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Contact: Ireneusz Kondak
Tel: 03.90.21.59.86

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Meeting: 1563rd meeting (June 2026) (DH)

Communication from NGOs (Social Justice Center, the Georgian Young Lawyers Association and the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre) (27/04/2026) in the case of Makarashvili and Others v. Georgia (Application No. 23158/20).

Information made available under Rule 9.2 of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers for the supervision of the execution of judgments and of the terms of friendly settlements.

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Réunion : 1563e réunion (juin 2026) (DH)

Communication d'ONG (Social Justice Center, Georgian Young Lawyers Association et European Human Rights Advocacy Centre) (27/04/2026) dans l'affaire Makarashvili et autres c. Géorgie (requête n° 23158/20). [**anglais uniquement**]

Informations mises à disposition en vertu de la Règle 9.2 des Règles du Comité des Ministres pour la surveillance de l'exécution des arrêts et des termes des règlements amiables.

DH-DD(2026)585: Rule 9.2 Communication from NGOs in the case of Makarashvili and Others v. Georgia.
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DGI – Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law

Department for the Execution of Judgments of the ECHR

F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex France

e-mail: dgI-execution@coe.int

DGI

27 AVR. 2026

SERVICE DE L'EXECUTION
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27 April 2026

Rule 9(2) Submissions to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in the Makarashvili group of cases (no. 23158/20) for the CM-DH meeting 1563rd (9-11 June 2026) by the Social Justice Center, the Georgian Young Lawyers Association and the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre

I. Introduction

1. This joint communication, submitted under Rule 9.2 of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers, is presented by the civil society organisations the Social Justice Center (SJC), the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) and the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC) for the 1563rd CM-DH meeting (9–11 June 2026), in order to provide the Committee of Ministers with significant updates concerning the execution of the cases grouped under the *Makarashvili* group and to critique the Government's most recent action plan of 26 March 2026, which includes an invitation to the CM to consider the Makarashvili group of cases in view of their possible closure.

2. Since 2023, the *Makarashvili* group of cases has comprised judgments concerning violations of the rights to freedom of expression and assembly, the right to liberty and security, and the right to a fair trial in the context of public demonstrations in Georgia in recent years. This group, now consisting of six judgments, was placed under enhanced supervision by the Committee of Ministers at its 1531st meeting in June 2025, against the backdrop of a serious human rights crisis in Georgia which intensified following the 2024 parliamentary elections and the pro-EU demonstrations in late 2024 - early 2025 and led to massive suppression of a right to freedom of assembly by the authorities.

3. That crisis has been marked by an unprecedented curtailment of the fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly and association, including through systemic and organized persecution of civil activists, unjustified and arbitrary use of force against peaceful protesters, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and the retaliatory imposition of administrative sanctions. Against this background, we refer to our joint Rule 9.2 submission of last year, which examined in detail the deficient and flawed legislative framework governing administrative offences and related proceedings, as well as

developments observed between autumn 2024 and spring 2025.[1] We further refer the Committee to our Rule 9.2 submission of 23 January 2026 in the Tsintsabadze group v Georgia, which covers the issue of widespread practice of punitive, brutal ill-treatment of protesters, and invite the Committee to read it together with this submission for a full context of the repression of peaceful pro-EU protests.[2]

4. The present submission reviews the principal developments in 2025 affecting freedoms of assembly and expression directly relevant to the Makarashvili group. In particular:

    - several waves of legislative amendments regulating participation in demonstrations and assemblies, adopted by the one-party Parliament without any meaningful democratic deliberation, have effectively criminalised peaceful participation in protests, significantly narrowed the space for criticism protected under the European Convention, and substantially increased the cost of civic activism and public engagement;
    - these authoritarian laws have become a powerful instrument for the ruling party to legitimise legal repression of assemblies and facilitate the systemic persecution of activists, journalists, politicians, civil society representatives and human rights defenders;
    - controversial facial recognition technologies and extensive CCTV surveillance have been widely misused for the automatic identification of peaceful protesters, enabling their targeting and the imposition of administrative and criminal penalties, including excessive fines and imprisonment, which also resulted in strong chilling effect on protesters;
    - in this deeply alarming context, the undersigned organisations sharply criticise the Government's updated action plan, which fails to provide the statistical information specifically requested by the Committee, sets out no concrete measures taken or envisaged, and amounts to no more than formalistic compliance with its reporting obligations.

5. Finally, we respectfully ask the Committee to dismiss the Government's invitation to consider the closure of these cases as highly premature and call firmly on the authorities to repeal the legislative amendments adopted throughout 2024–2025, cease the arbitrary application of legal measures against peaceful protesters, discontinue the use of AI-based technologies for the purposes of administrative offence proceedings, provide comprehensive statistical data concerning the application of administrative and criminal legislation in the context of public demonstrations, and ensure a fully enabling environment for civil society organisations. We also recommend the Committee request the Government to submit a revised action plan for its next human rights meeting, setting out concrete measures for compliance with the Committee's recommendations and adopt an interim resolution in the event of continued non-compliance and active regressive steps.

II. Recent amendments introduced throughout 2025 – effective criminalization of peaceful protesting

[1] Rule 9.2. Communication from NGOs (Social Justice Center, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, European Human Rights Advocacy Centre) (28/04/2025) in the Makarashvili and Others group of cases v. Georgia (Application No. 23158/20) https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=DH-DD(2025)539E

[2] Rule 9.2. Communication from NGOs (Social Justice Center, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, European Human Rights Advocacy Centre) (28/04/2025) in the Tsintsabadze group of cases v. Georgia (Application No. 35403/06) https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=DH-DD(2026)179E

6. Since December 2024, legislative changes adopted in an accelerated manner by the Georgian Dream party have further restricted the right to peaceful assembly.[3] The party continued to adopt restrictive legislation affecting freedom of assembly throughout 2025 as well. The legislative changes affected laws such as the Law on Assemblies and Manifestations, the Code of Administrative Offences (CAO), the Criminal Code and relevant bylaws.

7. On 31 January 2025, the Government amended Resolution N361, adding international and domestic roads to the official list of "objects of strategic and/or special importance".[4] In practice, this change functions as a blanket prohibition on assemblies at these locations, because strategic objects are legally protected from any form of obstruction and any peaceful gathering that occupies a road can now be treated as a serious criminal act of "blockage" rather than an administrative matter. While the Government presented this as a general security measure, the amendment was adopted just one day before a large-scale demonstration planned for 2 February 2025 on the Tbilisi-Senaki-Leselidze international road.[5] This reclassification provided a specific criminal legal basis for the Prosecutor's Office to charge 8 individuals under Article 222 of the Criminal Code (seizure or blockage of an object of strategic or special importance).[6]

8. On 6 February 2025, further amendments introduced broader restrictions to the CAO and the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations, including the quadrupling of the maximum period of administrative detention from 15 to 60 days.[7] Additionally, penalties for various administrative offences, namely, disorderly conduct, vandalism, non-compliance with a lawful police order, violation of assembly and demonstration rules were increased.[8]

9. The 6 February amendments significantly intensified the punitive framework of Article 173 of the CAO (non-compliance with a lawful police order), a provision frequently used against protest participants. The updated Article increased the fine to a range of 2,000-5,000 GEL (approximately 630-1,580 EUR) and extended the maximum duration of administrative detention to 60 days, whereas the old framework

[3] For detailed information: GYLA et al., Human Rights Crisis in Georgia Following the 2024 Parliamentary Elections, 28 November 2024 – 28 February 2025, 2025, pages 127-136 (Chapter 11 - Legislative/Political Support for the State Terror: Further Worsening of the Repressive Legislation), available at: https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/HUMAN%20RIGHTS%20CRISIS%20IN%20GEORGIA%20-%20final.pdf [09.04.2026].

