



**Institute for Development
of Freedom of Information**

FACT SHEET PART 4 [2025]

Sharp Democratic Backsliding and Continuous Systemic Repression in Georgia

The document includes major developments from March 10 to April 4, 2025

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Introduction

The pro-European protests continue with daily rallies in Tbilisi and other cities of Georgia. The protesters have two main demands: **1. release of all regime prisoners; 2. holding of new elections.**

In response, the “Georgian Dream” party continues systemic repression against demonstrators, civil servants, civil society organizations, media, political opponents, and other critical voices.

Considering the situation's complexity in Georgia, the number of facts worthy of attention is increasing daily. This document presents the most alarming developments, structured to reveal the sequence of events and their interrelations, **covering the period from March 10 to April 4, 2025.**

The information provided below is based on publicly available sources. Where sources are not originally available in English, IDFI provides an unofficial translation.

1. Ongoing protests across the country continue despite systemic repression

This chapter focuses on major incidents during the recent phase of the protests and the forms of repression used against the demonstrators and media. The list of issues covered in this part is not exhaustive since many things happen during the day. More detailed day-by-day information on protests and repression can be found in English on Civil Georgia’s Live Blog [Resistance 2025](#).

1.1. Repression against funds that supported the victims of systemic repression

On March 17, it was [revealed](#) that the bank accounts of funds supporting the victims of systemic repression had been frozen. The Prosecutor’s Office issued a [statement](#) indicating that, at its request, the accounts of five organizations were frozen as part of an investigation into a case classified as sabotage (Article 318 of the Criminal Code of Georgia), aiding hostile activities (Article 319 of the Criminal Code of Georgia), and financing activities directed against the constitutional order and national security principles of Georgia (Article 321¹ of Criminal Code of Georgia). This investigation was [launched](#) on February 8, following a statement filed by "United Neutral Georgia," an anti-Western and pro-GD movement.

The funds primarily [provided](#) financial assistance to the families of individuals who were unlawfully detained in connection with the protests. They also supported citizens who faced

heavy administrative fines due to repressive legislative changes. In addition to aiding those affected by the protests, some of the funds were also engaged in broader charitable activities. The following organizations' bank accounts were frozen: Nanuka's Fund, Prosperity Georgia, Fund for Each Other 24/7, Shame Movement, and Human Rights House Tbilisi.

According to the [Prosecutor's Office](#), since November 28, 2024, "the protest rallies, so-called "marches" and other events taking place in front of the Parliament of Georgia and at various locations across the country, took on a violent character in a short period of time and exceeded the limits established by law." The Prosecutor's Office [claims](#) that "the named so-called "funds" directed the main part of the received financial resources to encourage individuals committing illegal and criminal acts, as well as to purchase the inventory and means necessary to commit these crimes."

The UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights Defenders, Mary Lawlor, has [expressed](#) concerns over the freezing of the bank accounts of five organizations in Georgia and called for the decision to be reversed. Amnesty International's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Deputy Director also [responded](#) to the freezing of CSOs' accounts, describing it as "another blatant attack by the Georgian authorities on human rights."

1.2. Physical attacks on activists and journalists continue

On March 15, journalist Gela Mtivlishvili, founder of the online media outlet "Mtis Ambebi," [was attacked](#) by an armed man. Mtivlishvili [claims](#) the assailant is a Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) employee. He recounted that while driving, the man began following him and, after he stepped out of his vehicle, hurled verbal insults. When Mtivlishvili attempted to record the incident, the attacker assaulted him and tried to seize his phone. Eyewitness [footage](#) captures the armed man verbally abusing Mtivlishvili and "Whoever dislikes Khareba" (Zviad Kharazishvili, head of the Special Tasks Department of the MIA), and asking whether he was a protester. The Media Advocacy Coalition has [condemned](#) the attack on Gela Mtivlishvili, stating that "this fact confirms that media representatives in Georgia work in an environment that poses a threat to their lives and health."

