



# 2025 Country Report Georgia

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# Activity - Grow in Stability



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In 2025, Georgia was stricken with internal political turmoil even as it worked to bolster regional stability and economic integration in the South Caucasus through trade and diplomacy. Relations with Western partners became strained, however, even as the country advanced its position in regional transit and infrastructure.

## Key Points

- Georgia experienced an unprecedented degree of domestic political strife in the year following Georgia Dream's announcement to delay EU accession negotiations until 2028. The attack upon a former prime minister associated with the "For Georgia" opposition party, the top-down expansion of restrictions on the location and nature of protests, and mass demonstrations in the capital city of Tbilisi after the election of a Georgian Dream party member as the capital's mayor exemplify only some the strains Georgia's democracy experienced in 2025.
- Tbilisi leveraged both trade and diplomatic means of promoting regional stability in the South Caucasus. The country's spike in trade growth with neighboring Azerbaijan and willingness to serve as a temporary middleman for Baku's cargo transiting into Armenian territory, alongside its active participation in both bilateral and multilateral summits with its neighbors, advanced further political and economic integration among all three South Caucasian states.

- Relations between Georgia and its traditional Western partners – such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and the EU – appeared to sour throughout the year. The imposition of U.S. and UK sanctions on high-ranking Georgian Dream officials and party-affiliated individuals, a rather public diplomatic spat between Tbilisi and Washington, and Georgia's decision to withdraw from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe contributed to deteriorating relations.
- Tbilisi reaffirmed its status as an important player along the Middle Corridor through various efforts. These ranged from undertaking high-level diplomatic visits to partners across the Caspian Sea for discussions about Trans-Caspian transit connectivity to debuting the country's first-ever Dry Port, a railway container and cargo terminal strategically designed with direct access to other transit corridor infrastructure.

## ▾ Domestic Politics

### **Former Georgian Prime Minister Assaulted, Opposition Claims Government Involvement**

On January 15 in Georgia's Black Sea city of Batumi, former Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia, who heads the opposition For Georgia opposition party, was beaten in an attack that a For Georgia spokesman has claimed was politically motivated. The spokesman also claimed the attack involved sitting Georgian Dream politicians. Gakharia was briefly admitted to a hospital due to a broken nose and concussion. Recent months have seen street violence and intimidation directed toward Georgia's opposition amid mass protests over contested elections and the government's decision to postpone EU accession talks.

Source: [RFE/RL](#)

### **Georgian Dream Announces New Restrictions on Protests**

Mamuka Mdinaradze, Chairman of Georgia's governing Georgian Dream party, has announced a series of new measures aimed at restricting protests throughout the country that have continued since Georgia's Prime Minister announced that Tbilisi would not be engaging in European Union accession talks. The new restrictions include extending the maximum period for administrative detention to 60 days, banning protests in indoor spaces, and banning verbal insults against police officers and officials. The move follows previous restrictions that included a ban on protests on public roads.

Source: [JAM-News](#)

## **Elections in Abkhazia**

On February 15, residents of Abkhazia, the Russian-occupied separatist-governed region of Georgia, voted in elections for the territory's de facto leadership. Of the five initial candidates, Badra Gunba and Adgur Ardzinba will advance to the second round of voting to be held in the coming weeks. Gunba is the clear favorite of Moscow, who hosted him for high-level meetings in February. Russia has pushed aggressively for economic integration with the territory in recent months.

Source: [JAM News](#)

## **Abkhazia Elections Saturday**

The Russian-occupied separatist-governed Georgian territory of Abkhazia held local elections on March 1 for the territory's de facto "presidency." Badra Gunba emerged victorious, claiming a 54.7% vote share, even as his opponent claimed Russian rigging. The Kremlin had endorsed Gunba in the run-up to the local vote, hosting him for high-profile meetings in Moscow that produced significant financial and energy assistance for Abkhazia. In the last year, Russia has aggressively pushed for greater economic and political integration with Abkhazia, with Gunba's predecessor having been overthrown because he agreed to allow Russian investments in the territory. Gunba had promised to strengthen ties with Russia.

Source: [JAM News](#)

## **Saakashvili Sentenced to Additional Years, Prison Term Extended until 2032**

Former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili now faces an extended prison sentence until 2032 after having been convicted on March 12 of misappropriation of funds and on March 17 was convicted of illegally entering Georgia in 2021. Saakashvili, who governed Georgia from 2004 to 2013, had already been held by authorities since his arrest in 2021, whereafter he was charged with several crimes, including the violent suppression of protests in 2007. The former president had headed the United National Movement party, which the ruling Georgian Dream party has pledged to destroy.

