

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	452
Land:	Georgien
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	Georgia: Crackdown on government critics deepens as another opposition politician is jailed
Udgivet:	27. juni 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	17. oktober 2025



Document #2126717

Amnesty International (Author)

Georgia: Crackdown on government critics deepens as another opposition politician is jailed

Reacting to the jailing of yet another Georgian opposition figure, former lawmaker Giorgi (Givi) Targamadze, to seven months in prison for refusing to recognize the parliament's legitimacy and appear before a parliamentary investigative committee, Denis Krivosheev, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, said:

"Summoning opposition figures before a parliamentary commission and arresting and imprisoning them for refusing to recognize its legitimacy raises serious concerns over the misuse of legislative, policing and other powers to silence government critics in Georgia."

"With its status disputed, the commission has been instrumentalized to target former public officials for their principled opposition. It has become a tool of political repression, not of parliamentary scrutiny, used to lock away political opponents ahead of local elections. The ruling party's misuse of parliamentary structures is part of a broader crackdown on critics, which includes the arbitrary detention and [persecution of activists and peaceful protesters](#) and the [suffocation of civil society](#) through repressive legislation and unlawful demands.

"Authorities in Georgia must stop their relentless assault on dissent and targeting protesters and political activists for the peaceful exercise of their human rights, and release Givi Targamadze and the six other opposition members they have thrown behind bars in recent weeks. Authorities must halt practices that violate Georgia's international human rights obligations. Authorities must uphold and ensure the human rights of everyone in the country."

Background

On 27 June, Tbilisi City Court sentenced Giorgi (Givi) Targamadze to seven months in prison for “non-compliance” with a parliamentary commission led by the ruling Georgian Dream party. The commission purports to have been established to investigate alleged abuses by former government officials from the opposition United National Movement (UNM) party that ran the country from 2003 to 2012.

Giorgi Targamadze is the eighth opposition figure to be arrested, and the fifth to be sentenced, under these proceedings in recent weeks, after Giorgi Vashadze and Zurab Japaridze received a seven-month prison sentence each, Mamuka Khazaradze and Badri Japaridze were each sentenced to eight months in prison. All of them have also been banned from holding public office for two years. Three other opposition figures – ex-UNM chair Nika Melia, former Justice and Defence ministers Nika Gvaramia and Irakli Okruashvili – are also currently in detention and standing trial under the same charges.

Refusing to comply with a parliamentary commission can be punished by up to one year in prison or a fine under Georgian law. However, courts have so far imposed prison sentences only, in a string of cases which have targeted politicians who have challenged the legitimacy of the current parliament after disputed elections.

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Opposition politician Giorgi (Givi) Targamadze sentenced to 7 months in prison for non-compliance with a parliamentary commission established by the ruling party Georgian Dream

Country:
Georgia

Source:
[Amnesty International](#) (Author)

Published:
27 June 2025

Original link:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/06/georgia-crackdown-on-government-critics-deepens-as-another-opposition-politician-is-jailed/>

Document type:
Appeal or News Release

Language:
English

Available on ecoi.net since:
30 June 2025

Document ID:
2126717

Austrian Red Cross	Wiedner Hauptstraße	Contact
Austrian Centre for	32, 1041 Wien	Imprint & Disclaimer
Country of Origin and	T +43 1 589 00 583	F.A.Q.
Asylum Research and	F +43 1 589 00 589	Data Protection Notice
Documentation	info@ecoi.net	
(ACCORD)		

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

