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**National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights
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Georgia

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the National Report of Georgia 2025 under the 4th cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). In 2021, under the 3rd cycle of the Universal Periodic Review, Georgia received 285 recommendations and supported 257 recommendations. This report is accompanied by information on the status of implementation of the supported recommendations received.
2. The report consists of two parts: the Report and a table showing the status of implementation of the supported recommendations (Annex).
3. This Report was prepared with the participation of all relevant state agencies and involved the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government.
4. This Report was also submitted to the Public Defender of Georgia.
5. It is noteworthy that the Parliament of Georgia reviewed this Report in line with the Rules of Procedures of the Parliament as amended in 2016.

II. Human rights protection – Achievements and challenges

A. Major institutional and legislative reforms

6. Reforms and activities to be implemented in respect of human rights protection are reflected in national-level policy documents.
7. In 2022, the Government approved the National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights for 2022-2030, developed with the coordination of the Administration of the Government and with involvement of relevant agencies/organizations, which was adopted by the Parliament in 2023.
8. The second Human Rights Strategy follows on from the first National Strategy (2014-2020) and creates a unified framework for strengthening fundamental human rights and freedoms in the country. The new strategy aims to further develop, refine and improve the national human rights protection system. The document reflects existing challenges in terms of human rights, takes into account the recommendations of international human rights bodies and ensures their implementation.
9. The development process of the Strategy was conducted in an inclusive manner. The draft document was shared with the Public Defender of Georgia, international and non-governmental organizations for their comments and suggestions.
10. In order to implement the Strategy, the Human Rights Action Plan for 2024-2026 was approved in 2023. The document was developed with the support of international organizations, with full involvement of state agencies, and based on recommendations of non-governmental organizations, independent experts, and stakeholders.
11. In 2022, the following documents were adopted: 1) the 2022-2024 Action Plan on the Measures to be Implemented for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims (Survivors) and 2) the 2022-2024 Action Plan on the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.
12. In 2022, Parliament led the process of implementing the EU recommendations with the participation of stakeholders, including the government, civil society, and international partners.
13. 9 parliamentary working groups were established to work on specific priorities. The Parliament held about 60 working group meetings and adopted 82 laws to implement the 12 recommendations given to Georgia by the European Union.
14. The reforms included the following areas: improvement of parliamentary oversight mechanisms; electoral reform; judicial reform; strengthening of anti-corruption activities; de-oligarchization; fight against organized crime; professional, independent and pluralistic

media environment; fight against violence against women; taking into account the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights by Georgian courts; election of the Public Defender.

15. In 2021–2024, Central Election Commission of Georgia (CEC) ensured the organization of elections at a professional level, which is confirmed by positive assessments of international organizations. Namely: in 2021–2024, the Election Administration conducted three general (presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections), seven by-elections and two extraordinary elections.

16. Developing an inclusive electoral environment is one of the key priorities for the election administration. In developing the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, the Election Administration used a new approach, which meant taking into account the needs of underrepresented groups (people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, women) in all activities, to the extent possible.

17. For the parliamentary elections of 26 October 2024, the CEC conducted an unprecedentedly large-scale information campaign, which also reflected international standards and recommendations, since elections were held using electronic technologies in most polling stations.

18. In 2023, the Parliament adopted a new Law on Personal Data Protection and accompanying legislative amendments. As a result, personal data protection standards came into line with the European Union's data protection regulations.

19. Based on the recommendations of the European Commission, in 2022, based on legislative amendments made to the Law on the Fight against Corruption, an independent agency – Anti-Corruption Bureau – was established. The Bureau is distinguished by a high degree of independence. It is accountable only to Parliament, which entails annual reporting.

20. The mandate of the Bureau includes: developing a document defining the general policy of fight against corruption, a national anti-corruption strategy and an action plan, and ensuring their implementation; ensuring and monitoring the submission of asset declarations by officials; ensuring transparency and publicity of political finances; identifying conflicts of interest and conducting risk assessments; protecting whistleblowers.

21. From 1 May 2024, the Human Rights Protection Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) continues its activities with an expanded mandate. The competence of the Department has also been extended to monitoring the implementation of obligations stipulated by the Law of Georgia on Personal Data Protection in the Ministry. In addition, Witness and Victim Coordinator Service has been established as a separate structural unit of Department. It is also worth noting that starting from 2021, coordinators are involved in the case by decision of the prosecutor and/or investigator.

22. As part of the criminal police reform implemented in MIA in 2023, operational, investigative and precinct directions were completely separated in all territorial organs of the Ministry, and the investigator's functions and duties were defined only as the investigation of criminal cases. This reform will have a positive impact on the quality of criminal case investigation and the exercise of police powers.

23. In 2024, Parliament adopted the legislative amendments to address the crisis caused by the small number of social workers across the country. As a result, the certification process for those wishing to work as social workers continued. This will contribute to the implementation of the recommendation of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to involve more social workers in the field of social work.

24. The legislative amendments strengthened the social protection guarantees for the Public Defender and the staff of the Public Defender's Office, further enhancing institutional independence and support.

25. In May 2025, a Temporary Parliamentary Commission on Women and Children's Issues was established by a parliamentary resolution, the purpose of which is to systematically work on women and children's issues. Also, in April 2025, councils on women and children's issues were established in municipal assemblies, which cooperate with the relevant commission of the Government of Georgia.

B. Human rights situation in occupied territories

26. The human rights and humanitarian situation in the regions of Georgia occupied by Russia is deteriorating day by day. As a result of the illegal occupation of the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions by the Russian Federation, increasing militarization, the erection of barbed wire and other artificial barriers along the occupation line, and steps taken towards “integration” into Russia’s political, military, economic, social, and legal spaces, human rights are being grossly violated. The Occupying Power is committing violations of such fundamental rights as the violation of the right to life, torture and ill-treatment, illegal detention of people, discrimination on ethnic grounds, the violation of the right to receive education in one’s native language, restrictions on the right to life, property, freedom of movement, and healthcare, and others.

