



PERSECUTION AGAINST PERSONS EMPLOYED IN PUBLIC SECTOR

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PERSECUTION AGAINST PERSONS EMPLOYED IN PUBLIC SECTOR

(Brief Report on Persecution of Persons Employed in Public Sector)



AUTOR: NATO MIRZASHVILI

EDITOR: SOFO BEBERASHVILI

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INTRODUCTION

On November 28, 2024, a statement made by the Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, concerning the postponement of opening negotiations with the European Union until 2028, triggered mass protests. The wave of protests also covered those employed in the public sector. A common form of expressing a position regarding both the above-mentioned statement and the unlawful and disproportionate crackdown on peaceful protests was the publication of joint statements by those employed in public institutions, which were open for signature. The dissemination of such statements began on November 29–30, initiated by employees of the [Ministry of Education](#) of Georgia, the [Ministry of Defense](#), the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), the Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) “[House of Justice](#),” the [National Bank of Georgia](#), the LEPL [Public Service Development Agency](#), and the [Tbilisi City Hall](#). On November 30, a [joint statement from public sector employees](#) was also circulated, bringing together the signatures of approximately [460 employees or/and former employees](#) from around 50 public institutions. On December 1, employees of the LEPL [National Agency of Public Registry](#) also published a joint statement. A large number of these individuals were subsequently dismissed from their positions, which, in their opinion, was a direct result of their signatures on the above-mentioned statements.

In order to create formal grounds for the persecution of public sector employees for their dissenting opinions and/or other political views, on December 4, 2024, the Georgian Dream Party initiated a draft law on amendments to the [Law of Georgia on Public Service](#), which entered into force on December 29.

The amendments to the law changed the status of the head of the primary structural unit of a public institution and his/her deputy, as a permanent professional civil servant, to a person employed under an administrative contract. This change significantly simplified the process of [terminating their employment relations](#).

The amendments to the Law of Georgia on Public Service also affected employees who had previously been outside the scope of the law. The legal status of public sector employees was further worsened in cases of institutional reorganization, liquidation, and/or merger with another public institution. Specifically, under the amendments, it is no longer required to restore a civil servant to his/her working place, who was illegally [dismissed as a result of reorganization](#). Furthermore, despite the possibility of mobility, the amendments made it permissible to dismiss a public servant during the reorganization process in cases of staff reductions.

It is likely that since December 2024, the above-mentioned and other legislative changes, discriminatory treatment (creation of a hostile work environment, failure to provide monetary rewards, restriction of the right to participate in activities, etc.), and illegal dismissals, have been deliberately used to silence and/or punish those employees who expressed their position regarding the events taking place in the country since November 28, 2024.

MASS DISMISSALS OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN PUBLIC SECTOR

(December 1, 2024 – July 1, 2025)

According to available data, approximately 700 people were dismissed from public service from December 2024 to April 2025. One of the first recorded cases occurred on **2 December 2024**, when Salome Tsiskarauli, a specialist of youth affairs at the LEPL State Folklore Centre named after Anzor Erkomaishvili, was dismissed. She had been actively participating in protest rallies. The director cited the reason for her dismissal was a disagreement between the views of the Centre's administration and of Salome Tsiskarauli about the youth policy.

The practice of firing public sector employees took on a mass scale in late December 2024, when several social workers employed at the LEPL National Agency for Crime Prevention, Enforcement of Non-custodial Sentences and Probation were informed that their employment contracts would not be renewed in 2025. On 26 December, Giorgi Abuladze, a mediator in the National Probation Agency's Diversion and Mediation Programme, was notified via a phone call that he would no longer be able to work as a mediator starting from 2025.

Giga Sopromadze, Executive Secretary of the Tbilisi City Hall on Disability Issues, received a dismissal letter dated December 25, 2024. He was a signatory of the joint statement issued by the Tbilisi City Hall employees and actively participated in the protest demonstrations. On December 25, 2024 both current and dismissed public servants submitted a registration application for a trade union to the National Agency of Public Registry. On December 27, 2024, several other employees of the **Tbilisi City Hall** were also informed that their employment contracts would not be renewed in 2025. These individuals were signatories of the statement published by the Tbilisi City Hall employees and participated in pro-European rallies.

