



GEORGIA 2021

Main developments in migration
and international protection,
including latest statistics

EMN COUNTRY FACTSHEET

August 2022



OVERARCHING CHANGES

Since [joining the European Migration Network \(EMN\)](#) as an Observer State, the Georgian National Contact Point (NCP) actively developed EMN outputs and attended EMN events/meetings. The EMN Steering Board examined the performance indicators and granted Georgia permanent Observer status at the end of the year. In joining the EMN, Georgia strengthened bilateral cooperation with the EU in the areas of migration and asylum (while aligning its migration policy with EU standards) and enhanced the capacity of its national institutions to analyse and respond to modern migration trends. Following approval of its 2021-2030 Migration Strategy ([Governmental Ordinance No. 810 of 30 December 2020](#)), the State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia (SCMI) adopted and enacted the [Migration Strategy Action Plan](#) from January 2021.

The SCMI adopted a new, fully visualised [2021 Migration Profile](#), which is widely used by those involved/interested in national migration-related issues (state institutions, international organisations, researchers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academics, media, students and the general public).

A Prime Ministerial decision saw the Interagency Coordination Council (ICC), responsible for COVID-19 issues, prolonged the legal stay of foreigners unable to leave the country due to pandemic restrictions until 1 July 2021. After lifting restrictions on international flights, land and sea borders were reopened and additional categories of foreigners were included in the national free COVID-19 vaccination programme.

KEY POINTS



In March 2021, Georgia joined the EMN as an Observer State, becoming a permanent Observer at the end of the year.



The Interagency Coordination Council (ICC), responsible for COVID-19 issues, took several important decisions to facilitate safe and orderly migration.



Labour Inspection Service (LIS) became operational on 1 January 2021, with an extended mandate to identify labour exploitation/trafficking cases.



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

The updated [EU Visa-Free mobile app](#) was launched in 2021. The App with an integrated calendar includes new features: constantly updated information on individual mobility regulations in the EU/Schengen area (including in the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic); contact details of Georgian diplomatic missions; emergency information; possibility to save the travel history and favourite countries and other useful information.

WORK-RELATED MIGRATION

From 1 January 2021, the Labour Inspectorate Department of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs became a separate Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL), the

Labour Inspection Service (LIS), under the same Ministry. The LIS carries out scheduled and non-scheduled visits to companies and refers any suspected labour exploitation to the Central Criminal Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA).

A document on the implementation procedures of the “Agreement to regulate labour migration between the Republic of Bulgaria and Georgia” was signed in Sofia.

STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

The Ministry of Education and Science officially approved the ‘Study in Georgia’ programme for foreign students wishing to acquire higher education at Georgian universities. The programme was designed to facilitate admission procedures for international students, to address increasing regional demand for Georgian higher educational institutions, and to support the development of internationally accredited study programmes.

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The definition of ‘family member’ in the Law on Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons changed, with a foreigner’s child or parent now considered a family member only where the person requesting a residence permit is the parent of a minor residing in Georgia, or is the underage child of a foreigner residing in Georgia.

OTHER MEASURES

Amendments to the Law on Legal Status of Aliens and Stateless Persons saw the maximum validity term of a temporary residence permit extended from 6 to 12 years. The length of a temporary residence permit (a condition of eligibility to apply for a permanent residence permit) was increased from 6 to 10 years.

The Public Service Development Agency (PSDA) (an LEPL of the Ministry of Justice), as the body responsible for issuing residence permits to foreigners, was granted a mandate to establish monitoring in the year after a residence permit is issued and to verify the facts given in the applicant’s documents.



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

No significant developments in 2021.



MINORS AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

The Government Strategy for 2022-2026 on the Protection of Homeless Children from Violence, including Trafficking in Human Beings and its Action Plan for 2022-2024 were both finalised, with stakeholder feedback invited and integrated.

A new day-care centre service for children working and/or living on the streets was launched in Batumi (Adjara region). In November 2021, a new mobile group was set up in the region to identify children in such situations.

A service centre for child victims of violence (Barnahus Model) was piloted at locations in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. The service centre was established under the State Care Agency, based on the concept of a psychosocial service centre for child victims of violence that was adopted by the government.



INTEGRATION

BASIC SERVICES

A new component (funding of healthcare services and medications in the range of GEL 1 000) for program beneficiaries was added to the 2021 State Program to Support Integration of Foreigners Residing in Georgia.



CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP

An Organic Law on Georgian Citizenship was amended extending (until 31 December 2022) the period for the retention, restoration, granting (under the special rule) and determination of Georgian citizenship.



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

BORDER MANAGEMENT

A new working arrangement was signed between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Frontex. Plans for cooperation with Lithuania and Latvia on border management were also enacted.

From 1 January 2021, amendments to the Entry/Exit Law were enacted, ensuring additional check at Georgian border checkpoints of documentation required by Schengen Regulations. In this regard, 1 953 citizens of Georgia intending travel to EU/Schengen states were refused the right to depart from the country in 2021.

Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Records (PNR) system was switched from testing mode to operational. The system was developed in compliance with respective EU directives and its operation will considerably facilitate exercising control in terms of border security and illegal migration, as well as fight against terrorism and other serious crimes.

VISA POLICY

Agreements with the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Fiji on mutual visa exemption entered into force in 2021.



IRREGULAR MIGRATION INCLUDING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

No significant developments in 2021.



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

NATIONAL STRATEGIC POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

An [amendment](#) to the Criminal Procedure Code allowed MIA investigators to involve its witness and victim coordinators in criminal proceedings. Previously, only the prosecutor was permitted to involve the witness and victim coordinator of the Prosecutor's Office in trafficking in human beings case proceedings.

IDENTIFICATION AND INFORMATION TO VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Legislative amendments to the Law on Combating Human Trafficking came into force, simplifying the procedures for granting one-off state compensation (GEL 1 000) to trafficking/statutory victims. Victim/statutory victim can now receive one-off compensation directly without referring to the court.



RETURN AND READMISSION

COOPERATION WITH THIRD COUNTRIES

An Agreement between the Governments of Georgia and Montenegro on the Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorization [was signed and entered into force](#).

Norway joined Readmission Case Management Electronic System of Georgia (RCMES). Moreover, two new tools: a) Return Notification feature b) Assisted Voluntary Return module have been introduced/activated in RCMES, aiming to facilitate return process of Georgian citizens.



MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

MFA Georgia [launched](#) three flagship grant programmes on/for Georgian diaspora abroad: 1. "Support for Diaspora Initiatives"; 2. "Become a Young Ambassador of your Country"; 3. "Supporting the Georgian Dancing and Singing Groups Abroad".



STATISTICAL ANNEX

The Statistical Annex was prepared by the EMN NCP Georgia and the European Migration Network Service Provider and provides an overview of the latest available statistics for Georgia on aspects of migration and international protection (2018-2021), including legal residence, citizenship, asylum, unaccompanied minors, irregular migration, return and visas. Where statistics were not available at the time of publication, this is indicated in the Annex as "N/A".

STATISTICAL ANNEX

! GENERAL NOTES

This statistical annex complements the Country Factsheet with relevant migration-related data organised in up to nine thematic sections - depending on data availability. The dashboard-like layout of the annex allows comparability across countries as well as simultaneous visualisation of different indicators. Whenever data are not available, the relative chart is indicated with 'N/A'. Data are provided for the latest available year or the latest available four-year period. For some indicators, data are rounded in the source. The sum of percentages or of individual values might not add up to 100 or to the total value. This is due to rounding and confidence intervals in the original data.

COLOUR LEGEND

Whenever not specified, the following colour legend is adopted. Colours for multiple nationalities are randomly chosen.

