Georgian Dream member with shouts: “Freedom to the regime’s prisoners” and “Shameful,” which was assessed by the Zugdidi District Court as a violation of Article 173¹⁶ of the Code of Administrative Offenses.³¹

According to the Human Rights Center, by adding a new punitive norm to the Administrative Code, the Georgian Dream government is attempting to completely restrict critical opinion in the country. This provision contradicts the Constitution³², as freedom of expression protects not only ideas acceptable to others but also expressions that may be unacceptable to other individuals. Furthermore, the state representatives should be equipped with a high level of tolerance towards offensive language and demonstrate a high level of acceptance, except in cases where such language poses an immediate risk of violence. It is clear that this amendment serves to restrict forms of political expression, prohibit criticism of the Georgian Dream representatives, and punish civil activists for expressing peaceful protest in various forms.



Conclusion

1. Since 2025, the Georgian Dream regime has completely ignored fundamental human rights, including freedom of assembly, which has been widely exercised by the Georgian people since November 28, 2024, following the announcement by the Georgian Dream government of the suspension of negotiations with the European Union. The regime has physically assaulted and systematically tortured hundreds of protesters using force and/or unknown chemical irritants, causing long-term health consequences. This is substantiated by documented evidence

31 Radio “Liberty” - Zugdidi activists, who were sued by Zarkua, were fined 3,500 and 4,000 GEL. 23.05.2025 Available at: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33422476.html> 31.05.2025

32 Georgian Constitution, Article 17

from organizations such as the IRCT and OMCT³³, later supported by six UN Special Rapporteurs³⁴.

2. The Georgian Dream government actively suppresses dissenting opinions through the adoption of repressive laws, significantly increasing fines and prison terms for administrative offenses used to persecute critical civil activists and peaceful protesters.
3. The scale of serious human rights violations, the lack of effective response to them, the biased judiciary, as well as new repressive legislative initiatives, indicate that the methods of restricting human rights and violently suppressing protests are systemic, involving all three branches of power controlled by the Georgian Dream. The investigation of human rights violations in the country is largely ineffective, fueling impunity at both institutional and individual levels and completely destroying trust in Georgia's justice system.
4. The capture of the judiciary by political elites has resulted in a lack of independence in the justice system. Courts increasingly serve the interests of the Georgian Dream, leading to biased rulings, especially in the cases of civil activists.
5. A major problem is the blatant and open support or encouragement of violence by high-ranking officials. An example of this is the fact that the President of the Georgian Dream awarded³⁵ high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the Order of Honor, which caused dissatisfaction among the majority of society. Among the awarded were also those high-ranking officials who are suspected of personally participating in mass violations of human rights or issuing unlawful orders. Unfortunately, this act indicates state endorsement of torture and violent methods.

33 OMST, Statements Georgia: Preliminary Findings on the Investigation of Torture and Ill-Treatment Against Protesters from 28 November to 20 December 2024, 24.12.2024; see: <https://shorturl.at/hYuDm> 31.05.2025

34 OHCHR, Experts, Georgia must investigate use of force by police during demonstrations, 28.01.2025; nb. <https://shorturl.at/NlpNo> 31.05.2025

35 Radio "Liberty" – "Kavelashvili awarded the Order of Honor to sanctioned high-ranking officials." 30.01.2025. Available at: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33296959.html> - 30.05.2025.