On December 30–31, 2024, the number of public servants, whose dismissal was planned starting in 2025, increased. For example, on December 30, Mate Sokhadze, an employee of the Government Administration of Georgia, was informed that his employment contract would not be renewed from January onward. Three employees of the Legal Department of the LEPL **National Agency of the Public Registry** received a similar notification during non-working hours. On December 31, Tamar Lomadze, an employee of the Department of Tourism and Resorts of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara, was informed that she would be dismissed from her position from 2025. A few days prior, she was summoned and asked whether she would continue to attend protest rallies.

On December 31, numerous employees across various agencies received dismissal notifications in different forms: Sophio Todua, curator and guide of the **Georgian Parliament's Museum** of Georgian Parliamentarism; Aleksandre Gogoladze, employee of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia**; Ana Gagnidze, Head of the Human Resources Management Department and Tatia Udesiani, Head of the Internal Audit Department of the **LEPL Public Service Hall**;, whose administrative contracts, signed just the day before, were terminated. During non-working hours on the same day, Nino Tkeshelashvili, Head of the Department for Resocialization and Rehabilitation of Convicts and Former Prisoners, Koba Baramia, Head of the Diversion and Mediation Department and Natia Aliashvili, Head

of the Juvenile Referral Center at the **National Agency for Crime Prevention, Execution of Non-custodial Sentences and Probation** received termination orders for administrative contracts.. On December 31, as a result of reorganization **in the Central Election Commission**, [Vako Maisuradze](#), advisor to the Chairperson was dismissed and [Nino Katsiashvili's](#) employment contract was not renewed. Some [other employees](#) dismissed from the Central Election Commission on grounds of “reorganization” also associate their dismissal with their expression of views regarding the events occurring since November 28, 2024. Also on December 31, the employment contract of [Kristina Chubinidze](#), an employee of the **Tbilisi City Hall**, was terminated. Official notice of her dismissal was provided at her own request on January 13, 2025.

At the **beginning of 2025**, although public institutions had official holidays until January 10, numerous individuals received dismissal notifications. Among them was [Megi Katsitadze](#), head of the legal department at the **LEPL Public Service Hall**, whose administrative contract was unilaterally terminated. On January 10, 2025, on a non-working day, [Mikheil Valashvili](#), an employee of the High Council of Justice of Georgia, was informed via a phone call about the expiration of his employment contract and his dismissal. According to publicly available information, public sector employees have been, and continue to be, subjects of persecution due to their activity on social media. For example, on January 30, 2025, [Nino Khazalashvili](#), an employee of the Samtskhe–Javakheti Destination Management Organization, was dismissed for reacting with “Haha emoji” to one of the facebook “posts.” Following the expression of their position, the wave of dismissals also reached **public schools**. On January 18, 2025, [Levan Kochlamazashvili](#), a speech and language therapist at the Tbilisi Public School No 54, was dismissed. He had been actively participating in protest rallies. Music teacher and civil activist [Sopho Roinishvili](#) was first dismissed from Kutaisi Public School No 6 on February 23, 2025 and later, on March 7, from Gumati Public School. On February 7, 2025, the managers of the **Public Service Halls** in [Batumi](#), [Lagodekhi](#), and [Rustavi](#) were informed that their administrative contracts had been unilaterally terminated as of February 6. The persecution of employees at the **Ministry of Defense of Georgia** effectively began between February 23–25 2025, when, as a result of “reorganization” in various departments, dismissal orders were issued to at least [10 employees](#). These included staff members of the Department of International Relations and Euro-Atlantic Integration - Mikheil Ramazashvili and Gutsa Gvelesiani - both of whom had nearly 30 years of service in the Ministry. As of March 19, 2025, the reorganization at the Ministry of Defense had resulted in the **dismissal of around 150 employees**, some of whom had openly expressed their views regarding the events taking place since November 28, 2024.

In the Tbilisi City Hall, mass persecution of **employees with critical views** began between March 5-14, 2025, on the grounds of “reorganization.” During this period, around [10 employees received](#) dismissal notifications.

The intention to persecute employees in the Tbilisi City Hall was announced back in December 2024. At that time, Kakha Kaladze publicly stated that the joint statement spread by the City Hall employees constituted an act of sabotage, which [would not go unanswered](#).

In March 2025, the persecution of employees for critical views and/or based on other political grounds also began in the academic sector. At the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, three lecturers

from the Faculty of Law — [Tamar Tatanashvili](#), [Giorgi Tsertsvadze](#) and [Irine Kherkheulidze](#) - were dismissed. In April 2025, several [directors](#) and [staff members](#) of kindergartens in Tbilisi were also dismissed for participating in protest rallies.

