

# Refugee Status

## Contact Information

### **The Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia**

Vazha Pshavela Ave. #16, Tbilisi, Georgia 0160  
Phone: +995 32 38 52 92  
Fax: +995 32 38 47 92  
Opening hours: 09:00-18:00 (Mon-Fri)

### **The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

Kazbegi Ave. #2a, Tbilisi, Georgia 0160  
Phone: + 995 25 00 80 / 44 13 01  
Fax: +995 32 44 13 02  
E-mail: geotb@unhcr.org  
Opening hours: 0900-1730 (Mon-Fri)

### **The United Nations Association of Georgia**

Dolidze st. #2, Tbilisi, Georgia 0171  
Phone/Fax: +995 32 33 25 16; 33 52 16  
E-mail: una@una.ge  
Opening hours: 09:00-17:00 (Mon-Fri)

**Police&Fire: 022**  
**Ambulance: 03**  
**Telephone info: 09**

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stand and to be provided with an interpreter by the Ministry free of charge. UNHCR and your legal representative may attend the interview.

During the interview, you should submit to the Ministry any available documents, which help prove the facts you are stating or that are relevant to your asylum claim. You will be asked questions about the reasons why you left your country and why you are seeking asylum. You must be truthful and provide as many details as possible about your situation and experience.

If you do not appear for the interview, your absence without valid reason may be considered as an evasion from a legal requirement and serve as a ground for refusing to grant you refugee status. If you submit false information you will lose the right to acquire refugee status.

## Decision-making process

The decision on granting, denial, termination or revocation of refugee status shall be made by the Ministry.

Following the registration of your application and the interview, the Ministry will study and make a decision on your case within four months from the date of registration of your application. .

✓ **If you have been recognized as refugee:** you shall receive a certificate (and eventually a refugee ID card) confirming your refugee status within five days after the decision is made. You must also undergo annual registration.

**You have the right:** to live on the territory of Georgia in the areas of residence determined by the Ministry (including up to 6 months in the place of temporary settlement assigned to you when you applied for status), to be assisted in getting employment, to education, enjoy social welfare and other rights as provided by law.

✓ **If you have not been recognized as refugee:**

you shall be given a written notice specifying the reason(s) for the denial within 5 days after the decision is made.

**You have the right:** to appeal against the decision of the Ministry to reject your application for refugee status before the competent court within a month. You are exempted from any fees related to consideration of your appeal.

UNAG offer you free legal services and, if you have a valid claim, will also provide court representation during the appeal process. You shall not be expelled or deported from Georgia during the appeal process.

**If anyone threatens or mistreats you please contact immediately the local police, MRA, UNAG or UNHCR.**

## How to Obtain Refugee Status in Georgia

This brochure provides general information with the aim to acquaint the persons seeking asylum in Georgia with their rights and obligations, as well as with the procedures of obtaining refugee status. The term “refugee” shall apply to any person who has a **well-founded fear** of being **persecuted** for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

**The Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia (Ministry)** is the only public agency, which is authorized to solve the issue of granting refugee status. If you seek asylum in Georgia, you should apply to the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation, which will provide free service.

**The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State. UNHCR also helps refugees to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or in exceptional circumstances to resettle in a third country. The UNHCR office in Georgia does not have a formal role in the process of determining refugee status under Georgian law, which is the sole responsibility of the Georgian

Government. UNHCR does, however, provide asylum seekers and refugees with information, advice and counseling on asylum seeking procedures and rights. All services provided by UNHCR are free of charge.

**The United Nations Association of Georgia (UNAG)** is a non-governmental organization. It actively cooperates with UNHCR and the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation. Activities aimed at protecting the rights of asylum seekers and refugees is one of the major initiatives of the organization. UNAG assists refugees and asylum seekers with administrative procedures, and provides legal counseling and representation at all stages of the procedure for granting refugee status, including appeals before the court against decisions denying status. Services provided by UNAG are free of charge.

All the above-mentioned organizations ensure that the information and documents you provide are kept confidential and not shared with your country of origin. They will retain photocopies of the documents you submit in your file and return the originals to you.

**While living in Georgia you must respect the laws of Georgia.**

### Who is eligible for refugee status in Georgia?

The status and rights of refugees and persons seeking refugee status in Georgia is regulated by the 1998 Law of Georgia on Refugees.

According to the criteria of this Law, refugee status shall be granted to a person without Georgian citizenship who entered the territory of Georgia and to whom Georgia is not the country of origin and who was forced to leave his country of citizenship or permanent residence as a result of persecution for the reasons of race, religion, national identity, membership of a social group or political opinion and who is unable or is unwilling avail himself of the protection of his country owing to such danger.

### Rules of Applying for Refugee Status

If you seek to obtain refugee status, you must contact the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia and apply in person for refugee status.

An authorized person of the Ministry is obliged to acquaint you with the decision making rules and explain your rights and obligations.

To register your application, the Ministry will ask you to make your request in writing. They will also complete a standard application form on the basis of information and identification and family questionnaire shall also be filled in. Adults shall submit passports. Those without a passport can submit a temporary identification card, military card, or driver’s license. Children under 16 will need to show their birth certificate.

If you entered Georgia by crossing the state border without any valid entry documents to seek refugee status, you must approach the nearest state agency within **3 (three) days** and express your intention to apply for asylum. Otherwise, you may be subject to charges and imprisonment for unlawfully entering and staying in Georgia.

Within the three following (3) days, the Ministry will decide whether or not to register your application for asylum.

If the Ministry **decides to register your application**, they will issue a certificate confirming that you are registered as an asylum-seeker. This certificate will be valid in Georgia for four months, until a final decision on your application is made.

If the Ministry **decides not to register your application** you will be notified in writing of the reasons for the refusal within the next 5 days (in other words within 8 days of filing your application).

You may file a request to the Ministry to review their refusal to register your application,

within 15 days of receiving the written notification. You may also appeal this refusal directly before the Tbilisi City Court for Administrative Cases within one month.

As a person seeking for refugee status, you have the right not to be forcibly returned to your country of origin or another country where your life and freedom would be endangered. If you are instructed by any state authority to return, you should immediately contact the Ministry and UNHCR or UNAG.

If you decide to return voluntarily to your country of origin or to the country from where you arrived to Georgia, you should contact to the Ministry and UNHCR.

If your application for asylum is registered, you will also have the right to stay in a place of temporary settlement assigned by the Ministry and to enroll your children in school. If you wish to change the place of residence offered to you by the Ministry, you must inform them of your new address. The Ministry may also require that you undergo medical examination.

### Interview

The Ministry will interview you in order to determine whether to grant you refugee status.

The interview is confidential. You have the right to be interviewed in a language you under-