

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Georgia

**CAPITAL:** Tbilisi

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Unitary Multiparty Republic

**AREA:** 69,700 Sq Km (26,900 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION** 5,782,800

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**LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY:** Georgia is a former republic of the USSR. It is bound by Russia to the north and east, Azerbaijan to the southeast, Armenia to the south, Turkey to the southwest and the Black Sea to the west. In the north the Greater Caucasus Ranges are connected to the Lesser Caucasus Ranges and Armenian Highlands in the south, by the north to south Surami Range. In between these ranges lie a series of fertile plains and valleys while towards the Black Sea coast, the marshy delta of the Rioni River forms the Colchis Swamps. The principal rivers are the Kura and Rioni. Major Cities (pop. est.); Tbilisi 1,270,000, Kutaisi 240,000, Rustavi 158,000, Batumi 137,000, Sukhumi 112,000 (1993). Land Use; forested 39%, pastures 29%, agricultural-cultivated 14%, other 18% (1993).

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**CLIMATE:** Georgia has a transitional climate from subtropical along the coastal regions to continental in eastern Georgia. Along the coast there are frostless winters and warm humid summers with humidity and precipitation decreasing in the mountains to the east. Along the coast average annual precipitation varies from 1,200 to 2,800 mm (47 to 110 inches) to 600 to 800 mm (24 to 31.5 inches) in the mountainous regions. Average temperature ranges are from 3 to 6 degrees Celsius (37 to 43 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 23 to 26 degrees Celsius (73 to 79 degrees Fahrenheit) in August.

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**PEOPLE:** The principal ethnic majority are the Georgians who account for 70% of the population while 8% are Armenians, 6% are Russians and another 6% are Azerbaijani. Other ethnic minorities include Ukrainians, Ossetians, Abkhazians, Jews and Belarussians.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 79 persons per sq km (204 persons per sq mi) (1993). Urban-Rural; 55.8% urban, 44.2% rural (1991). Sex Distribution; 47.6% male, 52.4% female (1991). Life Expectancy at Birth; 68.7 years male, 76.1 years female (1991). Age Breakdown; 25% under 15, 24% 15 to 29, 19% 30 to 44, 17% 45 to 59, 11% 60 to 74, 4% 75 and over (1989). Birth Rate; 17.0 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 8.4 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 8.6 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 15.9 per 1,000 live births (1990).

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**RELIGIONS:** Mostly Christians of the Georgian and Armenian Orthodox Churches.

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**LANGUAGES:** The official language is Georgian, although Russian is also widely spoken and each ethnic minority also has its own language.

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**EDUCATION:** Aged 25 or over and having attained: primary or no formal schooling 12.3%, incomplete secondary 15.2%, complete secondary 57.4%, higher 15.1% (1989). Literacy; N/A.

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** On Apr. 9, 1991 Georgia declared its independence, although prior to independence its history was closely tied with that of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In Mar. 1953 Yosef Stalin died and was succeeded by Georgy Malenkov who was in turn forced to relinquish the party leadership to Nikita Khrushchev after a little over one week in power. In 1955 the Warsaw pact militarily aligned the Soviet Union with other communist countries and in Nov. 1956 the Soviet Red Army invaded Hungary to quell uprisings. In 1957 three communist ministers unsuccessfully attempted to depose Khrushchev which resulted in their expulsion from the central committee. In 1962 under Khrushchev's rule the USSR was involved in the Cuban Missile crisis and in the same year relations with China were broken off as a result of ideological differences. In Oct. 1964 Khrushchev was forced to retire and was succeeded by Leonid Brezhnev. In Aug. 1968 the Warsaw Pact forces led by the Red Army invaded Czechoslovakia to halt their Prague Spring reforms. In 1977 Brezhnev was elected President. In Nov. 1982 Brezhnev died and was succeeded by Yuri Andropov, the former head of the KGB. Andropov introduced limited economic reforms and established an anti-corruption program. In Feb 1984 Andropov died and was succeeded by Konstantin Chernenko who in turn died on Mar. 10, 1985. On Mar. 11, 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev was elected as Chernenko's successor and Gorbachev embarked on a program which restructured the USSR's relations with the West. Gorbachev also established Glasnost (openness) as well as Perestroika (restructuring and reform). In Apr. 1986 a meltdown in the reactor of the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine sent radioactive fallout across northern Europe. In Dec. 1987 the USSR and USA signed the Treaty on Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF). In Feb. 1988 a dispute erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh which resulted in mass demonstrations and strikes in the two republics. In Dec. 1988 an earthquake in Armenia killed some 50,000 people. In Apr. 1989 troops violently repressed demonstrations in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. In Dec. 1989 the Lithuanian Parliament adopted multiparty politics. In Jan. 1990 Gorbachev visited Lithuania and was met by some 250,000 pro-independence demonstrators. In Feb. 1990 some 18 people were killed in riots over housing discrimination in Tajikistan. In May 1990 Boris Yeltsin was elected President of the Russian Federation and on Nov. 1, 1990 launched a 500 day plan to give the Russian Republic a free market economy. In June 1990 Nakhichevan an Azerbaijani enclave bordering Iran declared its intention for a unification with Iran while a civil war was escalating between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In the same month around 150 people were killed during ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan. In Jan 1991 another 15 people were killed as the Red Army seized a television

