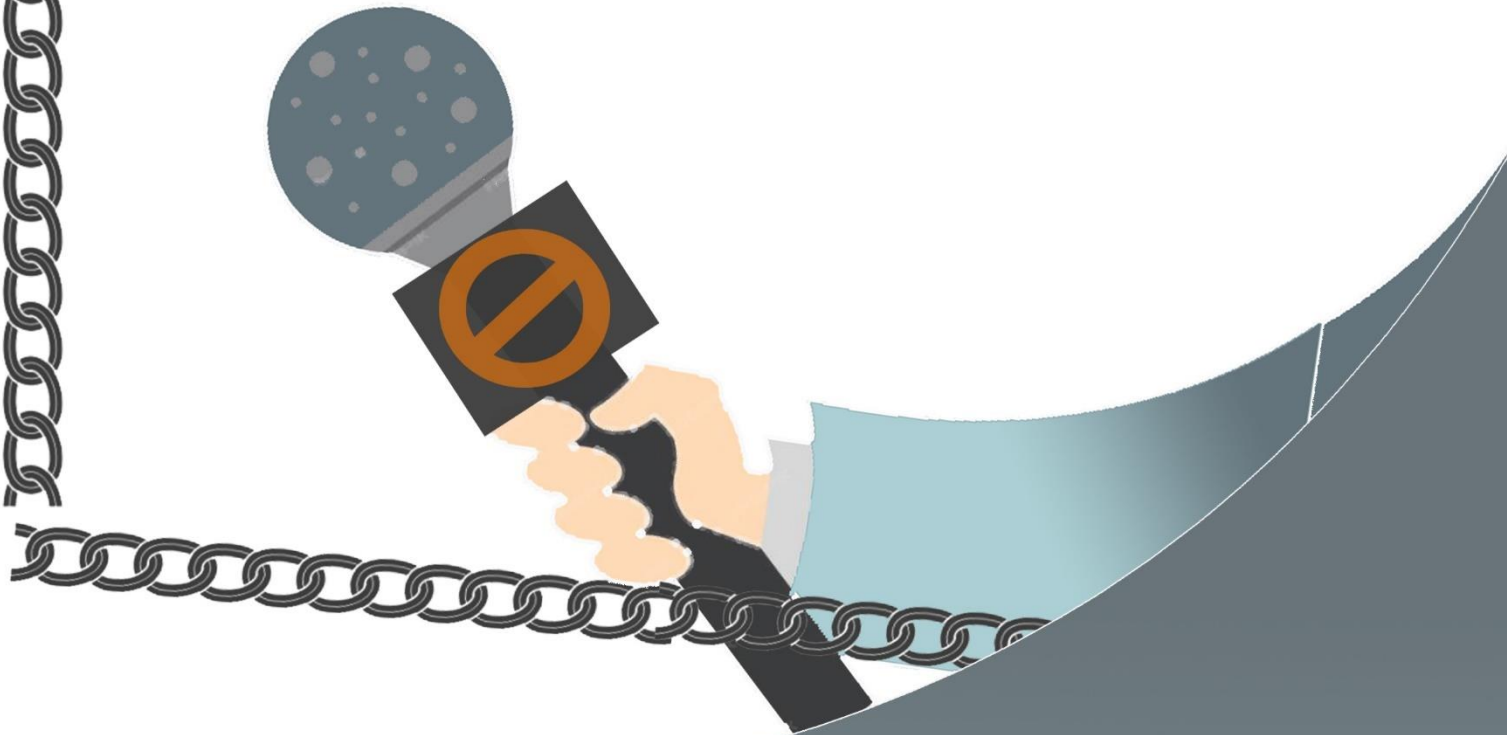




*Media
Institute*



PERSECUTION AGAINST MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS

(Legislative changes and
existing practice)



2025

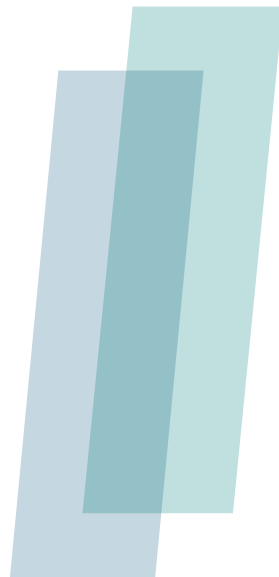
AGAINST MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS

(Legislative changes and existing practice)



