

GEORGIA: HUMAN RIGHTS AMIDST THE RUSSIAN LAW



**Human Rights 60 Days Following the Revival
of the Foreign Influence Transparency Bill**





**GEORGIAN
YOUNG
LAWYERS'
ASSOCIATION**

Georgia:

Human Rights Amidst the Russian Law

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Foreign Influence Transparency Bill**

June, 2024

Photos:
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Composed and set up at the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association.

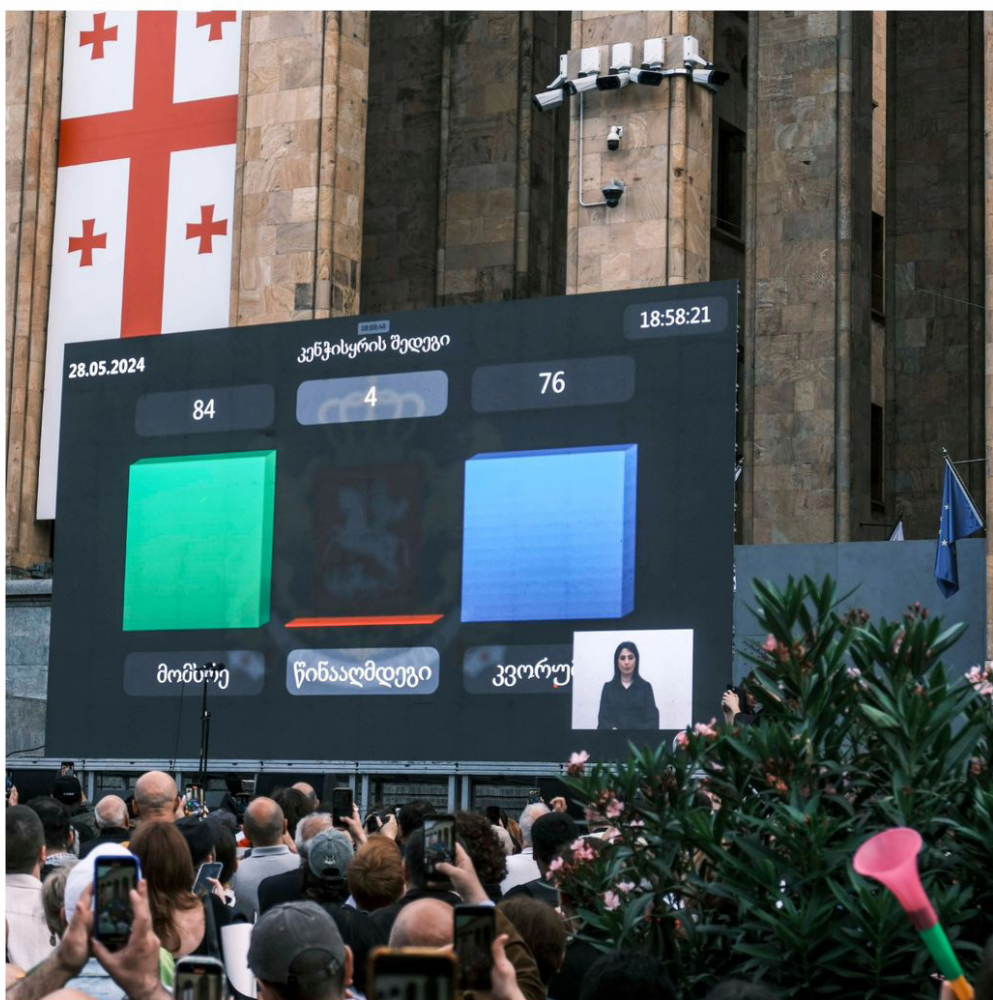
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BACKGROUND

On April 3, 2024, the ruling party in Georgia, “Georgian Dream,” re-introduced the draft Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, which led to continuous, mass, peaceful protests across the country.¹ The ruling power had previously attempted to adopt such a law in 2023.² At that time, the initiative faced sharp criticism from civil society³ and international partners,⁴ including the European Union.⁵ As a result, in March 2023, “Georgian Dream” was forced to withdraw the bill on the second hearing.⁶

In December 2023, Georgia was granted the status of a candidate for EU membership, contingent on fulfilling the recommendations determined by the European Commission.⁷ In its November 8, 2023 report, the European Commission noted that **Georgia should also refrain from adopting measures which could hamper or restrict meaningful participation of civil society in such processes.**⁸ The Commission also formulated nine recommendation that Georgia needed to fulfill after receiving candidate status. In recommendation nine, the

Commission emphasized the importance of involving civil society organizations in the decision-making process.⁹

Nevertheless, in 2024, a few months before the **parliamentary elections** on October 26, “Georgian Dream” re-initiated the bill with identical content, making only minor changes.¹⁰ The law mandates the creation of a discriminatory and stigmatizing registry for non-governmental and media organizations that receive more than 20% of their annual funding from foreign sources.¹¹ According to the updated version of the law, such organizations must be registered as “organizations pursuing the interest of a foreign power “ and submit relevant declarations.¹² If they fail to fulfill the obligation to submit the registration and declaration, the law imposes severe financial sanctions, ultimately making it impossible for these organizations to function.¹³ These organizations are also subject to intensive monitoring.¹⁴ According to the final version of the law, the monitoring body can request from any person (including natural persons) any secret-containing information (except for state secret) and any personal data (including special categories of personal data).¹⁵

On April 25, 2024, more than 200 civil and media organizations announced that they will not register in the said register and will cease cooperating with the authorities until the law is repealed.¹⁶

