

Shadow Report on the implementation of The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Georgia

Submitted by the Human Rights Clinic at Ilia State University School of Law
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Executive Summary

This shadow report, prepared by the Human Rights Clinic at Ilia State University School of Law, highlights serious regressions in Georgia's compliance with the Istanbul Convention. Despite the government's stated commitment to gender equality and violence prevention, recent legislative and institutional changes have dismantled key protections, undermined civil society, and entrenched discriminatory stereotypes.

Key concerns include:

- Elimination of gender equality from legislation: Amendments to the Law of Georgia "On Gender Equality" (April 2025) removed the concepts of gender and gender identity, replacing them with "equality between women and men." This terminological shift disregards the social construction of gender and undermines obligations under the Istanbul Convention.
- Restrictions in education: The Law on Family Values and Protection of Minors (September 2024) prohibits dissemination of information on gender beyond biological sex, creating a chilling effect in schools and universities and contradicting preventive goals.
- Weak awareness campaigns: State-led initiatives remain superficial, often limited to symbolic events such as the "16 Days of Activism," without long-term strategies or measurable impact. The Public Defender's monitoring confirms that campaigns lack methodology, impact analysis, and inclusivity.
- Institutional dismantling: The abolition of the Parliamentary Council on Gender Equality and municipal councils has left Georgia without an institution under the legislative body dedicated to gender equality. The newly created inter-agency commission lacks oversight capacity and independence.
- Civil society repression: Laws on Transparency of Foreign Influence (2024), the Foreign Agents Registration Act (2025), and amendments to the Law on Grants (2025–26) have stigmatized, criminalized, and financially restricted NGOs. Women's rights organizations such as Sapari have faced asset freezes and harassment, severely limiting their ability to contribute to awareness campaigns.
- Democratic backsliding: These changes form part of a broader authoritarian trend, where diversity, pluralism, and equality are systematically undermined. Vulnerable groups, including the queer community, face heightened risks of violence and exclusion.

Overall, Georgia's legislative and institutional trajectory represents a dangerous regression, directly contradicting GREVIO standards and international human rights obligations.

Introduction

The Human Rights Clinic at Ilia State University School of Law submits this shadow report to GREVIO in response to Georgia’s official state report (September 2025). The Clinic specializes in experiential legal education and trial monitoring, and has long engaged in documenting and litigating systemic challenges to gender equality and human rights in Georgia.

This report draws on:

- Legislative analysis of amendments adopted between 2024–26.
- Monitoring findings of the Public Defender (Ombudsman), integrated throughout the thematic sections.
- Case studies of civil society repression, including actions against women’s rights organizations.
- GREVIO’s own standards and prior recommendations, particularly regarding awareness campaigns, education, and civil society participation.

The purpose of this shadow report is to:

- Provide an independent assessment of Georgia’s compliance with the Istanbul Convention
- Highlight areas where legislative and institutional changes undermine gender equality and violence prevention.
- Document the impact of democratic backsliding on women, girls, and vulnerable groups.
- Offer recommendations for GREVIO’s evaluation and for international partners engaging with Georgia.

Equality and Non-Discrimination (Article 4)

1. On April 2, 2025, the Parliament of Georgia introduced fundamental amendments to the Law of Georgia “On Gender Equality” and to 15 related legislative acts.¹ These changes removed the concepts of gender and gender identity from the legal framework, replacing “gender equality” with “equality between women and men.”
2. The explanatory note accompanying the amendments described the term “gender” as an “artificial” concept introduced under foreign influence and lobbying, framing it as interference in Georgia’s internal affairs.² This reasoning reflects a negative and contradictory attitude toward international standards, particularly those of the Istanbul

¹ Parliament of Georgia, Draft Law Package on Amending the „Law of Georgia on Gender Equality“. Available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/?fbclid=IwAR12I5G3YNKPhzWB-J9YM7oFAsmnaU8Eiu1utQzdlzvbS7K2O1sFbdiCLYo#law-drafting/30327> [17.02.2026].

² Parliament of Georgia, *Explanatory note of the „Law of Georgia on Gender Equality“*, pp.1-2. Available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/381099?> [17.02.2026].

Convention, which explicitly recognize gender as a social construct and require states to address stereotypes and roles that perpetuate inequality.

