

PERSONALIZED LAWMAKING IN GEORGIA AS A MEANS OF UNJUSTLY RESTRICTING RIGHTS



A REVIEW OF RESTRICTIVE
LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS
ADOPTED SINCE 2024

PERSONALIZED LAWMAKING IN GEORGIA AS A MEANS OF UNJUSTLY RESTRICTING RIGHTS

A Review of Restrictive Legislative Amendments Adopted Since 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Authoritarians often attempt to consolidate their power by adapting the law, a tactic particularly effective in weakening the very institutions meant to hold powerful rulers accountable.¹

Laws adopted by ruling elites through the legislature to strengthen their authority or persecute political opponents can rightly be considered personalized legislation. Personalized legislation can operate in two directions: on the one hand, it may be designed to improve the legal situation of a specific person or group of persons, effectively tailoring the legislation to benefit the ruling elite; on the other hand, by personalizing the law, the ruling elite may seek to neutralize politically undesirable individuals and thereby “clean up the political field.”

Since 2024, the ruling political party has attempted to consolidate its power by repeatedly amending existing legislation. This document outlines the forms of personalized legislation in the Georgian context. Frequently, these changes were characterized by expedited lawmaking,² which in Georgia means adopting legal amendments within a very tight time-frame—specifically, within one week.³ The period from April 3, 2024, to February 20, 2026, is reviewed and analyzed below. **During this timeframe, 304 laws were initiated and adopted by the legislative body through the expedited procedure.**

Some were introduced as part of legislative packages, while others took the form of individual amendments. Several of these acts restricted various fundamental rights, and in many cases, the targets of these amendments were participants in the protests following the 2024 parliamentary elections. To illustrate the trend of personalized legislation, an analysis of the relevant facts is provided below.

¹ Landau, D., E., *Democratic Erosion and Constitution-Making Moments: The Role of Transnational Legal Norms, Constitution-Making and Transnational Legal Order*, edited by Gregory Shaffer, Tom Ginsburg and Terence C. Halliday, Cambridge University Press, 2019, 234.

² Kapanadze, N., Alaverdashvili, G., expedited adoption of laws, *Georgian Young Lawyers Association*, 2022, 32-36.

³ Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia, Article 117, Paragraph 2.

I. PERSONIFIED VIOLENT LAWMAKING IN GEORGIA

1. RUSSIAN LAW (GEORGIAN LAW “ON TRANSPARENCY OF FOREIGN INFLUENCE”) - DATE OF ADOPTION: MAY 28, 2024

The Georgian Dream initiated the draft law of Georgia on “Transparency of Foreign Influence” on April 3, 2024, and adopted it in the third reading on May 14.⁴ President Salome Zurbishvili exercised her veto power and returned the law to Parliament with motivated remarks on May 18, 2024.⁵ According to the President, “This law cannot be improved. The law is unconstitutional in its entirety, therefore un-Georgian, un-European and undemocratic.”⁶ She proposed that Parliament repeal the law one day after its enactment.⁷ Parliament overrode the veto, and the law was finally adopted on May 28, 2024, where it remains in force.

The law establishes a discriminatory and stigmatizing registry for non-governmental and media organizations that receive more than 20% of their annual funding from foreign sources. Under the law, such organizations must register as “organizations that carry the interests of a foreign power” and submit relevant declarations. Failure to comply with the registration or reporting requirements results in heavy financial sanctions that may ultimately render these organizations unable to function. The law also subjects them to intensive monitoring, allowing the monitoring body to request from any person—including individuals—information containing any secrets (except state secrets) and personal data, including special categories of personal data.⁸

The law has been strongly criticized at both the international and national levels, including by the Venice Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR, which have concluded that it fails to comply with democratic standards and human rights law, including the rights to freedom of expression, association, privacy, and the prohibition of discrimination.⁹

Due to its similarity to the laws in force in Russia, the public dubbed it the Russian law. The introduction of the law led to large-scale, peaceful protests in April–May 2024, which were violently suppressed by the authorities.¹⁰

Sixteen media organizations, 120 non-governmental organizations, and four individuals filed a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights on October 17, 2024,¹¹ challenging the “Russian law” and its severe consequences. NGOs, media organizations, and individuals argue before the Strasbourg Court that the “Russian law” violates rights protected by the European Convention on Human Rights: freedom of association (Article 11), freedom of expression (Article 10), the right to respect for private and family life (Article 8), the right to non-discrimination (Article 14), the right to an effective remedy (Article 13), and the scope of permissible restrictions on rights (Article 18).

The Court began considering the case in an unprecedentedly short period of time and admitted it for examination under all articles.¹² Moreover, the correspondence sent by the Court indicates that it may be granted the status of a case with significant impact—a designation reserved for cases involving particularly important issues of human rights violations.¹³

2. HOMOPHOBIC/TRANSPHOBIC LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE - ADOPTION DATE: SEPTEMBER 17, 2024

The Georgian Dream initiated the Law on Family Values and Minors on June 4, 2024, and on September 17, 2024, it adopted the third reading of the Law on Protection Family Values of Minors and related amendments to 18 legislative acts, including the Administrative Offenses and Criminal Codes.¹⁴ The adopted laws encourage homophobia and transphobia, discriminatory, unjustified restrictions on fundamental human rights, including freedoms of expression and assembly, and censorship of activist, creative, and scientific activities. At the same time, they provide for administrative and criminal sanctions that, in fact, criminalize activism, scientific activities, and trans-specific healthcare.¹⁵ The laws contradict,

⁴ See <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/28355>, updated: 11.05.26.

⁵ Motivated Questions of the President of Georgia, No. 07-1/32/10, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/361894>, updated: 11.05.26.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ GYLA, “Georgia: Human rights Amidst the russian law”, 2024, available at: <https://gyla.ge/files/Human%20rights%20Amidst%20the%20russian%20law.pdf> updated: 11.05.26.

⁹ Venice Commission, Georgia - Urgent Opinion on the Law of Georgia on Transparency of Foreign Influence, issued on 21 May 2024, CDL-AD(2024)020, updated [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2024\)020-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2024)020-e), OSCE ODIHR, Georgia: Urgent Opinion on the Law “On Transparency of Foreign Influence”, 2024, Opinion-Nr.: NGO-GEO/506/2024 [NR], updated <https://odihr.osce.org/odihr/569922>, Updated 11.05.26.

¹⁰ GYLA, “Georgia: Human rights Amidst the russian law”, 2024, available at: <https://gyla.ge/files/Human%20rights%20Amidst%20the%20russian%20law.pdf> updated: 11.05.26.

¹¹ GYLA, “Georgia: Human rights Amidst the russian law”, 2024, available at: <https://gyla.ge/files/Human%20rights%20Amidst%20the%20russian%20law.pdf> updated: 11.05.26.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ The legislative package and related documents are available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/28721>, updated: 11.05.26.

¹⁵ Georgian Young Lawyers Association responds to discriminatory legislative amendments directed against human rights and democracy, 20.09.2024, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/saqartvelos-akhalgazrda-iuristta-asociacia-diskriminaciu-adamianis-uflebebis-da-demokratiis-tsinaaghdmdeg-mimartul-sakanonmdelo-cvilebebs-ekhmaureba>, updated: 11.05.26.

among other things, obligations arising from the implementation of decisions of the European Court of Human Rights. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has also called on the state to repeal them.¹⁶

It is noteworthy that prior to this legislative package, on April 3, 2024,¹⁷ the Georgian Dream initiated a draft constitutional law with identical content. Like the legislative package adopted on September 17, 2024, it was also sharply criticized for its inconsistency with human rights law, including from the Venice Commission¹⁸ and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.¹⁹ As a result of the lack of a constitutional majority in the parliament, the Georgian Dream did not adopt this constitutional law.²⁰

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE CODE OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFENSES AND THE LAW OF GEORGIA “ON ASSEMBLIES AND MANIFESTATIONS” - ADOPTION DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2024

The draft amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses and the Law of Georgia “On Assemblies and Manifestations” were submitted to the Bureau on December 9, 2024, and were adopted by Parliament in an expedited manner on December 13.²¹ The amendments provided for a number of restrictions, such as a ban on covering the face with a mask or other means during assemblies, a ban on laser or other means of intense radiation at assemblies, an increase in sanctions for violations of the rules of assemblies and manifestations and violations related to protests, and an expansion of the grounds for administrative detention.²²

A blanket ban on covering the face at assemblies is incompatible with international standards on freedoms of assembly and expression.²³ In addition, by disproportionately increasing sanctions for actions related to protest, the authorities aimed to intimidate the population. It is noteworthy that since then, sanctions have become even stricter, and with subsequent legislative amendments, new offenses have emerged that are still actively used against protest participants.

The amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses and the Law on Assemblies and Manifestations, introduced in December 2024 and later in February 2025, were sharply criticized by both the Venice Commission²⁴ and the OSCE/ODIHR.²⁵

Against this background, the explanatory notes attached to the draft laws included in the package do not justify the necessity of their adoption in an expedited manner.²⁶

4. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON CIVIL SERVICE - ADOPTION DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2024

Amendments to the Law on Civil Service were initiated on December 4, 2024, and adopted on December 13, 2024 in an expedited manner.²⁷ The explanatory note states that the basis for the expedited consideration is the implementation of the government program.²⁸ The amendment touched on a number of issues provided for in the Law on Civil Service and created an effective mechanism for intimidation and political cleansing of civil servants.²⁹

¹⁶ 1507th meeting (17-19 September 2024) (DH) - H46-9 Identoba and Others group v. Georgia (Application No. 73235/12), available at: [CM/Del/Dec\(2024\)1507/H46-9](https://www.coe.int/cm/Del/Dec(2024)1507/H46-9), updated: 11.05.26.

¹⁷ The draft constitutional law and related files are available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/28840>, updated: 11.05.26.

¹⁸ Venice Commission, Georgia, Opinion on the Draft Constitutional Law on Protecting Family Values and Minors, CDL-AD(2024)021, 2024, available at: [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2024\)021-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2024)021-e), last updated: 11.05.26.

¹⁹ Committee on the Rights of the Child, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth reports of Georgia, 30.05.2024, CRC/C/GEO/CO/5-6, par. 16. Available: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g24/088/87/pdf/g2408887.pdf>, last updated: 11.05.26.

²⁰ Georgian Young Lawyers Association responds to discriminatory legislative amendments directed against human rights and democracy, 20.09.2024, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/saqartvelos-akhalgazrda-iuristta-asociacia-diskriminaciul-adamianis-uflebebis-da-demokratiis-tsinaaghddeg-mimartul-sakanonmdelo-cvilebebs-ekhmaureba>, updated: 11.05.26.

²¹ Legislative package, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/29793>, updated: 19.02.26.

²² GYLA, “Georgian Dream” is trying to introduce undemocratic and repressive amendments to the legislation, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/represuli-sakanonmdelocvilebebi-gyla>, updated: 19.02.26; GYLA, What amendments will be made to the Code of Administrative Offenses to restrict freedom of assembly? Georgian Young Lawyers Association, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/ra-tsvilebebi-shedis-administraciul-samartaldargevata-kodeqssh>, updated: 19.02.26.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Venice Commission, Georgia, Urgent Opinion on Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences and the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations, CDL-PI(2025)004, 2025, available at: [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-PI\(2025\)004-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-PI(2025)004-e), last updated: 04.05.2026.

²⁵ OSCE ODIHR, Urgent Opinion on the Amendments to the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations, the Code of Administrative Offences and the Criminal Code of Georgia (as Adopted on 6 February 2025), 2025, available at: <https://cdn.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/d/2/587466.pdf>, last updated: 04.05.2026.

²⁶ Explanatory note on the draft law of Georgia “On Assemblies and Manifestations” on amendments to the Law of Georgia, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/373185>; Explanatory note on the draft law of Georgia “On Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses of Georgia”, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/373179>, updated: 19.02.26.

²⁷ The draft law is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/29794>, updated: 19.02.26.

²⁸ Explanatory note on the draft law of Georgia “On Amendments to the Law of Georgia “On Public Service”, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/373193>, updated: 19.02.26.

²⁹ GYLA, Accelerated amendments to the Law on Public Service serve to increase pressure on civil servants and further politicize the public service, 16.12.2024, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/sajaro-samsaxuris-shesaxebkanoni-cvilebebi>, updated: 04.05.2026.

With the amendments, the head of the primary structural unit of the civil service and his deputy became persons employed under an administrative contract (until now they had the status of professional civil servants), which significantly simplified the unjustified dismissal and arbitrary appointment of persons holding this position.³⁰ In addition, the guarantees for the protection of civil servants in the conditions of reorganization were significantly weakened.³¹

It is noteworthy that since the end of December 2024, a large-scale process of dismissing employees for various reasons has begun in public institutions.³² According to the 2025 report of the Professional Union of Public Servants, the number of people dismissed from public service exceeded 1,200.³³ This indicates that the legislative body has the resources to abuse its authority and can instrumentalize the law.

5. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON THE SPECIAL STATE PROTECTION SERVICE - ADOPTION DATE: DECEMBER 13, 2024

The draft amendments to the Law on the Special State Protection Service were initiated on December 4, 2024 and were adopted by the Parliament on December 13, 2024 in an expedited manner.³⁴

According to the amendments,³⁵ the continuation and maintenance of state protection for the President of Georgia, the Prime Minister of Georgia, and the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia depends on the Constitutional Court establishing a violation of Article 48 of the Constitution of Georgia. It is noteworthy that the Constitutional Court established a violation of Article 48 of the Constitution for the 5th President of Georgia, Salome Zurbashvili, in 2023, and the Georgian Dream failed to mobilize enough votes in Parliament to terminate her powers.³⁶ The amendment should be considered a personalized law against the 5th President of Georgia, despite the fact that the norm refers to other officials in addition to the President.³⁷

6. AMENDMENTS TO THE CODE OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFENSES AND THE LAW OF GEORGIA "ON ASSEMBLIES AND MANIFESTATIONS" - ADOPTION DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2025

Another package of amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses and the Law on Assemblies and Manifestations was initiated on January 29, 2025, and adopted by Parliament in an expedited manner between February 3–6, 2025. The amendments included a significant increase in the term of administrative detention and fines (including a fourfold increase in the maximum term of administrative detention to 60 days).³⁸ In addition, the changes included transferring violations of the assembly rules to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as a result reversing the burden of proof in court and imposing it on the violator, worsening the rules of personal examination, expanding the concept of organizer, banning temporary structures, transferring the powers related to the prohibition of assemblies to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which previously belonged to the municipality, and prohibiting obstruction of the movement of people.³⁹

The changes also prohibited holding an assembly or demonstration in a closed space without the written consent of the owner.⁴⁰ This was a reactionary response to the protests taking place in universities at that time.⁴¹

The amendments added to the list of places where gatherings were prohibited bridges, tunnels, overpasses, and such transport hubs as determined by the municipality, the disruption of which would cause substantial damage to the normal functioning of enterprises, institutions, and organizations and/or significantly impede the movement of traffic flows.

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Ibid

³² Assessment of the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, Human Rights Situation in Georgia in 2025, December 10, 2025, p. 43, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/adamianisuplebebisagartveloshi-2025-GYLA>, updated: 04.05.2026.

³³ Batumi residents, more than 1,200 civil servants were fired – "But the critical mood has not gone anywhere", 16.09.2025, available at: <https://batumelebi.netgazeti.ge/slideshow/587084/?fbclid=IwY2xjawOC9HJleHRuA2FibQlxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzIxNzgz4MjA>; See also: 3 more civil servants speak out about being dismissed on political grounds, available at: <https://netgazeti.ge/news/758366/>; 3 more employees have been fired from Tbilisi City Hall, available at: <https://netgazeti.ge/news/767652/>; Obedient public sector? - Release in one sentence, available at: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%AF%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%9D-%E1%83%A1%E1%83%94%E1%83%A5%E1%83%A2%E1%83%9D%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C-%E1%83%92%E1%83%90%E1%83%97%E1%83%90%E1%83%95%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1%E1%83%A3%E1%83%A4%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%A3%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98/33269956.html>, Updated: 19.02.26.

³⁴ Website of the Parliament of Georgia, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/29794>, updated: 04.05.2026.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ GYLA, "Georgian Dream" is trying to introduce undemocratic and repressive changes to the legislation, 12.12.2024, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/represiuli-sakanonmdeblo-cvlilebebi-gyla>, updated: Updated: 04.05.2026.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ The legislative package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30044>, updated: 19.02.26.

³⁹ GYLA, Georgian Dream declares many aspects of the right to protest illegal - accelerated amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses, 05.02.2025, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/qartuli-ocneba-protestis-uflebis-bevr-aspeqts-zgudavs>; GYLA, Repressive legislative amendments to the Law on Assembly and Manifestation adopted in the third reading, 07.02.2025, available at: <https://www.gyla.ge/post/represiuli-sakanonmdeblo-cvlilebebi-saias-shefaseba>, updated: 05.05.2026.