In early February 2025, information was spread that, effective [1st of April](#), the **LEPL Civil Service Bureau** would be dissolved, with its functions transferred to the Administration of the Government of Georgia. It is noteworthy, that the legislative amendments were prepared without the involvement of the Civil Service Bureau, and approximately half of its employees publicly [opposed](#) the changes. Additionally, on March 10, 2025, the **LEPL Research Center of the Parliament of Georgia** was [dissolved](#). According to the statement by the Center's former director during a staff meeting, the reason for the liquidation was the [activism of several people](#) employed at the center.

On April 4, 2025, the Director General of the Union of Tbilisi Museums, [Nino Sanadiradze](#), received an order through electronic notification that her contract would be terminated as of April 8, two years earlier of the contract term. The dismissal followed prior demands for her resignation from the director's position. On April 4, 2025, the Director of the **Tbilisi Union of Multifunctional Libraries**, [Ninia Macharashvili](#), also received an order of dismissal. She had previously been [asked to resign](#) from her position in December 2024, following her initiation of a collective statement by the library staff and her public expression of protest. Similarly, on April 11, 2025, employees of the **Public Broadcaster** [Nino Zautashvili](#) and [Vasil-Ivanov Chikovani](#) were dismissed; both had expressed support, including on air, for individuals unlawfully detained during demonstrations. Various disciplinary measures were also imposed on the [four other employees of the Public Broadcaster](#), who had criticized the editorial policy of the Broadcaster. Subsequently, [five staff members](#) of the program *Realuri Sivrtse* ("Real Space") were also dismissed from the Public Broadcaster.

On April 16, 2025, a [reorganization process](#) began in the **Ministry of Education of Georgia**, resulting in the dissolution of the Inclusive Education Department as an independent structural unit and its merger with the Strategic Planning Department. On June 6, 2025, [Tamar Zhghent](#), Head of the Inclusive Education Department, received an order on the department's dissolution and her dismissal. She was among the signatories of a public statement spread by the employees of the Ministry and had openly expressed her position on the matter, which, in her view, led to the loss of the department's independent status and her dismissal.

On May 1, 2025, a [reorganization process](#) also began in the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia**, resulting in the dismissal of several diplomats who had signed the joint statement. Among them was [Mariam Maisaia](#), staff member of the Georgia's Permanent Mission to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, as well as other employees of the Ministry. Dismissals from the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** [continued](#); on 1st of July, [Tornike Parulava](#), Director of the Department for NATO Integration, was dismissed, and on 5th of July his spouse was dismissed from the Parliament's Committee on European Integration. [Khatia Vashakmadze](#), an employee of the Budget Office, was also dismissed from the Georgian Parliament on July 2 due to "personnel reductions", which she describes as her punishment for respecting the Article 78 of the Constitution.

On May 30, 2025, employees of the LEPL “**Information Center on NATO and the European Union**” were notified that, effective July 1, the Center would be dissolved and their contracts would be terminated. According to the Director of the Center, in the future, the functions of the Center will be carried out by the European Integration Department of the Central Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is likely that the liquidation of the Information Center is related to the *shift in the European and Euro-Atlantic course by the Georgian Dream party*.

In addition to the above-mentioned public institutions, employees were also dismissed from the **Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia**ⁱ, the LEPL Revenue Service; the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia; the LEPL Youth Agency; the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia; the Personal Data Protection Service; the LEPL Legal Aid Service; the LEPL National Agency of State Property; the LEPL National Forensic Bureau; Rustavi Municipal Government; Adigeni Municipal Government; the Ministry of Finance and Economy of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara; the Signagi Municipal City Hall and Municipal Assembly; Lagodekhi Municipal Assembly; and the Non-Entrepreneurial (Non-Commercial) Legal Entity “Sports Center of Batumi City Hall,” *etc.*

Interviews with Dismissed Public Servants – Key Trends and Findings

In June 2025, the Media Institute conducted interviews with public servants who were dismissed following the expression of their positions regarding the developments in the country since November 28, 2024. According to the information publicly shared by the dismissed employees and collected during the interviews, the majority received notification of their dismissal mostly during non-working daysⁱⁱ or *non-working hours*ⁱⁱⁱ. Information about the termination of labor contracts was communicated via email^{iv}, the electronic case management system^v, or **telephone calls**^{vi}. Some public servants were notified with unreasonably short notice - typically one day in advance - being instructed not to go to work, while others were informed post factum, after having already appeared at their workplace.

