

THE STATE OF JOURNALISTS' SAFETY IN GEORGIA

September 2025 - August 2026

Center for Media Information and Social Research
CMIS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between September 2025 and August 2026, the Center for Media, Information and Social Research (CMIS) documented 229 incidents, violations of media freedom in Georgia, affecting 117 media organizations and 174 individual journalists. Most were affected more than once. The broad picture based on these data is that the state has taken extensive measures to make independent journalism financially and legally unsustainable.

The character of the pressure in the current reporting period is as follows: verbal attacks were the most frequent incident type recorded (102), followed by legal incidents (81) and illegal interference with journalists' work (33), while employment rights accounted for 21 and the use of repressive legislation accounted for 15 incidents. The most common single form of attack was discrediting - 69 of the 102 cases of verbal attacks were attempts to portray independent journalists and outlets as foreign-funded propaganda instruments, serving foreign interests. Responsibility for these violations lies overwhelmingly with the state. Courts (46), law enforcement (32), and pro-government media outlets (27) were the three actors most frequently identified as responsible for incidents, followed by the Georgian Dream Party, the Parliament of Georgia and the Speaker of Parliament. The attacks were often less a series of individual remarks than a sustained campaign directed at independent outlets.

Tightening of legislation significantly worsened media freedom and freedom of expression in the country. Three waves of amendments during the reporting period - in October 2025, December 2025 and March 2026, further tightened sanctions for protest-related conduct, expanded criminal liability for repeat offenses, and criminalised

the receipt of foreign funding without government permission. Most were adopted under accelerated procedure without parliamentary and public scrutiny. Following the tightened legislation journalists have been detained and imprisoned both while they were carrying out their duties and while they were participating in protests. Overall, 16 such cases were documented during the reporting period.

The case of Mzia Amaglobeli illustrates how domestic remedies have completely closed. The imprisoned founder of *Batumelebi.ge* and *Netgazeti.ge* exhausted every level of the Georgian court system during the reporting period, with the Supreme Court declining to examine her case on the merits and without an oral hearing. Early release was refused on the stated ground that she does not regret her actions. Parliamentary delegations from the OSCE and the Council of Europe were both denied permission to visit her, and two defamation claims she brought against the Prime Minister were terminated without even being heard. Four applications have now been filed on her behalf with the European Court of Human Rights.

Furthermore, two institutions have been the instruments of pressure during the monitoring period - the Communications Commission and the Parliament of Georgia. The Communications Commission began systematic monitoring of broadcast content in March 2026 and has since issued fines to TV channels critical of the government for the vocabulary used in their news programs. During this reporting period it has enforced the new funding restrictions against broadcasters receiving foreign grants. Parliament, on the other hand, has put up more barriers for journalists to obtain accreditation - eight cases of suspension or early termination were recorded, and in five of the six suspensions the stated ground was that a journalist continued asking questions after a Member of Parliament

declined to answer. Seven applications for special accreditation under a procedure introduced in January 2026 were refused, mostly without explanation.

At the Public Broadcaster, the policy of dismissals, disciplinary sanctions and program closures that began in 2024 continued without much change, having affected 29 employees since spring 2025, with a reorganization at Adjara Television resulting in the dismissal of at least six journalists in 2026. In June 2026 Parliament abolished the open competition and independent commission through which members of the Board of Trustees had been selected, replacing them with direct nomination by quota holders in the Parliament.

Georgia has also ceased to be a safe place for exiled and foreign journalists. If the previous reporting period involved denials of entry into the country for foreign journalists, this one also saw a deportation, forced departure and a revocation of residence permit. Three journalists were expelled or compelled to leave the country, and four journalists and a journalism student were denied entry or held at the border. In several cases fines were imposed for reporting on protests. Exiled Azerbaijani Journalist Afgan Sadigov was subject to the transnational repression with the support of the Georgian government institutions.

The significance of the reporting year lies not only in the number of violations documented, but also in the escalation of restrictive measures against media. The period addresses the criminal case brought against a broadcaster in Georgia, the first administrative imprisonment imposed on a journalist for a social media post, early termination of parliamentary accreditation and the year-long suspension of a journalist's accreditation.

INTRODUCTION

Georgia's position in international assessments of press freedom has fallen fast in recent years. In the 2026 World Press Freedom Index published by [Reporters Without Borders](#), Georgia ranked 135th of 180 countries and territories, with a score of 40.77. This represents a fall of 21 places in a single year, from 114th, and a decline in score of nearly ten points, from 50.53. Measured against the country's best position in the Index - 60th, held between 2019 and 2021, Georgia has dropped 75 places.

This deterioration is a direct consequence of the [political crisis](#) of recent years, which deepened substantially from 2024 onward, particularly following the adoption of the so-called "foreign agents" law, the parliamentary elections of autumn 2024 and the suspension of Georgia's European integration process.

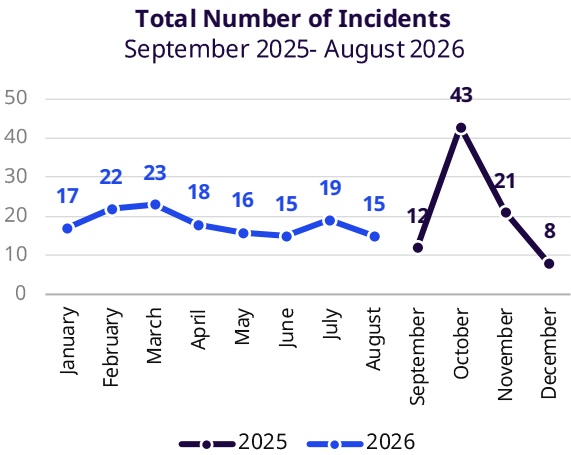
The Center for Media, Information and Social Research (CMIS) monitors violations of media freedom in Georgia on a [continuous basis](#). This report covers the period from September 2025 through August 2026 and consists of two parts. The first presents the statistical picture of the monitoring period- the number of recorded violations, the types of incident involved, who was affected, and which actors were identified as sources. The second section is organised thematically and examines the developments of particular significance during the period.

An incident is a single event. One incident may affect more than one person or organization, and may involve more than one type of violation, for example, a detention accompanied by physical violence. There are main incident types, most of which consist of specific incident types (e.g. legal incident has eight specific incident types, such as detention, imprisonment, fines, interrogation, SLAPP lawsuit etc.).

1. MEDIA FREEDOM VIOLATIONS IN NUMBERS

CMIS documented a total of 229 incident alerts, affecting media representatives and media organizations; most media organizations and reporters were affected more than once.

CHART 1.



Verbal attacks were the most frequent incident type (102), followed by legal incidents (81) and illegal interference (33). Violations of employment rights (21), use of repressive legislation (15) and physical violence (12), were also among the most frequent main incident types.

TABLE 1.

Main Incident Types (September 2025- August 2026)	N
Verbal Attack	102
Legal Incident	81
Interference	33
Employment Rights	21
Use of Repressive Legislation	15
Physical Violence	12

Note: One incident may affect more than one person or organization, and may involve more than one type of violation.

Discrediting independent media and journalists was most frequent specific type of incident (69) followed by legal persecution (37), verbal insult (19) and intimidation/threat (14). Fines imposed on journalists and media outlets (12) were the

next most documented incident types, alongside interrogation (12), administrative imprisonment (10), prohibition of filming (10), suspension/early termination of accreditation (8), and written warnings by Communication Commission (8).

TABLE 2.