3. In its official report to GREVIO (September 2025), the government claimed that only terminology had changed, not the essence of the law.³ However, this assertion misrepresents the definition of gender equality. By equating “equality between women and men” with gender equality, the authorities reduced equality to biological differences, disregarding the broader social dimensions of discrimination. This regression undermines both de facto and de jure equality.
4. The removal of gender and gender identity from legislation has far-reaching consequences. It denies recognition of diverse gender identities and erases protections for individuals who face discrimination based on gender roles. GREVIO had previously welcomed the inclusion of gender-based discrimination as an aggravating circumstance in the Criminal Code.⁴ Yet the 2025 amendments replaced this with crimes committed due to intolerance of “equality between women and men,” eliminating gender identity altogether from the list of protected grounds.
5. The Public Defender’s monitoring underscores the impact of these changes. Campaigns and awareness activities are insufficiently focused on gender equality, with only minimal initiatives addressing stereotypes. Indicators used to measure progress are overly general, preventing meaningful evaluation. This lack of focus, combined with the legislative regression, leaves systemic challenges unresolved and exacerbates existing inequalities.⁵
6. Taken together, these developments represent a dangerous step backward. By removing gender from the legal framework, Georgia disregards the social foundations of oppression and undermines the effectiveness of preventive measures. This regression directly contradicts Article 4 of the Istanbul Convention, which requires states to implement provisions without discrimination on any grounds, including gender identity.

Law on Family Values and Protection of Minors (2024)

7. The Law on Family Values and Protection of Minors, adopted on September 17, 2024⁶, represents one of the most significant setbacks in Georgia’s human rights framework. By prohibiting the dissemination of information that attributes sex beyond biological

³ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Report submitted by Georgia pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (First thematic evaluation round)*, 17 September of 2025, p.6. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-inf-2025-12-state-report-first-thematic-evaluation-georgia/4880289a47> [17.02.2026].

⁴ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Baseline Evaluation Report Georgia*, p.15, paragraph 28. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-s-baseline-evaluation-report-on-legislative-and-other-measures-/1680aab5e5> [17.02.2026].

⁵ Public Defender of Georgia, “*Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2024*”, p. 193. <https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2025091211433999093.pdf> [17.02.2026].

⁶ The Law on Family Values and Protection of Minors, September 17, 2024. Available at: <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/6283110?publication=0> [17.02.2026]

categories, the law eliminates the possibility of teaching about gender identity or social roles in schools.

8. This legislation has been widely condemned by international actors. The European Union deplored⁷ its rushed adoption without public consultation, stressing that it undermines fundamental rights and risks further stigmatization and discrimination. The United Nations warned⁸ that the law sacrifices universal standards of human rights protection to political ideology.
9. The law directly contradicts GREVIO standards, which emphasize the importance of education in changing patriarchal attitudes and preventing violence against women. Instead of fostering inclusivity and equality, the law entrenches discriminatory stereotypes and silences discussion of diversity. Its impact extends beyond education, contributing to a broader environment of repression and democratic backsliding.

Comprehensive and Coordinated Policies (Article 7)

10. On April 2, 2025, Georgia adopted legislative changes that abolished the permanent Parliamentary Council on Gender Equality and municipal-level gender equality councils. These bodies had previously provided at least a formal framework for coordination and oversight, despite challenges such as political influence and limited inclusiveness.⁹ Their abolition represents a significant weakening of institutional mechanisms for advancing gender equality.
11. In place of these structures, the government established an inter-agency commission on “equality between women and men, violence against women, and domestic violence.” This commission replaced the former Inter-agency Commission on Gender Equality. However, the new body lacks legislative authority, oversight capacity, and independence.¹⁰ Municipal councils, now renamed “councils on women’s and children’s issues,” are required to coordinate with the central executive authority rather than Parliament. This change has narrowed their mandate, excluding systemic work on gender equality and reducing their functions to women’s and children’s rights only.

⁷ Statement by the Spokesperson on the legislative package on “family values and protection of minors” 04.09.2024 Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/georgia-statement-spokesperson-legislative-package-family-values-and-protection-minors_en [17.02.2026]

⁸ Georgia must repeal discriminatory law targeting LGBT persons and human rights activists: UN experts. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/georgia-must-repeal-discriminatory-law-targeting-lgbt-persons-and-human> [17.02.2026]

⁹ Public Defender’s Office of Georgia, *Evaluation of Gender Equality Policies of Municipalities (2022)*, pp. 16-17. Available at: <https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2023041823365383262.pdf> [17.02.2026].

