

# FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF, EQUALITY, AND SECULARITY

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September 2025



# **Freedom of Religion or Belief, Equality, and Secularity**

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Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI)

[www.tdi.ge/en](http://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 **September 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](#)  
[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, July, August](#)

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## Main Trends

During the reporting period, the Georgian Dream (GD) government continued its aggressive anti-European campaign, **portraying the European Union as Georgia's adversary**, a foreign power allegedly fighting against the state's sovereignty, the Georgian Orthodox Church, and national traditions.

Repressions and discreditation campaigns against Georgian civil society organizations also continued. In addition, pro-government and propagandist media, as well as the Georgian Patriarchate, **targeted Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili, an Orthodox cleric and supporter of the pro-European movement.**

**A positive trend was also sustained** during the reporting period: a small number of Orthodox and other denominational clerics continued to voice critical positions against the GD's anti-democratic and anti-European course and propaganda rhetoric, and to express support for political prisoners through public statements and sermons.

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

Throughout the reporting period, the Georgian Dream (GD) government and its affiliated actors carried out an aggressive anti-Western campaign, presenting the European Union and the broader West as hostile forces threatening Georgia's sovereignty, religious identity, and national values.

The propaganda narrative revolves around several recurring themes: according to the GD and its satellites, the EU, allegedly composed of bureaucrats and agents, acts not in the interest of its own peoples but under the influence of external powers; EU countries are said to be losing their religious and ethnic identity, encouraging extremism; Georgian citizens are presented as facing a false dilemma — between joining the EU or preserving national sovereignty and traditions; European integration is equated with “LGBT propaganda” and “non-transparent funding.” These messages aim to deepen public distrust toward the EU and discredit Georgia's European integration prospects.

The GD government consistently attacks the European Union and representatives of its member states in Georgia. On 24 September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [summoned](#) the German Ambassador, Peter Fischer, and on 25 September, the [British Ambassador, Gareth Ward](#). According to the [GD Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze](#), “ambassadors cannot act with a Soviet-style approach; we are witnessing not only direct interference in politics but also the encouragement of radicalism and polarization, a blatant violation of the Vienna Convention.”



## The EU Portrayed as Opposing the Orthodox Church and National Traditions

In public speeches, the GD party depicts the European Union as an entity hostile to the Orthodox Church and Christianity in general, accusing it of imposing liberal values and the concept of diversity on Georgians, allegedly leading to the loss of national identity.

### Examples:

[Irakli Kobakhidze](#), GD Prime Minister, 12 September: **“They are losing their identity — both religious and ethnic.** In Germany, Christians now make up less than 50 percent; religious identity is disappearing. [...] This happens because the **European bureaucracy essentially consists of agents acting under external influence rather than in the interests of their own people.”**

[Davit Kartvelishvili](#), member of the GD satellite party *People’s Power*, 8 September: “The Soviet Union was founded on the idea of creating a ‘new historical unity’ — the Soviet people. National, cultural, and religious differences were considered secondary and absorbed into a single socialist identity. **The European Union or the ‘Euro-Soviet Union’ followed the same path, only under a different flag, in the name of liberal values:** ‘unity in diversity,’ which in reality has turned into forced homogenization. Brussels tries to impose common regulations, laws, and ‘EU values’ on all member states, which often leads to the **loss of national identity**. Any integration that ignores deep cultural, religious, and historical distinctions inevitably leads to an identity crisis.”

[Dimitri Samkharadze](#), GD Regional Secretary, 24 September: “First, let them admit us into the EU with our own culture. Let them stop demanding the repeal of laws that protect our children from **homosexual propaganda and moral degradation, and let them cease hostility toward the Georgian Church**, then we might believe they wish us peace.”

[Vato Shakarishvili](#), founder of the GD satellite movement, *United Neutral Georgia*, 26 September: **“They are fighting against faith, attacking the Church, the Patriarch, and the saints.** They think that since they don’t believe in God, He does not exist. [...] But they must realize that this small group seeking to declare ‘godlessness’ as a state religion will never prevail.”