[4] The Government Resolution N361, dated 23.10.2024, available at: https://www.matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6296025?publication=1 [09.04.2026].

[5] Civil.ge, Ahead of Scheduled Major Protest, GD Makes Closing Highways a Crime, Police Detains Activists, 01.02.2025, available at: https://civil.ge/archives/658668#:~:text=A%20new%20decree%20issued%20by,of%20%E2%80%9CJiutebi%E2%80%9D%20activist%20group [09.04.2026].

[6] Ministry of Internal affairs, Police Detained 8 People for Attempting to Block a Highway of International Importance, 04.02.2025, available at: https://police.ge/news/politsiam-saertashoriso-mnishvnelobis-saavtomobilo-gzis-djgufurad-blokirebis-mtsdelobis-braldebit-8-piri-daakava/9346?locale=en [09.04.2026].

[7] Draft law: "On Amendments to the Administrative Offences Code of Georgia", available at: https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30044 [09.04.2026].

[8] Article 166 - Disorderly conduct; 166^2 -Vandalism; 173 - non-compliance with a lawful police order; 174^1 - Violating the rules for organising or holding assemblies or demonstrations; Article 150 – Defacement of the appearance of a territory within the administrative boundaries of a municipality; Article 150^2 – Defacement of the appearance of the Tbilisi city municipality. See: Draft law: "On Amendments to the Administrative Offences Code of Georgia", available at: https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30044 [09.04.2026].

stipulated a fine of 2,000-3,000 GEL (approximately 630-950 EUR) or a maximum detention period of 15 days.

10. A new offence for "verbal insult" of a state representative was added under Article 173[16]. The provision established administrative responsibility for verbal insults, cursing, or other offensive actions directed at a Georgian state political official, political official, civil servant during the performance of their official duties or in connection with the performance of those duties (except in cases covered by the Criminal Code). The provision serves as a blanket prohibition on insults rather than a protection of reputation and can be triggered unilaterally by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) without a claim from the allegedly insulted party. The administrative penalty for this offence is a fine from 1,500 to 4,000 GEL (Approximately 475-1,265 EUR) or administrative detention for up to 45 days. A repeated offence is punishable by a fine of 2,500 to 6,000 GEL (approximately 790-1,897 EUR) or administrative detention for a term of 5 to 60 days.[9]

11. The February 6 amendments fundamentally restricted the right to protest by broadening the definition of an "organizer" to include any active participant and requiring immediate notification even for spontaneous gatherings. Spatial restrictions were significantly expanded to prohibit assemblies inside buildings without written consent of the owner. Based on the amendments, the MIA gained the authority to clear roads or dismantle temporary structures just 15 minutes after a warning. Participants are prohibited from remaining at an assembly terminated by the MIA on the grounds of legal violations, including the wearing of masks by protesters or the use of other means to cover the face.[10]

12. Additionally, amendments to Article 174[1] (violation of assembly and demonstration rules) of the CAO effectively reversed the burden of proof by transferring jurisdiction over various assembly-related offences to the MIA, forcing alleged offenders to prove their innocence in court rather than requiring the state to prove their guilt.[11] The transfer of jurisdiction for assembly violations to the MIA effectively replaces judicial oversight, treating an officer's on-site report as an indisputable legal fact. By forcing citizens to disprove these allegations during an appeal, the state reverses the burden of proof and violates the presumption of innocence. This framework undermines fundamental rights by treating administrative sanctions as inherently criminal proceedings without the necessary legal safeguards.

13. The amendments to the Criminal Code adopted on 6 February introduced stricter penalties for actions directed against state authorities. The maximum sentence for Article 353 (Resistance, threat or violence against a protector of public order or other representative of the authorities) was increased from five to six years of imprisonment. Article 353[1] (Attacking a police officer, employee of the Special Penitentiary Service or other representative of authority or a public institution) was expanded to include additional aggravating circumstances: acts committed by a group, in the presence of a minor, or using dangerous methods like arson, which lead to more severe penalty. A new Article 353[2], was also introduced,

[9] Draft law: "On Amendments to the Administrative Offences Code of Georgia", available at: https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30044 [09.04.2026].
[10] Draft Law: "On Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Assemblies and Manifestations", available at: https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30045 [09.04.2026]
[11] Draft law: "On Amendments to the Administrative Offences Code of Georgia", available at: https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30044 [09.04.2026].

specifically addressing actions against political officials and public servants, including the threat of violence, and establishes significant penalties, such as an imprisonment of up to three years.[12]

14. In October 2025, additional amendments to the CAO and the Criminal Code further deteriorated the legal environment regulating freedom of assembly. Sanctions for several administrative offences were increased, including the introduction of administrative detention as the sole form of punishment for covering one's face during an assembly and for blocking the road.[13] Under the amendments to the Criminal Code, a person who has already been declared an administrative offender for violating the rules governing assemblies or demonstrations, or for disobeying the police, becomes criminally responsible if they commit the same act again.[14] These changes significantly undermine freedom of assembly and, in effect, criminalize the exercise of this right. The amendments were strongly criticized by the OSCE ODIHR and Moscow Mechanism, stating that the amendments raise serious concerns due to their inconsistency with international human rights obligations and should be repealed.[15]

15. On 10 December 2025, a new legislative package introduced further repressive amendments concerning the rules of assemblies.[16] These changes expanded the prior notification requirement to include gatherings on "pedestrian walkways" (sidewalks), a rule previously reserved only for transport carriageways, and transferred the authority to receive such notices from local municipalities directly to the MIA, effectively centralising the power over assemblies.[17] The amendments also prohibited the "artificial blockage" of sidewalks unless necessitated by the number of participants and granted the MIA the authority to clear these areas if they deemed the assembly could be held elsewhere. Non-compliance with the law enforcement's instructions regarding location or roadway blockage now results in up to 15 days of administrative detention (20 days for organizers),[18] which, under Article 347 of the Criminal Code, triggers criminal liability for repeat offences. By subjecting sidewalk protests to the same restrictions as roadway demonstrations, the state has systematically removed the few remaining spaces for an assembly, creating a legal mechanism for the total suppression of demonstrations.

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[12] Draft Law "On Amendments to the Criminal Code of Georgia", available at: https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30046 [09.04.2026].

[13] Draft law: "On Amendments to the Administrative Offences Code of Georgia", available at: https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/401033 [09.04.2026]; Law of Georgia on Assemblies and Manifestations", available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/31678?publication=27 [09.04.2026].

[14] Article 347 - Violation of the rules of assembly or manifestation; Article 353^3- non-compliance with a lawful order. See: Draft Law "On Amendments to the Criminal Code of Georgia", available at: https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31310 [09.04.2026].