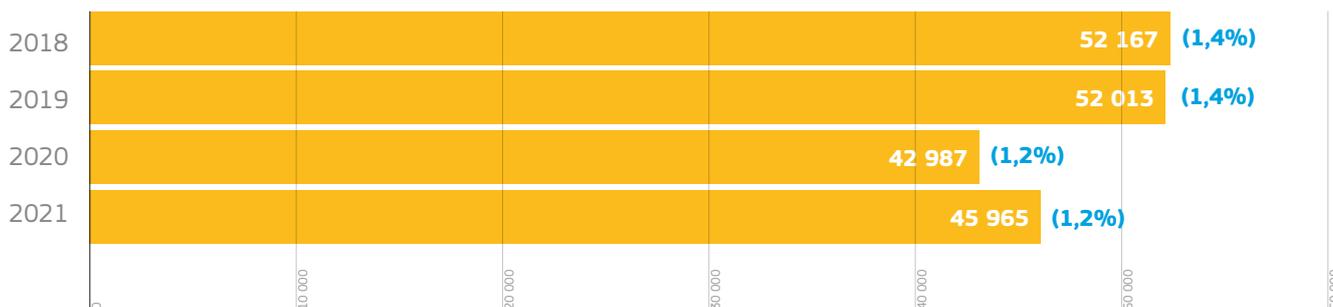
Data relative to Georgia



LEGAL MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

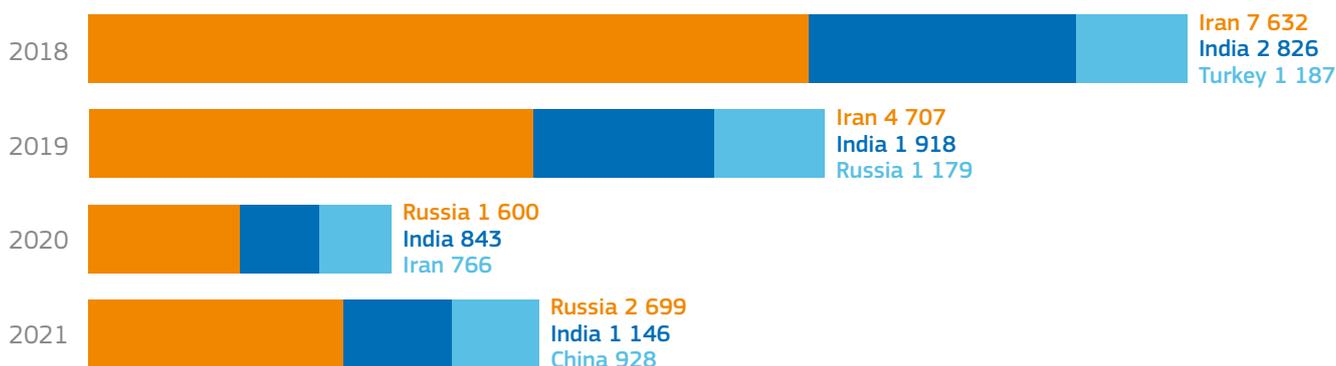
Foreigners holding residence cards as a share of total population in Georgia

SOURCE: National Statistics Office of Georgia / Public Service Development Agency of Georgia.



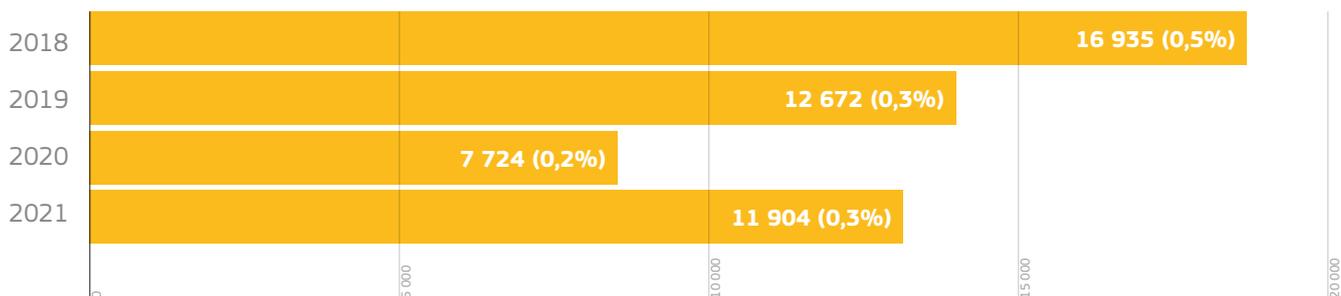
Top 3 nationalities of number of first residence permits annually issued