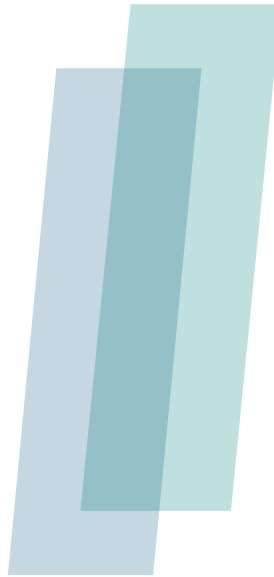
AUTOR: NATO MIRZASHVILI

2025



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INTRODUCTION

In the context of the mass protest rallies that began on 28 November 2024, representatives of various sectors and professional groups became subject to persecution. In parallel, the **targeted persecution against the media and journalists resumed**, a trend previously observed in 2023–2024 during the initiation and re-initiation of the so-called “Russian Law.” At that time, journalists faced obstruction in the exercise of their professional duties while covering demonstrations, as well as incidents of physical violence. Since 2023, the ruling party *Georgian Dream* has been taking measures to silence independent media, both through legislative initiatives and in practice.

At the legislative level, restrictions on media freedom began on May 28, 2024, when the ruling party *Georgian Dream* adopted the so-called “Russian Law” and extended its scope to media organizations. In addition, broadcasters became subject to newly introduced legislation, including the law restricting LGBT rights and the so-called “FARA.” Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Broadcasting prohibited broadcasters from receiving direct or indirect funding from a “foreign power,” expanded the definitions of the principles of accuracy, fairness, and impartiality and - through the removal of references to “gender” and “gender identity” - effectively allowed programs or advertisements to incite violence or hatred on those grounds. Furthermore, under the new provisions, complaints concerning violations of broadcasting standards may now be submitted to the Georgian National Communications Commission (GNCC). Considering the procedure for appointing its members¹, this raises risks of biased decision-making against critical media outlets and the imposition of a form of censorship. Notably, the GNCC was also granted the authority to apply to the courts and to request confidential information about broadcasters from banks.

Media organizations also became subject to amendments to the Law of Georgia on Grants. Further restrictions on media freedom were introduced through amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on Common Courts, which prohibited journalists from taking photographs, making video or audio recordings or broadcasting within court buildings, including courtrooms and courtyards. Amendments to the Law of Georgia on Freedom of Speech and Expression, particularly the shift of the burden of proof in defamation cases from the claimant to the respondent, increased the risk of censorship and self-censorship among journalists. The same objective was pursued through an amendment to the Code of Administrative Offenses, which introduced a new administrative offense of “insulting political officials and public servants.”

In order to effectively ban the existence of independent media, along with the adoption of legislative amendments, the Georgian Dream party still uses various forms of **persecution of journalists on professional grounds**. From November 28, 2024 to June 16, 2025, 37 cases of fines of journalists on the grounds of “artificially blocking the road” were recorded while covering protest rallies. Dismissal from work and other disciplinary measures were also used against critical journalists. The persecution of media representatives was also manifested in targeted physical violence, insults, detention, damage to broadcasting equipment and other actions against them during protest rallies. A clear example of numerous violations of rights against journalists is Mzia Amaglobeli, the founder of the publications "Batumelebi" and "Netgazeti", who became a political prisoner of the Georgian Dream.

In pursuit of its campaign against journalists, the ruling party *Georgian Dream* has also imposed fines on them for so-called “posts” on social media concerning political officials, thereby violating their freedom of expression. Beyond the direct violations targeting journalists, it is notable that *Georgian Dream* has further restricted the work of critical media outlets through the use of complaints filed with the Communications Commission and by imposing garnishments on their bank accounts. These measures serve to interfere with editorial policy, enforce censorship or self-censorship and silence independent media organizations. Between November 28, 2024 and May 1, 2025, a total of 193 media representatives became targets of persecution in the context of the protest rallies.



VIOLATION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION OF MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS

(November 28, 2024 –September 15, 2025)

From November 28, 2024, at the initial stage of suppressing the ongoing protest, the party *Georgian Dream* attempted to disperse peaceful demonstrations using unlawful, disproportionate and violent means. Together with participants of the protest, journalists, cameramen and photographers, who were live-broadcasting the protest, also became subjects of physical violence and inhuman treatment. On the night of 28–29 November 2024, during the dispersal of the protest, a Special Forces officer attacked *Formula*'s journalist Guram Rogava, while he was live on air and repeatedly punched him in the head, resulting in broken facial bones and a fractured neck. On the same night, *Publika*'s journalist Aleksandre Keshelashvili was arrested and beaten. According to his statement, the physical violence against him intensified after he informed the police that he was a journalist. During the protest on

November 28-29, Radio Liberty's journalist [Davit Tsagareli](#), TV Pirveli's cameraman [Giorgi Shetsiruli](#), and Project 64's editor [Giorgi Gogua](#) were physically assaulted.