[15] OSCE ODIHR, Urgent Opinion on the Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences and the Criminal Code of Georgia (as adopted on 16 October 2025), Opinion-Nr.: FOPA-GEO/564/2025 [ALC/TN], para 79, available at: https://www.osce.org/odihr/601503 [09.04.2026]; OSCE, Report on Developments in Georgia in Respect of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms since Spring 2024, 2026, p7-8, available at: https://odihr.osce.org/sites/default/files/documents/official_documents/2026/03/odgal0009c1%20ODIHR%20NV%2082-2026%20report_Moscow%20Mechanism%20invoked%20in%20respect%20of%20Georgia_0.pdf [22.03.2026].

[16] Draft Law: "On Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Assemblies and Manifestations", available at: https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31646 [09.04.2026].

[17] Law of Georgia on Assemblies and Manifestations", Article 5, available at: https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/31678?publication=27 [09.04.2026].

[18] Law of Georgia on Assemblies and Manifestations", Article $11^{1.}$

III. Practice of targeting civil activists through excessive fines, administrative detention, account freeze, criminal charges, including pretrial detention, and orchestrated hate speech campaigns

16. The practice of targeting civil activists in Georgia in 2025 has transformed into a systematic repression aimed to undermine protests. Through weaponizing the legislation regarding assemblies and demonstrations, the Georgian Dream party created a highly punitive environment, where a basic peaceful expression, such as standing on a sidewalk[19] or clapping[20], results in arbitrary arrest. Beyond the threat of detention, these measures have imposed a severe financial burden on the protesters and journalists, as the bank accounts of individuals who are unable to pay high administrative fines are being frozen.[21] Prior to the Orthodox Easter holiday in 2026, several protesters and journalists reported the summary freezing of their bank accounts. These measures were imposed without prior notice, with individuals becoming aware of the restrictions only through automated banking alerts.[22]

17. On 2 February 2025, the law enforcement officers violently dispersed a peaceful demonstration. 22 out of 25 demonstrators who were detained indicated ill-treatment by law enforcement officers.[23] 8 individuals were charged under Article 222 of the Criminal Code (seizure or blockage of an object of strategic or special importance) for attempt to block highway to hold a rally on the territory of Agmashenebeli alley.[24] The state's effort to undermine freedom of expression and assembly demonstrated a new pattern of gender-based violence against women. Public officials use sexist and misogynistic language, even call female journalists and demonstrators a "different breed" rather than citizens exercising their rights.[25] By promoting anti-gender rhetoric, the state created a permissive environment for hate speech and turned green light for police officers to subject female protesters to sexual harassment, physical violence, and gender-based abuse.[26] Additionally, arrested female

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[19] Civil Georgia, First Protester Sent to Detention in 'Sidewalk' Protest Case, 23.01.2026, available at: https://civil.ge/archives/718382 [09.04.2026].

[20] Video shows the arrest of the student and activist Luka Gogia for clapping hands, available at: https://x.com/AnnaGvarishvili/status/1903158770739581411 [09.04.2026].

[21] OC Media, Bank accounts seized from over 12 Georgian protesters, 05.02.2026, available at: https://oc-media.org/bank-accounts-seized-from-over-12-georgian-protesters/ [09.04.2026].

[22] Civil Georgia, Protesters, Journalists Report Frozen Accounts Over Unnotified 'Road Blockage' Fines, 14.04.2026, available at: https://civil.ge/archives/730435 [21.04.2026].

[23] Public Defender, Public Defender's Representatives Visit Detainees, 03.02.2025, available at: https://www.ombudsman.ge/eng/akhali-ambebi/250203042524sakhalkho-damtsvelis-rtsmunebulebma-dakavebulebi-moinakhules [24.04.2026]. AP Archive, At least 20 people arrested at rally in Tbilisi as protesters demand new Georgian society, 08.02.2025, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WF679DFI_0o [09.04.2026]. The Chief of Special Task Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs - Zviad Kharazishvili (Khareba), kicked a detainee, which later was fined in amount of 2000GEL,available at: https://x.com/JAMnewsCaucasus/status/1886090982430523566[09.04.2026]. https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33303099.html [09.04.2026].

[24] Ministry of Internal Affairs, Police Detained 8 People for Attempting to Block a Highway of International Importance, 04.02.2025, available at: https://police.ge/news/politsiam-saertashoriso-mnishvnelobis-saavtomobilo-gzis-djgufurad-blokirebis-mtsdelobis-braldebit-8-piri-daakava/9346?locale=en [09.04.2026].

[25] Formula, "Where do you see women here? Not a single one is a woman, I don't know, they're some other breed" — Kakha Kaladze, available at: https://www.youtube.com/shorts/YABklNyHyOw [22.04.2026].

[26] Public Defender's Statement on Increased Cases of Hate Speech against Women and Minors, 29.08.2025, available at: https://ombudsman.ge/eng/akhali-ambebi/sakhalkho-damtsvelis-gantskhadeba-kalebisa-da-arasrultslovanebis-mimart-sidzulvilis-enis-gakhshirebul-shemtkhvevebtan-dakavshirebit [09.04.2026]; OC Media, 'You ₾100 whores' — police obscenity and violence against women protesters in Georgia, 13.02.2025, available at: https://oc-media.org/you-100-whores-police-obscenity-and-violence-against-women-protesters-in-georgia/ [09.04.2026].

demonstrators were subjected to sexist insults and threats of sexual violence, as well as humiliating strip searches. These abuses not only violate Georgian law, which prohibits full undressing during searches, but also international human rights standards aimed at safeguarding human dignity and protecting people from gender-based violence.[27]

18. In September 2025, GYLA requested statistical information from the MIA and the Tbilisi City Court regarding the number of cases initiated under Articles 174[1] (5) and 173[16] of the CAO.[28] They have not provided the data, however, information from the NGO Legal Aid Network and Hotline indicates that between November 2024 and September 2025, over 8500 calls were received. Administrative proceedings have been initiated against about 2000 individuals for participating in assemblies and demonstrations on various grounds. 544 individuals have been detained on administrative grounds.[29] Although this information shows a high number of administrative offence-related proceedings, it is not complete, as the statistics are based only on information received through the legal aid network of non-governmental organizations.

19. The amendments to the CAO adopted in October 2025 were followed by a new wave of arrests of protest participants. According to the MIA's statement dated 26 October 2025, "*the employees of the Ministry have detained 60 participants of the rally in past 3 days*".[30] According to data as of 1 November 2025, published by online media following the October legislative amendments, "*the MIA detained over 130 individuals within 15 days, at least 57 of whom were sentenced to administrative detention*".[31] Unlawful arrest of the protest participants was often accompanied by ill-treatment.[32] To date, there are 2 cases, where individuals are detained on criminal grounds for repeated protest-related offences.[33]

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[27] Amnesty International, Georgia: Women protesters are targeted with escalating violence and gender-based reprisals, 23.05.2025, available at: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/05/georgia-women-protesters-are-targeted-with-escalating-violence-and-gender-based-reprisals/#:~:text=Instead%2C%20women%20in%20Georgia%20have,people%20from%20gender%2Dbased%20violence [27.04.2026].

