



Freedom of Religion or Belief, Equality, and Secularity

July 2025



Freedom of Religion or Belief, Equality, and Secularity

July 2025

Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI)

www.tdi.ge/en



The Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI) continues to monitor the environment regarding freedom of religion or belief, equality, and secularity. This includes monitoring statements and activities by political parties, politicians, public figures, and clergy.

The present report covers **July 2025**

2024-2025 reports on monitoring the pre-election and post-election environments regarding freedom of religion or belief, equality, and secularity:

Pre-election period (2024)

[August 25 to September 25](#)

[September 25 to October 25](#)

Post-election period (2024)

[October 26 to November 26, 2024](#)

[November 26 to December 26, 2024](#)

2025

[December 26, 2024- January 31](#)

[February](#), [March](#), [April](#), [May](#), [June](#)

Cover photo: Nini Gabritchidze/civil.ge



Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Main Trends | 4 |
| 1. Propaganda Against the European Union and Manipulation Through Pseudo-Religious Narratives | 5 |
| 2. Anti-European Rhetoric by Orthodox Clergy | 11 |
| 3. Clergy Statements on Political Repression and Intolerance | 13 |
| 3.1. Statements by Orthodox Clergy | 13 |
| 3.1.1. Statements on Political Repression and Prisoners | 14 |
| 3.1.2. Statements on the Imprisonment of Journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli | 14 |
| 3.1.3. Statements on the Judiciary, Judges, and Law Enforcement Agencies | 15 |
| 3.1.4. Responses to Georgian Dream’s Manipulative Messages and Pro-European Statements | 16 |
| 3.2. Statements by Clergy of Various Denominations | 17 |

Main Trends

During the reporting period, *Georgian Dream (GD)* and its satellite actors bolstered their anti-Western propaganda, which became even more aggressive and openly anti-European. They openly labeled the European Union as an **“enemy”** and a **“foreign power”** acting under the orders and influence of the **“Deep State,”**¹ allegedly demanding that Georgia give up its state sovereignty.

Political and legal messages from the EU, related to sanctions over the democratic backsliding and political persecution in Georgia, were reframed in their rhetoric as **“blackmail against the country.”** The EU was portrayed as a bureaucracy operating under **“informal governance.”**

A key pillar of this anti-European discourse is the **manipulation of pseudo-religious narratives**, suggesting that the EU is **“taking away faith, traditions, and fighting against the Georgian Orthodox Church.”** Part of the Orthodox clergy echoed this narrative.

A positive trend persisted during the reporting period — a small number of Orthodox clergy, as well as representatives of other denominations, continued to publicly criticize *Georgian Dream’s* anti-democratic, anti-European path and propaganda rhetoric, and expressed support for political prisoners in their public speeches and sermons.

¹ GD has been drumming up the infamous “deep state” conspiracy into the public narrative for several months. During the [previous reporting period](#), GD propagandists openly associated Jewish origin with the alleged global domination of “oligarchic families,” the orchestration of international conflicts, and deliberate efforts to eradicate national identities. Through political channels and media platforms, they disseminated conspiracy theories claiming that democratic countries, including EU and NATO member states, **are secretly controlled by Jewish “oligarchic families” or the same “Deep State,” whose supposed objective is to “degenerate European countries, including Georgia, politically, ethnically, religiously, morally, and economically.”**

1. Propaganda Against the European Union and Manipulation Through Pseudo-Religious Narratives

During the reporting period, *Georgian Dream (GD)* and its affiliated actors carried out an aggressive anti-Western campaign. They continued to manipulate pseudo-religious narratives and presented themselves as the sole defenders of Christianity and traditions, while portraying the EU as a hostile force.

Content analysis revealed the **following thematic narratives:**

Conspiracy: The EU Acts on Orders from the “Deep State”

and international partners, are portrayed as enemies. According to *Georgian Dream*, the “[Deep State](#)” forces a “foreign ideology” on Georgia and fosters destabilization.

Georgian Dream Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze [claimed](#) that in “European structures” and “European bureaucracy,” there is “powerful informal governance” where “any moral boundaries have been completely erased.” According to the GD Prime Minister, the “Deep State” is using the European bureaucracy and Great Britain to implement its “vicious goals” in Georgia.

