

Media Monitoring

In what context are foreign migrants mentioned in the Georgian media?

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In Georgia, as in many countries, the politicization of immigration is noticeable, almost always immigration is framed within a political discourse in relation to economic or security issues. In many articles, political or public figures talk about migration as a problem or crisis.

Previously, Georgia had a very liberal migration policy, but in previous years the government carried out several reforms, in connection with which representatives of many countries now need a visa. This fact, combined with the statements of ultra-right groups and many “news” in traditional and social networks, makes a strong negative immigration background prevailing under the overall perspective that migration is a problem that needs to be solved, responsibility that needs to be mitigated, the task to be resolved rather than a positive phenomenon that opens up real opportunities for economic growth.

It should be noted, that in 2017 in Tbilisi, was organized a xenophobic, ethno-nationalist rally. The ‘March of Georgians’ organized by ultra-conservative political group Erovnuloba (Georgian for nationality) railed against ‘illegal immigrants’, meaning anyone not Christian and white. The sentiment of the demonstration was openly Xenophobic and Islamophobic.

‘They should leave our country as soon as possible’, many of the protesters said. They claimed that the social and political problems facing the country could be easily be solved after this, as the departure of ‘foreign immigrants would open up new jobs.

Media outlets that most often express hatred towards different groups are ethno-nationalistic newspapers: Georgia and World, Asaval-Dasavali, Alia, Marshalpress and TV channel – Obiektivi.

Let me give you some examples of my internet media monitoring.

Many articles indirectly but negatively describe migrants.

- “Arab statements appeared on the walls of Tbilisi buildings without Georgian translation”.
- “The Chinese buy houses and especially land in different parts of the country”.
- “The "invasion" of the Arabs is felt in the capital, especially in old Tbilisi”.
- The newspaper Resonansdaily, title “Increased risks of growth of migrants”.

In this article is highlighted problems of security and economic issues. The great amount of Arab and Islamic migrants are coming in Georgia, which may occur terroristic attacks which will impact on political destabilization of the country; parallel is made with "Islamic State", as if is interested in Georgia. (http://resonancedaily.com/index.php?id_rub=2&id_artc=27023)

- Newspaper Georgia and World, title: “New Wave of Foreign Migrants Waiting for Georgia!”

In this article the decision of the government regarding the visas, particularly prolonging visas for foreigners is estimated as a disaster and destruction of the country.

(<http://geworld.ge/ge/6563/>)

- In the article: “Does anybody control migrants in Georgia?!” is written about threats that are related with a big amount of migrant flows, the author seems to be a neutral, but the respondent is from the ultra-conservative, ultra-right party. So the context is clearly negative. (<https://sputnik-georgia.com/opinion/20180515/240474149/migrantebi-saqartveloshi.html>)
- The article: “How do foreign migrants cheat to get easily the right to live in Georgia?” does not need further annotation. The title speaks on its own. (<https://digest.pia.ge/post/220912-rogor-tarlitoben-ucxoeli-migrantebi-saqartvelosi-binadrobis-uflebis-martivad-mosapoveblad>)
- The same for this article: “We should not allow suspicious persons to get citizenship of our country”. <https://www.kvirispalitra.ge/politic/34173-qar-unda-davushvath-rom-saetcvo-pirebma-miighon-chveni-qveynis-moqalageobaq.html>

Fortunately, there are some media outlets that are very balanced and some even promote the positive aspects of immigration.

- “India's citizens are most likely to be denied entry to Georgia”. This article and following articles are pure statistical and based on the data provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. (<http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/126785-saqartveloshi-shemosvlaze-kvelaze-met-uars-indoetis-moqalageobs-eubnebian>)
- “Study: Number of immigrants in Georgia has decreased by 8246” (<https://imedinews.ge/ge/saqartvelo/63782/kvleva-saqartveloshi-imigrantebis-raodenoba-8246it-shemtsirda>)
- “The most immigrants in Georgia are from Russia” (<https://sputnik-georgia.com/georgia/20160428/231391977.html>)

- “17,330 foreigners work in Georgia - in which business sector are non-residents working?” (<http://trialeti.ge/?p=23329>)
- “Unemployment as a source of xenophobia”. Here is analyzed the economic and employment market and how it effects on xenophobic attitudes towards foreign workers. (<https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/24510323.html>)
- “Advantages of a liberal immigration policy” (<http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/73447-liberaluri-saimigracio-politikis-siketeebi>). The article is promoting pluses of migration.
- “Foreign nationals in Georgia: myths and reality”. This article is showing the wrong perceptions of public towards migrants. (https://idfi.ge/ge/foreign_citizens_in_georgia)

To sum up, media coverage of foreign migrants in Georgia is diverse, here we can find balanced reports, as well as biased reports.