On March 12, activist Lasha Gogebashvili was also [attacked](#). Reports [indicate](#) that during the assault, the attackers reminded Gogebashvili of a joke he had made about the mother of GD president Mikheil Kavelashvili during the protests. Reportedly, the attackers filmed the beating. Notably, in December 2024, Gogebashvili [was detained](#) under administrative charges, and before being placed in the temporary detention facility, he was physically assaulted by the police forces.

1.3. Repression in civil service continues

Recently, repression has been particularly severe against employees of the Ministry of Defense, where, [according to GYLA](#), around 150 individuals have been dismissed “as a result of reorganization.” GYLA [assesses](#) that the ongoing process of employee dismissals in public institutions, including the Ministry of Defense, is unlawful and constitutes politically motivated repression against public servants.

Repression continues in Tbilisi City Hall as well. On March 14, it was [reported](#) that seven employees had been dismissed. On March 24, another employee [announced](#) on social media that she had been dismissed. On April 4, it was revealed that by the decision of the Tbilisi Mayor, Nino Sanadiradze was also [dismissed](#) from the position of General Director of the Museums Union. According to her, it had already been clear since spring that her dismissal was being planned, and she had been receiving informal requests to leave the position. On the same day, it became known that by the decision of the Tbilisi Mayor, Ninia Macharashvili, head of the Tbilisi Libraries Union, was also [dismissed](#) from her position. Macharashvili considers her dismissal to be politically motivated.

Back in December 2024, Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze [denied](#) allegations that the dismissals resulting from reorganization in City Hall had a political context; however, on March 24, Kaladze [stated](#), “It is incomprehensible how someone can work with me on Tbilisi’s affairs in the morning and criticize me and undermine the process in the evening.”

1.4. Repression against university students and professors

The previous Fact Sheet highlighted the application of repressive amendments against the Theatre and Film University students, who were [fined](#) 5,000 GEL (approximately 1,650 EUR) each and [forced to leave](#) the university building, where their protest had been ongoing for over 80 days. On March 10, the university's ethics commission [decided](#) to revoke the student status of several protesters; however, on March 13, the university rector [reinstated](#) their student status.

On March 11, it was [reported](#) that two lecturers had been dismissed from Tbilisi State University (TSU) - Associate Professor Giorgi Tsertsvadze and Professor Irine Kherkheulidze. Both professors actively support the pro-European protests, and it is considered that their dismissal is [linked](#) to this support. On March 12, another lecturer from TSU, Tamar Tatanashvili, [stated](#) that she had been dismissed for political reasons. She [noted](#) that unfair treatment from the

university administration became particularly evident since the initiation of the Russian-style Foreign Agents Law.

1.5. Repression against theatre actors

On March 14, Rustaveli Theatre actress Ana Amilakhvari [stated](#) that she and two other actors were removed from a performance and reprimanded for supporting regime prisoners. The reason for this decision was an event that occurred on February 2nd, when, after a performance, she and her colleagues displayed t-shirts and banners with messages supporting regime prisoners.

On March 18, Batumi Theatre actress Megi Kobaladze also [stated](#) that the theatre's Artistic Director, Nukri Kantaria, suspended her salary for six months. Notably, there had already been [tensions](#) between the actress and the Artistic Director in light of the ongoing political situation. On March 10, actor Tornike Baramidze was [also dismissed](#) from the theatre. Actors at the Batumi Drama Theatre [believe](#) that anyone with differing political views will eventually be removed.

1.6. Administrative detention of demonstrators

On March 21, police forces [arrested](#) three students on Rustaveli Avenue: Tako Gvilia, Tatia Apriamashvili, and Luka Gogia. The students of the National University of Georgia had been holding a 24-hour continuous protest in front of the parliament building when Tako Gvilia and Tatia Apriamashvili brought chairs to the protest site. Police officers instructed them not to use the chairs, but when the students placed them on the sidewalk and sat down, they were arrested.

The [footage](#) shows that after the administrative detention of Gvilia and Apriamashvili, Luka Gogia, a student from Ilia State University, clapped ironically in response to the police action, which led to his arrest as well. Tako Gvilia and Tatia Apriamashvili were [released](#) later that day based on a written statement that they refused to sign. Luka Gogia was [released](#) from a temporary detention facility on March 22, and his court hearing is scheduled for April 17.

