



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Treatment of Georgians in Russia

The *US Department of State* report issued in February 2009 covering events of 2008 notes how:

“Georgian diaspora groups in Russia reported no major campaign against their communities in response to the August conflict over the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. An anti-Georgia campaign following the 2006 diplomatic row between Russia and Georgia resulted in the deportation of approximately 4,000 ethnic Georgians, three of whom died in detention” (US Department of State, (25 February 2009), *2008 Human Rights Report: Russia*, Section 2d).

The *Freedom House* annual report published in July 2009 on events of 2008 states:

“The government has relied increasingly on anti-Western, anti-Georgian, and anti-Ukrainian rhetoric to shore up its legitimacy” (Freedom House, (16 July 2009), *Freedom in the World - Russia (2009)*).

A report by *Sova* in April 2009 notes:

“In contrast to previous years, there was no openly discriminatory campaign such as the anti-Georgian one (2006) and the anti-Estonian campaign (2007). Media coverage of the war in South Ossetia in August and September made clear that the conflict was political rather than ethnic. This does not mean that there were no manifestations of ethnic hatred against Georgians during this period, however. As in 2006, mainstream media coverage of attacks on ethnic Georgians and other anti-Georgian incidents was absent, although such incidents certainly occurred” (Sova, (15 April 2009), *Radical Nationalism in Russia in 2008, and Efforts to Counteract It*, The expansion of nationalism into public life).

In October 2009 the *Moscow Bureau on Human Rights Chronicle* includes Georgians in the following listing of xenophobic attacks in the period from January to October 2009:

“The attacks were recorded in Moscow and Moscow region (28 dead, 118 wounded), St. Petersburg and Leningrad region (8 dead, 25 wounded), Chechnya (5 dead), Nizhniy Novgorod (5 dead, 43 wounded at least), Stavropol region (2 dead, 13 wounded at least), Samara region (2 dead, 7 wounded), Kaliningrad (1 dead, 2 wounded), Yaroslavl (1 dead, 2 wounded), Vladivostok (1 dead, 6 wounded), Orel (1 dead, 1 wounded), Ingushetia, Lipetsk region,

Ryazan, Novosibirsk region, Ulyanovsk, Kemerovo, Kaluga region, Daghestan, Buryatia, Karachai-Cherkess (1 dead each), Vladimir region (7 wounded), Yekaterinburg (5 wounded), Murmansk, Naberezhniye Chelny (3 wounded each), Kabardino-Balkaria, Republic of Adygei (2 wounded at least), Blagoveshchensk, Voronezh, Tambov, Syktyvkar, Volgograd, Kostroma, Novgorod region, Izhevsk, Petrozavodsk, Chelyabinsk, Penza, Ufa (1 wounded each). The victims of attacks include: Uzbeks (14 dead, 12 wounded), Russians (5 dead, 9 wounded), the Tajik (6 dead, 17 wounded), the Kirghiz (6 dead, 10 wounded), Azerbaijanis (5 dead, 14 wounded), Armenians (3 dead, 14 wounded), Daghestanis (3 dead, 4 wounded), the Vietnamese (3 dead), natives of Africa (1 dead, 18 wounded), Koreans, the Chinese (1 dead, 2 wounded each), Chechens (1 dead, 3 wounded at least), Kabardinians (1 dead and 1 wounded), Georgians (1 dead, 2 wounded), the Ingush (1 dead), Kazakhs (5 wounded), Jews, Nogays (4 wounded each), Spaniards (3 wounded), Americans, Indians, Kalmyks, Bangladeshis, Buryats, Kurds, Latin Americans, Iraqis, Ossetians (1 wounded each). (Moscow Bureau on Human Rights Chronicle, (23 October 2009), *Aggressive xenophobia manifestations in RF from January till October 15,2009*,p.1).

Page 1 of an older report by *HRW* in October 2007 on the treatment of Georgians in Russia in late 2006 states:

“The Russian government’s campaign against ethnic Georgians occurred in the context of pervasive racism and xenophobia in Russia. In recent years, violent racially-motivated attacks and murders, often perpetrated by ultranationalist and neo-Nazi groups have become common occurrences, especially in large cities. Although there have been some convictions in recent years for violent hate-related crimes, the Russian government has done little to effectively combat these dangerous trends. In some cases, senior officials exacerbate the situation through public statements and policies. Russian experts have documented an increase in xenophobic and nationalist language in political discourse as well as in the media. Although the government campaign against Georgians did not result in a particular increase in vigilante violence against Georgians or other minorities, the Russian government’s willingness to single out an ethnic group sets a dangerous tone and indicates a government tolerance for discriminatory attitudes and actions” (HRW, (October 2007), *Singled Out, Russia’s Detention and Expulsion of Georgians*).

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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.

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