



**Georgia – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 30 April 2019**

**Are there reports of blood feuds or vendettas leading to murders or injuries by Qists?**

Recent reports of blood feuds in Georgia involving Qists (Kists) were not found among sources available to the Refugee Documentation Centre.

A 2006 report from the Human Rights Center of Georgia states:

“The family and relatives of Avto and Vakho Gumashvili - both killed during a special operation in the village of Duisi in the Pankisi gorge - have for the past year been demanding that guilty police officers be punished and they be compensated for the burning of their home. So far their demands have been in vain. The Kists, who are frustrated by both the indifference and the injustice of the authorities, intend to deal with the present situation in the old traditional way - by way of a Blood Feud.” (Human Rights Center (24 May 2006) *Threat of Blood Feud in Pankisi*)

This report also states:

“After the special operation, the situation became tense in the Pankisi Gorge. Although the officers with the Special Forces were on duty, a blood feud between the families was inevitable according to the old traditions of the Kists, say locals.

Avto Gumashvili’s brother, in his interview with the Human Rights Information and Documentation Centre, did not hide that he plans to take revenge. ‘I do not have a brother or a cousin any more. I am homeless, my mother has been very sick since the special operation. My brother did nothing wrong except shoot Margoshvili in the leg. Should he be burned to death because of that? Temur Anjaparidze promised to give us 7000 laris as compensation for the burned house. Later, he said that the promises were given in order to calm the family down. I am Kist and I do remember everything. We have different traditions. We have been looking for justice for a year but no one paid any attention to us. The Ombudsman sent a letter saying that he could do nothing for us as it exceeded his powers. The police threatened to kill me if I kept on, however, I told you, we are Kists and we will take our revenge if we are not listened too’, states Malkhaz Gumashvili, who is supported by his friends.” (ibid)

A 2015 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to a request for information on blood feuds in Georgia, in a section headed “Prevalence and Statistics”, states:

“According to National Geographic, in Svaneti, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, blood feuds returned, but, since 2004, have ‘virtually disappeared.

Similarly, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, a lawyer from Georgian Democracy Initiative (GDI), an independent NGO that aims to advance Georgia's 'democratic development and Euro-Atlantic integration', indicated that blood feuds are an ancient tradition that continued until the end of the 20th century, but that there have been no new cases reported in 'recent years'.

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an associate professor at the School of Law at Ilia State University in Tbilisi, Georgia, who is active in the field of human rights, said that blood feuds no longer exist in Georgia today, and, to his knowledge, no cases have been reported between 2010 and 2015. In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a representative of the Human Rights Centre (HRIDC), a Georgia-based NGO dedicated to the protection and promotion of human rights, indicated that the organization has not heard of the existence of blood feuds in 'modern times'. (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (3 June 2015) *GEO105168.E – Georgia: Blood feuds, including prevalence, state protection, mediation and relocation (June 2012-May 2015)*)

A 2014 Eurasianet report states:

"The majority of Pankisi's population are Kists, an ethnic tribe with Chechen origins. Around two hundred years ago their ancestors fled from poverty and conflicts across the mountains to Georgia, and have lived here ever since as hunters, farmers or shepherds.

The great 19th century Georgian poet Vasha Pshavela describes the Kists as a vengeful yet honorable people, who were locked in blood feuds with their neighbors but would respect the laws of hospitality, even unto death.

Today relations between Kists and their Georgian neighbors are peaceful, if distant." (Eurasianet (7 November 2014) *The Fight to Reclaim Pankisi*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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.

## References:

Eurasianet (7 November 2014) *The Fight to Reclaim Pankisi*  
<https://eurasianet.org/the-fight-to-reclaim-pankisi>  
(Accessed 30 April 2019)

Human Rights Center (24 May 2006) *Threat of Blood Feud in Pankisi*  
<http://www.humanrights.ge/index.php?a=main&pid=6133&lang=eng>  
(Accessed 30 April 2019)

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (3 June 2015) *GEO105168.E – Georgia: Blood feuds, including prevalence, state protection, mediation and relocation (June 2012-May 2015)*  
<https://www.refworld.org/docid/5587bb464.html>

(Accessed 30 April 2019)

**Sources Consulted:**

BBC Monitoring  
Electronic Immigration Network  
Google  
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada  
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database  
UNHCR Refworld