

Brussels, 12 December 2024

Solidarity with Georgian film, media and cultural workers

The Media, Entertainment and Arts sector of UNI Europa, representing more than 70 unions and guilds across Europe, rises in support of Cineunion – the Union of Georgian Film Workers, and of all film, culture and media professionals in Georgia who, at the risk of their freedom and safety, are taking the streets alongside hundreds of thousands of fellow civilians, to express their commitment to democracy, fundamental rights, and their attachment to the EU integration process.

The Georgian government has met with force the mass protests that have been taking place across Georgia since 28 November. Tear gas, truncheons and water cannons have been used against the protesters. Over 300 civilians have been arrested, including various film and culture professionals, as part of the government's attempt to crackdown the protest rallies. Most of those detained report having been beaten or tortured by the police special forces.

On the evening of December 5, 2024 renowned actor Andro Chichinadze, was arrested in Tbilisi on charges related to organizing group violence, participating in or inciting violent actions. This arrest follows a similar incident of arrests and detentions involving actor Giorgi Nakashidze, who reported being physically assaulted in custody.

The European Federation of Journalists and its affiliate in Georgia, the Independent Association of Georgian Journalists, have also strongly condemned the police violence and extreme brutality targeting journalists covering the demonstrations in Tbilisi since 28 November. We join EFJ and the Georgian journalists demanding that all media, including the Georgian public media, cover the events from an objective perspective and protect journalists and all other media professionals when doing their jobs.

The unacceptable use of violence by the authorities against peaceful protesters, civil society activists, political opponents, and film, media and cultural workers must cease immediately. The Georgian government should halt its violent response and engage with the political opposition to define a way forward.