[In a June 13 statement](#), the *Georgian Dream (GD)* Political Council declared that “the majority of European states operate under the principled influence of the ‘deep state.’ Against this backdrop, neither the absurd resolutions of the European Parliament, nor the disinformation-filled letter from 18 European officials, nor their sanctions or other attacks against the Georgian people surprise anyone².”

“Visa Liberalisation” vs. Preservation of National Traditions and Sovereignty

This narrative seeks to demonize the EU’s political and legal messages. *Georgian Dream* frequently compares the [EU to the Soviet Union](#), portraying it as a [hostile force](#) that indirectly **abolishes Georgia’s sovereignty, blackmails the country, and punishes it for disobedience.**

² On July 11, the British Embassy in Georgia [released a joint statement](#) by the foreign ministers of 17 countries and the European Union’s High Representative, Kaja Kallas, regarding Georgia. According to the statement, the foreign ministers of Europe’s democratic countries were “concerned and deeply troubled” by “the deteriorating situation in Georgia.” The *Georgian Dream*’s growing repressive policies against individuals critical of it, and the arrests of politicians, are said to be “undermining democracy in Georgia and rapidly transforming the country into an authoritarian system, which is contrary to European values and norms.” To resolve this situation, the statement called on “the Government of Georgia” to immediately release unjustly detained politicians, journalists and activists, to reverse repressive legislation and to engage in a national dialogue with all relevant stakeholders”.

Context:

On July 15, the EU Foreign Affairs Council met in Brussels and once again discussed Georgia. Before the meeting, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas [stated](#) that *Georgian Dream's "attacks on democracy are becoming more severe" and that "Georgia's democratic backsliding will come at a high cost."*

On July 16, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs sent an official [letter](#) to *Georgian Dream's* Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili. The letter reiterated the eight points listed in the [European Commission's Seventh Report on the Visa Suspension Mechanism](#) (December 6, 2024), including the demand to repeal anti-democratic laws. The report stressed that fundamental human rights and freedoms are being violated in Georgia, including the principle of non-discrimination, contrary to European and international standards.

The *Georgian Dream* Political Council, party leaders, and pro-government media responded with speculation and anti-EU messaging, [framing the EU's stance as blackmail](#) over visa liberalisation and claiming it was conditional upon repealing the "Law on Family Values" — a law stating "a man must remain a man." They argued [Brussels was demanding](#) Georgia "say that the Earth is flat" or "say that a man can become a woman," implying that sovereignty meant nothing to the EU. In its [July 18 statement](#), the *Georgian Dream* Political Council declared that "Eurobureaucracy, coordinated by the Global War Party, is attempting to find a pretext for the blackmail and pressure it is exerting".

Georgian Dream created a **false juxtaposition between visa-free travel and Georgia's state sovereignty**, as if Georgian citizens need to choose between protecting state sovereignty, traditions, and Orthodoxy on the one hand, and enjoying visa-free travel to Europe on the other.

Shalva Papuashvili, Speaker of the GD Parliament, July 22: "The main thing is that Brussels has, for some reason, demanded the complete repeal of a law supported by the Georgian people in a referendum-style parliamentary election, and backed by the Orthodox Church and all traditional religions. A law which has nothing to do with visa-free travel³..."

The message about the "blackmail" has been echoed by other MPs of the GD parliament. Nino Tsilosani, the GD parliament vice speaker, [wrote](#) on Facebook: "Visa-free travel is really comfortable, and we earned this comfort during the *Georgian Dream* government... However, **if comfort contradicts patriotism**, the Georgian people have always remained and will remain patriots of their country."

EU Ambassador Paweł Herczyński [explained](#) to the media that the European Union fully respects Georgia's culture and identity, and supports the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He stated that the release of unjustly detained individuals, the repeal of repressive

³ This refers to the package of draft laws "On Family Values and the Protection of Minors," adopted by the Parliament of Georgia on September 17, 2024. The discriminatory and homophobic legislation [restricts](#) the freedoms of assembly and expression, including access to information and media freedom, as well as the rights to respect for private and family life, the right to health, and the freedom to work.

legislation, and the provision of open dialogue are the only ways to resolve the ongoing crisis and bring Georgia back onto the path toward the European Union.