Several media representatives were also injured as a result of the disproportionate use of special means intended to disperse the peaceful protest, including targeted use of [pepper spray](#) and [water cannons](#), as well as [tear gas](#). During the protest of November 28–29, around [40 cases](#) of physical violence were recorded, as well as obstruction of professional activities, injuries and detentions of media representatives. Targeted physical and verbal abuse by the Special Tasks Department (STD) of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Patrol Police against journalists and cameramen, as well as obstruction when filming the detention and beating of protesters, continued in the following days of the protest. While covering the protest, *TV Pirveli's* journalist [Mariam Gaprindashvili](#) suffered a serious head injury and her [cameraman](#) was also injured.

Publika's journalist [Ana Mskhaladze](#) also became a victim of physical abuse - she was struck and her mobile phone was taken away after she informed the Special Forces that she was a journalist. From November 30 to December 5, 2024, while covering the protests, Realpolitik journalist Aka Zarkua (whose press identification card was [allegedly shoved into his mouth](#) by a special forces "commander"), Formula journalist [Giorgi Kvizhinadze](#), Publika's journalist [Natia Amiranashvili](#) and others were also physically assaulted. Several media representatives were also reportedly shot at with [rubber bullets](#). Journalists, cameramen and photographers were prevented from performing their professional duties by [confiscating their phones](#), ordering them to turn off their recording equipment, [illegally detaining](#) them, and [damaging cameras and other broadcasting equipment](#). It is noteworthy that in addition to the Special Forces and police, media representatives were also prevented from carrying out their activities and physically assaulted by individuals associated with the Georgian Dream party, the so-called "Titushki" - violent groups directly or indirectly supported by the government.

On 7 December 2024, TV Pirveli's journalist [Maka Chikhladze](#) and cameraman [Giorgi Shetsiruli](#) were attacked live on air by unidentified individuals, who physically assaulted them and took away their broadcasting equipment. Although patrol police were present at the scene, [they did not react](#) to the actions of the masked individuals. The police also failed to take appropriate measures when a so-called "titushka" physically assaulted Publika's journalist [Mindia Gabadze](#). During the protests of December 5–8, 2024, the persecution of media representatives continued - not only through physical assaults, but also by [obstructing their professional duties](#), [detaining or attempting to detain them](#), subjecting them to [verbal abuse](#), and [damaging](#) their mobile phones. The practice of imposing fines on media representatives while performing their professional duties began to emerge in December 2024, when the director of the regional Poti-based TV company "9th Wave", Germane Salia, was found [administratively liable](#) and fined 1,000 GEL for participating in a protest march with his car. By the end of 2024, the persecution of journalists, cameramen, and photographers mainly consisted of [obstruction of their work](#), [hostile treatment](#), [verbal and physical abuse](#), as well as [attacks and attempted attacks](#).

In 2025, the prosecution of media representatives was renewed with fines on the grounds of **"artificially blocking the road"** while performing their professional duties. On January 3, 2025, during a rally, EuroNews' journalist [Davit Kekenadze](#) was fined 5,000 GEL for allegedly blocking the road. On January 4, Main Channel's journalist [Aleksandre Sajaia](#) was charged with artificially blocking the road; on January 17, Tabula's journalist [Nikoloz Chirakadze](#); on January 22, Radio Liberty's journalist [Eka Kevanishvili](#), whose fine was later lifted, and on February 14, Tabula's journalist [Beka Jikurashvili](#) was also charged with artificially blocking the road.

During the protests of January-February 2025, around [15 more media representatives were fined](#) for allegedly “artificially blocking the road.” Of these, the fines for two journalistsⁱⁱ remained in effect, while fines for several others were later cancelledⁱⁱⁱ. [Two journalists](#) were found administratively liable by the Tbilisi City Court and were ordered to pay a fine of 5,000 GEL and some cases are still under consideration. Notably, media representatives were fined even when they were [wearing press identification cards](#), as is visible in [videos documenting](#) the alleged “offense.”

In March, April and May 2025, during the protests, [around 15 media representatives were fined](#) for allegedly blocking the road while carrying out their professional duties. Notably, some of them were fined multiple times, for example, [Giorgi Mosiashvili](#), a photo-rapporteur of TV Pirveli, was fined twice on this ground, while OC Media’s founder, journalist and photographer [Mariam Nikuradze was fined four times](#), amounting to a total of 20,000 GEL. According to Mariam Nikuradze, in all four cases, the video materials shared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs as a case evidence, clearly show that she was wearing a press badge and an armband, holding a camera, and taking photographs. Moreover, one of the video files submitted to the court as an evidence was titled “*Mariam Nikuradze, the Journalist.*”^{iv} Accordingly, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was aware that she was carrying out journalistic activities at the moment.

