



Institute for Development
of Freedom of Information

Official Statistics on Refusals to Entry for Foreign Citizens at the Georgian Border

The analysis was prepared in frames of the project "[Empower Society for Strengthening Good Governance](#)", financially supported by International Visegrad Fund and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The responsibility of the content of the article lies with the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI). It does not necessarily reflect the opinions of International Visegrad Fund and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Contact:

A. Griboedovi Str. #3, 0180, Tbilisi, Georgia

Tel: + 995 32 292 15 14

E-mail: info@idfi.ge

Website: www.idfi.ge

KEY FINDINGS:

- *The number of refusals to let foreign citizens enter the country has been declining over the past 4 years.*
- *In the last four years, most refusals of entry were given to the citizens of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Russia, Iran and India. The citizens of these countries made up 58% of all those who were refused entry into the country.*
- *In the last two years, citizens of India were refused entry most often.*
- *In 2015, the largest share of refusals of entry fell on Turkish (33%) and Azerbaijani (13%) citizens.*
- *The Ministry of Internal Affairs does not keep a record of the bases for refusal of entry into Georgia to foreign citizens.*

STATISTICS OF REFUSAL TO ENTER BY YEAR

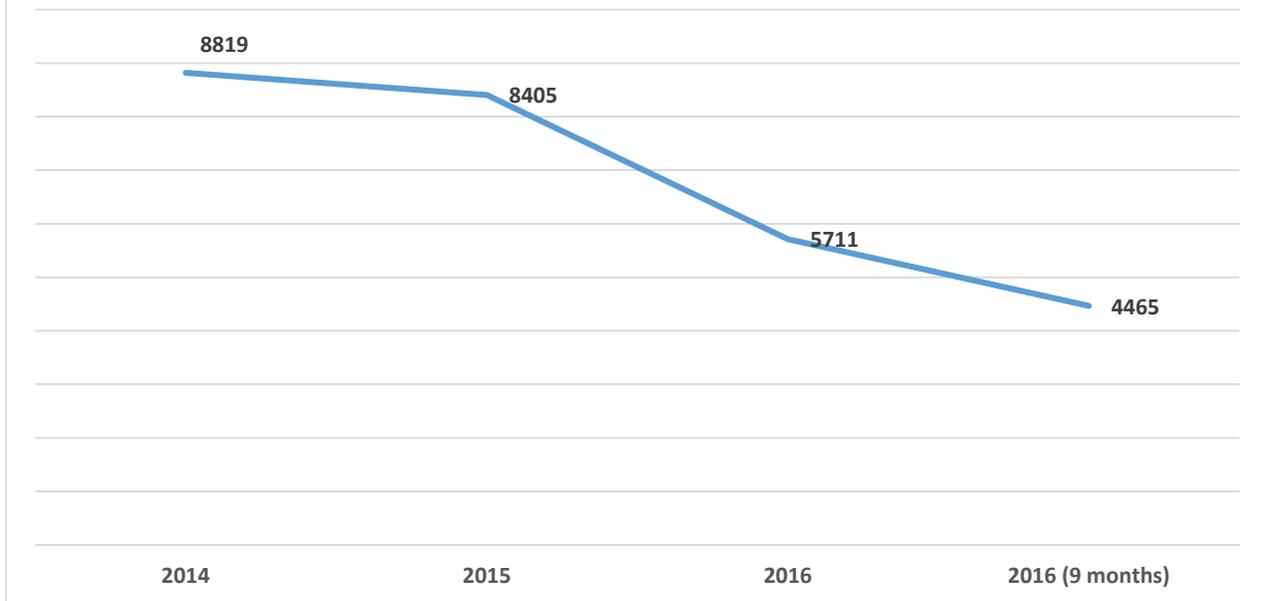
Between 2014 and September 30 of 2017, foreign citizens were refused entry at the Georgian state border a total of 27,400 times (see Figure #1).¹ The 2014-2016 data makes it clear that the incidence of such refusals was decreasing annually. Specifically, in 2014 a total of 8,819 instances of refusals to enter were recorded, in 2015 the number decreased to 8,405, while in 2016 saw a decline by 32% compared to the previous year and went down to 5,711 cases. In the first nine months of 2017, foreigners were refused entry into the country only 4,465 times.

According to the Georgian legislation, a person can be refused entry to Georgia on the following bases:

- The person is banned from entering the country;
- The person did not pay the prescribed fine for being on the territory of Georgia unlawfully;
- The person does not possess health and accident insurance;
- The person does not possess the financial means to live in Georgia and subsequently return to the country of origin;
- The person does not provide or provides false information regarding self and the reasons for travelling to Georgia;
- The presence of the person in Georgia constitutes a threat to national security and/or public order, etc.

