

Georgia Erupts in Mass Protests Over Suspended EU Talks

On December 5, massive demonstrations were reported in Tbilisi, Georgia, for the eighth consecutive day in response to the governing party's decision to suspend European Union entrance negotiations until 2028. Tens of thousands of demonstrators have overtaken Georgia's capital, raising national flags and engaging in confrontations with law enforcement. This unrest follows the controversial passing of a "foreign agent law" in the Georgian Parliament, which critics claim is based on a Russian statute used to restrict independent media and persecute dissenters.

The unrest has resulted in riot police using water cannons and tear gas to disperse nighttime demonstrations, while several protestors have launched fireworks at officers and constructed barricades on Tbilisi's major promenade. Over 300 demonstrators have been apprehended, and more than 100 individuals have received medical treatment for injuries. President Salome Zourabichvili stated that the demonstrations had escalated to "hundreds of thousands" of people, alleging that the governing Georgian Dream party is guiding the country towards a "quasi-Russian model."

The Georgian Dream party maintained its position in parliament after the contentious election on October 26, which was seen as a referendum on Georgia's ambitions for EU membership. Protests over the election intensified and extended outside Tbilisi after the party's decision on November 28 to suspend EU membership discussions until at least 2028. The recent demonstrations signify widespread dissatisfaction with the party's conduct, seen by many as undermining Georgia's pro-European ambitions.

As the country navigates these turbulent times, the future of its EU ambitions remains uncertain. Given the present circumstances, further demonstrations are expected to continue significantly impacting key locations in Tbilisi, including Rustaveli Avenue. The protraction of EU discussions and the government's repression of protesters may exacerbate opposition and amplify the magnitude of demonstrations.

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