The initiation and adoption process of the mentioned law **was accompanied by strongly anti-Western rhetoric from representatives of the ruling party.** Notably, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Parliament, and other state officials actively spread the conspiracy theory about the “Global War Party,” which they claim influences the decisions of Euro-Atlantic structures.¹⁷

The initiation and adoption of the Law on Foreign Influence was again resulted with strong criticism from the international community.¹⁸ **Representatives of the European Union and the USA repeatedly confirmed that the law contradicts the country’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations.**¹⁹ Additionally, in an assessment published on May 21, 2024, the Venice Commission issued a “strong recommendation” to repeal the law in its current form.²⁰ The Commission highlighted that the law’s fundamental flaws include a significant negative impact on the rights of association and expression, privacy, participation in public life, and the prohibition of discrimination. Ultimately, the law would affect open, informed public debate, pluralism, and democracy.²¹ The Venice Commission concluded that this law stigmatizes NGOs and the media, putting them at risk of being silenced and ultimately eliminated.²²

The initiation of the law **triggered a new wave of protests**, which have been ongoing for more than two months.²³ The mass public protests are directed against the law, which is seen as incompatible with basic human rights and indicative of an authoritarian regime. Additionally, the government’s apparent shift in foreign policy by the adoption of this law, signaling a separation from the European Union, have further fueled the unrest. Similar legislation in Russia has already led to the termination of civil society organizations.²⁴

Despite the mass protests, the Parliament adopted the bill by third hearing **on May 14, 2024.**²⁵ It should be noted that the committee hearings took place against the background of expulsion and censorship of MPs.²⁶ On May 18, the president returned the bill to the parliament with motivated remarks (she vetoed the bill).²⁷

On May 28, 2024, the Parliament overcame the veto.

Since the initiation of the draft law, the government has been trying to narrow the civil space by violent means.²⁸ Such as

- **Gross violation of freedom of assembly;**
- **Systematic violence by law enforcement officers;**
- **Encouragement of violence by high political officials;**
- **Instrumentalization of criminal and administrative legal mechanisms to intimidate protest participants;**
- **Also, intimidation of rally participants, general supporters of the protest, civil activists, journalists, politicians and their family members (including children and elderly family members), using various methods of psychological violence and physical violence against them.**²⁹



I. PHYSICAL SAFETY

Multiple instances of physical violence and verbal abuse by law enforcement officers³⁰ and third parties³¹ against opponents of the draft law have been identified. The investigation conducted by the Special Investigation Service faces significant challenges in this regard.

(1) Physical violence against individuals detained by law enforcement officers

Multiple instances of improper treatment by law enforcement officers were identified, manifesting as physical³² and verbal³³ retaliation against rally participants. Law enforcers beat attendees,³⁴ including women,³⁵ children,³⁶ journalists,³⁷ and opposition politicians.³⁸

Law enforcement officers have been particularly aggressive during detentions, with several cases of ill-treatment reported. The use of force by the police often appeared to be retaliatory rather than aimed at preventing illegal resistance or law violations. In some instances, law enforcement officers used such severe and excessive force that several detainees required medical treatment³⁹ and emergency surgery⁴⁰ due to the severity of their injuries. According to the public defender, more than half of the citizens detained at the rally (over 200 people) reported improper treatment by law enforcement officers.⁴¹ This is corroborated by the information from the network of civil society organizations, which indicates that the majority

of the 190 detained individuals visited by the network’s lawyers reported being beaten. Notably, some detainees refrained from applying to the Special Investigation Service because they did not expect the investigation to be conducted fully and objectively, nor did they anticipate any concrete results.

In footage distributed through public sources, it is evident that, in some cases, the violence by police representatives against activists and politicians reaches the level of degrading and inhumane treatment. Despite this, the Special Investigation Service investigates these crimes only under Article 333, clause Three, Sub-Clause “B,” which pertains to exceeding official authority by violence or the use of weapons.⁴²

It should also be noted that on July 31, 2023, by order of the head of the Special Investigation Service, guidelines for the classification of torture and ill-treatment were approved for the investigators of the Special Investigation Service. These guidelines aim to simplify the assignment of the correct classification for investigations. The 2023 activity report of the agency states, “In many decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, the importance of correctly classifying an action as a crime is emphasized. A wrongly classified crime at the stage of investigation threatens the formation of the victim’s trust, involvement in the investigation process, and obtaining relevant evidence of the composition of the crime.”⁴³

However, based on the investigation carried out by the Special Investigation Service into the aforementioned crimes, it appears that the Special Investigation Service, in practice, places less importance on conducting the investigation with the correct classifications, thereby undermining the trust of the victims.

the Special Investigation Service received A total of 138 reports from different agencies and through the hotline regarding possible illegal actions taken by employees of the law enforcement body. These reports were related to the violation of the rights of rally participants.⁴⁴ According to the resolution of the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia, only 10 people have been granted victim status.

Despite the fact that in some cases the possible perpetrators of crimes were identified even through public sources, even after almost two months, the Special Investigation Service and the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia have not released information about the identification and prosecution of the violent police officers at the rallies. This indicates that these agencies are either unable or unwilling to exercise their authority effectively.