Paweł Herczyński's interview was followed up by [angry remarks](#) by Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze, who said that if it were up to him, he would expel EU Ambassador Paweł Herczyński from the country.

Other Examples of Statements:

[Irakli Zarkua](#), Member of the GD Parliament, July 18: "...Now Kallas and her 'deep state' hirelings are attacking us with a new theme — that we must repeal the transparency⁴ and family purity laws because they want to fund marches against religion, the Church, and Orthodoxy, and hold prides here like they did in Kyiv. ...We will make sure that all those who take steps against their country and people regret it. **We have one homeland, centuries-old religion, Orthodoxy, and we won't let either the 'deep state'-hired MEPs or local agents trample on them.**"

[Guram Macharashvili](#), MP of the GD offshoot People's Power, July 18: "Visa liberalisation is important, but if there is no country, no traditions, if Georgian men officially marry each other, if minors have their gender changed, and **if a second front opens here, then visa liberalisation and all of Georgia will be gone.**"

[Vato Shakarashvili](#), founder of the GD offshoot movement United Neutral Georgia, July 14: "Without exaggeration or pathos, we must say that the Georgian people — who have 100,000 martyrs — cannot be broken by the suspension of visa liberalisation. **The EU today is as much an enemy of Georgia as Jalal ad-Din's army was in history.**"

"The EU is Fighting the Georgian Orthodox Church and Faith"

The *Georgian Dream* government presents itself as the main defender of Orthodoxy and national traditions, while portraying its opponents as **enemies of the Georgian Orthodox Church**. [According to the GD Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze](#), the government protects political and social institutions, including the Orthodox Church, from hatred, which is allegedly driven by "externally funded campaigns."

One of *Georgian Dream*'s key messages is that there is "[non-transparent funding](#)" being used in [Georgia to attack the Church](#)." The party has claimed, without evidence, that past assistance from USAID, NED, and, to this day, *EU funds was allocated to carry out strikes against the country's identity, the Georgian Orthodox Church, and religious faith*.

It should be noted that *Georgian Dream* systematically attacks the **EU Ambassador to Georgia, Paweł Herczyński**. The latest attack was linked to the position expressed by Tamta Mikeladze, Director of the Social Justice Center, and Beka Mindiashvili, co-founder and board member of

⁴ This refers to the "Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence" (the Russian law), which aims [to discredit, control, and interfere with the activities of civil society and media organisations](#).

the Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI), regarding a July 21 statement by the Patriarchate's Public Relations Service.

Context: Attack on the Social Justice Center and the Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI)

On July 21, in response to the EU Foreign Affairs Council's decision to review the suspension of Georgia's visa-free regime, the Public Relations Service of the Patriarchate [stated](#) that *"in recent times, the content of the EU's recommendations to Georgia has caused serious concern among the Georgian public and within the Orthodox Church. This refers to the part that requires repealing the legislation on protecting the sanctity of the family and restricting so-called LGBT propaganda among minors."* This statement repeated *Georgian Dream's* propaganda narrative — as if the EU, in exchange for visa liberalisation, was demanding that Georgians abandon their traditions.

On July 22, Tamta Mikeladze, Director of the Georgian civil society organisation Social Justice Center, [responded](#) to the Patriarchate's PR Service statement on Facebook. She wrote that the statement "directly repeats the spirit of *Georgian Dream's* propaganda on this issue." Mikeladze also distinguished between the official position of the Patriarchate of the Georgian Orthodox Church and that of its Public Relations Service, which, according to her, *"represents the faction of Metropolitan Shio Mujiri [Patriarchal Locum Tenens]" and whose "agreed, purchased, or commissioned common messages from Georgian Dream cannot be legitimised as the position of the Church."*

