

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	448
Land:	Georgien
Kilde:	UN General Assembly. Cooperation with Georgia
Titel:	Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Udgivet:	23. april 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	17. oktober 2025



General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 April 2025

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Fifty-ninth session

16 June–11 July 2025

Agenda items 2 and 10

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Technical assistance and capacity-building

Cooperation with Georgia

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 57/33, outlines the technical assistance provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights between 1 June 2023 and 31 December 2024 to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights in Georgia. The report highlights human rights developments during the period and the challenges to be addressed. It also provides an update on the main human rights issues in Abkhazia, Georgia, the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, and adjacent areas in Tbilisi-controlled territory.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 57/33, the Human Rights Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to present an oral update at its fifty-eighth session on follow-up to the resolution and a written report at its fifty-ninth session on developments relating to the resolution and its implementation. The Council also requested the High Commissioner to continue to provide technical assistance through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Tbilisi and demanded that immediate and unimpeded access be given to OHCHR and other international and regional human rights mechanisms to Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia.¹
2. Pursuant to resolution 57/33, the present report provides an update on the technical assistance provided by OHCHR in Georgia and on key human rights developments during the period from 1 June 2023 to 31 December 2024. Guided by the preamble to the resolution, the report also describes the main human rights issues in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and in adjacent areas.
3. In preparing the report, in October 2024, OHCHR issued a public call for written submissions² pursuant to resolution 57/33 to seek contributions from the Government of Georgia and various stakeholders in order to inform the oral update and the report of the High Commissioner.
4. The present report draws on information provided by the Government of Georgia, the Office of the Public Defender of Georgia (an “A” status national human rights institution), international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as on information in credible open-source documents. OHCHR has continued to exercise due diligence to corroborate, to the extent possible, the validity of the information received, within the constraints of limited resources and the continuing lack of access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In the report, the High Commissioner therefore highlights key human rights issues and developments on the basis of information received by OHCHR but does not seek to present a comprehensive account of the human rights matters.

II. Context

5. On 26 October 2024, parliamentary elections were held in Georgia. The Central Election Commission announced that the ruling Georgian Dream party received 53.9 per cent of the votes cast and that four opposition parties cleared the 5 per cent threshold for representation in the Parliament, totalling 37.79 per cent of the votes cast. The International Election Observation Mission³ praised the good organization of election day and its orderly administration but noted the tense environment, “with frequent compromises in vote secrecy and several procedural inconsistencies, as well as reports of intimidation and pressure on voters that negatively impacted public trust in the process”.⁴ The Government, the ruling party and the Central Election Commission have denied claims of irregularities. Members of the opposition rejected the results, citing irregularities, including voter intimidation, vote buying and alleged foreign interference. In addition, three of the four opposition political parties that cleared the 5 per cent threshold submitted formal requests to Parliament for their mandates to be revoked. Those requests were granted on 5 February 2025. On 14 December 2024, an electoral college dominated by representatives of the ruling party elected Mikheil

¹ Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, are hereinafter referred to as Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

² See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/2025/2025-call-submissions-pursuant-human-rights-council-resolution-5733>.

³ Formed by observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Parliamentary Assembly.

⁴ See <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/0/579346.pdf>.

Kavelashvili as President. Most of the opposition and many civil society organizations (CSOs) rejected the legitimacy of the entire electoral process.

6. On 14 and 15 December 2023, the European Union granted Georgia candidate status⁵ on the understanding that the Government would take several required steps.⁶ On 28 November 2024, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze announced that the Government was suspending accession talks with the European Union until 2028 and would not be accepting budgetary grants from the European Union. Subsequent public protests against that decision broke out in Tbilisi and other Georgian cities in November and December 2024.

III. Technical assistance by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and human rights developments

7. An OHCHR Senior Human Rights Adviser has been posted in Tbilisi since 2007. The Adviser enjoys full cooperation from the Government of Georgia and is supported by national staff. The Adviser, who works with the United Nations country team, has continued to advise and provide technical assistance to the Government and institutions of Georgia, CSOs and other actors. The Adviser has also continued engaging in country team advocacy efforts on various human rights issues.

8. During the reporting period, OHCHR conducted 23 capacity-building events in Georgia for 668 participants, of whom 434 were women, and cooperated with governmental entities and several municipalities in Georgia. Participants in OHCHR-sponsored programmes and events included members of the Georgian Bar Association, youth groups, including national and religious minority youth, older persons, civil servants, members of Parliament and the staff of the parliamentary committee on human rights and civil integration.

9. The fifth periodic report of Georgia to the Committee against Torture, which was scheduled for submission on 15 July 2015, remains overdue.⁷

A. Human rights challenges related to protests in November and December 2024

10. OHCHR notes credible allegations of serious human rights violations by law enforcement authorities during the dispersal of the protests that took place between 28 November and early December 2024. The allegations are related to the use of unnecessary or disproportionate force, torture or ill-treatment, including lack of respect for the rights and safety of media workers and due process rights of detained protesters.⁸

11. OHCHR has received multiple reports of the alleged unnecessary or disproportionate use of force by the police directed at certain participants in the protests, including journalists. Between 28 November 2024 and 27 January 2025, personnel of the Public Defender's Office reportedly visited 401 individuals, either in detention or released from detention, who alleged that they had been injured in the context of the protests: 241 reported incidents of police violence; and 163 had visible injuries. Of the 401 people visited, most had been detained on administrative grounds, while 37 people, including 15 women and two minors, had been

⁵ See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/68967/europeanCouncilConclusions-14-15-12-2023-en.pdf>.

⁶ See https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/388e01b7-e283-4bc9-9d0a-5600ea49eda9_en?filename=SWD_2023_697%20Georgia%20report.pdf.

⁷ See https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx; see also https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=1&CountryID=65&DocTypeID=29.