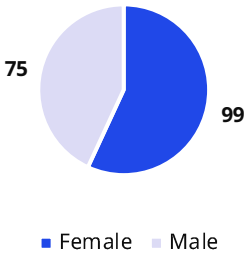
Top 10 Specific Incident Types	Column1
Discrediting	69
Legal Persecution	37
Verbal Insult	19
Intimidation/threat	14
Fine	12
Interrogation	12
Administrative Imprisonment	10
Prohibition of Filming	10
Suspension/early termination of Accreditation	8
Written Warning	8

Note: Main incident types are further broken down to specific incident types.

Overall, 117 media organizations and 174 reporters were affected. Among the journalists, 99 were women and 75 were men.

CHART 2.

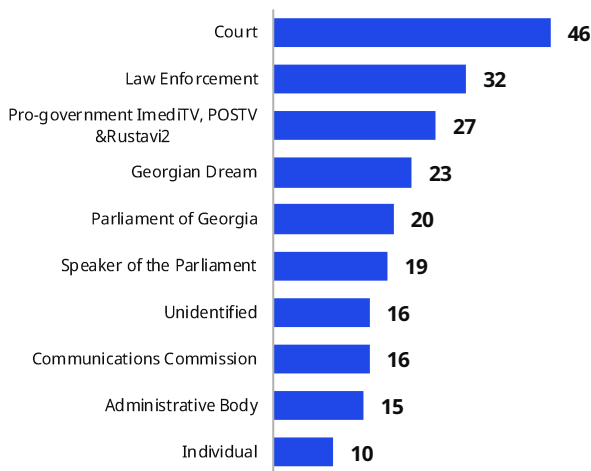
N of Journalists Affected by Gender



Courts (46), law enforcement (32) and pro-government media outlets (27) were three most frequently identified or mentioned as perpetrators, followed by Georgian Dream Party (23), Parliament of Georgia (20), and Speaker of the Parliament (19).

CHART 3.

Top 10 Actors Responsible for Incidents



2. MAJOR ISSUES RELATED TO MEDIA FREEDOM VIOLATIONS

During the monitoring period from September 2025 through August 2026, violations of media freedom occurred principally in several areas: the adoption of repressive laws and legal amendments undermining media freedom, legal action taken against journalists and media outlets, incidents targeting media representatives while they covered street protests or sought to attend court hearings and parliamentary sessions, the continuing violation of labor rights at the Georgian Public Broadcaster as well as the erosion of editorial independence at the GPB, and the Communications Commission use of its regulatory powers against critical media.

2.1. Continued Adoption of Repressive Legislation

The legislative framework has undergone frequent and rapid changes in Georgia in the past two years. During this period, sanctions for violations related to the freedom of expression and freedom of media were substantially tightened

through amendments of existing laws or adoption of new laws, limiting the activity and operation of media and civil society organizations.

Concerns have been raised regarding the extent to which these legal amendments and laws have taken into account relevant international standards, including assessments by bodies such as the [Venice Commission](#) and [ODIHR](#), as well as critical views expressed by domestic [civil society](#) organizations. These concerns were further reflected in the OSCE Moscow Mechanism [report](#) on developments in Georgia since spring 2024, published on 12 March 2026, which referred to a “clear democratic backsliding” and highlighted restrictions on the freedoms of assembly and expression, including through legislation, administrative and criminal proceedings.

The following section outlines the main legislative changes adopted since September 2025 that have had a direct impact on media and journalists, forming an important part of the context in which the incidents presented in this document occurred.

2.1.1. The October 2025 Amendments to the Criminal Code and the Administrative Offenses Code

On 16 October 2025, a new package of legislative [amendments](#) was adopted under an accelerated procedure, introducing further changes to both ***the Criminal Code and the Administrative Offenses Code***.

The amendments introduced stricter sanctions for protest-related conduct, including cases where administrative imprisonment may be applied without the alternative of a fine, for actions such as wearing a face covering during an assembly, possession of tear gas or similar protective means, and blocking roads.

In addition, the amendments limited judicial discretion in administrative cases by removing the

option to impose a fine in certain situations, allowing for the direct application of administrative imprisonment of up to 60 days, including in cases where a person is found in possession of items such as firearms, flammable substances, cold weapons, or pyrotechnics during an assembly, or fails to comply with a decision to disperse.

The amendments also introduced provisions whereby repeated commission of such acts may result in criminal liability, including imprisonment of up to 1 year, and up to 2 years in case of further repetition. Further changes to criminal legislation established criminal liability for the repeated verbal insult of, or non-compliance with, a law enforcement officer, with penalties including imprisonment of up to 1 year, and up to 2 years in case of repetition.

2.1.2. Amendments to the Law of Georgia On Assemblies and Demonstrations and the Code of Administrative Offenses

On 8 December 2025, a new set of legislative [amendments](#) were introduced and adopted under an accelerated procedure, entering into force on 12 December 2025. These amendments further expanded restrictions related to assemblies and protest activities. The legislative changes were introduced into ***the Law of Georgia “On Assemblies and Demonstrations” and the Code of Administrative Offenses***.

The changes introduced an obligation to notify the Ministry of Internal Affairs at least 5 days in advance if an assembly is expected to interfere with transport or pedestrian movement. The Ministry was granted authority to issue binding instructions to participants regarding the time, place, or route of an assembly, including during ongoing demonstrations. Additional restrictions were introduced on creating obstacles to pedestrian movement, alongside existing restrictions on blocking roads. Failure to comply with these requirements, including non-notification of an

assembly or non-compliance with police instructions, became punishable by administrative imprisonment of up to 15 days.

In cases of repeated violations, these acts may lead to criminal liability, including imprisonment of up to 1 year.

The amendments also introduced a mechanism under which an assembly may be declared unlawful if movement (including pedestrian movement) is obstructed and the situation is not resolved within 15 minutes, regardless of whether participants have taken steps to comply.

In addition, the competence to regulate and manage assemblies, including decisions on restrictions and changes to their conditions, was effectively centralized under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

2.1.3. Amendments to the Law on Grants, the Criminal Code, the Law on Political Associations of Citizens, and the Administrative Offenses Code

On 4 March 2026, a new package of legislative [amendments](#) was adopted, introducing changes to ***the Law on Grants, the Criminal Code, the Law on Political Associations of Citizens, and the Administrative Offenses Code***.

The amendments significantly expanded the definition of a grant to include virtually any financial or in-kind resource, including technical assistance, knowledge sharing, expertise, and consultancy, where such support may be linked to activities affecting political or public processes. Receipt of such support is subject to prior approval by the Government of Georgia.

Failure to obtain prior approval may result in liability, including administrative fines or criminal sanctions. Legal entities may face criminal liability for violations of grant regulations, while branches or representative offices may be fined double the amount of the received grant.

The amendments introduced new criminal offenses related to violations of grant regulations and cooperation with foreign entities, with penalties including fines, community service, or imprisonment of up to 6 years.

Additional changes expanded criminal liability in financial crimes, including aggravating circumstances in money laundering cases where activities are linked to influencing political processes, with penalties ranging from 9 to 12 years of imprisonment. Further amendments introduced liability for political party officials receiving foreign funding or engaging in external lobbying, with penalties including imprisonment of up to 6 years.

The amendments further [introduced](#) a new aggravating circumstance in criminal law, namely the commission of a criminal offense on the grounds of non-recognition of the constitutional order or constitutional bodies. Where this aggravating circumstance is established, the penalty prescribed for the relevant offense is increased by one year. In addition, Georgian citizens and stateless persons may incur criminal liability, punishable by imprisonment for up to three years, for systematically and publicly calling for mass violations of Georgian legislation, mass disobedience to state authorities, or the establishment of alternative state authorities.

Changes to the Law on Political Associations of Citizens introduced restrictions on political party membership, prohibiting individuals employed by organizations receiving more than 20% of their funding from foreign sources from being party members for a period of 8 years.