¹ Data presented in this article was provided to IDFI by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia

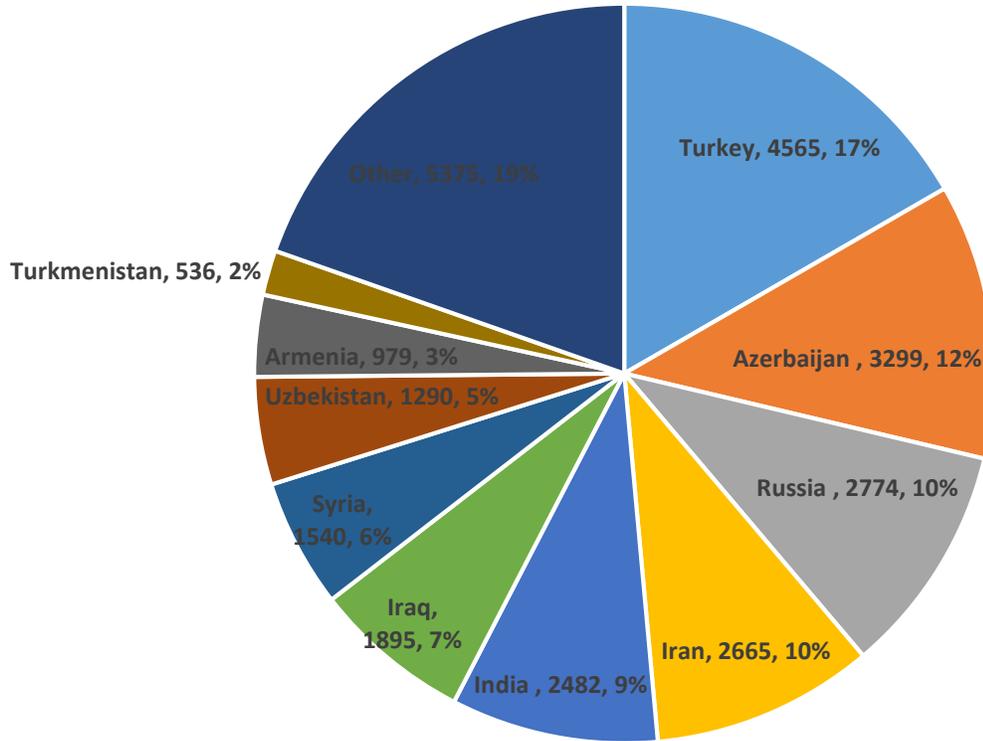
Figure #1 - Statistics of Refusal to Enter Georgia to Foreign Citizens at the Georgian Border by Year



STATISTICS OF REFUSALS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

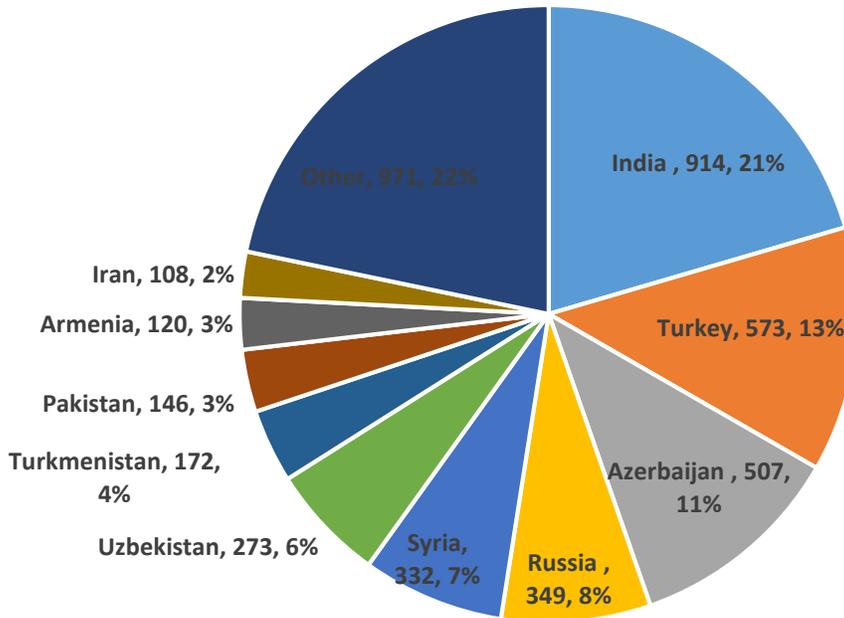
According to the data from the previous four years, citizens from the following list of countries were refused entry to Georgia most often; Turkey, Azerbaijan, Russia, Iran, India, Iraq, Syria, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Turkmenistan. Citizens of these countries account for the majority of the cases of refusal to enter Georgia (80%), while the share from the first five countries from the list is 58% (see Figure #2). Among the total number of refusals to enter (27,400), citizens of Turkey were met with refusal 4,565 times (17%), Azerbaijan – 3,299 (12%), Russia – 2,774 (10%), Iran – 2,665 (10%), India – 2,482 (9%), Iraq – 1,895 (7%), Syria – 1,540 (6%), Uzbekistan – 1,290 (5%), Armenia – 979 (3%) and Turkmenistan – 536 (2%).

