



Georgia - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 22 January 2019

Treatment of Georgians in Abkhazia

A report issued in 2018 by *Freedom House* commenting on events of 2017 notes that:

“The ethnic Georgian population is routinely excluded from elections and political representation...” (Freedom House (2018) *Freedom in the World 2018, Abkhazia*, p.3).

This report also states that:

“Ethnic Georgian residents of the Gali region continue to face discrimination” (ibid, p.6).

In April 2018 the *United States Department of State* reviewing events of 2017 points out that:

“De facto authorities in the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia restricted the rights, primarily of ethnic Georgians, to vote or otherwise participate in the political process, own property, register businesses, and travel” (United States Department of State (20 April 2018) *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 – Georgia*, p.2).

This document also states that:

“In Abkhazia the de facto legal system prohibits property claims by ethnic Georgians who left Abkhazia before, during, or after the 1992-93 war, thereby depriving IDPs of their property rights in Abkhazia” (ibid, p.11).

In April 2018 the *Council of Europe* points out in a report that:

“...the delegation was informed that the de facto authorities in Abkhazia had temporarily extended the validity of use of the so-called “Form Nr. 9”, arguably in view of the low number of so-called “residence permits” issued so far (cf. also part III.1.iii)...The so-called “borderisation” and other freedom of movement restrictions along with the reported lack of crossing documents continue to complicate access to livelihoods, healthcare and education as well as family links. Several interlocutors met in Tbilisi, including from civil society, raising concerns that the humanitarian and economic situation in the Gali district is primarily and particularly affected even though restrictions appear to affect not only the ethnic Georgian population but also members of other communities” (Council of Europe (11 April 2018) *Consolidated report on the conflict in Georgia (October 2017 – March 2018)*, p.9).

A report issued in May 2018 by the *International Crisis Group* includes the following commentary on Abkhazia (and South Ossetia) noting:

“In the past two years, the conditions for ethnic Georgians in both breakaway republics have greatly deteriorated...” (International Crisis Group (24 May 2018) *Abkhazia and South Ossetia: Time to Talk Trade...*,p.5).

In August 2018 the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights* states that:

“The restrictions on the use of Georgian as a language of instruction reportedly continued to be applied in Abkhazia and were introduced in South Ossetia during the reporting period. According to various sources, these restrictions particularly affect the communities who identify as ethnic Georgians living in Gali, Abkhazia, as well as in Akhgori and other areas in South Ossetia” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (15 August 2018) *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on cooperation with Georgia*, p.14).

This report also states, commenting on Abkhazia (and South Ossetia) that:

“Ethnic Georgians also appear to regularly face various forms of discrimination” (ibid, p.17).

A publication in December 2018 by *Carnegie Europe* states that:

“Currently around 50,000 Georgians remain in the Gali region of eastern Abkhazia—around one-fifth of the population of Abkhazia—but they are in many ways second-class citizens, who also travel back and forth to the western Georgian region of Samegrelo...” (Carnegie Europe (3 December 2018) *Uncertain Ground, Engaging With Europe’s De Facto States and Breakaway Territories*, p.20).

No information on this issue could be found among sources available to the RDC.

References

Carnegie Europe (3 December 2018) *Uncertain Ground, Engaging With Europe’s De Facto States and Breakaway Territories*

https://carnegieendowment.org/files/deWaal_UncertainGround_final.pdf

Attachment not included due to IT limitations

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Council of Europe (11 April 2018) *Consolidated report on the conflict in Georgia (October 2017 – March 2018)*.

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United States Department of State (20 April 2018) *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Georgia*

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International
BBC News/Monitoring
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
International Crisis Group
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
Minority Rights Group International
Online Newspapers
Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library
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Reliefweb
Reuters
United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State
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