¹⁰ Ordinance of the Government N414 „On the Establishment of the Inter-agency Commission on Equality between Women and Men, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Approval of its Statute“. Available at: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/6630006?publication=0> [17.02.2026].

12. The absence of a permanent parliamentary institution dedicated to gender equality leaves a critical gap. A temporary parliamentary commission on women's and children's issues was created in May 2025, but its mandate was short-term and limited to studying problems and drafting recommendations.¹¹ Unlike the abolished Parliamentary Council, it lacked the authority to define policy directions or exercise oversight. As a result, Georgia currently has no legislative institution ensuring comprehensive work on gender equality.
13. At the executive level, the inter-agency commission cannot fully assume the functions of the abolished Parliamentary Council. Even before the 2025 changes, both the Parliamentary Council and the commission were criticized as ineffective and formalistic.¹² In some cases, they even supported policies harmful to equality, such as the abolition of mandatory gender quotas in elections in 2024.¹³ The dismantling of these structures has further weakened Georgia's ability to coordinate policies and monitor progress in line with Article 7 of the Istanbul Convention.
14. The Public Defender's monitoring reinforces this assessment. Indicators used to evaluate activities under the Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence are overly general, preventing meaningful evaluation. Campaigns and awareness activities remain minimal, with only one activity focused on raising public awareness of gender equality. This lack of institutional capacity and oversight exacerbates systemic challenges, leaving deep-rooted problems unresolved.¹⁴
15. In sum, the abolition of the Parliamentary Council and municipal councils, combined with the creation of a weak inter-agency commission, has dismantled Georgia's institutional framework for gender equality. These changes represent a serious regression, undermining coordinated and comprehensive policies required under Article 7 of the Istanbul Convention.

Civil Society and NGOs (Article 9)

16. Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention obliges states to promote and support the work of civil society organizations combating violence against women, and to cooperate with them at all levels. In Georgia, however, the situation has deteriorated dramatically. Recent legislative changes have stigmatized, criminalized, and financially restricted NGOs,

¹¹ Parliament of Georgia, *Statute of the Temporary Commission of the Parliament of Georgia on Women's and Children's Issues*, pp.1-2. Available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/396669?> [17.02.2026].

¹² Coalition for Equality, *The State of Right of Equality in Georgia* (2024), p.8. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aPKotlr4P2i2Xc7pb97N_FzjhERaciQq/view; Transparency International - Georgia, *Performance of the 10th Convocation of the Parliament on Gender Equality (2024)*, p.5. Available at: https://transparency.ge/sites/default/files/meate_mocvevis_parlamentis_sakmianoba_genderuli_tanascorobis_mimartulebit-e.pdf [17.02.2026].

¹³ Radio Liberty - Georgia, News Section, „*List: Women MPs who voted to override the veto on abolishing quotas*“, 16 May of 2024. Available at: <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/32949875.html> [17.02.2026].

¹⁴ Public Defender of Georgia, *"Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2024"*, p. 192. <https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2025091211433999093.pdf> [17.02.2026].

undermining their autonomy and capacity to contribute to awareness campaigns and service provision.

17. The adoption of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence (2024) created a registry for organizations whose income derives 20% or more from foreign sources, labeling them as “carriers of foreign power interests.” This stigmatizing framework imposes strict monitoring and financial sanctions, affecting civil society and media organizations alike.¹⁵ The Venice Commission¹⁶ and OSCE/ODIHR¹⁷ concluded that the law fails to meet international standards, warning that it silences critical voices and undermines pluralism.
18. The situation worsened with the Foreign Agents Registration Act (2025), which introduced criminal liability for failure to register or comply with reporting requirements. Penalties include fines and imprisonment of up to five years. Unlike the U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act, which Georgian authorities claim as a model, the Georgian version lacks safeguards and grants excessive discretionary powers to the Anti-Corruption Bureau.¹⁸ The Venice Commission emphasized that the label “foreign agent” is inherently stigmatizing and recommended repeal.¹⁹
19. Further amendments to the Law on Grants (2025–26) intensified state control. Receiving grants from foreign donors now requires government consent, with violations punishable by fines and asset freezes. The definition of grants was expanded to include technical assistance, knowledge-sharing, and in-kind support. These measures strip civil society of autonomy, transforming organizations into state-regulated actors subject to arbitrary punishment.²⁰
20. The impact on women’s rights organizations has been severe. In August 2025, the bank accounts of Sapari, a leading NGO working on women’s rights and gender-based violence for 24 years, were frozen by court order.²¹ The Anti-Corruption Bureau demanded sensitive personal data of women and child victims of violence, including names, ID

¹⁵ Public Defender of Georgia, *Report On the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia*, 2024, p.161. Available at: <https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2025091211433999093.pdf> [17.02.2026].