The previous day, on March 20, the police [attempted](#) to conduct a superficial inspection of striking female students. One student [claimed](#) that police officers also tried to search her bag. However, the students refused and demanded that the inspection be carried out by female officers.

On March 28, a protest [began](#) outside the parliament building at midday in response to statements made by representatives of the “Georgian Dream” party regarding the 2008 war during a session of the “Parliamentary Investigative Commission.” The protesters gathered at the rear entrance of the Parliament building, opposing the session’s proceedings. Tensions between demonstrators and the police escalated multiple times. At one point, police [arrested](#) two female activists who were standing on the sidewalk holding banners. It was later [revealed](#) that they had been detained for disobeying police orders.

On the same day, police [arrested](#) one of the leaders of the “Coalition for Change,” Elene Khoshtaria, on charges of disorderly conduct and disobedience to police orders. [According to Khoshtaria](#), after her arrest, police inflicted injuries on her jaw and teeth, and while in temporary detention, they handcuffed her and fully stripped her. The Public Defender [responded](#) to Khoshtaria’s arrest, stating that completely stripping a detainee constitutes “degrading and humiliating treatment.” [According to MIA](#), Khoshtaria was found in possession of a substance that was “presumably illegal,” for which an expert examination was ordered. “It doesn't matter what they say, ... I haven't had any illegal substances, and I won't have any,” Khoshtaria [said](#) after leaving the temporary detention facility. Khoshtaria was [released](#) from administrative detention on March 29 without holding a court hearing.

On March 31, Gela Khasaia, a member of the political party “Girchi – More Freedom,” was [arrested](#) on Rustaveli Avenue. Before the arrest, the police demanded to search his bag, referring to it as an “external inspection.” Initially, the officers on site [told](#) journalists that Khasaia was being taken to the police station for identification purposes. However, it was later [revealed](#) that he was being detained for allegedly disobeying a police officer’s order. Khasaia was [released](#) from administrative detention on April 2, and his court hearing was postponed.

On March 31, activist Luka Kintsurashvili was administratively [detained](#). According to his lawyer, the police stopped him on the street to conduct a “superficial inspection,” after which they searched him, demanded to see his Telegram chats, and confiscated his phone. The lawyer also [stated](#) that Kintsurashvili called her after being stopped by the police, and while receiving legal advice, his phone was taken away. His whereabouts remained unknown for six hours. [According to the lawyer](#), Kintsurashvili has bruises and was fully stripped at the police station. Notably, Kintsurashvili was also [arrested](#) in July 2024.

1.7. The practice of imposing severe financial sanctions on protesters continues

“Georgian Dream” continues to impose disproportionate financial sanctions (amounting to 5,000 GEL, approximately 1,650 EUR) on protesters for blocking Rustaveli Avenue (in front of the parliament building), a practice that has taken on an especially repressive nature amid the freezing of bank accounts of victims-supporting funds.

Judges play a crucial role in fully enforcing this repressive mechanism of fines. For instance, on March 11-12, judges of the Batumi City Court - Aleksandre Gogvadze, Jumber Bezhanidze, and Mariana Fomaeva - [fined](#) 23 individuals 5,000 GEL (approximately 1,650 EUR) each, totaling 115,000 GEL (approximately 38,000 EUR) merely for marching on a pedestrian crossing. Additionally, police officers [continue](#) the intimidating practice of delivering fines to citizens. [According to GYLA](#), between November 2024 and March 18, 2025, the total amount of fines issued against protesters for “violating” the rules for organizing or holding assemblies has reached 2,000,000 GEL (approximately 660,200 EUR). Notably, according to the official data available on the [website](#) of the National Statistics Office of Georgia, the average monthly nominal earnings in the 4th quarter of 2024 amounted to 2,217.5 GEL (approximately 732 EUR), while in December 2024, the subsistence minimum for the average consumer amounted to 230.5 GEL (approximately 76 EUR).