27. As a result of repeated waves of ethnic cleansing, hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees, driven from their homes, are still unable to return to their homes in safety and dignity.

28. The practice of killing Georgian citizens continues in the occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. Recently, two innocent Georgian citizens have been killed. Namely, on 6 November 2023, in the village of Kirbali, Gori Municipality, Russian occupation forces brutally killed a Georgian civilian, Tamaz Ginturi, which was followed on 9 December of the same year by the murder of Vitali Karbaia, who died as a result of beatings by representatives of the occupation regime in the so-called militia building in occupied Gali.

29. Illegal detentions are systematic in both the occupied territories and near the occupation line. In particular, since 2021, 108 facts of illegal detention by representatives of the Russian occupation forces have been identified in the occupied Abkhazia, and 201 in Tskhinvali. The occupying force does not show a humane approach and illegally detains representatives of vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly, and people with serious health conditions.

30. Since 2021, more than 320 cases of illegal so-called borderization have been recorded. As a result, locals living along the occupation line are deprived of the opportunity to visit their families, do not have access to their property, agricultural lands, religious monuments or cemeteries, and are restricted from receiving healthcare and education services in the territory controlled by the Georgian authorities.

31. Several citizens in need of emergency medical assistance have lost their lives as a result of these illegal restrictions, including, in January 2023, a one and a half year old child, whose timely transfer from Akhagori to Tbilisi for treatment was not possible precisely due to the barriers and obstacles artificially created by the Russian occupation forces.

32. Education in the native language has been banned in both occupied regions, and the teaching process in Georgian kindergartens and schools has been switched entirely to Russian. Access to education in the native language is restricted to more than 4,000 school and 600 kindergarten students in both occupied regions every year.

33. The grave human rights situation in the occupied territories is particularly worrying given the Russian Federation’s refusal to allow international human rights mechanisms access to the occupied territories. The European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) is also restricted from accessing the occupied regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, despite its mandate covering the entire territory of Georgia.

34. The Russian Federation, as the occupying power and the State exercising effective control, bears full responsibility for human rights violations in the occupied regions, as reflected in numerous decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and in rulings on arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court.

35. Georgia is steadfastly pursuing a policy of peaceful resolution of the Russian-Georgian conflict and is using all possible diplomatic, political, legal and other levers to ensure the protection of human rights in the territories occupied by Russia as a result of the occupation. To this end, the Georgian government is actively using the Geneva International Negotiations and the meetings of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM)

operating within its framework. However, in this regard, it is noteworthy that the IPRM meetings in the direction of occupied Abkhazia have been suspended as a result of the decision of the Russian occupation forces. In addition, the aforementioned issues are constantly actively raised in all relevant bilateral and multilateral formats and are reflected in a number of documents adopted by both individual countries and international organizations.

36. Despite the ongoing occupation, the Government continues to effectively implement the Action Plan for Engagement Strategy and the Peace Initiative “A Step to a Better Future”.

37. Within the framework of the Peace Initiative, in order to promote the deepening of trade relations on both sides of the occupation line and improve the socio-economic situation of the population affected by the Russian-Georgian war and subsequent occupation, a unique financial mechanism – the “Peace Fund for a Better Future” – was launched at the end of 2020, which provides grants to support joint business projects on both sides of the occupation line.

38. In order to ensure access to quality education for young people living in the occupied regions, various preferential programs/mechanisms tailored to their interests and needs – simplified enrollment, tuition financing, education recognition, involvement in professional or international educational programs – are in effect. In 2021–2024, 938 students were enrolled in higher educational institutions of Georgia without exams, and an additional 22 young people were enrolled in the Georgian language training educational program, the so-called “1+4 program”.

39. In 2024, the Post-School Education Preparation Program was fully launched, which involves one-year intensive and needs-based training of young people living in the occupied regions in the Georgian language and various profile subjects, funding for study and placement, as well as a monthly scholarship.

40. Within the framework of the State Medical Referral Program, 5,466 people from the occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions received completely free medical services in 2021–2024. Since 2023, free medical care has become available to people living in the occupied territories who have a status-neutral personal number within the framework of other specialized state health care programs. In 2021–2024, the amount spent by the Government on the healthcare component in the occupied regions amounts to more than 220 million GEL.

C. Fight against crimes committed with discrimination/hatred motive

41. Monitoring the quality of investigations into crimes committed with intolerance motive on the ground of discrimination is one of the priority directions of the MIA. From the moment of receiving a notification about the crime, the Ministry is involved and monitors those criminal cases within the framework of which, presumably, a motive of intolerance on the basis of any of the grounds provided for in Article 53¹ of the Criminal Code of Georgia is revealed.

42. In the training programs of the Academy of the MIA, the human rights module pays special attention to the issues of prohibition of discrimination, including the discussion of international and national legislation, the characteristics of hate crimes, etc. The trainings aim to improve the qualifications of law enforcement officials for effective investigation of cases of this category.

43. According to the 2022-2027 Strategy of the Prosecutor’s Office, one of its important functions is again fight against crimes motivated by intolerance. Since 2020, specialized prosecutors have been conducting procedural management of crimes committed with the motive of intolerance. Currently, 164 employees of the Prosecutor’s Office are specialized. In 2021-2024, criminal prosecutions were initiated against 4,464 persons for crimes committed with the motive of intolerance. According to the aforementioned data, the rate of initiation of criminal prosecutions in 2016–2020 increased by 561%.

44. In 2024, Guideline on Eliminating Shortcomings Identified as a Result of Monitoring Criminal Cases of Crimes Motivated by Intolerance was approved for prosecutors and

Prosecutor's Office investigators. Also, starting in 2024, prosecutors' witness and victim coordinators are required to participate in criminal cases of femicide, gender-based violence against women, sexual and domestic crimes, human trafficking, and discrimination motivated by intolerance.