¹⁶ Venice Commission, *Urgent opinion on the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence*, 21 May 2024, para 98, 100. Available at: [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-PI\(2024\)013-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-PI(2024)013-e) [17.02.2026].

¹⁷ OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights - *Urgent opinion on the Law of Georgia “On Transparency of Foreign Influence”*, 30 May 2024. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/b/d/569922.pdf> [17.02.2026].

¹⁸ Social Justice Center, *FARA Does Not Apply to Civil Society and Media Organizations*, 09 March 2025. Available at: <https://socialjustice.org.ge/en/products/ratom-ar-vrtseldeba-fara-sinamdvilesi-samokalako-da-media-organizatsiebbe-ashsh-shi> [17.02.2026].

¹⁹ Venice Commission, *Opinion On The Law On The Registration Of Foreign Agents, The Amendments To The Law On Grants And Other Laws Relating To “Foreign Influence”*, Strasbourg, 15 October 2025, para 114-117. Available at: [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2025\)034-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2025)034-e) [17.02.2026].

²⁰ Social Justice Center, *“Georgian Dream” Is Effectively Destroying Political Freedoms — An Analysis of the Planned Amendments to the Law on Grants and Other Legislation*, 02 February 2026. Available at: <https://socialjustice.org.ge/en/products/kartuli-otsneba-praktikulad-anadgurebs-politikur-tavisuflebebs-grantebis-shesakheb-kanonisa-da-skhva-sakanonmdelblo-aktebshidagegmili-tsvlilebebis-analizi> [17.02.2026].

²¹ Statement of the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia, 27 August, 2025. Available at: <https://pog.gov.ge/news/saqartvelos-prokuraturis-gantskhadeba-4982?lng=eng> [17.02.2026].

numbers, and medical records. This harassment not only violated privacy rights but also endangered vulnerable beneficiaries.²² The Public Defender condemned these practices, noting that they undermine trust and obstruct essential services.²³

21. Civil society consultation mechanisms have also been dismantled. On April 2, 2025, Parliament abolished the obligation to involve NGOs in public decision-making processes, removing oversight and accountability mechanisms. This formalized a trend of recent years, during which authorities had already ceased cooperating with civil society representatives.²⁴
22. Taken together, these measures constitute a broad, interconnected system of repression. Civil society organizations, particularly those working on women’s rights, face stigmatization, surveillance, and criminalization. Their exclusion from policymaking and awareness campaigns directly contradicts Georgia’s obligations under Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention.

Awareness Raising Campaigns (Article 13)

23. Georgia’s state report claims that its action plan aims to eliminate harmful stereotypes, reduce the vulnerability of women and girls at risk of intersectional discrimination, and encourage inclusive participation in violence prevention. One of the stated objectives of the 2022–2030 National Human Rights Protection Strategy is the strengthening of gender equality in all spheres of life, including raising public awareness on domestic violence.
24. In practice, however, these commitments have been undermined by legislative regression. The removal of the concept of gender equality from Georgian law, replaced with “equality between women and men,” disregards the social construction of gender recognized by the Istanbul Convention. This terminological change has weakened the foundations of awareness campaigns, which must address stereotypes and social roles to be effective.
25. Awareness campaigns remain superficial and fragmented. State agencies often equate one-off information meetings with comprehensive campaigns. For example, many initiatives are limited to symbolic events such as the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.” These short-term activities cannot achieve long-lasting change in attitudes or behaviors. The Public Defender’s monitoring confirms that indicators used by

²² Sapari’s statement: *The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has suspended the enforcement of the court order*, 18 Jul, 2025. Available at: <https://sapari.ge/en/saparis-statement-the-un-committee-on-the-rights-of-the-child-has-suspended-the-enforcement-of-the-court-order/> [17.02.2026].

²³ Public Defender’s Office of Georgia, *Public Defender Files General Amicus Curiae Brief with Tbilisi Court of Appeal*, 18 July, 2025. Available at : <https://www.ombudsman.ge/geo/akhali-ambebi/sakartvelos-sakhalkho-damtsvelma-sasamartlos-megobris-zogadi-mosazrebit-mimarta-tbilisi-saapelatsio-sasamartlos> [17.02.2026].