It is noteworthy that the German Ambassador to Georgia, Peter Fischer, publicly responded to the GD’s ongoing propagandist and manipulative discourse that frames the EU as an enemy of religion, culture, and tradition. In a [video](#) for the Ilia State University Student Movement, Fischer emphasized that Europe celebrates religious diversity and values freedom of religion.

[Peter Fischer](#), 2 September: “You know our motto, ‘United in Diversity.’ We celebrate diversity, and sometimes young Georgians ask me: Should we give up our traditions, religion, and national pride? No, not at all. Every country has its own traditions and religion. You know, we have religion in the EU, after all, the Pope lives right at the heart of Europe, and we have many Christians, Catholics, Protestants, and others. We value religious freedom; let us continue this path together.”

## The EU as a Source of “LGBT Propaganda” and “Moral Corruption”

The GD party and its satellites continue using propagandist reductionism, deliberately reducing the EU's conditions for membership, which include human rights protection, fair legislation and judiciary, anti-corruption measures, and a free political environment free from persecution, to a single issue: the promotion of LGBT rights.

### Example:

[Tengiz Sharmanashvili](#), GD Member of Parliament, 29 September: “Euro-bureaucrats sent us a list of conditions, saying that if we meet them, they will continue close cooperation with us. I will mention only two: 1) Repeal the legislation protecting family values and amend the Parliament's human rights framework to strengthen LGBT rights further; 2) Repeal the transparency law and stop monitoring foreign funds, which are proven to finance destabilization in Georgia, actions against the Church, and the promotion of unnatural relationships. The question is simple — should we agree?”

## 2. “Deep State” and the Global Conspiracy Narrative

During the reporting period, as in previous months, the GD party and its affiliated propagandists systematically promoted the conspiratorial narrative of the “Deep State” and the “Global War Party.” This narrative is rooted in an anti-liberal and anti-democratic paradigm widely adopted in Russian propaganda.

According to this [narrative](#), the West is portrayed as a unified entity of “oligarchic families” or a “global ideology,” whose aim is to drag Georgia into war and deprive it of its national identity, while rejecting “family, faith, the Church, the nation, and traditional values.” Against this backdrop, the GD presents itself as the sole defender of faith, tradition, and national identity. The goal of this narrative is to deepen mistrust toward Western institutions, intensify societal polarization, and discredit domestic opponents of the government as “agents of foreign powers.”

According to the GD Prime Minister [Irakli Kobakhidze](#), relations between Georgia and the United States depend on “the outcome of the battle between the Deep State and the Trump administration.”

[Shalva Papuashvili](#), GD Speaker of Parliament, 4 September: “We know what the facts are. The facts are what we've been talking about: the Deep State, its harmful influence, the use of American taxpayers' money here for revolutions, for bringing alien ideologies into society, for fighting against the Church. The Trump administration itself has practically confirmed all of this.”

[Kakha Kaladze](#), GD Secretary General and Mayor of Tbilisi, 6 September: “We know who fights against national consciousness, independence, freedom, and sovereignty, the domestic agent network acting under foreign instructions. [...] They go against faith, the Patriarch, our culture, and traditions. This is no coincidence; everything is managed and financed from outside. There are different types of organizations ready to do anything.”

[Society Georgian](#), 6 September: “The Communist International has been replaced by totalitarian neoliberalism, for which any solid institution or worldview that limits its global domination agenda is unacceptable. Therefore, the global Deep State has made allies of all those ‘woke’ ideological doctrines, movements, and groups of people who reject family, faith, the Church, the nation, and traditional values.”

[Propagandist Zaza Shatirishvili](#), one of the most active promoters of conspiracy theories related to the “Deep State,” frequently publishes essays on the topic. In his article published on [25 September](#), he labeled the European Union and Western ambassadors in Georgia as “agents of the Deep State” and accused them of “anti-Georgian actions.”

