



# Freedom of Religion or Belief, Equality, and Secularity

June 2025



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Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI)

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**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 **June 2025**

You can also access the 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](#)  
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**Post-election period (2024)**

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

**2025**

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

During the reporting period, *Georgian Dream (GD)* and its propagandists continued to manipulate pseudo-religious narratives, portraying the ruling party and its satellites as the political force defending Christianity and traditions. According to their rhetoric, Europe has been emptied of Christian values, and the European Union poses a threat to the national identity, values, Orthodoxy, traditions, and sovereignty.

***Direct attacks on the EU Delegation and the Ambassador to Georgia*** - According to the GD narratives, the EU Delegation and the Ambassador are allegedly executing the orders of the “Deep State” and interfering in Georgia’s internal politics.

***Antisemitism*** - Anti-Western messages have increasingly assumed an aggressive antisemitic character. Notably, since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Georgian Dream and its propaganda network have systematically promoted anti-Western narratives grounded in conspiracy theories. The rhetoric surrounding the so-called “Global War Party” and “Deep State” closely mirrors the Kremlin’s information warfare, portraying the West, the United States, and Ukraine as a unified hostile bloc conspiring against the Orthodox world. In the past two months, this narrative has escalated to include overtly antisemitic content: propagandists affiliated with the GD have 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 have 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.”

***Crackdown on Civil Society and Freedom of Expression*** - Against the backdrop of aggressive anti-Western propaganda, during the reporting period, *GD* enacted the “Foreign Agents Registration Act” (FARA) and [began using](#) punitive mechanisms acquired through authoritarian laws against non-governmental organizations. In parallel, GD leaders continued to demonize the civil sector, alleging that NGOs, through “external hidden” and “foreign opaque funding,” are fighting against sovereignty, the Orthodox Church, traditions, and values. Furthermore, the *Georgian Dream Parliament* [passed](#), in an expedited manner, new anti-democratic and unconstitutional amendments to the Law of Georgia on Freedom of Speech and Expression, which significantly deteriorate the standard of protection of freedom of expression. The main purpose of these restrictions is to suppress critical voices and, as *GD* satellites assert, to protect the Church and the Patriarchate from the so-called “neoliberal agents.”

***Dissenting voices among Orthodox clergy:*** A positive trend continued during the reporting period: some clergy of the Georgian Orthodox Church persistently voiced criticism of *Georgian Dream’s* anti-democratic, anti-European course and propagandistic rhetoric, and issued public statements and sermons in support of political prisoners.

# 1. Political Manipulation with Religion and Identity by Georgian Dream

During the reporting period, the *Georgian Dream Government* continued to manipulate pseudo-religious narratives, presenting itself as the sole political force defending Christianity and traditions. According to *Georgian Dream* statements, an “external force,” the so-called “Deep State,” through “foreign funding,” is fighting the Orthodox Church in Georgia, aiming to replace religion with “pseudo-liberal, so-called LGBT ideology.” Also, according to the rhetoric of *Georgian Dream* and its propagandists, European values are “devoid of Christian values, respect for family and parents, and faith,” and this anti-Christian “LGBT ideology” conflicts with Georgia’s national interests. Through such propaganda, *Georgian Dream* constructs a conspiratorial image of the enemy in the form of the European Union and partner countries and portrays Georgia in an isolated context.

## 1.2. Demonization of the European Union

According to *Georgian Dream* and its satellite parties, Europe has been emptied of Christian values, and the European Union poses a threat to Georgians’ national identity, values, traditions, and sovereignty. The EU Delegation and ambassadors are allegedly carrying out the orders of the “Deep State” and interfering in Georgia’s domestic politics. According to [Shalva Papuashvili](#), the *Georgian Dream Parliament Speaker*, “...We ordered European standards, European law, and what did we get in return? We got Euro-hatred, Euro-violence, Euro-propaganda.”