Source: [POLITICO](#)

## **Georgian Dream Victory in Local Elections Sparks Protests and Five Arrests**

The municipal elections, which included mayoral posts, were held on October 4, with

Georgian Dream receiving over 80 percent of the vote. However, the elections were heavily boycotted by primary opposition parties, resulting in landslide victories and sparking mass protests. In Tbilisi, where Mayor and Georgian Dream member Kakha Kaladze won reelection for a second time, thousands of protestors rallied on the streets, and police employed water cannons and pepper spray to push back those that attempted to enter the presidential palace.

Source: [AP](#), [The Moscow Times](#)

## ↘ Energy and Trade

### National Banks of Georgia and China Sign MoU

On March 26, the governors of the national banks of Georgia and China signed a memorandum of understanding on economic cooperation in Beijing, China. According to the read-out provided by the National Bank of Georgia, the agreement seeks to promote collaboration in sectors including monetary policy, financial technology, payment systems, securities market development; attract Chinese banks to Georgia; and ease payments between the two countries. Georgia has expanded relations with China in recent years, joining the Belt and Road Initiative and giving key infrastructure tenders to Chinese state firms as Tbilisi's relations soured with Europe and the United States.

Source: [National Bank of Georgia](#)

### Tbilisi Dry Port Commences Operations

On June 3, the official opening ceremony of the Tbilisi Dry Port, the first modern railway container and cargo terminal in Georgia, took place. According to Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, the construction of port will be completed in three phases, with the initial capacity being 100,000 containers annually, and then increasing up to 200,000 containers in the later stages. Investors, including AD Ports Group from the UAE and the Norwegian company, Wilhelmsen Port Services, as well as the Georgian firm, Inveco, participated in the opening ceremony. The Dry Port is strategically located with direct access to international highways, national railways, and to the Armenian and Azerbaijani borders, which will allow it to be a part of the Middle Corridor.

Source: [Business Media Georgia](#), [ITV Georgia](#)



## Azerbaijan–Georgia Trade Grows by 28%

According to Azerbaijan’s State Customs Committee, since the beginning of 2025 trade volume between Azerbaijan and Georgia amounted to \$465 million, a 28.4% increase compared to last year. Exports from Azerbaijan totaled \$382 million, while imports from Georgia reached \$82.6 million. Georgia now accounts for 1.61% of Azerbaijan’s total trade turnover, ranking as its 10th-largest trade partner.

Sources: [Vestnik Kavkaza](#)

## ➤ International Diplomacy

### The United States Sanctions Ivanishvili

The U.S. Department of Treasury has imposed financial sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili, the billionaire widely believed to be the informal center of power in Georgia’s governing Georgian Dream party, using the sanctions mechanisms which disrupt transactions with Russian financial institutions. The State Department statement on the decisions reads, “The United States is designating Bidzina Grigoris Dze Ivanishvili...for undermining the democratic and Euro-Atlantic future of Georgia for the benefit of the Russian Federation. Ivanishvili and Georgian Dream’s actions have eroded democratic institutions, enabled human rights abuses, and curbed the exercise of fundamental freedoms in Georgia.”

Source: [United States Department of Treasury](#), [United States Department of State](#)

### Georgia Quits the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

On January 29, Georgia’s delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) declared its withdrawal from the organization. The decision came in reaction to a plenary that accused the Georgian Dream government of rigging the elections and that requested the release of the prisoners detained at the pro-EU protests. Moreover, the plenary restricted delegation members’ rights during the probationary period, which includes participation in PACE election monitoring committees, holding assembly positions, and representing the assembly.

Source: [bne Intellinews](#)

### United Kingdom Sanctions Georgian Dream Officials

The United Kingdom has announced a new slate of sanctions targeted at Georgian elites

London, noting “their role in allowing serious human rights violations in response to legitimate protests in Georgia since 2024.” The new list of sanctions targets four individuals, including Georgia’s general prosecutor and the head of Georgia’s Special Investigatory Service, with visa bans and asset seizures. The UK, among other Western nations, has sanctioned Georgian Dream elites in the past year, citing democratic backsliding and the creation of a hostile environment for civil society in Georgia.

