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Georgia: Protesters face arrests, abuse, and denial of fair trial rights

Responding to the persistent and widespread use of unlawful force by police in Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, after four consecutive nights of protests, Denis Krivosheev, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, said:

"The Georgian authorities must end their violent crackdown, which has inflicted physical, psychological and legal harm on those exercising their right to protest. Hundreds of protesters, dispersed and arrested by police, have faced violence that, in some cases, amounts to torture and other ill-treatment. Reports of severe injuries — including broken facial bones, fractures, and concussions among detainees — are mounting. It has become increasingly clear that the police are operating as if enjoying an assurance of impunity from the government, using sporadic acts of violence by protesters, often provoked by their own actions, as a pretext for repression.

"Lawyers and witnesses report that detainees are being denied timely medical care and access to legal counsel, while facing retaliatory administrative or criminal proceedings without due process. This recurring pattern of violence and human rights violations, well-documented since last year's protests, reveals the Georgian government's strategy to deploy the full machinery of the state to punish and suppress dissent.

"All demonstrators detained solely for peacefully participating in protests must be immediately and unconditionally released, while all officials responsible for unlawful use of force, including acts of torture and other ill-treatment, must be held fully accountable."

Background

Over four turbulent nights, since 29 November, protesters in Tbilisi have blocked key streets to oppose the government's announcement that it would not proceed with EU accession talks until 2028. The police responded by deploying water cannons, tear gas, and rubber bullets. The clashes left many injured, with footage capturing the brutal beatings of peaceful demonstrators and journalists.

Some protesters clashed with police, throwing Molotov cocktails and stones, prompting authorities to arrest 224 people on charges of disobedience and hooliganism.

Rights groups have documented alarming instances of police brutality, torture and other ill-treatment, including the denial of medical care. Legal proceedings have flouted fair trial standards, and no officials responsible for abuses have been held accountable, highlighting a deep-rooted culture of impunity.

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Tbilisi: Violent crackdown by security forces against protests that erupted after the government announced the suspension of its negotiations on EU membership; several journalists assaulted by security forces and at least 224 protesters arrested

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