[28] GYLA's letter of September 18, 2025 to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Nგ-04/52-25; GYLA's letter of September 18, 2025 to the Tbilisi City Court, Nგ-04/51-25.

[29] Results of the activities of the Legal Aid Network of Non-Governmental Organizations, available at: https://www.facebook.com/GYLA.ge/posts/pfbid0Eb3V4x6tv6Uv57arVPpXFuWppNoos3vbeXXtyRPe2WurWgtDfrjfNK1HfxZKJGU7l [09.04.2026].

[30] Ministry of Internal Affairs, Statement, 26.10.2025, available at: https://police.ge/news/shinagan-sakmeta-saministros-gantskhadeba-30/10078 [09.04.2026].

[31] Publika, Post regarding detentions in October 2025, available at: https://www.instagram.com/publikaenglish/p/DQe2KVRDtEp/?img_index=3 [09.04.2026].

[32] Public Defender's Report, 2025, page 77, available at: https://ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2026040108450417707.pdf [09.04.2026]. Georgia Today, Public Defender: Allegations of police mistreatment persist despite drop in protest detentions, 01.04.2026, available at: https://georgiatoday.ge/public-defender-allegations-of-police-mistreatment-persist-despite-drop-in-protest-detentions/ [09.04.2026].

[33] The first case was recorded in November, 2025 and the second one in March, 2026. See: Civil Georgia, Protester Faces Up to One Year in Jail After Police Arrests Him for 'Repeat Road-Blocking'. 01.11.2025, available at: https://civil.ge/archives/709260 [09.04.2026]; OC Media, Second Georgian faces criminal charges for minor protest-related offences, 20.03.2026, available at: https://oc-media.org/second-georgian-faces-criminal-charges-for-minor-protest-related-offences/ [09.04.2026].

20. After legislative amendments of October 2025, the police began increasingly stopping and searching citizens, then unlawfully arresting, drawing up protocols and confiscating items from individuals wearing masks near the Rustaveli Avenue and Freedom Square.[34]

21. The use of criminal prosecution mechanisms against activists, which is aimed not only at identifying and preventing specific possible crimes, but also at suppressing the right to freedom of assembly and expression, is not an isolated violation of rights, but also contains an element of political motive/hidden intent. In 2024-2025, in the context of protests, 69 individuals have been charged on criminal grounds. Additionally, 10 activists have been charged under various criminal law norms. In the context of October 4 events, criminal investigation began against 66 people. They are mostly charged with organizing group violence, attempting to seize and block strategic and special-importance facilities as a group, and resisting the police.[35]

Protest on Melikishvili Avenue and the use of informal violent groups against the protesters

22. During and outside of the protests, there have been cases of targeted attacks by informal criminal groups, the so-called "Titushkas", on journalists, protest participants and opposition figures.[36] The members of the informal criminal groups are unknown individuals, who are widely known government-hired perpetrators.[37] The involvement of such individuals in violent actions on behalf of the state is a state tactic to use violence to intimidate protest participants and journalists who cover protests.[38]

23. In 2025 there were a number of incidents involving attacks on protest participants by violent third parties. Notably, on May 5, activists returning from a demonstration were attacked by unknown individuals near an elevator in an apartment building and they were sprayed with pepper spray and

[34] Based on available reports, on 18 October 2025, police arrested several participants of a protest on Rustaveli Avenue in Tbilisi, *"Lara Nachkebia was arrested for standing on the sidewalk with a scarf."*, 19.10.2025, available at: https://www.interpressnews.ge/en/article/143277-based-on-available-reports-on-october-18-2025-police-detained-several-participants-of-a-protest-on-rustaveli-avenue-in-tbilisi/ [09.04.2026].

[35] GYLA, Criminal Cases of High Public Interest that Give Rise to a Risk of the Presence of a Political Dimension, 2026, available at: https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/CRIMINAL%20CASES%20OF%20HIGH%20PUBLIC%20INTEREST.pdf [09.04.2026].

[36] During the protests against the "Russian Law" in the spring of 2024, unknown persons met the participants of the protest, the organizers and their family members near their homes or on the street, where they were severely beaten, which also did not result in any response from the law enforcement agencies, which further incited and expanded the scope of violence. The violence by punitive groups also took place during the protests related to the elections.
For detailed information: GYLA, Georgia: Human Rights Amidst the Russian Law Human Rights 60 Days Following the Revival of the Foreign Influence Transparency Bill, 2024, page 8, available at: https://gyla.ge/files/Human%20rights%20Amidst%20the%20russian%20law.pdf [09.04.2026]; https://gyla.ge/en/post/araformaluri-sadamsjelo-jgufebi-gyla-ganckhadeba [09.04.2026].

[37] On 31, May 2024, MP Dimitri Samkharadze, a member of the Georgian Parliament and the "Georgian Dream" uploaded a video of unidentified individuals on his Facebook page, which showed vandalism on the offices of the organizations with critical views, available at: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=423357193946251 [09.04.2026].

[38] GYLA et al., Human Rights Crisis in Georgia Following the 2024 Parliamentary Elections, 28 November 2024 – 28 February 2025, 2025, page 108, available at: https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/HUMAN%20RIGHTS%20CRISIS%20IN%20GEORGIA%20-%20final.pdf [09.04.2026].

green paint.[39] On June 22, a car was driven into a rally, injuring a participant,[40] and on September 8, informal groups targeted demonstrators and journalists on Melikishvili Avenue.[41]

24. The events of 8 September represent a grave violation of peaceful assembly and indicate a systemic failure by the state to exercise its positive and negative obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. The organized groups associated with the "Georgian Dream" party appeared from the nearby territory of the party's election headquarter. They physically and verbally assaulted peaceful demonstrators and media representatives.[42] Despite the presence of police officers, no measures were taken to intervene, and no immediate arrests were made, even when objects were thrown at the officers themselves.[43] Video evidence indicates a possible affiliation between certain perpetrators and law enforcement officers.[44] This failure to act, combined with indications of alignment with violent groups and the MIA's initial characterization of the incident as a "mutual clash",[45] contributes to a climate of impunity, thereby encouraging non-state actors to employ criminal methods against peaceful assemblies.

25. The organized groups associated with the "Georgian Dream" party appeared from the nearby territory of the party's election headquarter. They physically and verbally assaulted peaceful demonstrators and media representatives.[46] Despite the presence of police officers, no measures were taken to intervene, and no immediate arrests were made, even when objects were thrown at the officers themselves.[47] Video evidence indicates a possible affiliation between certain perpetrators and law enforcement.[48] This failure to act, combined with indications of alignment with violent groups and the MIA's initial