1.8. Intimidation of protesters through surveillance

GYLA has [raised concerns](#) over the MIA’s continued use of facial recognition cameras against protesters, particularly in cases involving roadblocks. The organization [claims](#) that photos from these cameras serve as the sole evidence in court, while the courts fail to examine whether the identification process complies with personal data protection law. GYLA [argues](#) that surveillance serves as a tool to intimidate and control protesters, creating a “chilling effect” on freedom of expression.

GYLA also [highlighted](#) a recent case that exposed the MIA’s targeted surveillance tactics. [Footage](#) from a January 2025 protest on Rustaveli Avenue shows a camera actively tracking an individual, zooming in on a document they were reading. The organization [says](#) this proves that surveillance is being manually controlled, allowing authorities to access personal information unrelated to the alleged offense.

GYLA [urged](#) the Personal Data Protection Service to examine these concerns and ensure that surveillance practices align with national and international data protection standards.

In response to GYLA's concerns, the Personal Data Protection Service [stated](#) that it, on its initiative, started two independent unplanned inspections which include: "Examination of the lawfulness of biometric data processing through cameras (Tbilisi, Rustaveli Avenue) by the Ministry of Internal Affairs' public law legal entity – Public Safety Command Center 112" and "Examination of the lawfulness of biometric data processing in the administrative legal process through a special electronic program by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia."

In response to the statement by the Personal Data Protection Service, the Social Justice Center [clarified](#) that the legislation provides a more effective mechanism for monitoring data processing than the unplanned inspection initiated by the Service. Specifically, based on a data subject's request, the legality of data processing can be reviewed, and the review period should not exceed two months, with the possibility of an extension of a maximum of one month. Additionally, the data subject, as a party to the proceedings, has the right to request information from the Service regarding the inspection process.

Notably, in several cases, IDFI requested the Service to review the legality of data processing based on a data subject's request. However, the Service unjustifiably considers such requests inadmissible and refuses to fulfill its obligation as prescribed by law. (The analysis prepared by IDFI on this issue will be published soon on www.idfi.ge.)

1.9. Taking citizens to the police for graffiti restoration

Lekso Samkharadze, Tsotne Japaridze, and Davit Tatiashvili, who were attempting to restore the damaged graffiti of Georgia's national hero, Giorgi Antsukhelidze, who heroically fell in the 2008 war, and of Kakha Tilidze, a Georgian fighter who died in Ukraine, [were taken](#) to the police station. Several police units approached them and demanded to see their identification documents. The officers then informed them that they needed to be taken to the station to draft a "response report."

A few hours after being taken to the station, they were [released](#). According to Tsotne Japaridze, they were not fined. However, the police confiscated the items (stencils) they intended to use to restore the graffiti.

2. Adoption and/or initiation of other restrictive measures for consolidation of the Georgian Dream's systemic repression

The "Georgian Dream" party and institutions under its effective control continue to announce and/or adopt further repressive measures against critical voices.

The following chapter aims to provide information about the recent decisions/initiatives aimed at further targeting demonstrators, media, civil servants, CSOs, political opponents, and other critical voices.

2.1. Adoption of repressive legislative amendments

On April 1, “Georgian Dream” adopted all the repressive amendments outlined in the previous Fact Sheet:

Adoption of the “Foreign Agents Registration Act” - “Georgian Dream” [adopted](#) FARA, with the announced aim to target critical voices, including CSOs. The scope of the law applies to "natural persons, partnerships, associations, companies, organizations or other types of associations of persons". Furthermore, **it imposes criminal liability**. For instance, if an organization fails to register, its management (directors, board members, and other managerial entities) may face **imprisonment for up to five years**, a fine (up to 10,000 GEL (approximately 3,300 EUR)), or a combination of both. The Anti-corruption Bureau is defined as the body responsible for the execution of the Georgian Dream’s FARA. GD President Mikheil Kavelashvili [signed](#) the law on the same day it was adopted by the GD Parliament. According to the [Legislative Herald of Georgia](#), the law will enter into force on May 31, 2025.