D. Equality between women and men

45. The Government Resolution of 22 January 2024 approved the National Referral Procedures for the Identification, Protection, Assistance and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence against Women and/or Domestic Violence, the main goal of which is to develop rapid and effective coordination between relevant agencies, determine victim support measures, and prevent repeated violence.

46. In 2023, the State Concept for the Economic Empowerment of Women was adopted, which aims to establish a framework for the economic empowerment of women, taking into account the specific gender equality challenges in Georgia. This document is the first in the region to represent a unified vision of the state specifically for the economic empowerment of women and the creation of better working conditions.

47. In 2022, the Parliament adopted State Concept of Gender Equality, which represents the state's vision for eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination and ensuring gender equality. Its starting point is the elimination of the root and systemic causes and consequences of gender inequality.

48. The Government Resolution of 9 November 2022 approved the Rules for Determining and Issuing Compensation to Victims of Violence against Women and/or Domestic Violence, according to which a victim/survivor of violence is entitled to receive compensation from the state.

49. In 2021, the Government approved the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Strategy of Georgia for 2021-2025 and related action plans, which, among many other important issues, focus on encouraging women's entrepreneurship. The Strategy identifies the promotion of women's entrepreneurship as a separate priority area.

50. In order to empower women economically, the agencies under the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development are working in a number of directions, including prioritizing women entrepreneurs within various programs, producing gender-disaggregated statistics, improving skills, deepening knowledge, and raising awareness. For example, it is noteworthy that as a result of these measures, within the framework of the Micro and Small Entrepreneurship Support Program alone, the share of women beneficiaries has been 50% since 2021 to the present, and the percentage of funds transferred to them in the total amount is 48%.

E. Elimination of violence against women and domestic violence

51. Legislative amendments adopted in 2022 granted the right to free legal aid to insolvent victims of domestic violence and domestic crime in criminal cases. The right to free legal aid was also granted to victims who, although not considered insolvent under the law, are in a difficult economic situation that does not allow them to use the services of a private lawyer.

52. Amendments to the Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women and/or Domestic Violence, and the Protection and Support of Victims of Such Violence in 2022 abolished the requirement to have "victim status" to benefit from support services, in particular, shelter and crisis center services.

53. The provision of services will also not be dependent on the victim's willingness to cooperate with law enforcement/Prosecutor's Office and/or judicial authorities against perpetrators of acts of violence.

54. There are shelters and crisis centers operating in the country, which are institutions providing support services to victims/survivors of violence against women and/or domestic violence and/or sexual violence and their dependents, as well as victims/survivors of human

trafficking and their dependents, which provide support to victims and their dependents with psychological, social, and legal assistance services.

55. As of 2024, a total of 6 shelters (in Tbilisi (2), Batumi, Gori, Kutaisi and Signaghi) and 7 crisis centers (in Tbilisi, Gori, Kutaisi, Ozurgeti, Marneuli, Telavi and Zugdidi) will operate under the LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking.

56. Under the LEPL Agency for State Care and Assistance for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking, in order to provide consultation services to the population, both the consultation of victims of violence (116 006) and the child assistance (111) hotlines operate. The hotlines operate 24/7 and are available in 9 languages (Georgian, English, Russian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Persian, Arabic, Ukrainian). Calls to the hotline are free of charge.

57. Combating gender-based violence against women and domestic crime is a priority direction of the 2022-2027 Strategy of the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia. In the Prosecutor's Office of Georgia, specialized prosecutors provide procedural guidance and support to state prosecution in cases of domestic violence and domestic crime. Currently, 257 employees of the Prosecutor's Office are specialized.

58. In 2021–2024, the number of referrals to law enforcement agencies and the rate of initiation of criminal prosecution by the Prosecutor's Office for domestic crimes is high. In particular, in 2021, criminal prosecution was initiated against 5,144 persons, in 2022 – against 5,325 persons, in 2023 – against 5,286 persons, and in 2024 – against 5,003 persons.

59. In 2021–2024, in 90–91% of cases involving individuals accused of domestic crimes, the Prosecutor's Office requested the court to impose pre-trial detention as a preventive measure. It also refused to use alternative mechanisms of criminal prosecution.

60. Since 2021, only specialized prosecutors have been responsible for the procedural management of sexual crimes. Currently, 173 employees of the Prosecutor's Office are specialized.

61. In 2022–2024, 100 prosecutors and managers of the Prosecutor's Office were trained within the framework of 6 training activities on the effective investigation and prosecution of gender-motivated murders of women (femicide).

62. The MIA actively investigates cases of violence against women and domestic violence. Since 2020, when issuing restraining orders in such cases, it has become possible to impose electronic monitoring on perpetrators to enforce restrictions on approaching victims. The electronic monitoring system (electronic bracelet) enables real-time supervision of the perpetrator's compliance with the conditions set out in the restraining order, including the prohibition on approaching the victim, their residence, workplace, or other designated locations. In May 2023, an updated risk assessment tool was introduced, enabling police officers to assess the risk of repeat violence and to issue restraining orders proactively to prevent further violence.

63. To facilitate the prevention and detection of crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability, the Ministry has established an electronic system and registry to monitor individuals convicted of, or deprived of rights for, such crimes. This system electronically processes personal data, court verdicts, and information on the legal restrictions imposed on individuals convicted of or deprived of rights for crimes against sexual freedom and inviolability.

F. Child rights

64. Protection of children's rights is a key part of the national strategy. The process of deinstitutionalization of large children's institutions has been completed.

65. In 2024, the Parliament adopted the Law on the Protection of Family Values and Minor, along with accompanying legislative amendments. In order to strengthen family values based on the union of a man and a woman, and mechanisms for the protection of

minors, the legislative amendments defined issues related to marriage, adoption and foster care of minors, the use of medical manipulation to assign a person to a sex other than their biological sex, sex designation in state-issued documents, education, dissemination of information, public gatherings and demonstrations, and disregard for biological sex within the framework of employment relationships.