(2) “Titushky Raid” against opponents of the Russian Law

It was identified that in some cases, specific individuals physically abused opponents of the law,⁴⁵ in a manner similar to the so-called Titushky Raids.⁴⁶ They beat demonstrators⁴⁷ at the rally and brutally abused organizers⁴⁸ and their family members⁴⁹ at their homes⁵⁰ or on the street.⁵¹ Violence by third parties also occurred against students, particularly on May 18⁵² and 25,⁵³ 2024, when students were waiting for the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze, who came to give a lecture at Tbilisi State University. During these events, specific individuals physically and verbally assaulted students. According to the Public Defender’s assessment, these attacks on opposition party representatives, journalists, and rally participants exhibit signs of persecution based on political activities, beliefs, and opinions.⁵⁴



II. FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

From the initiation of the Russian Law to the present day, the policing measures at the ongoing actions have been mostly illegal and disproportionate. The investigation conducted by the Special Investigation Service faces significant challenges in this regard.

(1) Unjustified dispersal of peaceful demonstrations

The Georgian Young Lawyers Association monitors the protests both on-site and through the media. During this time, not a single instance of the protest turning violent was detected. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Internal Affairs systematically and without legal basis disproportionately restricts the freedom of assembly.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs typically **regards isolated incidents as grounds for deeming**

the entire demonstration violent and dispersing it.⁵⁵ This approach does not align with international and national standards for the protection of freedom of assembly.

a. Dispersal of entire gatherings in response to incidents

- **On the night of April 16-17**, the crackdown on a peaceful demonstration commenced without legal preconditions. The crackdown was accompanied by brutal physical violence against peaceful demonstrators by police forces.⁵⁶
- The raid on the **night of April 30 - May 1**, aimed at freeing the entrances to the Parliament, was groundless. There was no justification for dispersing the demonstrators because the goals and actions of the organizers and participants of the meeting were peaceful. Additionally, the second reading of the law in the parliament had concluded, and the parliamentary work process was not hindered by the demonstration.⁵⁷ Even if there were grounds for dispersal due to the blocking of entrances, there would be no legal basis for dispersing the entire protest, as local contentious actions by a small group do not automatically turn an otherwise peaceful protest into a violent one.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the Ministry of Internal Affairs dispersed the protest using special means for several hours, even after the entrances to the Parliament were cleared of demonstrators and the participants continued peacefully on Rustaveli Avenue.⁵⁹
- In response to the incident, a crackdown of the entire rally occurred **on the night of May 1-2**. The use of special means by a few individuals in response to the iron gate bars of the Parliament, and protesting with noise, escalated into the crackdown of large masses of demonstrators.⁶⁰ It's important to emphasize that by this time, the legislative process in the Parliament had been completed, and therefore, the protest around the Parliament did not cause any disruption to its functioning.⁶¹
- **At the May 14 protest**, the Ministry of Internal Affairs declared the protest violent⁶² based on damage to the iron dam erected in front of the Parliament by several demonstrators. Subsequently, the Ministry began to crack down on the peaceful protest,⁶³ which was accompanied by heavy physical violence against the participants.⁶⁴

b. Dispersal to clear the roadway

The Ministry of Internal Affairs also considers the clearance of the roadway as one of the grounds for dispersing the protest, even though depending on the scale and nature of the protest, the state is obligated to tolerate certain disruptions, including traffic disruptions.⁶⁵ Due to this reason, the rally was dispersed on Heroes' Square on the **evening of May 2**,⁶⁶ as well as on Chavchavadze Avenue on **May 9**.⁶⁷

c. Dispersal to free the entrances to the Parliament

From the cases discussed above, it is evident that the Ministry of Internal Affairs considers clearing the entrances to the parliament as a justification for cracking down on the ongoing demonstrations at these locations,⁶⁸ even when participants are peacefully exercising their right to assembly and the legislative process is not being delayed (**April 30 - May 1**).⁶⁹ To clear the entrances to the parliament, a raid was launched on **the morning of May 13, 2024**, despite the fact that the entrances were occupied by police forces, not demonstrators. Thus, there was no factual or legal basis for the protest raid.⁷⁰

(2) Violation of the Rules Regarding the Use of Active Special Means Against Peaceful Demonstrators

The Ministry of Internal Affairs routinely uses active special means, such as pepper spray, tear gas, and water cannons, when dispersing rallies. There have also been instances of rubber bullets being used.⁷¹ As mentioned above, the demonstrations were peaceful, making their dispersal—and the use of active special means to achieve it—illegal. Additionally, the use of these special means violates both international and national standards.

a. Use of special means without warning

A common practice is to use special means **without warning**.

- **On April 16**, a warning was issued following the **use of pepper spray**.⁷² It should be noted that in this case, there was no justification for using pepper spray or breaking up the rally.⁷³
- **On April 30 - May 1**, a **water cannon** was deployed without allowing the participants of the rally a reasonable time to respond to any warning.⁷⁴ Additionally, no warning preceded the **use of tear gas canisters**.⁷⁵ Regarding the use of **rubber bullets**, despite evidence⁷⁶ indicating their deployment during the rallies on the nights of April 30 - May 1 and May 1-2, the Ministry of Internal Affairs denies their use.⁷⁷

b. Targeted use of special means

- **On April 16**,⁷⁸ as well as on the **night of April 30**⁷⁹ and at the protests on **May 14**,⁸⁰ pepper spray was used at close range without any justification.
- On the night of **April 30 - May 1**, police forces fired tear gas canisters directly **targeted** at the faces of peaceful demonstrators. Additionally, it is likely that rubber bullets were also fired.⁸¹
- On the **night of May 1-2**, **rubber bullets were used at close range, aimed at vital organs such as the face and abdomen**, and possibly targeted at individuals who did not pose a threat.⁸² Additionally, tear gas canisters were fired from the roof towards peaceful demonstrators on Rustaveli Avenue, a violation of tear gas canister usage rules and posing a significant risk of irreversible harm to life and health if a hot canister were to make contact.⁸³