The State Audit Office was granted authority to monitor the financial activities of political party members, including access to financial accounts.

Amendments to the Administrative Offenses Code introduced a new offense related to public political activity by business entities not directly

linked to their commercial activity, punishable by fines of 20,000 GEL, and 40,000 GEL for repeated violations.

The first wave of amendments to the law on grants was introduced on April 16, 2025. The amendments introduced a requirement for donors to obtain prior approval from the Government of Georgia before issuing a grant. Receipt of funding without such approval is subject to a fine equal to double the amount of the grant. The definition of a grant was expanded to include technical assistance, knowledge sharing, and similar forms of support.

2.1.4. Worsening Accreditation Rules for Media and Journalists

By order of the Speaker of the Parliament Shalva Papuashvili, additional [changes were introduced](#) to the parliamentary accreditation system. Under the new rules, repeated violations may result in the suspension of a journalist's accreditation for up to one year. Depending on the severity and frequency of violations, an entire media outlet may also lose accreditation for up to one year. Papuashvili justified the changes by referring to the European Parliament's practice. He first [announced](#) the possible tightening of media rules on May 14, 2026, after the European Parliament suspended the accreditation of the pro-government *TV Imedi*, which had also been sanctioned by the United Kingdom for spreading Russian disinformation.

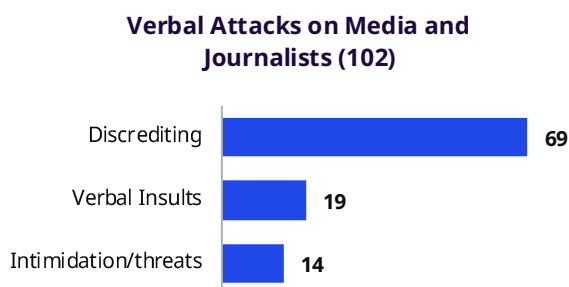
Previously, sanctions for violating accreditation rules applied only to individual journalists. Papuashvili stated that, since the European Parliament also sanctions media outlets, Georgia would adopt a similar approach. Restrictions on media access to Parliament have been gradually tightened since [February 2023](#). Non-accredited journalists were barred from entering Parliament, while journalists' accreditation could be suspended at an MP's request. From January 1, 2026, a new [special accreditation rule](#) introduced

additional barriers. These measures have been [used repeatedly](#) against journalists representing independent media outlets.

2.2. Verbal Attacks On Media Outlets And Individual Journalists

From September 2025 through the end of August 2026, the Center for Media, Information and Social Research recorded 102 cases of verbal attacks against media outlets and journalists in Georgia. Of these, 69 were attempts by state authorities and actors affiliated with them to discredit media and journalists critical of the government, 19 were verbal insults and 14 were intimidation/threats against them, including two instances of death threats.

CHART 4.



In most cases, the actors responsible for verbal attacks were politicians, high-ranking civil servants, pro-government media outlets, and individuals associated with the Georgian Dream party. Among the cases documented by CMIS, the Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia, Shalva Papuashvili, was most frequently identified as a source of verbal attacks, with 19 recorded cases. Efforts to discredit media outlets and journalists often took the form of coordinated or campaign-style attacks and involved pro-government media outlets, including *TV Imedi*, *POSTV*, and *Rustavi 2* alongside officials. Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze and Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze were also partaking in verbal attacks against journalists, with five publicly recorded cases each.

The targets of verbal attacks included both independent media outlets and individual journalists. The media outlets most frequently targeted were *TV Pirveli*, *TV Formula*, *Publika.ge*, *Netgazeti.ge*, *Batumelebi.ge*, and *Tabula.ge*. In several cases, a single verbal attack targeted multiple media outlets simultaneously. In one such case, 22 independent media outlets, members of the platform “Sinatle Media” were collectively targeted.

2.2.1. Discrediting and Verbal Insult Against Media

The Speaker of Parliament, Prime Minister and Tbilisi Mayor verbally attacked independent media outlets and journalists by referring to them as propaganda media or propaganda tools funded from foreign sources. Pro-government media outlets amplified their attempts by airing their speeches, or prepared separate stories targeting independent media and journalists. Below are some of the examples as the attempts to discredit independent media are permanent:

- Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze twice attempted to discredit *Monitori.ge*, first on [June 1](#), 2026 and then on [July 17](#), 2026. In both cases, the actions were related to journalistic investigations prepared by *Monitori.ge*. On July 17, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze also [tried](#) to discredit the outlet and accused it of “manipulation”. It is worth noting that, on July 17, Kakha Kaladze and Irakli Kobakhidze responded to *Monitori.ge*’s journalistic investigation regarding the selling of the Hotel Sakartvelo’s building in the Tbilisi Center by Bidzina Ivanishvili’s family bank - Cartu Bank. Simultaneously, the website and social media accounts of *Monitori.ge* were taken down as a result of [cyberattacks](#). The accounts were soon restored.
- On April 2, 2026, at a briefing in Parliament, the Speaker of Parliament [referred](#) to the publications *Radio Liberty*, *Tabula.ge*, *Publika.ge*, and *Netgazeti.ge* as “foreign-funded party

propaganda groups”, accused them of interfering in the activities of the Holy Synod of the Georgian Patriarchate, and threatened to respond accordingly.

- On March 10, 2026, the pro-government television channel *Rustavi2* [produced](#) a story about the investigative studio *iFact*, alleging the media outlet of cooperating with “foreign special services” and “acting against Georgia’s interests”.
- On February 6, 2026, after the publication *Publika.ge* was awarded the EU Prize, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze and Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze [attempted](#) to discredit the outlet. “The awarding of the prize to Publika.ge is a continuation of what we saw in the case of [Mzia] Amaglobeli, when a person was awarded for insulting a police officer – this is the low standard by which the European bureaucracy operates,” said Irakli Kobakhidze. Kakha Kaladze repeated the anti-Western message of the Georgian Dream that “violent groups in the country are being encouraged from outside.” Their narrative was aired by the pro-government media outlets *Imedi*, *Rustavi 2*, and *POSTV*.
- On January 29, 2026, on the air of the *TV Imedi*, and later on his own social media page, Speaker of the Parliament Shalva Papuashvili [called](#) online Publika.ge a “propaganda instrument”. He sought to discredit independent media in the context of their registration abroad. Along with *Publika.ge* he also mentioned other media outlets in the same context - *on.ge* and *Tabula.ge*.
- On November 23, a segment [aired](#) on the pro-government television channel *TV Imedi* aimed at discrediting the platform “Sinatle Media”- a platform created by 22 independent online media outlets following the tightening of legislation by Georgian Dream, which limited media’s activity in the country. *TV Imedi* referred

to these media outlets as “foreign security services media network”.

- On September 9, 2025, Papuashvili [referred](#) to the publication *Netgazeti.ge* as “a propaganda platform that incites violence” and “violent media”.

2.2.2. Discrediting Mzia Amaglobeli

A particular target of discrediting by high-ranking officials of the Georgian Dream was the imprisoned journalist [Mzia Amaglobeli](#), founder of the publications *Netgazeti* and *Batumelebi*. The following individuals were particularly prominent in spreading disinformation messages against Mzia Amaglobeli: the Speaker of Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, the Prime Minister, Irakli Kobakhidze, and the then Executive Secretary of the Georgian Dream, Mamuka Mdinaradze. In addition to them, statements were periodically made by Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze and other members of the Georgian Dream Party - Nino Tsilosani, Davit Matikashvili, and Sozar Subari.

