

# Georgia

## *Ethnicity in Georgia*

### *Power relations*

Georgians were and still are the dominant majority in the country (1251).

As a result of the ethno-territorial conflicts in the beginning of 1990s the South-Ossetians and the Abkhazians have regional autonomy in their secessionist republics (1252). While conflicts in these regions have been "frozen" between 1994-2008, in 2008 the violent conflict re-occurred in South Ossetia which resulted in the recognition of the two regions as independent states by Russia. Already after the conflicts in the beginning of 1990s the Georgian government had no power in these two regions. As for 2013 Georgia still has no control of these two regions (1253). Most of the international society considers Abkhazia and South Ossetia as de facto states while Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Nauru had recognized them as independent states de jure.

Due to this fact, the Census data of Georgia in 2002 does not include South Ossetia and Abkhazia (1254), those numbers are only approximations based on the estimated size of the population in these regions available at the website of the Minority Rights Group International (1255, 1256).

The Armenians and Azeri which are both regionally concentrated and have a few representatives in the government are powerless. It is difficult for them to gain political power. The law prohibits parties that don't have members in all rajons to run at national elections. This aims clearly at preventing parties from regionally concentrated ethnicities to become strong at the national level (1257). Although there were some positive shifts in terms of minority rights after the Rose Revolution, there have been no substantial improvements in granting political power on the national level to minorities (1258; 1259).

The Russian minority is irrelevant due to mass-emigration of Russians after Georgia's independence (indicated by the change in the size of Russians). There was no evidence of Russians being politically organized in Georgia.

The Adzhars (Ajars) in South-western Georgia are considered politically irrelevant. The Adzhars are ethnically closely related to Georgians, but are Muslims, so they were also called "Muslim Georgians". Since independence from the SU a Christianization took

<sup>1251</sup> [National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2002a]

<sup>1252</sup> [King, 2001]

<sup>1253</sup> [US State Department, 2010–2013]

<sup>1254</sup> [National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2002a]

<sup>1255</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2008a]

<sup>1256</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2008b]

<sup>1257</sup> [Zollinger Bochsler, 2012]

<sup>1258</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2009]

<sup>1259</sup> [US State Department, 2010–2013]

place, so that by now about half of the Adzhars are Muslims and half Christians (<sup>1260</sup>).

The latest census was conducted in 2002. There have been no major changes in power configuration in the period of 2009-2013 (<sup>1261</sup>; <sup>1262</sup>). While Georgian government took several steps to integrate ethnic minority communities (through language instruction, education and participation in several programs) and while few members of ethnic minorities are present in the parliament as well as occupying positions in local governments, ethnic minority representation on the national political arena generally remained limited and far lower than its representation in the country (<sup>1263</sup>).

There are two periods with same power stati but different group sizes, resulting from the emigration of Armenians, Russians and other politically irrelevant ethnic groups.

<sup>1260</sup> [Toft, 2001]

<sup>1261</sup> [International Crisis Group, 2011]

<sup>1262</sup> [US State Department, 2010-2013]

<sup>1263</sup> [US State Department, 2010-2013]

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## Political status of ethnic groups in Georgia

*From 1991 until 2001*

| Group name        | Proportional size | Political status |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Georgians         | 0.694             | DOMINANT         |
| Armenians         | 0.08              | POWERLESS        |
| Azeri             | 0.056             | POWERLESS        |
| Ossetians (South) | 0.032             | SELF-EXCLUSION   |
| Abkhazians        | 0.017             | SELF-EXCLUSION   |

*From 2002 until 2013*

| Group name        | Proportional size | Political status |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Georgians         | 0.805             | DOMINANT         |
| Azeri             | 0.063             | POWERLESS        |
| Armenians         | 0.055             | POWERLESS        |
| Abkhazians        | 0.037             | SELF-EXCLUSION   |
| Ossetians (South) | 0.015             | SELF-EXCLUSION   |



Figure 286: Political status of ethnic groups in Georgia during 1991-2001.



Figure 287: Political status of ethnic groups in Georgia during 2002-2013.

## Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Georgia

*From 1991 until 2008*

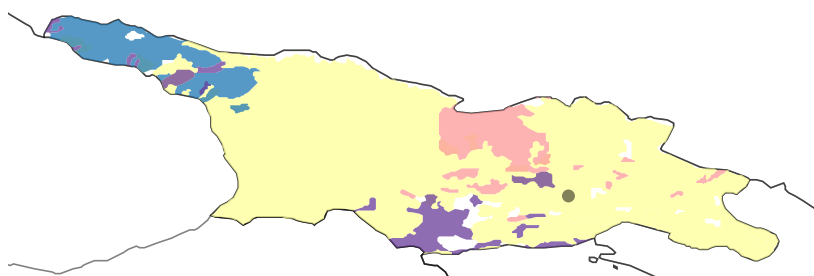


Figure 288: Map of ethnic groups in Georgia during 2002-2013.

| Group name        | Area in km <sup>2</sup> | Type             |
|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Georgians         | 51 345                  | Regional & urban |
| Abkhazians        | 5507                    | Regionally based |
| Ossetians (South) | 5154                    | Regionally based |
| Armenians         | 3742                    | Regional & urban |
| Azeri             | 3133                    | Regional & urban |

Table 88: List of ethnic groups in Georgia during 1991-2008.

*From 2009 until 2013*

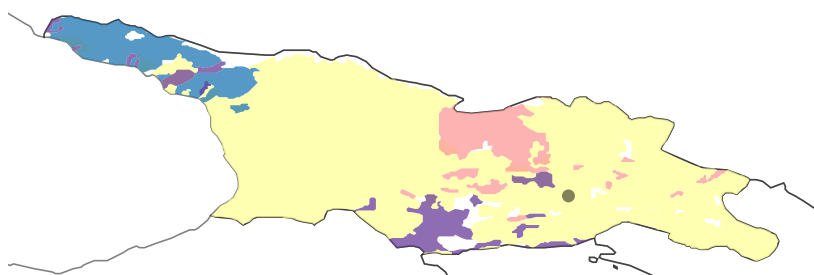


Figure 289: Map of ethnic groups in Georgia during 2002-2013.

|   | Group name        | Area in km <sup>2</sup> | Type             |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| ■ | Georgians         | 50 936                  | Regional & urban |
| ■ | Abkhazians        | 5507                    | Regionally based |
| ■ | Ossetians (South) | 5154                    | Regionally based |
| ■ | Armenians         | 3742                    | Regional & urban |
| ■ | Azeri             | 3133                    | Regional & urban |

Table 89: List of ethnic groups in Georgia during 2009-2013.



## *Conflicts in Georgia*

*Starting on 1991-12-22*

| Side A                | Side B                        | Group name | Start      | Claim | Recruitment    | Support |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------|-------|----------------|---------|
| Government of Georgia | National Guard and Mkhedrioni | Georgians  | 1991-12-22 | No    | No             | No      |
| Government of Georgia | Zviadists                     | Georgians  | 1992-01-21 | No    | Yes, from EGIP | No      |

*Starting on 1991-12-22*

| Side A                | Side B                    | Group name        | Start      | Claim    | Recruitment | Support |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|------------|----------|-------------|---------|
| Government of Georgia | Republic of South Ossetia | Ossetians (South) | 1991-12-22 | Explicit | Yes         | Yes     |

*Starting on 1992-08-14*

| Side A                | Side B               | Group name | Start      | Claim    | Recruitment | Support |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|---------|
| Government of Georgia | Republic of Abkhazia | Abkhazians | 1992-08-14 | Explicit | Yes         | Yes     |