### [Shalva Papuashvili, Georgian Dream Parliament Speaker, 7 June:](#)

*“...When the ambassadors of Georgia’s partner countries exceed their mandates, our only way is to protect our country’s national interests. Georgians still remember well the so-called institution of the second secretary of the Communist Party from the Soviet era, who was exclusively appointed from Moscow and had the decisive word in Georgia’s internal affairs. From this painful experience, we recognize a ‘second secretary’ immediately upon seeing them.*”

### [Mamuka Mdinardze, Georgian Dream Parliamentary Majority Leader, Chair of the Georgian Dream faction, 29 June:](#)

*“For us, Europe and Europeanness mean respect for Christian values, family and parents, faith, a sense of homeland, and respect for one’s own country and people. It has become necessary to distribute this understanding in Europe because, unfortunately, today European leaders have entirely drained Europe of Europeanness.”*

**People’s Power, a satellite party of Georgian Dream, 23 June:**

*“...One way or another, today, in Georgia, the European Union is represented by a person entirely devoid of that Europeanness and European values he is supposed to embody, just like his patron, official Brussels, which is controlled by the ‘Deep State.’ The EU bureaucracy has long removed its mask and, on the orders of the ‘Deep State,’ is now openly fighting Georgia’s sovereignty...”*

**Davit Kartvelishvili, member of Georgian Dream’s satellite party People’s Power, 22 June:**

*“...In Europe, LGBT ideology is gradually counterbalancing traditional Christian values and replacing worship with LGBT parades and pride. Some invented theories of gender diversity are replacing the biblical story of humanity’s creation... Cultures are being mixed, which deals an even more severe blow to traditional Christianity, whose pulse is hardly even measurable on the European continent.”*

### **1.2.1. Euroscepticism**

On 3 June, the media disseminated the results of the [European Commission’s public opinion survey, the Standard Eurobarometer](#). The Eurobarometer survey was conducted in Georgia from 27 March to 15 April 2025, during which 1,011 respondents were interviewed. According to this survey, since the autumn of the previous year, trust in the European Union in Georgia decreased by 9%, from 58% to 49%.

On 4 June, online media, Civil.ge reported that in Georgia, the [Eurobarometer fieldwork had been conducted by GORBI](#), which performs pre-election surveys and exit polls for the pro-government propaganda television channel *Imedi*. Notably, according to the [survey](#) conducted in June by the Institute of Social Studies and Analysis (ISSA), 83% of the population supports Georgia’s accession to the European Union.

Members of *Georgian Dream* and its satellite party, People’s Power, used the decline in trust indicators to reinforce anti-EU messages. According to their rhetoric, “European values,” the demand to “open a second front,” “confront the Church,” and “legalize the propaganda of homosexuality” conflict with Georgian values.

**Dimitri Samkharadze, Georgian Dream MP, 5 June:**

*“Not only has the number of those wishing to join the European Union decreased, but the rating has catastrophically plummeted! Moreover, it irritates people, and can anyone be surprised? When the Georgian population is being bargained with, what is the object of the bargain? Whether to let you in or whether you will start a war, confront the Church, legalize homosexual propaganda, and become the slaves of those corrupt Euro-officials who stand in the ranks of Deep State bribed agents!*

*When your representative is Pawel Herczynski, who has already become more “Natsi” [Opposition party, United National Movement supporter] than the Natsis [United National Movement representative] themselves, more of a crook than the crooks of Lelo, and more of a scoundrel than Gakharia “Mazakvali” [Mazakvali, the Megrelian word, combines meanings of hypocrisy, cunning, and malice], you should not be surprised! You will never enslave us—accept it! Even those stronger than you wanted Georgia’s destruction but could not annihilate us, and we will not let you trample us either!”*

**Guram Macharashvili, member of Georgian Dream’s satellite party People’s Power, 4 June:**

*“...When you tell a Georgian to abandon family for LGBT propaganda, offer vassalage instead of partnership, and the choice of opening a second front instead of peace, naturally, a Georgian will reject such ‘European values.’ All the more so since we know very well in Georgia what European and Georgian values truly are. It is precisely all this that caused such distrust, not of Europe itself but of EU bureaucracy.”*

**1.2.2. Visa Liberalization**

On 11 June, Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk, speaking before the Polish Parliament about illegal migration, [also mentioned Georgia and said he would gather the necessary majority across the European Union to restrict or suspend visa-free travel](#) with various countries, including Georgia. Alongside the migration issue, in Georgia’s case, he emphasized the incompatibility with EU standards resulting from the *Georgian Dream Government’s* authoritarian rule.

