



# **OCTOBER 4, 2025: SCENARIOS FOR THE PUBLIC PROTEST FUTURE FORECAST METHODOLOGY**

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## Context

In 2024, after the Georgian government adopted the so-called Russian Law despite strong public opposition, the political crisis in Georgia intensified.<sup>1</sup> This crisis was further exacerbated by the fraudulent parliamentary elections of 2024, the results of which were rejected by the public and political parties through non-recognition and boycott. Against this backdrop, one month after the elections, the ruling party decided to halt the EU accession process,<sup>2</sup> which triggered massive street protests. The government of “Georgian Dream” responded to these protests with violent crackdowns, actions that amounted to international crimes and crimes against humanity. In addition, during further protests, “Georgian Dream” detained up to 60 people and enacted repressive laws.

Today, the situation in Georgia is as follows: Georgia is governed by the Georgian Dream party, yet it is unrecognized by the EU members states and the majority of the states, and it has a Parliament boycotted by the parties that overcame the electoral barrier. It is the 294th consecutive day of protests<sup>3</sup>, during which citizens block the central avenue of the capital daily. Political prisoners are present in Georgia, and a large part of the opposition spectrum has been imprisoned for 7–8 months for various reasons.<sup>4</sup>

The demand of the Georgian people is the holding of early elections under a new electoral administration and the release of all political prisoners.

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1 <https://civil.ge/archives/607256>

2 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/28/georgia-to-suspend-eu-accession-talks-until-2028>

3 <https://tvpirveli.ge/ka/siaxleebi/sazogadoeba/109686-utskveti-protestis-289-e-dge-rustavelis-gamziri-gadaiketa>

4 <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckg5x53z7djo>

## “Peaceful Overthrow” and Local Self-Government Elections

On October 4, 2025, local self-government elections are being held in Georgia. Throughout this year, there has been significant disagreement regarding participation in these elections. A large portion of protest participants, including family members of political prisoners, considered that participation by political parties in the local elections would constitute a betrayal of the protest and would help normalize the situation, thereby legitimizing the existing Georgian Dream government.

Nevertheless, two of the barrier-crossing parties chose to participate in the October 4 elections: businessman Mamuka Khazaradze’s party, Lelo,<sup>5</sup> and former Georgian Dream Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia’s party For Georgia.

Various groups, including opera singer Paata Burchuladze and some leaders of the United National Movement, announced a major rally on October 4 under the slogan “Peaceful Overthrow” instead of participating in the elections. One the main speakers for the Peaceful Overthrow slogan, head of the Political Council of the UNM Levan Khabeishvili was arrested on the charges of the overthrow of Constitutional Order on September 11, 2025.<sup>7</sup>

The announcement of the October 4 “Peaceful Overthrow” rally mobilized the public and heightened expectations for this date. A perception emerged that the rule of Georgian Dream rule would end on October 4. A large portion of society eagerly anticipates 4:00 PM on October 4, when, according to their estimates, more than 300,000 people will take to the streets, reportedly forcing the informal leader, Bidzina Ivanishvili, to relinquish power.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.interpressnews.ge/ka/article/843114-lelo-zlieri-sakartvelo-tvitmartvelobis-archevnebshi-monacileobas-miigebs>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ghn.ge/news/335576-4-oktombers-gardauvalia-am-rezhimis-mshvidobiani-damkhoba-levan-khabeishvili>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/33527762.html>

Following the announcement of the October 4 rally threats came from Georgian Dream. At the same time, tensions have risen significantly. Members of Georgian Dream have continuously commented on this date and have not ceased their threats, maintaining that Dream government will respond with harsh measures to all attempts of violent overthrow of the government. Kaladze stated:

"Somehow, they need to discipline their supporters. I will say it very simply: if anyone dares... go ahead, dare! Dare to break the law. They will receive an appropriate response and be punished most severely, of course, within the framework of the law. Go ahead, dare!"<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, it should be noted that daily protest marches continue on the main avenue of the capital. It was precisely on this avenue that Mayor Kakha Kaladze placed an electoral office, which has led to multiple confrontations to date.