⁸ See also <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/12/turk-calls-georgian-authorities-protect-freedoms-expression-and-assembly>.

arrested on criminal charges.⁹ The reports received by OHCHR raise concerns about the use of arbitrary detention. The Government of Georgia asserts that all those arrested or detained on criminal charges were brought promptly before a judge and that decisions regarding the deprivation of their liberty were made by a competent court. The Government stated that persons held in temporary detention centres were provided with appropriate conditions and treatment.

12. Statements in some reports received by OHCHR suggest that the response to the protests may, in some instances, have amounted to torture and ill-treatment. The World Organization against Torture reported that in the majority of cases where physical attacks were alleged to have reached the threshold of torture or ill-treatment, the attacks were carried out by police officers wearing face masks and black uniforms without insignia.¹⁰

13. In some submissions to OHCHR and in public statements it is suggested that the disproportionate use of force, torture or ill-treatment by the police against protestors may have been widespread and systematic.¹¹ Consistent with the submission of the Public Defender's Office (see para. 11 above), civil society groups have alleged that of some 500 persons detained in connection to the protests, the majority were subjected to physical violence, psychological pressure and verbal assault.¹² While OHCHR not in a position to verify all allegations received, the Office emphasizes the need for independent, impartial and thorough investigations into all alleged violations. The Government of Georgia asserts that the police did not violate the right to peaceful assembly of participants of the demonstrations held since 28 November 2024 and used proportionate measures to maintain public order during rallies that were not peaceful.

14. OHCHR notes that the lack of individual identification numbers or nametags on the uniforms of riot police and special police forces presents a significant challenge in investigations into alleged violations by law enforcement officials and stresses the need to address the long-standing concern regarding the establishment of individual responsibility on the part of law enforcement officers in Georgia.¹³ In addition to the lack of identification on the uniforms of police officers, OHCHR notes that some protesters and media workers covering the protests alleged that attacks were carried out by unidentified plain-clothed persons. For example, on 7 December 2024, individuals dressed in black allegedly attacked and physically abused citizens and journalists working for the TV Pirveli channel near Rustaveli Avenue in Tbilisi.¹⁴ On 20 December 2024, the Special Investigative Service of Georgia stated that it is actively investigating the allegations of police officers exceeding their official powers by using violence and unlawful interference against participants, including against journalists carrying out their professional activities, at the protests in November and December 2024 in Tbilisi.¹⁵ In addition, the Government of Georgia reported that the Special Investigative Service had interviewed 526 people, including 51 journalists and 180 law enforcement officers, and that 88 persons had been recognized as victims in connection with the protests. The Government also noted that the Special Investigative Service is investigating alleged inaction by law enforcement officers regarding the violence committed against participants at the protests.

15. OHCHR notes the allegations by the Ministry of Internal Affairs regarding violence on the part of the protesters towards law enforcement officials and other authorities. According to information provided by the Government of Georgia, 171 law enforcement officers were injured between 28 November 2024 and 20 December 2024, allegedly as a result of the stones thrown by the protestors: nine policemen needed surgery, including two

⁹ Submission by the Public Defender's Office.

¹⁰ Submission by the World Organization against Torture.

¹¹ See <https://gyla.ge/en/post/terororis10dge>.

¹² Statement of the Legal Aid Network of Non-Governmental Organizations Regarding Detainees, 01.12.2024, <https://gyla.ge/en/post/arasamtavrobo-organizaciebis-qselis-gancxadeba-dakavebulebze>.

¹³ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/12/turk-calls-georgian-authorities-protect-freedoms-expression-and-assembly>.

¹⁴ See <https://ombudsman.ge/eng/akhali-ambebi/sakhalkho-damtsvelis-gantskhadeba-aktsiaze-mimdinare-movlenebtan-dakavshirebit>.

¹⁵ See <https://sis.gov.ge/media/Statement-of-the-Special-Investigation-Service-on-the-progress-of-the-investigation-into-the-rallies-taking-place-in-November-and-December-2024> (in Georgian).

under general anaesthesia; and 39 law enforcement officers suffered serious injuries to their faces, heads, eyes, groin area and limbs. Fifty-four employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs reportedly received multiple burns to their faces, limbs, abdomen and eyelids, with one employee suffering significant hearing loss, all as the result of the use of pyrotechnical devices.¹⁶ The Government also reported damage to the Parliament building, State-owned items (for example, benches, garbage cans and road signs) and private property, which it attributes to actions by the protestors. In addition, the Government stated that it had recorded a number of thefts allegedly committed by the protestors.

16. Several stakeholders have expressed concerns to OHCHR with respect to court proceedings against protesters, including a failure to uphold due process rights. According to the Public Defender's Office, cases and court hearings concerning the more than 400 protesters who were detained have been processed under the outdated Code of Administrative Offences, which has been in force since 1984. Among other concerns, the Code does not guarantee prompt access of the accused to legal representation.¹⁷ The Government of Georgia asserts that the Code contains all of the important provisions that ensure proper protection of procedural rights of accused persons. Observers allege that administrative sanctions, most commonly fines, have been systematically imposed by courts against protesters based solely on the testimony of police officers, including some who, according to defendants, were not present at the time of their arrest. Lawyers representing protesters have reported that judges have systematically dismissed their motions and demonstrated lack of impartiality in other ways.¹⁸ OHCHR has also received reports that judges have disregarded evidence of disproportionate use of force, torture and ill-treatment presented by defendants, including visible injuries, forensic medical reports and photographic and video documentation.