[Zaza Shatirishvili](#), 25 September: “The mentioned **ambassadors and embassies, the small branches of the Deep State are deliberately encouraging violence, radicalism, and division**; they incite hostility within society and simultaneously strengthen radical political groups on the ground, seeking to destabilize the country and place their agent network in power, which is currently the main objective of the Deep State in Georgia.”

### 3. Discrediting Protest Demonstrations in Religious and Ideological Contexts

A central element of the GD’s propaganda has been the discreditation of the self-organized, peaceful, and continuous demonstrations that began on 28 November 2024, portraying participants as forces hostile to the Church and Christian values. To achieve this, the authorities and their propagandists have manipulated pseudo-religious arguments against civil activists and protesters.

On the evening of 8 September 2025, on Melikishvili Avenue, near Kakha Kaladze’s election headquarters, supporters of the GD party [attacked and physically assaulted participants of a protest](#) march coming from the Public Broadcaster. Some GD supporters had been mobilized inside the headquarters and insulted citizens from behind a police cordon, while others arrived by car and violently assaulted demonstrators with metal rods. [Video recordings](#) show that the attack was premeditated, targeted, and violent. GD supporters specifically assaulted [women](#) and [journalists](#).

On 10 September, the [Ministry of Internal Affairs](#) arrested two individuals, Z.M. and I.B., under Article 126 of the Criminal Code (violence). However, two days later, both were released from the temporary detention facility without formal charges.

High-ranking GD officials also responded to the attack on protesters with [hate speech](#).

Georgian Dream members blamed the protesters while downplaying the assault. According to GD Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, those gathered near the headquarters were *“people who have erased everything, they have **no nationality, no religion, no gender, nothing.**”*



Tbilisi Mayor Kakha Kaladze, [speaking](#) to journalists, accused demonstrators of a “targeted provocation” aimed at “artificially stirring up tensions.” When pressed about the assault on women, Kaladze dismissed the question, “*Where do you see women?.. There are some other species; there is no woman there.*” He [stated](#) that the protesters represented “*an aggressive, violent group financed from abroad,*” who “**do not recognize their own gender, nationality, religion, or homeland.**”

For propaganda purposes, the GD and its satellites employ various manipulative techniques. For instance, they have redefined the concept of “fascism” to blur value distinctions and associate it with ideologies they reject, particularly liberalism. By referring to opponents as “**liberal fascists,**” they seek to discredit the resistance movement and frame it as a value-based conflict. The same narrative was used on 8 September, after the attack on protesters on Melikishvili Avenue, to justify the violence and delegitimize participants of the protest march.

[Irakli Kirtzkhalia](#), GD parliamentary majority leader, 10 September: “What we witnessed was the complete picture of **liberal fascism**, something one could see live, in the 21st century, in the streets, and not only in the streets but also on social media.”

[Guram Macharashvili](#), member of the GD satellite party *People’s Power* and MP, 10 September: “What we are seeing is exactly what we’ve been talking about for years — liberal fascism and Bolshevik/fascist elements visibly manifesting in these so-called protests.”

[Archil Gorduladze](#), GD Member of Parliament, 10 September: “What we saw yesterday on Melikishvili Avenue was fascism directed from abroad... These are foreign-controlled orcs who have lost the faces of both men and women.”

The “liberal fascism” narrative was also used by GD leaders and affiliated figures when commenting on the [killing of Charlie Kirk](#), a U.S. conservative activist and supporter of former President Trump. GD leaders blamed his death on “**liberal fascism,**” claiming that this was the very ideology they were fighting against in Georgia. For example, GD Speaker of Parliament Shalva Papuashvili [stated](#) that “***just like Bolshevism a century ago, its ideological successor, liberal fascism, is a foreign-imposed ideology and practice,***” and that “*liberal fascism has managed to create similar groups in Georgia, feeding an atmosphere of hatred and hostility daily.*”

Other GD leaders and propagandists, including [Nino Tsilosani](#), [Tornike Chishvili](#), [Kakha Kaladze](#), [Mikheil Kavelashvili](#), and [Bacho Odisharia](#), made statements of similar content on this topic.