On January 11, 2025, **Mzia Amaghlobeli**, the founder of the media outlet *Batumelebi* and *Netgazeti*, media manager and currently a political prisoner - [was unlawfully detained for placing a so-called sticker on the wall](#) of an auxiliary building near the entrance of the Batumi Police Department. For this action, she was fined twice: on 18th of March, 2,000 GEL for “disobedience to a lawful order of a police officer,” and on 18th of June, 1,000 GEL for “distortion of the appearance of an area within the administrative boundaries of the municipality.” It is noteworthy that in the detention report, “insulting a police officer” is indicated as the official ground for detention of Mzia Amaghlobeli, while a different person^v is listed as the detaining officer, which indicates [falsification of the detention report](#) in order to create a legal basis.

The aforementioned report later served as the basis for [the unjustified use of pre-trial detention](#) against Mzia Amaghlobeli in her criminal case. On the night of January 11 (12th of January), she was detained under criminal law on charges of so-called “assault” against the Head of the Batumi Police Department. The conviction delivered against Mzia Amaghlobeli for “violence against the police officer” - [two years of imprisonment](#) - together with the [inhuman treatment](#) she endured, the presence of [false witnesses in the case, falsified documents](#), and defamatory statements disseminated by the [members of Georgian Dream](#), clearly indicate that the judgment against Mzia Amaghlobeli constitutes a politically motivated decision.

Another measure directed against Mzia Amaghlobeli and independent media was [freezing of bank accounts](#) by the Revenue Service of the media outlet *Batumelebi*. This action was perceived as a discriminatory approach and as an attempt to terminate the activities of the media organization both by the outlet itself and by international human rights organizations, including [Amnesty International](#), the [Safety of Journalists Platform](#), the [International Press Institute \(IPI\)](#), and others. The publication managed to cover [the main amount of the debt](#) with the help of public support. It is noteworthy that during the protests held in Batumi on January 11–12, *Batumelebi*’s cameraman and photographer, [Guram Murvanidze](#), was also unlawfully detained while covering the protest and recording video materials.

It is noteworthy that representatives of the media particularly became targets of persecution by the Georgian Dream party, when they were covering large-scale protest rallies and instances of physical violence carried out by Special Forces, police or groups of party supporters against demonstrators. On

February 2, 2025, during a protest near the Tbilisi Mall, the professional activities of the following journalists were obstructed: [Vladimer Chkhitunidze](#) (*Radio Marneuli*), [Ninia Kakabadze](#) (*Mediachecker*), [Akaki Sikharulidze](#) (*Guria News*), and *Media April* staff members [Vakho Kareli](#) and [Nata Uridia](#). Furthermore, on March 28, 2025, Nata Uridia was again prevented from carrying out her professional duties when, while filming a protest with her mobile phone, she was [pushed by police officers](#).

During the protest, [Diana Chirgadze](#), a journalist at the TV Pirveli, and her cameraman, as well as [Dea Mamiseishvili](#), a journalist at the Mtavari Channel, were verbally/physically abused and prevented from carrying out their activities. [Gela Bochikashvili](#) (*Radio Liberty*) was threatened with physical harm, and TV Pirveli's cameraman [Niko Kokaia](#) was injured. Additionally, Mirza Kezevadze, the former deputy director of the Special Tasks Department at Ministry of Internal Affairs seized the personal phone of TV Pirveli's journalist Khatia Samkharadze, threw it to the ground, and kicked.. During this protest, more than [ten incidents of obstruction of journalistic activities](#) were documented. The protest was preceded by the statement of the Chairman of the Parliament Shalva Papuashvili, who accused the media outlet "Publika" of allegedly [promoting a criminal offense](#) by placing a poster about the protest rally planned for February 2.

Obstruction of professional activities of media representatives, as well as their physical abuse and violence, continued actively in the context of protest demonstrations. On February 4, 2025, a masked police officer attempted to [seize the mobile phone](#) of Givi Avaliani, a journalist for the OC Media, while he was implementing his professional duties. On the same day, police officers [struck and pulled the hair](#) of Publika's photojournalist Natia Alaverdashvili, and used violence against [Vancent Khabeshvili](#), editor-in-chief of the *NEWS.On.ge*. An unidentified person deliberately damaged a vehicle belonging to the publication [Mtis Ambebi](#) and later banged on the apartment door of its editor, Gela Mtivlishvili. On March 15, 2025, Gela Mtivlishvili also [became target of an attack](#) by an employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Notably, representatives of critical media have additionally faced obstruction in their journalistic activities [through suspension of accreditation](#) and [prohibition of entry into the Parliament](#).