17. In December 2024, the Parliament of Georgia adopted significant legislative amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences. Stakeholders allege that several of the amendments do not comply with human rights standards¹⁹ and that, despite the substantial nature of the legislative amendments, the process was rushed and lacked consultation.²⁰ Amendments to the Code significantly increased fines for blocking traffic, graffiti, vandalism and carrying prohibited items²¹ during demonstrations. Penalties for repeat offenses have also increased. Parents can now be fined if their children violate laws related to the use of fireworks or disobey the police.²² Further, an amendment to article 244 of the Code expands the scope for detention by the police, including to ensure "timely" production of the detainee to court or to "prevent" the detainee from delaying court proceedings.

B. Civic space, rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and to association

18. In April 2024, the Georgian Dream party reintroduced the draft law "on transparency of foreign influence" in Parliament. The law was initially presented in February 2023 and subsequently withdrawn in March 2023 after large-scale protests.²³ The law was adopted on 14 May 2024. The law defines civil society and media organizations receiving over 20 per cent of their funding from abroad as "organizations acting in the interest of a foreign power".²⁴ A number of stakeholders have identified concerns with respect to freedom of

¹⁶ See <https://police.ge/en/shinagan-saqmeta-saministros-gantskhadeba/16526>.

¹⁷ Submission by the Public Defender's Office.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF\(2025\)012-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2025)012-e).

²¹ Code of Administrative Offences, arts. 125 (6), 150, 166 (2) and 174-1(4), respectively.

²² Ibid., art. 172.

²³ A/HRC/54/80, para. 19.

²⁴ See <https://x.com/UNHumanRights/status/1775904834241110361?lang=en>.

expression and association.²⁵ In view of related concerns, many CSOs decided not to register voluntarily under the law by 2 September 2024.

19. Large-scale protests erupted in Tbilisi after the reintroduction of the draft law in April 2024. OHCHR received multiple reports of unnecessary and disproportionate use of force by law enforcement personnel against demonstrators and media workers in this context.²⁶

C. Promoting women's human rights and gender equality and combating gender-based discrimination and violence

20. OHCHR notes progress that has been made by the authorities in the context of investigations into cases of femicide, even in the face of persistent challenges. For example, in its submission the Public Defender's Office indicated that investigators have approached cases with a narrow understanding of the issue, failing to apply a gender-sensitive perspective, which ultimately affected how such cases are classified and handled.²⁷

21. On 4 April 2024, the Georgian Parliament abolished the 25 per cent gender quotas for Parliamentary elections by approving amendments to the Electoral Code of Georgia. Prior to the amendments, legislation required that at least one out of four persons on a party list be a woman. The fact that Parliament chose to use an expedited procedure to approve the amendments is cause for concern. The use of gender quotas as a temporary measure to compensate for women's systemic exclusion from political decision-making is a long-standing recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.²⁸ The Government, noting that the number of women elected to local self-governance bodies and to Parliament increased considerably in the most recent elections, sees no need for the prolongation of the temporary measure.

D. Equality and non-discrimination

22. On 17 September 2024, the Georgian Parliament adopted a law "on family values and protection of minors" and a related package of amendments. The law imposes restrictions on education, public discussion and gatherings that may be discriminatory based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It reinforces negative stereotypes by equating same-sex relationships with incest, denies legal recognition to same-sex couples and transgender people, restricts access to healthcare and undermines efforts to fight HIV/AIDS.²⁹ The Government of Georgia stated that equal access to healthcare for everyone is guaranteed by law and that no provision of the law restricts access to healthcare in any way. According to publicly available information, the legislative amendments include administrative and criminal sanctions effectively banning certain forms of LGBTQI+ activism, related scientific and professional activities and transgender-specific healthcare services.³⁰

23. In previous reports, OHCHR highlighted the situation of Muslims in the city of Batumi who have been unable to secure a permit for the construction of a new mosque from the municipal authorities.³¹ On 25 May 2023, the Supreme Court of Georgia ruled that there was no specific discrimination against the Muslim community because the administration of the city had also refused to issue a permit for the construction of Orthodox churches in the same area. The case has been returned to the Court of Appeals for

²⁵ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/turk-deeply-regrets-adoption-foreign-influence-law-georgia>.

²⁶ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/05/turk-concerned-reports-disproportionate-use-force-against-georgia>; see also <https://www.ombudsman.ge/eng/akhali-ambebi/16-17-aprilis-aktsiis-monitoringis-pirveladi-shedegebi>.

²⁷ Submission by the Public Defender's Office.

²⁸ See also <https://georgia.un.org/en/265569-statement-united-nations-georgia>.

²⁹ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/georgia-call-rescind-new-anti-lgbtqi-law>.

³⁰ See <https://gyla.ge/en/post/saqartvelos-akhalgazrda-iurista-asociacia-diskriminaciul-adamianis-uflebebis-da-demokratiis-tsinaaghdmdeg-mimartul-sakanonmdeblo-cvlilebebs-ekhmaureba>.

³¹ A/HRC/51/64, para. 23.

re-examination, resulting in a further delay in the construction of the mosque. The Government of Georgia noted that there are four mosques in Batumi.

IV. Situation of human rights in Abkhazia and South Ossetia

A. Access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia

24. During the reporting period, no progress was made in granting OHCHR access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 57/33.

25. On 22 October 2024, OHCHR sent letters to the authorities in control in Abkhazia and South Ossetia seeking immediate and unimpeded access, in accordance with resolution 57/33, to gather factual and up-to-date information about the human rights situation in those areas. The authorities in control did not reply during the reporting period.