⁴⁰ GYLA, Repressive Legislative Amendments to the Law "On Assembly and Manifestation" Adopted in Third Reading, 07.02.2025, Available at: <https://www.gyla.ge/post/represiuli-sakanonmdeblo-cvlilebebi-saias-shefaseba>, Updated: 05.05.2026.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² The explanatory note justified this change with the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Kudreviš and Others v. Lithuania*.⁴³ However, in addition to the manipulative interpretation of the standard established in this case and the neglect of important factual and legal circumstances that made this interpretation irrelevant, the more recent case law of the European Court of Human Rights, in particular the decision *Geylan and Others v. Turkey*⁴⁴ (in this case, the demonstrators were holding a demonstration on one of the main roads. The police began to disperse the demonstration immediately, a few minutes after the demonstration began and less than 20 minutes after the disruption of traffic. Although the demonstrators had been warned by the police several times beforehand, the European Court considered that the disruption of daily life was not of such a degree as to justify rapid intervention by the police), is more relevant.⁴⁵

According to the Venice Commission, “the new rules introduced by the amendments contain a number of vague and broadly worded provisions, which give the authorities too wide discretion in their application. This reduces the predictability of the legal framework and undermines legal certainty in the exercise of fundamental freedoms. The heterogeneous and vague wording of the norms increases the risk of their abuse. In addition, the necessity and proportionality of the various restrictive measures envisaged in the amendments are not properly justified. The new strict prison sentences, as well as the significant increase in fines imposed for administrative offenses, appear excessive and are likely to have a chilling effect on the exercise of the freedoms of assembly and expression.”⁴⁶

In addition to the amendments related to assemblies and demonstrations, Article 173¹⁶ was added to the Code of Administrative Offenses, which prohibits insulting an official or a public servant.⁴⁷ According to the OSCE/ODIHR, this provision “should be reviewed due to its possible chilling effect on freedom of expression, or at least amended to define its constituent elements more precisely and limit its use only to cases where the expression reaches a certain level of severity.”⁴⁸

The explanatory notes to the drafts initiated on these issues are of a general nature and do not justify their adoption in an expedited manner.⁴⁹

7. AMENDMENTS TO THE CRIMINAL CODE - ADOPTION DATE: FEBRUARY 6, 2025

Amendments to the Criminal Code were initiated on 29 January 2020 and adopted by the Parliament on 6 February 2025 under an expedited procedure.⁵⁰ The amendments provided for an increase in sanctions for incitement to violence, assault on a law enforcement officer, and criminal liability for threats and assaults against officials or their family members (Article 35³²).

The OSCE/ODIHR noted that it questioned the need to add Article 35³ to the Code, as it may overlap with or duplicate the existing Article 151 (Threat).⁵¹ The ODIHR also drew attention to the sharp, unjustified increase in sanctions and the fact that the amendments do not take into account the different consequences and degrees of severity of various aggravating circumstances.⁵² According to ODIHR, such disproportionate sanctions and aggravating circumstances may have a chilling effect, including on the exercise of freedom of expression and assembly.⁵³

In addition, the amendments added a note to the articles of the Code (Article 222 – “Seizure or Blockage of a Broadcasting or Communications Facility or an Object of Strategic or Special Importance”; Article 320 – “Seizure or Blockage of an Object of Strategic or Special Importance for Terrorist Purposes”), according to which, for the purposes of these articles, the list of objects of strategic and/or special importance is determined by a resolution of the Government of Georgia.

⁵⁴ According to ODIHR, determining this list by a government resolution contradicts the principles of legal certainty and

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ *Kudrevičius and Others v. Lithuania* [GC], 37553/05, 15.10.2015.

⁴⁴ *Geylani and Others v. Türkiye*, 10443/12, 12.09.2023.

⁴⁵ GYLA, Repressive Legislative Amendments to the Law “On Assembly and Manifestation” Adopted in Third Reading, 07.02.2025, Available: <https://www.gyla.ge/post/represiuili-sakanonmdeblo-cvilebebi-saias-shefaseba>, Updated: 05.05.2026.

⁴⁶ Venice Commission, Georgia, Urgent Opinion on Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences and the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations, CDL-PI(2025)004, 2025, par. 53-54, Available [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-PI\(2025\)004-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-PI(2025)004-e), Updated 04.05.2026.

⁴⁷ GYLA, “Georgian Dream” declares many aspects of the right to protest as illegal - accelerated amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses, 05.02.2025, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/qartuli-ocneba-protestis-uflebis-bevr-aspeqts-zgudavs>, updated: 05.05.2026.

⁴⁸ OSCE ODIHR, Urgent Opinion on the Amendments to the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations, the Code of Administrative Offences and the Criminal Code of Georgia (as Adopted on 6 February 2025), 2025, par. 104, available at: <https://cdn.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/d/2/587466.pdf>, last updated: 04.05.2026.

⁴⁹ Explanatory cards are available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30044>, updated: 19.02.26.

⁵⁰ The amendments and related files are available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30046>, updated: 04.05.2026.

⁵¹ OSCE ODIHR, Urgent Opinion on the Amendments to the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations, the Code of Administrative Offences and the Criminal Code of Georgia (as Adopted on 6 February 2025), 2025, par. 107, Available at <https://cdn.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/d/2/587466.pdf>, updated: 04.05.2026.

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Assessment of the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, Human Rights Situation in Georgia in 2025, December 10, 2025, p. 19, available at: <https://gyla.ge/en/post/adamianisuplebebisqartveloshi-2025-GYLA>, updated: 04.05.2026.

predictability.⁵⁵ Before that, on January 31, 2025, the Resolution of the Government of Georgia No. 361 of October 23, 2024 “On Approval of the List of Objects of Strategic and/or Special Importance” was amended, adding international roads to this list.⁵⁶ This entry was included in the resolution after the announcement of the February 2 protest rally near the Tbilisi-Senaki-Leselidze international road, near the Tbilisi Mall, and was directed against this gathering.⁵⁷

8. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON PUBLIC SERVICE AND SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENTS IN OTHER LAWS - ADOPTION DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2025

On February 12, 2025, the Georgian government initiated a package of amendments aimed at modifying the civil service.⁵⁸ With these amendments, the **Civil Service Bureau** was abolished. At the request of the initiator, the package was considered in an expedited manner and adopted between February 17–20.

The justification for using the expedited procedure indicated that the reform was envisaged by the government program.⁵⁹ However, the program contains only a general reference to improving the civil service and does not specify deadlines.⁶⁰ In addition, the explanatory note states that the reform should come into effect on April 1, 2025; therefore, expedited adoption was allegedly necessary. Why this specific deadline was set, or why meeting it was essential, was not explained. Accordingly, the arguments presented were not weighty.⁶¹

The executive branch was fully aware that certain reforms were being considered. Therefore, it could have refrained from rushing and considered the package—which included amendments to 13 laws—under the ordinary procedure instead of an expedited one.⁶²

In addition to procedural shortcomings, the package also contained substantive problems. As a result of the changes, the **Civil Service Bureau** was abolished. According to GYLA, the liquidation of the Bureau is another repressive measure not only against its employees, but also against any public servant.⁶³ Such actions continue the repressions initiated against independent and impartial public servants, affecting them both individually and institutionally. These developments further distance the country from democratic processes and good governance standards.

9. THE SO-CALLED FARA AND ITS AMENDMENTS - ADOPTION DATE: APRIL 1, 2025

The Georgian Dream initiated the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) on February 19, 2025, and passed it on April 1. The package also included amendments to the Criminal Code stemming from FARA.⁶⁴

According to the law, a person may be required to register as an “agent of a foreign principal” if he or she, directly or through another person, participates in political activities in Georgia for the benefit or in the interests of a foreign principal and, at the same time, acts at the direction, request, instruction, or control of that foreign principal. The law grants overly broad monitoring powers to the **State Audit Office** (whereas the original version designated the **Anti-Corruption Bureau** as the monitoring body), imposes extensive reporting obligations on registered organizations, and requires them to apply specific markings to all materials they distribute. Failure to comply with, or improper compliance with, the requirements established by the law results in criminal liability, including imprisonment for up to five years.

According to the Venice Commission, the vague definitions contained in the so-called FARA allow for an overly broad and arbitrary interpretation, creating a chilling effect and fostering an environment of self-censorship.⁶⁵ The Commission noted that this law, like its predecessor, the Foreign Influence Transparency Act, does not meet the requirements of legality, necessity, and proportionality and undermines the freedoms of association and expression.⁶⁶

⁵⁵ OSCE ODIHR, Urgent Opinion on the Amendments to the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations, the Code of Administrative Offences and the Criminal Code of Georgia (as Adopted on 6 February 2025), 2025, par. 106, available at: <https://cdn.osce.org/sites/default/files/f/documents/d/2/587466.pdf>, last updated: 04.05.2026.

⁵⁶ Resolution of the Government of Georgia No. 361 of October 23, 2024 on approving the list of objects of strategic and/or special importance.

⁵⁷ Assessment of the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, Human Rights Situation in Georgia in 2025, December 10, 2025, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/adamianisuplebebisagartveloshi-2025-GYLA>, updated: 04.05.2026.

⁵⁸ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30249>, updated: 19.02.26.

⁵⁹ Explanatory note on the draft law of Georgia “On Amendments to the Law of Georgia “On Public Service”, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/380120>, updated: 19.02.26.

⁶⁰ Government Program 2025-2028, 7-8, available at: https://www.gov.ge/files/90372_90372_536784_372256.pdf, updated: 19.02.26.

⁶¹ Explanatory note on the draft law of Georgia “On Amendments to the Law of Georgia “On Public Service”, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/380120>, updated: 19.02.26.

⁶² The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30249>, updated: 19.02.26.

⁶³ “The decision to liquidate the Civil Service Bureau is a continuation of repression in the civil service”, Georgian Young Lawyers Association, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/sajarosamsaxurisbiuro-likvidacia>, updated: 23.02.26.

⁶⁴ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30320>, updated: 11.05.26.

⁶⁵ Venice Commission, Georgia Opinion on the Law on the Registration of Foreign Agents, the Amendments to the Law on Grants and Other Laws Relating to “Foreign Influence”, CDL-AD(2025)034, 2025, par. 98, available at: [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2025\)034-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2025)034-e), last updated: 11.05.26.

⁶⁶ Ibid para 66-67.