station in Lithuania while in Latvia the Soviet Black Berets killed 5 people in an attack on the ministry building. In the same month troops were being deployed in Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova. In Mar. 1991 pro-Yeltsin demonstrators held a mass rally. On Aug. 18, 1991 as Gorbachev was vacationing in the Crimea, the Politburo hard liners attempted a coup to remove Gorbachev from power through the declaration of a State of Emergency under the control of a State Committee. Almost immediately republic leaders declared the emergency committee illegal as well as unconstitutional and began to barricade their parliaments as troops and tanks were deployed throughout the republics. By Aug. 20 senior officers had refused to order their troops to use force against the civilians and on Aug. 21, 1991 the coup collapsed as troops were ordered to return to their barracks. Immediately following the unsuccessful coup many republics suspended or purged the communist party and on Sept. 5, 1991 after 3 days of debate the 74 years of centralized communist control came to an end. In Jan. 1992 the democratically elected President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was overthrown in a violent and bloody struggle. In Mar. 1992 Eduard Shevardnadze returned from Moscow and was installed as the State Council chairman by the co-leaders of the Military Council, Tengiz Kitovani and Dzhaba Ioseliani. In Oct. 1992 Shevardnadze was elected President. In 1992 Georgia suffered from internal conflicts in the regions of South Ossetia, Mingrelia and Abkhazia. The mainly Muslim population of South Ossetia wished to reunite with their co-nationals in North Ossetia which is part of Russia while sporadic fighting continued with Kitovani wanting to impose a military solution and Ruslan Khasbulatov, the Russian parliament chairman, threatening to annex South Ossetia. In June 1992 the Russian and Georgian leaders agreed to sign an agreement that provided peace-keeping force which would establish a South Ossetia buffer zone. In Dec. 1992 Pres. Shevardnadze imposed martial law on all government ministers as a result of the deteriorating situation in the northern Abkhazia region which had earlier announced its independence from Georgia. In 1993 the separatist war in Abkhazia dominated the political scene with large-scale Abkhazian and unofficial Russian offensives in Mar. 1993 in an attempt to capture Sukhumi. In May 1993, Shevardnadze and Russian Pres. Boris Yeltsin concluded a cease-fire agreement, that the Abkhazian Parliament chairman Vladislav Ardzinba later agreed to, although it never took effect. In the same month, Shevardnadze forced Kitovani to resign as defense minister and demanded greater executive powers, which alienated radical deputies. In July 1993 another large-scale Abkhazian offensive against Sukhumi took place, along with strong Russian diplomatic pressure on Georgia to reach a settlement. On July 27, 1993 a Georgia agreed to another cease-fire and withdrew its heavy artillery from Sukhumi. In Aug. 1993 the government was dissolved after failing three times to pass its draft budget. In Sept. 1993 Shevardnadze imposed a state of emergency which he later retracted on the condition the Parliament take a recess for three months. In late Sept. 1993 after fierce fighting with Georgian government troops the Abkhazian forces re-captured Sukhumi and then consolidated their control over the region. In Oct. 1993 the ousted Pres. Gamsakhurdia with his private army launched a major offensive and almost took the city of Kutsai only to be forced back by Georgian troops with the support of Russia. In Nov. 1993 the Abkhazian leader Ardzinba called for the deployment of UN observers along the frontier to eliminate any possible attempt by Georgian troops to regain control of the region. On Dec. 1, 1993 a UN-sponsored peace accord was signed by the two groups that guaranteed Abkhazia's autonomy within Georgia and included the

deployment of UN peacekeeping forces. On Dec. 19, 1993 the first prisoner exchanges took place and it was reported that former Pres. Gamsakhurdia had shot himself on Dec. 31, 1993. Also during 1993 Georgia was admitted to the Commonwealth of Independent States, which logistically provided the Georgia government with Russian support against attacks from Gamsakhurdia's forces.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Lari divided into 100 Tetri

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$3,055,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$1,000,000,000 (1994). Imports; R 35,389,000,000 (1992). Exports; R 16,762,000,000 (1992). Tourism Receipts; N/A. Balance of Trade; R -18,627,000,000 (1992). Economically Active Population; 1,959,000 or 36.3% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 3.5% (1989).

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partner is the CIS.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Citrus Fruits, Coal, Copper, Grapes, Hydroelectricity, Livestock, Manganese, Oil, Tea, Timber, Tobacco, Vegetables.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Agriculture, Chemical and Fertilizer Processing, Electric Locomotives, Food Processing, Footwear, Iron and Steel, Mining, Oil Refining, Precision Tools, Textiles, Tourism, Wine Making.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Canned Foods, Cigarettes, Coal, Copper, Cotton, Fertilizers, Footwear, Fruits, Iron and Steel, Manganese, Petroleum, Precision Tools, Textiles, Trucks.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; route length 1,570 km (976 mi) (1990), passenger-km 17,000,000 (10,563,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km N/A. Roads; length 33,900 km (21,064 mi) (1989). Vehicles; cars 427,400 (1988). Merchant Marine; vessels 54 (1988), deadweight tonnage 1,108,068 (1988). Air Transport; passenger-km 5,295,600,000 (3,290,532,000 passenger-mi) (1989).

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 147 with a total circulation of 3,677,000 (1989). Radio and Television; receivers 3,760,000 (1990). Telephones; units 1,002,000 (1993).

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**MILITARY:** 4,500 (1994) total active duty personnel with 95.5% army, navy and 4.5% air force while military expenditure accounts for 3.1% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).