## 4. Propagandist Campaign Against an Orthodox Cleric

In August 2025, the propagandist television channels affiliated with the GD party, *Imedi TV* and *POSTV*, [launched](#) a campaign against Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili, which continued and intensified during the reporting period.

Archimandrite Dorote Kurashvili is the priest of the Lower Bethlehem Church of the Nativity of the Savior in Tbilisi. He is distinguished by his statements in support of the pro-European movement and political prisoners. At the same time, from a Christian perspective, he often criticizes the GD's unconstitutional and anti-Western discourse and policies.

On 27 September, the TV channel *TV Pirveli* aired a [report](#) on its program *Saturday Broadcast*, stating that Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili had been summoned to the Patriarchate of Georgia to provide explanations regarding his statements and sermons in support of protest movements and prisoners of conscience.

According to an audio recording released by *TV Pirveli* (reportedly recorded on 16 September inside the Patriarchate's building in Tbilisi), the head of the Patriarchate's Public Relations Department, Andria Jaghmaidze, [accused](#) the Archimandrite of "morally degrading" other representatives of the Patriarchate and "insulting" them.

Following the broadcast, Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili confirmed that he had indeed been summoned to the Patriarchate and [stated](#) that, despite the threats, he would not change his views or remain silent.

During the reporting period, GD propagandist [Zaal Anjaparidze](#) referred to Dorothe Kurashvili as "politically biased" and urged the Patriarchate to respond strictly to his statements.

## 5. Persecution of Georgian Civil Society Organizations

During the reporting period, the GD government, acting through the Anti-Corruption Bureau, initiated [a new phase in the repressive enforcement of restrictive laws against civil society](#).

After 8 September 2025, [dozens of civil society organizations](#) received letters announcing the launch of monitoring procedures based on the "Law on Grants," which was [amended](#) in April to bar foreign donors from funding local groups without government approval. The Bureau demanded extensive information from organizations concerning their activities after 16 April 2025 and also sought to enforce these repressive laws through the courts.

The recipient organizations submitted written explanations, stating that the Bureau was violating the "Law on Grants" and noting that they had neither signed new grant agreements nor amended existing ones since the adoption of the repressive amendments. Therefore, the initiation of the monitoring process against them was unlawful.

Nevertheless, the court fully upheld the Bureau's motions and ordered the organizations to provide extensive information related to their activities. It is noteworthy that the court essentially copied the Bureau's reasoning verbatim into its orders, without verifying either the factual or legal grounds, thereby refusing to exercise judicial oversight as required by law.

It is also notable that the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia is investigating [seven non-governmental organizations](#) under a criminal case on "sabotage." As a result, the accounts of these organizations have been frozen.

Parallel to these punitive actions, reminiscent of repressive measures employed by the Russian authorities against civil society, the GD continues its discreditation campaign against the NGO sector, once again manipulating the name of the Orthodox Church for political purposes.

In the GD's narrative, civil society organizations are depicted as "foreign-funded agents" serving "Euro-bureaucrats" and the "Deep State." According to this propaganda, their funding allegedly aims not only to **organize revolutions** but also to **"attack the Church," spread "perverse propaganda," and "alienate young people from faith."**

#### **Examples:**

[Irakli Kobakhidze](#), GD Prime Minister, 12 September: "Not only revolutions, but also attacks against the Church, attempts to undermine state institutions, dissemination of lies and all sorts of falsehoods, and the spread of perverse propaganda, for all of this, certain so-called media outlets, functioning under the guise of NGOs, were funded."

[Vato Shakarishvili](#), founder of the GD satellite movement, *United Neutral Georgia*, 10 September: "The offspring of Soros and Euro-American money — the degenerated Georgian — for years, every cent of foreign money entering Georgia was used for a long-term project to create a 'new Georgian.' This was one of the main goals of foreign powers. Soros and other Euro-American foundations financed the complete degradation of the education system and the introduction of liberal indoctrination. They have also alienated the youth from the Church. They did not teach that, alongside rights, there are obligations in society; instead, they told them that if they want freedom, they must liberate themselves from morality, faith, and conscience."