[39] OC Media, Anti-government protesters in Tbilisi pepper sprayed and pelted with dye, 06.05.2025, available at: https://oc-media.org/anti-government-protesters-in-tbilisi-pepper-sprayed-and-pelted-with-dye/ [09.04.2026].
[40] OC Media, Car plows into anti-government protesters in Tbilisi, 23.06.2025, available at: https://oc-media.org/car-plows-into-anti-government-protesters-in-tbilisi/ [09.04.2026].
[41] Radio Liberty, Georgian Opposition Protesters Gather Without Incident A Day After Violent Clashes, 09.09.2025, available at: https://www.rferl.org/a/georgia-tbilisi-opposition-protest/33526071.html [09.04.2026].
[42] Civil Georgia, Protesters, Journalists Assaulted, Injured at Kaladze Campaign Office, 08.09.2025, available at: Protesters, Journalists Assaulted, Injured at Kaladze Campaign Office – Civil Georgia [09.04.2026].
[43] Netgazeti, A bottle thrown from the "Dream" office hits a police officer in the face. The bottle was filled with water - no one was arrested, 09.09.2025, available at: https://www.instagram.com/reel/DOYF8jKDqgf/?igsh=MWwycW1rYWF4dm9jaQ%3D%3D [09.04.2026].
[44] In one of the videos is shown, how a police officer is taking away a baton from an armed violator. Earlier the perpetrator has used the baton to beat a demonstrator. The violator tells the policeman "I am on your side" and the officers answers that he "will put the baton in the car", available at: https://www.instagram.com/reel/DOXD6gFjVP3/?igsh=eGJoa2Nqd2xlaWc%3D [09.04.2026]; https://www.facebook.com/reel/2526699837695452 [09.04.2026]. https://www.instagram.com/reel/DOXD6gFjVP3/?igsh=eGJoa2Nqd2xlaWc%3D[09.04.2025].
[45] Ministry of Internal Affairs, Statement, 08.09.2025, available at: https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1076352818006884&set=a.230631755912332 [09.04.2025]
[46] Civil Georgia, Protesters, Journalists Assaulted, Injured at Kaladze Campaign Office, 08.09.2025, available at: Protesters, Journalists Assaulted, Injured at Kaladze Campaign Office – Civil Georgia [09.04.2026].
[47] Netgazeti, A bottle thrown from the "Dream" office hits a police officer in the face. The bottle was filled with water - no one was arrested, 09.09.2025, available at: https://www.instagram.com/reel/DOYF8jKDqgf/?igsh=MWwycW1rYWF4dm9jaQ%3D%3D [09.04.2026].
[48] In one of the videos is shown, how a police officer is taking away a baton from an armed violator. Earlier the perpetrator has used the baton to beat a demonstrator. The violator tells the policeman "I am on your side" and the officers answers that he "will put the baton in the car", available at: https://www.instagram.com/reel/DOXD6gFjVP3/?igsh=eGJoa2Nqd2xlaWc%3D [09.04.2026]; https://www.facebook.com/reel/2526699837695452 [09.04.2026]. https://www.instagram.com/reel/DOXD6gFjVP3/?igsh=eGJoa2Nqd2xlaWc%3D[09.04.2025].

characterization of the incident as a "mutual clash",[49] contributes to a climate of impunity, thereby encouraging non-state actors to employ criminal methods against peaceful assemblies.

26. Furthermore, high-ranking officials of the Georgian Dream party supported the perpetrators of the violence and verbally assaulted the demonstrators and journalists.[50] Namely, the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia Shalva Papuashvili stated: *"Today, already for the third time, titushki* supported by the German Ambassador, chanting fascist slogans, have attacked the Tbilisi election HQ of the Georgian Dream. Supporting extremists during the election campaign from the foreign ambassador is an example of election interference and a blatant violation of the Vienna Convention [on Diplomatic Relations]*." [51] Moreover, MP Dimitri Samkharadze, confirmed that the violence was an act of revenge against the protesters' demonstration.[52]

IV. Absence of effective judicial oversight in administrative cases - court practices in 2025

27. The Government's recent action plan alleges that the violations identified by the Court in the cases joined under the Makarashvili group do not disclose systemic problems, however, the Court has established that judicial overview over the administrative offence cases as well as available remedies are systematically deficient in Georgia, both in terms of practice and existing procedure.[53] Further to that, the number of the cases in this group are increasing steadily year after year reaching six cases, and the CM acknowledged the existence of such problems at its 1531st meeting by placing this group under enhanced supervision. The Committee called on the authorities to take measures to align judicial practices concerning administrative arrests and convictions in the context of demonstrations with Convention standards, ensuring adequate safeguards and effective remedies against arbitrary and disproportionate application of the law, as well as provide relevant statistical data and analysis.

28. Unfortunately, the Government fails to provide any measures taken or planned in order to comply with the Committee's recommendations. The recent Action Plan also failed to provide any statistical data, including even basic figures illustrating the percentage of protest-related administrative cases decided in favour of the MIA, the percentage of successful appeals, and the number of first-instance decisions overturned on appeal. This information is particularly important in relation to Articles 166 (minor hooliganism), 173 (disobedience to a police officer's lawful order), and 174[1] (breach of the rules for organizing and holding demonstrations) of the CAO. Similarly, statistical data on criminal cases which were based on the repeated violation of the above Articles of the CAO, is essential to assess the intensity and impact of these amendments. Of particular significance would be data on the number of cases in which the courts imposed administrative detention or fines, as well as the number of cases in which individuals were found guilty, but only a verbal warning was applied. Instead, the Government refers to two administrative cases as illustrative examples of Convention-compliant practice, without

[49] Ministry of Internal Affairs, Statement, 08.09.2025, available at: https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1076352818006884&set=a.230631755912332 [09.04.2025]
[50] Civil Georgia, Protesters, Journalists Assaulted, Injured at Kaladze Campaign Office, 08.09.2025, available at: https://civil.ge/archives/699865 [24.04.2026].
[51] The Statement of Shalva Papuashvili, 08.09.2025, available at: https://www.facebook.com/shpapuashvili/videos/1387502092721521 [09.04.2025]
[52] The Statement of Dimitri Samkharadze, 08.09.2025, available at: https://www.facebook.com/dito.samkharadze/posts/pfbid02prsfXV3DUdWi8Bm1ae66ti1ghZfjuapX1wR6js12FThmmoj4isyahatZWJF5burMl [09.04.2025]
[53] Dzerkorashvili and Others v. Georgia (app. no. 70572/16), 2 March 2023, §§77-84; Matchavariani v. Georgia (app. no 46852/21), 20.05.2025, §§61-68

explaining their context or factual background. This cannot be regarded as compliance with the Committee's recommendations and calls for an appropriate response from the CM.

29. The need for effective judicial review of police conduct has become particularly acute following a series of legislative amendments adopted by Parliament throughout 2025, enforcement of which, by itself, already undermines the core of the right to fair trial guarantees. Namely, these amendments have curtailed judicial discretion by excluding the possibility of imposing less restrictive alternative sanctions, introduced lengthier administrative detention as a default penalty for certain conduct classified as administrative offences, and provided for criminal imprisonment where an individual has a prior record of committing such offences. As noted in the OSCE/ODIHR opinion prepared in response to the October 2025 amendments, when the conduct protected under international law (including wearing a facial mask, peaceful participation in assemblies deemed unlawful or obstructing roadways) is subjected to criminal liability after the automatic imposition of two administrative sanctions, carrying imprisonment of up to two years in case of repetition, without any judicial assessment of the underlying facts, violates the presumption of innocence.[54]

30. In this context, the undersigned organisations reiterate their submissions set out in their previous communication, in which they criticised the absence of effective judicial remedies in administrative cases and the persisting deficiencies in practice. These shortcomings include a lack of reasoning in court judgments, the shifting of the burden of proof onto alleged offenders in breach of the presumption of innocence, and the undue weight accorded to police testimonies.[55] During 2025, such judicial proceedings, in which the outcome appears predetermined for both parties (the MIA and the protester) have become a powerful instrument of retaliation and repression of civic activists by the authorities. For instance, as reported by the Public Defender Office (PDO) of Georgia, between 13 December 2024 and 30 November 2025, the Tbilisi City Court had finalised the examination of 1,732 cases concerning alleged violations of Article 174[1] of the CAO, namely breaches of the rules governing the organisation and conduct of demonstrations (with higher number of similar cases underway). While comprehensive statistics on the outcomes of those proceedings are unavailable due to the Government's failure to provide it, in the cases of our beneficiaries, the domestic courts have not dismissed a single offence case or found any demonstrator not liable.