66. Important steps have been taken to protect children from sexual violence. Since 2022, a Psychological and Social Service Center (Barnahus) has been operating in Tbilisi for the children who are victims of violence. The goal is the rehabilitation of child victims and a coordinated response in order to prevent re-victimization of the child. The center serves to create a child-friendly, multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach that provides psychological and social rehabilitation of the child through the “one-stop shop” principle.

67. In 2023, an action protocol for cases of sexual violence against children was approved, which includes instructions on recognizing signs of child sexual abuse and responding to it.

68. Within the framework of the State Program for Child Care and Youth Support, the sub-program Providing Shelter for Homeless Children is being implemented, the task of which is the psychosocial rehabilitation and integration of homeless children, including children living and working on the streets. Within the framework of this sub-program, services were provided to 277 beneficiaries in 2021, 296 in 2022, 261 in 2023, and 119 in 2024.

69. The budget of the State Program for Social Rehabilitation and Child Care is increasing every year, and the services financed under the program are becoming more diverse. In 2022, this amounted to 51,590,893 million GEL, and in 2023 – 66,550,000 GEL. In 2024, it increased by approximately 10 million GEL and was determined at 76,350,000 GEL. Since 2021, the Sub-Program for Supporting Young People Aged 18–21 Having Left the State Care System and the Sub-program for Providing Food Products to Young People Aged 18–21 Having Left the State Care System have been added to the program.

70. In accordance with the standard approved by the High Council of Justice, criminal, civil and administrative cases involving children may be heard only by a judge who has undergone appropriate training, namely, has undergone mandatory training established by the High Council of Justice. The training of judges is provided by the High School of Justice.

71. Since 2020, a structural unit – Juvenile Referral Center – has been operating within the LEPL National Agency for Crime Prevention, Execution of Non-custodial Sentences and Probation, the goal of which is the rehabilitation, resocialization and socialization of juveniles who have not reached the age of criminal responsibility and have complex behavior, and crime prevention through an institutional and complex approach. The target group of the Center is juveniles aged 10 to 18 with complex behavior, as well as juveniles aged 7 to 14 involved in antisocial activities.

72. In order to develop restorative justice, 13 regional mediation spaces were opened across the country to provide access to mediation. A registry of mediators was created, within the framework of which trained mediators were employed in the Agency. A draft Law of Georgia on Restorative Justice was developed.

73. In 2022, 9 rehabilitation programs were renewed to promote the resocialization and rehabilitation of Probation Agency beneficiaries, including diverted individuals and juvenile probationers.

74. 333 employees of the Prosecutor’s Office specialize in juvenile justice. In 2021–2024, 662 employees of the Prosecutor’s Office were trained on juvenile justice issues within the framework of 60 training activities.

75. The MIA, within the framework of its competence, actively promotes the protection of children’s rights and their full realization. An important component of achieving this goal is a child-friendly environment. Children’s rooms operate in several territorial divisions of the Ministry. The Ministry’s medium-term action plan for 2024–2027 includes a component for creating child-friendly spaces, which implies the creation of a specialized unit for minors and the arrangement of child-friendly spaces in the structural units of the Ministry.

76. Given the specifics of crimes committed against and by minors and the best interests of the child, the Main Division for Juvenile Affairs has been operating in the Tbilisi Police Department since 2020. The Division for Juvenile Affairs was also launched in the Adjara Police Department in 2024. The aforementioned units are staffed by specialized investigators and detectives, who are constantly undergoing advanced training in the field of juvenile justice.

77. The MIA monitors crimes committed by/against minors on a daily basis. Relevant employees of the Ministry constantly provide consultations to persons involved in criminal cases and administrative proceedings, ensure coordination of activities in cases of violence against children, appropriate referral of these cases, and prepare thematic recommendations.

78. The Ministry is actively involved in awareness-raising campaigns organized to protect children's rights. In order to raise awareness on issues related to the protection of minors' rights, the Ministry has also been organizing the Befriend the Police campaign since 2022, under which informational and educational meetings are held for thousands of schoolchildren.

79. For the first time in the Georgian educational space, the introduction of a social work component in schools began in 2021. The social worker carries out his functions and duties directly at the school. Currently, social workers are represented in 80 public schools.

80. As part of the planned reform to further improve and develop the inclusive education support system, in 2023, an Inclusive and Special Education Support Center (Department) was established within the LEPL Office of Resource Officers of Educational Institutions.

81. Currently, the country has a National Counter-Terrorism Strategy for 2022-2026 and its Action Plan. Their implementation is supervised by an inter-agency standing commission that meets at least once a year. The prevention chapter of the strategy, among other things, determines the development of special approaches for children and adolescents in terms of radicalization prevention, de-radicalization and resocialization. To this end, the strategy envisages the implementation of educational and cultural projects. In addition, the State Security Service of Georgia actively cooperates with the media and the public on issues within its competence, especially in matters related to counter-terrorism.

G. Right to fair trial

82. In 2021–2024, Georgia continued its reform to strengthen the independence, accountability, efficiency, transparency and accessibility of the judiciary. As a result, the process of selection/appointment/election of candidates for judges at all levels is fully transparent. The identities of High Council of Justice members evaluating candidates, their individual assessments, and the justifications for those assessments are now publicly available. An open voting procedure was introduced within the High Council of Justice, ensuring that only candidates for the Supreme Court, or appointees to first and second instance courts, who received the highest evaluations based on competence and integrity are submitted to the Parliament or appointed; Additionally, judicial candidates were granted the right to appeal the decisions of the High Council of Justice to the Qualification Chamber of the Supreme Court at any stage of the selection process. This reform was positively assessed in GRECO's 2024 report.

83. To further develop the administration of justice, the Judicial Reform Strategy and Action Plan were developed by the Parliament in October 2022. Since October 2021, updated rules of judicial ethics aligned with international standards have been in effect.