26. OHCHR notes allegations by the Government of Georgia that the authorities in control in Abkhazia increased efforts during the reporting period to put pressure on United Nations agencies and international NGOs operating on the ground, hindering confidence-building initiatives and blocking specific projects. The Government stated that such practices negatively affect the prospects for confidence-building and the broader process of conflict resolution. In its submission, the European Union noted that the authorities in control denied the European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus access to Abkhazia on two occasions in the second half of 2023 and first half of 2024. The European Union noted that, in some instances, the authorities in control sought to limit operations by international NGOs. However, after August 2024, restrictions eased slightly, although access remained tightly controlled, with one-month “visas” being issued for international aid workers. The European Union stated that there have been several cases when the Georgian authorities did not approve the required authorizations for travel to Abkhazia for representatives of international organizations and experts. The Government of Georgia stressed that it has never blocked access to Abkhazia for representatives of international organizations although it has occasionally requested that such visits be postponed due to “security concerns” and “destructive attitudes” of the authorities in control. During the reporting period, the United Nations and other international organizations remained without access to South Ossetia, with the exception of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

27. The Council of Europe, amidst challenging circumstances, remained committed to facilitating confidence-building measures in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.³²

B. Main human rights issues in Abkhazia and South Ossetia

28. The authorities in control in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have the responsibility to respect and ensure the human rights of everyone in areas under their control, including the right of victims to effective remedies. International human rights law and standards, as well as other areas of international law described in the first report of the High Commissioner on cooperation with Georgia, remain applicable.³³ The territorial State also retains certain obligations to take appropriate measures within its power to seek to ensure protection of human rights in areas of its territory where it does not exercise effective control.

29. In its submission, the European Union stated that the 2017 report³⁴ by the former Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner, Thomas Hammarberg, while no longer completely up to date, remains the most comprehensive analysis of the human rights situation

³² Council of Europe, “Consolidated report on the conflict in Georgia (April 2024–September 2024)” (<https://rm.coe.int/consolidated-report-on-the-conflict-in-georgia-april-september-2024/1680b282a8>), paras. 74–77.

³³ A/HRC/36/65, in particular paras. 46, 48, 51, 61, 66–67, 71–72 and 80.

³⁴ See <https://www.palmeccenter.se/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Human-Rights-in-Abkhazia-Today-report-by-Thomas-Hammarberg-and-Magdalena-Grono.pdf>.

in Abkhazia. OHCHR reiterates the need for updates on the human rights situation in Abkhazia and a baseline human rights assessment in South Ossetia. In both cases, OHCHR remains available to provide technical support.

30. Concerns about the human rights and humanitarian situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia persist. The situation on the ground did not change during the reporting period, with continuing allegations of human rights violations in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The violations affected ethnic Georgians in Gali and Akhagori districts in particular, but also affected those living in areas adjacent to the Administrative Boundary Lines and displaced persons. The allegations include violations of the right to life; torture and ill-treatment; arbitrary detention; violations of property rights; violations of the right to receive an education in native languages; restrictions on freedom of movement; and discrimination on ethnic grounds. Most restrictions, including those affecting the rights to liberty and security of person, healthcare, basic services and property rights, continue to impact ethnic Georgians in Akhagori and Gali districts. However, it is reported that, following amendments to the so-called law “on status of foreign nationals and Stateless persons”, access to personal documentation and, consequently, freedom of movement have become somewhat easier for people in Gali district. The absence of effective remedies for violations and abuses of human rights, as well as regular and independent monitoring and reporting – compounded by the lack of international access, especially to South Ossetia – continued to hinder human rights protection on the ground. These factors, together with the lack of progress in finding political solutions and implementing effective confidence-building measures, continue to exacerbate the existing vulnerabilities and socioeconomic isolation of the affected population.

31. The Government of Georgia stated that it remained committed to a policy of peaceful conflict resolution.³⁵ It has noted the continued implementation of its reconciliation and engagement policy with people living in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Furthermore, the Government continued implementing the peace initiative, “A Step to a Better Future”, aiming at improving humanitarian and socioeconomic conditions and fostering people-to-people contacts, interaction and confidence-building between the divided societies. This initiative has received support from the “Peace Fund for a Better Future”, a mechanism to facilitate implementation of the initiative. In addition to limited resources from the State budget, the Fund has received financial support from other donors. Funding was terminated by some donors in the last months of 2024, following the general suspension of funding to Georgian government institutions.

1. Right to life

32. During the reporting period, OHCHR received reports of the violation of the right to life of two ethnic Georgian men. On 6 November 2023, Tamaz Ginturi, a 58-year-old resident of the village of Kirbali, was fatally shot, reportedly by Russian Federation border guards, along the South Ossetian administrative boundary line, near the Saint George of Lomisi Church in Kirbali.³⁶ On 6 December 2023, de facto law enforcement personnel in Abkhazia detained and severely beat Vitali Karbaia, a Georgian citizen, resulting in his death on 9 December 2023 at Sokhumi hospital.³⁷

33. With regard to the cases highlighted in previous reports³⁸ there has been no progress during the reporting period. No one has been held accountable for the four deaths in Abkhazia and South Ossetia of David Basharuli (in 2014), Giga Otkhazia (in 2016), Archil Tatumashvili (in 2018) and Irakli Kvaratskhelia (in 2019).

³⁵ [A/HRC/54/80](#), para. 38.

³⁶ [A/78/864](#), para. 28.

³⁷ According to open sources, “the prosecutor’s office” in Abkhazia launched an investigation into three individuals and, on 10 February 2024, arrested two suspects in connection with Mr. Karbaia’s death. It was reported that the suspects were later released. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia also opened a criminal investigation, and on 29 February 2024, Georgian police reportedly arrested a third suspect.

³⁸ [A/HRC/36/65](#), paras. 46–47; [A/HRC/39/44](#), paras. 54–55; [A/HRC/42/34](#), paras. 47–49; [A/HRC/45/54](#), para. 44; [A/HRC/48/45](#), paras. 40–41; and [A/HRC/51/64](#), para. 39.

34. All relevant actors are urged to ensure independent, impartial and thorough investigations into these cases and to provide redress, as appropriate.