Verbal attacks on Mzia Amaglobeli were especially active during periods when the journalist and/or the publications founded by her were nominated or received international awards. For example, after the International Press Institute (IPI) named Mzia Amaglobeli a “World Press Freedom Hero”, the Georgian Dream [attacked](#) this decision at a special briefing on October 10, linking it to a conspiracy theory on Deep State’s actions and calling Mzia Amaglobeli a “foreign agent”. On October 23, the European Parliament’s awarding of the Sakharov Prize to Mzia Amaglobeli further intensified the Georgian Dream’s rhetoric. Shalva Papuashvili [called](#) the awarding of the prize an “incitement”, while Irakli Kobakhidze [stated](#) that Amaglobeli “completed the task” and that her award was nothing more than “encouraging radicalism and crime”.

2.2.3. Intimidation/Threats

During the reporting period, intimidation and threats against journalists and media outlets occurred, including death threats. Some of the examples include the cases below:

- On May 7, 2026, in Khelvachauri, Sulkhan Meskhidze, founder of Adjara Times, and Lela Dumbadze, a journalist for Batumelebi.ge, were [allegedly](#) prevented from performing their professional duties by public officials. The journalists were verbally abused, and there were threats and attempts at physical violence against them.
- On February 9, 2026, after the end of a protest rally in Tbilisi, an unknown person [threatened](#) Mindia Gabadze, a journalist for *Publika.ge*, and Mariam Nikuradze, founder of *OC.Media* with physical assault.
- On September 9, 2025, individuals associated with the ruling Georgian Dream party [demanded](#) that *Radio Marneuli* delete information about one of the party’s candidates, otherwise, they threatened to sue the media outlet.
- On April 11, 2026, the *TVFormula* [reported](#) that journalist Davit Chabashvili was receiving death threats. “They will cut off your head for what you say, what you do, and what you write,” one of the messages addressed to the journalist read.

2.3. Ongoing Crisis at the Public Broadcaster

This section reviews developments at the Georgian Public Broadcaster, both Channel One and Adjara Television and Radio, focusing on such incidents as labor rights, legal persecution, and a lack of editorial independence, among others.

2.3.1. Measures Taken Against Journalists at Channel One of the Public Broadcaster

The repressive policy of the management of Channel One, which [began](#) in the fall of 2024, in parallel with the pro-European protests in Georgia, has continued unchanged. This policy was expressed through the imposition of disciplinary sanctions on employees critical of the channel’s editorial policy, their dismissal from work, and/or the closure of programs, columns, or authorial projects. According to publicly available information, in total, from spring 2025 to the present, the channel’s repressive policy [affected](#) 29 employees. During the reporting period, dismissals and sanctions resulted in seven cases in which the rights of current and former employees of the public broadcaster were violated – two were dismissed, four disciplinary sanctions were imposed, and in one case, the content created by a former employee was allegedly removed.

TABLE 3.

GPB Channel One Measures Taken Against Journalists		
4	2	1
Disciplinary Sanctions	Dismissals	Other

For example, by an order issued on August 4, 2025, Meri Shikhashvili, an employee of Realuri Sivrtse (Real Space) talk show, who had been on maternity leave until then, was [dismissed](#) from her job as of September 1, 2025. On December 26, another employee, Kakhaber Melikidze, Director of the Equipment and Technologies Broadcast Group who had worked at the channel since 1998, was also [dismissed](#).

The administration often used disciplinary sanctions against its employees. Two months before his dismissal, on October 25, 2025, Kakhaber Melikidze, [wrote](#) on social media that he had received another warning from the channel and that his November salary would be reduced by 30%. On February 11, 2026, the management issued a decree with a [reprimand](#) of Givi Chimakadze, a studio operator of the Equipment and Technology Operators Group, for “spreading a statement on a social network that damaged the reputation of the broadcaster.” On May 20, 2026 Givi Chimakadze, was also given a 30% [deduction](#) from his May salary. On February 24, Ketevan Sinitsa, a human resources project manager at the Human Resources Management Service, [received](#) a one-time 30% deduction from her February salary for “spreading/facilitating the spread of incorrect information in the public space that damaged the reputation of her employer.”

Journalist Ia Antadze [wrote](#) on social media on July 29, 2026, that 340 interviews prepared as part of her authorial project Interesting People had allegedly been removed from the website of the Public Broadcaster's First Channel (1tv.ge). Ia Antadze's project, which ran for eight years, and featured interviews with people from various backgrounds, including participants of pro-European protests, was [closed](#) in July 2025, along with a number of other projects and columns, and the journalist was dismissed from her job.

2.3.2. Journalists' Court Cases Against Channel One

Some of the dismissed employees from Channel One have initiated legal proceedings against the Public Broadcaster. The host of the program Real Space, Nino Zautashvili, and members of the creative team applied to the court. The host of the 18:00 broadcast of the news program Moambe, Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani, also applied to the court. They demanded the annulment of the dismissal

orders, reinstatement in their positions, and compensation for forced dismissal.

None of the claims were satisfied at the first instance court. CMIS assessed the following cases as bearing signs of legal persecution:

- On October 10, 2025, the Tbilisi City Court [denied](#) the lawsuit of Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani.
- On April 15, 2026, the Tbilisi City Court [dismissed](#) the lawsuit of Nino Zautashvili.
- On April 20, 2026, the Tbilisi City Court dismissed the [lawsuit](#) of five members of the Real Space creative team - Ketevan Kapanadze, Ioseb Katsitadze, Tamar Mshvenieradze, Omar Tsotsoria, and Tukha Kvinikadze.
- On May 20, 2026, the [lawsuit](#) of another Real Space employee, Meri Shikhashvili, was also dismissed.

The plaintiffs appealed the decisions to the second instance court. On February 6, 2026, the Court of Appeals [upheld](#) the first-instance decision in the case of Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani, and on July 14, the appeal of the employees of Real Space was also [upheld](#) by the Court of Appeals. Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani's case has already been transferred to the Supreme Court. The first hearing in the case of Nino Zautashvili and Meri Shikhashvili has already been held at the Court of Appeal, awaiting for the second hearing.

2.3.3. GPB's New Old Director

On July 29, 2026, Tinatin Berdzenishvili was elected for a second term as Director of the First Channel of the Public Broadcasting Company. Eight members of the Board of Trustees supported her, while two members, Lasha Tughushi and Lika Basilaia-Shavgulidze, voted against her. She had no competitors, as Berdzenishvili was the only candidate running for the position.

Tinatin Berdzenishvili was elected by the Board of Trustees to the position of Director for a six-year

term. Berdzenishvili has been working at the Public Broadcaster since 2011 in various positions. Initially, she was appointed Head of the Public Relations Department. In 2012 - 2013, she was a presenter. In 2014–2015, she became Director of the Marketing Department, and since 2015, she served as Director of the Media and Communications section. Since 2018, she has held two positions simultaneously: Director of the Media and Communications Block and First Deputy Director General. Since 2020, she has served as Director of the channel.

According to the Media Advocacy Coalition, during Tinatin Berdzenishvili's first term, the broadcaster's editorial policy was in favor of [Georgian Dream](#), political influence increased, independent programs were closed, and disciplinary sanctions, dismissals, and other mechanisms of pressure were used against critical and independent minded journalists.

2.3.4. Reorganization and Dismissals at Adjara Television

On September 1, 2025, the director of Adjara Television and Radio of the Public Broadcaster, Vladimir Tatishvili, resigned from his position, even though his term was due to expire in November. The competition to fill the position of director of television [failed](#) twice. Eventually, on January 29, 2026, on the third attempt, the head of the Batumi State Puppet and Youth Theater, Irakli Kikvadze, was [elected](#) to the position of director of the channel. He was the only participant in the competition.