*Georgian Dream* Prime Minister [Irakli Kobakhidze called Donald Tusk’s statement “blackmail” and “threats.”](#) According to [party leaders](#), Brussels is using visa-free travel “against the interests of the Georgian people.” The *Georgian Dream* satellite party People’s Power also used the potential suspension of visa liberalization to spread anti-Western messages. According to them, the alternative to visa liberalization is the opening of a “second front,” legalization of “men’s marriages,” and the humiliation of “traditions and the Church.”

**Guram Macharashvili, member of Georgian Dream’s satellite party People’s Power, 22 June:**

*“...When we hear direct threats from EU bureaucrats that they will suspend visa liberalization and they are even changing the mechanism of suspension so that, allegedly, it can be partially suspended, this means, practically speaking, that they are posing this question to the Georgian people: either you will have visa liberalization but open a second front, legalize men’s marriage, and insult traditions and the Church or you will lose visa liberalization. What reasonable person in Georgia would ever say they would trade peace for war just to keep visa liberalization?”*

## 2. Antisemitism by Georgian Dream and Its Propagandists

Since the launch of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, the *Georgian Dream Government* has systematically developed a propagandistic discourse about the "[Global War Party](#)" and "Global Ideology," allegedly fighting Georgia's sovereignty, religious identity, and traditions. In their rhetoric, the "Deep State" has become the main term designating a collective Western hostile force. In reality, *Georgian Dream* relies on [Kremlin narratives](#), in which "secret elites," the "U.S. Deep State," and "Nazi Ukraine" are conspiratorially waging war against Russia, its allies, and the Orthodox world. The Kremlin also [manipulatively uses](#) narratives emphasizing claims about President Volodymyr Zelensky's Jewish background to blame ethnic Jews for the war.

After the start of the Israel-Iran war, *Georgian Dream* propagandists began to specify **whom they mean by the "Deep State" and "Global War Party."** According to their statements, behind all wars and negative developments in the world stand the so-called "**oligarchic families,**" meaning **Jews.**

For example, on 12 June, [an audio recording was circulated on social media](#), which, according to a citizen, [Georgian Dream MP Dito Samkharadze](#) had sent to his friend fighting in Ukraine. In the alleged recording, threats and insults toward Georgian fighters could be heard, as well as antisemitic language directed at President Volodymyr Zelensky. Reportedly, Samkharadze used antisemitic, offensive, and demeaning terms (for example, "Uriya") and emphasized the president's presumed Jewish origin.

On 13 June, *Georgian Dream* propagandist **Goga Khaindrava**, appearing on [the pro-government propaganda channel POSTV](#) as a guest of Shalva Ramishvili, began his remarks about the Israel-Iran war with antisemitic statements. According to Khaindrava, the **"Deep State" and the "oligarchic families" had "even betrayed Israel, from where they originate."** He stated that these **"oligarchic [Jewish] families"** secretly control international politics ("the Deep State") and are dragging the world into war. Khaindrava's remarks repeat the classic antisemitic conspiracy theory and myth of Jewish domination of the world.

Khaindrava's statement that the "Deep State" consists of oligarchic families of Jewish origin was preceded by other statements from *Georgian Dream* propagandists on the same topic.