GYLA filed a case against the so-called FARA before the Strasbourg Court in 2025 on behalf of six applicants (three organizations and three individuals). In its complaint, GYLA argues that the “Foreign Agents Registration Act” adopted by the “Georgian Dream” violates several rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights: Article 11 (freedom of association), Article 10 (freedom of expression), Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life), Article 13 (right to an effective remedy), Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination), and Article 18 (scope of restrictions on rights).⁶⁷

According to the communication received from the European Court of Human Rights on March 31, 2026, the Court has begun consideration of the case. The European Court accepted the application for examination under all invoked articles, and its correspondence indicates that the case may be granted the status of a “significant impact” case.⁶⁸

10. AMENDMENTS REGARDING THE ABOLITION OF THE MANDATORY PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS - ADOPTION DATE: APRIL 2, 2025

The package was initiated by the Georgian Dream on February 19, 2025, and adopted on April 2. As a result of the amendments, the obligations for civil society involvement in the decision-making process, which were provided for in various laws, were abolished.⁶⁹ These amendments are one of the components of creating an environment directed against civil society.

11. AMENDMENTS RELATED TO THE REMOVAL OF THE TERM “GENDER” FROM THE LEGISLATION - ADOPTION DATE: APRIL 2, 2025

The package was initiated by the Georgian Dream on February 19, 2025 and adopted on April 2. As a result of the amendments, the Parliament completely removed the term “gender” from the legislation. The legislative amendments are based on a false, disinformation narrative, as if “the artificial term “gender” was deliberately introduced through active lobbying by foreign influences and their representatives”. The disappearance of the concept of gender from the legislation is not just a terminological change and undermines the efforts made over the years to combat gender-based violence, creating the basis for not considering the gender perspective of violence or inequality, and ignoring social and cultural factors, which significantly complicates the systematic and thorough fight against problems.⁷⁰

12. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON BROADCASTING - ADOPTION DATE: APRIL 1, 2025

The Georgian Dream initiated amendments to the Law on Broadcasting on February 19, 2025 and adopted them on April 1, 2025. The amendments prohibit the broadcaster from receiving direct or indirect funding from a “foreign power”; purchasing the broadcaster’s services by a foreign power; direct or indirect funding and/or co-financing of the preparation and/or broadcasting of a program. The exceptions are commercial advertising, teleshopping, sponsorship, and placement of a product (goods/services) in the program by a foreign power.⁷¹ In addition, as a result of the amendments, new vague, unpredictable requirements for “fairness and impartiality” have appeared in the law, which allow for arbitrary interpretation and control over the content of the broadcaster.⁷²

Unjustified restrictions on broadcasting funding are characterized by the same problems as Russian law and the so-called FARA. According to the Venice Commission, the ban does not distinguish between funding that actually poses a threat to democratic values and funding that supports legitimate journalistic and civic activities. Nor does the ban provide for less restrictive alternatives. It undermines media pluralism and fails to meet the standards of necessity and proportionality. Accordingly, it is recommended that the ban be lifted.⁷³

The vague requirements regarding impartiality are also problematic. According to the OSCE Moscow Mechanism rapporteur, the existence of this norm and the possibility of its use at any time against unwanted broadcasting are incompatible with freedom of expression.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ GYLA, “The European Court of Human Rights has begun considering a complaint regarding the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) and indicated that it may be granted the status of a case with significant impact”, 01.04.2026, available at: <https://www.gyla.ge/post/GYLA-FARA-strasburgi>, updated: 11.05.26.

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Social Justice Center, “Georgian Dream” deprives civil society of even the formal opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, 05.03.2024, available at: <https://socialjustice.org.ge/ka/products/kartuli-otsneba-samokalako-sazogadoebas-gadatsqvetilebebis-mighebis-protsesshi-monatsileobis-for-malur-shesadzleblobasats-artmevs>, updated: 11.05.2026.

⁷⁰ GYLA, “March 8: How Authoritarian Tendencies Affect Women’s Rights in Georgia”, 08.03.2026, <https://www.gyla.ge/post/8marti-2026-GYLA>, updated: 11.05.2026.

⁷¹ The draft law and related files are available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30326>, updated: 11.05.26.

⁷² The draft law and related files are available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30325>, updated: 11.05.26.

⁷³ Venice Commission, Georgia Opinion on the Law on the Registration of Foreign Agents, the Amendments to the Law on Grants and Other Laws Relating to “Foreign Influence”, CDL-AD(2025)034, 2025, par. 120, Available [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2025\)034-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2025)034-e), Updated 11.05.26.

⁷⁴ OSCE Moscow Mechanism Report on Developments in Georgia in Respect of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms since Spring 2024, 2026, par. 240. Available https://odhr.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, Updated 11.05.26.

13. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON GRANTS - ADOPTION DATE: APRIL 16, 2025

Between April 7-16, 2025, the Parliament adopted the so-called “Grants Package” in an expedited manner.⁷⁵ According to the amendments, a grant allocated by a foreign donor can be received only after the consent of the Government of Georgia or an authorized person/body designated by it.⁷⁶ Receiving a grant without consent would result in the recipient being fined double the amount of the grant.⁷⁷

The amendments adopted in an expedited manner on May 21, 2025 specified that a grant also includes technical assistance provided to the grantee in the form of sharing of technologies, specialized knowledge, skills, expertise and/or other forms.⁷⁸ The exceptional rule related to obtaining higher or general education abroad and grants issued by specific programs (“Horizon Europe”, “Erasmus+”, “German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD”, “Creative Europe”) was also clarified.

These changes, like the so-called FARA, are closely linked to the campaign waged by the Georgian Dream against civil society and aim to deprive critical civil society and media organizations of access to resources important for their activities. This is illustrated by the case related to the British Embassy grant project: on June 11, the British Embassy made an announcement about the cancellation of grant proposals, which was caused by the Georgian Dream’s delay in issuing approvals.⁷⁹ This was followed by unfounded attacks by Georgian Dream officials on the British Embassy, civil society organizations (including GYLA, which was supposed to be one of the grant recipients), and independent media.⁸⁰

According to the Venice Commission, these amendments impose a general requirement that the receipt of foreign grants be subject to prior government approval, without providing adequate justification for necessity and proportionality. Furthermore, the amendments do not define clear and objective criteria for refusal and do not contain sufficient safeguards, leaving wide scope for arbitrary or discriminatory use. The Bureau’s [the Anti-Corruption Bureau, whose powers were transferred to the State Audit Office after its abolition] broad investigative and enforcement powers, including the power to immediately seize assets, coupled with limited procedural deadlines and disproportionate sanctions, further undermine fairness and the due process of law. Given these shortcomings, it is recommended that the amendments be repealed.⁸¹

It is noteworthy that with the changes of March 2026, the regulation related to the receipt of foreign grants has become even more vague and repressive.

14. AMENDMENTS TO THE CODE OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFENSES, THE CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER ACTS (REGARDING THE TIGHTENING OF DRUG POLICY) - DATE OF ADOPTION: APRIL 16, 2025, JULY 2, 2025

These amendments were initiated on March 5, 2025 and adopted by the Parliament on April 16 of the same year.⁸² As a result, mandatory treatment was added to the Criminal Code as a punishment, which can be used for a period of no more than 2 years.

In addition, evasion of examination, as well as the practice of citizens who were taken for forced examination without grounds and refused to provide biological material to the relevant expert service, became administratively punishable.⁸³ According to the new regulation, alternatively, on the basis of a relevant application written by a police officer, no later than 4 hours after its issuance, a person may, at his own discretion, undergo a laboratory examination at the Forensic and Forensic Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia or at the Levan Samkharauli National Bureau of Forensic Examination.

In addition, on July 2, the Georgian Parliament adopted amendments that tightened criminal penalties for the illegal purchase, possession, cultivation, and cultivation of marijuana, and defined imprisonment as one of the forms of sanction.⁸⁴ In addition, the amendments to the Law “On Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, Precursors, and narcological Assistance” on July 2 deprived private medical institutions of the right to provide substitution treatment.⁸⁵

⁷⁵ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30563>, updated: 19.02.26.

⁷⁶ Paragraph 1 of Article 51 of the Law of Georgia “On Grants”.

⁷⁷ Ibid articles 6¹ and 6⁴

⁷⁸ Paragraph 1 of Article 51 of the Law of Georgia “On Grants”..

⁷⁹ Assessment of the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, Human Rights Situation in Georgia in 2025, December 10, 2025, pp. 9-10, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/adamianisuplebebisagartveloshi-2025-GYLA>, updated: 06.05.2026.

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Venice Commission, Georgia Opinion on the Law on the Registration of Foreign Agents, the Amendments to the Law on Grants and Other Laws Relating to “Foreign Influence”, CDL-AD(2025)034, 2025, par. 118-119, available at: [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2025\)034-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2025)034-e), last updated: 06.05.2026.

⁸² The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30417>, updated: 06.05.2026.

⁸³ Social Justice Center, “Drug Policy and the New Wave of Criminalization: Populism Instead of Solving Real Needs”, 21.07.2025, available at: <https://socialjustice.org.ge/ka/products/narkopolitika-da-kriminalizatsiis-akhali-talgha-populizmi-namdvili-sachiroebebis-gadachris-natsvlad>, updated: 06.05.2026.

