

GEORGIA 2022 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Georgia's constitution provides for an executive branch that reports to the prime minister, a unicameral parliament, and a separate judiciary. The government is accountable to Parliament. The president is the head of state and commander in chief. The president is popularly elected; however, starting with the next presidential election, the president will be chosen by an electoral college comprising all members of parliament, members of the high councils of the autonomous republics, and city council representatives. The country held two rounds of parliamentary elections in 2020. In its final report, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe stated the first round of parliamentary elections was competitive and, overall, fundamental freedoms were respected, but “pervasive allegations of pressure on voters and blurring of the line between the ruling party and the state reduced public confidence in some aspects of the process.” The organization did not observe the runoff elections.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Service have primary responsibility for law enforcement and the maintenance of public order. The ministry is the primary law enforcement organization and includes the national police force, the border security force, and the Coast Guard. The State Security Service is the internal intelligence service responsible for counterintelligence, counterterrorism, and anticorruption efforts. There were indications that at times government officials did not maintain exclusive control of domestic security forces. There were credible reports that members of the security forces committed some abuses.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: torture or inhuman, cruel, or degrading treatment; arbitrary arrest or incarcerations; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary, along with investigations and prosecutions widely considered to be politically motivated; arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media, including violence and threats of violence against journalists; substantial interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association; refoulement; and

Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health, and Social Affairs, is responsible for enforcement. The Labor Inspectorate has authority over all sectors of the economy and may make unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions. The Labor Inspectorate's new mandate to conduct inspections covering all aspects of labor law took effect in 2021. During the year, inspectors conducted unannounced visits to workplaces and monitored OSH and labor violation cases.

By August, the Labor Inspectorate had 96 total inspectors, with 21 located in the regions. During the year, inspectors received training on different issues, including monitoring of forced labor and labor exploitation, effective communication, and basic issues of labor and technical safety in the mining industry. However, GTUC assessed there was a need for more trained labor inspectors.

Informal Sector: According to National Statistics Service data for 2021, the share of informally employed persons in the nonagricultural sector in the labor force was 28.8 percent, although GTUC states that the number is 45 percent. According to a Social Justice Center publication in 2021, the only social safety net was targeted social assistance, which was not directly related to a person's employment status.

Nonstandard and informal work is common in sectors where physical safety is a major concern of employees, such as in open quarries in Tkibuli or Chiatura, as well as construction works in big cities. The tourism industry was also identified as a sector of physically dangerous labor practices, since drivers and guides often perform long, physically demanding, and largely unregulated work. There were frequent cases involving drivers in the tourism sector driving for more than 15 consecutive hours. The law does not adequately ensure the safety of those involved in informal and nonstandard work, and the Labor Inspectorate does not possess the mandate or resources to adequately cover informal and nonstandard employment sectors.