Each dismissed respondent expressed their protest in various ways, like by posting on *social media*, sharing thematic “stories” and posts^{vii}, by *signing statements*^{viii} protesting the suspension of the Euro-integration process, by participating in protest demonstrations^{ix}, *giving interviews*^x to television broadcasts, by *joining the trade unions of public servants*^{xi}, wearing protest-themed T-shirts in workplaces^{xii}, and other.

The legal grounds for dismissing respondents were the mechanisms of *liquidation*^{xiii} of the institution, *termination of administrative contract*^{xiv}, and non-renewal of *employment contracts*^{xv}. Additionally, arbitrary *reorganization*^{xvi} mechanisms were used as a basis for the dismissal of other public servants.

Most respondents noted that following the public expression of their positions, the attitudes of both supervisors and colleagues toward them changed. This was reflected in *avoidance of communication*^{xvii}, not greeting them^{xviii}, *restricting their participation in significant activities* (such as meetings, business trips, and trainings), behaviors inconsistent with an ethical and healthy work environment^{xix}, and other

discriminatory actions (e.g., not providing a monetary reward). Some respondents described the work environment prior to their dismissal **as hostile**^{xx}.

It is noteworthy that all respondents directly linked their dismissal to the exercise of their **rights to freedom of speech and expression**. They believe that the dismissal of professionals with institutional memory in the public sector due to political views will *inevitably affect the quality* of the products and services that the public service provides to the population.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

Persecution of public sector employees - creating a hostile working environment for them and dismissing them from their jobs for expressing their positions - violates Article 17 of the Constitution of Georgia, which *prohibits persecution based on opinion and its expression*. The Law of Georgia on Freedom of Speech and Expression reinforces the State's obligation to recognize and protect freedom of speech and expression as *inviolable and supreme human values*. The persecution of public servants who publicly expressed their views regarding ongoing developments in the country constitutes a violation of the fundamental principle of equality and the Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. The labor discrimination is also prohibited by the Organic Law of Georgia, the Labour Code^{xxi} of Georgia.

The Law of Georgia on Public Service prohibits restriction or obstruction of the exercise of legal rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of a person participating in legal relations of public service on discriminatory grounds^{xxii}. The principle of equality is further reinforced by Article 14 of Government Resolution No. 200 of Georgia on the Definition of General Rules of Ethics and Conduct in Public Institutions, which applies to all persons employed in public institutions, regardless of the legal basis of their employment^{xxiii}.

The persecution of public sector employees for exercising their right to freedom of opinion and expression violates the right to *freedom of expression* guaranteed by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which includes the right to hold opinions and to impart information or ideas without interference by public authority. Such persecution also contravenes Article 14 of the Convention, which prohibits *discrimination* in the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth therein. The arbitrary dismissal of critical public sector employees violates Articles 7^{xxiv} and 19^{xxv} of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Articles 19^{xxvi} and 26^{xxvii} of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and fundamentally contradicts the principle of non-discrimination established by the Convention No.111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation.

CONCLUSION

The dismissal of a critical mass of public sector employees has become an *explicit part of state policy*. The dismissal of publicly critical civil servants by the Georgian Dream party contravenes the fundamental principles of a democratic and rule-of-law state, *threatens the effective functioning of the public service* and undermines the quality of products and services provided by this sector. The dismissal of long-serving, value-driven public servants increases the risks of nepotism, politicization of the public service and staffing it with unqualified personnel. Notably, the persecution carried out by the Georgian Dream party will also have a “*chilling effect*” - personnel who may become subjects of persecution for exercising their right to freedom of speech and expression will refrain from working in the public service. At the same time, unlawful interference with freedom of speech and expression threatens the rule of law and democracy in the country, as the full exercise of these instrumental rights is closely linked to the realization of other rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ **To International Labour Organization (ILO):**

- To ensure the investigation of violations of the rights of both public servants unlawfully dismissed by the Georgian Dream party since November 28, 2024 and those currently employed in the public sector, including through the establishment of an [investigative commission](#);
- to develop recommendations on mechanisms to protect the rights of public servants unlawfully dismissed since November 28, 2024 (including compensation, reinstatement, appointment to an equivalent position, and others) and urge the Georgian Dream party to implement these recommendations.