²⁴ Social Justice Center, “Georgian Dream” Deprives Civil Society Even of the Formal Opportunity to Participate in the Decision-making Process”, 05 March 2025. Available at: <https://shorturl.at/NU0PB> [17.02.2026].

the government are overly general, lacking methodology and impact analysis. As a result, statistics on trainings and participant numbers create only an illusion of progress, without demonstrating real effectiveness.²⁵

26. GREVIO standards emphasize that awareness campaigns must be regular, long-term, and inclusive, targeting groups at heightened risk of violence, including women with disabilities and ethnic minorities. GREVIO has also highlighted the importance of involving men and boys in rejecting stereotypes and violence. Yet Georgia's report fails to provide disaggregated data, making it impossible to assess whether campaigns reach diverse groups.
27. Civil society participation, which is essential for effective campaigns, has been severely restricted.²⁶ Legislative changes in 2025 abolished the obligation to involve NGOs in decision-making processes.²⁷ The freezing of bank accounts of women's rights organizations such as Sapari illustrates the hostile environment in which civil society operates. Without the expertise and outreach capacity of NGOs, campaigns risk becoming state-controlled exercises that reinforce, rather than challenge, discriminatory norms.
28. The broader political context further undermines awareness efforts. The adoption of repressive laws such as the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence (2024) and the Foreign Agents Registration Act (2025) has stigmatized civil society, restricted resources, and criminalized advocacy. This deterioration of democratic institutions has created a hostile environment where campaigns cannot meaningfully address patriarchal attitudes or violence against women.
29. In sum, while Georgia's official report presents awareness campaigns as a priority, the reality is that legislative regression, institutional dismantling, and civil society repression have rendered these initiatives ineffective. Campaigns lack inclusivity, sustainability, and measurable impact, leaving deep-rooted stereotypes and violence against women unaddressed.

Education System and Preventive Measures (Article 14)

²⁵ Public Defender of Georgia, "Report of the Public Defender of Georgia on the Situation of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in Georgia 2024", p. 248. Available at: <https://www.ombudsman.ge/res/docs/2025040121291438156.pdf> [17.02.2026].

²⁶ Georgian Young Lawyers Association, *Document for Monitoring the Development and Implementation of the National Strategy for Human Rights for 2022-2030*, 2023, p.12. Available at: https://admin.gyla.ge/uploads_script/publications/pdf/MONITORING%20OF%20THE%20NATIONAL%20STRATEGY.pdf [17.02.2026].

²⁷ Parliament of Georgia, Draft law N07-3/32/11. Available at: <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/30344> [17.02.2026].

30. Georgia's state report emphasizes that the national curriculum includes primary prevention measures aimed at changing mentality and attitudes related to violence against women. Subjects such as Me and Society and Civic Education are presented as vehicles for awareness-raising, with claims that textbooks are reviewed to ensure they are free from discriminatory content and reflect women's contributions in various fields.²⁸ However, in practice, these subjects seldom contain meaningful content on gender equality and fail to address reproductive freedoms, which are essential components of teaching gender equality and empowering students to understand their rights.
31. While these measures appear positive on paper, they are contradicted by recent legislative changes. The adoption of the Law on Family Values and Protection of Minors in September 2024 prohibits the dissemination of information in early education that promotes attribution to any sex other than biological sex. This restriction applies across all levels of education, effectively banning the discussion of gender as a social construct.
32. The result is a chilling effect within the education system. Teachers and schools are prevented from addressing gender issues, undermining the very preventive goals the state claims to pursue. Instead of serving as a foundation for building a violence-free society, the education system risks reinforcing stigmas and discriminatory norms. This approach sacrifices universal human rights standards to political ideology, damaging democratic development and contradicting Georgia's obligations under the Istanbul Convention.
33. The Public Defender's monitoring further highlights the weakness of state-led educational initiatives. Activities are often limited to symbolic events or general information sessions, without long-term strategies or measurable impact. Indicators used to evaluate progress are overly general, and the absence of methodology or impact analysis prevents meaningful assessment. As a result, the education system fails to provide students with the tools to challenge stereotypes or prevent violence.

Democratic Backsliding and Vulnerable Groups

34. The deterioration of gender equality in Georgia cannot be understood in isolation. It is part of a broader pattern of democratic backsliding, characterized by weakened institutions, consolidation of authoritarian power, and the manipulation of human rights for political purposes. Legislative changes that remove gender from the legal framework, restrict civil society, and silence dissent are emblematic of this trend.