During the ongoing protests, media representatives were and continue to be detained for alleged "violations" that the Georgian Dream party actively uses against protest participants. On February 19, 2025, Lasha Jioshvili, a cameraman for the TV Pirveli, was [abducted and illegally detained](#) on the grounds of "disobedience to a lawful order of a police officer," and on April 6, Saba Sordia, [a journalist for Indigo](#), was similarly detained. Both were found offenders and [fined 2,500 GEL each](#). Notably, within the context of protests ongoing since November 28, 2024, [journalists](#), cameramen and [other media representatives](#), who were [unlawfully detained](#) and [beaten](#), were subsequently officially recognized as administrative offenders by the *Georgian Dream* party courts.

Critically minded journalists became targets of persecution in their workplace too. [Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani](#), a journalist at the Georgian Public Broadcaster, was informed that, as of February 4, 2025, he would no longer host the 18:00 Moambe program, as producers no longer wished to continue collaboration with him. The journalist attributed this decision to his criticism of the channel's editorial policy. Critically minded journalists - [Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani](#) and [Nino Zautashvili](#), the host of *Realuri Sivrtse* (*Real Space*) - were dismissed from the Public Broadcaster on April 11, 2025 based on a "disciplinary examination." This was preceded by a request voiced at the meeting of the members of the Public Broadcaster's Board of Trustees that the Prosecutor's Office must [launch an investigation](#) into the facts of "groundless accusations" made by the aforementioned hosts and director Kakha Melikidze. Within the framework of the aforementioned disciplinary investigation, disciplinary sanctions were also imposed on [four employees](#) of the Public Broadcaster.

On February 28, 2025, the Public Broadcaster did not renew the employment contract of Anna Metreveli, assistant producer of the radio programs “Shuadgis Piki” (“Noon Peak”) and “Saghamos Piki” (“Evening Peak”), who also criticized the channel’s editorial policy. Journalist Ani Jobava also explained the fact with the same reason. Three employees of the Public Broadcaster were given a warning as a disciplinary sanction for questioning the editorial independence and impartiality of the Broadcast that caused reputational damage. Starting from May 13, 2025, five employees of the program “Real Space” were dismissed from their jobs, some of whom had been subject to disciplinary sanctions. On August 1, 2025, four more employees were dismissed, some of whom had also been subject to disciplinary sanctions. Meri Shikhashvili, an employee of the Real Space, was also fired upon returning from maternity leave on August 30, 2025. As a disciplinary sanction for causing reputational damage, 30% of the September salary of the editor-operator Giga Kitia was deducted.

The ruling party Georgian Dream also carries out persecution against media organizations through the practical application of recently adopted legislative amendments. On June 2, 2025, on the basis of amendments introduced to the Law of Georgia on Broadcasting, *Georgian Dream* submitted a complaint to the National Communications Commission against the television companies **Formula, TV Pirveli and Mtavari Arkhi**. The complaint concerned the use, both on television and on social media platforms, of certain expressions and terms, such as: “illegitimate parliament,” “so-called speaker of parliament,” “oligarch’s MP,” “the regime’s city court,” “Georgian Dream’s regime,” “prisoners of the regime,” among others. On 3 July 2025, the Communications Commission held that all three broadcasters had violated the law, although no administrative fines were imposed on them. Lodging such complaints by the Georgian Dream against media outlets and the subsequent recognition of these outlets as violators, not only undermines freedom of expression of the media, but also constitutes targeted harassment of media organizations through **interference in editorial policy and the imposition of censorship and self-censorship**.

Georgian Dream further restricted media freedom by introducing and enforcing amendments to the Organic Law of Georgia on Common Courts. As of 27th of June 2025, a prohibition entered into force on **photo and video recording**, audio capture, and live broadcasting within court buildings, courtyards, and courtrooms. This measure effectively closed judicial proceedings to the media and consequently, to the public. Representatives of critical media outlets are still not given the opportunity to cover court hearings concerning individuals detained on political grounds. It is important to note that the right of critical media representatives to cover trials was restricted even before the amendments to the law.

In June 2025, the Georgian Dream party massively used the amendments to the Code of Administrative Offenses against media representatives, which introduced a **new administrative violation: verbal insult and/or other offensive conduct** directed at political officials or public servants. On this basis, on June 6, 2025, administrative proceedings were initiated against several media representatives over so-called “posts” published on the social media platform Facebook about the members of *Georgian Dream*. As a result, several journalists were fined: Eka Mishveladze, Vakho Sanaia, Vika Bukia, and television host Misha Mshvildadze were each fined 4,000 GEL, while journalist Dea Mamiseishvili was fined 3,000 GEL.