84. The European Court of Human Rights (Strasbourg Court) serves as the best tool for assessing fair trial standards and access to justice. In 2011, 3,045 cases were pending against Georgia before the Strasbourg Court. By December 2024, this number had decreased to just 198 pending applications, marking one of the lowest figures in Georgia's history as a member of the Council of Europe. This decrease in applications is, among other factors, attributed to the state's effective implementation of the Strasbourg Court's judgments. In total, 118 cases against Georgia have been closed through resolutions of the Committee of Ministers, with the majority (100 cases) closed since 2013, and 18 cases closed prior to 2013. Notably, in

2024 alone, supervision was closed in 18 cases based on the Committee of Ministers' resolutions, representing Georgia's best annual result to date.

H. Reforms in the penitentiary system

85. To develop the penitentiary system and bring the number of prisoners closer to European standards, in 2021 the Parliament adopted a package of legislative amendments, which also exempted persons accused and convicted of certain crimes under the Criminal Code from criminal liability and punishment.

86. In 2022, the Parliament adopted the Law on Amnesty. In order to compensate for the restrictions imposed on persons in penitentiary institutions in the fight against COVID-19, the Law provided for the establishment of a benefit for persons in custody (accused/convicted persons), namely, the reduction of the days provided for in the sentence in proportion to the restrictions.

87. In 2024, the Parliament again adopted the Law on Amnesty, which took into account various forms of amnesty (complete exemption from criminal liability and punishment; halving the sentence; reducing the sentence by 1/4; reducing the sentence by 1/6; reducing the suspended sentence and probation period).

88. On the one hand, in order to improve the working conditions of employees of the Special Penitentiary Service, including expanding social security guarantees for employees of the Service, and on the other hand, in order to further strengthen the guarantees for the protection of the rights of accused and convicted persons, a new Penitentiary Code came into force on 1 January 2024.

89. According to the new Code: all types of visits became completely free ; convicts placed in high-risk prisons were granted the right to video visits; juvenile defendants/convicts were granted 60 minutes of free phone time per month, taking into account their best interests and in order to improve contact with the outside world, at the initiative of the Special Penitentiary Service; all convicts were granted the right to receive higher education.

90. In order to improve the living and daily conditions of the accused/convicted, Laituri Penitentiary Institution No. 1 was opened in 2023, which is designed for 700 convicts and meets all the recommendations of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The institution is fully adapted for persons with disabilities.

91. To resocialize and rehabilitate the convicts, 21 psychosocial rehabilitation programs and psychosocial trainings have been implemented in the penitentiary system for the current period. In penitentiary institutions, convicts master new professions and undergo retraining courses in various fields, which helps them effectively reintegrate into society and ensure their own financial income after leaving the institution.

92. In 2022, the gradual introduction of the Digital University began in penitentiary institutions, which involves the direct involvement of students in the process of obtaining higher education using a telebridge. The project ensures access to higher education for convicts and allows them to remotely engage in the university education process; attend lectures online and have direct, interactive communication with lecturers. In 2024, all convicts were granted the right to study at the I and II levels of higher education. Digital education has been implemented in penitentiary institutions N1, N2, N5, N11, N8 and N16 at this stage. The Digital University will be gradually introduced in all penitentiary institutions.

93. The first House of Justice was opened in 2023 in order to further expand the rehabilitation and resocialization capabilities of prisoners in the penitentiary institution and create a mechanism for providing adequate and simplified services. More than 50 services of the House of Justice are available to those in the penitentiary institution, and all services are available to employees.

94. The penitentiary health care system is part of the universal health care system, therefore, all medical services are provided to the accused/convicted in accordance with the

same protocols and standards as in the civilian sector. The infrastructure and material and technical equipment of the medical institution operating in each penitentiary institution, as well as the N18 penitentiary medical institution, function in accordance with the requirements of the healthcare system. The Special Penitentiary Service has signed agreements with more than 70 civilian clinics and, if necessary, the beneficiary is referred to a civilian clinic for medical services.

95. In 2023, in order to improve penitentiary healthcare services and increase the availability of civil healthcare services for convicts, a new innovative service – the online clinic model – was introduced in the penitentiary system. The innovative service allows convicts to benefit from online consultation with a civil clinic specialist in the shortest possible time, which, in itself, will improve the quality of medical services. The new medical service is provided in all institutions.

I. State policy on fight against trafficking in human beings

96. In 2021, the Parliament adopted a law aimed at improving the right to rehabilitation of victims/survivors of human trafficking. The law established that the state shall provide one-time compensation to victims and survivors of trafficking, regardless of whether the victim/survivor claims for compensation for damage in accordance with civil procedural legislation. A sufficient prerequisite for providing one-time state compensation is the granting of victim or survivor status to a person. The rule to award compensation was retroactively extended to persons who had acquired victim/survivor status before the enactment of this law.

97. In order to coordinate a unified state policy to combat human trafficking, the Inter-Agency Coordination Council for the Implementation of Measures Against Human Trafficking continues to implement active measures. During the reporting period, the Council developed, approved and implemented the 2021-2022 and 2023-2024 Action Plans for Combating Trafficking, which are based on the so-called 4P principle and are aimed at crime prevention, victim protection, proactive investigation and effective criminal prosecution and cooperation measures.

98. The Law on Combating Human Trafficking recognizes two statuses in relation to the crime of trafficking: victims of trafficking and survivors of trafficking. Victims and survivors of trafficking enjoy the same legal status. The existence of two statuses is a unique approach aimed at ensuring that no person affected by trafficking, including foreign citizens, is left behind in the protection and state services available to them.

99. Various types of state services are available to victims/survivors of trafficking, including psychological and social rehabilitation, medical services, legal aid, and a one-time compensation of 1,000 GEL, the procedure for receiving of which has been simplified since 2021. In 2023, a new shelter for victims of human trafficking and violence was opened in Tbilisi.