Speaker of the *Georgian Dream's* Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, [used](#) Mikeladze's post to discredit NGOs and the EU and to promote manipulative messages. In an interview on the Georgian Public Broadcaster's program *Aktualuri Tema – Maka Tsintsadze's Show*, [he stated](#) that *"contractor organisations of the EU Delegation came out and directly attacked the Patriarchate," which had issued a statement on the "Law on Family Values."*

According to Papuashvili, Beka Mindiashvili, Head of the Tolerance Center under the Public Defender and a board member of the Georgian civil society organisation Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI), is "known for his attacks on the Church." He referred to TDI as "his [Mindiashvili's] NGO" and called him "the most intolerant person." It should be noted that TDI, as well as Mindiashvili personally (due to his private opinions), have been repeatedly [targeted by Georgian Dream in the past](#).

Papuashvili stated that both Tamta Mikeladze and Beka Mindiashvili were not acting on their own "initiative," but that *"the EU Delegation and its Ambassador directly sanction this, because they fund both of these organisations."* He demanded that the EU Ambassador make a statement clarifying and distancing himself from their remarks, adding that otherwise, it would be *"a direct attack on the Georgian Orthodox Church by the EU Delegation."*

[Shalva Papuashvili](#), Speaker of the GD Parliament, July 22: *"... So, Mr. Herczyński will either distance himself from the attack on the Georgian Church, the labeling of it as pro-Russian, and the dismissive tone toward it, or I will consider this to be the personal words of Paweł Herczyński"*

*and an attack on the Church — and I will emphasize this every time. **We can no longer just watch as people come here, throw money around, think they can dig into the soul of Georgian society, launch belittling attacks on the Georgian Church, and then calmly come out and talk to us about values they absolutely do not understand.***

Other comments:

[Levan Machavariani](#), Deputy Chair of the Georgian Dream parliamentary faction, July 22: *“In recent years, we have seen many cases when wealthy NGOs and their employees have directly attacked the Church. One of the purposes of the funding coming from USAID, NED, and various European funds, apart from keeping our country in constant turmoil, was precisely to carry out strikes against our country’s identity, the Church, and religious faith. This is a clear example of all that.”*

[Dimitri Samkharadze](#), Member of the GD Parliament, July 16: *“...They are openly and directly demanding: exchange honesty and family dignity for depravity and the domination of homosexuals! Forget Georgian customs, spirit, our history, heroes, and ancestors — focus on securing the future of the ‘tolerant’ LGBT society and codify it into law! Replace standing beside and protecting the Georgian Church with undermining its authority and destroying it! Replace peace with war!!”*

Manipulation with LGBT+ Issues and Disinformation

In *Georgian Dream*’s rhetoric, support for LGBT rights and gender equality is identified as foreign pressure and as a threat to national values and religious faith. This manipulation is used to strengthen political legitimacy.

[Irakli Kobakhidze](#), the GD Prime Minister, July 21: *“We do not act on foreign orders; we have cleansed all branches of government of agents, we protect sovereignty, we have not allowed LGBT propaganda, and we have not entered the war. No one has even bothered to present evidence of [our] pro-Russian stance.”*

[Mamuka Mdinaradze](#), Chairperson of the Georgian Dream parliamentary faction, July 19: *“...That we must abandon family values and similar ‘Georgian-national whims’ — they basically wrote this to us directly a few days ago.”*

[Vato Shakarashvili](#), founder of the Georgian Dream satellite movement United Neutral Georgia: *“Today the European Union is openly and very clearly demanding that we change our religious law and declare the liberal LGBT ideology as a religion.”*

Georgian Dream and its satellites often resort to propagandistic reductionism, attempting to narrow the EU’s eight-point demands, which include protecting human rights in general, ensuring fair legislation, anti-corruption measures, and more, solely to the issue of supporting LGBT+ rights.

[Dimitri Samkharadze](#), MP from Georgian Dream, July 16: “...They are openly and directly demanding: exchange honesty and family dignity for depravity and the domination of homosexuals! Forget Georgian customs, spirit, our history, heroes, and ancestors — focus on securing the future of the ‘tolerant’ LGBT society and codify it into law! Replace standing beside and protecting the Georgian Church with undermining its authority and destroying it! Replace peace with war!!”