It is important to note that the growing trend of so-called SLAPP cases against critical media, as well as the imposition of censorship and self-censorship, has been facilitated by amendments introduced to the Law of Georgia on Freedom of Speech and Expression by *Georgian Dream*. These amendments shifted the burden of proof **in defamation cases** from the plaintiff to the defendant, abolished qualified privilege and extended the substantive regulation of speech and expression to include insult in public spaces. Significantly, on the basis of these amendments, *Georgian Dream* member Tea Tsulukiani

[filed a lawsuit against the TV host Nanuka Zhorzholiani](#). Furthermore, [Cartu Bank](#) initiated a defamation lawsuit against *TV Pirveli*, seeking a court ruling prohibiting the broadcaster from referring to it as “Ivanishvili’s bank” or “the oligarch’s bank.”

The Georgian Dream party continues to actively persecute media representatives - obstructing them in the performance of their professional duties and physically/verbally abusing them. In parallel, proceedings have been launched against the civil society organizations both on the basis of alleged [violations of the so-called “FARA” provisions](#) and for the purpose of [obtaining information on grants, beneficiaries, and partner organizations](#). A number of these NGOs are [members of the Media Advocacy Coalition](#) and work specifically on issues related to media freedom. In the context of the investigation into the so-called “face masks case,” the bank accounts of several such organizations were also frozen.

On September 3, 2025, during the protest held in parallel to the opening ceremony of the election headquarters of the Georgian Dream’s candidate for Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze, *Georgian Dream* member Beka Odisharia [verbally insulted journalist Mindia Gabadze](#) of the online media - *Publika*. The editor of the online newspaper *Publika* [Lika Zakashvili](#), was also targeted: she was subjected to both verbal and physical abuse by members and supporters of the *Georgian Dream*, including being spat upon. Police officers further obstructed her work, forcing her to stop filming by twisting her arm.

On September 8, 2025, [six journalists were attacked](#) during a protest held near the same election headquarters. Supporters of the Georgian Dream [physically assaulted](#) *Publika*’s journalists [Aleksandre Keshelashvili and Keto Mikadze](#), while they were conducting their professional duties, and confiscated their mobile phones. [Netgazeti’s journalist Ketevan Khutsishvili](#) was also obstructed in her work; police officers verbally abused her and used physical force against her. In addition, supporters of the ruling party threw water on the founder of the OC Media and photojournalist [Mariam Nikuradze](#) and the journalist of the Studio Monitor [Keti Tutberidze](#). [Hungarian journalist Laszlo Muzes](#) was also became a victim of physical assault.

It is noteworthy that, **no individuals have been identified or held accountable for the** incidents targeting media representatives since November 28, 2024 including physical violence, verbal and physical abuse, and obstruction of journalistic activity.



LEGAL ANALYSIS

Article 17 of the Constitution of Georgia guarantees freedom of opinion and expression, protecting the right of every individual to freely receive and disseminate information. This provision also *establishes the fundamental principles of media freedom and prohibits censorship*. The actions carried out by the *Georgian Dream* - including *interference in the editorial policies of media organizations through legislative amendments, the imposition of censorship and self-censorship*, targeted verbal and physical abuse of media representatives, acts of violence, unlawful detention or fines and *obstruction of the performance of professional duties* - constitute a gross and unjustified infringement within the scope of rights protected under the Article 17 of the Constitution.

Illegal interference into a journalist's professional activities, including forcing him/her to disseminate information or refrain from disseminating it, is a crime under the Criminal Code of Georgia.^{vi} Similarly, criminal liability exists for the *persecution on the basis of speech*, opinion, conscience, or other grounds. Media representatives, however, have increasingly become the targets of such actions^{vii} carried out by the *Georgian Dream*. Freedom of speech and expression encompasses not only the *prohibition of censorship* but also the *editorial independence* and pluralism^{viii} of the media, which the *Georgian Dream* actively undermines. The lawful right to editorial independence of broadcasters *is protected from commercial, political, and other forms of pressure and influence*^{ix}. The dismissal or imposition of disciplinary sanctions on employees with a critical stance within the public broadcaster violates both the fundamental principle of non-discrimination^x and the editorial principles of independence^{xi} and freedom from political or commercial influence.

Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects freedom of expression, which may only be subject to restrictions that are prescribed by law and *are necessary in a democratic society* for the protection of national security, territorial integrity or other legitimate aims. The actions carried out by the *Georgian Dream* against media representatives violate not only this provision but also the Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Criticism of the government or government-supported political and social systems by media outlets, publishers and journalists can never be considered a necessary and legitimate restriction on freedom of expression.^{xii}

The role of human rights defenders and journalists in monitoring assemblies is particularly important for the full realization of the right to peaceful assembly. *They must not be prohibited or excessively restricted in performing these functions*, including monitoring the actions of law enforcement officers. Journalists should not be subjected to punishment (repression), intimidation, or harassment, *nor should their equipment be confiscated or damaged*. Even if an assembly is declared unlawful or has already been dispersed, this does not limit the right to conduct monitoring.^{xiii} The confiscation of broadcasting equipment or the deprivation of liberty while performing professional duties significantly restricts the *right to receive and disseminate information*.^{xiv} Law enforcement authorities must ensure the respect and protection of the fundamental rights of organizers and participants of assemblies, as well as

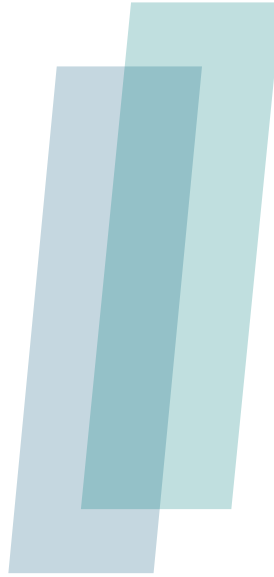
protection of *journalists from harm*.^{xv} Journalists are not participants in assemblies but observers; therefore, they should not be required to leave the protest site while monitoring and recording police actions, unless their presence significantly obstructs law enforcement officers in performing their duties.^{xvi} Any attempt to remove journalists from the site of a demonstration should be subject to strict scrutiny, taking into account the essential function of the media in a democratic society (*such as, providing information about public demonstrations and government measures to manage or disperse unrest*).^{xvii} In cases of violence against media representatives by law enforcement officers, *a comprehensive and independent investigation* must be conducted, and, if necessary, criminal charges should be brought. States should also impose *professional sanctions* on police officers who commit violence against journalists.^{xviii}



CONCLUSION

The actions carried out by the Georgian Dream against media representatives - including unlawful fines imposed under the pretext of “artificially blocking roads” during the performance of professional duties, physical violence and verbal abuse while covering protests, the imposition of censorship, and other violations of the right to freedom of expression - **have taken the form of targeted persecution of the media and journalists**. This persecution is carried out both through arbitrarily restrictive legislative amendments and through physical reprisals by law enforcement officers and informal groups affiliated with the Georgian Dream Party against journalists and cameramen. The indifference of relevant authorities and the lack of effective response to acts of violence, further reinforce an environment of impunity, where perpetrators remain unpunished.

Interference in the editorial policies of broadcasters through various means (*such as unjustified and restrictive legislative amendments, the filing of unsubstantiated complaints with the Communications Commission, and other measures*) together with the physical and verbal abuse of media representatives or the direct or indirect encouragement of such abuse, unlawful fines and detentions, the unlawful dismissal of employees from the public broadcaster, and the deprivation of financial resources for media organizations, *is aimed at silencing critical, independent, and free media*. These actions create a “chilling effect” that pressures media outlets into self-censorship.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression of the United Nations (Irene Khan):

Respond to the systematic violations of journalists' rights in Georgia and to urge the Georgian Dream Party *to stop restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression aimed at persecuting media representatives*. More precisely: stop imposing fines on journalists, television hosts, cameramen and other media representatives for opinions expressed in digital (social media) or physical spaces; stop lodging complaints to the Communications Commission to impose censorship on media organizations; stop interference in editorial policies and the designation of broadcasters as violators; abolish administrative fines imposed on media representatives on the basis of exercising their right to freedom of expression.

To the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association of the United Nations (Gina Romero):

To respond to the systematic violations of journalists' rights in Georgia and to urge the Georgian Dream Party to stop the intimidation and persecution of media representatives during the exercise of their *right to peaceful assembly*; to end, namely, end unlawful detention, obstruction of professional duties, acts of violence and verbal or physical abuse of journalists; abolish the administrative penalties (fines, suspension of driving licenses and other measures) imposed on media representatives for covering protests on the grounds of "artificially blocking roads"; identify and ensure appropriate legal accountability for individuals who, since November 28, 2024, have participated in violations of the rights of journalists, cameramen and photographers, including acts of violence, verbal and physical abuse, obstruction of professional duties, and other violations.

To the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR):

Call upon the ruling party *Georgian Dream* to act in full compliance with the **Guidelines on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly** and other international standards - to ensure the protection of journalists' rights and safety during protests, to refrain from restricting media representatives from recording the actions of law enforcement officials and to avoid any unjustified interference in the performance of their professional duties.