SOURCE: Public Service Development Agency of Georgia



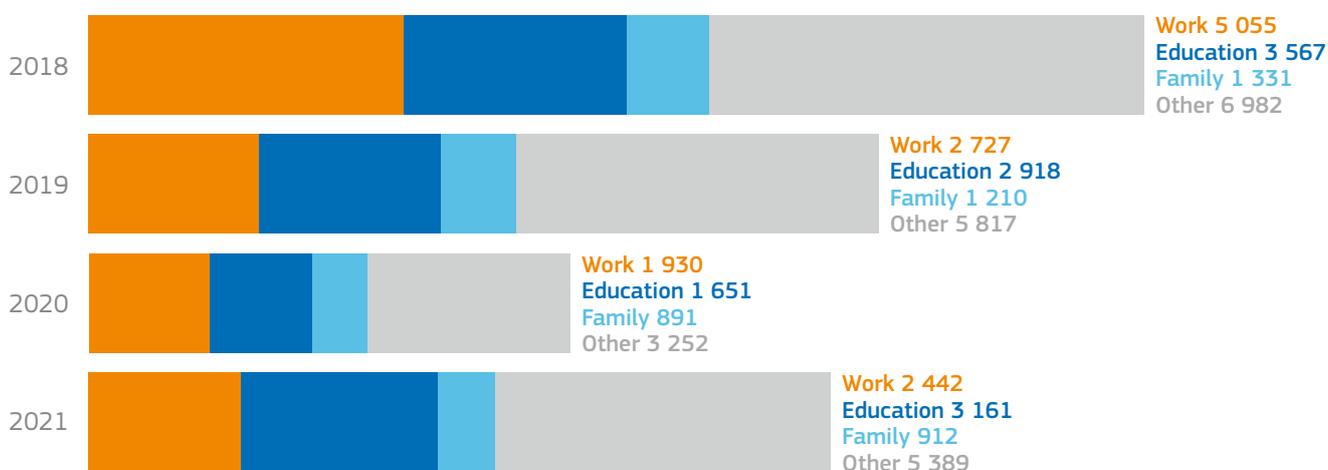
First residence permits annually issued: total number and % of total population in the country

SOURCE: Public Service Development Agency of Georgia / National Statistics Office of Georgia



First residence permits annually issued by reason

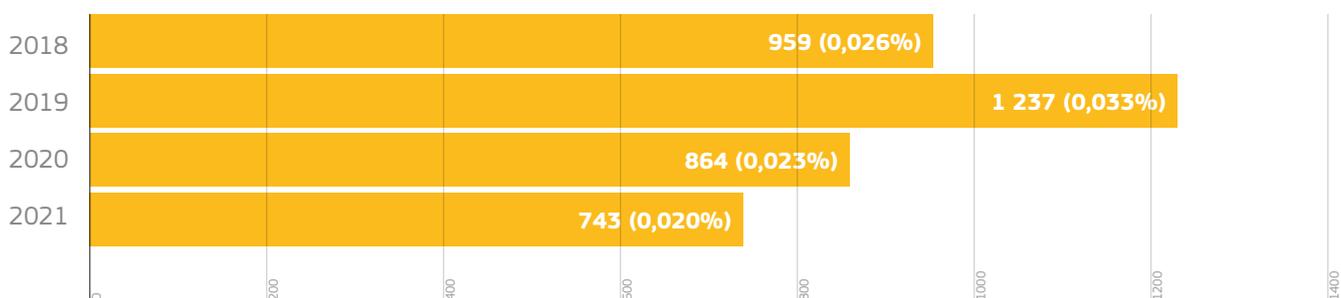
SOURCE: Public Service Development Agency of Georgia



INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION INCLUDING ASYLUM

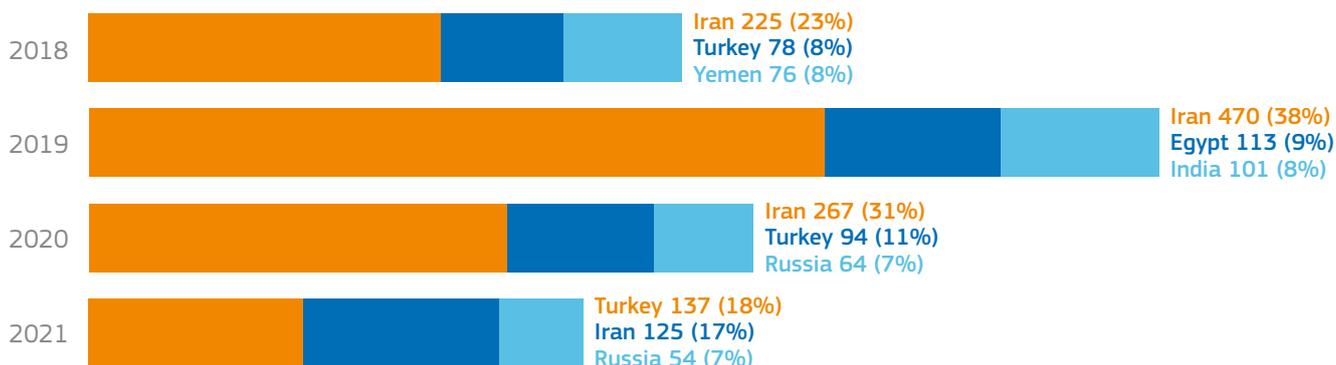
First-time asylum applications: total number and as % of population in the country