[Davit Kartvelishvili](#), member of the Georgian Dream satellite party People’s Power, July 15: “On EU Commissioner Kaja Kallas’s desk, there is already that anti-Georgian ‘package,’ in the practical implementation of which she is not even sure, but of course she will try to carry it out to the maximum. In the ‘package’ is, among other things, the sanctioning of two specific judges and the partial restriction of Georgia’s visa-free regime. According to Kallas’s calculations, this should finally ‘bring down’ our country, in which the main European value — holding Pride has been postponed for an indefinite period...”

Opposition to the ‘Western Model’ of Democracy vs. ‘Georgian Democracy’

In *Georgian Dream*’s rhetoric, the ideals of Western democracy are portrayed as ideological weapons, while “Georgian democracy” is presented as a sovereign and national alternative.

[Shalva Papuashvili](#), Speaker of the GD Parliament, July 30 — speech at the general debate of the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament: “...Although the strongest foundation of democracy is the diversity of norms, opinions, and arguments, alienocracy — that is, foreign rule — has ideologically restricted this diversity and given preference to those groups in society that share a foreign-imposed agenda and ideology. [...] Georgia is among the nations whose democracy has been harmed by this imposed foreign political interference...”

European Union: “A Space of Stagnation”

According to the rhetoric of [Georgian Dream](#), “uncontrolled migration, pseudo-liberal propaganda, and the weakening of state and religious institutions are rapidly depriving Europe of its identity.” The European Union is [portrayed](#) as an ideological enemy of Georgia, no longer a space of development and peace, but one that destroys the traditional order.

2. Anti-European Rhetoric by Orthodox Clergy

On July 21, the Public Relations Service of the Patriarchate of Georgia [issued a statement](#) that once again amplified a propagandistic, anti-Western discourse, according to which support for “family traditions” and striving toward Europe are incompatible.

“Unfortunately, the latest recommendations of the European Union today present openly incompatible positions: on the one hand, support for family traditions and the protection of minors from LGBT propaganda; on the other hand, the prospect of the country’s movement toward Europe. This causes disappointment among a large part of the Georgian population.”

At the same time, during the reporting period, some Orthodox clergy continued in their sermons and public appearances to express rhetoric both in support of the *Georgian Dream* government and against civil society, human rights, and the European Union.

Bishop Iakob Iakobashvili, Archbishop of Bodbe, — Sermons on July [12](#) and [20](#) were based on anti-Western messages and the discrediting of *Georgian Dream*’s opponents.

Main message: Europe is “no different from Russia” and, instead of taking our territories, is taking away our choice

*“We see that in recent decades, anti-God teachings have emerged and taken root in many countries. If you look here as well, what does today’s territorial Europe want from us, what do their governments want? Apparently, we must fulfill eight [recommendations] by August 31. And they say it will be the government’s fault if we can no longer fly visa-free abroad. Step down from the flight for a moment and see what they are asking: repeal the law on family values. Why are you forbidding me to have traditions and to protect family values the way I want? **How is Europe different from Russia?** Russia took 20% from me, and now you are taking away my choice? You will not achieve this in Georgia...”*

Metropolitan Stephane Kalajishvili of Chkondidi, Tsageri, and Lentekhi — As in previous sermons, his July [20](#) sermon continued anti-Western disinformation.

Main message: Europe is taking away Christianity

*“...Today they tell us: **abolish Christianity and we will give you visas.** Does that mean visa-free travel and renouncing Christ are the same thing? Should I be given this [benefit] based on abolishing Christianity? If normal relations are only possible if I necessarily renounce Christ, then I will not renounce Christ, and we do not want anything from anyone.”*

Bishop Spiridon Abuladze of Skhalta Diocese — Sermons on July [7](#) and [27](#) contained anti-Western statements, repeated *Georgian Dream* propaganda, and thanked the government for not involving Georgia in the war and for banning “gay propaganda.”