c. Simultaneous use of multiple special means

On the night of **April 30 - May 1**, the special forces utilized multiple special means simultaneously, including **water cannons, rubber bullets, and tear gas**.⁸⁴ Similarly, these special means were employed concurrently during the raid of the **nighttime rally on May 1-2**.⁸⁵

d. Obstructing demonstrators from leaving the area

On the night of April 30, during the dispersal of the rally behind the Parliament, participants reported that **due to insufficient space** they were unable to leave the area where the police force was using pepper spray.⁸⁶

e. Insufficient medical care

According to the participants of the **April 30 - May 1** protest, the number of emergency teams mobilized at the initial stage of the protest was disproportionately low compared to the number of injured.⁸⁷

(3) Procedural safeguards

During the gathering and demonstration, a security action plan is formulated and approved by the Minister of Internal Affairs. This plan encompasses: a) relevant departments of the Ministry that are involved in carrying out special means, their functions and sequence of actions; b) relevant persons of the Ministry responsible for using special means; c) a number of personnel; d) routes through which the participants will be able to leave the territory quickly and freely; e) existing risks; f) necessary special resources and equipments.⁸⁸ **At present, it remains unclear whether such an action plan existed in relation to the cases mentioned above. It's noteworthy that the public announcements issued by the Special Investigation Service concerning the ongoing protests do not include any information regarding the retrieval of the aforementioned action plan by the service.**⁸⁹ Additionally, in contrast to the standard set by the European Court of Human Rights,⁹⁰ the special forces do not wear any distinctive insignia, which would facilitate recognition during the investigation process and enable the identification of law enforcement personnel.⁹¹

It is worth noting that according to the public statements of the Special Investigation Service,⁹² the investigation is always conducted under Article 333 of the Criminal Code, which implies exceeding official powers,⁹³ despite the fact that some demonstrators⁹⁴ were subjected to alleged torture (Article 144¹ of the Criminal Code⁹⁵) or humiliating or inhuman treatment (criminal Article 144³ of the Law Code⁹⁶).



III. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The trend of restricting the freedom of expression and security of media representatives, which started in previous years,⁹⁷ significantly worsened after the initiation of the Russian Law, and the cases of illegal interference in the professional activities of journalists became even more frequent. The investigation conducted by the Special Investigation Service in this regard has significant challenges.

(1) Application of media accreditation rules

The malicious practice⁹⁸ of using the **rule of accreditation**⁹⁹ of media representatives continued and, like the previous year,¹⁰⁰ access to accredited online, print media and radio journalists was again restricted to the committee and plenary sessions of the Russian Law review in the Parliament of Georgia.

- **On April 8, 2024**, only Journalists of several TV broadcasters were given the opportunity to work in the legislative body.¹⁰¹
- On April 14, the chairman of the parliament activated the so-called “yellow level”, after which access to the parliament of Georgia was restricted to accredited journalists of online media.¹⁰²

(2) Facts of interference in journalistic activity

During the protests following the initiation of the law, incidents of violence against journalists and interference in their activities were reported. These incidents are part of a troubling trend that has emerged in recent years, during which the media environment in Georgia has

significantly deteriorated. Verbal and physical attacks on journalists and illegal interference in their professional activities have become increasingly frequent.¹⁰³ This situation is directly related to the inactivity or infrequent action of the Special Investigation Service in effectively investigating such incidents.¹⁰⁴

- On April 16, 2024, during the coverage of the rally, the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs physically assaulted the journalists of the online publications “Publika”, “Tabula” and “Aprili”.¹⁰⁵
- **On April 30, 2024**, during the coverage of the protest, special forces used pepper spray against Lika Zakashvili and Mamuka Mgaloblishvili, journalists from the online publication Publika.¹⁰⁶ The special forces also physically assaulted Robi Zaridze, a journalist from the online publication „AI FAKTI“,¹⁰⁷ as well as journalists and cameramen from TV Company Pirveli, Nanuka Kajaya and Davit Beradze.¹⁰⁸
- During the coverage of the **May 14** protest, a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs seized a small camera from a journalist from the publication Indigo and obstructed their professional activities. Additionally, they physically assaulted Giorgi Zhamerashvili, a photojournalist from Interpressnews.¹⁰⁹

IV. RIGHT TO FREEDOM AND SECURITY

(1) Administrative proceedings

In the period of April-May 2024, about 200 people were detained during the ongoing protests against the Russian Law.¹¹⁰ Ensuring the right to a fair trial was an important challenge for them. Groundless administrative detentions serve to suppress the momentum of the protest and intimidate citizens.

Regarding the human rights of the detainees, it was problematic to obtain information about their location when taken directly to medical facilities by law enforcement officers, as their whereabouts were often unknown to their lawyers and families. In multiple cases, detainees with injuries were not properly registered as emergency patients brought in by law enforcement, resulting in the detainees having to cover some treatment costs themselves after treatment. Additionally, it was discovered **that temporary placement isolators lacked detailed records of injuries**, hindering proper investigation procedures.¹¹¹ According to civil society organizations, detainees were transferred to detention centers in various cities, including Gori, Khashuri, Telavi, and Dusheti, further complicating efforts by families, lawyers, and human rights advocates to locate them. Furthermore, an unjustified extension of the detention period for individuals detained under administrative rules was observed, with the Ministry of Internal Affairs routinely extending the initial 24-hour detention period to 48 hours without adequate justification.