⁸⁴ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31053>, updated: 06.05.2026.

⁸⁵ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31045>, updated: 06.05.2026.

These changes create leverage over citizens and the risk of police arbitrariness, increase stigma, and complicate access to medical services.⁸⁶

15. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS OF CITIZENS - ADOPTION DATE: MAY 13, 2025

The legislative package was initiated on March 26, 2025, and the Parliament adopted it on May 13.⁸⁷

With the legislative amendments, the norm on banning a political party was extended to include parties that essentially repeat the declared purpose and/or the essence of the activities of a party already banned by the Constitutional Court of Georgia. It is noteworthy that the “essence of the activities” of a party also encompasses the party’s personal contingent, including the composition of the party list submitted to the election commission. However, the similarity of a party’s personal composition with that of an already abolished party does not automatically imply identity — additional circumstances are required to establish such similarity.⁸⁸ In addition, the Organic Law “On the Constitutional Court of Georgia” was amended to specify the time limits for considering a claim: under ordinary conditions, the Court will have a 9-month period for examination, while during the election period it will have a 14-day period for consideration.

According to the wording in force before the amendments, the Constitutional Court could ban a party if its goal was to overthrow or violently change the constitutional order of Georgia, encroach on the country’s independence, violate its territorial integrity, or if it engaged in propaganda for war or violence, incited national, ethnic, religious, or social strife, or created/maintained an armed formation.⁸⁹

The initiative serves to clear the political field, remove opponents, and strengthen anti-democratic propaganda.⁹⁰ In conditions where the “Georgian Dream” has effectively captured virtually all democratic institutions, including the Constitutional Court, it is expected that the ruling party will be able to ban political parties and dismantle the political spectrum without providing the necessary legal justification, factual evidence, or adherence to international standards on freedom of association.⁹¹ The ban on the activities of so-called “inheritance parties,” combined with the potential for broad interpretation, will restrict the emergence of new political forces and further narrow the country’s political landscape.⁹²

16. AMENDMENTS TO THE NEW RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA - ADOPTION DATE: MAY 13, 2025

On February 2, 2025, Georgian Dream initiated the updated Rules of Procedure of Parliament, which were adopted on May 13.⁹³ According to the new rules, certain issues — such as the election of officials, the creation of temporary investigative and other temporary commissions, the declaration of confidence in the government, the election of the President of Georgia, and the dismissal of an official by impeachment — are no longer subject to committee discussion. In addition, the obligation to publish information on the organization of committee working groups and the minutes of their meetings on the Parliament’s website has been removed.⁹⁴

The Minister’s Hour and the Thematic Investigation Group have also been abolished. The explanatory note cites the increased frequency of interpellations as the reason for abolishing the Minister’s Hour, which is an entirely incomprehensible argument. Interpellation is a fundamentally different mechanism and cannot replace the Minister’s Hour either in substance or in procedure. Simply abolishing the Minister’s Hour and referencing the existence of interpellation significantly weakens parliamentary oversight mechanisms.⁹⁵

In addition, the temporary investigative commission is no longer obliged to hold at least two sessions per month. Under the new regulations, full discretion over the frequency of sessions has been transferred to the commission itself. Moreover, the powers of the chairman of the temporary investigative commission may now be expanded through the statute of that commission, increasing the risk of disproportionate influence concentrated in a single position.⁹⁶

⁸⁶ Center for Social Justice, “Drug Policy and the New Wave of Criminalization: Populism Instead of Solving Real Needs”, 21.07.2025, <https://socialjustice.org.ge/ka/products/narkopolitika-da-kriminalizatsiis-akhali-talgha-populizmi-namdvili-sachiroebebis-gadachris-natsvlad>, updated: 06.05.2026.

⁸⁷ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30503>, updated: 06.05.2026.

⁸⁸ GYLA, Amendments initiated by the Georgian Dream to abolish political parties are directed against political opponents, 07.04.2025, available at: <https://www.gyla.ge/post/saias-ganckhadeba-politicuri-partiebis-gauqmebis-iniciativaze>, updated: 06.05.2026.

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30551>, updated: 06.05.2026.

⁹⁴ GYLA, “changes according to the new rules of procedure”, 2025, available: https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/CHANGES%20ACCORDING%20TO%20THE%20NEW%20RULES%20OF%20PROCEDURE.pdf Updated: 06.05.2026.

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ Ibid

The permanent parliamentary councils on gender equality, open governance, and child rights protection have also been abolished.⁹⁷

These changes significantly weaken the mechanisms of oversight over accountable officials and reduce the scope and transparency of committee-level discussions. As a result, citizens' access to information about parliamentary activities becomes more limited, undermining openness and democratic accountability.⁹⁸

17. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW “ON FREEDOM SPEECH AND EXPRESSION” - DATE OF ADOPTION: JUNE 26, 2025

The amendments were initiated on June 18, 2025, and the Parliament adopted them in an expedited manner on June 26.⁹⁹ As a result, the definition of defamation was changed, with the harm component removed; the burden of proof in defamation cases was shifted to the defendant; the guarantees of confidentiality of a journalist's source in defamation cases were weakened; and the qualified privilege for the dissemination of information containing false facts was abolished.¹⁰⁰

These amendments significantly weaken the legal guarantees that were intended to protect public discourse and make the media (as well as other actors) more vulnerable to strategic lawsuits against civic engagement (SLAPPs).¹⁰¹

18. AMENDMENTS TO THE ORGANIC LAW “ON COMMON COURTS” (RESTRICTION ON VIDEO/PHOTOGRAPHY AND AUDIO RECORDING IN COURT) - DATE OF ADOPTION: JUNE 26, 2025

The amendments were initiated on June 18, 2025, and the Parliament adopted them on June 26 in an expedited manner. As a result, photography, film, video recording, broadcasting and audio recording were prohibited in the court building, courtroom, and courtyard. This right was granted only to the court or a person authorized by it.¹⁰²

Under the previous regulation, the Public Broadcaster was authorized to take photographs, film, video, and audio recordings of court proceedings without restriction, except in cases where, by court ruling, the session was partially or fully closed. The Public Broadcaster was also obliged to provide the recording to other media outlets upon request.¹⁰³ Also, under the previous regulation, if the Public Broadcaster did not cover the session, another broadcaster could exercise this right, for which it had to apply in writing to the judge hearing the case.¹⁰⁴

Under the new rules, in order for journalists to be able to take videos/photos and audio recordings in the court or its courtyard, they must obtain permission from the High Council of Justice for each specific session.¹⁰⁵

The right to take photos/videos or make audio recordings in court is not unlimited; however, it is important that the restriction is not implemented in a blanket manner, but on the basis of an assessment and balancing of the interests protected by Articles 6 (right to a fair trial), 8 (right to respect for private life) and 10 (freedom of expression) of the Convention.¹⁰⁶ These changes are not aimed at balancing the interests protected by various rights, but at disproportionately restricting the activities of the media and preventing the coverage of cases of high public interest.¹⁰⁷ This is indicated by the blanket nature of the restriction and its consequences in practice: it is noteworthy that the sessions of some court stages - the so-called first presentation sessions - are often scheduled only a few hours in advance due to short procedural deadlines.¹⁰⁸ In such a situation, the media would not have time, even theoretically, to promptly receive a response from the High Council of Justice.¹⁰⁹ Nor has the legislation proposed any alternative mechanism that, in the event of a failure to receive a response from the Council or a negative response, would ensure the availability of the hearing to the general public.¹¹⁰ This bureaucratic mechanism de facto completely prohibits photo-video shooting and audio recording of the proceedings. This is also evidenced by the fact that, in practice, journalists are unable to obtain this right.¹¹¹

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31001>, updated: 06.05.2026.

¹⁰⁰ GYLA, “Laws against speech: Analysis of legislative amendments restricting freedom of expression and media activities in Georgia, February - July 2025”, 2025, available at: https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/LAWS%20AGAINST%20SPEECH.pdf updated: 06.05.2026.

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31004>, updated: 06.05.2026..

¹⁰³ GYLA, “Laws against speech: Analysis of legislative amendments restricting freedom of expression and media activities in Georgia, February - July 2025”, 2025, available at: https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/LAWS%20AGAINST%20SPEECH.pdf updated: 06.05.2026.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Ibid

19. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW “ON THE LEGAL STATUS OF FOREIGNERS AND STATELESS PERSONS”, THE CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER LAWS - DATE OF ADOPTION: JUNE 26, 2025

The Georgian Dream initiated the package on April 16, 2025, and adopted it on June 26.¹¹² The changes significantly worsened the situation of foreigners in Georgia. Among other things, in the event of a crime committed by a foreigner, a new type of punishment was established - expulsion of the foreigner from Georgia and a ban on entering Georgia for a certain period. In addition, expulsion and a ban on entering Georgia were also defined by the Code of Administrative Offenses for disobeying a lawful request of a police officer, petty hooliganism, verbal insults to a politician, and violation of the requirements of the Law on Manifestations.

At the same time, the procedures for expelling a foreigner illegally staying in the country, and considering asylum, were significantly simplified, and the guarantees for the protection of a person’s rights were weakened.