SOURCE: National Statistics Office of Georgia / Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia



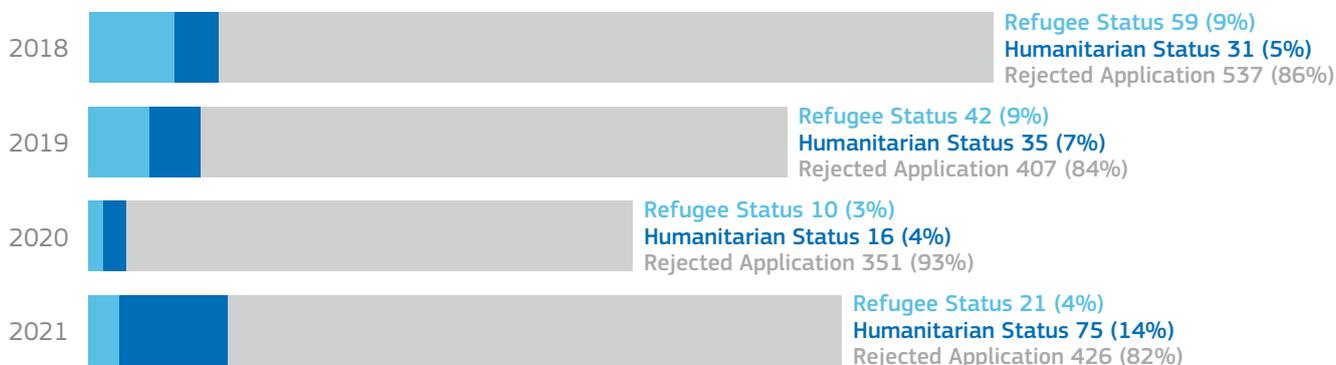
Top 3 nationalities of annual number of first-time asylum applications: number of applications and % of total first-time annual applications

SOURCE: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia



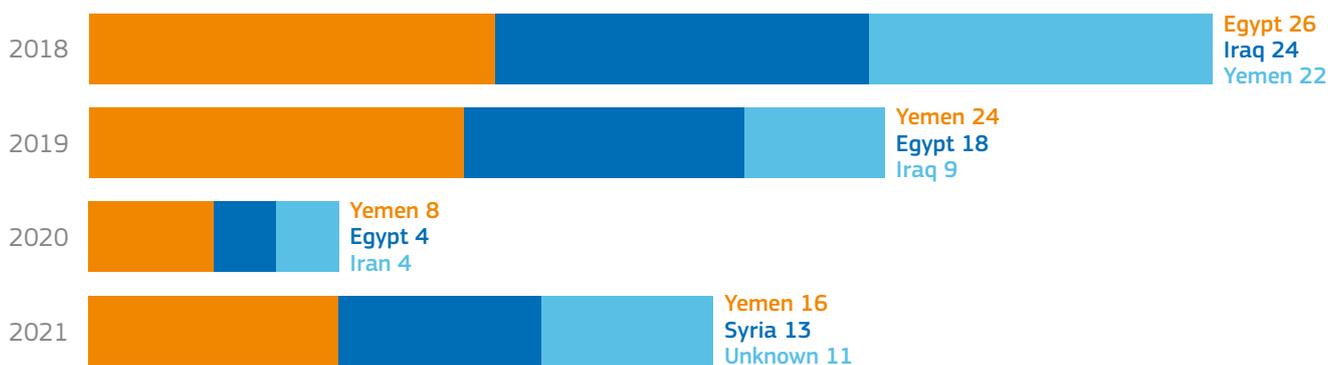
Number of asylum decisions by outcome (% of total decisions)

SOURCE: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia



Top 3 nationalities of asylum applications granted

SOURCE: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia



UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Unaccompanied minors applying for asylum in Georgia