The main charges for prosecution mainly include Disorderly conduct (Article 166 of the Administrative Offences Code) and Non-compliance with a lawful order or demand of a law-enforcement officer (Article 173 of the Administrative Offences Code). Furthermore 50 peaceful demonstrators (a growing number) of rallies received administrative penalty (Article 125 of the Administrative Offences Code) for organizing or participating in group movements or gatherings, such as in urban or other populated areas, roadblocks, or group mobility, when a section of the road is completely closed off. Additionally, charges under Articles 150, 150¹, 150² (which pertain to self-expression on posters, drawings, symbols, banners, pillars, trees, as well as the placement and removal of municipal advertising) and 174¹ (Violating the rules for organising or holding assemblies or demonstrations) are prevalent in cases related to public order offenses, among which are motorcycle owners.

(2) Criminal proceedings

Multiple criminal cases have been initiated against protest participants, resulting in the arrest of eight individuals. As investigations and arrests persist, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is summoning more rally participants for questioning.¹¹² This extensive summons for questioning regarding demonstrations against the Russian Law raises suspicion that the Ministry is utilizing questioning as another form of legal intimidation against pro-testers. The criminal proceedings targeting rally participants seem aimed at quelling the protest's momentum and intimidating citizens.

On May 1, 2024, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Aleksandre Darakhvelidze announced during a briefing that “six Ministry of Internal Affairs employees sustained serious injuries

during the Rustaveli Avenue rally, due to violent actions by rally participants.” Following this, an investigation was launched within the Ministry of Internal Affairs under [Article 353¹ of the Criminal Code](#), which pertains to **assault on a police officer, special penitentiary service employee, or another government or public institution representative**.¹¹³ On **May 8**, the Central Criminal Police Department initiated an investigation under three articles of the Criminal Code. Firstly, [Article 222](#), which pertains to **the seizure or blocking of an object of strategic or special importance**. Secondly, [Article 225](#), which involves **the organization, leadership, or participation in group violence**. Lastly, [Article 226](#) of the same Code, which deals with the **organization of a group action that grossly violates public order or involves clear disobedience to the legal request of a government representative**, or that causes a disruption in the operation of transportation, institutions, or organizations.¹¹⁴

On **May 9**, the Ministry of Internal Affairs announced that, following investigative actions in collaboration with the Prosecutor’s Office, **six individuals** were arrested on charges related to assaulting a police officer and damaging property. It was identified that the Ministry of Internal Affairs is conducting an investigation **under Article 353 of the Criminal Code, concerning the assault on a police officer, and Article 187 of the Civil Code, regarding damage or destruction of property**.¹¹⁵ Subsequently, on **May 16**, the series of arrests continued, with the Ministry of Internal Affairs apprehending two individuals on the charge of potentially committing the offense outlined in [Article 187, Part 2, Sub-paragraph “c”](#) of the Criminal Code, which pertains to group damage to property¹¹⁶

V. OTHER METHODS OF REPRESSION

In addition to physical violence, there have been numerous cases of intimidation and threats against demonstrators and representatives of civil society, as well as activists critical of the Russian Law.¹¹⁷ On May 31, 2024, a public post by a member of the parliamentary majority, Dimitri Samkharadze, shed light on the organized repression orchestrated by high-ranking state representatives. This repression, he indicated, is supported by them, leveraging the lenient policies of various state institutions. For instance, along-side the ongoing ineffective investigations by law enforcement agencies, the stance of the Personal Data Protection Service is concerning. They concluded their examination of cases involving telephone calls as a form of repression without probing whether the data was acquired through access to state databases. This failure to investigate the source of the data undermines the authority of the investigative bodies.¹¹⁸

(1) The practice of state-organized persecution

On May 31, 2024, as a result of the publicly released statement and video, it becomes clear that Georgian Dream MP Dito Samkharadze is one of those persons who is carrying out organized persecution of civil society organizations and other opponents of the Russian Law, which is manifested in various repressive measures (eg, phone calls, damage to private property).¹¹⁹ Dimitri Samkharadze published a collage of videos on the social network, where it can be seen how the offices of civil society and political parties are damaged; Samkharadze admits that the mentioned facts were organized by him and writes: [...] you will not even want to see each other, we will treat you like that! [...]"¹²⁰

a. Threats by telephone

Opponents of the law, their family members, and journalists have been actively receiving calls from various foreign numbers, where they are subjected to verbal abuse and threatened with physical harm due to their participation in the rally.¹²¹ This phenomenon directly correlates with the practice known as the "Titushki Raid", albeit with a difference: threats and intimidation are conducted over the phone. Calls have been traced to both Georgian and foreign numbers, including those from the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Mexico, and others. The Personal Data Protection Service has assessed this situation as Caller ID Spoofing, which operates as follows: the caller uses a genuine number via a specialized infrastructure, but replaces it with a fictitious or appropriated one. Consequently, when the recipient is contacted, a non-existent or appropriated phone number appears as the caller's identity, concealing the actual number of the caller from electronic communication companies.¹²²

The stance taken by the Personal Data Protection Service on this matter is alarming. Their investigation into the issue, and their subsequent assessment of the response from investigative bodies, did not delve into whether the data used for these calls was obtained through access to the state database. This oversight raises questions about the thoroughness and comprehensiveness of their examination.¹²³

b. Facts of damaging private property

multiple instances of encroachment on private property have been documented, including damage to cars, placement of posters featuring the images of organization leaders near residences and offices of civil society groups, and the defacement of property with derogatory messages. ¹²⁴ Additionally, two-wheeled vehicles belonging to protestors were also targeted and damaged. ¹²⁵