## 6. Anti-Western and Antisemitic Statements by Orthodox Clergy

During the reporting period, several Orthodox clerics continued using sermons and public appearances to promote rhetoric supportive of the GD government while attacking civil society, human rights organizations, and the European Union.

For instance, Metropolitan Stephane Kalaijishvili of the Chkondidi, Tsageri, and Lentekhi Diocese continued spreading anti-Western propaganda and disinformation in his sermons on [7](#) and [28](#) September, similar to his earlier statements.

### Propaganda and Defamation Against Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili

Metropolitan **Stephane Kalaijishvili** also continued supporting the smear campaign initiated by pro-government media outlets against Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili, referring to him as a “heretic.”

**Sermon of 7 September:** “...Whether he goes to Europe or to the moon, the main issue is not whom he supports, but whether he distorts the teachings of the Lord. Heresy is exactly that. This man leads so many people astray with his false sermons, turning children against their parents — all in the name of Christ.”

In response to Metropolitan Stephane Kalaijishvili’s ongoing defamation, **Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili** wrote on [Facebook](#): “A bishop has no right to publicly condemn or expose a priest who serves under another bishop, let alone to question his priesthood. Apparently, many hierarchs in the Georgian Church are unaware of this rule and do not respect it. Such behavior constitutes not only a violation of ecclesiastical teaching but also of canon law — a transgression that, as a rule, is punished severely.”

### Pre-Election Support for the GD Party

**Bishop Spiridon Abuladze of the Skhalta Diocese** delivered anti-Western and pro-GD sermons on [14](#) and [27](#) September. Echoing the GD’s propaganda, Bishop Spiridon expressed gratitude to the GD government and oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili for “*maintaining peace for 13 years*” and for “*standing guard over family purity, national identity, language, homeland, and faith.*” He also called on the public to support the GD party in the local municipal elections scheduled for 4 October.

### Anti-Western and Anti-Ukrainian Statements

Bishop Spiridon repeated disinformation narratives claiming that joining the European Union requires “**legalizing same-sex marriage,**” that **Europe is “preparing for war with Russia,”** and that “**Ukraine no longer exists.**”

“Now the whole of Europe is intensively preparing for war against Russia — they don’t even hide it. Shall we blindly close our eyes? They are arming themselves to the teeth, openly declaring it. Everyone is preparing and longing for a second front to open... Can’t you see

what they did to Ukraine? Where is Ukraine now? It no longer exists. [...] Is this what you want for Georgia?”

### Antisemitic Statements<sup>1</sup>

On 16 September, a video excerpt from one of Bishop Spiridon Abuladze’s sermons was published on the [Facebook page Archbishop Spiridon of Skhalta](#), containing overt antisemitic content. In it, the bishop repeated long-standing religious stereotypes portraying Jews as collectively responsible for the crucifixion of Christ and as persecutors of Christians, one of the most enduring foundations of institutional antisemitism throughout history: *“The Jews were traitors; they crucified Christ, betrayed God, and were severely punished for it...”*

## 7. Statements by Clergy on Political Repressions and Intolerance

The positive trend continued during the reporting period: a small number of Orthodox clergy maintained a critical stance toward the GD government’s anti-democratic and anti-European course and its propaganda narratives.

### 7.1. Statements on the GD’s Propaganda Policy, Repressions, and Political Prisoners

Since 28 November 2024, pro-European demonstrations have continued in Tbilisi and other cities, demanding new parliamentary elections and the release of those detained during the rallies. Since that period, the GD parliament has adopted a number of repressive, anti-democratic, and unconstitutional [laws](#), which have begun to be enforced by law enforcement agencies and the courts.

[As a result](#), hundreds of individuals have been held administratively liable for various alleged “offenses,” while more than 70 people have been arrested under criminal charges.

In this context, a small group of clergy has publicly opposed Georgian Dream’s propaganda, calling on the public to stand on the side of truth. Their main messages include:

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed documentation of past years’ incidents of church-based antisemitism, see. the TDI report: <https://tdi.ge/en/statement/antisemitism-church-summary-and-assessment-events>.