For example, on 3 April, *Georgian Dream* propagandist and ideologue **Zaza Shatirishvili** [wrote](#) extensively in an article explaining that the initiator of "bloody wars" is the "Global War Party," or "Deep State," which uses Europe and America as instruments. *"Behind them are about 15 oligarchic families who have been accumulating wealth for centuries and today control trillions of dollars in assets,"* he noted. According to him, these "families" profit specifically from waging wars. Shatirishvili did not specify who these "oligarchic families" were and said he would name them later. However, the propaganda and conspiracy theories he developed in his text that these forces control the world, politics, the economy, etc., align with antisemitic conspiracy theories.

Shatirishvili's propaganda was continued by **Davit Kartvelishvili, representative of Georgian Dream's satellite party People's Power**, in a 10 June article in which he stated that the **"Deep State" is controlled by "oligarchic families,"** whose aim is the abolition of the states and the establishment of corporate governance. According to Kartvelishvili, *"Today, 90% of European countries are controlled by Deep State agents,"* and their goal is the *"degeneration of European countries in political, ethnic, religious, moral, and economic terms."*

On 11 June, [Nana Kakabadze](#), representative of Georgian Dream's satellite party **United Neutral Georgia**, also spoke about the rule of globalists, *"who do not recognize democratic forms of existence, traditional values, or the classical understanding of liberalism,"* and for small countries like Georgia, *"the struggle to defend their faith, traditions, and values automatically results in confrontation with the globalists."*

On 15 June, the **pro-government TV channel Imedi**, in its program *Imedi's Week*, aired an extensive [report](#) about the "Deep State's plan." According to the anchor, the report was inspired by Shatirishvili's lengthy article and Davit Kartvelishvili's expert assessments. The main message of the report was that "influential families" are trying to eliminate the very concept of the state and legalize the corporate rule of the Deep State, with countries becoming puppets of these families, having lost their sovereignty and ability to make decisions.

This extensive propaganda report of conspiracy theories ended with footage and commentary about the Israel-Iran war:

*"Oligarchic families, obsessed with corporate success and the desire to acquire unprecedented monetary, energy, and other wealth, have brought humanity to the brink of yet another severe crisis. Half the world is engulfed in flames. Politicians no longer have the strength to make independent decisions to stop the real madness happening even near our region. These processes, which claim the lives of countless innocent people, are increasingly prompting experts to speak of how close nuclear catastrophe has become."*

On 17 June, propagandist [Zaza Shatirishvili](#) devoted another open letter to the rule of oligarchic families, stating:

*"The 'Deep State', that is, informal oligarchs are specific names and surnames, specific families and dynasties who consider themselves semi-gods, while the rest of us, in their view, are the so-called 'goyim,' creatures reduced to the level of animals. [...] As long as we maintain our national identity, as long as a woman is still a woman and a man is still a man, as long as we have faith and high spiritual aspirations, it will be very difficult even for such powerful families, oligarchic dictators to defeat us and enslave us in their service."*

In this letter, without naming specific individuals, Georgian Dream's propagandist again repeated anti-Western and antisemitic conspiracy theories and, by referring to "goyim," clarified **that Jews are precisely whom he means as the oligarchic families of the "Deep State."**

## 3. Persecution of Non-Governmental Organizations and New Repressive Legislative Changes

### 3.1. Persecution of Non-Governmental Organizations

During the reporting period, the *Georgian Dream Government* launched a new wave of repression against non-governmental organizations. On 1 June, the so-called [“Foreign Agents Registration Act” came into force](#). According to *Georgian Dream’s* explanation, the law is analogous to the U.S. FARA; in reality, it precisely targets the groups that the American legal practice largely exempts from FARA, such as independent media outlets, human rights organizations, watchdog groups, or simply individuals critical of authorities. The *Georgian Dream’s* interpretation of FARA aims to crack down on independent and critical civil society, including through criminal prosecution.

