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Pre-election harassment and intimidation in Georgia

As Georgia goes to the polls today for the first genuinely contested elections since the Rose revolution nine years ago, Amnesty International condemns human rights abuses in the highly politically polarized pre-election period.

“While the “Georgian Dream” coalition has by and large been able to get its message across to Georgian voters, many of its supporters have fined, fired, harassed or detained for expressing their political views,” said Natalia Nozadze, Amnesty International’s expert on Georgia.

“In a highly charged political environment, public officials associated with the ruling party have on occasion abused public institutions and administrative resources to restrict the freedom of assembly, expression and association of opposition supporters.”

The parliamentary elections today are important on two accounts. For the first time since the Rose Revolution, the ‘Georgian Dream’ coalition, formed around billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, poses a real challenge to the dominance of President Mikheil Saakashvili’s United National Movement.

Secondly, constitutional amendments made in October 2010 ensure that the parliament Georgians elects now will, following the 2013 Presidential election, choose a prime minister and form government which will have significantly increased powers at the expense of the Presidential office.

Amnesty International’s briefing “*A lot to contest: rights abuses in the run up to Georgia’s 2012 Parliamentary Election*” published today examines the new electoral framework and presents examples of harassment and intimidation of opposition figures and supporters and pro-opposition media and organizations.

To learn more about Amnesty International’s concerns in relation to human rights violations in Georgia, please see also:

[Georgia: Authorities must fully investigate evidence of torture in prisons](#)

[Georgia: Authorities must stop violence against opposition ahead of elections](#)

[Georgian authorities pour cold water on opposition protest](#)

[Georgian Chamber of Control must respect human rights in the ongoing probe on political financing](#)

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