



April 23 2024

Henry Foy

Brussels Bureau Chief

## Kremlin-esque

Mass protests against a Georgian draft law on “foreign influence” have [continued for the second week in a row](#) in Tbilisi, **writes [Anastasia Stognei](#)**.

Thousands of people marched through the city over the past days, waving EU and Georgian flags and demanding the withdrawal of the draft bill. Protesters clashed with police, who fired tear gas.

Context: The initiative would force NGOs and media that receive more than 20 per cent of their funding from abroad to register with the Ministry of Justice, or face fines. Critics fear it resembles legislation the Kremlin uses to suppress dissent, and that it could pave the way for criminal prosecution.

The [stakes are at their highest](#) for both political elites and society. The ruling Georgian Dream party needs the law to clamp down on opponents ahead of elections in October.

“Passing this law is a question of survival for the Georgian dream . . . The party needs a constitutional majority in the upcoming elections, but according to all the polls it is not in their cards,” said Kornely Kakachia of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.

“For the party, the civil society and the media are a problem in the upcoming elections. There shouldn’t be anyone to challenge the results,” Kakachia added.

But for Georgians, the law could end the [prospect of a long-desired EU membership](#) and bring their country closer to Russia.