(2) Pressure on employees

Employees of public institutions faced threats of dismissal and coercion to endorse posts made by politicians from the Georgian Dream party, ¹²⁶ notably Tbilisi Mayor Kakhi Kaladze, on social media platforms. ¹²⁷ In another incident, severe written reprimands were issued by the Batumi State Drama Theater management to actors who concluding a performance on April 23 with the statement ¹²⁸ “Russia is an occupier. Our path leads to Europe. No to Russian Law!” ¹²⁹

(3) Forms of repression in the regions of Georgia

According to information provided to GYLA from various sources, threatening calls were also made to representatives of regional non-governmental organizations or branches, members of opposition political parties, representatives of civil society, and regional media organizations, as well as their family members, including minors. ¹³⁰

It is alarming that the state is allegedly using various repressive methods against opponents of the Russian Law, including reportedly restricting their ability to access municipal healthcare programs. One of the regional offices of GYLA was approached by a citizen who filed an application in the municipality’s town hall in April of this year and requested one-time assistance to finance medical research due to health problems. As the citizen explains, they were immediately promised 500 GEL in assistance, but they have not received a written answer about the decision, even though it has been more than 1 month. Since before that, the citizen’s acquaintances, who are employed in local self-government, asked them not to share posts against the Russian Law, the citizen suggests that the local government selectively distributes state resources only to their supporters.

Georgian Young Lawyer’s association

Continues to document rights violations and protect the affected.

Based on evidence, GYLA will identified and inform the public about facts that undermine the constitutional principles of a democratic, legal and social state.

1 BREAKING: GD Reintroduces the Draft law on Foreign Agents, Civil.ge, 03.04.2024. <<https://civil.ge/archives/589747>>

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⁸⁷ LEGAL EVALUATION OF THE APRIL 30 - MAY 1 RALLY DISPERSAL, 01.05.2024, <<https://gyla.ge/en/post/30-aprili-1-maisi-aqciis-darbevis-samartlebrivi-shefaseba#sthash.dMOzouML.dpbs>>; Participants of the rally: there are many injured, the number of ambulance brigades is small, TV Pirveli, 30.04.2024, <<https://tvpirveli.ge/ka/siaxleebi/politika/67981-aqtsiis-monatsileebi-dashavebuli-bevria-sastsrapo-dakhmarebis-brigadebis-raodenoba>>

⁸⁸ Order No. 1002 of the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia dated December 30, 2015 “Guidelines for the behavior of internal affairs officers during gatherings and demonstrations”.

⁸⁹ Statement of the Special Investigation Service, 01.05.2024, < <https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-01>>; Statement of the Special Investigation Service on the ongoing investigation regarding the public rallies that took place in April and May of 2024, 07.05.2024, <<https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-on-the-ongoing-investigation-regarding-the-public-rallies-that-took-place-in-April-and-May-of-2024>>; Statement of the Special Investigation Service, 11.05.2024, <<https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-11>>; Statement of the Special Investigation Service, 13.05.2024, <<https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-13>>; Statement of the Special Investigation Service, 14.05.2024, <<https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-14>>;

⁹⁰ Tsaava and Others v. Georgia, ECtHR, 13186/20, 07.05.2024, 223.

⁹¹ Special forces at the rally: permitted violence, Radio Tavisufleba, 21.05.2024, <<https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/32957192.html#player-start-time=0.820423>>.

⁹² Statement of the Special Investigation Service, 01.05.2024, < <https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-01>>; Statement of the Special Investigation Service on the ongoing investigation regarding the public rallies that took place in April and May of 2024, 07.05.2024, <<https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-on-the-ongoing-investigation-regarding-the-public-rallies-that-took-place-in-April-and-May-of-2024>>; Statement of the Special Investigation Service, 11.05.2024, <<https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-11>>; Statement of the Special Investigation Service, 13.05.2024, <<https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-13>>; Statement of the Special Investigation Service, 14.05.2024, <<https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-14>>;

⁹³ CRIMINAL CODE OF GEORGIA, art. 333, <<https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/16426?publication=259>>.

⁹⁴ Davit Katsarava recalls details of his beating by riot police, IPN, 21.05.2024, <<https://www.interpressnews.ge/en/article/131675-davit-katsarava-recalls-details-of-his-beating-by-riot-police/>>; THE BRUTAL SCENES ARE CIRCULATING ONLINE, DEPICTING MEMBERS OF THE SPECIAL TASK FORCES TAKING TURNS ATTACKING A DETAINEE LYING IN A CIRCLE, WITH THE INTENT TO RETALIATE, HUMILIATE, AND INSULT HIS DIGNITY, GYLA, 13.05.2024, <<https://gyla.ge/en/post/the-brutal-scenes-are-circulating-online-depicting-members-of-the-special-task-forces-taking-turns-attacking-a-detainee-lying-in-a-circle-with-the-intent-to-retaliate-humiliate-and-insult-his-dignity#sthash.q1qGIXJY.dpbs>>.

⁹⁵ CRIMINAL CODE OF GEORGIA, art. 144¹, <<https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/16426?publication=259>>.

⁹⁶ CRIMINAL CODE OF GEORGIA, art. 144³, <<https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/16426?publication=259>>.