100. To prevent children from living and working on the streets and to support their reintegration into society, the Ministry of Justice has led the development of a State Strategy for 2025–2030 for the Protection of Children Living and/or Working on the Streets from All Forms of Violence, including Trafficking. The strategy, along with its implementation action plan, is expected to be approved in the near future.

101. According to the 2016-2024 reports of the United States Department of State on the topic of trafficking, Georgia maintains the highest rating, the so-called first basket, alongside a number of European countries.

102. The Prosecutor's Office implements a strict criminal justice policy on trafficking crimes. In 2021–2024, criminal prosecutions were initiated against a total of 40 traffickers.

103. An inter-agency multidisciplinary working group for the detection, prevention and suppression of labor trafficking is functioning under the organization of the Prosecutor General's Office.

104. Proactively detecting cases of human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and girls, and punishing perpetrators is one of the priorities of the MIA.

105. The Department of Human Rights Protection and Monitoring the Quality of Investigations of the MIA, along with other categories of cases, monitors criminal cases where signs of possible trafficking are identified. Relevant representatives of the MIA undergo appropriate training/retraining in order to identify victims and perpetrators of trafficking. Trafficking issues are also included in the preparatory courses of the Academy of the MIA.

106. The Criminal Code of Georgia provides for the exemption of a person from criminal liability for a number of actions if the person committed the action due to being a victim of trafficking, before obtaining the status of a victim of trafficking.

J. Right to privacy and personal data protection

107. In Georgia, institutional control over the legality of personal data processing has been carried out by the Personal Data Protection Service since 2013, while supervision of covert investigative actions and activities related to the central bank of electronic communication identification data has been in place since 2015. Since 1 March 2022, these functions have been performed by the Personal Data Protection Service as an institutionally independent supervisory body for personal data protection.

108. In order to control the legality of personal data processing, the Service examines the legality of personal data processing by private and public institutions and law enforcement agencies, both on its own initiative, through planned or unplanned inspections, as well as on the basis of notifications from interested parties and applications from citizens. In order to correct the identified shortcomings, the Service issues recommendations and mandatory instructions to be performed.

109. In order to strengthen the standards and guarantees for the protection of personal data and privacy, a new Law on Personal Data Protection was developed, the main part of which entered into force on 1 March 2024. The Service has developed a strategy and action plan for the implementation of the new Law. Since 1 December 2023, the Service has introduced individual consultation meetings with any interested person.

K. Freedom of religion, expression, assembly and association

110. The Constitution of Georgia protects freedom of belief, religion and conscience, freedom of opinion and its expression, freedom of assembly and association. The right to form and join a trade union, and the right to strike are guaranteed by the Constitution. Citizens of Georgia have the right to form a political party in accordance with the Organic Law and to participate in its activities.

111. The authorities pay special attention to protecting the rights of participants in assemblies and demonstrations and understanding and fulfilling the state's positive obligation to ensure their safety, and to providing appropriate training to the police in this regard. The relevant structural units of the MIA ensure the freedom of expression of every citizen, prevent acts of violence and respond effectively to such cases.

112. The State Agency for Religious Issues conducts various activities to strengthen the culture of religious tolerance and tolerance in society, to present the religious diversity existing in Georgia, and to protect the religious rights of religious communities.

113. An inter-religious council operates under the State Agency for Religious Issues, in which almost all religious associations in Georgia participate.

114. Although Georgia is not a legal successor to the Soviet Union, the state is gradually returning to religious communities the cult buildings that became the de facto property of the state after the restoration of independence, symbolically and partially compensating for the damage caused during the Soviet regime.

115. As part of symbolic and partial compensation for the damage caused by the Soviet totalitarian regime, financial assistance to religious associations was increased several times, namely.

<i>Religious denomination</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>Total</i>
Muslim community	2 750 000	3 350 000	3 350 000	4 150 000	13 600 000
Roman Catholic community	550 000	650 000	650 000	700 000	2 550 000
Armenian Apostolic community	800 000	1 000 000	1 000 000	1 100 000	3 900 000
Jewish community	400 000	500 000	500 000	550 000	1 950 000
Total	4 500 000	5 500 000	5 500 000	6 500 000	22 000 000

L. Healthcare and social protection

116. Since the launch of the Universal Healthcare Program in 2013 and up to November 2024, 3.3 million citizens have received financing for 13.1 million medical cases, with a total expenditure of 8.8 billion GEL. To reduce the financial burden of co-payments for the population, an upper limit for co-payments on hospital services within the framework of the Universal Healthcare Program was introduced in April 2023. Under this arrangement, the co-payment for persons of retirement age is capped at 500 GEL, while for children aged 0–5, children with disabilities, persons with severe disabilities, and students, it is capped at 1,000 GEL. For other beneficiaries, the co-payment does not exceed 1,500 GEL.

117. In 2022, the annual limit for chemo-hormonal and radiation therapy was increased to 25,000 GEL, up from 18,000 GEL in 2019. Starting in 2024, all citizens of Georgia, regardless of insurance coverage or social status, are eligible to receive oncology medications (including chemotherapy, hormonal therapy and immunotherapy) in full, without limits, based on a doctor's prescription. As a result of reforms in the pharmaceutical sector, co-payments and annual limits for medications used in the management of chronic and oncological diseases have been eliminated.

118. A reference pricing policy has been in place since January 2023 to regulate the prices of medicines. Prices are regulated at the wholesale and retail levels and currently apply to more than 7,000 pharmaceutical products. Reference pricing reduces the price of medicines by an average of 40%.

119. To enhance the efficiency of the Universal Healthcare Program, a new service reimbursement mechanism – the Diagnosis-Related Grouping (DRG) system – was introduced in November 2022. As a result, in 2023, patient co-payments for medical services decreased on average from 27% to 12%.

120. The Government launched a world-first hepatitis C elimination program in 2015. As of March 2024, 2.8 million beneficiaries have been screened, more than 86,000 people have been treated, of whom more than 82,000 have been fully cured, with a cure rate of 99%. A hepatitis B diagnosis and management program was also launched in 2024.

