



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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16 April 2003

GGA41017.E

Georgia: Treatment of ethnic Russians and state protection (update to GGA33137.E of 5 November 1999)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Article 38 of the Constitution of Georgia, adopted on 24 August 1995, states that "[c]itizens of Georgia are equal in social, economic, cultural and political life regardless of national, ethnic, religious or language origin" (Georgia 24 Aug. 1995). The Constitution further states that, "all have the right to develop their culture freely without any discrimination and interference" (ibid.). The U.S. Department of State, Country Report on Human Rights Practices states that, although the Georgian Constitution stipulates that the state language is Georgian, "[b]oth Georgian and Russian are used for interethnic communication" (4 Mar. 2002, Sec.5). More recent corroborating and/or contrasting information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

A 2000 US Immigration and Naturalization Service Response to Information Request on the treatment of ethnic Russians, in Georgia, did not find "any evidence of systematic mistreatment of ethnic Russians in Georgia" (US 25 May 2000). The response quotes a representative of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as saying that the rights of minorities are generally respected and "that most ethnic Russians are very well integrated in Georgian society" (ibid.). The CSCE representative further stated that all Georgian citizens, including ethnic Russians, face the same difficulties in obtaining police protection (ibid.). The response also quotes the Executive Director of the London Information Network on Conflicts and State-Building as saying that "he has never heard of any instances of discrimination of ethnic Russians in the majority of Georgia and that Russians and Georgians have long lived respecting each other" (ibid.).

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 to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2001. 4 March 2002. United States Department of State. Washington DC. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/eur/8256.htm>> [Accessed 15 Apr. 2003]

Georgia. 24 August 1995. Constitution of Georgia.
<http://www.parliament.ge/LEGAL_ACTS/CONSTITUTION/consten.html> [Accessed 15 Apr. 2003]

United States. 25 May 2000. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. "Georgia: Response to Information Request GGA00001ZNY."
<<http://www.immigration.gov/graphics/services/asylum/ric/documentation/GGA00001.htm>> [Accessed 14 Apr. 2003]

Additional Sources Consulted

IRB Databases

Internet sites, including:

Amnesty International

Civil Society International (CSI)

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)

Human Rights Watch

International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHFHR)

IRIS Georgia

Parliament of Georgia

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)

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