

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

[Home](#)

> [Research Program](#)

> Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment please email Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca.

20 January 2014

ZZZ104747.E

Georgia and South Ossetia: Requirements and procedures for a Georgian citizen of Ossetian ethnicity to acquire South Ossetian citizenship (2008-2013)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Excerpts from the Constitutional Law of the Republic of South Ossetia Concerning Citizenship of the Republic of South Ossetia are attached to this Response.

Additional information on acquiring South Ossetian citizenship was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. However, the following information may be relevant.

Sources indicate that, in 2008 [after the end of the August 2008 war between Georgia and Russia/South Ossetia], the South Ossetian authorities announced that [ethnic] Georgians who had fled South Ossetia during the hostilities would be allowed to return if they renounced their Georgian citizenship and acquired South Ossetian citizenship (*Civil Georgia* 20 Sept. 2008; US 25 Feb. 2009). The US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008* also indicates that displaced Georgians would only be permitted to return if they had not participated in the war (ibid.). Similarly, in November 2008, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, a Strasbourg-based human rights organization that includes 47 member states, including 28 members of the European Union (Council of Europe n.d.), reported that, according to the de facto president of South Ossetia, ethnic Georgians who wished to return to their homes [in South Ossetia] "would have their cases examined individually to verify that they have not participated in the hostilities" before they could exercise their right of return (ibid. 16 Dec. 2008, 6).

A 2013 article by the BBC Monitoring Caucasus indicates that Georgian citizens are required to submit a certificate issued by Georgia's Ministry of Justice confirming that they had renounced their Georgian citizenship, as well as their Georgian ID cards, before they can obtain a South Ossetian passport (11 Dec. 2013). Another article published by the same source states that a person wishing to become a South Ossetian citizen must apply to the foreign ministry of South Ossetia, which then transfers the request to the "relevant agencies at the interior ministry" (BBC 8 Sept. 2013).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). 11 December 2013. BBC Monitoring Caucasus. "Travel to Tbilisi from Georgia's Rebel South Ossetia to Be Even More Complicated." (Factiva)

_____. 8 September 2013. BBC Monitoring Caucasus. "Georgians in Breakaway Seeking to Get S Ossetia Passports, Official Says." (Factiva)

Civil Georgia. 20 September 2008. "Tskhinvali Sets Condition for Georgian IDP Return."

<www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=19562> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2014]

Council of Europe. 16 December 2008. Commissioner for Human Rights. *Special Follow-up Mission to the Areas Affected by the South Ossetia Conflict: Implementation of the Commissioner's Six Principles for Urgent Human Rights and Humanitarian Protection*. (COMDH(2005)37)

<http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1227_1233065375_sossetia.pdf> [Accessed 17 Jan. 2014]

_____. N.d. "Who We Are." <<http://www.coe.int/aboutCoe/index.asp?page=quisommesnous&l=en>>

[Accessed 17 Jan. 2014]

South Ossetia. 2006. Constitutional Law of the Republic of South Ossetia. "Concerning Citizenship of the Republic of South Ossetia." Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Works and Government Services Canada. <<http://cominf.org/node/1156855873>> [Accessed 13 Jan. 2014]

United States (US). 25 February 2009. Department of State. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008*. <<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eur/119080.htm>> [Accessed 10 Jan. 2014]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact representatives of the Passport and Visa Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of South Ossetia and the Embassy of South Ossetia in Moscow were unsuccessful.

Internet sites, including: Balkan Insight; ecoi.net; Ethnologue; *The Georgian Times*; *Georgia Today*; International Relations and Security Network; Inter Press Service; Minority Rights Group International; *The Moscow Times*; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; South Ossetia - News Agency of the Republic.

Attachment

South Ossetia. 2006. Constitutional Law of the Republic of South Ossetia: "Concerning Citizenship of the Republic of South Ossetia." Translated by the Translation Bureau, Public Works and Government Services Canada.

[Tips on how to use this search engine.](#)

[Top of Page](#)

Date modified: 2014-06-11

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.