

190 'Political Prisoners' Walk Free in Georgia

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TBILISI, Georgia — Nearly 200 inmates considered political prisoners by Georgia's new parliament were freed under an amnesty strongly opposed by President Mikheil Saakashvili.

Many of those who walked free Sunday were arrested during anti-Saakashvili protests in May 2011. Others had been convicted of trying to overthrow the government or of spying for Russia. Relations with Moscow were cut off after Russia and Georgia fought a brief war in 2008.

The head of parliament's human rights committee, Eka Beselia, described the prisoners as the president's "personal convicts," who had been imprisoned for opposing his government.

Saakashvili, however, warned of grave consequences following the release of what he described as criminals and Russian spies.

(AP)

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