To the UN Human Rights Council:

Monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights** with respect to Georgia and, within its mandate, take measures aimed at addressing the failure of the ruling party *Georgian Dream* to comply with its international obligations.

To the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights (Michael O’Flaherty):

Call on the ruling party Georgian Dream to fully implement the recommendations set out in the March 26, 2025 Memorandum ([on the Human Rights Situation in Georgia](#)) concerning the protection of journalists’ rights. These include: ensuring safe and free filming and monitoring of protest demonstrations by journalists; conducting effective investigations into violations committed against media representatives; and the release of Mzia Amaglobeli.

To the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission):

Call on the ruling party *Georgian Dream* to act in accordance with the Commission’s findings to other countries regarding the prohibition of media representatives from recording court proceedings; interference with freedom of expression through the imposition of censorship or self-censorship; and the introduction of vague and burdensome obligations for media organizations under broadcasting legislation.

At the national level, to the authorities responsible for the implementation of respective functions

To the Ministry of Internal Affairs:

Cease arbitrary and unlawful actions against media representatives, including the imposition of unlawful administrative fines and detentions, verbal and physical abuse, acts of violence, obstruction of professional duties and prohibiting restrictions on filming violations in the context of peaceful assemblies;

Identify those officials, who used physical violence against media representatives, verbally abused them, and/or otherwise interfered with their journalistic activities, and initiate an investigation into their illegal actions.

To the Common Courts of Georgia:

Ensure objective, complete and effective administration of justice in lawsuits filed against media representatives (including for alleged violations of the Law on Assemblies and Demonstrations, “artificially blocking roads,” or unlawful dismissal from employment).

To the Public Defender of Georgia:

Examine the cases of physical and verbal abuse and violence against media representatives carried out by *Georgian Dream*’s law enforcement subdivisions and violent groups supported by the *Georgian Dream* (so-called “titushki”) since November 28, 2024; as well as the cases of dismissal of employees from the Public Broadcaster due to discrimination and violation of the right to freedom of expression.

ⁱ According to Article 9 of the [Law of Georgia on Broadcasting](#), the members of the Communications Commission are appointed by the Parliament of Georgia upon the nomination of the President of Georgia.

ⁱⁱ [Beka Beridze](#), graphic designer of the online media "64" and [Basti Mgaloblishvili](#), journalist of the publication "Publika".

ⁱⁱⁱ Radio Liberty journalists Giorgi Diasamidze and Gela Bochikashvili, Studio Monitor journalists Nino Shubitidze and Nino Tsverava. See [link](#).

^{iv} Interview with Mariam Nikuradze conducted by the Media Institute on July 16, 2025.

^v Former Adjara Police Chief Grigol Beselia was replaced by Deputy Chief of Batumi City Police Gocha Vanadze.

^{vi} Article 154 of the Criminal Code of Georgia.

^{vii} Imposing fines on media representatives for opinions expressed on social media, obstructing journalistic activities through prohibitions on recording, verbal or physical abuse, acts of violence, unlawful fines or detention and other similar measures.

^{viii} Article 3, paragraph 2, subparagraph "d" of the Law of Georgia "On Freedom of Speech and Expression". See [link](#).

^{ix} Article 28 of the "Code of Conduct for Broadcasters". See [link](#).

^x Article 11 of the [Constitution](#), Article 2 of the Law of Georgia "[On All Forms of Discrimination](#)", Article 4 of the [Labor Code](#), Section 3.3 of the Internal Regulations of the [First Channel](#) of Georgia.

^{xi} Paragraph 1 of Article 18 of the Law of Georgia "On Broadcasting". See [link](#).

^{xii} UN Human Rights Committee General Comment No. 34 of 2011 on the right to freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19), p. 11, paragraph 42. See [link](#).

^{xiii} UN Human Rights Committee General Comment No. 37 on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 21), p. 6, paragraph 30. See [link](#).

^{xiv} [Mammadov and Abbasov v. Azerbaijan](#), no. 1172/12, § 62, 8 July 2021.

Also see: [Hayk Grigoryan v. Armenia](#), no. 9796/17, § 63, 3 April 2025.

^{xv} UN Human Rights Committee General Comment No. 37 on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 21), p. 13, paragraph 74. See [link](#).

^{xvi} Venice Commission and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (2020). Guide to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly, 3rd edition, paragraph 202, p. 76. See [link](#).

^{xvii} [Butkevich v. Russia](#), no. 5865/07, § 130, 13 February 2018.

^{xviii} Venice Commission and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (2020). Guide to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly, 3rd edition, paragraph 203, p. 76. See [link](#).