Source: [United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#)

## **Kobakhidze Protests Trump’s Lack of Policy Toward Georgia, Describes U.S.–Georgia Relations as “Active–Negative”**

Speaking on pro-Georgian Dream (GD) television on May 14, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze described that U.S.–Georgian relations as “not a state of neutral silence, it is not a passive status. Our relationships have a sort of active–negative status.” The Prime Minister pointed to the fact that U.S. President Donald Trump had not reversed the sanctions placed upon Georgian elites by the United States in recent years. The day prior, Kobakhidze had released an open letter in which he stated he had “expressed Georgia’s readiness to renew [U.S.–Georgia] strategic partnership with the United States” but “have not received a response.... Moreover, no communication has taken place at the highest level between the Governments of Georgia and the United States.” GD had spoken with optimism about the Trump presidency and had reached out publicly to Trump, mirroring MAGA–style rhetoric.

Source: [Civil.ge](#)

## **UN Backs Georgia’s Right of Return Resolution with Record Support**

On June 3, the UN General Assembly adopted Georgia’s resolution affirming the right of return for the displaced persons from Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, with 107 votes in favor, 9 against, and 49 abstentions. Syria abstained for the first time following the fall of the Assad regime, while Equatorial Guinea and Sudan joined the “no” camp. Support rose compared to 2024, with Paraguay, South Korea, Seychelles, and Sierra Leone newly voting in favor. China once again abstained despite its strategic partnership with Georgia. First introduced in 2008, the resolution condemns forced demographic change and mandates annual UN reporting on displaced persons’ conditions and rights.

Source: [Civil.ge](#)

## **Further US Sanctions Against Georgia Face Blockage in the Senate**

On September 5, it was reported that U.S. GOP Senator Markwayne Mullin from Oklahoma has on multiple occasions blocked the passage of the MEGOBARI Act, a bill that was introduced by the U.S. Helsinki Commission with largely bipartisan support. The proposed

law would levy targeted sanctions against officials of the Georgian Dream Party, which faces multiple accusations of human rights violations, corruption, and pro-Russia ties.

Source: [The Hill](#)

## **Poland Building EU Majority to End Visa-Free Travel for Georgia**

Speaking during a parliamentary session in Warsaw on June 11, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk stated that Poland is currently working to garner support among a majority of EU member states to terminate or restrict visa-free travel for Georgian citizens to the European Union, citing democratic backsliding in Georgia and migration concerns. Noting pro-European sentiments in Georgia, Tusk stated, "I apologize to those Georgians who may feel offended, but more broadly, I strongly support restricting visa-free travel from countries, like Georgia, that no longer uphold basic democratic standards and from which migration presents a direct threat." Georgian citizens gained visa-free entry to the EU in 2017, but years since have seen a steep deterioration in Georgia-EU relations under the rule of the Georgian Dream party.

Source: [Civil.ge](#)

## **US Expands Cooperation with Georgia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan along Middle Corridor**

U.S. Chargé d'Affaires to Georgia Alan Purcell led a delegation of American business leaders to Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan to explore opportunities in trade, energy, infrastructure, and logistics along the Middle Corridor. Organized with the U.S. Commercial Service, American-Georgian Business Council, US-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce, and American Chamber of Commerce in Kazakhstan, the visit included meetings with government officials, including Georgian Minister of Economy Mariam Kvrivishvili. The initiative aims to strengthen U.S. economic partnerships and enhance regional connectivity along this strategic Asia-Europe transport route.

Source: [Trend](#)

## **MEGOBARI Act Passes U.S. House of Representatives**

The MEGOBARI Act, a piece of U.S. legislation that places additional sanctions and visa bans on elites associated with Georgia's governing Georgian Dream party, passed the U.S. House of Representatives on May 5. Democratic Congressman Steve Cohen released a statement describing that the bill "mandates a comprehensive sanctions review of all Georgian Dream officials," and that "[t]hose found to have engaged in corruption or undermining Georgian sovereignty will be sanctioned." The legislation will now proceed to the U.S. Senate and, if passed, move to the President's desk for his signing into law.



Georgia's relations with its traditional Western partners have deteriorated rapidly in recent years as Georgian authorities have cracked down on local civil society organizations and the free press, as well as having pledged to ban opposition parties. MEOBARI stands for Mobilizing and Enhancing Georgia's Options for Building Accountability, Resistance, and Independence.