## Future Forecast Scenarios for October 4

On October 4, a part of the public is expected to participate in the elections and vote for their preferred candidates. However, the majority of society is expected to gather at 4:00 PM on the main avenue, expressing the people's voice to the Western world through a unified protest. Citizens are motivated and filled with enthusiasm. They still do not know exactly what will happen on October 4; the organizers of the rally have not disclosed their plan or explained what the term "Peaceful Overthrow" entails. The desire for change among the Georgian people is so strong that they are determined to appear at 4:00 PM on October 4 unconditionally, regardless of any uncertainties. Employing future forecast methodology, Lynx experts have identified several scenarios of development for October 4 protests.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://tvpirveli.ge/ka/siaxleebi/politika/109183-kakha-kaladze-4-oqtombris-aqtsiis-monatsileeb-emuqreba-abagabedon>

## *1. Consolidation of Authoritarianism*

Based on the rhetoric of Georgian Dream and the steps they have taken, it is possible that the party may artificially target the date of October 4 as a pretext to ultimately suppress political activity in Georgia, ban political parties, and portray the participants of the rally not as enthusiastic citizens, but as radical activists allegedly seeking a coup. According to this narrative, Georgian Dream would present itself as having prevented such a threat.

## *2. Russian Influence Enhanced, Threats of Interference*

Since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war, the Georgian government has intensified propaganda centered on the fear of war, portraying itself as having done everything to prevent a second front in Georgia and to ensure peace in the country. This message of peace has had a significant impact on a large portion of society. Recently, reportedly Russian attempts to assert influence over NATO countries have escalated, including with the drone activity. Flexing of military might on the so-called “Western front” can be mirrored in Russia’s south i.e. Georgia.

On October 4, we may witness a deliberately engineered, irreversible situation, eruption of violence and conflict, which could be followed by provocation/statement from the Russian Federation. On one hand, this would further strengthen Georgian Dream, and on the other hand, it would give Russia an opportunity to influence Europe’s stance toward Georgia through intimidation or pressure.

Moreover, with artificially created tensions in Georgia, the Russian Federation may bargain with the Georgian Dream as well, extracting further concessions. It is well-known from the history of the relationship between the Russian Federation government and the President of Georgia Eduard Shevardnadze that the Russian government pledged its support to then Government of Georgia, yet also reinforced opposition to it.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See Eduard Shevardnadze, *Thoughts About Past and Future* (Tbilisi 2018).

### *3. New Parliamentary Elections, stronger Georgian Dream*

Currently, as opposition members have been removed in February 2025 (except Gakharia's for Georgia) only members of Georgian Dream are represented in the Georgian Parliament, which undermines its legitimacy. At the same time, based on the statements of the European Commission and some EU member states, the issue of visa-free travel to European countries is at risk—a matter of significant concern even for Georgian Dream voters.

It is possible that Georgian Dream may need a pretext to schedule new parliamentary elections in the Spring, and they could use the radicalization of the October 4 rally as justification, potentially leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze and the announcement of new parliamentary elections. It should be noted that Prime Minister Kobakhidze has recently been isolated within the government as his last ally, Minister of State Security Anri Okhashvili was recently removed and replaced by an independent figure Mamuka Mdinardze.<sup>10</sup>

New elections should be appointed in accordance with Article 56 of the Constitution of Georgia, which stipulates that if the Prime Minister resigns, the Parliament must express confidence in a new Prime Minister by a majority of the full composition of Parliament. If the Parliament fails to grant confidence to the nominated Prime Minister, the President of Georgia, no earlier than two weeks and no later than three weeks after the expiration of the relevant term, shall dissolve the Parliament and call extraordinary parliamentary elections.<sup>11</sup> However, for the past year, the ruling party has maintained that the previous parliamentary elections were not fraudulent and that all political prisoners are lawfully detained. In the situation when political leaders are in prison and in the context of heightened activity of UNM and its leader Mikheil Saakashvili, preterm parliamentary elections could be used to revive the effective Georgian Dream rhetoric of “nine bloody years.” Having UNM as its primary adversary will strengthen the chances of GD to dominate the elections and perhaps achieve constitutional majority. October 4 rally could serve as that pretext.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://georgiatoday.ge/mamuka-mdinaradze-appointed-head-of-georgias-state-security>

<sup>11</sup> <https://matsne.gov.ge/document/view/30346?publication=36>

## 4. Transfer of Power

However, Bidzina Ivanishvili may have the intention of stepping away from politics and preparing to transfer power to the groups represented at the rally. In this scenario, there are three avenues on the table:

- Constitutional avenue explained under Chapter 3
- New Cabinet of Ministers appointed under the umbrella of Georgia's first government (1990-1992).