SOURCE: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia

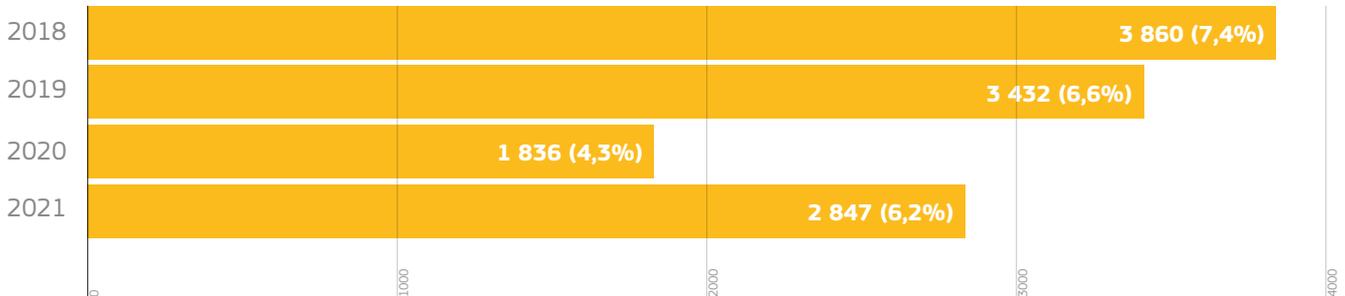




CITIZENSHIP AND STATELESSNESS

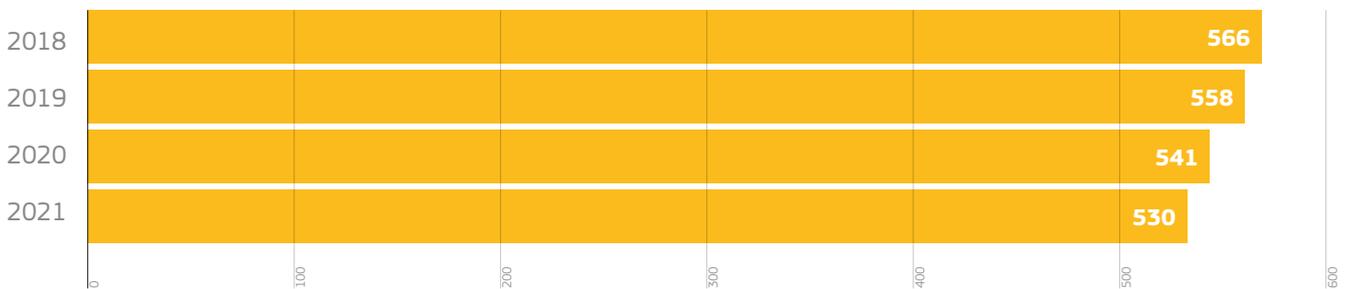
Foreigners who have acquired Georgian citizenship as a share of total foreigners holding residence cards in the country

SOURCE: Public Service Development Agency of Georgia



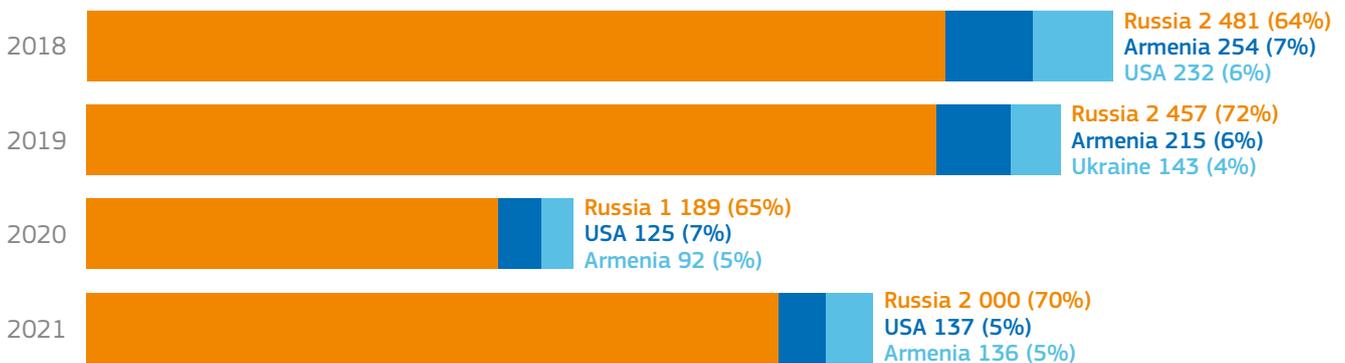
Number of Stateless persons in Georgia per year

SOURCE: Public Service Development Agency of Georgia



Top 3 nationalities by number of citizenship acquisition: absolute number and % of total acquisitions in the country by foreigners