121. In 2023, financing for childbirth increased significantly, with support for childbirth rising from 500 GEL and for cesarean sections from 800 GEL to 1,222 GEL. Additionally, patient co-payments for these services were eliminated. Since 2024, the State Program for Maternal and Child Health has begun financing postpartum visits and psychological consultations. As a result, the maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) decreased from 32.2 in 2015 to 22.4 in 2023, while the infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) declined from 8.6 in 2015 to 8.2 in 2023.

122. An important component of the pension system reform is the state pension indexation rule introduced in 2021, under which pensions increase annually. Additionally, pensioners permanently residing in mountainous settlements receive a 20% pension supplement.

M. Labour and employment

123. Since 1 January 2021, the LEPL Labor Inspection Office has been conducting comprehensive monitoring of labor norms, covering both labor safety and labor rights. The official website of the Office (lio.moh.gov.ge) has been launched, and since 2022, the Consultation Center/Hotline 15-75 has been integrated within the Office's structure. Through this hotline, individuals can receive consultations on labor rights and labor safety monitoring. As of 1 September 2023, the mandate of the Office has been expanded to include labor migration, enabling the inspection and monitoring of labor immigrants and intermediary companies.

124. Since the adoption of the Law on Occupational Safety, the number of workplace fatalities has significantly declined, with a 42% decrease recorded in 2023 compared to 2018. In 2022–2023, four technical regulations on occupational safety and health were prepared and approved. As of November 2024, the Office had published 63 thematic, general, and sectoral educational and informational videos on labor standards on its YouTube channel.

125. From 1 January 2023, the amount of assistance provided during pregnancy, childbirth and childcare leave has doubled and amounted to 2,000 GEL.

126. In 2024, the Law on Seafarers' Labor entered into force, regulating the employment and activities of seafarers on Georgian-flagged commercial vessels. It also establishes standards for the employment of Georgian seafarers on ships flying any flag by entities engaged in crewing activities. The law covers the terms of seafarers' employment contracts, health protection standards, and issues related to wages, leave, and repatriation.

N. Rights of persons with disabilities

127. The Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities entered into force on 1 January 2021. It was developed with the active involvement of organizations working on disability issues, activists, and persons with disabilities themselves. The law explicitly requires state agencies, local governments, and administrative bodies to develop and adopt annual action plans on the rights of persons with disabilities, specifying the measures to be taken and the timelines for their implementation.

128. In 2021, the Parliament ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Protocol entered into force for Georgia on 12 May 2021.

129. A unified Coordination Council for the implementation of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been established, bringing together government agencies, non-governmental organizations, donor and international organizations, persons with disabilities and/or their representatives, organizations of persons with disabilities and parents. Within the framework of the Council, thematic recommendations will be developed to improve existing policies related to the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

130. In 2022, an amendment was made to the Law on Social Assistance, which provides for an annual increase in the amount of the social package for persons with disabilities. The same indexation principle was applied as is applicable to pensioners in accordance with the Law of Georgia on State Pension.

131. In 2024, the Parliament repealed legislative provisions that had excluded in a blanket manner persons with mental and intellectual disabilities – who were deemed unable to correctly perceive, remember, recall, or testify to facts – from obtaining the status of a witness or a person providing explanations. As a result, persons with disabilities have now been granted the opportunity to obtain such status and participate in legal proceedings.

132. As a result of legislative amendments adopted in 2023, violations found by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in individual complaints against Georgia are now considered newly discovered circumstances, forming a basis for the review of relevant decisions by national courts. In addition, individuals in respect of whom the

Committee has found a violation have the right to apply to national courts for monetary compensation.

133. According to Article 16 of the Law on Broadcasting, the Public Broadcaster is required to take into account the interests of persons with disabilities and to ensure their access to information intended for the general public. This includes providing sign language interpretation in its programs related to elections, referendums, and plebiscites during election campaign periods and while a referendum or plebiscite is being held.

134. In 2024, the National Communications Commission approved the following secondary legislation under the Law on Broadcasting: Standards for Ensuring Continuous and Progressive Access to Media Services for Persons with Disabilities and Rules for the Establishment and Operation of an Information Portal for Persons with Disabilities (according to the law, the portal should be put into operation from 1 January 2027).

135. In 2024, Georgia acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled, which entered into force for Georgia on 26 February 2025. This was preceded by legislative amendments to the national legislation in 2023 to harmonize it with the Treaty.

136. By Government Resolution No. 551 of 29 November 2021, the Inter-Agency Coordination Committee for the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was established. The Committee is composed of deputy ministers and heads of state agencies. To ensure the active involvement of persons with disabilities, organizations of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, the Committee has established an Advisory Council.

137. In 2023, the Policy and Guide of the Ministry of Defense of Georgia on the Rights and Needs of Persons with Disabilities was approved by the order of the Minister of Defense, which creates a conceptual and functional basis for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and realizing their special needs within the framework of the Ministry of Defense system.

138. Since 2021, the High Council of Justice has annually approved the Action Plans of the Common Courts on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which have three main goals: increasing access to court buildings for persons with disabilities, increasing access to court services for persons with disabilities and increasing access to legal proceedings in common courts.

139. Since 2021, the Ministry of Justice has developed four annual action plans (2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024) on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. Efforts have been made across the Ministry's system to ensure the accessibility of various services and institutional websites. Between 2021 and 2024, eight new Houses of Justice were opened across the country, all meeting accessibility standards and the principles of universal design. Approximately 100 persons with disabilities are employed within the Ministry system.

140. The deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities is an ongoing process. A deinstitutionalization strategy and action plan have been developed to guide this process. Since 2022, all persons with disabilities have gained the right to receive a social package while engaging in public activities. In 2023, personal assistant and home care services were introduced to prevent the institutionalization of older persons and persons with disabilities, support families, and promote independent living.