2. Right to freedom of movement, documents and artificial barriers

35. Impediments to freedom of movement continued to be one of the most pressing concerns, particularly along the Administrative Boundary Line between South Ossetia Tbilisi-controlled territory and, to a lesser extent, between Abkhazia and Tbilisi-controlled territory. Such restrictions, in particular in South Ossetia, continued to have negative consequences for the enjoyment of human rights and to exacerbate the isolation of the communities living on either side of the Lines. They also continued to adversely affect the already limited access of local residents to education, healthcare, pensions, markets and other services in Tbilisi-controlled territory, as well as their rights to liberty and security of person.

36. During the reporting period, the Administrative Boundary Line between Abkhazia and Tbilisi-controlled territory had two main operational crossing points: the main Enguri crossing point (vehicular and pedestrian) and the Saberio-Pakhulani crossing point (pedestrian only), with the latter mostly serving the needs of a significantly smaller group of residents of adjacent villages. According to the submission of the European Union, a slight increase in activity was recorded at the two crossing points over previous years, bringing the average number of crossings back to levels recorded prior to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Government of Georgia stated that although the Enguri Bridge remains open, it continues to be subject to arbitrary closures by the authorities in control in Abkhazia. According to available information, the other four crossing points in Abkhazia remained closed, negatively impacting people living in nearby villages whose travel times have been significantly extended, particularly affecting the elderly and those with medical needs.

37. In Abkhazia, since the adoption of amendments to the law “on legal status of foreign nationals and Stateless persons” in November 2023, and its subsequent entry into force in January 2024, “foreign residence permits” are now issued for period of 10 instead of 5 years. Until the residence permits are renewed, individuals are provided with a certificate enabling them to cross the Administrative Boundary Line. The Public Defender’s Office noted in its submission that the process for issuing permits in Gali district was simplified in 2024. The Public Defender’s Office also noted that the affected residents expressed particular concern about the authorities in control arbitrarily closing crossing points, which restricts their freedom of movement and creates barriers to accessing their livelihoods. The European Union also stated that the procedures for obtaining new documents were reported to have been somewhat improved in 2024.

38. The Government of Georgia reiterated concerns that the Administrative Boundary Line between South Ossetia and territory controlled by Georgia has been closed since September 2019. Since August 2022, the Administrative Boundary Line at the crossing points between South Ossetia and territory controlled by Georgia has been temporarily opened for crossing during the last 10 days of each month, as well as on specific religious holidays. The European Union noted that the fluctuation in the number of people at the Odzisi and at the Karzmani crossing points increased in both directions in 2024. The European Union stated that the Ergneti crossing point continued to be used for ICRC-organized medical crossings, the handover of detainees and other purposes, while the Zardiantkari crossing point remained open for the movement of a small number of local ethnic Ossetians with special authorization to cross the Administrative Boundary Line. The European Union noted that the number of commuters remains lower than before 2019, mainly due to the depopulation of Akhagori district. The Government of Georgia also reported that the authorities in control denied medical evacuation based on ethnicity. According to the Public Defender’s Office, individuals are required to obtain a “pass” (valid for one year) to cross the Administrative Boundary Line from the “security service” of the authorities in control. The process of obtaining a new pass involves certain fees.

39. The Government of Georgia continued to maintain that ethnic Georgians residing in Gali district in Abkhazia were forced to register as foreigners and obtain “foreign residence permits” and to change their surnames to Abkhazian ones and their ethnic identity to Abkhazian in order to be able to enjoy their full range of human rights. The Government

highlighted additional restrictions on ethnic Georgians in Abkhazia regarding residence, work and exercising property rights, pressuring them to renounce their ethnic roots or flee. According to information received, social services in Abkhazia reportedly doubled the monthly poverty allowance. However, the ethnic Georgian population in Gali district, which is reportedly aging and impoverished, has continued to migrate to Tbilisi-controlled territory owing to harsh living conditions.³⁹

40. A continued process of “borderization” was enforced along the Administrative Boundary Lines of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In 2024, the Government of Georgia recorded one case of installation of razor and barbed wire fences as well as border signs, trenches and anti-fire dividing lines in Abkhazia, and 45 such cases in South Ossetia. The Government noted that these activities increased the risks of escalation. The European Union alleged that approximately 80 kilometres (35 per cent of the passable area) of the South Ossetian and 40 kilometres (70 per cent of the passable area) of the Abkhaz Administrative Boundary Lines had been fenced off. These activities have a continuing negative impact on the socioeconomic conditions of the population affected, including on family life and access to property, grazing, pastures and farmlands, religious sites and cemeteries.

3. Deprivation of liberty and allegations of torture and other forms of ill-treatment

41. OHCHR continued to receive allegations of arbitrary deprivation of liberty by the authorities in control. The allegations relate to ethnic Georgians, especially those residing along the Administrative Boundary Lines who are accused of so-called “illegal crossings”. Allegations of arbitrary deprivation of liberty also involved Russian Federation border guards in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These practices continue to perpetuate a climate of insecurity and mistrust.

42. In their submissions, the Government of Georgia and the Public Defender’s Office reported the detention of a total of 70 people, including 34 persons (29 men, 3 women and 2 minors) in Abkhazia and 36 persons (34 men, 1 woman and 1 minor) in South Ossetia during 2024. According to the Government, at the end of 2024, nine of its citizens were arbitrarily deprived of their liberty in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Government reiterated that some of the citizens suffered from severe health problems that required their immediate release. The Government alleged that the authorities in control mistreated and inflicted harm upon the detained ethnic Georgians. According to the Public Defender’s Office, the practice of arbitrarily detaining individuals for “illegal crossings” has intensified. In contrast to previous years, when those detained were typically released after paying a fine, the use of detention has reportedly become harsher and punitive. The Government underlined that in the village of Kirbali alone, located in the vicinity of the Administrative Boundary Line with South Ossetia, nearly every family had experienced arbitrary detention of at least one family member.