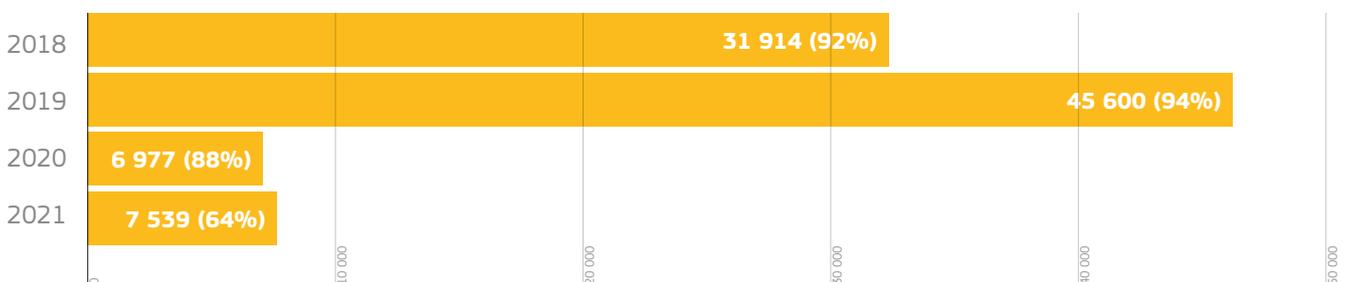
SOURCE: Public Service Development Agency of Georgia



BORDERS, SCHENGEN AND VISAS

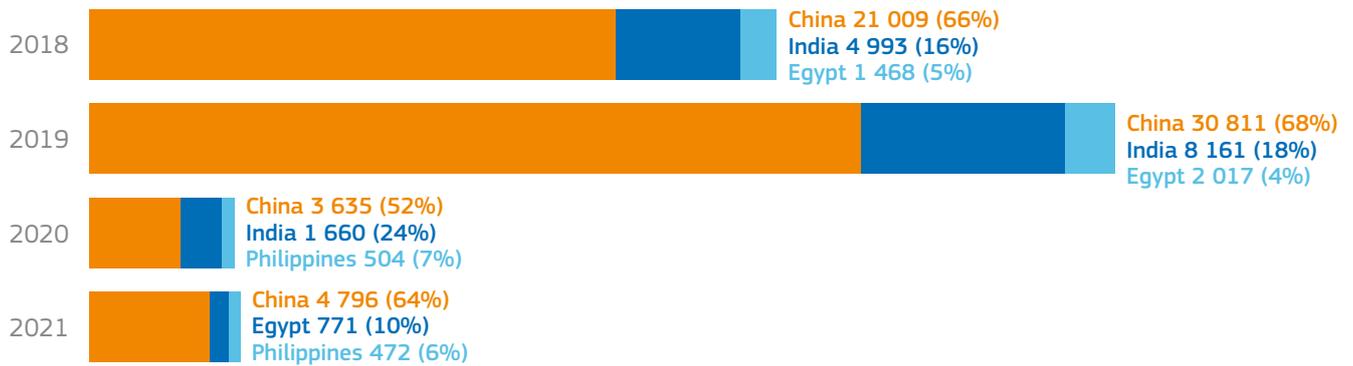
Short-term visas annually issued and as % of total visas issued

SOURCE: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia



Top 3 nationalities by number of short-term visas issued: absolute number and % of total short-term visas issued