Current reports indicate that citizens may symbolically “vote” on the composition of the Cabinet of Ministers at the rally. One of the organizers of the rally, Paata Burchuladze noted that on October 4 the Cabinet of Ministers will be presented to the public. “People should know who it is. Everything will be announced. A technical government will be declared right there,” Paata Burchuladze stated in a television interview<sup>12</sup> At this time, it remains unknown who the members of the Cabinet would be.

- Some civil society groups rally around 5th President Salome Zourabichvili as a figure who could broker peaceful power transfer.

The legal issue as to who will appoint new elections and who will be in charge of election administration arises.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.interpressnews.ge/ka/article/848822-paata-burchulaze-tu-chkua-shescevt-ramdenime-organizatori-unda-datovon-garet-rom-akcia-iqos-martvadi-torem-vnaxet-umartavi-xalxi-nepalshi-rva-saatze-ukve-gadmobarebuli-unda-iqos-xelisupleba-moxdeba-ministrta-kabinetis-shetavazebac>

## *5. Ivanishvili does not concede, alternative Cabinet is formed nevertheless*

There is a possibility that an alternative cabinet of ministers will be formed on the foundations of the government of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, that was deposed with a coup in 1992. Some media reports indicate of this possibility. The Cabinet might claim legitimacy from the public on the basis of symbolic vote on the rally. The Cabinet is not likely to have official recognition from Georgia's partner countries. Its activity will be used to leverage international contacts for various political groups, including to form an alternative focal point to Salome Zourabichvili.

## *6. Nihilism and Short-Term Reduction of Protest Spirit*

October 4 may be viewed as yet another wave of disappointment, similar to what has happened in the past. Hundreds of thousands of people may gather, spend the night in protest, only to see that nothing has changed, and then return home. This disappointment would be even more damaging, as many view this date as the day of liberation from Russian-style authoritarianism. When faced with such a profound sense of disillusionment, many of the protesters, in addition to simply going home, will inevitably leave the country and emigrate for a long period. Today, there are many reports of individuals on social media saying that if nothing changes on October 4, they will certainly leave the country.

However, considering the level of distrust of the government, evidenced by all recent publicly available data, except data shown by TV Imedi, protests in various forms will revive and continue. Gakharia's for Georgia party will likely enter the Parliament, as alluded to by their leaders in their recent media interviews.<sup>13</sup> The move is likely to be condemned by hundreds of activists, families of political prisoners and opposition politicians.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zl8scwiVBhc&t=4s>

## 7. Provoking Internal Confrontation

As mentioned, on October 4, when the opposition rally is scheduled to take place, local self-government elections will be held in parallel, in which two parties from the opposition flank are participating. A few days ago, information was circulated that one of the opposition parties taking part in the local elections—specifically, “Lelo” —plans to participate in the rally after the elections.<sup>14</sup> This news caused significant outrage from the public and some individuals promised that if the party members appeared at the rally, they would be confronted physically. This threat is quite realistic, since in recent months when Lelo had already decided to take part in the elections, one of its members showed up at a rally, where citizens confronted him and expelled him from the gathering.<sup>15</sup>

Accordingly, if members of the Lelo party appear at the rally, a clash between the two groups will inevitably occur, the focus of the protest will be lost, and this will once again serve the interests of the government and contribute to damaging the image and the objective of the rally

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14 <https://tvpirveli.ge/ka/siaxleebi/politika/110399-dilit-archevnebbe-sagamos-aqtsiaze-ra-gegma-aqvt-opozitsiur-partiebs-romlebits>

15 <https://www.interpressnews.ge/ka/article/845700-parlamenttan-mimdinare-akciaze-mokalakeebi-grigol-gegeliash-daupirispirdnen-ris-shemdegac-lelos-cevrebs-teritoriis-datoveba-mouciat>

## *Conclusion*

Although, it is very difficult to predict which of the above scenarios will unfold on October 4, this report puts most of possible pathways based on the future foresight methodology. In collaboration with the experts from political science, security studies and law, this study presents an unprecedented overview of potential developments of events following October 4 public gathering.

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