31. To illustrate the generic nature of the court judgments in these cases, it is sufficient to examine the judgments delivered in respect of SJC's two beneficiaries and future applicants before the European Court. One such beneficiary, Giorgi Chanturia, was administratively fined by the MIA on more than 70 occasions in 2025 for allegedly artificially blocking the road, which in practice referred to his participation in daily marches that had consistently been coordinated with, and known to, the police in advance. All of those fines were upheld by the domestic courts, including by the Tbilisi Court of Appeal. As a result, he has been ordered to pay 5,000 GEL in respect of each instance, amounting to more than 350,000 GEL (approximately 110,000 Euros), for peaceful participation in protests which caused no harm to any individual or entity. In those proceedings, the courts did not attempt to provide individualised reasoning as to the elements justifying the imposition of such penalties in each case, including whether a sufficient number of participants were present on the roadway, the duration of the

[54] OSCE/ODIHR Urgent Opinion on the Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences and the Criminal Code of Georgia (as adopted on 16 October 2025), p. 27
[55] Rule 9(2) Submissions to the CM in the Makarashvili group of cases (no. 23158/20) for the CM-DH meeting 1531 (10-12 June 2025) by SJC, GYLA and EHRAC, 30.04.2025 https://hudoc.exec.coe.int/?i=004-62629

march, whether the police had been notified of any potential traffic disruption, or whether the participants occupied only the road necessary in light of their number rather than blocking the entire roadway. Instead, relying solely on CCTV recordings which merely demonstrate the applicant's participation in the marches and without conducting an individualised assessment of each incident, the courts routinely endorsed the position of the MIA and imposed cumulative fines in a blanket manner.[56] As a result, due to his inability to pay the fines, his bank accounts were frozen.

32. In another case, Giorgi Bulia was sentenced to two days' administrative detention for standing on a pedestrian sidewalk for several minutes during a relatively small daily demonstration (which gathered maximum of 500 individuals) on Rustaveli Avenue held on 17 December 2025. The MIA did not present any convincing evidence that his presence significantly interfered with the rights of other citizens or caused any substantial disruption to public life. Without assessing relevant factors, such as whether the demonstrators had notified the police of the planned protest in advance (which they had), the precise scope of the pedestrian sidewalk (as the sidewalk in front of the Parliament is not strictly confined from the area near the Parliament), the duration of the applicant's presence, the number of demonstrators involved, or the actual impact on public order and daily life, the court imposed a custodial sanction. Even in cases where the MIA submits video evidence showing that an alleged offender was present at the relevant location on the relevant date, the domestic courts have failed to explain why such conduct was classified as the artificial blockage of a roadway or pedestrian sidewalk.[57] Most importantly, in the event of any repeated presence on the allegedly prohibited sidewalk, the applicant would be subjected to criminal prosecution and a penalty of up to one year's imprisonment, causing a serious chilling effect on the enjoyment of freedoms of assembly and expression.

V. Misuse of facial recognition technologies by police and absence of effective remedies against unjustified biometric data processing practices

33. In 2025, as a part of the systemic repression against the peaceful and continuous protests, the police have largely relied on CCTV cameras and facial recognition technologies (FRT) to rapidly identify protesters, target them and impose unjustified administrative and criminal penalties for alleged artificial blocking of roads or sidewalks, or for other purported violations of rules governing participation in assemblies.

34. In particular, in December 2024, "112 - the Public Safety Management Center" (112 Center), - a legal entity within the MIA structure, procured 30 surveillance cameras manufactured by the Chinese company "Dahua Technologies", equipped with facial recognition capabilities, for a total value of 85,000 GEL. The procurement was justified by damage sustained by existing surveillance cameras on Rustaveli Avenue during the 2024 winter demonstrations.[58] In January and February 2025, the "112 Center" procured additional 135 surveillance cameras by the same company for a total amount of 485,877 GEL.[59] These cameras were installed across Rustaveli Avenue, the central location of the

[56] Decision N4/9400-25 of the Tbilisi City Court, 18.11.2025, annex 1
[57] Decision N4/13445-25 of the Tbilisi City Court, 10.02.2026, annex 2
[58] Radio Liberty, "112 purchased 30 cameras with facial and emotion recognition amid protests near Parliament", 14.12.2024 https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33239681.html [16.04.2026]
[59] Civil Idea, "Georgian Dream's Surveillance of Protesters through Chinese Cameras", 14.03.2025 https://civicidea.ge/en/georgian-dreams-surveillance-of-protesters-through-chinese-cameras/ [16.04.2026]

ongoing demonstrations.[60] In parallel, in January 2025, Tbilisi City Hall procured 121 surveillance cameras of the same manufacturer, for approximately 3 million GEL, however, it is unclear whether these cameras were installed exclusively on Rustaveli Avenue or elsewhere in Tbilisi.[61] To understand the ratio of the number of installed cameras to the area, for example, only on the façade of the Parliament building, more than 40 surveillance cameras have been installed.[62] "Dahua Technology" has been included on the United States sanctions list since 2019 due to its involvement in mass and targeted surveillance practices, including their reported use by the Chinese authorities against the Uyghur population.[63]

35. As regards the FRT program used by the MIA for the purposes of identifying individuals after their photos are captured in the CCTV cameras, although no official confirmation has been provided, media reports indicate that the technology deployed by the MIA since 2021, is the "Polyface" – a program developed by the company "Papillon Systems," a controversial company reportedly linked to Russian security services and headquartered in Moscow.[64] It is noteworthy that, although this system has been in use since 2021, its large-scale deployment for biometric identification appears to have been triggered by the public demonstrations in 2025.

36. While it is not publicly known how many times the MIA has used FRT technologies to identify protesters and draw up administrative offence protocols in 2025, as reported by the PDO, between November 2024 and October 2025, the MIA issued 8200 administrative offence protocols under Article 174[1] of the CAO (breach of the rules governing public assemblies).[65] Based on GYLA's and SJC's practice of providing legal aid to protesters, it appears from casefiles before domestic courts that the absolute majority of such protocols were issued on the basis of identification through FRT program. This indicates that the MIA processes large volumes of biometric data of individuals, thereby significantly exacerbating the risks associated with such intrusive technologies.