In March 2026, a reorganization was [announced](#) at the channel, and it switched to a "special operating mode". The station's management announced that, for security reasons, the broadcaster's building would be temporarily emptied of personnel and that all programs, except news programs, would be suspended.

On June 2, it became [known](#) that 14 employees had been dismissed from Adjara Television and Radio of the Public Broadcasting Company as a result of the so-called reorganization. According to publicly available information, among them were six journalists. The director, Irakli Kikvadze, confirmed to [MediaChecker](#) that these employees had been dismissed and specified that the reorganization affected a total of 57 positions.

Some of the dismissed journalists - Irina Kurua, Maia Merkviladze, Levan Uridia, Gabriela Kvachantiradze, and Salome Gegeshidze - have [sued](#) the broadcaster. They are demanding that the dismissal order be declared invalid.

2.3.5. Public Broadcaster's Board of Trustees

In June 2026, the terms of office of three members of the Board, Zaza Abashidze, Bondo Mdzinashvili, and Grigol Murghulia, [expired](#). In June, Parliament approved a nine-member commission to select trustees, three of whom were employees of the *TV Imedi*. On June 23, Parliament [elected](#) two trustees to the vacant positions, one of whom, Grigol Murghulia, was re-elected to the Board under the Georgian Dream quota. The second trustee was Davit Kartvelishvili, nominated by the parliamentary political group People's Power. As for the third member, the three candidates nominated by the For Georgia faction failed to receive the required number of votes.

In June 2026, Parliament [changed](#) the rules for electing trustees, with the new version coming into [effect](#) on July 1. According to the amendments, the open competition for selecting candidates for membership in the Board of Trustees of the Public Broadcaster was abolished, as was the special competition commission. Under the new rules, a political or other entity holding the appropriate quota in Parliament will directly nominate a candidate, and the candidate's compliance with legal requirements will be checked by Parliament's Economic Policy Committee.

The Media Advocacy Coalition [assesses](#) the changes in the election process of the board of trustees as creating additional risks for media freedom, transparency, and institutional independence. "This decision further reduces transparency and strengthens the risk of undue influence over the Public Broadcaster, which has been under the influence of Georgian Dream for years, and whose management persecutes independent and professional journalists," the coalition noted in its statement.

2.4. Financial Sanctions, Detentions, Imprisonments and Court Cases Against Journalists and Media Outlets

During the reporting period, CMIS identified three mechanisms of financial and legal pressure used against the media: administrative fines for covering rallies, seizure of bank accounts at the stage of court enforcement, and criminal and administrative cases against media outlets and individual journalists. In total eight fines, four bank account seizures, ten administrative imprisonments and six detentions were recorded during the monitoring period, based on publicly available information. Additionally, one civil and one criminal case was initiated against media outlets *TV Formula* and *TV Pirveli*.

CHART 5.



2.4.1. Fines for Covering Protests

The 5,000 GEL fine has been systematically applied to journalists since 2024. During the reporting period, several journalists were fined. Fines were imposed on six other journalists from September until the end of December 2025: Liza Tsitsishvili, a journalist for *TV Formula* was fined 5,000 GEL for blocking the road on September 10, when she was covering protests; Maka Chikhladze, a journalist for *TV Pirveli* and Irakli Datunashvili, a copywriter for *JamNews Georgia* were fined both on October 15. Three journalists were fined on December 18: Zuka Khidasheli, a cameraman for Radio Liberty who was carrying out an editorial assignment and covering the pro-European protest, was [fined](#) 5,000 GEL, [Giorgi Tarkhnishvili](#), a photographer, and [Lile Shukvani](#), a journalist for the online publication *Interpress-news.ge*.

In 2026, administrative proceedings were initiated against two more media representatives who covered the Saturday protest marches: a journalist with *Netgazeti.ge* [Mariam Dzidzaria](#) on January 31, *Tabula.ge* journalist [Mariam Kuprava](#) on February 7, who were charged with blocking the road by standing on the sidewalk. In all these cases, it was noted that the journalists were wearing press identification badges and carrying cameras.

Most of these cases have been appealed in courts. The cases against Mariam Kuprava, Mariam Dzidzaria, Lile Shukvani, Zuka Khidasheli and Giorgi Tarkhnishvili were [dismissed](#) following an appeal.

2.4.2. Bank Account Seizures

In some cases, when journalists were fined, the bank accounts were also frozen. On April 7, 2026, the bank accounts of *TV Formula* journalist Liza Tsitsishvili were [frozen](#). Only then did it become clear that she had been fined 5,000 GEL on Sep-

tember 10, 2025, while performing her professional duties on Rustaveli Avenue and covering protests. According to the journalist, she had not received any notification about the fine, although during this period she had been detained once and had also crossed the border.

A similar case occurred on April 15, 2026, when the accounts of *TV Pirveli* journalist Maka Chikhladze were [frozen](#) on the basis of a fine issued on October 15, 2025. According to the head of the news service, Nodar Meladze, the journalist had been covering events on Rustaveli Avenue that day. Chikhladze stated that the case was related to her journalistic activities and was an act of retaliation. According to her, other media representatives had also been working at the same event, but she was the only one fined.

During the same period, the accounts of *JamNews Georgia* copywriter Irakli Datunashvili were also [seized](#) on the basis of a fine that, according to him, he had not been informed about. In the case of Tozu Gulmamedli, the National Bureau of Enforcement, in addition to seizing her accounts, issued a warning about the possible [seizure](#) of her property.

2.4.3. Imprisonments and Detentions of Media Representatives

During the reporting period, at least 16 arrests or detention incidents involving 13 journalists and other media representatives were [documented](#) by CMIS: 14 incidents in 2025 and two in 2026. The legal basis for these cases was provided by legislative amendments adopted through an expedited procedure in the past two years. Of the 14 detainees, seven were affiliated with *TV Formula*. Two journalists, Vakho Sanaia and an exiled Azerbaijani journalist Afgan Sadigov, were arrested more than once during this period.

On October 19, 2025, [Vakho Sanaia](#), a journalist and anchor for *TV Formula*, was arrested on charges of blocking a road and sentenced to six

days of administrative imprisonment. During the following two days, journalists from the same TV station, [Keta Tsitskishvili](#) and [Tsira Zhvania](#), were arrested on the same charges and sentenced to five and 10 days of administrative imprisonment, respectively. On October 21, journalist and former anchor at the Georgian Public Broadcaster, [Vasil Ivanov-Chikovani](#) was arrested and imprisoned for 7 days on the same charges.



Photo: Detention of Vakho Sanaia. © *TV Pirveli*

On October 22, [Lika Basilaia-Shavgulidze](#), a member of the Board of Trustees of the Georgian Public Broadcaster from the opposition quota, was arrested and sentenced to five days of administrative imprisonment. Footage released from the incident showed her standing on the sidewalk, without a mask and not blocking the road. According to her lawyer, she sustained an injury to her throat during the arrest. On the same day, Azerbaijani journalist exiled in Georgia, [Afgan Sadigov](#) was sentenced to 14 days of administrative detention also for blocking a road. Sadigov was again arrested on [November 12](#), Sadigov was released after serving seven days of administrative imprisonment.

On October 24 and 25, founder and director of *TV Formula* [Giorgi Liponava](#) was sentenced to three days of administrative imprisonment. A program host at *TV Formula*, a writer, and founder of a publishing company *Intelekti* [Zviad Kvaratskhelia](#) was sentenced to three days of imprisonment, and *TV Formula* cameraman [Nika Patariaia](#) to four days. On October 24, [Basti Mgaloblishvili](#), a journalist

for the online publication *Publika.ge*, was temporarily detained outside his home but released a few hours later after being told that he had been “mixed up with someone else.” According to the journalist, the detention was intended to intimidate him and put pressure on independent media.