²⁸ Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), *Report submitted by Georgia pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (First thematic evaluation round)*, 17 September of 2025, pp. 57-58. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-inf-2025-12-state-report-first-thematic-evaluation-georgia/4880289a47> [17.02.2026].

35. The weakening of democratic institutions has created a hostile environment where the rights of vulnerable groups are increasingly subject to populist manipulation. Discriminatory norms and stereotypes remain dominant, and instead of being challenged, they are reinforced by state policy. This regression undermines pluralism and diversity, both of which are essential for democratic development.
36. The impact on the queer community has been particularly severe. With the removal of gender identity from legislation and the adoption of repressive laws, queer individuals have been left without legal protection mechanisms. Transphobic and homophobic violence has increased, legitimized by narratives promoted at the state level. The absence of basic security guarantees has even encouraged migration among community members, who no longer feel safe in Georgia.
37. The Public Defender's monitoring confirms that state-led initiatives fail to address these systemic challenges. Campaigns are minimal, often symbolic, and lack inclusivity. Vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, and queer individuals are excluded from awareness efforts. Indicators used to measure progress are overly general and fail to capture the lived realities of those most at risk.
38. The abolition of gender equality from the legal framework and the adoption of repressive legislation should therefore be seen not as isolated changes, but as part of a deliberate anti-democratic process. This process seeks to eliminate diversity, pluralism, and equality, replacing them with a narrow, exclusionary ideology. The consequences are profound: marginalized groups face heightened risks of violence, exclusion, and repression, while society as a whole loses the foundations necessary for democratic resilience.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Georgia's recent legislative and institutional changes represent a serious regression in the protection and promotion of gender equality. The removal of gender and gender identity from the legal framework, restrictions on education, weak awareness campaigns, dismantling of institutional mechanisms, and repression of civil society all undermine compliance with the Istanbul Convention. These developments are not isolated but form part of a broader process of democratic backsliding, where diversity, pluralism, and equality are systematically eroded.

The consequences are profound. Women and girls remain vulnerable to violence and discrimination, while marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, and the queer community face heightened risks of exclusion and abuse. Civil society organizations, which play a decisive role in combating violence against women, are stigmatized, criminalized, and excluded from policymaking. The Public Defender's monitoring confirms that state-led initiatives are superficial, lacking methodology, inclusivity, and measurable impact.

To address these challenges, the Human Rights Clinic at Ilia State University School of Law urges GREVIO and international partners to consider the following recommendations:

Legislative Framework

1. Urge Georgia to restore the concepts of gender and gender identity in legislation, ensuring compliance with Article 4 of the Istanbul Convention.
2. Recommend repeal of the Law on Family Values and Protection of Minors (2024), which prohibits discussion of gender in education and contradicts preventive goals.
3. Call for repeal of repressive laws targeting civil society, including the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence (2024), the Foreign Agents Registration Act (2025), and amendments to the Law on Grants (2025–26).

Institutional Mechanisms

4. Reinstatement of the Parliamentary Council on Gender Equality and municipal-level councils, ensuring they have clear mandates, independence, and oversight capacity.
5. Strengthen the inter-agency commission by granting it authority to coordinate policies, monitor implementation, and involve civil society in decision-making.

Awareness and Education

6. Develop long-term, inclusive awareness campaigns that target diverse groups, including women with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and the queer community.
7. Ensure campaigns involve men and boys as active participants in rejecting stereotypes and violence.
8. Integrate gender equality into the education system, removing restrictions that silence discussion of gender identity and social roles.

Civil Society Participation

9. Guarantee civil society organizations' autonomy and participation in policymaking, in line with Article 9 of the Istanbul Convention.
10. End harassment of NGOs, including asset freezes and demands for sensitive beneficiary data.
11. Provide financial and institutional support to women's rights organizations, recognizing their essential role in combating violence against women.

Democratic Safeguards

12. Address broader democratic backsliding by restoring pluralism, diversity, and accountability in governance.
13. Ensure that legislative and institutional reforms are developed through inclusive, transparent processes with meaningful civil society participation.

Overall, Georgia must reverse its current trajectory of regression and recommit to its obligations under the Istanbul Convention. Without restoring gender equality to the legal framework, protecting civil society, and ensuring inclusive awareness and education, the state cannot meaningfully prevent violence against women or safeguard fundamental human rights.