Amendments to the “Law on Broadcasting” - Broadcasters are now [prohibited](#) from receiving foreign funding. Furthermore, the amendments significantly expand the Communications Commission’s authority over broadcasting content, introduce strict rules for content accuracy, and impose harsher penalties. Additionally, after adopting the bill in the first reading, a provision was added according to which the law will extend to broadcasters’ online platforms. Notably, the law had already impacted independent media. For example, a Radio Liberty program that aired on Radio Palitra was [shut down](#) “due to the repressive law.”

Criminalization of Treason - The article on “treason against the motherland” has been [reintroduced](#) into the Criminal Code. Notably, all offenses covered by this article were already punishable under existing law, indicating that its primary purpose is to label Georgian Dream’s political opponents as “traitors.”

Abolition of the Mandatory Participation of NGOs in Public Decision-Making - Amendments to 14 different laws have [abolished](#) the mandatory participation of NGOs in public decision-making processes.

Removing “Gender” from Legislation - The terms “gender” and “gender identity” have been [removed](#) from all Georgian legislation. Furthermore, the Permanent Parliamentary Council on gender equality has been abolished.

Restrictions on Receiving Remuneration/Benefits by Public Servants and Judges - Under the [amendments](#), public servants (excluding political officials) must obtain written approval from their institution's head or a designated authority to engage in scientific, teaching, or creative work. These restrictions also apply to judges - common court judges need to obtain permission from the High Council of Justice, while justices of the Constitutional Court need permission from the Court's Plenum.

Changing the Appointment Procedure for Heads and Deputies of Legal Entities of Public Law (LEPLs) - LEPL heads and their deputies will no longer be appointed through a simplified competition process. Instead, their appointment will be [determined](#) by the relevant state supervisory body or the head of the agency under whose jurisdiction the specific LEPL operates.

Changes to the Law "On Professional Theaters" - The amendments [abolish](#) the existing two-tier theater management system, merging artistic and administrative leadership under a single theater director. The changes [grant](#) significant appointment powers to the Minister of Culture and mayors, with all current directors being dismissed immediately upon enactment.

Abolishment of the Civil Service Bureau - As mentioned in the previous Fact Sheet, on February 20, as part of the repression of the public service, the "Georgian Dream" [approved](#) final amendments aimed at abolishing the Civil Service Bureau and transferring its functions to the GD government administration. These amendments came into force on April 1, and accordingly, the Civil Service Bureau ceased to exist.

2.2. The sessions of the "Parliamentary Investigative Commission" continue

As already mentioned in one of the previous Fact Sheets, on February 5, an investigative commission was [established](#) to "investigate" the activities of the United National Movement government (2003-2012). However, on March 27, Mamuka Mdinaradze, the Executive Secretary of "Georgian Dream", [stated](#) that the mandate of the investigative commission would also be extended to the period after 2012 to ensure that its "scope of activity is not limited solely to unconstitutional actions committed before 2012." This amendment was [adopted](#) by the GD Parliament on April 1.

Parliament's Rules of Procedure indicate that attending a session upon the commission's request is mandatory. According to the Criminal Code of Georgia, "Non-compliance with a request of the provisional investigative commission of the Parliament of Georgia shall be punished by a fine or imprisonment for up to one year."

On March 19, “Georgian Dream” [adopted](#) amendments to Parliament’s Rules of Procedure concerning the powers of temporary investigative commissions. The amendments [expand](#) the commission’s authority, allowing it to request investigations at any stage of its work.

On March 24, the commission [summoned](#) the leaders of the opposition party, “Lelo”, Mamuka Khazaradze, and Badri Japaridze. [According to the commission](#), the case concerns alleged business racketeering. Khazaradze and Japaridze [refused](#) to attend the commission’s session. In response, the commission [referred](#) the matter to the Prosecutor’s Office, which subsequently [launched](#) an investigation into their refusal to attend the commission’s session. On March 27, Mamuka Khazaradze [announced](#) that he had received a notice from the court regarding questioning as a witness. On April 1, Mamuka Khazaradze was [charged](#) with “failure to comply with the lawful request of the Temporary Investigative Commission of the Parliament of Georgia” (Article 349 of CCG). On April 2, the court [granted](#) the prosecution’s motion and set bail for Khazaradze at 50,000 GEL (approximately 16,504 EUR). On April 4, the Prosecutor’s Office also [charged](#) Badri Japaridze for refusing to appear before the investigative commission.