“They say: you don’t hold gay parades — what’s that? You forbid gender-change surgeries — what’s that? You don’t legalize same-sex marriage — what’s that? If you don’t legalize these, don’t come to us, get out of here, you’re nothing. What is this European Union, what filth! They say: you won’t get visa-free travel unless you become gay. Now I ask you, are you Georgians — do you want such a visa-free regime where your children become gay? Where boys get married and girls take wives? Do you want such a visa-free regime? You don’t.”

Russian disinformation on the August 2008 war: Claiming Georgia started the war and that Russia is an Orthodox state.

*“**[Russia]** is a huge state, and Orthodox Christians, and shouldn’t you be glad about that? That it is an Orthodox nation like you, fighting against this depravity of homosexuality, against same-sex marriage, against this debauchery? Shouldn’t you be glad it is so strong? You say it has taken your territories — blessed one, **if you hadn’t been shouting NATO, NATO, it wouldn’t have taken your territories...** Those people don’t want their mortal enemy at their doorstep, and so they took your territory. The same happened in Ukraine. That Orthodox state does not want NATO, which is the state of Satan.”*

3. Clergy Statements on Political Repression and Intolerance

3.1. Statements by Orthodox Clergy

The positive trend persisted during the reporting period, as a small number of Orthodox clergy continued to speak critically about *Georgian Dream*'s anti-democratic, anti-European course and propagandistic statements.

Their narratives included the **following themes and messages**:

Political repression and prisoners of conscience – Some Orthodox clergy emphasized that the GD government punishes critically minded citizens, journalists, and activists solely for opposing injustice. This persecution is not only political but also a manifestation of spiritual and moral crisis.

Politicization of the judiciary and law enforcement – Courts and the Ministry of Internal Affairs act like institutions under totalitarian regimes. “Legal” persecution is used to suppress critical and oppositional opinion.

Persecution of Christians and defenders of truth – Defenders of Christian values and those who fight for justice are targeted by the government. The persecution of Christians is framed not only as persecution for faith, but for defending truth and justice.

Restriction of media freedom – The case of journalist Mzia Amaglobeli is presented as an example of political retribution and media persecution. She was punished for boldly exposing the system.

Anti-Russian and pro-Western positioning – Russia is Georgia's historical and current enemy, continuing its occupation and causing harm. *“Anyone who says today that ‘Europe will marry us off’ is a Russian agent, whether willingly or unwillingly; I doubt anyone does it unwillingly, but they are supporters of our enemy.” Europe and the U.S. are Georgia's partners; attempts to portray them as a “war party” or “enemies” repeat Russian narratives* (Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili)

Exposing GD government propaganda – *Georgian Dream* misleads society with false narratives that Europe is harming Georgia, while in reality, this is an attempt to divert attention from Russian influence and authoritarian tendencies.

3.1.1. Statements on Political Repression and Prisoners

Since November 28, 2024, pro-European rallies have been held in Tbilisi and other cities demanding new parliamentary elections and the release of detained protesters. The protests were triggered by *Georgian Dream*'s decision on November 28, 2024, not to raise the issue of opening EU accession negotiations “until 2028.”

Police detained around [500 people](#), including about 50 under criminal charges. As of August 2025, no law enforcement officers who used violence against protesters, including journalists, have been identified or punished.

[Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili](#), July 13: “Look how many young people are in prison. When a parent knows that their child is honest and loves the country, they should not be in prison. It is hard for a parent to bear. That’s why parents perish. The Constitution says: mother is mother, father is father — where is their respect? Where has compassion for children, family, and the country gone? Is that income so sweet and good? I hope that God will drown their income in the sea and they will be left empty, without God and without income. May God give strength to every parent, to everyone unlawfully imprisoned, and may God comfort all and grant rest to those who have fallen victim to this cruelty.”

[Archimandrite Iliia Jinjolava](#), July 24: “Today’s pain in Georgia is not only economic poverty, legal inequality, violation of human rights, and fundamental institutional degradation; first and foremost, it is a spiritual catastrophe whose origin lies in lies, selfishness, and ugly power. Society is divided, polarized to the extreme, as if truth no longer exists and each side defends its own ‘truth.’ ... The future of Georgia cannot be built on deals, fear, moral nihilism, and a sold conscience. It will be built only on the hearts of those who serve Christ’s truth, public justice, and freedom of conscience — not outwardly, but in their hearts. Therefore, I call on everyone who still retains dignity: do not submit to this false, agonizing spectacle that some impose on the nation as if in the name of the country. Speak the truth loudly, defend the weak and the oppressed, expose injustice; be the light that always shines in the darkness.”