## Call for Justice, Truth, and Active Citizenship

Clerics spoke out against public passivity and silence in the face of injustice, emphasizing that silence equates to complicity in evil. They asserted that faith and civic responsibility are inseparable, and true Christianity requires active citizenship and condemnation of injustice.

“Silence makes one complicit in evil, while concealing the truth brings discord into Christ’s Church.” — [Archimandrite Ilia Jinjolava](#), 9 September.

“Passive citizens give birth to corrupt governments.” — [Archimandrite Shio Kvaratskhelia](#), 28 September.

“Whoever is not on the side of truth blinds themselves... and such blindness will not be forgiven, neither here, nor in eternity.” — [Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili](#), 4 September.

## Condemning Injustice and Political Repression

“Such injustice has never existed in Georgia! None of it is based on law, not even on communist law! [...] When they beat you and arrest you, they are arresting the Lord, and He will not forgive that.” — [Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili](#), 14 September.

“If a person is inwardly free... they cannot be silenced or intimidated.” — [Metropolitan Grigol Berbichashvili](#), Diocese of Poti and Khobi, sermon of 12 September.

## Condemning Violence and Defending Human Dignity

Sermons strongly condemned the violence perpetrated by GD supporters and law enforcement officers, particularly against women. Violence was described as an affront to God’s image and a rejection of Christian ethics.

“These ‘Georgian men,’ hiding behind Russian policemen, punch women in the face... Georgia has never known such degraded and humiliated men.” — [Archimandrite Ilia Toloraia](#), 8 September.

“You so-called ‘men’ hiding behind the militia — there is nothing manly or Christian in you.” — [Archimandrite Shio Kvaratskhelia](#), 8 September.

“The Georgian nation is by nature freedom-loving and will never tolerate dictatorship.” — [Deacon Thevdore Basilaia](#), 8 September.

“Shameful violence by illegitimate forces! Do not abolish the state! The police! Do not abolish humanity!!!” — [Zaza Tevzadze](#), Deacon, 9 September.

“In our eclectic culture, there has always been one value that should never be questioned — unconditional respect for women.” — [Priest Nikoloz Skhulukhia](#), 13 September.

## The Church's Role in Political and Public Life

Clerics highlighted that the Church cannot remain neutral in the face of injustice. Historically, Georgian clergy have participated in national and political struggles, and “non-interference in politics” is seen as an evasion of Christian duty.

“When John the Baptist condemned Herod... was that not politics? Should he have stayed silent?” — [Deacon Konstantine Paichadze](#), 1 September.

“In the 1980s, when one or two clergy stood alongside dissidents in the forefront of the national movement — should they have stayed out of politics?” — [Deacon Konstantine Paichadze](#), 1 September.

“It pains me to see colleagues who hide from responsibility out of fear... at such moments, service in the Church is no longer service to God.” — [Archimandrite Ilia Jinjolava](#), 9 September.

## The Role of Youth in Nation-Building

GD propagandist and philosopher Zaza Shatirishvili stated on [Radio Sivrtse](#) that “some of the youth, those who are redundant, should emigrate, just as Franco expelled communists from the Basque region to the Soviet Union.”

In response, on 29 September, [Deacon Zakaria Peradze](#) wrote:

“...Let us not mock our youth but respect them. Their struggle for freedom is not madness — it is the seed of tomorrow's justice.”

## Support for European Integration

Clerics emphasized that Christian values are compatible with the European cultural and political model, viewing Europe as a space of law, order, and freedom.

“Today, the world has nothing better than European civilization... freedom of speech and of the individual — nothing better yet exists in the world.” — [Deacon Tamaz Lomidze](#), 28 September.

## Statements on the Judiciary and Law Enforcement

Several clergy members expressed support for prisoners of conscience. Archimandrite Ilia Toloraia, Hegumen Andria Ghurtskaia, Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili, and Archimandrite Shio Kvaratskhelia [met](#) with family members of those detained.

