

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

1. Could you please find out if the Justice Party (*Samartlianoba*) was involved in any demonstrations on 25 – 26 May 2006 and if so provide details?
2. If they were involved in any demonstrations after 2003, please obtain details.
3. Please find out if you studied in higher education in Georgia, would you be able to avoid military service? Is there any information available as to whether or not a person who has completed tertiary studies is required to undertake 3 weeks military service?

RESPONSE

1. Could you please find out if the Justice Party (*Samartlianoba*) was involved in any demonstrations on 25 – 26 May 2006 and if so provide details?

On 25 May 2006, thousands of opposition activists and supporters of former Security Minister Igor Giorgadze¹ rallied in Tbilisi. The protesters called for the resignation of President Saakashvili and his government (Dzhindzhikhashvili, Misha 2006, 'Supporters of former Georgian security chief, opposition activists call for government to resign', *Associated Press*, 25 May – Attachment 1).

On 26 May 2006, members of the Justice Party and the anti-Soros movement held a concert outside the Sports Palace in Tbilisi. The protest then moved to the Georgian Public TV Centre. The protesters demanded the resignation of President Saakashvili and early elections ('Pro-Russian opposition rallies in Georgian capital on Independence Day' 2006, *BBC Monitoring Newsfile*, source: *Channel 1*, 26 May – Attachment 2).

¹ Igor Giorgadze is the leader of the Justice Party. For more information on Giorgadze please see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igor_Giorgadze; <http://english.mn.ru/english/issue.php?2006-27-9>; and http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2371128.

On 26 May 2006, a protest staged by the Justice Party in Zugdidi called for the resignation of President Saakashvili. A special squad dispersed the rally and detained several Justice Party activists ('Protest Rally Dispersed in Zugdidi' 2006, *Prime-News*, 26 May – Attachment 3).

On 26 May 2006, the Justice Party and other parties also organised protests in Batumi, Kutaisi and Telavi (Pachkoria, Tengiz 2006, '300 protesters in western Georgia demand Saakashvili reign', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 2 June – Attachment 4).

2. If they were involved in any demonstrations after 2003, please obtain details.

The Justice Party (*Samartlianoba*) and supporters of Igor Giorgadze have been involved in a number of demonstrations since 2003. The following list is not exhaustive. Reports of demonstrations by the Georgian opposition have not been included. The demonstrations have been organised into the following years:

- [2007](#);
- [2006](#);
- [2005](#);
- [2004](#);
- [2003](#).

2007

A number of demonstrations involving the Georgian opposition occurred during 2007; however, no reference to the Justice Party, *Samartlianoba*, the anti-Soros movement² or Igor Giorgadze were found amongst the sources consulted.

2006

15 June 2006: About 1,000 people protested Georgia's military deployment to Iraq and police brutality in front of Georgia's Parliament. The demonstration was organised by the Justice Party, "which has staged regular protests against President Mikhail Saakashvili's policies, riding a wave of public discontent with persistent poverty and the slow pace of economic growth" ('Opposition Activists Protest Georgian Deployment to Iraq' 2006, *Associated Press*, 16 June – Attachment 5).

5 June 2006: More than 2,000 members of the Justice Party and the anti-Soros movement protested in front of Georgia's Parliament in Tbilisi. They demanded the resignation of President Saakashvili (Mekhuzla, Eka 2006, '2,000 protesters in Tbilisi demand Saakashvili's resignation', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 5 June – Attachment 6; and 'Opposition activists call for Georgian president's resignation' 2006, *Associated Press*, 6 June – Attachment 7).

2 June 2006: Around 300 activists of the Justice Party protested in Zugdidi demanding the resignation of Saakashvili and the freeing of Party Secretary Revaz Bulia who was detained during the 26 May 2006 rally and sentenced to 10 days in prison. Seven other activists were

² The anti-Soros movement was formed by Forward, Georgia! Movement and the Justice Party in October 2003 ('Anti-Soros movement set up in Georgia' 2005, *Interfax News Service*, 4 October – Attachment 8). The anti-Soros movement "embraces the Justice Party, the Popular Party, the Monarchical Party, the Twenty-First Century Movement and a number of non-governmental organizations" ('Anti-Soros movement organizes protest in Tbilisi' 2006, *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 14 March – Attachment 9).

sentenced to five days in prison and released on 31 May 2006 (Pachkoria, Tengiz 2006, '300 protesters in western Georgia demand Saakashvili reign', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 2 June – Attachment 4).