37. Unfortunately, there is no effective oversight over such intrusive and unjustified biometric data processing practices by the MIA neither before the national data protection institution, nor – before the courts. The Personal Data Protection Service (PDPS) – a supervisory body responsible for the monitoring of compliance of data processing practices, failed to properly examine the above practices by the MIA. In particular, the PDPS did not assess the lawfulness and necessity of real-time video surveillance on the Rustaveli Avenue, despite indications based on video material used in administrative proceedings, that individuals were subject to tracking and behavioural monitoring during

[60] OC-Media, "Georgian Dream is watching: how AI-powered surveillance is used against Tbilisi protesters," 29.05.2025 https://oc-media.org/georgian-dream-is-watching-how-ai-powered-surveillance-is-used-against-tbilisi-protesters/ [16.04.2026]
[61] Radio Liberty, "Tbilisi City Hall purchased 121 video surveillance cameras", 14.02.2025 https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33314941.html [16.04.2026]
[62] Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Mass Surveillance of Demonstrations and Inadequate Oversight by the Personal Data Protection Service, 2025, p. 5
[63] Baker Mackenzie, "US Government Adds 28 Chinese Entities Associated with Human Rights Violations and Abuses", 14.10.2019 https://sanctionsnews.bakermckenzie.com/us-government-adds-28-chinese-entities-associated-with-human-rights-violations-and-abuses/#:~:text=On%20October%209%2C%202019%2C%20the,license%20requirement%20to%20such%20entities [16.04.2026]
[64] Civil.ge, "Media: Georgian Police Use Russian, Belarusian Software for Forensics Databases", 25.01.2023 https://civil.ge/archives/522504 [16.04.2026]
[65] PDO, Annual Human Rights Report, 2025, p. 185 https://ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2026040108450417707.pdf

demonstrations, and that a large number of high-resolution cameras continuously monitored a relatively confined protest area.[66]

38. As regards the processing of biometric data by the MIA through the FRT program, although the PDPS conducted an inspection, it did not find any violations.[67] This conclusion was reached despite the following:

- the MIA lacks an adequate legal basis for the processing of biometric data - Article 9 of the Personal Data Protection Law (PDP Law) does not permit such processing for administrative offences, such as the alleged artificial blocking of a road, which does not constitute a level of threat to public order capable of justifying the large-scale use of sensitive data by police;
- while the protection of public order may constitute a legitimate aim, the processing fails to meet the requirement of necessity - the identification of alleged offenders could have been achieved on the spot through less intrusive means, such as requesting identification documents and drawing up administrative offence reports, without resorting to AI-based technologies;
- the MIA failed to conduct a data protection impact assessment (DPIA), contrary to its obligation under Article 31 of the PDP Law, which requires such an assessment where processing is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, in particular where it involves large-scale monitoring of publicly accessible areas and the processing of biometric data for identification purposes;
- the MIA did not adopt a specific legal instrument regulating the processing of biometric data, as required by Article 9(2) of the PDP Law, instead it relied on fragmented safeguards contained in various legal acts.

39. As a result, the PDPS dismissed the complaints submitted by the data subjects requesting control over the lawfulness of their biometric data processing by the MIA, arguing that it had already had inspected MIA practices and had found no violation.[68] Subsequently, on 1 March 2026, the PDPS was abolished by the Parliament without any substantial discussion, and its data protection functions were added to State Audit Service of Georgia, which is a body responsible for efficient spending of public funds by state institutions, and a number of staff at the data protection departments was decreased three times.[69] This decision is in clear breach of Georgia's obligations under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement to establish independent data protection supervisory body, and amounts to the abolishment of already formal and weak execution mechanism for the data protection practices, especially by law enforcement services.

40. As regards the judicial review of the PDPS decisions concerning the MIA's biometric data processing practices, the SJC lodged appeals on behalf of at least five data subjects before the Tbilisi City Court between September 2025 and January 2026. However, the courts have not yet commenced examination of these complaints. Furthermore, where lawyers and protesters submitted motions in the course of administrative proceedings requesting judges to assess the lawfulness of the MIA's biometric data

[66] Letter of the Personal Data Protection Service to Social Justice Center, 08.08.2025, annex 3
[67] Inspection Conclusion of the Personal Data Protection Service, 29.07.2025, annex 4
[68] Response of the Personal Data Protection Service to the data subject's complaint, 27.01.2026 annex 5
[69] SJC, "Disintegrated, Captured, Abolished – Fate of Georgia's Independent Supervisory Institutions Under Authoritarianism", 26.12.2025 https://socialjustice.org.ge/ka/products/dashlili-mitatsebuli-gaukmebuli-sakartvelos-damoukidebeli-sazedamkhedvelo-institutebis-bedi-avtokratizatsiis-pirobebshi [16.04.2026]

processing and to exclude evidence obtained on that basis, such motions were dismissed, further demonstrating the merely formal nature of these proceedings.

41. This manifestly ineffective supervision is especially concerning given the fact that in most cases where the protesters have been fined for artificially blocking the roadway or sidewalks, the only evidence in the case presented by the MIA are the CCTV camera recordings and the report drawn up by the MIA officer noting that the alleged offender was identified via "special electronic program" (i.e. FRT program). Therefore, the Courts rely on the evidence obtained unlawfully to impose fines or administrative imprisonment against them, which by their nature and intensity, amount to criminal sanctions. In practice, having regard to the punitive and sweeping protest laws and practices outlined above, the use of this technology effectively enables the authorities to prosecute an unlimited number of individuals merely on the basis that they were identified as present in the vicinity of a protest.

42. Such an uncontrolled and pervasive surveillance in public spaces, where covering one's face is itself a punishable act and protesters are subjected to constant monitoring, creates an Orwellian environment in which individuals expressing political views cannot reasonably expect to do so without state retaliation. The knowledge that they may be identified, tracked and recorded in police databases generates fear of repercussions, including harassment and continued surveillance, discourages participation in protests and marches, and produces a serious chilling effect on the exercise of the freedoms of expression and assembly.

VI. Alarming and deteriorating working environment for CSOs and human rights defenders

43. The year 2025 marked a further escalation of repression and persecution directed against Georgian civil society organisations and human rights defenders. These developments were accompanied by the deliberate creation of a hostile operating environment, as well as sustained discreditation and disinformation campaigns targeting independent organisations and their international partners, including the European Union. This repression particularly targeted those NGOs and HRDs who monitored and documented demonstrations, and represented protesters who were arrested, ill-treated during court trials.

44. In 2025, Parliament adopted the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), introducing criminal sanctions for non-compliance with burdensome registration, reporting, self-labelling and inspection requirements imposed on organisations designated as "foreign agents". Its enforcement was initiated by the Anti-Corruption Bureau, subjecting Social Justice Center and other six CSOs to extensive financial, confidential client-lawyer information as well as sensitive personal data requests with retrospective effects.[70]

45. Following the freezing in March 2025 of the bank accounts of five crowdfunding organisations, under the guise of criminal investigation into sabotage for their support for protesters in paying administrative fines, the authorities extended these measures in August 2025 to a further seven organisations, including Social Justice Center, by freezing their bank accounts on similar grounds and summoning their heads

[70] SJC, "Authoritarian laws are now being used against us - but we remain steadfast in our fight for human rights!", 19.06.2025 https://socialjustice.org.ge/en/products/avtoritaruli-kanonebis-aghsruleba-chvens-mimartats-daitsqo-vagrdzelebt-adamianis-uflebebistvis-brdzolas

for mandatory interrogation. These actions resulted in the de facto paralysis of the affected organisations, including the vacating of offices, suspension of ongoing projects and dismissal of staff.[71]