Example statements:

“Today, when Nino Datashvili<sup>2</sup> suffers daily in prison without receiving adequate medical care, the state bears responsibility for her life and dignity. Imprisonment may serve justice, but it must never become torture. It does not matter which government is in power — suffering can never be justified.” — [Deacon Giorgi Tserodze](#), 17 September.

“The Gospel says: ‘Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.’ How political is it when I tell the government: you are treating people in a way none of you would wish to be treated?” — [Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili](#), 14 September

### Statements by Clergy of Other Denominations

**Bishop Rusudan Gotsiridze** of the Evangelical-Baptist Church actively used social media and media platforms to express [support](#) for political prisoners and to criticize unlawful decisions by judges and law enforcement agencies.

**Pastor Zaal Tkeshelashvili** of the Evangelical Church published a [Facebook post](#) on 11 September supporting activist Megi Diasamidze<sup>3</sup>. On 5 September, he also [expressed solidarity](#) with Tamta Mikeladze<sup>4</sup>, Director of the Social Justice Center, and condemned the repressive actions taken against Georgian NGOs.

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<sup>2</sup> Teacher and activist Nino Datashvili was arrested on 20 June. The Prosecutor’s Office accuses her of assaulting a bailiff of the Tbilisi City Court. The incident under investigation occurred on 9 June. Video footage shows several court bailiffs forcibly removing Datashvili from the courthouse, during which she falls to the ground. According to Datashvili, she sustained bodily injuries as a result of the incident.

<sup>3</sup> On 10 September, 23-year-old student Megi Diasamidze was arrested on Melikishvili Avenue, accused of damaging the election banner of Kakha Kaladze, the GD candidate for Tbilisi mayor. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Diasamidze “damaged the election banner of the political party *Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia*’s mayoral candidate on Melikishvili Avenue.” She is accused of inscribing the words “Russian Dream” on the banner and is being investigated under Article 187 of the Criminal Code (damage or destruction of property), which carries a potential prison sentence of one to five years, among other penalties. According to the Prosecutor’s Office, the damage is estimated at 380 GEL. On 12 September, despite the prosecution’s request for pre-trial detention, she was [released](#) on bail of 2,000 GEL.

<sup>4</sup> The Prosecutor General’s Office of Georgia summoned several NGO heads, including Tamta Mikeladze to testify in the “sabotage” probe, days after authorities froze the bank accounts of seven civil society organizations, claiming they equipped protesters who committed “violent acts” against police in 2024.

## 7.2. Statements in Support of Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili

During the reporting period, GD-affiliated propagandist television channels continued their discreditation campaign against **Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili**. At the same time, the campaign was joined by Andria Jaghmaidze, Head of the Patriarchate's Public Relations Service, along with other clergy members. In contrast, several clerics publicly expressed their support for Archimandrite Kurashvili.

[Ilia Toloraia](#), **28 September**: "Anyone who fights against Father Dorothe is pro-Russian. Yesterday, we heard no word from either the Church or the people about Russia's evil. Yet the Georgian nation will never kneel before a government that kneels before Russia."

[Tamaz Lomidze, Deacon](#), **1 September**: "Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili is doing precisely what is required of a disciple of Christ and a priest of the Church — defending the oppressed, condemning cruelty, injustice, and betrayal, exposing liars and those who abuse power, and living and acting according to the truth of the Gospel. Is this not exactly what our Lord Jesus Christ Himself did?!"

[Zaza Tevzadze, Deacon](#), **1 September**: "My support and solidarity go to Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili and to all who fight for truth and for their homeland, not for their personal comfort or benefit!"

[On 28 September](#), **Archimandrite Dorothe Kurashvili** responded to *TV Pirveli's* broadcast and to his summons to the Patriarchate. He stated that he preaches nothing against the Church but speaks openly about Russia's hostility toward Georgia:

"If anyone disapproves of me, it is because I say that Russia is our enemy. The GD government moves toward the enemy, embraces the enemy, and curses its own people."