In June, the Anti-Corruption Bureau began [enforcing](#) Russian-style laws against civil society organizations. Eight NGOs<sup>1</sup> [received orders](#) from judges of the Administrative Cases Panel of Tbilisi City Court, by which the court granted the Anti-Corruption Bureau’s motions and demanded legal, technical, and financial information from private and public institutions in Georgia, as well as from the organizations addressed in the orders, including personal data of individuals under their protection—victims of torture, women survivors of violence, schoolchildren, students, teachers, pensioners, persons with disabilities, entrepreneurs, whistleblowers, journalists, election observers, and public servants dismissed unlawfully. The Anti-Corruption Bureau’s motions and the court orders contradict both the Constitution of Georgia and the orders cited in the court’s own decisions, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. Nevertheless, the Tbilisi Court of Appeal [upheld](#) the first-instance court orders.

Alongside this illegal interference in and control over the internal autonomy of civil society organizations, *Georgian Dream* continued discrediting the NGO sector, again manipulatively invoking the name of the Orthodox Church. Its main message is that “external hidden” and “foreign opaque funding” are used through NGOs in Georgia to attack sovereignty, the Georgian Orthodox Church, traditions, and values.

[Irakli Kobakhidze](#), *Georgian Dream Prime Minister*, [Annual Address](#) to Parliament, 27 June:

*“...I want to touch on one important issue. Against the background of constant external pressure, some decided that the state had become weakened and decided*

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<sup>1</sup> “Transparency International Georgia,” “Sapari,” “Civil Society Foundation,” “Economic Policy Research Center,” “Academy of the Future of Georgia,” “Media Development Foundation,” “Social Justice Center,” and “International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy.”

to use violence against it. Among other things, this was manifested in the events of November and December. For some reason, many actors felt emboldened towards our state. We were seeing attempts to weaken state institutions from the outside, to do all this with hidden funding from abroad. **With external hidden funding, they were trying to damage the reputation of our Church**; they were funding LGBT propaganda, political rallies, and so on. All of this was happening without the knowledge of our country's population. For some reason, they decided that they would get away with it and that it would all be possible.”

**Irakli Kobakhidze, Georgian Dream Prime Minister, 30 June:**

“...They [NGOs] have a lot to hide. In reality, exactly the same standard is being applied to NGOs as has been applied to political parties all these years. Why was nobody interested then in personal information or anything else? In fact, the Anti-Corruption Bureau is requesting exactly the same information it has always requested from political parties. All of this is, of course, an excuse sucked out of thin air. In reality, NGOs and their patrons have a lot to hide, including the fact that, **with foreign opaque funding, they were encouraging the spread of drug addiction in our country, organizing revolutions, fighting against the Church, against state institutions**, and so on. That is what they have to hide, which is why they are avoiding disclosing the relevant funding information.”

**Irakli Zarkua, Georgian Dream MP, 11 June:**

“Naturally, criticism will not stop, because it is precisely these organizations and these people who were encouraging the radicals towards violence. We saw how even certain USAID programs were funding them. Once again, thanks to the Trump administration for exposing even more of what we were saying. Now this, let's say, banner-waving of funding these **radicals has been further strengthened, including from EU funds**. Thank God we adopted the Grants Law in time, which will make everything even more open and transparent. They cannot forgive the Georgian authorities for the fact that we are not allowing them to stage a Maidan here, to turn our youth upside down, and to set our country on fire. We will do everything to maintain peace and **will not let anyone undermine our faith, our religion, our national values**, or install their puppets in power...”

### **3.2. Restriction of Freedom of Speech and Expression**

During the reporting period, the *Georgian Dream Parliament* adopted, under expedited procedure, new anti-democratic and unconstitutional [amendments](#). According to the changes made to the [Law of Georgia on Freedom of Speech and Expression](#), the standard of protection of freedom of expression has significantly deteriorated. Specifically:

- In defamation cases, the burden of proof shifts from the plaintiff to the defendant.
- Whereas the law previously applied to “insult face-to-face,” after these amendments, it may also cover “insult in public space.”
- Failure to disclose a confidential source, professional secret, or information source may become grounds for a decision against the defendant.
- Any doubt that cannot be substantiated under the procedures prescribed by law must be resolved against freedom of expression.
- In addition to retraction or correction of statements deemed defamatory by the court, damages, both material and non-material, may be awarded.
- Moreover, the amendments will have a retroactive effect for 100 days, which violates the principle of legal certainty.

