STATEMENT

Crackdown on Civil Society, Political Prosecutions and Torture in Georgia

UPR Pre-session on Georgia

Geneva, November 28, 2025

Delivered by: Georgian Young Lawyers' Association

Honourable Representatives of the States,

This statement is delivered by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association.

1. **Presentation of the Organization**

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) is a membership-based Georgian human rights watchdog organization established in 1994. GYLA works to protect human rights and uphold the rule of law in Georgia. Over the years, the organization has played a significant role in strengthening democracy, promoting the rule of law, and safeguarding human rights across the country. In 2025, GYLA was honored with the Defender of Democracy Award for its outstanding contribution to the promotion of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law in Georgia.

2. **National consultations for the drafting of the national report**

The Georgian authorities have held no consultations with independent civil society. The ruling Georgian Dream party has adopted a number of laws aimed at discrediting, undermining, and defunding civil society organizations, and, at the legislative level, abolished all mechanisms that ensured civil society participation.

3. **Plan of the Statement**

This statement will address three issues: (1) Crackdown on Civil Society; (2) Political Prosecutions; (3) Practice of Torture in Georgia.

4. **Statement**

I - Crackdown on CSOs

A. Follow-up to the previous review

During the 3rd UPR cycle, states recommended Georgia that protect human rights defenders and activists, ensuring they can operate freely and safely without intimidation or harassment. They also urged the

country to strengthen the representation of civil society in decision-making processes. None of these recommendations have been implemented.

B. New developments since the last review

Since the last UPR review, the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party has intensified a systematic crackdown on human rights and democratic freedoms. Core civil and political rights, particularly the freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, have been severely restricted through violent dispersals of protests, repressive legislation, and widespread police brutality. Since 2024, the ruling Georgian Dream party has adopted a number of laws aimed at discrediting, undermining, and defunding civil society organizations. These include the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, the Foreign Agents Registration Act, and amendments to the Law on Grants. These laws would impose heavy fines, including imprisonment, and burdensome obligations that further restrict their ability to operate freely and independently. CSOs have been subjected to smear campaigns, vandalism, and assaults. More than 100 NGOs have been targeted through unlawful monitoring processes. The Prosecutor's Office has initiated investigations against CSOs, including allegations of sabotage and assisting foreign hostile organizations. More than 10 organizations have had their bank accounts frozen, fund representatives have faced home searches, and NGO leaders have been subjected to intense questioning.

c. Recommendations

1. **Repeal the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, the Foreign Agents Registration Act and the Amendments to the Law on Grants.**
2. **Refrain from repressive actions against civil society including the adoption of laws that violate their freedom of association.**

II Statement - Political Prosecutions and the right to a fair trial

During the 3rd UPR cycle, Georgia received the highest number of recommendation - 16 in total, from different states concerning judicial reform and the right to a fair trial. States recommended that Georgia ensure the full independence and impartiality of the judiciary, prevent the politicization of prosecutions, and guarantee fair trials. None of these recommendations have been implemented.

B. New developments since the last review

Since spring 2024, and particularly from 28 November 2024, criminal and administrative law mechanisms, including the Administrative Offences Code, have been systematically used against demonstrators. The charges, violations of the presumption of innocence by high-ranking officials, and strict criminal policy indicate political persecution by the ruling Georgian Dream party to suppress dissent. Administrative proceedings have similarly been weaponized to repress protests and civic dissent.

Observation of cases reveals selective justice, lack of judicial independence, and professional deficiencies. Final judgments often lack sufficient evidence to prove guilt beyond reasonable doubt, undermining trust in the judiciary, the rule of law, and increasing the risk of politically motivated prosecutions.

Recommendations:

1. **Releasing political prisoners prosecuted for exercising their rights to freedom of assembly and expression;**
2. **Cease the misuse of administrative and criminal proceedings to target peaceful protest participants;**

3. **To conduct a structural overhaul of the Administrative Offences Code to align it with international human rights obligations;**
4. **Reinforce the rule of law and judicial integrity through reforms that eliminate informal power structures, depoliticize the justice system, and institutionalize merit-based selection and promotion.**

III Statement - Practice of Torture in Georgia

A. Follow-up to the previous review

During the 3rd UPR cycle, states recommended **strengthening the State Inspector's Service to effectively investigate abuses by law enforcement officials and prevent torture or ill-treatment.** None of these recommendations have been implemented.

B. New developments since the last review

Torture and ill-treatment have become a grave concern in Georgia since November 2024. According to the Public Defender's Office, from 28 November 2024 to 28 January 2025, 282 cases of alleged ill-treatment were documented. Documentation by 11 Georgian CSOs found that 77.7% of 117 respondents reported violence and ill-treatment by police during the protests. Victims included children, women, and people with disabilities.

The scale of the violence, coordination of law enforcement units, matching victim statements, repeated patterns, and the state's lack of response indicate the systematic and organized nature of torture and ill-treatment.

No state institution in Georgia has taken meaningful steps to protect victims of torture or other forms of repression. Following the abolition of the State Inspector's Service in 2025, concerns over the independence and effectiveness of the Special Investigation Service (SIS) intensified. To date, not a single case has been properly investigated.

Recommendations:

1. **Eliminate all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, and ensure that all allegations of torture, and ill-treatment by police are investigated fully, independently, and impartially;**
2. **Perform thorough and prompt investigations into the conduct of high-ranking officials, particularly those responsible for planning and supervising law enforcement activities.**

Closing

Honorable Representatives of the States,

We urge you to reflect these issues in your recommendations during Georgia's fourth Universal Periodic Review.

Thank you for your attention.