

Georgia: Family Values Bill imposes censorship on media

The undersigned international press freedom, journalists and human rights organizations strongly condemn Georgia's recently [adopted](#) Family Values Bill. This legislation imposes censorship on media by banning broadcasters from freely reporting on LGBT+ issues. The Georgian government must stop its legal attacks on press freedom and freedom of expression.

On 17 September, Georgia's Parliament [adopted](#) the Family Values Bill in its third reading, with 84 MPs voting in favour. The Bill is part of a legislative package titled "On Family Values and the Protection of Minors," which proposes amendments to 18 existing laws, including the Law on Freedom of Speech and Expression.

Initially [introduced](#) by Speaker of Parliament Shalva Papuashvili on 4 June 2024, the bill includes provisions aimed at banning so-called "LGBT propaganda" This package comprises a primary bill and 18 related draft laws, which propose amendments to various legislative acts, including the civil code, labour code, the law on broadcasting, and the law on general education.

The most concerning section of the Bill for press freedom is Article 8, which explicitly prohibits broadcasters from disseminating content that "promotes identification with a gender other than one's biological sex or relationships between individuals of the same biological sex based on sexual orientation." This censorship measure is an extreme attack on the right to freedom of expression in Georgia and a manifest violation of international human rights standards.

The new amendments included in the package also include fines. Dissemination of restricted information will incur fines of 1,000 GEL (approx. €350) for individuals and 3,000 GEL (approx. €1,050) for legal entities, in addition to confiscation of the "restricted materials".

This Bill will prevent journalists from freely reporting on LGBT+ issues and in particular giving voice to the LGBT+ community. The fear of prosecution will inevitably create a chilling effect and will lead to self-censorship.

Additionally, the Bill bans public gatherings or demonstrations that promote what it refers to as "LGBT propaganda." It also introduces a ban on same-sex marriage, gender-affirming surgeries, child adoption by non-heterosexuals, and the promotion of same-sex relationships in schools.

The restrictions over media reporting on the LGBT+ issues and public gatherings implied in the law are in conflict with the freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly and association enshrined in the Constitution of Georgia (Article 17, Article 21). Additionally, they are incompatible with the principles of freedom of expression enshrined in international and European standards, including the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 10, Article

11).¹ The Georgian Dream government must immediately halt its persistent assault on human rights, including press freedom and freedom of expression, which are the fundamental pillars of democracy.

Signatures:

International Press Institute (IPI)
The European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)
ARTICLE 19 Europe
The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)
Free Press Unlimited (FPU)
Committee to Protect Journalists
D84 Association/daktilo1984
Justice for Journalists Foundation (JFJ)
Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA)
South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)
OC Media
Association of European Journalists in Belgium (AEJ Belgium)
Media Diversity Institute Global
IMS (International Media Support)
Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE)
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
Media April
The Georgian Charter of Journalistic Ethics (GCJE)
Journalism Resource Center
IFEX
Society of Journalists (Warsaw)
Index on Censorship
Civil Rights Defenders

DISCLAIMER:

This statement was coordinated by the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR), a Europe-wide mechanism which tracks, monitors and responds to violations of press and media freedom in EU Member States, Candidate Countries.

¹ See Decision 207 (2017) of the ECHR *Bayev and others v. Russia*
<https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre?i=001-174422>