On March 27, the commission also [referred](#) the matter to the Prosecutor’s Office regarding Irakli Okruashvili, who served as Minister of Defense of Georgia from 2004 to 2006, for failing to appear at the commission session. Okruashvili had likewise refused to attend the commission’s meeting, where he was summoned to answer questions about the 2008 Russia-Georgia war.

The deputy general director of Formula TV, journalist Giorgi Targamadze, representative of the Soviet Past Research Laboratory (SovLab) and former MP Giorgi Kandelaki, and opposition politician Givi Targamadze were also [summoned](#) to the commission meeting. None of them [appeared](#) at the session.

On April 2, the commission [summoned](#) the leaders of the “Coalition for Change” - Nika Gvaramia, Zurab “Girchi” Japaridze, and Nika Melia. All three [stated](#) that they do not intend to appear before the commission.

2.3. Georgian Dream’s plan to ban opposition parties

Mamuka Mdinaradze, the leader of the parliamentary majority of the “Georgian Dream”, [announced](#) that the party had initiated a bill that seeks to declare the “successor parties” of the United National Movement (UNM) unconstitutional. According to the proposal, this would apply if a party’s “activities, the personal composition of decision-makers, or statutory goals” are identical to those of the UNM. Mdinaradze justified the initiative by [stating](#) that parties operating with a “common hostile purpose against the country” should be removed from

politics. To this end, the “Georgian Dream” plans to appeal to the Constitutional Court to declare the UNM and “its satellite parties” unconstitutional.

During a briefing on March 27, Mdinaradze [emphasized](#) that banning the “collective UNM” was one of GD’s pre-election promises. He also [claimed](#) that an upcoming report from a “parliamentary investigative commission” would provide sufficient grounds for GD to seek the Constitutional Court’s ruling “regarding the declaration of the 'National Movement' and its satellite parties as unconstitutional.” He named four major opposition parties that overcame the electoral threshold in the 2024 parliamentary elections as potential targets of this initiative. [According to Mdinaradze](#), these parties form the “collective UNM” and, if the bill is enacted, their members would be barred from participating in any future elections. He further [argued](#) that without such a measure, it would be impossible to establish “a real, action-oriented, national-interest-oriented, strong opposition, which will not be busy fulfilling orders received from outside the country.”

The draft law mentioned by Mdinaradze [states](#) that the Constitutional Court may ban a political party “whose aim is to overthrow or forcibly change the constitutional order of Georgia, undermine the country’s independence, violate its territorial integrity, or that engages in war or violence propaganda, incites national, regional, religious, or social discord, or creates or has created an armed formation.” According to the initiated draft, the court may also ban a party that “essentially repeats the declared goals or/and the essence of the activities of a party previously banned by the Constitutional Court.”

2.4. Restrictions on journalists’ activities in public institutions

TV Pirveli journalist Nata Kajaia has been [banned](#) from working in the GD parliament for six months. According to an official letter from the GD parliament, the journalist violated a rule set by the speaker of the GD parliament, Shalva Papuashvili. The rule [states](#) that a journalist is not allowed to continue recording an interview if the respondent refuses to speak. A first violation results in a one-month ban from the parliament building, while a second violation leads to a six-month suspension. Parliament [imposed](#) the same sanction on Kajaia in July 2024.

The Media Advocacy Coalition [condemned](#) Kajaia’s accreditation suspension, as well as the closure of the Akhaltsikhe City Hall advisory council meeting for regional journalists. The coalition [highlighted](#) that local media representatives from Samkhretis Karibche and Tok TV “were unlawfully denied access to the meeting.” In its statement, the coalition [argued](#) that “Georgian Dream’s current policy toward the media is characteristic of authoritarian regimes and aims to restrict the fundamental democratic principles of a free press and public accountability.”