⁹⁷ Read more: Assessment of the Rule of Law and Human Rights in Georgia in 2023, GYLA, Tbilisi. 2024. 31. <<https://www.gyla.ge/ge/post/saias-angarishi-saqartvelo-2023-tsels-qveyanas-adamianis-uflebebisa-da-samartlis-uzenaesobis-kutkhit-mnishvnelovani-gamotsvevbi-aqvs> [23.05.2024]

⁹⁸ The accreditation rules are vague and contain risks of limiting expression and media freedom, on the basis of which critical media representatives were discriminatorily suspended in 2023. See: Assessment of the Rule of Law and Human Rights in Georgia in 2023, GYLA, Tbilisi. 2024. 32. <<https://www.gyla.ge/ge/post/saias-angarishi-saqartvelo-2023-tsels-qveyanas-adamianis-uflebebisa-da-samartlis-uzenaesobis-kutkhit-mnishvnelovani-gamotsvevbi-aqvs> [23.05.2024]

⁹⁹ See: Order on approval of the accreditation procedure of mass media representatives in the Parliament of Georgia. 06.02.2023. <<https://web-api.parliament.ge/storage/files/11/akreditacia-2023.pdf> [23.05.2024]

¹⁰⁰ See: “People against the Russian Law”, GYLA. Tbilisi, 2023, 29. <<https://gyla.ge/ge/post/khalkhi-rusuli-kanonistsinaaghmdog-7-9-martis-aqciis-dashlasa-da-mastan-dakavshirebuli-adamianis-uflebatadarghvevis-faqtebis-shefasebis-angarishis-prezentacia> [23.05.2024]

¹⁰¹ According to media reports, on April 8, law enforcement officers did not allow several media representatives to enter the parliament. According to media outlets, despite having accreditation or passes, they could not enter the legislative body and waited for several hours for an answer from the press office of the Parliament of Georgia. See: The coalition responds to the non-admission of journalists to the parliament. 10.04.24. <<http://mediacoalition.ge/ge/a/e750ce64> [23.05.2024]

¹⁰² The coalition urges the Parliament of Georgia not to restrict journalists’ right to work in Parliament, April 15, 2024. <<http://mediacoalition.ge/ge/a/f56e52e5> [23.05.2024]. Starting from May 13, online media representatives will no longer be allowed in Parliament. 12.05.24. <<https://www.facebook.com/MEDIACOALITION.GE/posts/pfbid0WFWBzkXwPmtaaxCJN2QTQvENo56DcQW4PB53d2jwHo2wePu4qkCz1GNfLRzxDVWvzl> [23.05.2024]

¹⁰³ See: “Georgia 2023: Assessment of the Rule of Law and Human Rights Situation,” Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association, Tbilisi, 2024, 31. <<https://www.gyla.ge/ge/post/saias-angarishi-saqartvelo-2023-tsels-qveyanas-adamianis-uflebebisa-da-samartlis-uzenaesobis-kutkhit-mnishvnelovani-gamotsvevbi-aqvs> [23.05.2024]

¹⁰⁴ Equality Coalition, Special Report: “Equality Policy in Georgia Against the Background of Hate-Motivated Crimes,” 2023, pp. 7-13, available at: <<https://gdi.ge/storage/files/doc/Geo-%20No%20to%20Phobia.pdf> , [28.05.2025].

¹⁰⁵ See: Media Advocacy Coalition Statement, 17.04.24 <https://www.facebook.com/MEDIACOALITION.GE/posts/pfbid02QRH9ysDkob7fN9mZTSA4NDipqw5YPjbcnfX8CNxKjBnCu8sbkhc3jY8686LUHihFI> [23.05.2024]

¹⁰⁶ During the protest against the Russian law, where special forces used pepper spray against the demonstrators, journalists from Publika were injured. - Publika.30.04.24. <https://www.facebook.com/100041686795244/posts/1154619735937575/?mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=1pTOBpiudytVvhjL> [23.05.2024]

¹⁰⁷ See: "The special forces dragged me because I was a journalist [and released me], telling me I was lucky," — AiFact journalist Robi Zaridze, Formula. 01.05.24. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?mibextid=WC7FNe&v=317234598068005&rdid=p9PyuLcfszb4pWyM> [23.05.2024]

¹⁰⁸ Special forces deployed tear gas, from the TV Pirveli news crew was injured as well., 01.05.24. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?mibextid=WC7FNe&v=1289971065530475&rdid=e5bHsjXcwJm0lxbn> [23.05.2024]

¹⁰⁹ On May 14, journalists were prevented from carrying out their professional duties during the peaceful protest. - Media Advocacy Coalition. 15.05.2024, <http://mediacoalition.ge/ge/a/d950756c> [23.05.2024]

¹¹⁰ «Statement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs», website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 15.04.24 available at: <https://police.ge/ge/shinagan-saqmeta-saministros-gantskhadeba/16213> ; «Statement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs», website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 18.04.24 available :<https://police.ge/ge/shinagan-saqmeta-saministros-gantskhadeba/16221> ; «Public Defender’s representatives will determine the location of the detainees», Public Defender of Georgia, 05.03.24, available at: <https://ombudsman.ge/geo/akhali-ambebi/sakhalkho-damtsvelis-rtsmunebilebidakavebulta-adgilmdebareobas-adgenen>; «Statement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs», website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 13.05.24 available at: <https://police.ge/ge/shinagan-saqmeta-saministros-gantskhadeba/16269> ; «Statement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs», website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 14.05.24 available at: <https://police.ge/ge/shinagan-saqmeta-saministros-gantskhadeba/16272> , Updated: 23.05.2024.

