



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Georgia - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on the 13 December 2012

Information required on the following aftermath of the election on 02 October 2012:

Treatment of members/supporters on the losing side (including the Nationalebi/Nacionaluri Partia party), including arrests, confiscation of property;

Treatment of those who actively oppose the new government including threats of imprisonment, using false drugs (or similar) charges

A report published in *BBC News* from December 2012 points out that:

“A wave of arrests of high-profile opposition politicians is tearing Georgia's new parliament apart” (BBC News (5 December 2012) *Georgia under Bidzina Ivanishvili: Justice or revenge?*).

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in November 2012 notes that:

“The prosecutor's office in Georgia's western province of Imereti has ordered the detention of the head of the administration of the town of Zestaponi. Media reports in Georgia say Kakha Getsadze was charged on November 29 with battery, hooliganism with a firearm, and damage to private property. Getsadze is a former member of Georgia's parliament and an active member of President Mikheil Saakashvili's United National Movement party. Several officials representing Saakashvili's party have been arrested since Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream coalition won parliamentary elections in October” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (30 November 2012) *Another Georgian Official Detained*).

Commenting on arrests, *The Economist* in November 2012 points out that:

“Many of those arrested face charges that relate to the election campaign, which suggests a sense of personal grievance on the part of senior members of the new government” (The Economist (22 November 2012) *Justice or Revenge?; Georgian politics*).

In November 2012 *BBC News* states:

“Georgian authorities have arrested a further nine former government officials, accusing them of abusing their power while in office. All the officials worked at the interior ministry under President Mikheil Saakashvili, whose party was ousted from power last month” (BBC News (16 November 2012) *Georgia: Fresh wave of arrests of former officials*).

A report published in October 2012 by *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* points out that:

“Since the October 1 elections, which were won by the opposition Georgian Dream coalition of billionaire businessman Bidzina Ivanishvili, a growing number of senior officials and former officials from the government of President Mikheil Saakashvili's United National Movement have disappeared. Georgian media have been rife with speculation that they have fled the country in fear of possible prosecution by the new authorities” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (16 October 2012) *After Elections, Many Georgian Officials Go Missing, Leave Town*).

A document issued in November 2012 by *Reuters* notes:

“Georgia's new prime minister aims to change the constitution to boost his powers before a presidential vote next year, he said on Thursday, but will not try to impeach rival President Mikheil Saakashvili. Bidzina Ivanishvili won power in a parliamentary election last month that ended Saakashvili's nine-year political dominance but left Georgia with an uneasy "cohabitation" government, with the president still in place, at least until October” (Reuters (22 November 2012) *Georgia PM aims to strengthen his role before presidential vote*).

This report also states:

“Under Ivanishvili, authorities have arrested more than 10 former senior officials, including an ex-interior minister and the army chief-of-staff, raising opposition fears of a purge and drawing criticism from Saakashvili's allies in the West. Parliament approved the constitutional changes - giving more powers to the legislature and the prime minister - before the election which brought the billionaire businessman to office - but they were due to take effect only after the October 2013 presidential election” (ibid).

No further information on these issues could be found among sources available to the RDC.

References

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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

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Freedom House

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