These changes create leverage for the state to expel foreign citizens legally staying in Georgia.¹¹³ This is a direct signal to many foreign activists still remaining in Georgia that they may have to leave the country and re-migrate if they criticize the Georgian Dream or participate in political rallies.¹¹⁴

20. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW OF GEORGIA “ON OPERATIONAL-INVESTIGATIVE ACTIVITIES” AND THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE - DATE OF ADOPTION: JULY 2, 2025

The package was initiated by the Georgian Dream on June 25, 2025 and adopted on July 2 in an expedited manner.¹¹⁵ With the amendments, a new term was added to the Criminal Procedure Code - restriction of the identification of a person, which means concealing the identity of a person participating in an operational-search measure or covert investigative action, by erasing, blurring, using remote means of communication to limit visualization, and/or any other means that excludes identification and/or recognition of his/her identity at any stage of the proceedings.

With the consent of the Prosecutor General or his/her deputy, the Prosecutor is granted discretion to decide on concealing the identity of a person participating in an operational-search measure or a covert investigative action who cooperates with the investigation, if its disclosure would harm the security of that person and/or substantially prejudice the interests of justice.

In addition, the evidence of this action and all other investigative/procedural actions shall be transferred to the defense in a form that protects the identity of that person from identification and limits the possibility of recognition.

The proposed amendments completely disregard the interests of the defense and unjustifiably favor the prosecution, thereby violating the principles of adversarial proceedings and equality.¹¹⁶ The defense cannot establish the identity of the witness or whether the person who participated in a specific event is actually directly involved in the trial.¹¹⁷ The defense cannot appeal this decision of the prosecutor, and therefore has no means of defending its rights in this context. For the defense, such a ban is blanket and does not comply with the principles of a fair trial.¹¹⁸

21. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON “POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS OF CITIZENS” AND CONSEQUENT AMENDMENTS TO OTHER LEGISLATIVE ACTS - ADOPTION DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2025

Between October 13 and 16, 2025, amendments were adopted in an expedited manner, according to which persons associated with a political party banned by the Constitutional Court are prohibited from party activities (including founding a party, holding a party leadership position), holding state-political and political positions, as well as participating in elections.¹¹⁹ According to GYLA, the concept of a person associated with a party is vague, which leaves a wide scope for interpretation and creates the risk of its misuse, so that the activities of opposition-minded people can be easily restricted through the court with the status of a “person associated with a party”.¹²⁰

¹¹² The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30617>, updated: 23.02.26.

¹¹³ Social Justice Center, “Georgian Dream” is catastrophically worsening the legal situation of foreigners, 13.05.2025, available at: <https://socialjustice.org.ge/ka/products/kartuli-otsneba-utskhoelebis-samartlebriv-mdgomareobas-katastrofulad-auaresebs>, updated: 23.02.26.

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31055>, updated: 23.02.26.

¹¹⁶ GYLA, “By completely concealing the identity of a person participating in an operational-search measure or secret investigative action, the “Georgian Dream” worsens the rights of the defense party”, 03.07.2025, available at: <https://www.gyla.ge/post/sagamodziebo-moqmedebashi-piris-vinaobis-dapar-va-saia-gancxadeba>, updated: 23.02.26.

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31315>, updated: 23.02.26.

¹²⁰ The initiative of the “Georgian Dream” - on the ban on political activities of individuals is incompatible with the Constitution of Georgia, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/GYLA-politikuri-saqmianobis-akrdzalvis-shesaxeb>, updated: 23.02.26.

22. AMENDMENTS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFENSES AND CRIMINAL CODES - ADOPTION DATE: OCTOBER 16, 2025

The amendments were initiated on October 8, 2025, and were adopted by the Parliament on October 16 in an expedited manner.¹²¹ The amendments to the Administrative Offenses and Criminal Codes further worsened the legal environment related to freedom of assembly. Sanctions for certain administrative offenses were increased, including administrative imprisonment as the only form of administrative punishment for covering the face at an assembly and blocking the carriageway of transport.¹²² According to the amendments to the Criminal Code, a person who has been administratively punished for violating the rules for holding an assembly or demonstration and disobeying a police request will be held criminally liable for committing the same act.¹²³ These amendments undermine freedom of assembly and effectively criminalize the exercise of this right. The OSCE/ODIHR strongly criticized the amendments, noting that they are of concern because they are inconsistent with international human rights obligations, and therefore called on the state to repeal them.¹²⁴

23. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON PSYCHIATRIC CARE AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS - ADOPTION DATE: DECEMBER 9, 2025

On July 23, 2025, the Georgian Dream initiated and on December 9, 2025, adopted a package of amendments that envisaged the creation of a unified information base for persons with mental health problems, alcoholism, drug addiction and/or toxic addiction. The base is administered by the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health, and Social Protection of Georgia.¹²⁵

According to the explanatory note, “in the absence of a timely and reliable source of information, the state cannot properly implement the effective functioning of mechanisms aimed at public security”, and “the existence of a unified information base for persons with mental health problems will make the functioning of state bodies, including the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health, and Social Protection of Georgia, more flexible and effective, and will also increase the reliability of the data obtained by them”.¹²⁶

This law creates significant threats in terms of the instrumentalization and misuse of people’s personal data and their mental health status. According to the Public Defender, “the legislative amendment contains both the risk of the emergence and spread of discriminatory practices and is related to the challenges of practical enforcement of the legislative norm(s), since the aforementioned amendments may reinforce stigma against the most vulnerable people. The state has an increased responsibility to implement timely intervention based on a human rights-based approach; otherwise, specific vulnerable groups will automatically be presented as being at increased risk, while mental health problems/addictions in themselves are not a risk or threat and do not constitute a direct causative factor for harmful actions. The proposed amendments will have a negative impact and will create an intimidating environment in terms of access to health care services.” The Public Defender emphasizes that the amendments do not include less restrictive measures to achieve a legitimate aim and procedural guarantees for the protection of rights.¹²⁷

According to Human Rights Watch, by extensively processing particularly sensitive personal data and expanding police access to medical records, this database creates the risk of stigma, discrimination, and facilitating the violation of a number of rights. The Georgian authorities should suspend the implementation of this database until solid guarantees based on human rights protection are adopted.¹²⁸

¹²¹ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31311>, updated: 04.05.2026.

¹²² Assessment of the Georgian Young Lawyers Association, “The Situation of Human Rights in Georgia in 2025, December 10, 2025”, available at: <https://gyla.ge/post/adamianisuplebebisagartveloshi-2025-GYLA>, updated: 06.05.2026.

¹²³ Ibid

¹²⁴ 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), 2025, available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/601503>, last updated: 06.05.2026.

¹²⁵ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/28951>, updated: 11.05.26.

¹²⁶ Explanatory note on the draft law of Georgia “On Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Mental Health”, available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/383199>, updated: 07.05.2026.

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Human Rights Watch, Georgia’s New Database Raises Serious Rights Concerns, available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/05/05/georgias-new-data-base-raises-serious-rights-concerns>, updated 07.05.2026.

24. Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses and the Law on “Assemblies and Manifestations” - Adoption Date: December 10, 2025

Between December 8–10, 2025, amendments were adopted in an expedited manner, according to which the artificial blocking of public thoroughfares was prohibited (previously, this restriction applied only to the thoroughfare of transport), and the obligation to notify the Ministry of Internal Affairs arose in the event that a gathering is held on a public thoroughfare.¹²⁹ The Ministry of Internal Affairs was authorized to consider the issue of the expediency of changing the place and/or time of the gathering or demonstration, the route, and, in writing or by other means of communication, to issue mandatory instructions for their implementation. Also, in the event of partial or complete blocking of public thoroughfares, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is authorized to make a decision on opening and/or restoring public movement. Violation of the notification rule or failure to comply with a mandatory instruction is punishable by administrative detention. In addition, taking into account the amendments made to the Criminal Code in October 2025, this means that the commission of the same act by a person convicted of this act will, in accordance with Article 347 of this Code, result in criminal liability (with deprivation of liberty for a term of up to one year).

According to the European Convention on Human Rights, freedom of assembly includes the freedom to choose the place and time of assembly.¹³⁰ According to the European Court of Human Rights, the state must show some tolerance for assemblies that cause disruption to daily life.¹³¹ Furthermore, in order for the existence of a warning system to be compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, it should never become a de facto authorization procedure.¹³²

The importance of the possibility of choosing the place and time of assembly is also emphasized by the UN Human Rights Committee,¹³³ which notes that the requirement of government approval for assemblies undermines the idea that freedom of assembly is a fundamental right.¹³⁴ According to the Committee, a notification system should not become a method of hindering the right to assembly, and a person should not be subject to disproportionate sanctions merely for failing to comply with the notification obligation.¹³⁵

These amendments go beyond the grounds for restricting the right established by the Constitution of Georgia and international human rights treaties and do not constitute a necessary and proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim, but rather another step towards the effective criminalization of freedom of assembly. The amendments, in effect, leave no space in which assembly is not subject to de facto consent.¹³⁶

25. REVISED ELECTORAL CODE - ADOPTION DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2026

The Georgian Dream initiated the revised Election Code on November 12, 2026, and adopted it on December 17.¹³⁷ As a result of the amendments, Georgian citizens living outside the country will no longer be able to participate in parliamentary elections, which essentially contradicts the principle of universal suffrage guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia.¹³⁸

This ban contradicts the universal right to vote guaranteed by Article 24, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution of Georgia. The new regulation does not serve any constitutionally legitimate purpose. In fact, it creates an artificial financial and social barrier – in the form of high flight costs, forced dismissal from work, and other related pressures – that forces hundreds of thousands of Georgian emigrants to effectively give up their right to participate in elections. It should be noted that the income earned by immigrants from working abroad is often critically important for both the immigrants themselves and their family members.¹³⁹

In 2026, GYLA filed a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court on behalf of Georgian citizen immigrants living in France regarding this regulation.¹⁴⁰

¹²⁹ The package of amendments is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31646>, updated: 23.02.26.