43. The European Union reported a slight decline in the number of detentions in South Ossetia (from 41 in 2022 to 36 in 2023 and 35 in 2024). However, this decrease was mainly due to incremental “borderization” and weakened community ties across the Administrative Boundary Lines, reducing both the reasons and opportunities for crossing. The European Union expressed concern that ethnic Georgian detainees were increasingly facing additional charges, such as “drug possession or smuggling”, which Georgian authorities claim are usually fabricated. These charges often result in prolonged sentences and heavy fines, serving as a further deterrent to unauthorized crossings. In Abkhazia, according to the European Union, the number of detained Georgian citizens remains lower, with four cases reported in 2023 and 16 in 2024 according to information shared through the hotline managed by the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia. However, there has been a noticeable increase in the detention of foreign nationals, especially people from countries in the Middle East.

44. The Government of Georgia stated that gender dimensions featuring in cases mentioned in the previous reports persisted,⁴⁰ including the detention of young Georgian

³⁹ Submission by the European Union.

⁴⁰ A/HRC/54/80, para. 48.

women on fabricated charges, such as espionage, or for possessing a Georgian passport. It is alleged the detentions are intended to intimidate women as a more vulnerable segment of the ethnic Georgian population, which is already subjected to other forms of discrimination in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Government reported the arbitrary detention, in South Ossetia, of an underage Georgian girl, A.B., in August 2024, describing it as an indication of a troubling escalation in detention practices (see also para. 55 below).

4. Right to health

45. Key issues related to the enjoyment of the right to health mentioned in previous OHCHR reports remain relevant in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.⁴¹ According to the Public Defender's Office, poor medical services, inadequate infrastructure and unqualified medical staff remain among the major difficulties facing communities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Transferring patients across the Administrative Boundary Lines continued to be a challenging process.⁴² The European Union stated that the State referral programme of the Government of Georgia continued to offer free medical assistance and ambulance transportation for residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia at hospitals in Tbilisi-controlled territory. The number of beneficiaries remained similar to previous years.

46. The Government of Georgia has highlighted reports of ethnically based denials of medical evacuation for ethnic Georgians across the Administrative Boundary Lines. According to the European Union, access to primary healthcare available for residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia continues to be an issue of serious concern. The ethnic Georgian population in Gali district has access to medical treatment across the Administrative Boundary Line in Tbilisi-controlled territory. Residents of other parts of Abkhazia and South Ossetia rely mainly on the primary healthcare provided in those areas, which is considered to be inadequate. Moreover, some parts of those territories remain without any available primary healthcare facilities. According to the Government of Georgia, the residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia may freely access primary healthcare services on the territory under its control.

47. According to available information, the quality of health services in Gali and adjacent districts remains poor, and the situation presented in the previous report by OHCHR remains unchanged.⁴³

48. Concerns persist over the negative impact of restrictions on freedom of movement across the Administrative Boundary Line between South Ossetia and Tbilisi-controlled territory on persons affected by the conflict. This may affect their right to health, including their access to healthcare, critical services and urgent medical evacuations.⁴⁴

5. Right to education in the Georgian language

49. The continued restrictions on the use of Georgian as a language of instruction in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which particularly affects the ethnic Georgian population in Gali and Akhgori districts,⁴⁵ remain of concern.

50. The Government of Georgia stated that Georgian has been fully replaced by Russian as the language of instruction in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which, it says, amounts to linguistic discrimination. According to the Government, schools prohibit books and notebooks displaying the Georgian flag, forbid schoolchildren from speaking Georgian and present historical narratives portraying Georgia as an enemy. According to the Public Defender's Office, data from the 2023/24 academic year indicates that 30 general education schools, nine pre-school institutions and five art schools are functioning in Gali district, while in Akhgori, only six schools are operational. In five of those schools, teaching is conducted in Georgian only in grade 11, with teaching conducted in Russian in the first 10 grades. In other instances, the Georgian language is taught as a foreign language subject and is included

⁴¹ Ibid., paras. 50–51.

⁴² [A/HRC/51/64](#), paras. 50–51.

⁴³ [A/HRC/54/80](#), para. 50.

⁴⁴ Ibid., para. 51.

⁴⁵ Ibid., para. 52.

in the study of Georgian literature. According to the Government, four art schools are functioning in Gali district, while in Akhgori, only five schools are currently operational. Four of those schools initially provided instruction in Georgian, but the language of instruction has gradually switched to Russian. The Government alleges that 4,000 school children and 600 children in kindergarten in Abkhazia and South Ossetia are deprived of the right to receive education in their native language.

51. The right to receive education in Georgian continues to be an important issue for the residents of Gali district. According to available information, since September 2015, Russian has been gradually replacing Georgian as the language of instruction, becoming the only language of instruction as of September 2022. Since most teachers do not have adequate Russian-language skills for teaching, there have been serious problems in schools, heavily impacting the quality of education.⁴⁶ Recently, the shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in science disciplines, has become a significant concern. The lack of teachers with the necessary qualifications hampers the education process. As a result, non-specialized teachers are often assigned to teach these subjects, once again with a negative effect on the quality of education. The Government of Georgia reported that ethnic Georgian teachers and principals, especially those educated in Georgia, are pressured to repeat their studies in Russian in Abkhazia. Some have reportedly been dismissed and replaced with ethnic Abkhaz teachers or teachers trained in Sokhumi or in the Russian Federation. In addition, the dilapidated conditions of education facilities also have negative impact on the quality of education. Nevertheless, nearly all school-age children are enrolled and attend schools, although during the cold season attendance typically drops off due to inadequate heating and poor overall conditions.