[The amendments to the law](#) are a continuation of the repressions initiated by *Georgian Dream*, which crudely restrict freedom of expression, the media, and civil space.

The *Georgian Dream* satellite organization, *Society Georgian (Sazogadoeba Kartuli)*, had repeatedly demanded stricter legal liability for defamation and hate speech. According to them, the purpose of the stricter rules is to protect the Church and the Patriarchate from the “neoliberal agents.”

**[Society Georgian, 28 June:](#)**

*“With the amendments to the Law on Freedom of Speech and Expression... These legal principles, known as the [Giga] Bokeria-[Levan] Ramishvili Law, to this day effectively served the interests of external forces whose objective is declared: to divide and radicalize Georgian society, to insult authorities, to discredit history and national symbols, everything that unites us. **That is precisely why the neoliberal agents have attacked and are attacking the Church and the Patriarch with special ferocity**, spreading rumors about historical figures, heroes, beloved kings, and public figures.”*

## 4. Confrontation Between Orthodox Bishop and Senior “Georgian Dream” Official

### The Case of Giorgi Jamdeliani

During the reporting period, Bishop Giorgi Jamdeliani of Marneuli and Hujabi eparchy [claimed](#) during his [Sunday sermon](#) on June 8 that an incumbent government official had plotted to kill him. According to the bishop, a high-ranking official of the State Security Service planned this through a nun who had been turned into an agent. Giorgi Jamdeliani did not name any specific individuals but noted that “this man is a high-ranking official and specifically a representative of the security agency.”

On the same day, the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia [issued a statement](#) announcing that, based on Giorgi Jamdeliani’s claim about the planning of his murder, it had launched an investigation under Articles 18-108 of the Criminal Code (preparation for premeditated murder).

On June 9, Bishop Giorgi Jamdeliani responded to the Prosecutor’s statement, declaring that he did not intend to cooperate with the Prosecutor’s Office or the police, which, he said, he was entitled to do under church canonical rules.

On June 10, the Facebook page of the Marneuli and Hujabi Eparchy published a ruling by the diocesan ecclesiastical court dated June 6. According to the ruling, the accused individual, G.Sh., was found guilty of “the gravest sin committed against the Church, attempted murder (planning and attempted execution).” As punishment, the individual was prohibited from receiving Holy Communion until “sincere repentance,” and in the event of repentance, was to remain excommunicated for twenty years.

On June 22, the Patriarchate of Georgia, following the conclusion of an extended Synodal Commission, suspended the ruling against G.Sh. pending clarification of other details related to the case.

According to media reports, the person referred to in the ruling as G.Sh. is believed to be Giorgi Shinjikashvili, the former First Deputy State Commissioner of Kvemo Kartli, who is affiliated with *Georgian Dream*.

On June 28, TV company Formula aired a special report in its “Saturday Formula” program, showing footage recorded in the bishop’s chamber. The segment shows the confrontation between the “turned” nun and the “high-ranking official” (former governor Giorgi Shinjikashvili), while Giorgi Jamdeliani listens to their mutual accusations to clarify the truth about the assassination attempt. The recording also shows and audibly captures the sound of a firearm being cocked into combat readiness.

It is noteworthy that the State Security Service has repeatedly been accused of interfering in religious activities. Of particular concern [is the release and publication in 2021 of over 50,000 files allegedly documenting illegal surveillance and eavesdropping by the State Security Service](#), indicating that the Georgian Dream government had, for years, purportedly been illegally monitoring representatives of the Georgian Orthodox Church and other religious organizations. However, no criminal prosecution has been initiated against any specific individuals, and no one has been held accountable for these offenses.

The case of Giorgi Jamdeliani is problematic in many respects regarding the relationship between the State and religious institutions. On the one hand, it reveals a pattern of influential Orthodox clergy exercising parallel “justice,” violating the fundamental principles of secularity. On the other hand, it highlights possible state interference in the autonomy of the religious organization, gross violations of the rights of clergy, including the nun, and other serious alleged crimes.