¹³⁰ ECtHR, *Sáska v. Hungary*, 58050/08, 27.11.2012, par. 21.

¹³¹ ECtHR, *Kudrevičius and Others v. Lithuania* [GC], 37553/05, 15.10.2015, par. 155; *Malofeyeva v. Russia*, 36673/04, 30.05.2013, par. 136-37.

¹³² Venice Commission, OSCE ODIHR, *GUIDELINES ON FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY* (3rd EDITION), 2020, par. 25, available at [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2019\)017rev-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2019)017rev-e), Updated 06.05.2026.

¹³³ Human Rights Committee, General comment No. 37 (2020) on the right of peaceful assembly (article 21), par 22.

¹³⁴ *Ibid* para 70-71.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*

¹³⁶ GYLA, “Georgian Dream” continues its unconstitutional attack on freedom of assembly with a new legislative initiative, 09.12.2025, available at: <https://www.gyla.ge/post/GYLA-shekrebistavisuplebaze-shetevisshesaxe>, updated : 23.02.26.

¹³⁷ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31490>, updated: 11.05.26.

¹³⁸ GYLA, “Restriction of the right to vote for citizens living abroad is unacceptable”, 18.11.2025, available at: <https://www.gyla.ge/post/sazgvargaret-xmismicemis-upleba-saia>, updated: 11.05.26.

¹³⁹ GYLA launches strategic litigation to protect the electoral rights of Georgian emigrant citizens, 14.04.2026, available at: <https://www.gyla.ge/post/GYLA-emigrantbis-xmisuplebistvis>, updated: 11.05.26.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*

26. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON HIGHER EDUCATION - ADOPTION DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2026

Between February 2 and 4, 2026, the Parliament adopted a package of amendments to the Law on Higher Education.¹⁴¹ According to the amendments, the reorganization of higher education institutions, which can be initiated by the government, is simplified.¹⁴² In addition, by order of the Minister, it is possible to appoint acting rector, deputy rector, head of administration and create temporary governing bodies.¹⁴³ The amendments, within the framework of reorganization, simplify the replacement of undesirable university administration, which is the instrumentalization of universities. The executive branch is given the opportunity to replace politically unacceptable university leaders or bodies with individuals loyal to the party. This is an example of interference in university autonomy.

27. AMENDMENTS TO THE LAWS “ON GRANTS” AND “ON POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS OF CITIZENS”, THE CODE OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFENSES AND THE CRIMINAL CODE - DATE OF ADOPTION: MARCH 4, 2026

The package of amendments was registered on January 21, 2026, and adopted by Parliament on March 4.¹⁴⁴

The amendments further tighten the responsibility for receiving foreign grants without the consent of the government and lead to the actual criminalization of civil activity. Criminal sanctions have been established, including imprisonment for a term of up to six years.¹⁴⁵ In addition, the definition of “grant” has been expanded to include funds transferred in cash or in kind that are used or may be used for: (a) activities carried out or to be carried out with the aim of exerting any influence on the Georgian government, state institutions or any part of society, which are aimed at forming, conducting or changing the domestic or foreign policy of Georgia; (b) activities that stem from the political or public interests, approaches or relations of the government of a foreign country or a foreign political party.¹⁴⁶ Such a broad and unpredictable definition has a chilling effect on legitimate civil activism. At the same time, the law extends the obligation to obtain consent to legal entities of other states whose activities essentially include activity on issues related to Georgia.¹⁴⁷

In addition, the amendments to the Law on Political Associations of Citizens prohibit a person who has received income, in whole or in part, under an employment contract with an “organization representing the interests of a foreign power” from being a party member. The aforementioned person is prohibited from being a party member for 8 years from the calendar year in which he or she last received income from such an organization.¹⁴⁸ The definition of an “organization representing the interests of a foreign power” in the Law is identical to the definition used in the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence (Russian law). These amendments effectively abolish the passive electoral rights of civil society representatives.

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights also expressed concern about these amendments, noting that they are inconsistent with Georgia’s obligations under international law to ensure freedom of association.¹⁴⁹ The Commissioner called on the Parliament to reject these amendments.¹⁵⁰

Within the framework of the same package, amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses¹⁵¹ and the Criminal Code¹⁵² prohibit an entrepreneurial legal entity from engaging in public political activity that is “not related to its main entrepreneurial activity”, while introducing administrative fines for the first violation and criminal liability for repeated actions. The term “political activity” is broadly defined and includes “any activity carried out or to be carried out with the aim of exerting any influence on the Georgian government, state institutions or any part of society, which is aimed at the formation, implementation or change of the domestic or foreign policy of Georgia, as well as any activity that arises from the political or public interests, approaches or relations of the government of a foreign country or a foreign political party”. Such regulation creates a risk that ordinary expression on public issues becomes the basis for administrative or criminal sanctions.

In addition, as a result of the amendments, a norm on “extremism” appeared in the Criminal Code, according to which extremism is defined as: “Systematic public call by a citizen of Georgia or a stateless person with status in Georgia for mass violation of the legislation of Georgia, mass disobedience to the authorities of Georgia, for the creation of alternative

¹⁴¹ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31757>, updated: 23.02.26.

¹⁴² The draft law is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/414679>, updated: 23.02.26.

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ The package is available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/31739>, updated: 06.05.2026.

¹⁴⁵ Criminal Code of Georgia, Article 319¹.

¹⁴⁶ Law of Georgia on Grants, Article 2, paragraph 1⁴.

¹⁴⁷ Law of Georgia on Grants Article 5², paragraph 2.

¹⁴⁸ Law of Georgia on Political Associations of Citizens, Article 10, Paragraph 3.

¹⁴⁹ Commissioner for Human Rights, Georgian Parliament should reject amendments stifling civil society, 02.02.2026, available at: https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/-/georgian-parliament-should-reject-amendments-stifling-civil-society?fbclid=IwY2xjawP2pEtleHRuA2FbQixMABicmlkETFieUg4T1VwcU-JhUERFU0Ztc3J0YyZhcHBfaWQzMjlyMDM5MTc4ODIwMDg5MgABHo76ZZvY2x4Je5y5KrzOHdMiectyrHWn4UyphPpnQ6valWk_TdTSVPdgOBcb_aem_L8JxW-cGXAOMHBMJuLMIV6A, last updated: 06.05.2026.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

¹⁵¹ Code of Administrative Offenses, Article 153¹³.

¹⁵² Criminal Code of Georgia, Article 355³.

bodies to the authorities of Georgia, arbitrary, public and systematic presentation by the same person of another person or of himself as a representative of the authorities of Georgia, or other public and systematic actions committed by the same person, if any of the aforementioned actions provided for in this article are aimed at establishing a perception of the illegitimacy of the constitutional order of Georgia or constitutional bodies and harm the interests of Georgia or are aimed at establishing such a perception and create a real threat of harm to the interests of Georgia.” The norm provides for a fine, community service, or imprisonment for up to three years, and for a legal entity - a fine with or without liquidation.¹⁵³

Crimes against the state are already covered by an entire chapter in the Criminal Code, which protects the constitutional order, state authorities and the foundations of national security.¹⁵⁴ These norms cover such actions as violent change of the constitutional order, coup d'état, rebellion, seizure of power, public incitement to violence, etc. Accordingly, violent or organized threats against the state are already regulated by the existing legal framework.¹⁵⁵ The proposed new article, which criminalizes actions related to non-recognition of the government, establishing a perception of illegitimacy or systematic incitement to mass disobedience, poses the risk of normative duplication and expansion of criminal repression.¹⁵⁶ If the acts in question do not involve a real, immediate and concrete threat of violence, their criminalization goes beyond the classical protection of state security and moves into the sphere of regulating political expression.¹⁵⁷ The reference to evaluative and broad categories such as “establishing a perception of illegitimacy” or “harming the interests of the state” is particularly problematic, as they do not meet the requirement of legal certainty.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Criminal Code of Georgia, Article 316¹.

¹⁵⁴ Criminal Code of Georgia, Article chapter 11.