52. According to the European Union, the gradual switch to education in Russian continued in Akhgori district in South Ossetia. By the end of the 2024/25 school year, the process is expected to end, after which there will no longer be access to mother tongue education for Georgian language speakers. The Government of Georgia stated that the gradual transition to Russian as the language of instruction in Akhgori district was completed by the end of the 2023/24 academic year, after which Georgian-speaking students no longer had access to education in their native language.

6. Property rights and cultural heritage

53. Observations presented in previous reports by OHCHR concerning property issues require continued attention.⁴⁷ The Government of Georgia stated that, in 2019, the authorities in control in South Ossetia discussed redistributing apartments owned by displaced ethnic Georgians, allocating 60 flats to local residents. In 2017, up to 300 homes belonging to internally displaced ethnic Georgians in Eredvi were destroyed by the authorities in control, with plans to turn the area into a landfill. Dzatsemi village was converted into a military training ground. As a result, 11 Georgian villages were reportedly completely destroyed. The Government considers that those actions by the authorities in control are intended to discourage the creation of favourable conditions for the process of return of displaced people and could be seen as a deliberate attempt to hamper such return.

54. The Government of Georgia reiterated concerns that the state of monuments of Georgian cultural, historical and religious heritage located in Abkhazia and South Ossetia is deteriorating progressively and that some monuments are in urgent need of protection and rehabilitation. The Government also raised concerns over the destruction of and stylistic alterations to those monuments, arguably aimed at erasing their ties to Georgian history and identity. Of special concern were the Bedia Monastery (tenth century) and the Mother of God Monastery in Thiri (sixteenth century).

⁴⁶ Ibid., para. 53.

⁴⁷ Ibid., para. 55.

7. Gender equality and gender-based discrimination and violence

55. The local population in Abkhazia continued to express concerns related to the lack of effective protection against crime and gender-based violence, including sexual violence.⁴⁸ According to the European Union, the absence of functional human rights mechanisms in Abkhazia and South Ossetia exposes women and girls to an increased risk of gender-based violence, lack of protection and lack of access to psychosocial rehabilitation services. Gender inequalities continue to restrict women's opportunities to improve their livelihoods and to engage in political decision-making.

8. Civil society

56. Observations presented in previous reports concerning restrictions on civil society⁴⁹ require continued attention. These include the draft proposal on "foreign agents", which risks limiting the activities of international and local organizations in Abkhazia, especially activities around trust-building, education and conflict transformation. According to the European Union, civil society strongly objected to the draft proposal, the adoption of which was eventually postponed. The European Union stated that some international agencies working in Abkhazia had been under pressure from the authorities in control to abstain from supporting NGOs with critical views.

57. The European Union noted that the law "on transparency of foreign influence" (see para. 18 above) has not yet directly affected projects it has funded that benefit CSOs in Tbilisi-controlled territory working on conflict transformation and confidence-building with partners in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. However, due to the increasingly restrictive environment for civil society, projects initially intended to engage government stakeholders in peacebuilding were modified to exclude government entities from their activities. The European Union expressed concern that the full implementation of the law in Tbilisi-controlled territory or other similar measures could negatively impact NGOs working with partners in these regions, potentially hindering efforts to address human rights issues.

58. The protracted "criminal proceedings" against Tamar Mearakishvili⁵⁰ require close attention considering the intimidation and restrictions on freedom of movement in South Ossetia.

9. Accountability

59. On 30 June 2022, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for three individuals from South Ossetia for the crimes of unlawful confinement, ill-treatment, hostage-taking and the subsequent unlawful transfer of ethnic Georgian civilians, allegedly committed between 1 July and 10 October 2008 in the context of an international armed conflict in and around South Ossetia.⁵¹ As of the time of reporting, the arrest warrants remain active and the individuals concerned remain at large. On 16 December 2022, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced that he was concluding his investigation into the situation in Georgia, given the absence of any material change in circumstances.⁵² The investigation revealed the alleged involvement of Major General Vyacheslav Borisov, then Deputy Commander of the Russian Airborne Forces and now deceased, who is believed to have deliberately contributed to some of the above-mentioned crimes.

60. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe examined the case of *Georgia v. Russia (II)* at its meetings in December 2023 and September 2024.⁵³ Regarding *Georgia v.*

⁴⁸ A/78/864, para. 36.

⁴⁹ A/HRC/51/64, paras. 63–64.

⁵⁰ Ms. Mearakishvili is an ethnic Georgian and civil society activist in Akhalkalaki district who had been cooperating with the international community and reporting allegations of human rights violations. Her case has been mentioned in previous reports (A/HRC/54/80, paras. 50–51 and 59).

⁵¹ See <https://www.icc-cpi.int/georgia>. See also A/HRC/51/64, para. 65.

⁵² See <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/prosecutor-international-criminal-court-karim-aa-khan-kc-announces-conclusion-investigation>.

⁵³ Council of Europe, "Consolidated report on the conflict in Georgia (April–September 2024)", para. 22 (<https://rm.coe.int/consolidated-report-on-the-conflict-in-georgia-april-september-2024/1680b282a8>).

Russia (IV),⁵⁴ which was declared admissible on 20 April 2023, the European Court of Human Rights issued its ruling on 9 April 2024. The European Court of Human Rights issued rulings on 19 of December 2023 in the cases of *O.J. and J.O. v. Georgia and Russia*, and *Matkava and others v. Russia*, and in its judgement of 17 December 2024, in the case of *Taganova and Others v. Georgia and Russia*.⁵⁵

10. Missing persons

61. ICRC reported on progress under its coordination mechanisms established to clarify the fate of persons missing in relation to the armed conflicts in the 1990s and in 2008 and in their aftermath. According to ICRC, as at January 2025, 317 human remains have been recovered, identified and returned to families since the start of its work and 1,956 persons remain unaccounted for.