➤ **To the Global Union Federation of Workers in Public Service – the Public Services International (PSI) and the European Federation of Public Service Union (EPSU):**

- to call on the Georgian Dream party to respect and protect the rights of workers of public sector, including the rights of those who are members of the [Independent Trade Union of Public Servants](#) (Article 78 of the Constitution);
- to call on the Georgian Dream party to ensure the existence of a politically independent public service.

To the bodies responsible for implementing various functions at the local level

➤ **To the Administration of the Government of Georgia:**

- As the legal successor to the LEPL Public Service Bureau, to ensure the fair, objective, and impartial announcement and conduct of competitions across the Georgian public service;
- to examine the current practices of recruitment, evaluation and dismissal of civil servants, analyze civil service-related legal disputes and develop appropriate recommendations.

➤ **To the Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia:**

- To ensure the prompt and effective investigation of complaints submitted by public servants to the Public Defender's Office since November 28, 2024, concerning possible discrimination, civil and political rights violations based on different opinions and/or political beliefs.
- To investigate, on its own initiative, the facts of possible violations of civil and political rights, as well as possible discriminatory treatment, of those public servants, who have expressed their views regarding the events taking place in the country since November 28, 2024;

➤ **To the Common Courts of Georgia:**

To ensure prompt, effective, thorough, and impartial administration of justice in lawsuits filed by dismissed public servants (including cases of unlawful dismissal and discrimination), safeguarding every component of the right to a fair trial.

ⁱ [Noe Megrelishvili, Ekaterine Bendeliani.](#)

ⁱⁱ Interview conducted with M.K. on June 2, 2025; interview conducted with M.V. on June 29, 2025.

ⁱⁱⁱ Interview conducted with N.T. on June 5, 2025; interview conducted with A.G. on June 15, 2025.

^{iv} Interview with A.G. conducted on June 15, 2025; Interview with S.T. conducted on June 24, 2025.

^v Interview with M.K., June 2, 2025; Interview with S.N., June 4, 2025; Interview with N.T., June 5, 2025.

^{vi} Interview with M.V., June 29, 2025.

^{vii} Interview with M.K., June 2, 2025; Interview with S.N., June 4, 2025; Interview with M.T., June 7, 2025; Interview with A.G., June 15, 2025; Interview with S.T., June 24, 2025; Interview with M.V., June 29, 2025.

^{viii} Interview with M.K., June 2, 2025; Interview with S.N., June 4, 2025; Interview with N.T., June 5, 2025; Interview with M.T., June 7, 2025; Interview with A.G., June 15, 2025.

^{ix} Interview with M.K., June 2, 2025; Interview with S.N., June 4, 2025; Interview with N.T., June 5, 2025; Interview with M.T., June 7, 2025; Interview with A.G., June 15, 2025; Interview with S.T., June 24, 2025; Interview with M.V., June 29, 2025.

^x Interview with M.K., June 2, 2025; Interview with S.N., June 4, 2025; Interview with N.T., June 5, 2025; Interview with S.T., June 24, 2025.

^{xi} Interview with M.K., June 2, 2025; Interview with S.N., June 4, 2025; Interview with N.T., June 5, 2025; Interview with M.V., June 29, 2025.

^{xii} Interview with M.T., June 7, 2025.

^{xiii} Interview with S.N., June 4, 2025; Interview with M.T., June 7, 2025.

^{xiv} Interview with M.K., June 2, 2025; Interview with N.T., June 5, 2025.

^{xv} Interview with A.G., June 15, 2025; Interview with S.T., June 24, 2025; Interview with M.V., June 29, 2025.

^{xvi} Tbilisi City Hall, Ministry of Education of Georgia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, etc.

^{xvii} Interview with M.K., June 2, 2025; Interview with S.N., June 4, 2025; Interview with N.T., June 5, 2025; Interview with M.T., June 7, 2025.

^{xviii} Interview with S.N., June 4, 2025; Interview with N.T., June 5, 2025.

^{xix} Interview with M.T. conducted on June 7, 2025; Interview with S.T. conducted on June 24, 2025.

^{xx} Interview with S.N., June 4, 2025; Interview with N.T., June 5, 2025; Interview with A.G., June 15, 2025.

^{xxi} Article 4

^{xxii} Article 9

^{xxiii} Professional public servant, a person employed under a labor/administrative contract.

^{xxiv} Equality before the law.

^{xxv} Freedom of opinion and expression.

^{xxvi} The right to freely express one's opinion.

^{xxvii} Equality before the law.