3.1.2. Statements on the Imprisonment of Journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli

The case of imprisoned journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli is seen as a [manifestation](#) of the *Georgian Dream*'s political justice and restriction of media freedom. She was criminally detained on January 12.

[Archimandrite Shio Kvaratskhelia](#), July 14: “...Today in Georgia, the government has dismantled all restraints. This is why there is a fire in our country. The culprit is not the one trying to extinguish the fire — the culprit is the one who started it. Today in Georgia, the government started the fire and is arresting and punishing those who try to put it out. For example, why are they so vengeful toward Mzia Amaghlobeli? Mzia didn’t slap just a policeman, she slapped the entire system, and they cannot forgive her. They cannot forgive that a woman journalist dared to expose the whole system like that. A Georgian literary work says it well in the gendarmerie, it is hardest to preserve high morality. Today our police failed this moral test; they didn’t pass it,

committing terrible acts. When we look, many of them are very young, at such an age, how did they accumulate so much hatred and malice toward their own people?"

3.1.3. Statements on the Judiciary, Judges, and Law Enforcement Agencies

During the reporting period, court cases of some prisoners of conscience reached their final stage, awaiting verdicts. Due to illegal decisions by judges and law enforcement bodies, and political justice in general, these institutions were in the public spotlight.

[Archimandrite Ilia Jinjolava](#), July 11: *"Whenever the Ministry of Internal Affairs says and writes 'legal' or 'lawful,' it already resembles the 'legal' and 'lawful' persecution of citizens under the regimes of Hitler and Stalin — the same justification for killings, imprisonments, and torture... Then too, everything was 'legal,' everything fit within the 'legal framework'... That is what characterizes regimes, and the end of every regime is a great fall. It pains me for those who willingly become part of this system; it pains me also for those who became victims of propaganda; it pains me for both victim and perpetrator, the fallen in spirit are the saddest sight."*

[Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili](#), July 3: *"...Look at what is happening today, see the similarity: what does our Prime Minister say? 'Whoever does not recognize us, all of them go to prison.' See how they demand recognition and how they use violence because they are not recognized. Christ said: 'Come to me, all who are weary and burdened.' The burden meant imposing unjust laws on people. The Savior told the Pharisees: You put heavy burdens on others, and you yourselves do not want to lift a finger. They have placed such heavy punishments on the people, yet do not investigate their own crimes; they do not even consider them crimes. This is the persecution of Christianity, because a Christian is one who is just. Christ said: 'I am the truth.' Whoever opposes injustice in a Christian nation is persecuted; therefore, the Christians are persecuted. Persecution of Christians is not only about demanding or not demanding acknowledgment of Christ; it is when you unjustly persecute people for truth, impoverish them."*

[Archimandrite Ilia Jinjolava](#), July 5: *"The situation in Georgia is not just about politics, it is a test of conscience and morality, where each of us serves either truth or lies. We saw how the court turned into a circus arena; instead of justice, we found trampled dignity, and the shameless gaze of judges filled with fear. We saw how they hunt down people simply because they think freely and serve no one but God and their conscience. We saw how they try to enslave the nation's heart, darken its mind, and finally take possession of its soul. This is not just persecution; it is an unfinished war against the nation's soul. It is an attempt to take not our land, but our truth and dignity... It is entirely possible to be in prison and remain free. It is entirely possible to be outside and be called a slave. Our task is not to let Georgia be turned into a prison and Georgians into slaves."*

3.1.4. Responses to Georgian Dream’s Manipulative Messages and Pro-European Statements

[Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili](#), July 27: “For hundreds of years, Georgia has suffered from the Russians, from the Russian state. Russia could not move us with our own blood, and oh, wonder, our government looks to Europe for a ‘party of war,’ looks to America for a ‘deep state.’ I don’t know the definition of ‘deep state,’ but I know the definition of Russophilia - anyone who says today that the party of war is Europe and not Russia, anyone who says today that ‘Europe will marry us off,’ is a Russian agent, whether willingly or unwillingly; I doubt anyone unwillingly, but they are supporters of our enemy. This is a formula the Georgian people know. It is in our blood, we know who our enemy is, and today they are blinding us. Christ opened our eyes, and these people are blinding us... I have never seen the Church so silent.”