On November 3, [Ninia Kakabadze](#), a journalist for *MediaChecker.ge*, was detained while walking home wearing a press badge. According to Kakabadze, she was not allowed to contact her minor child for a prolonged period. She was released within a few hours, although administrative proceedings against her continued. On November 5, TV Formula journalist [Liza Tsitsishvili](#) was forcibly detained and pushed into a police car while recording interviews with protest participants and was released shortly afterward.

On November 22, 2025 TV Pirveli journalist [Giorgi Mamniashvili](#) was arrested while covering a rally. The arrest was preceded by an attempt by police officers to seize his phone, which he had used to film the detention of protest participants.

Arrests and detentions continued in 2026. On April 4, Azerbaijani journalist [Afgan Sadigov](#) was arrested for the third time. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, he was detained under Article 173 of the Code of Administrative Offenses for insulting a police officer on social media. On July 22, [Yakho Sanaia](#) was sentenced to 14 days of administrative imprisonment for the second time, this time over his social media posts concerning Parliament Speaker Shalva Papuashvili and a Georgian Dream Member of the Parliament - Lado Bozhadze. This was the first case in which a journalist was sentenced to imprisonment for a post published on social media.

2.4.4. SLAPP Lawsuits against Independent Media

Litigation remains one of the tools of pressure against independent media and journalists, including so-called SLAPPs - strategic lawsuits against public participation. Human rights organizations have [stated](#) that such lawsuits may place critical media under financial and legal pressure and create a “chilling effect” for journalists.

During the reporting period, two legal disputes - one criminal and one civil - were initiated against the *TV Formula* following complaints by pro-Georgian Dream film director Giorgi (Goga) Khaindrava. The criminal case against the media was particularly alarming, as it is the first criminal case of this kind against a media outlet in Georgia in the past couple of decades.

2.4.4.1. Goga Khaindrava vs. TV Formula – Criminal Case

On June 16, 2026, the Investigation Department of the Tbilisi Prosecutor's Office opened a criminal case against Formula under Part 1 of Article 373 of the Criminal Code of Georgia. According to the Prosecutor's Office, the investigation was [launched](#) following a complaint by lawyers representing Goga Khaindrava and concerned an alleged false accusation made by a *TV Formula* source.

The case [relates](#) to investigative reports broadcast by *TV Formula* on December 20, 2025, and January 17, 2026. The first report concerned Khaindrava's property, activities, and ties to the government. In the second, *TV Formula* reported, citing a source, that in 2016–2017 Khaindrava, in agreement with the State Security Service, brought citizens of India and Pakistan to Georgia in exchange for money. Khaindrava considered the information defamatory.

Three journalists of Saturday Formula were summoned to the Prosecutor's Office for questioning:

host [Davit Kashiashvili](#), journalist [Natuka Lomidze](#), and cameraman [Misho Martashvili](#).

2.4.4.2. Goga Khaindrava vs. Formula – Civil Case

Based on the same reports, Khaindrava [filed](#) a civil lawsuit against Formula on March 19, 2026, seeking 10,000 GEL in moral damages and a retraction of information he claimed was false and defamatory.

On July 14, 2026, Tbilisi City Court Judge Liana Kazhashvili upheld the lawsuit, ordering Formula to pay 10,000 GEL in moral damages and to retract the information on its own airwaves.

2.4.4.3. Aleksandre Chikaidze vs. TV Pirveli

On December 9, 2025, the Tbilisi Court of Appeal [upheld](#) the Tbilisi City Court's decision in the defamation case filed by former Interior Minister Aleksandre Chikaidze against *TV Pirveli* and journalist Sopo Niauri.

The dispute concerned a [report](#) aired on Nodar Meladze's Saturday, which alleged Chikaidze's links to so-called call centers' case. The Court of Appeal ordered *TV Pirveli* and the journalist to retract the information and pay 10,000 GEL in moral damages.

2.5. Mzia Amaglobeli's Case

Mzia Amaglobeli, journalist and founder of *Batumelebi* and *Netgazeti* has been imprisoned since January 2025. The court sentenced her to two years in prison on August 6, 2025. Following the verdict, the state continued to violate Mzia Amaglobeli's rights, as reflected in various subsequent developments.

During the reporting period, complaints related to Mzia Amaglobeli's case were considered by courts of various instances. At the same time, Mzia Amaglobeli herself initiated legal proceedings for defamation against the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Kobakhidze. However, none of the

claims were satisfied at any instance, and some proceedings were terminated altogether. Mzia Amaglobeli was also denied early release. In addition, international delegations were not permitted to visit the imprisoned journalist.

During the reporting period, consideration of Mzia Amaglobeli's criminal case was completed in all instances of the Georgian courts.



Photo: Mzia Amaglobeli court hearing.

On November 18, 2025, the Kutaisi Court of Appeal upheld the first-instance decision in the criminal case of Mzia Amaglobeli. The defense requested the annulment of the Batumi City Court's verdict of August 6, 2025, as well as Mzia Amaglobeli's acquittal and release. The Prosecutor's Office, in turn, requested that the case be reclassified under Part 1 of Article 353¹ of the Criminal Code ("Attack on a Police Officer") and that the sentence be increased to 4 -7 years. The Court of Appeal did not grant either appeal and upheld the first-instance decision: conviction under Part 1 of Article 353 of the Criminal Code and a sentence of two years' imprisonment.

On March 4, 2026, the Supreme Court, did not [consider](#) Mzia Amaglobeli's criminal case on the merits. It declared the cassation appeals inadmissible and did not accept them for consideration. The decision was made without an oral hearing.

The cassation appeal requested the annulment of the appellate court's verdict, an acquittal, and an assessment of the legality of several procedural rulings. The Prosecutor's Office also filed a cassation appeal, again requesting classification under Article 353¹(1) and an increase in the sentence.

With this decision, the verdict of the Kutaisi Court of Appeal entered into legal force, and the possibility of appealing it before the domestic courts of Georgia was exhausted.

On behalf of Mzia Amaglobeli, four separate [applications](#) have been filed with the European Court of Human Rights. The fourth and most recent application was filed by the Georgian Young Lawyers Association on June 26, 2026. The four cases concern different episodes: the use of pre-trial detention, administrative detention, ill-treatment by the police and the ineffective investigation of that treatment, as well as her prosecution and conviction in the main criminal case.

After the arrest of Mzia Amaglobeli, members of the Georgian Dream repeatedly violated the presumption of innocence in relation to the journalist and made discrediting and defamatory [statements](#). On July 10, 2025, on *TV Imedi*, Kobakhidze stated that "Mzia Amaglobeli aimed to discredit the police and she carried out a specific order in this regard." On January 29, 2025, on *TV Imedi*, Kobakhidze spread unsubstantiated information alleging that "Mzia Amaglobeli was putting stickers on police officers." Based on these and several other statements, Mzia Amaglobeli twice filed lawsuits against Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze in the court of first instance. The [first](#) lawsuit was submitted to the Tbilisi City Court on November 24, 2025, and the [second](#) lawsuit was submitted on April 24, 2026. However, in both cases, the proceedings were terminated, which human rights defenders assessed as a dangerous precedent.

Furthermore, the Parole Commission (the local council of the Special Penitentiary Service that reviews cases of convicts) [refused](#) to grant early release to prisoner Mzia Amaglobeli on the grounds that "she still does not regret the act she committed." The commission made this decision despite the positive conclusion of Women's Penitentiary Institution No. 5. "Releasing Mzia Amaglobeli would be disrespectful to the numerous law enforcement officers who protect the country's order and respect for the law," the commission wrote in its conclusion.