Source: [OCCRP](#)

## **Georgia's President Mikheil Kavelashvili Speaks at General Debate for the 2025 UN General Assembly**

Kavelashvili expressed Georgia's solidarity with Ukraine during its war with Russia, calling back to Georgia's war against Russia in 2008 and Tbilisi's commitment to supporting those in the Russian-occupied territories of Abkhazia and Ossetia. Kavelashvili also stated his support for U.S. President Donald Trump's peace efforts in the South Caucasus and reiterated Georgia's important strategic location on the Middle Corridor.

Sources: [United Nations](#)

## **➤ Regional Cooperation and Connectivity**

### **Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, and Romania Meet to Discuss Transit Route**

According to a statement from the Turkmenistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, officials from Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Romania held a video conference on February 10 to work on a draft agreement seeking to advance a Caspian Sea-Black Sea international trading route. Such a route would allow for the shipment of Turkmen gas, in addition to other goods and resources, as far as to Europe.

Source: [The Times of Central Asia](#)

### **Kobakhidze Visits Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan for Middle Corridor Talks**

Georgia Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze has visited Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as part of a Central Asia tour focused on the development of the Middle Corridor transit route. Kobakhidze's trip included meetings with Uzbekistan's Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Turkmenistan President Seder Berdimuhamedow, during which Georgia's Prime Minister stated his aim of expanding transit connectivity. Kobakhidze's trip comes after year in which Georgia has grown isolated from its traditional partners, the United States and European Union.

Source: [Civil.ge](#)

## **Pashinyan Meets with Kobakhidze**

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan hosted Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze in Yerevan for discussions. The two leaders discussed Armenia and Azerbaijan's ongoing efforts to establish a final peace agreement, other regional and global issues, as well as the upcoming Georgia-Armenia football match that coming weekend.

Source: [Armenpress](#)

## **Georgia's President to Visit Azerbaijan and Armenia in April**

On April 2, Georgia President Mikheil Kavelashvili's advisor on international relations, Luke Ekhvaia, announced that the president will pay an official visit to Azerbaijan on April 14-15, followed by a trip to Armenia later in the month. The visits are part of Kavelashvili's regional diplomatic agenda aimed at strengthening Georgia's bilateral ties with its South Caucasus neighbors.

Source: [APA](#)

## **Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, and Bulgaria to Form Green Energy Corridor**

On April 4, the Minister of Energy of Azerbaijan reported, "On Friday, the energy ministries of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Türkiye, and Bulgaria signed a memorandum of cooperation in the green energy sphere, kickstarting the process of creating a new green energy corridor." The memorandum, a draft of which was approved in February, will apply for three years and can thereafter be renewed for another three-year period.

Source: [Interfax](#)

## **Caucasus Deputy FMs Meet in Tbilisi**

The Deputy Foreign Ministers of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan met for talks on April 17 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The meeting follows joint participation by all three countries Foreign Ministers at the Antalya Forum earlier in April. The meeting produced a joint document that described the talks as a "an initial phase designed to build trust and pave the way for the eventual advancement of the dialogue to a higher level." The meeting was also attended by Georgian Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili, who emphasized the South Caucasus as "a region of strategic importance, with immense potential."

Source: [OC Media](#)

## Armenia and Georgia Reaffirm Ties, Emphasize Regional Peace

Armenian President Vahagn Khachaturyan met with Georgian President Mikheil Kavelashvili in Yerevan to discuss strengthening bilateral relations and advancing regional stability. Following a private conversation, the two leaders held an expanded meeting with their delegations, where they emphasized the importance of deepening cooperation across multiple sectors. Both presidents reaffirmed their commitment to fostering peace in the South Caucasus and promoting a regional agenda centered on lasting stability and development.

Source: [Heta](#)

## ➤ Security

### Russia Re-Launches Commercial Flights to Abkhazia

Russian state media reported on February 7 that for the first time in decades passenger flights would be available to Abkhazia, Georgia's Russian-occupied separatist-governed region. A test flight from Moscow to Sukhumi took place on February 7, and regular commercial flights are expected to begin in May. Abkhazia, with its Black Sea coast, had been a major tourist destination during the Soviet Union, but the territory's airport had largely been shuttered since the outbreak of the Abkhaz-Georgian war in the 1990s. In recent months, the Kremlin has sought greater Russian economic and political integration with Abkhazia.

Source: [Reuters](#)

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