¹⁵⁵ GYLA's assessment of the changes initiated regarding “extremism”, 2026, pp. 4-5, available at: https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%98%E1%83%90%E1%83%A1%20%E1%83%A8%E1%83%94%E1%83%A4%E1%83%90%E1%83%A1%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%90%20%E1%83%94%E1%83%A5%E1%83%A1%E1%83%A2%E1%83%A0%E1%83%94%E1%83%9B%E1%83%98%E1%83%96%E1%83%9B%E1%83%97%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%20%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%99%E1%83%90%E1%83%95%E1%83%A8%E1%83%98%E1%83%A0%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%97%20%E1%83%98%E1%83%9C%E1%83%98%E1%83%AA%E1%83%98%E1%83%98%E1%83%A0%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%A3%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98%20%E1%83%AA%E1%83%95%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1%20%E1%83%A8%E1%83%94%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%AE%E1%83%94%E1%83%91.pdf (in Georgian)

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

¹⁵⁷ Ibid

¹⁵⁸ Ibid

II. ASSESSMENT AND SUMMARY OF TRENDS

The study showed that the personalization of legislation is one of the problematic issues in Georgia. Experience indicates that after the 2024 elections, the Parliament adopted a number of amendments in an expedited manner, the purpose of which was to suppress post-election protests. At the same time, the personalization of laws was manifested in the deterioration of the rights of political opponents. It is important that each such amendment be adopted after sufficient deliberation and discussion. The more the law interferes with a fundamental right, the more deliberative the legislative discussion of such a norm should be.

The sharp authoritarian turn in the legislative process began in May 2024 with the adoption of the so-called Russian Law (Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence). The law was aimed at stigmatizing civil society organizations and undermining their work, drawing strong criticism both domestically and from international organizations and partner states. Notably, the legislative process unfolded against the backdrop of mass peaceful protests opposing the law, which were met with violent dispersals, intimidation of activists, and widespread human rights violations.¹⁵⁹ Later that year, in September, Parliament adopted homophobic and transphobic legislation based on disinformation and hate-driven narratives. In 2025–2026, the legal infrastructure targeting civil society became even more repressive. In April 2025, Parliament adopted the so-called FARA law, which enables the stigmatization of organizations and individuals as “agents” based on vague criteria and introduces criminal liability for failure to comply with registration requirements. In May 2025, amendments to the Law on Grants prohibited the receipt of foreign grants without prior government approval. In March 2026, the legislation governing grants was further tightened, effectively criminalizing the receipt of funding for the ordinary activities of civil society organizations.

Following the October 2024 parliamentary elections, repressive lawmaking became significantly more active and far-reaching. The legislative changes affected fundamental issues related to democracy and human rights, substantially transforming the legal framework governing these areas. It is noteworthy that shortly before the legislative amendments adopted in December 2024, between 28 November and 7 December 2024, the ruling Georgian Dream party resorted to the systematic use of torture and other forms of ill-treatment against participants in large-scale peaceful protests.¹⁶⁰

In December 2024, legislative amendments significantly increased the sanctions for offences related to protest activities. At the same time, the civil service system was fundamentally altered, making it considerably easier to dismiss public servants from their positions and, consequently, facilitating politically motivated dismissals.

Throughout 2025, a series of amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences, the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations, and the Criminal Code made the legal framework governing assemblies more repressive. By the end of 2025, the legislative framework had created the conditions for the effective criminalization of peaceful assembly. As of today, the legal framework requires organizers to notify the Ministry of Internal Affairs of an assembly in advance. This obligation is equivalent to a permit requirement, as it empowers the Ministry to alter the time, location, and route of an assembly. Furthermore, where an assembly involves the partial or complete blockage of a pedestrian movement, the Ministry is authorized to decide on the reopening of the road and/or the restoration of the pedestrian movement. Violation of the notification requirement or failure to comply with a mandatory instruction issued by the Ministry is punishable by administrative detention. If a person who has already been sanctioned for such conduct commits the same act again, they are subject to criminal liability, punishable by imprisonment for up to one year.

Freedom of expression was also among the primary targets of these legislative changes. In February 2025, a new provision was introduced into the Code of Administrative Offences establishing liability for insulting public servants and public officials. The provision is drafted in a manner that creates a high risk of arbitrary enforcement. In addition, amendments adopted in 2025 significantly worsened the media environment. Broadcasters were prohibited from receiving foreign funding, while the Law on Broadcasting introduced vaguely defined obligations of impartiality. Furthermore, photo and video recording, as well as audio recording, in courts was effectively prohibited.

These changes were accompanied throughout 2025 by amendments affecting various areas of public life that create risks of repressive state control. Examples include amendments to the Law on Higher Education, which threaten academic independence; amendments concerning the creation of a unified database of persons with mental health conditions, which endanger the protection of their personal data and create risks of state misuse; and amendments to the Law on Foreigners and Stateless Persons, which worsen the legal status of foreign nationals and may serve as a mechanism for sanctioning foreigners critical of the authorities. The legislative changes adopted in 2025 were also directed against political pluralism, for instance by simplifying the legal framework for banning political parties.

It is noteworthy that the trend of repressive and highly personalized lawmaking has continued actively into 2026. Through extensive legislative amendments adopted in March 2026, Georgian Dream expanded the definition of a grant and introduced criminal liability for receiving a grant without prior government approval, including penalties of up to six years’ imprisonment. In addition, individuals who received income under an employment contract with a so-called “organiza-

¹⁵⁹ GYLA, Georgia: Human Rights Amidst the Russian Law Human Rights 60 Days Following the Revival of the Foreign Influence Transparency Bill, 2024, https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/rusuli%20kanoni.pdf, last updated: 06.05.2026.

¹⁶⁰ GYLA et al. Human Rights Crisis in Georgia Following the 2024 Parliamentary Elections, 28 November 2024–28 February 2025, last updated: 06.05.2026., https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/HUMAN%20RIGHTS%20CRISIS%20IN%20GEORGIA%20-%20final.pdf.

tion pursuing the interests of a foreign power” were prohibited from becoming members of a political party for a period of eight years, starting from the calendar year in which the income was received.

The same amendments also significantly restricted the freedom of expression of commercial legal entities by prohibiting them from engaging in public political activities that are “unrelated to their core commercial activities.” Furthermore, the amendments introduced a new provision on “extremism” into the Criminal Code. The provision is drafted in a manner that fails to satisfy the requirement of foreseeability.

Each of the cases discussed above restricts human rights and worsens the legal status of the individual. At the same time, each of them is aimed at punishing persons who are politically unacceptable to the ruling elite. This is the personalization of legislation. In addition, what makes these cases examples of violent lawmaking, in addition to the increased degree of interference with rights, is their adoption in a short period of time, without deliberation. Within the framework of a 3-level democracy, parliament acts in its daily activities at the so-called legislative level.¹⁶¹ This means resolving current legislation and political issues. In the context of a 3-level democracy, this is the lowest level, within which parliamentary lawmaking power is most limited.¹⁶² It is necessary to adhere to certain principles in the lawmaking process. These are: awareness, deliberation and an effective, efficient process, which ensures the adoption of good laws.¹⁶³ Important legislative decisions should be made by obtaining sufficient and relevant information, exchanging all arguments and opinions, and, most importantly, allocating sufficient time resources.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, the law-making process should be conducted in a context of deliberation, openness, and the involvement and expression of opinions by all relevant actors. Sufficient time should be allocated to it so that the addressees of the norm have the opportunity to express their motivated position on it. The more extensive the interference with a fundamental right, the more deliberative the legislative process should be.

It is worth noting that in April 2026, the Open Government Partnership (OGP) decided to suspend Georgia’s membership.¹⁶⁵ The OGP brings together democratic and transitioning countries that are committed to becoming more transparent and accountable to their citizens. It is a space where governments and civil society work together to reduce corruption, increase access to information, and strengthen citizen engagement. For years, Georgia has been considered a successful example in this regard.¹⁶⁶

The decision followed the suspension of Georgia’s membership in 2024 due to legislative measures aimed at violating civil liberties and fundamental rights.¹⁶⁷ At that time, the OGP temporarily suspended Georgia’s membership and gave the government a specific deadline of 2025 to implement two recommendations: (1) repeal all laws that restricted civil society, the media, and citizens’ rights; (2) ensure that freedom of expression, assembly, and civil society activities are protected from physical or other attacks. Far from being implemented, these recommendations have worsened.¹⁶⁸

This OGP decision is yet another confirmation that Georgia is increasingly moving away from standards of democracy, transparency, and accountability, which is reflected, among other things, in repressive legislation.

¹⁶¹ Roznai, Y., *Unconstitutional Constitutional Amendments: the Limits of Amendment Powers*, Oxford University Press, 2017, 127.

¹⁶² *Ibid*

¹⁶³ Ranchordás, S., *Constitutional Sunsets and Experimental Legislation: A Comparative Perspective*, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2014, 3.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁵ OGP, *Georgia Permanently Suspended from the Open Government Partnership Following Response Policy Review*, 22.04.2026, available at: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/news/georgia-permanently-suspended-from-the-open-government-partnership-following-response-policy-review/>, updated: 07.05.2026.

¹⁶⁶ GYLA, “Georgia Excluded from the Open Governance Partnership”, available at: <https://www.gyla.ge/post/ertoblivi-gancxadeba-OGP>, updated: 07.05.2026.

¹⁶⁷ OGP, *Georgia Temporarily Suspended from the Open Government Partnership*, 16.10.2024, available at: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/news/georgia-temporarily-suspended-from-the-open-government-partnership/>, updated: 07.05.2026.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*