2.5. Threat of persecution against Public Broadcaster employees

At the March 21 [meeting](#) of the Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB) Board of Trustees, the Board reviewed and dismissed concerns raised by journalists Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani, Nino Zautashvili, Kakhaber Melikidze, and Gia Imnaishvili. The journalists had criticized GPB's inadequate and insufficient coverage of protest-related major events, including attacks on journalists and the arrest of Batumelebi and Netgazeti (online media outlets) founder and director Mzia Amaghlobeli.

On March 22, eight members of the Board of Trustees [called](#) on the Prosecutor's Office to investigate the "baseless allegations" made by the critical employees. In response, the Media Advocacy Coalition [condemned](#) the board's actions, calling the involvement of the Prosecutor's Office "deeply concerning" and an unprecedented pressure on media freedom.

On March 24, Georgian Public Broadcaster (GPB) [issued](#) a statement claiming to be the target of a coordinated discrediting campaign by various political and civil groups. The management [argued](#) that public statements about the broadcaster contain false information and misrepresentations that damage its reputation. Despite these pressures, GPB [states](#) that its employees continue to fulfill their professional duties under difficult conditions, facing external attacks and pressure. The broadcaster also [criticized](#) a group of its employees, known as GPB Guardians, who have joined protests against the organization, accusing them of violating their employment contracts and spreading false accusations that harm the broadcaster's image and credibility.

On March 27, pro-GD media outlet TV Imedi [launched](#) a slander campaign claiming the involvement of several employees critical of GPB management and GPB editorial policy in receiving "illegal income." Both Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani and Nino Zautashvili [denied](#) the allegations and accused TV Imedi of spreading disinformation. According to them, they will resort to legal action if TV Imedi refuses to retract the disinformation.

On April 3, Vasil Maghlaperidze was [re-elected](#) as the chairman of the Public Broadcaster's Board of Trustees.

2.6. New restrictions on observation of elections

On April 3, the Central Election Commission (CEC) adopted amendments to resolutions that revoked the right of any person authorized to be present at the polling station to request to see a voter's identification document. The amendments also imposed new restrictions on photo

and video recording at polling stations. [According to Nino Dolidze](#), Executive Director of ISFED, “With this change, observers will no longer be able to identify individuals attempting to vote on behalf of others (so-called 'carousel voting'), which is one of the main methods of election fraud.”

3. Updated information on the criminal cases initiated against the demonstrators of the ongoing protests

One of the most repressive measures taken by the “Georgian Dream” party is the opening of criminal cases against more than 50 individuals in connection with the ongoing protests.

Previously, criminal proceedings have also been initiated in connection with the April-May 2024 protests, and in the first week of February 2025, the first instance court completed a review of these criminal cases and [issued](#) judgments of conviction for all persons detained under criminal charges.

As of April 4, 2025, no individual responsible for torture, inhuman treatment, or violence against peaceful demonstrators and media has been held criminally liable, and police forces continue systemic physical violence.

As of April 4, 2025, according to public information, criminal investigations have been initiated against 55 persons in connection with the ongoing protests from November 2024. Out of the overall number, 40 persons are detained, and information about the imposed measure of restraint within the framework of the new criminal proceedings (see details below, section 3.1.) is not available. Furthermore, Temur Katamadze is in custody while a decision regarding his deportation from the country is pending.

The following chapter provides major updates from **March 10 to April 4, 2025**, about the criminal cases initiated from November 2024.

3.1. Initiation of criminal proceedings against the Russian citizen

On March 31, the Ministry of Internal Affairs [issued](#) a statement claiming that during the March 28 protest in Tbilisi, a masked individual damaged a police vehicle belonging to the ministry and then fled the crime scene. According to the MIA, they [arrested](#) a Russian citizen, D.K., born in 1995, in connection with this incident. D.K. faces charges under Article 187.1 of the Criminal Code (damage to property), which carries a potential term of imprisonment for several years. At this time, no further details of this case are publicly available.

3.2. Court hearings on criminal cases initiated from November 2024

Court hearings in the first instance courts continue for individuals charged under criminal law in connection with their participation in pro-European protests. According to GYLA, the preliminary hearing stage has been completed for all cases in which individuals have been held in pretrial detention since November 2024 in connection with the protests.