[Archimandrite Ilia Toloraia](#), July 25: “How can you be an Ekvtime Takaishvili today and stand on Russia’s side — the same Russia that killed Kirion, Ilia Chavchavadze, Merab Kostava... Only from Europe do we hear a voice defending us.”

[Archimandrite Ilia Toloraia](#), July 20: “When the Russians came and occupied our country, where did [Georgia] take its treasures? To France — and there, in Europe, we hid them. At the same time, the Russians were stripping the covers off Gospels bound with precious metals, taking them away; they weren’t interested in the Gospels themselves, only the covers; they were damaging our frescoes; they took many precious icons and crosses from Georgia. And today, you cannot speak a word about such a Russia that fought against you and still fights you, yet you insult Europe, which has never done us harm. Where do they get this from? Looking back at history, Europe never fought against us; I don’t know of any territory Europe took from us... And now they say Europe is dangerous because ‘men will marry each other.’ What is this? Such things should not be said to a Georgian man, and how can a Georgian man say such things himself, I don’t understand... Such ingratitude is unacceptable, as are the lies and hypocrisy they spread. Yesterday they said one thing, today they say another: ‘Toward Europe with dignity’, then it turned out Europe’s dragging us into war. ’ Now it turns out Europe ‘marries men.’”

[Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili](#), July 20: “One philosopher says that ‘human’ and ‘caring’ are identical names. A person is where there is care... And today, foreigners care about our nation, our people; Europeans, Americans tell our government not to kill these people, why are you imprisoning these young, innocent people, why are you beating these young people in the streets? And do you know what the answer is? Amazing, ‘Why did you kill Giordano Bruno?’ Amazing. This is the kind of care our Prime Minister has for our nation. If those conditions are not met and if this government remains, Russia will drown us in our blood; if we are left without our friends, without those who have protected us from this executioner state for so long, they will do worse to us than Stalin did to Ukraine...”

3.2. Statements by Clergy of Various Denominations

Metropolitan Malkhaz Songhulashvili of the Evangelical-Baptist Church made a media [comment](#) on 26 July regarding the unlawful imprisonment of Mzia Amaghlobeli:

“The story of Mzia Amaghlobeli has, in a way, become a description of our reality, where we stand as a people, as a culture, as a society. Without exaggeration, it can be said that Ms. Mzia has become our conscience. The approach currently taken by the judicial system towards her is excessively disproportionate, cruel, and merciless. ... Mzia’s case should determine the direction we will take, the vector of our development: towards compassion and mercy, or cruelty.”

Bishop Rusudan Gotsiridze of the Evangelical-Baptist Church visited political prisoner, activist, and teacher Nino Datashvili in prison:

[Rusudan Gotsiridze](#), Bishop of the Evangelical-Baptist Church, 21 July: *“Friends, I have just come out of prison, where I visited Nino. She is in good spirits and doing well. Her back is troubling her, but she has already been sent a medical belt, a neurologist has seen her, and she is coping more or less normally! She asked me to tell everyone: don’t worry about me, focus on the protests. We are not victims, we are fighters. Our future depends on whether those on the outside will keep fighting! I have no right to scold anyone or give lectures, but I must ask everyone: do not stop the struggle. Go out to the rallies at least twice a week for at least an hour.”*

Pastor [Zaal Tkeshelashvili](#) of the Evangelical Church published a Facebook post on 3 July in support of 21-year-old political prisoner Giorgi Mindadze and his mother:

“An honourable mother of a son with a heart burning for justice. My support and solidarity to Ms. Nani. ‘Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.’ (Proverbs 14:34)”