31 May 2006: Around 1,500 members of the youth organisation of the Justice Party demanded the resignation of President Saakashvili in Tbilisi ('1,500 Georgian youth demand Saakashvili resign', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 31 May – Attachment 10).

29 May 2006: About 500 people walked from the Zugdidi branch of the Justices Party to the regional administration headquarters. They demanded the release of Revaz Bulia and seven other activists who were arrested during the 26 May 2006 protest in Zugdidi ('Georgian protesters demand release of exiled pro-Russian politician's supporters' 2006, *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, source: *Rustavi-2 TV*, 30 May – Attachment 11).

26 May 2006: Members of the Justice Party and the anti-Soros movement held a concert outside the Sports Palace in Tbilisi. The protest then moved to the Georgian Public TV centre. The protestors demanded the resignation of President Saakashvili and early elections ('Pro-Russian opposition rallies in Georgian capital on Independence Day' 2006, *BBC Monitoring Newsfile*, source: *Channel 1*, 26 May – Attachment 2).

26 May 2006: A protest staged by the Justice Party in Zugdidi called for the resignation of President Saakashvili. A special squad dispersed the rally and detained several Justice Party activists. *Prime-News* reports that, the anti-Soros movement and the Justice Party "have been regularly staging the series of protest rallies termed as Hot Week since May 23rd" ('Protest Rally Dispersed in Zugdidi' 2006, *Prime-News*, 26 May – Attachment 3).

26 May 2006: The Justice Party and other parties also organised protests in Batumi, Kutaisi and Telavi (Pachkoria, Tengiz 2006, '300 protesters in western Georgia demand Saakashvili reign', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 2 June – Attachment 4).

25 May 2006: Thousands of opposition activists and supporters of former Security Minister Igor Giorgadze rallied in Tbilisi. The protesters called for the resignation of President Saakashvili and his government. *Associated Press* reports that "the opposition Justice party and a loose coalition of parties called the anti-Soros movement have held regular anti-government protests" (Dzhindzhikhashvili, Misha 2006, 'Supporters of former Georgian security chief, opposition activists call for government to resign', *Associated Press*, 25 May – Attachment 1).

24 May 2006: Supporters of Igor Giorgadze held a rally at Tbilisi State University demanding the charges against Giorgadze be lifted. They also demanded the resignation of President Saakashvili. The rally was organised by the anti-Soros movement and the Justice Party ('Supporters of fugitive former security chief protest in Georgian capital' 2006, *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, source: *Prime-News*, 24 May – Attachment 12).

23 May 2006: Up to 800 members and supporters of the Justice Party staged a protest outside a government building in Tbilisi. The protesters called for the resignation of President Saakashvili, the dissolution of Parliament and early elections ('Tbilisi protestors demand President Saakashvili's resignation' 2006, *RIA Novosti*, 23 May – Attachment 13).

23 May 2006: Over 1,500 activists of the anti-Soros movement held a protest in Tbilisi. The protesters called for the resignation of President Saakashvili and the dissolution of Parliament. *ITAR-TASS World Service* reports that, “Over the past several months, the Anti-Soros movement...has organized several rallies and marches protesting against Saakashvili’s government” (Mekhuzla, Eva 2006, ‘1,500 Anti-Soros activists demand Saakashvili’s resignation’, *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 23 May – Attachment 14).

17 May 2006: About 700 opposition demonstrators marched across Tbilisi. The demonstrators denounced the Georgian government and called for its resignation. The demonstration was organised by the anti-Soros movement (‘About 700 attend anti-government demonstration in Georgia’ 2006, *Associated Press*, 18 May – Attachment 15).

5 May 2006: Some 5,000 people demonstrated in Tbilisi. The protesters called for the resignation of President Saakashvili and closer ties with Russia. The protest involved the anti-Soros movement and the Justice Party (‘Thousands call for Georgian leader to quit’ 2006, *Agence France Presse*, 6 May – Attachment 16).

31 March 2006: About 1,000 opposition demonstrators, including members of the Justice Party, rallied in front of the Georgian Parliament. The protesters demanded the resignation of President Saakashvili (‘About 1,000 turn up for opposition rally in Georgia’ 2006, *Associated Press*, 1 April – Attachment 17).

14 March 2006: Hundreds of people dressed in striped prison garb protested in Tbilisi’s central square against the “encroachment on human rights in Georgia.” The anti-Soros movement organised the protest (‘Anti-Soros movement organizes protest in Tbilisi’ 2006, *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 14 March – Attachment 9).