On March 10, 2026, it became [known](#) that the Georgian Dream did not allow the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Delegation on an official visit to Tbilisi to meet journalist Mzia Amaglobeli in prison. "We requested visits to prisoners who are in prison, especially to the Sakharov Prize winner [Mzia Amaglobeli]. We expressed this to the Prime Minister, we expressed this to the President of the country, we expressed this to the Minister of Internal Affairs, we expressed this to the Speaker of Parliament. And they answered us: no," said Pere Joan Pons Sampietro, President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, during his official visit to Georgia. In November 2025, members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe who were in Tbilisi and sought to visit Mzia Amaglobeli were also [denied](#) request to meet her.

2.6. Suspension, Early Termination or Denial of Parliamentary Accreditation to Media Outlets and Journalists

2.6.1. Suspension and Early Termination of Accreditation

During the reporting period, a total of eight cases of early termination or suspension of accreditation by the Georgian Parliament were recorded. On May 21, 2026, the media outlets *Monitori.ge*

and *Publika.ge* [received](#) letters from the Parliament of Georgia regarding the early termination of their parliamentary accreditation. In total four journalists from each outlet held parliamentary accreditations. In both cases, Parliament cited a provision of the Rules for Accreditation of Representatives of Mass Media as the reason for the early termination of accreditation. According to this provision, accreditation may be revoked if journalists from the respective media outlets are absent from the Parliament building for ten consecutive weeks during the current parliamentary session. The Parliament's Public Relations Department [explained](#) to *Publika.ge* that this was the first time journalists' accreditation had been terminated early on the basis of this provision.

CMIS documented a total of six cases in which journalists' accreditation was suspended for periods of one month, six months, or one year. All six cases involved journalists from *TV Pirveli* and *TV Formula*. In five of the six cases, accreditation was suspended because journalists continued asking critical questions to Members of Parliament from the Georgian Dream Party, despite their refusal to give an interview. In one case, a journalist filmed the screen of a Member of Parliament's phone.

- On June 23, 2026, Parliament [suspended](#) the accreditation of Formula journalist Nini Balanchivadze for six months over a report aired on the program New Formula. In this case as well, the reason was that the journalist continued the interview despite a Member of Parliament's refusal. As Balanchivadze [explained](#), her questions concerned "Russia" and "the Strasbourg decision," which, according to her, irritated the MPs.
- On June 27, 2026, *TV Pirveli* program Nodar Meladze's Saturday aired a report prepared by Natalia Kajaia. The report concerned alleged cases of nepotism. Kajaia asked Members of Parliament questions about the issue, and

some of them refused to give interviews. By decision of the Chief of the Parliamentary Staff, Natalia Kajaia's parliamentary accreditation was [suspended](#) for one year because she continued the interview despite their refusal. In 2026, the accreditation rules were [amended](#), and under the revised rules, a repeated "violation" may result in a journalist being denied access to Parliament for one year.

- On the basis of an order issued by the Chief of the Parliamentary Staff on June 22, 2026, Parliament [suspended](#) the accreditation of *TV Pirveli* journalist Maka Andronikashvili for one month. In this case as well, the reason for the suspension was that she continued an interview despite the interviewee's refusal.
- On June 8, 2026, the accreditation of *TV Pirveli* journalist Maka Chikhladze was [suspended](#) for six months. Again, the reason was that she continued asking questions to a Member of Parliament despite the MP's refusal.
- On November 24, 2025, the parliamentary accreditation of *TV Formula* journalist Dea Badzaghua was [suspended](#) for one month. She had attempted to ask questions to MP Aluda Ghudushauri.
- During the reporting period, one case involving a different reason for the suspension of a journalist's accreditation was recorded on November 12, 2025. By the order of the Chief of the Parliamentary Staff, the accreditation of *TV Formula* journalist Tiko Eradze was [suspended](#) for one month. The [letter](#) explained that the basis for the suspension was filming, without permission, the screen of a Georgian Dream MP Eka Chichinadze's mobile phone from the area designated for the media.

2.6.2. Denial of Special Accreditation

A new procedure for issuing one-time special accreditation [came into effect](#) on January 1, 2026. Under the new rule, the Head of the Staff must

decide whether to issue special accreditation no later than five working days after receiving an application. One-time special accreditation allows journalists who do not hold parliamentary accreditation to enter the Palace of the Parliament of Georgia and carry out professional activities for a specific purpose. To obtain such accreditation, a journalist must submit an application to the Speaker of Parliament and specify the reason for requesting access.

CMIS documented seven cases in which media representatives applied for one-time special accreditation and were denied. In June 2026, a photojournalist for *Publika.ge*, [Mindia Gabadze](#), applied for one-time special accreditation, but Parliament refused to issue it. Between [February](#) and June 2026, several journalists of an investigative *Monitori.ge* applied for special accreditation. In none of these cases did Parliament issue accreditation or provide an explanation for the refusal.

2.7. Regulatory Pressure by the Communications Commission

2.7.1. Funding Control

The adoption of a number of laws [restricted](#) the operation of independent media and increased the powers of the Communication Commission's, the main regulatory body of broadcasting of electronic communication. The first precedent for enforcement of the law was [recorded](#) on October 9, 2025, when the Commission issued written warnings to *TV Formula* and *Formula Multimedia*, as well as to the radio broadcasters *Journalists' Union - People's Voice (Radio Marneuli)*, *Radio and TV Nori*, and *Sistema Gama*, and instructed them to stop receiving funding from a foreign power. This was the first practical application of the new laws that had [entered](#) into force on April 1, 2025.



Photo: Communications Commission meeting. © [ComCom FB Page](#)

On January 22, 2026, the Commission [issued](#) a second written warning to *Radio Marneuli* for receiving a grant of GEL 32,542 from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). One month later, on February 16, according to [information](#) provided by Nino Jangirashvili, director of the TV company Kavkasia, the Commission initiated administrative proceedings against the broadcaster over an individual donation received from the United States. The broadcaster was instructed to submit detailed information about the funds received and the relevant documentation within three working days. Eventually, the case was dropped.

2.7.2. Media Monitoring and Content Regulation

On March 6, 2026, the Commission [announced](#) that it would begin applying in practice the provisions established by the Law on Broadcasting and the Code of Conduct for Broadcasters and would start monitoring broadcasters' content.

The initiative was announced soon after the United Kingdom imposed sanctions on Georgian Dream-affiliated television channels *TVImedi* and *POSTV* for spreading pro-Russian propaganda and disinformation. The Commission stated that the sanctions were aimed at restricting fair competition among media outlets and journalists'

professional activities and posed a threat to media pluralism and freedom of expression.

The first results of the monitoring were [published](#) on April 8. The Commission issued written warnings to four television channels: the government-critical *TV Formula* and *TV Pirveli*, as well as the pro-government *POSTV* and *TV Imedi*. The warnings concerned content regulation requirements related to impartiality, balance, coverage based on personal attitudes or opinions, and due accuracy of facts. For example, the Commission found that *TV Formula* had covered certain issues in its news programs on the basis of the broadcaster's "personal attitude" by using phrases such as "Dream's Prosecutor's Office," "Dream's Parliament," "Ivanishvili's Prime Minister," and "the court clan." The monitoring identified the highest number of alleged violations only among the independent channels: 20 for *TV Formula* and 18 for *TV Pirveli*. The lowest numbers were recorded for *TV Imedi* - with four, and *POSTV*, with seven.

