

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	455
Land:	Georgien
Kilde:	Jamestown Foundation
Titel:	Government Pressure Puts Georgian NGOs on Brink
Udgivet:	30. september 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	17. oktober 2025



Document #2130710

Jamestown Foundation (Author)

Government Pressure Puts Georgian NGOs on Brink

By: [Khatia Shamanauri](#)

Executive Summary:

- Georgian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) say they are enduring one of the most difficult periods in the country's history, yet they vow to continue their work despite the financial restrictions.
- Georgia's Prosecutor's Office has frozen the bank accounts of seven prominent Georgian civil society organizations, while their leaders have been summoned for questioning.
- The growing pressure on civil society, including the recent freezing of assets, has raised alarm among Western partners, who view these measures as incompatible with European Union standards.

Georgian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are facing unprecedented challenges amid one of the most severe crises the country's civil society has ever encountered. A series of recently adopted laws, including amendments to the Law of Georgia "On Grants," now effectively bar NGOs from receiving foreign funding without prior government approval ([Georgian Parliament](#); [Civil Georgia](#), June 10). Meanwhile, the new Foreign Agents Registration Act requires any individual or organization deemed to act on behalf of a foreign entity to register as a foreign agent, further complicating their operations ([Civil Georgia](#), May 31). Additionally, at the end of August, the Prosecutor's Office froze the assets of seven leading organizations, leaving many to operate largely on a voluntary basis ([Radio Tavisupleba](#), August 27). With their capacity dwindling, these groups face an unprecedented struggle to continue defending human rights, providing legal support, and sustaining civil society in Georgia.

On September 17, Eka Gigauri, the head of Transparency International-Georgia, an NGO dedicated to combating corruption by promoting transparency and accountability, was questioned at the Tbilisi City Court. After leaving the court building, Gigauri told reporters that investigators focused on transactions from her personal bank account and her public calls for sanctions against government officials. “They brought information about transfers from my personal account to various other accounts,” she said. “The purpose of those transfers was to cover the fines of people who had been detained. Apparently, this is what worries them the most” ([Radio Tavisupleba](#), September 17).

Gigauri’s questioning is part of a process that began on August 27, when Tbilisi City Court upheld a motion by the Prosecutor’s Office to freeze the bank accounts of seven leading Georgian civil society organizations. The groups are accused of “funding” protest rallies held at the end of 2024 as part of what authorities have called the “sabotage case” ([Radio Tavisupleba](#), August 27). According to the Prosecutor’s Office, the organizations “coordinatedly” financed participants of last year’s demonstrations, allegedly encouraging “violent actions against law enforcement officers.” The statement goes on to allege that the funds were used to buy equipment—including “special gas masks, protective goggles, respirators, face-covering masks, pepper spray, and other items”—which prosecutors say were “actively used by protesters during violent confrontations with the police” ([The Prosecution Service of Georgia](#), August 27).

The frozen accounts belong to some of Georgia’s most prominent civil society groups, including the Civil Society Foundation, International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Defenders of Democracy, Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI), Sapari, and the Social Justice Center (formerly EMC). In response, the affected NGOs issued a joint statement, vowing to continue their work despite the financial restrictions. The statement read:

The enemies of the Georgian people want us to be no longer able to defend the rights of children, women, people with disabilities, students, illegally detained individuals, workers, and the elderly. Their aim is not only to sabotage the country’s future European integration but also to strip the Georgian people of one of their greatest achievements—the right to visa-free travel ([Radio Tavisupleba](#), August 27).”

Sapari, a leading women’s rights organization in Georgia, is among those whose accounts were frozen. Its executive director, Baia Patariaia, was also summoned for questioning. In an interview with this author, Patariaia described the process as “disgraceful,” emphasizing that investigators “practically had no questions” and failed to point to any procurement that might raise legitimate concerns. Instead, she said, much of the

questioning centered on her personal Facebook posts—particularly those in which she had called for public officials to go on strike. She stated:

They asked me why I attended protests. I told them that the country had stepped outside the constitutional framework, the elections had been rigged, and I wanted Georgia to return to constitutional order. They also asked whether I had been trained abroad on how to organize protests or whether I had received money from abroad to fund them. My answer was ‘no’ (Author’s interview, September 18).

Giorgi Mshvenieradze, Chairman of Democracy Defenders Georgia, told this author in an interview that the country’s NGOs are enduring one of the most difficult periods in Georgia’s history. He said, “We know—based on hints we receive from the authorities—that if we do not leave Georgia, we may be arrested. But we are prepared for that. We are citizens of this country, and we share its burdens and responsibilities.” Mshvenieradze added that his organization is preparing for every possible scenario and plans to ensure they can continue supporting people under any circumstances. He stated:

There is the near-total destruction of our resources—our bank accounts have been frozen, we can no longer pay rent for offices or cover utility bills, let alone compensate the people who work with us. Taken together, these measures critically undermine the work we have dedicated ourselves to—helping the Georgian people—and threaten to dismantle the strong civil society we have built over so many years (Author’s Interview, September 17).

Georgia’s non-governmental sector relies heavily on foreign donors for funding (see EDM, [April 9](#), [May 1](#), 2024, [March 12](#), [April 15](#)). With the ruling Georgian Dream party’s adoption of new laws and the freezing of accounts, however, they now face mounting financial pressure and uncertainty about their future.

“We are already partly working on a voluntary basis. Within a few months, we may have to move entirely to volunteer work, which would radically reduce our capacity,” Pataria told this author. She explained that Sapari currently employs more than 10 full-time lawyers, all of whom rely on their salaries to support their families. She stated, “They are no longer working full-time with us, which means they can only partially fulfill their responsibilities to the organization. Their involvement is gradually declining” (Author’s interview, September 18).

The growing pressure on civil society organizations in Georgia, including the recent freezing of their assets, has raised alarm among the country’s Western partners (see EDM, January 23; [X/@SFRCDems](#), August 27). Such measures are widely seen as incompatible with European Union standards for democratic governance and the protection of fundamental

freedoms (see [EDM](#), September 23). The Georgian Dream party's current policies could further undermine Georgia's prospects for EU integration, casting a shadow over the country's aspirations to align with European democratic norms.

ecoi.net description:

Non-governmental organisations face new legal restrictions, foreign funding limits, and asset freezes

Country:

Georgia

Source:

[Jamestown Foundation](#) (Author)

Published:

30 September 2025

Original link:

<https://jamestown.org/program/government-pressure-puts-georgian-ngos-on-brink/>

Document type:

Special or Analytical Report

Language:

English

Available on ecoi.net since:

3 October 2025

Document ID:

2130710

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.