2005

14 December 2005: Several hundred people protested against George Soros in central Tbilisi. The rally was organised by the Justice Party (‘Anti-Soros Rally in Tbilisi’ 2005, *Prime News Agency*, 14 December – Attachment 18).

10 December 2005: About 500 representatives of the anti-Soros movement and the Justice Party protested in Republic Square outside the Ombudsman’s office in Tbilisi. They appealed to Georgian President Saakashvili and Public Defender Subari to protect human rights in Georgia (‘Antisoros and Justice Party held Protest Action’ 2005, *Prime News Agency*, 10 December – Attachment 19).

23 November 2005: The anti-Soros movement held a protest rally in Tbilisi. The protesters gathered in Vera Park and marched along Melikishvili Street to the main university building (‘Georgian “anti-Soros” activists hold protest on Rose Revolutionary anniversary’ 2005, *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, source: *Rustavi-2 TV*, 23 November – Attachment 20).

Prior to November 2005 no demonstrations involving the Justice Party were found amongst the sources consulted; however, a demonstration against the withdrawal of Russian military bases from Georgia involving supporters of Igor Giorgadze took place in Batumi on 31 March 2005 (‘Igor Giorgadze’s supporters led protest action in Batumi against withdrawal of the Russian military bases’ 2005, *Prime-News News Agency*, 31 March – Attachment 21).

2004

No demonstrations involving the Justice Party, *Samartlianoba*, the anti-Soros movement or supporters of Igor Giorgadze during 2004 were found amongst the sources consulted.

2003

No demonstrations involving the Justice Party during 2003 were found amongst the sources consulted; however, a demonstration involving supporters of Igor Giorgadze took place on 15 December 2003. More than 100 supporters of Igor Giorgadze spent the night outside the Electoral Commission in Tbilisi demanding that Giorgadze be registered as a candidate in the 4 January 2004 Presidential Elections ('Georgian protestors demand electoral registration for fugitive ex-security boss' 2003, *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, source: *Prime-News News Agency*, 16 December – Attachment 22).

3. Please find out if you studied in higher education in Georgia, would you be able to avoid military service? Is there any information available as to whether or not a person who has completed tertiary studies is required to undertake 3 weeks military service?

For information on compulsory military service in Georgia please see the following documents:

- Quaker Council for European Affairs 2005, *The Rights to Conscientious Objection in Europe: A Review of the Current Situation – Country Report: Georgia*, April <http://www.quaker.org/qcea/coreport/georgia.pdf> – Accessed 6 July 2007 – Attachment 23;
- 'Military Service Delay Fee Rises' 2006, *Civil Georgia*, 30 June <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=12934> – Accessed 6 July 2007 – Attachment 24;
- Seshiashvili, Irakli 2005, 'Chapter 13 – The Military Service Appeals System in Georgia', *From Revolution to Reform: Georgia's Struggle with Democratic Institution Building and Security Sector Reform*, July, Austrian Armed Forces website http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/10_wg11_chapt13_140.pdf – Accessed 6 July 2007 – Attachment 25.

Reserve service in Georgia began as a voluntary scheme three years ago. In December 2006 it was made compulsory under the *Law on Reserve System*. The new system was launched in March 2007. Under the new system, all students of accredited higher educational institutions must complete 18 days of army training. If the student volunteers twice he will not have to undertake compulsory military service ('Presentation of New Compulsory Reserve System' 2007, Ministry of Defence of Georgia website, 14 March <http://www.mod.gov.ge/?l=E&m=13&sm=0&st=80&id=499> – Accessed 6 July 2007 – Attachment 26; and Liklikadze, Koba 2007, 'Georgia Creates Army Reserves', Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 22 March http://iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=334293&apc_state=henicrs200703 – Accessed 6 July 2007 – Attachment 27).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Government Information & Reports

Austrian Armed Forces <http://www.bmlv.gv.at/english/index.shtml>

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/cgi-bin/foliocgi.exe/refinfo_e

Ministry of Defence of Georgia <http://www.mod.gov.ge/>

US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

United Nations (UN)

UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>

Non-Government Organisations

Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org/>

European Country of Origin Information Network <http://www.ecoi.net/>

Freedom House <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>

Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

ReliefWeb <http://www.reliefweb.int/>

International News & Politics

BBC <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

Civil Georgia <http://www.civil.ge/eng/>

Georgia Today <http://www.georgiatoday.ge/>

Moscow News <http://www.mnweekly.ru/>

Institute of War and Peace Reporting <http://iwpr.net/>

Jamestown Foundation <http://jamestown.org/>

Topic Specific Links

The Religious Society of Friends <http://www.quaker.org/>

War Resisters' International <http://www.wri-irg.org/>

Search Engines

Google <http://www.google.com.au/>

Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. Dzhindzhikhashvili, Misha 2006, 'Supporters of former Georgian security chief, opposition activists call for government to resign', *Associated Press*, 25 May. (FACTIVA)
2. 'Pro-Russian opposition rallies in Georgian capital on Independence Day' 2006, *BBC Monitoring Newsfile*, source: *Channel 1*, 26 May. (FACTIVA)
3. 'Protest Rally Dispersed in Zugdidi' 2006, *Prime-News*, 26 May. (FACTIVA)

4. Pachkoria, Tengiz 2006, '300 protesters in western Georgia demand Saakashvili reign', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 2 June. (FACTIVA)
5. 'Opposition Activists Protest Georgian Deployment to Iraq' 2006, *Associated Press*, 16 June. (FACTIVA)
6. Mekhuzla, Eka 2006, '2,000 protesters in Tbilisi demand Saakashvili's resignation', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 5 June. (FACTIVA)
7. 'Opposition activists call for Georgian president's resignation' 2006, *Associated Press*, 6 June. (FACTIVA)
8. 'Anti-Soros movement set up in Georgia' 2005, *Interfax News Service*, 4 October. (FACTIVA)
9. 'Anti-Soros movement organizes protest in Tbilisi' 2006, *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 14 March. (FACTIVA)
10. '1,500 Georgian youth demand Saakashvili resign', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 31 May. (FACTIVA)
11. 'Georgian protesters demand release of exiled pro-Russian politician's supporters' 2006, *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, source: *Rustavi-2 TV*, 30 May. (FACTIVA)
12. 'Supporters of fugitive former security chief protest in Georgian capital' 2006, *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, source: *Prime-News*, 24 May. (FACTIVA)
13. 'Tbilisi protestors demand President Saakashvili's resignation' 2006, *RIA Novosti*, 23 May. (FACTIVA)
14. Mekhuzla, Eva 2006, '1,500 Anti-Soros activists demand Saakashvili's resignation', *ITAR-TASS World Service*, 23 May. (FACTIVA)
15. 'About 700 attend anti-government demonstration in Georgia' 2006, *Associated Press*, 18 May. (FACTIVA)
16. 'Thousands call for Georgian leader to quit' 2006, *Agence France Presse*, 6 May. (FACTIVA)
17. 'About 1,000 turn up for opposition rally in Georgia' 2006, *Associated Press*, 1 April. (FACTIVA)
18. 'Anti-Soros Rally in Tbilisi' 2005, *Prime News Agency*, 14 December. (FACTIVA)
19. 'Antisoros and Justice Party held Protest Action' 2005, *Prime News Agency*, 10 December. (FACTIVA)
20. 'Georgian "anti-Soros" activists hold protest on Rose Revolutionary anniversary' 2005, *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, source: *Rustavi-2 TV*, 23 November. (FACTIVA)

21. 'Igor Giorgadze's supporters led protest action in Batumi against withdrawal of the Russian military bases' 2005, *Prime-News News Agency*, 31 March. (FACTIVA)
22. 'Georgian protestors demand electoral registration for fugitive ex-security boss' 2003, *BBC Monitoring Former Soviet Union*, source: *Prime-News News Agency*, 16 December. (FACTIVA)
23. Quaker Council for European Affairs 2005, *The Rights to Conscientious Objection in Europe: A Review of the Current Situation – Country Report: Georgia*, April <http://www.quaker.org/qcea/coreport/georgia.pdf> – Accessed 6 July 2007.
24. Seshiashvili, Irakli 2005, 'Chapter 13 – The Military Service Appeals System in Georgia', *From Revolution to Reform*, July, Austrian Armed Forces website http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/10_wg11_chapt13_140.pdf – Accessed 6 July 2007.
25. 'Military Service Delay Fee Rises' 2006, *Civil Georgia*, 30 June <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=12934> – Accessed 6 July 2007.
26. 'Presentation of New Compulsory Reserve System' 2007, Ministry of Defence of Georgia website, 14 March <http://www.mod.gov.ge/?l=E&m=13&sm=0&st=80&id=499> – Accessed 6 July 2007.
27. Liklikadze, Koba 2007, 'Georgia Creates Army Reserves', Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 22 March http://iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=334293&apc_state=henicrs200703 – Accessed 6 July 2007.