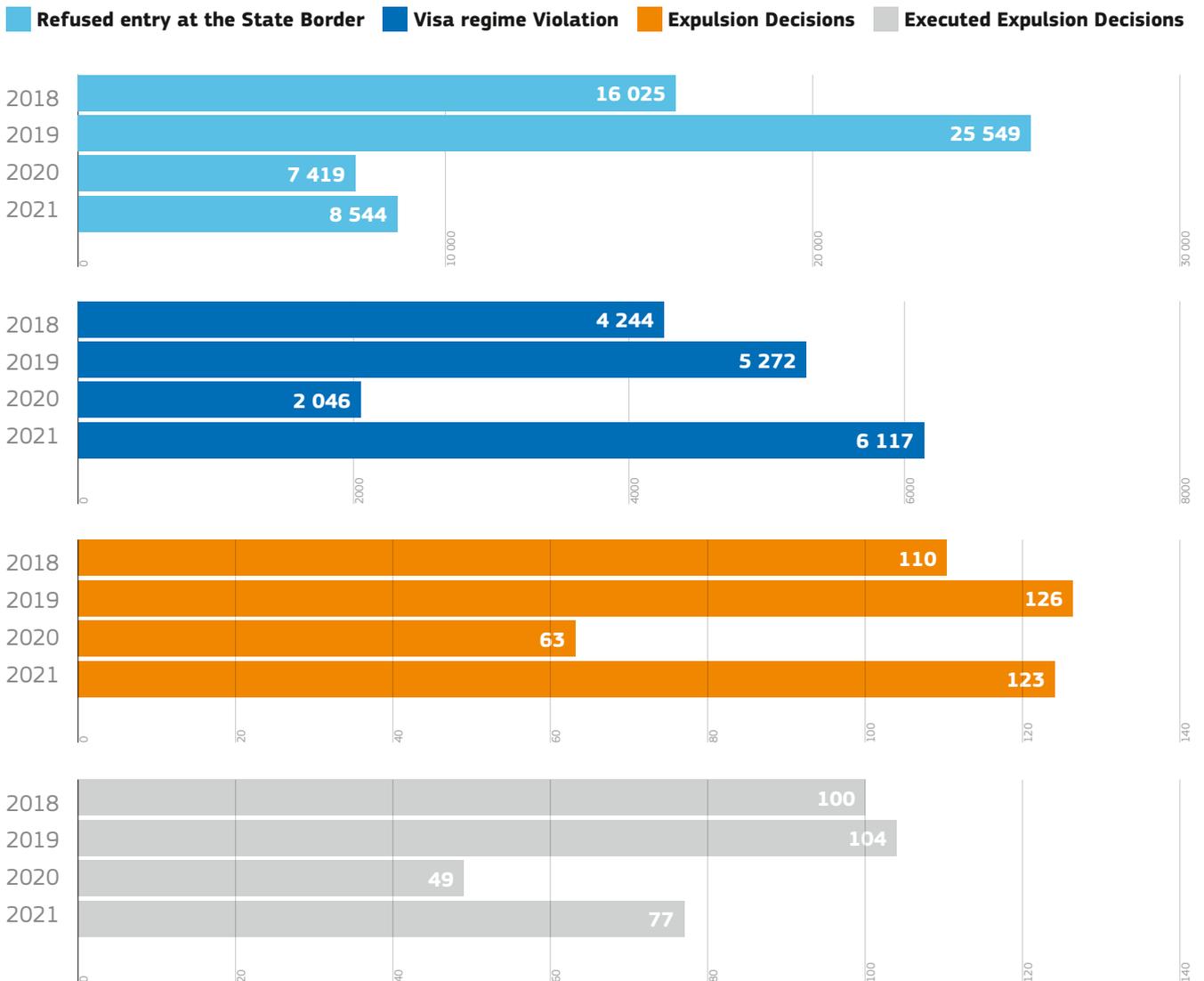
SOURCE: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia



IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Irregular migration data in Georgia

SOURCE: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia

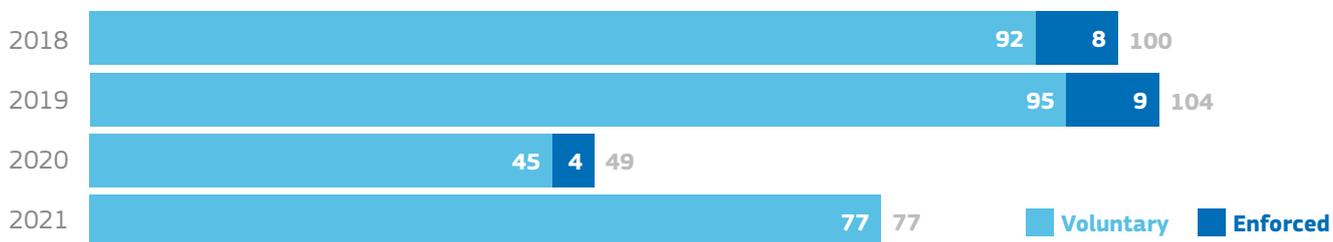




RETURN AND READMISSION

Number of Foreigners who left the territory of Georgia by type of return

SOURCE: Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia



TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Number of residence permits issued to victims/statutory victims of Trafficking in Human Beings

SOURCE: Public Service Development Agency of Georgia