## 5. Statements by Orthodox Clergy on Political Repressions and Intolerance

The positive trend persisted during the reporting period: Certain Orthodox clergy continued to publicly criticize the anti-democratic, anti-European course of Georgian Dream and its propaganda narratives.

### Statements on Political Repressions and Prisoners

#### Dorothe Kurashvili, Archimandrite, 22 June:

*“Look at what they called the prisoners, prisoners of conscience. This means that people who could not abandon their conscience and reason have been imprisoned. Our nation sees the imprisoned as victors. Today, they are the individuals who constitute the nation. A nation is built on nationality, not merely ethnicity. May God help our nation, all those who do not submit to slavery, who do not fear oppressors, who do not surrender their minds, who do not give up thinking, and who go to prison—and in this, they triumph... There can be no peace where justice does not prevail. Peace is only within justice. When law enforcement officers are just, there is peace. When the whole nation sees that law enforcement is unjust, this is no peace, neither for the nation nor for them; they cannot be at ease. May God grant that true, just peace be established among us.”*

#### Ilija Jinjolava, Archimandrite, 19 June:

*“Today, when injustice looks like an open wound and the quest for justice flows through our veins like blood, we are witnessing events that we are both civically and spiritually obliged to speak about. For a woman’s slap—4 to 7 years of imprisonment; for waving a stick—a 21-year-old is sentenced to 4 years and 6 months in prison; for peacefully expressing protest in the street—a 5,000 lari administrative fine; for calling a politician an*

*'enslaved lackey' on Facebook—a 4,000 lari fine. Direct persecution against critical media. Direct terror against the protesting youth. And dozens of political prisoners. Grants and good deeds received from friendly countries are declared a betrayal and a foreign agency. How many more dozens of such injustices could be listed and... 'When will we finally awaken?!' Today, each of us is like a candle standing in the wind; if we do not shield each other, godless violence will extinguish us. ...If today we accept this injustice with our silence, tomorrow our children will feel the same humiliation, will follow the same path toward imprisonment. Our history is written in the search for justice, while every silence is a red line across the future, like blood. Let us lift our spirits, strengthen our minds, and never surrender to the silencing of conscience.'*

**Tamaz Lomidze, Priest, 12 June:**

*"When I have expressed my opinion on critical issues, the words I've been called 'Slave' is mild compared to them. But how can any serious person take offense at this? How can it cross your mind to punish someone for it, to sue or take revenge? And how do officials find the time to read these comments and react? You, who hold power, you have all the advantages. They have no power and their dissatisfaction, even their anger (and the government often sins), to express it this way is their right, and a wise government should not take that away. If you shut off this 'valve' for releasing anger, know that sooner or later, an explosion is inevitable. So, whether you're a minister, MP, or any official, stop chasing after comments, do your job, and let people at least release their anger in words."*

**Statements Regarding Political Prisoner Mate Devidze's Sentence**

On 12 June, Tbilisi City Court Judge [Nino Galustashvili sentenced Mate Devidze to 4 years and 6 months of imprisonment](#), convicting him for attacking police officers during the dispersal of a protest on 19 November (striking with a stick). Mate Devidze responded to the sentence by saying: "Searching for light in endless darkness."

**Dorothe Kurashvili, Archimandrite, 12 June:**

*"Even if you silence these young people, the stones themselves will begin to cry out against your injustice."*

**Leon Gelovani, Priest, 13 June:**

*"I have seen this too under the sun: in the place of justice—wickedness; in the place of righteousness—iniquity." (Ecclesiastes 3:16)*

*During every liturgy, we hear the priest or deacon say:*

*'For the deliverance of captives and their lives, let us pray to the Lord.' The Church has, since ancient times, prayed for the liberation of captives, clearly not so that guilty prisoners would escape accountability, but precisely for those who are unjustly held in prison. "Every prisoner unjustly detained will inevitably leave prison. The God of true peace is and will be alongside those brave fighters for this freedom. But 'Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by injustice!' (Jeremiah 22)."*