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² «Ordinary State Terror» - Ministry of Internal Affairs summons the participants of the rally, 17.05.2024, website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, available : <https://shorturl.at/CiVOv> .

¹¹³ Briefing at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. 01.05.2024 Ministry of Internal Affairs website, available: <https://shorturl.at/HiVKE> , Updated: 23.05.2024.

¹¹⁴ Briefing at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 09.05.2024, website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, available at: <https://shorturl.at/7pHbP> , Updated: 23.05.2024.

¹¹⁵ Briefing at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 09.05.2024, website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, available at: <https://shorturl.at/7pHbP> , Updated: 23.05.2024.

¹¹⁶ The Ministry of Internal Affairs arrested 2 persons on charges of group damage to property, 16.05.2024, website of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, available: <https://shorturl.at/k2DRW> .

¹¹⁷ see <<https://netgazeti.ge/news/721621/>>

¹¹⁸ see <https://pdps.ge/ka/content/979/755/gancxadeba-moqalaqeebTan-satelefono-zarebis-ganxorcielebis-Sesaxeb>

¹¹⁹ Dimitri Samkharadze’s post is available: <https://www.facebook.com/dito.samkharadze/videos/423357193946251>, [31.05.2025]. Samkharadze writes in the post: "The low-quality bullying initiated by neo-fascists, stateless agents was answered yesterday! I won't tolerate you in the slightest and forgive you, fool each other! What you intend against us, we will return to you a thousand times worse, painful and quality! You won't want to show up and run into each other, you won't even want to see each other, we'll treat you like that! You are very arrogant, we know your identity one by one, your owners cannot save you if you do something bad to any member of the Georgian Dream team! So that I don't miss you, stop looking back, we're not sneaking up on anyone, look ahead, don't step on anything! I am attaching the answer to the status, to the offices of those who want a video revolution! NGOs:

- 1), GYLA
- 2), "Tbilisi Pride"
- 3), "safari"
- 4) movement "Nabiji"
- 5) Movement is "Sirckhvilia"
- 6), "court watchman"
- 7), "News of the mountain"
- 8 studio monitors
- 9) movement "talgha"
- 10), "Civil Society Foundation" (Soros Foundation)
- 11), "International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy"
- 12), " Transparency International " - Batumi
- 13), "Green Sector" - Batumi

Parties:

- 1), "Try for Georgia"
- 2), "Girchi-more freedom"
- 3), "Girchi - it's time"
- 4), "Try Georgia" - youth

- 5), "National Movement" - Central
- 6)" New - Gvaramia Melia
- 7), "Enm" - Batumi
- 8 try" - Batumi
- 9), New "- Batumi"

¹²⁰ ibid

¹²¹ According to the Personal Data Protection Service, about 70 people applied for threatening calls from strangers. See: <https://pdps.ge/ka/content/979/731/gancxadeba-personalur-monacemTa-damuSavebasTan-dakavSirebiT-mniSvnelovan-sakiTxebe> [23.05.2024].

¹²² <https://pdps.ge/ka/content/979/755/gancxadeba-moqalaqeebTan-satelefono-zarebis-ganxorcielebis-Sesaxeb>

¹²³ see <https://pdps.ge/ka/content/979/755/gancxadeba-moqalaqeebTan-satelefono-zarebis-ganxorcielebis-Sesaxeb>

¹²⁴ Mariam Kvaratskhelia and Giorgi Tabagar's house was covered with graffiti, and Giorgi Tabagar's car was damaged. See <https://oc-media.org/georgias-foreign-agent-law-live-large-protest-due-to-be-held-this-evening/>, [23.05.2024].

¹²⁵ On May 9, 2024, attacks on bikers participating in the rally were reported, in particular, they damaged motorcycles, cut wires, brakes and tires.

See https://mtvari.tv/news/155699-sheteva-baikerebze-uzianeben-mototsiklebs-uchrian?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR2YyP8bqcczaLZiUAINUnbYqUjj_Wvnt-WydhpbZbiW59FCW2XfTQZxfI_aem_AdB3KB61tZ_LU4v46wLjaeGckCJHxRW2NylK2lb_zh100EWb4VvVdsikeFiAnUOC_HHCOypUH6jjmjaV0m9VQT_w, [23.05.2024].

¹²⁶ <https://netgazeti.ge/life/719638/>

¹²⁷ <https://dailyinfo.ge/category/news/7590-tbilisis-123-e-bagshi-tanamshromlebs-kaladzis-postis-mowonebas-avaleben.html>

¹²⁸ see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYS8NvKOMxo>, [23.05.2024].

¹²⁹ The artistic director of the theater, Alexander Kantaria, addressed the actors with the following phrase: "We will find out in court." See https://batumelebi.netgazeti.ge/slideshow/524602/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR0j-WMtbAEz0gYRyo57VObRleM-Key69-FpVvijOj4XdOjm-ORydrStk1E_aem_ARCKeRzWlrLTKhbXlrGjSQm8XI77ZpncBMnEArz-TeJk6kiLPSAxN1vB9BRuGIZVavhrRXbOiV-N50tAb-erTEf, [23.05.2024].

¹³⁰ see <https://qvemoqartli.ge/%e1%83%a5%e1%83%95%e1%83%94%e1%83%9b%e1%83%9d-%e1%83%a5%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83%97%e1%83%9a%e1%83%a8%e1%83%98-%e1%83%9f%e1%83%a3%e1%83%a0%e1%83%9c%e1%83%90%e1%83%9a%e1%83%98%e1%83%a1%e1%83%a2%e1%83%94/>