2.7.3. Sanctioning Independent Media

On May 20, 2026, the Commission [found](#) that *TV Formula* had violated Paragraphs 1, 4, and 5 of Article 54 of the Law on Broadcasting and imposed a fine of 2,500 GEL. The proceedings were initiated on the basis of the Commission's own media monitoring conducted in April. The Commission considered formulations such as "head of the Georgian Dream government," "Ivanishvili's regime," "regime's prosecutor's office," and "Dream's prime minister" to be problematic. It also identified as a separate violation the broadcast of a report about children with Duchenne muscular dystrophy without a comment from the Ministry of Health, which the Commission considered a violation of the requirement to ensure balance. Since *TV Formula* had already received a warning for a similar violation within the previous year, the minimum fine provided by law was imposed.

On June 25, *TV Pirveli* was [fined](#) 2,500 GEL for a similar violation under Paragraph 5 of Article 54. According to the Commission, the use of terms such as "oligarch," "Ivanishvili's regime," "Dream's investigation," and "false witness" was problematic.

On July 17, the Commission [found](#) *TV Formula* in violation for the third time and increased the fine to 5,000 GEL. The case concerned monitoring of the 17:00 editions of News broadcast between June 15 and 17. According to the Commission, journalists in several instances expressed personal opinions and attitudes through the systematic use of phrases such as "Dream's government," "Georgian Dream president," "Dream Ministry of Foreign Affairs," "repressive laws," and "repressions by the Dream regime." At this stage, the Commission did not apply the alternative sanction that provides for the possible suspension of broadcasting authorization.

On August 17, 2026, *TV Pirveli* was [fined](#) for the second time for violating content regulation requirements, this time in the amount of 5,000 GEL. The monitoring concerned news broadcasts aired on July 27 and 28. According to the Commission, violations were identified in relation to coverage based on personal attitudes and the requirement to report facts with due accuracy. Phrases such as "launched a major hunt," "scrolling-and-screening agency," "Chechen-style unit," and "hunting activists" were considered problematic.

2.8. Foreign Journalists Denied Entry, Faced Obstacles At the Border, or Expelled from Georgia

Georgia has increasingly become unsafe for refugee and dissident journalists, as well as foreign reporters critical of developments in the country. While the cases in the [previous](#) reporting period mainly involved foreign journalists and photographers being denied entry, the current reporting

period also saw deportations, forced departures, and revocation of residence rights. During the current reporting period three such instances were recorded. Additionally four journalists and one journalism student were either denied entry in Georgia or faced issues at the border.

2.8.1. The Case of Hungarian Journalist László Robert Mezés

On August 6, 2026, Hungarian journalist László Robert Mezés, who had been living in Tbilisi, was [forced](#) to leave Georgia following his detention by the Migration Service. He was detained on August 5. The Ministry of Internal Affairs stated that he was staying in Georgia without legal grounds and had violated the terms of his stay.

His lawyer, Tornike Janelidze, explained that Mezés had been denied an extension of the deadline to leave Georgia after his legal stay expired and had appealed the decision in court. The court accepted the case for consideration in February, and proceedings were still pending. The lawyer therefore expected Mezés to be released after verification, but police transferred him to the Migration Service.

Had Mezés left voluntarily, he would have faced a lighter fine and an entry ban, while deportation would have carried more severe consequences. He therefore decided to leave Georgia. Citizens raised money for his ticket, and law enforcement officers escorted him to the airport.

Mezés had [lived](#) in Georgia since August 2024 and had previously visited the country as a journalist. He actively covered the pro-European protests and worked as a correspondent for the Hungarian outlet Magyar Hang, regularly reporting on Georgia. Formerly a supporter of Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party, he later became a critic of Orbán's government and faced persecution in Hungary.

Mezés was also physically [attacked](#) in Georgia while covering a protest near the election headquarters of Tbilisi mayoral candidate Kakha Kaladze on Melikishvili Avenue, he was assaulted, sustained injuries to his face and hand, and was hospitalized.

2.8.2. Deportation of Azerbaijani Journalist Afgan Sadigov

In April 2026, Azerbaijani exiled journalist Afgan Sadigov, who had also lived in Georgia for several years, was [arrested](#), fined, and expelled from the country.

Sadigov was arrested late on April 4. The Ministry of Internal Affairs [stated](#) that Sadigov had been detained under Article 173 of the Code of Administrative Offenses for allegedly insulting a police officer on social media. Tbilisi City Court found him guilty of the administrative offense and fined him GEL 2,000. He was also ordered to be deported from Georgia and banned from entering the country for three years. Before his deportation, Afgan Sadigov had twice been placed in administrative detention in Georgia on the grounds of blocking a road during a protest.

2.8.3. French Photographer Francis Primerski's Residency Revoked

On March 25, 2026, French photographer Francis Nicolas Primerski, who had lived in Georgia for years, had his residence permit [revoked](#) on the grounds that his activities allegedly "pose a threat to the state security of Georgia." The authorities did not publicly explain which activities formed the basis of this decision.

Primerski, a professional photographer and videographer, first arrived in Georgia in 2004 and later settled in the country. He photographed Georgia's regions, people, traditions, cultural heritage, and, in recent years, political events and protests in Tbilisi.

On March 9, 2026, the Public Services Development Agency had extended Primerski's residence permit until March 9, 2027. However, on March 25, the same Agency reversed its decision and revoked the permit.

Primerski was given a deadline to leave Georgia and appealed the decision to the Tbilisi City Court, seeking the restoration of his residence permit. He [links](#) the revocation to his professional activities, documentation of protest rallies, and public positions.

2.8.4. Journalists Denied Entry or Facing Obstacles at the Georgian Border

During the reporting period, several foreign journalists and photojournalists faced problems entering Georgia, including being denied entry, detained at the border, or required to pay administrative fines related to alleged road blocking during protests while they were reporting about ongoing pro-European protests.

In 2025, three foreign photojournalists [faced](#) such restrictions. On September 28, Swiss photojournalist Gregor Ziemer was denied entry after being informed that two fines totaling 10,000 GEL had been registered in his name for allegedly blocking a road. He refused to pay and was turned back after being detained at the border for approximately eight hours. On September 29, Italian journalist Giacomo Ferrara was denied entry from Armenia after being informed of a 5,000 GEL fine related to his presence at a protest in Tbilisi on March 31. Ferrara stated that he had been covering the protest as a journalist rather than participating in it. He refused to pay the fine and was returned his passport after approximately two hours. On October 1, a German journalist was reportedly detained at the Georgian border for six hours over a 5,000 GEL fine for allegedly blocking a road and was allowed to enter only after paying it.

On September 6, Azerbaijani journalism student Javid Ahmedov, who had been living and studying in Tbilisi since September 2024, was [denied](#) entry to Georgia. Authorities initially referred to two fines totaling 10,000 GEL for alleged road blocking, but later informed him that payment would not change the decision. The official refusal document cited "other reasons". Ahmedov, who said he had attended demonstrations as a journalist carrying a camera, was sent back to Turkey.

On May 11, 2026 German journalist Marina Klimchuk, who was eight months pregnant, was [denied](#) entry at Tbilisi International Airport after being informed of a 5,000 GEL administrative fine. Although she initially attempted to pay part of the amount, she was later told that payment would not result in her admission to Georgia, and the money was returned. She spent almost 24 hours in a temporary holding room before being sent back to Germany.

CONCLUSION

The report covering the period from September 2025 through August 2026 has analysed violations of media freedom in Georgia. In total, 229 incidents were recorded, during which 291 media representatives and/or outlets were affected. The main findings include the shift from physical violence to bureaucratic violence and legal pressure, the Communications Commission and the Parliamentary accreditation mechanism as primary instruments to exert pressure on media, criminal case against a broadcaster, early termination of accreditation at the Parliament, the year-long suspension of accreditation, and the first sentence for a social media post. CMIS continues to track incidents and monitors the state of media freedom in Georgia.