141. In 2021, to improve access to justice for persons with disabilities and implement international standards in practice, two guidelines were developed for prosecutors and investigators within the Prosecutor's Office: (1) Standards and Methodology for Working with Witnesses, Victims, and Accused Persons with Disabilities; and (2) Standards and Methodology for Working with Minor Witnesses, Victims, and Accused Persons with Disabilities.

142. By orders of the Prosecutor General, the 2021-2024 Action Plans for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were approved.

143. In 2024, the Guidelines on Eliminating Deficiencies Identified as a Result of Monitoring Criminal Cases of Victims with Disabilities were approved for prosecutors and

investigators of the Prosecutor's Office. In 2021–2024, 19 training activities were carried out in the Prosecutor's Office on the rights of persons with disabilities, within the framework of which 304 employees of the Prosecutor's Office were retrained.

144. During the reporting period, the MIA developed recommendations on the Effective Involvement of Persons with Disabilities at the Investigation Stage and the Effective Involvement of Minors with Disabilities at the Investigation Stage.

145. Since 2021, the MIA has annually approved the Action Plan for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the System of the Ministry. For the execution of those Action Plans the Ministry has implemented a number of important measures. The Ministry is actively training employees on the rights of persons with disabilities.

146. The education of students with special educational needs and students with disabilities is fully financed by the state, with additional funding provided to meet various needs. Nearly all educational programs allocate a quota for persons with special educational needs, allowing for an additional 15% of announced places beyond the standard threshold for vocational students. In total, more than 2,000 persons with special educational needs and persons with disabilities are currently included within the education system.

147. 2025 marked a significant year for legislative reforms. Notably, a comprehensive legislative package was adopted, which eliminated discriminatory terminology toward persons with disabilities across multiple legislative acts.

148. Finally, it is important to note that in recent years, budgets of programs improving access to services for persons with disabilities have expanded, including the Home Care and Personal Assistant Programs, alongside other initiatives that enhance support and promote inclusion.

O. Rights of ethnic minorities

149. One of the core mechanisms for the effective implementation of the civic equality and integration policy is the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration for 2021-2030 and the respective two-year Action Plans, which aim at further strengthening of ethnically and culturally diverse democratic society based on equality.

150. Ethnic minorities in Georgia have access to all levels of education (pre-school, secondary, vocational, higher). There are about 100 non-Georgian-speaking kindergartens and about 300 non-Georgian-language public schools/sectors operating in Georgia. Currently, bilingual education is provided in 34 non-Georgian-language kindergartens and 184 non-Georgian-language public schools.

151. Instruction of numerically smaller ethnic groups (Ossetian, Assyrian, Chechen, Udi, Avar) for schoolchildren at 12 public schools is ensured upon request.

152. Access to vocational education for ethnic minorities has increased as a result of the introduction of an integrated state language learning course. Over the past four years, the number of students in vocational education institutions has increased by 27%.

153. Interest toward a special higher education "1+4 Program" remains high: in 2024 1,462 students were enrolled in the program; in 2020–2024 – 6,403 students.

154. Equal and full participation of ethnic minorities in the 2020 and 2024 Parliamentary elections was ensured. To this, the Election Administration of Georgia has undertaken a number of significant measures, including preparation of various electoral documentation in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages; relevant informational materials were distributed.

155. Access to information and media in ethnic minority languages is ensured through: the web-portal of the Public Broadcaster in seven languages, including ethnic minority languages; live broadcasting in minority languages by regional TV channels; publication of Armenian and Azerbaijani language weekly newspapers. Weekly newspapers are published in Armenian and Azerbaijani.

156. To improve the civic and political participation of ethnic minorities, a special internship program in public sector for the beneficiaries of the “1+4 Program” continues to operate. Over 400 young people has successfully completed the program so far.

157. Large-scale door-to-door information/awareness-raising bilingual campaigns on state programs and services, as well as current issues and processes, are regularly conducted. In 2020–2024, more than 110 meetings were held in 342 villages inhabited by ethnic minorities, attended by up to 9,000 beneficiaries.

158. Support for ethnic minority theaters (annual budget: 2,251,000 GEL) and museums (annual budget: 274,168 GEL) continues. To promote intercultural dialogue and youth engagement, a range of cultural, educational, and sports activities were implemented, including festivals, concerts, exhibitions, training sessions, and camps.

159. According to Article 16 of the Law of Georgia on Broadcasting, the Public Broadcaster is obliged to “air programs in the languages of minorities, about minorities, and produced by minorities in an appropriate proportion.”

P. Right to safe and healthy environment

160. The authorities implement relevant measures for safeguarding the right to live in a safe and healthy environment.

161. In 2021, the Parliament adopted the Law on Environmental Liability, which is in line with the EU legislation on environmental liability and is based on the “polluter pays” principle. The law aims to prevent significant environmental damage, mitigate damage and restore the damaged environment.

162. In 2023, the Law on Industrial Emissions was adopted to prevent, reduce, and control emissions into air, water, and soil from the industrial activities of large enterprises, as well as to prevent waste generation.

163. In 2022, the Government approved a new five-year National Waste Management Action Plan (2022-2026) and a revised National Waste Management Strategy (2016-2030).

164. In 2023, the Government approved the Concept/Strategy for Long-Term Low-Emission Development of Georgia, which is a vision document and defines the paths to climate-smart development in seven sectors of the economy (energy generation; transport; buildings; industry; waste management; forestry; agriculture).

165. On 27 June 2024, the Parliament approved the State Energy Policy of Georgia and its annex - the National Integrated Energy and Climate Plan of Georgia.

166. The Government approved the Climate Change Strategy 2030 and its Action Plans for 2021-2023 and 2024-2025.

III. Conclusion

167. Georgia is constantly implementing measures to improve human rights protection. However, a number of challenges remain. The Government will continue to implement reforms in all areas to raise the standard of human rights protection. The Government considers the Universal Periodic Review process and the implementation of recommendations received within its framework as an important tool and guide, to implement further comprehensive reforms in the field of human rights.