These cases are now at the hearing on merits stage. **Between March 10 and April 4, 2025, not a single case resulted in the substitution of pretrial detention with an alternative measure of restraint.**

GYLA [assessed](#) the conduct of the **completed preliminary hearings** for detained individuals and highlighted four key problematic issues that emerged during the proceedings:

Admissibility of Evidence: According to GYLA, in the cases under review, the courts deemed all prosecution evidence fully admissible, with only one exception in the case of Mzia Amaghlobeli, where the judge excluded one witness from the list of those to be questioned. The defense had filed motions to declare publicly available video recordings inadmissible, arguing that they had not been obtained through proper legal procedures. However, the courts rejected these motions. In contrast, the Batumi City Court ruled the video recordings obtained in the same manner by the defense inadmissible. Notably, this decision was later overturned by the Court of Appeals. However, GYLA emphasized that “in cases involving activists, judicial decisions are consistently made against them, further reinforcing concerns that these cases are driven by politically motivated persecution.”

Referral of Cases to the Hearing on Merits: GYLA noted that the courts did not find grounds to terminate the criminal prosecution in any of the cases. Instead, all cases were forwarded to the hearing on merits stage.

Continuation of Pretrial Detention: According to GYLA, the first-instance courts failed to consider that the investigation phase in these cases had already been completed. Additionally, the courts disregarded the individual circumstances and the personal characteristics of the defendants. As a result, none of the 40 defendants were released from pretrial detention, nor was any less severe measure of restraint applied in their cases.

Violation of the Principle of Public Hearings: GYLA reported that the principle of public hearings was breached during the preliminary hearing stage. Judge Irakli Shvangiradze partially closed sessions for 11 defendants, allowing only media representatives to attend while restricting access for GYLA’s court monitor. The judge also denied access to representatives of the Public Defender’s Office and diplomatic missions.

3.3. Administrative proceedings in parallel with criminal and deportation cases

While the criminal case against Mzia Amaghlobeli is ongoing, on March 18, the first-instance court [fined](#) her 2,000 GEL (approximately 660 EUR) under administrative proceedings for disobeying a police order. Notably, during the previous hearing, Judge Shainidze [stated](#) that there was no need to summon witnesses, as the presented evidence already showed that Amaghlobeli had not verbally insulted the police and that the “arresting officer” mentioned in the report was not the actual detaining officer.

In parallel with his deportation case, Temur Katamadze was also [fined](#) 2,800 GEL (approximately 924 EUR) in administrative proceedings. The fine was imposed based on a complaint filed by Nino Nadiradze, the director of the Vivamedi clinic, where Katamadze was undergoing a refeeding procedure after a hunger strike. Nadiradze [accused](#) him of disorderly conduct, claiming that he verbally insulted her - an allegation Katamadze denies. He [argues](#) that his remarks were concerns about violations of the refeeding protocol after his 48-day hunger strike.

On March 18, the court [denied](#) Katamadze's request for refugee status. Notably, on the previous day, the Social Justice Center [submitted](#) an [amicus curiae](#) to the court, urging it to consider the risk that Katamadze could become a target of political persecution in Turkey if expelled from Georgia, where an arrest warrant has been issued against him.

3.4. Transfer of convicted protesters detained during the spring 2024 protests to a different detention facility

According to his spouse, Giorgi Okmelashvili, who was arrested during protests against the Russian-style Foreign Agents Law and [sentenced](#) to five years in prison on February 3 for “violence against a police officer,” has been [transferred](#) to another, more restrictive prison facility. His wife [stated](#) that she only discovered this three days later by accident when a scheduled video call was canceled due to his absence at the Gldani penitentiary facility.

According to the information disseminated on March 15, 2025, by family members and the lawyer, Omar Okribelashvili, who was convicted for damaging a 400 GEL (approximately 132 EUR) barrier, has also been [transferred](#) to a different prison. According to the available information, the lawyer and family members were not informed of the transfer. They received the information based on a call made by Omar Okribelashvili from the prison.