**Ilia Jinjolava, Archimandrite, 12 June:**

*“In recent days, the weight of injustice has pressed on my heart like a stone. Even words cannot fully express this spiritual pain that chokes me like a lump in my throat. All around is the unrestrained celebration of oppression and humiliation—the delight in inflicting pain, the indulgence in others’ misfortunes... And yet, no matter how dark this temporary stretch of history may be, evil cannot have the final word. Evil is a lie wrapped in the illusion of duration. Behind every silenced voice, behind every tear, stands eternal truth. And those who today feel powerless may tomorrow be strengthened by God’s consolation.”*

**Zenon Iarajuli, Archbishop of Dmanisi and Agharak-Tashir, Great Britain, and Ireland, Facebook post, 13 June:**

*“How can one not be shaken to the core by the pain visible in these eyes, bishops, bishops? Whoever oppresses them, there is no point trying to talk to them anymore.”*

**Statements Regarding the Imprisonment of Mzia Amaghlobeli**

The case of imprisoned journalist Mzia Amaghlobeli is a manifestation of [Georgian Dream’s political justice and restrictions on media freedom](#). She was arrested on 12 January on criminal charges.

**Dorothe Kurashvili, Archimandrite, 19 June:**

*“A journalist who slapped a policeman is sitting in prison and the policemen who beat journalists and the public were awarded the Order of St. George. Look closely at why their justice is not Christian: St. George was not a torturer, he was a martyr. How can you award the Order of St. George to someone who tortures people? Justice must be based on something. What is our justice based on? Pharaoh’s justice? Just because the Pharaoh wants it so? This is not state governance to do whatever the Pharaoh wants. You must do what the people need.”*

**Priest Tamaz Lomidze, 23 June:**

*“Why should Mzia Amaghlobeli be in prison, what threat does a single woman journalist pose to society? ‘If you turn the country into Qvarqvare’s prison, that country cannot develop. It becomes everyone’s misfortune!’”*

**Statements on the Judiciary**

During the reporting period, the court hearings of some prisoners of conscience moved into the final stage, awaiting verdicts. Because of judges’ unlawful decisions, general bias, and political justice, judges and their actions became a focus of public attention.

**Priest Tevdore Basilaia, 16 June:**

*“Unjust judges, executors of the will of unjust patrons! Do not forget the film Repentance, how the injustice of the ruler came back to him in the form of his own grandchild. Fear God and fear your future! To all who shed tears because of oppression, unjust persecution, and punishment, know that these tears reach God. For the Lord created*

*humanity for joy and freedom, and you are destroying those values most precious to every Georgian—God, homeland, and humanity. New people are building Georgia. This injustice will not pass without consequences in your future life. Whoever sows grace will reap grace; whoever sows sin will reap sin—St. Paul the Apostle. Repent while there is still time, or it will be too late! With your unjust acts, you have already filled the pages of history. Freedom is the nation’s conscience, truth, and light. Georgia will endure; Georgia is immortal.”*

**Priest Maksime Chkheidze, 7 June:**

- “1. Woe to those who pronounce unjust verdicts and impose unlawful sentences.*
  - 2. Who deny justice to the poor, condemn the oppressed of my people, seize widows as plunder, and rob orphans!*
  - 3. What will you do on the day of reckoning and ruin, which comes from afar? To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your wealth?*
  - 4. You will cower among the captives, you will fall among the slain. Yet his anger is not turned away, and his hand is still upraised...*
- /Isaiah 10:1–4/*

**Ilia Jinjolava, Archimandrite, 21 June:**

*“How can these so-called judges be such slaves? No justice at all, no tolerance, no compassion. Completely enslaved to a deformed system! They have lost all the semblance of humanity! This is not just their personal sorrow, it is the pain of the nation. Every Christian has the duty not to bow their head before such ‘Pilates.’”*