46. In 2025, the Law on Grants was amended several times, introducing a governmental pre-approval mechanism for foreign grants, creating a serious and, in practice, insurmountable obstacle for organisations perceived as undesirable to access international funding.[72] In February 2026, as a continuation of their efforts, the GD Parliament adopted another set of amendments to the Law on Grants and Criminal Code, which significantly expanded the definition of grants, placing under state control and criminalizing any individual's political self-expression if that person receives financial resources from a foreign citizen or legal entity. In addition, anyone employed by a foreign-funded organization will be prohibited from holding membership in a political party for a period of 8 years. Legislative restrictions, financial transparency requirements, and monitoring obligations established for political parties are further expanded and extended to persons who are not political parties but, by their participation in political life, resemble political parties.[73]

47. In 2025 and 2026, further retaliatory measures targeting NGO representatives, human rights defenders and independent researchers included the emerging concerning practice of summoning them for mandatory interrogation by the State Security Service (SSS) for human rights work, human rights speech and including cooperation with international organisations. For instance, the former Human Rights Program Director (Currently Chairperson of GYLA) Tamar Oniani and Human Rights Program employee, together with other activists, were questioned by the SSS in connection with their participation in a BBC investigative documentary concerning the alleged use by the MIA of prohibited chemical compounds during the dispersal of demonstrations in November–December 2024.[74] Tina Khidasheli and Giorgi Kandelaki were similarly interrogated in relation to research published in cooperation with international partners concerning the alleged links between the Georgian Government and the Iranian state.[75] The Head of the Democracy Research Institute, Ucha Nanuashvili, was also questioned following a public interview in which he stated that he had provided information to the OSCE Moscow Mechanism opened in January 2026 concerning the alarming human rights developments in Georgia.[76] Such practices send a clear message to others to self-censor and refrain from cooperation with international human rights institutions, while demonstrating a new and harsher

[71] Civil.ge, "Authorities Freeze Bank Accounts of Seven NGOs in 'Sabotage' Criminal Probe", 27.08.2025 https://civil.ge/archives/698002

[72] SJC, "Amendments to the Law "On Grants" Aim to Destroy Georgian Civil Society", 17.04.2025 https://socialjustice.org.ge/en/products/grantebis-shesakheb-kanonshi-gatarebuli-tsvlilebebis-mizania-kartuli-samokalako-sazogadoebis-ganadgureba-shefaseba

[73] SJC, "Georgian Dream" Is Effectively Destroying Political Freedoms - An Analysis of the Planned Amendments to the Law on Grants and Other Legislation", 02.06.2026 https://socialjustice.org.ge/en/products/kartuli-otsneba-praktikulad-anadgurebs-politikur-tavisuflebebs-grantebis-shesakheb-kanonisa-da-skhva-sakanonmdeblo-aktebshi-dagegmili-tsvlilebebis-analizi

[74] Civil.ge, "Georgian State Security Service Summons Those Featured in BBC Report", 03.12.2025 https://civil.ge/archives/713372

[75] Civil.ge, "SSSG Summons Pundits Following Allegations on Iranian Recruitment in Georgia", 07.03.2026 https://civil.ge/archives/724028

[76] Georgia: FIDH Vice President Ucha Nanuashvili summoned and interrogated over cooperation with OSCE, 30.03.2026 https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/georgia-fidh-vice-president-ucha-nanuashvili-summoned-and

phase of repression against human rights defenders likely to intensify further. Additionally, this practice demonstrates securitization of human rights work by labelling it as a state security issue.

48. As a result of these sustained and strategic measures, pursued against Georgian civil society by the ruling party since 2023, the operating environment for organisations, including for those who work to promote and defend freedom of assembly, has deteriorated dramatically. This has significantly undermined their capacity to provide the CM with Rule 9 submissions concerning the human rights situation in the country and to advocate for compliance with rule of law standards, including under the Makarashvili group. The continuing escalation of repression indicates the ruling power's clear intention to persist these methods until critical voices are effectively silenced. If left without adequate response, these developments risk creating a situation in which no organisation remains able to engage with the CM or contribute to the execution process of the Court's judgments.

VII. Recommendations

49. During the past year, Georgian society has witnessed an alarming and unprecedented deterioration of the legislative framework governing freedoms of assembly and expression. The manner in which successive legislative packages were adopted, together with their arbitrary and disproportionate application in practice, strongly indicates that their purpose is not the protection of public order, but the elimination of civic space for criticism of the ruling power and the complete silencing of peaceful gatherings, clearly indicating their true intentions. In circumstances where all the state institutions have been captured or supervisory mechanisms dismantled, independent media outlets are being shut down, and civil society organisations are subjected to systemic persecution, the role of international institutions, including the Committee of Ministers, in deterring the consolidation of authoritarianism in Georgia has become paramount.

50. The above developments do not only indicate the failure to comply with the Makarashvili group, but they also indicate the very active, deliberate, well considered actions by the Georgian authorities to the opposite direction, clearly refusing to comply with the Court's judgments and the Committee's respective recommendations. Accordingly, the undersigned organisations respectfully request the Committee of Ministers to examine this case in the wider context of suppression of freedom of assembly, including through ill-treatment of protesters, and call firmly on the authorities to:

- repeal the amendments severely affecting freedom of assembly adopted throughout 2024–2025 to the relevant legislative acts, with a view to bringing domestic law and practice into conformity with the European Convention and the Court's case-law;
- cease the arbitrary and disproportionate application of legal measures against peaceful protesters, media representatives and civic activists;
- provide comprehensive statistical data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the common courts concerning the application of the CAO and relevant criminal law provisions in the context of public demonstrations, and ensure the public accessibility of such information;
- immediately cease the processing of biometric data and the use of AI-based technologies for the purposes of administrative offence proceedings and the identification of alleged offenders, which creates a strong chilling effect on the exercise of Article 11 rights;
- ensure a fully enabling environment for civil society organisations, as key partners of the Council of Europe in advancing human rights standards within its jurisdiction, including by

DH-DD(2026)585: Rule 9.2 Communication from NGOs in the case of Makarashvili and Others v. Georgia.
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ceasing investigation into alleged sabotage and lifting account freeze measures against CSOs, repealing the FARA Law and the TFI Law and the recent amendments to the Law on Grants.

We respectfully recommend that the Committee of Ministers request the Government to submit a revised action plan, within a clear timeframe, setting out concrete measures envisaged to comply with the Committee's recommendations and, in the event of continued non-compliance, adopt an interim resolution in respect of Georgia and consider other available measures.

Tamta Mikeladze	Tamar Oniani	Ramute Remezaite
		Implementation Lead
SJC	GYLA	EHRAC







List of Annexes

1. Decision N4/9400-25 of the Tbilisi City Court, 18.11.2025, annex 1
2. Decision N4/13445-25 of the Tbilisi City Court, 10.02.2026, annex 2
3. Letter of the Personal Data Protection Service to Social Justice Center, 08.08.2025, annex 3
4. Inspection Conclusion of the Personal Data Protection Service, 29.07.2025, annex 4
5. Response of the Personal Data Protection Service to the data subject's complaint, 27.01.2026 annex 5