11. Geneva International Discussions

62. The fifty-eighth through sixty-second rounds of the Geneva International Discussions, with participants meeting in two parallel working groups, were held during the reporting period, in July and December 2023 and April, June and November 2024. OHCHR regrets the continued suspension, since June 2018, of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in Gali, which is essential for effective security and stability on the ground. In 2024, the Ergneti Incident and Reporting Mechanism was convened six times.

C. Situation of internally displaced persons and refugees

63. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/293, the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly, at its seventy-eighth session, a comprehensive annual report on the status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, covering the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.⁵⁶ The information contained therein remains relevant at the time of the finalization of the present report. The Government of Georgia stated that displaced persons from Abkhazia and South Ossetia remained deprived of their fundamental right to a safe and dignified return and continued to face severe obstacles and discrimination, including violations of their property rights.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

64. **The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights appreciates the continued cooperation between the Government of Georgia and OHCHR and welcomes the commitment of the Government to the promotion and protection of human rights, including by hosting an OHCHR presence in Tbilisi. OHCHR remains committed to supporting the Government and other national stakeholders to further the promotion and protection of human rights in Georgia, including in responding to the issues identified herein.**

65. **In addition to the recommendations made in previous reports, OHCHR presents the following recommendations to the Government of Georgia:**

(a) **Guarantee the right of peaceful assembly and urgently address serious allegations of human rights violations in the context of public protests in the country, including by halting the arbitrary arrest of demonstrators, and the unnecessary or disproportionate use of force by law enforcement against journalists and media workers**

⁵⁴ European Court of Human Rights, *Georgia v. Russia (IV)*, Application No. 39611/18, Judgment (Merits), 9 April 2024.

⁵⁵ *Taganova and Others v. Georgia and Russia*, Applications Nos. 18102/04 and 4 others, Judgment, 17 December 2024; *O.J. and J.O. v. Georgia and Russia*, Applications Nos. 42126/15 and 42127/15, Judgment, 19 December 2023; *Matkava and others v. Russia*, Application No. 3963/18, Judgment, 19 December 2023.

⁵⁶ See [A/78/864](#).

covering protests; conduct prompt, independent and thorough investigations and hold those found responsible to account; ensure, in line with the recommendation in the OHCHR publication, “Guidance on the use of less lethal weapons in law enforcement”,⁵⁷ indicating that “law enforcement officials should be identifiable, for example by wearing nametags or individually assigned service numbers”; and ensure that any detention of individuals is consistent with international human rights law and that all concerned are afforded the full scope of due process and fair trial protections, including judicial review of the lawfulness of detention, prompt trial by a competent and independent court or release;

(b) Submit its long overdue report to the Committee against Torture and engage in a dialogue with the Committee to address challenges pertaining to the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(c) Intensify efforts to combat gender-based discrimination and violence and take steps towards gender equality in political representation in Georgia, including by reviewing the legislative changes made in April 2024 to abolish the 25 per cent gender quotas ahead of the October 2024 Parliamentary elections;

(d) Repeal the law “on family values and the protection of minors” adopted on 17 September 2024 and address risks emanating from this law, including hate speech, possible incidents of violence, stigma, intolerance and misinformation;

(e) Ensure an enabling environment for civil society, including by repealing the law “on transparency of foreign influence” adopted on 14 May 2024 and address the risks it carries with regard to freedoms of expression and association;

(f) Review legislative amendments to the Code on Administrative Offences, the Criminal Code and the law on assemblies and manifestations adopted on 13 December 2024 to ensure their alignment with international human rights law.

66. The lack of access for international and regional human rights mechanisms to Abkhazia and South Ossetia is regrettable, although it is noted that the authorities in control in Abkhazia continued to provide access to some United Nations development and humanitarian entities. OHCHR reiterates its call for immediate and unimpeded access for OHCHR and international and regional human rights organizations and mechanisms to Abkhazia and South Ossetia so that they may contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights.

67. OHCHR continues to support efforts within the framework of the Geneva International Discussions to improve the human rights situation on the ground. It is essential that the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in Gali district resume operations without delay or preconditions.

68. Concerning the situation of human rights in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, all actors involved are strongly encouraged to:

(a) Implement pending recommendations from previous OHCHR reports to the Human Rights Council, as relevant;

(b) Lift all undue restrictions on movement and fully reopen all crossing points at the Administrative Boundary Lines with Abkhazia and South Ossetia without further delay in order to facilitate the enjoyment of human rights and access to basic services and livelihoods by the affected populations;

(c) Pay close attention and properly respond to continuing allegations of human rights violations identified in this report, in particular those affecting ethnic Georgians in Gali and Akhgori districts, as well as those living in the areas adjacent to the Administrative Boundary Lines and displaced persons;

⁵⁷ See https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CCPR/LLW_Guidance.pdf.

(d) Promote dialogue and confidence-building measures to protect civic space, ensure effective remedies and allow international organizations to operate without undue restrictions;

(e) Refrain from exploiting conflicting narratives and using conduct that may augment tensions or incite discrimination or violence;

(f) Investigate, promptly and thoroughly, all allegations of violation of the right to life, as well as torture or ill-treatment, and intensify efforts to establish accountability and provide redress to victims and prevent their recurrence;

(g) Cease any practice of arbitrary deprivation of liberty and address all related concerns, including by conducting a thorough review and promptly resolving alleged or suspected violations, consistent with international human rights law;

(h) Take all necessary additional measures to identify sustainable solutions regarding personal identity and related documentation, in order to facilitate freedom of movement, and address the adverse effects of current practices, ensuring equality in the exercise of all human rights;

(i) Ensure access to quality education for all without discrimination and the right to receive instruction in one's native language.