Figure #2 - 2014-2017 Statistics of Refusal to Enter Georgia to Foreign Citizens at the Georgian Border by Country of Origin



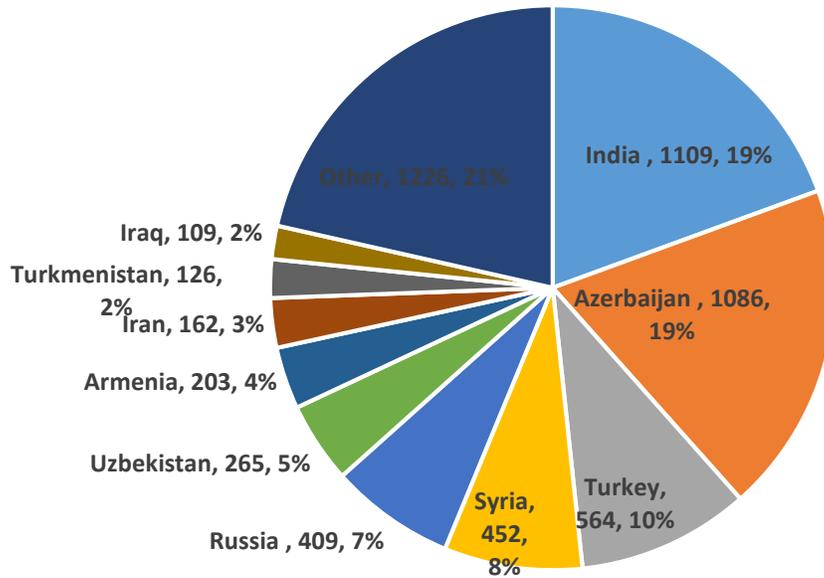
In the first 9 months of 2017, citizens of India were refused entry most often (914 – 34% of the total amount). Following citizens of India, the following countries were represented: Turkey (573 – 13%), Azerbaijan (507 – 11%), Russia (349 – 8%), Syria (332 – 7%), Uzbekistan (273 – 6%), Turkmenistan (172 – 4%), Pakistan (146 – 3%), Armenia (120 – 3%) and Iran (108 – 2%). These countries represent 78% share of the total number of cases of refusal to enter Georgia. Meanwhile, the remaining 929 cases (21% of the total) were distributed among citizens of 78 different countries (as well, 42 cases dealt with persons with no citizenship).

Figure #3 - 2017 Data by Citizenship Status



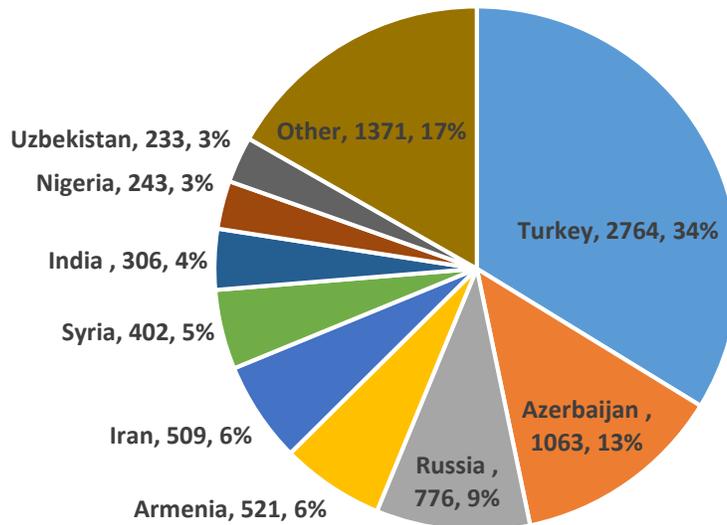
In 2016, citizens of India represented the largest share of cases of refusal (1,109 – 19.4% of the total amount). Following citizens of India, the following countries were represented in declining order: Azerbaijan (1,086 – 19%), Turkey (564 – 10%), Syria (452 – 8%), Russia (409 – 7%), Uzbekistan (265 – 5%), Armenia (203 – 4%), Iran (162 – 3%), Turkmenistan (126 – 2%) and Iraq (109 – 2%). These countries represent 79% of the cases of refusal to enter. The remaining number of 1,196 (21%) cases was distributed among citizens of 90 different countries (with additional 30 cases of persons lacking citizenship status).

Figure #4 - 2016 Data by Citizenship Status



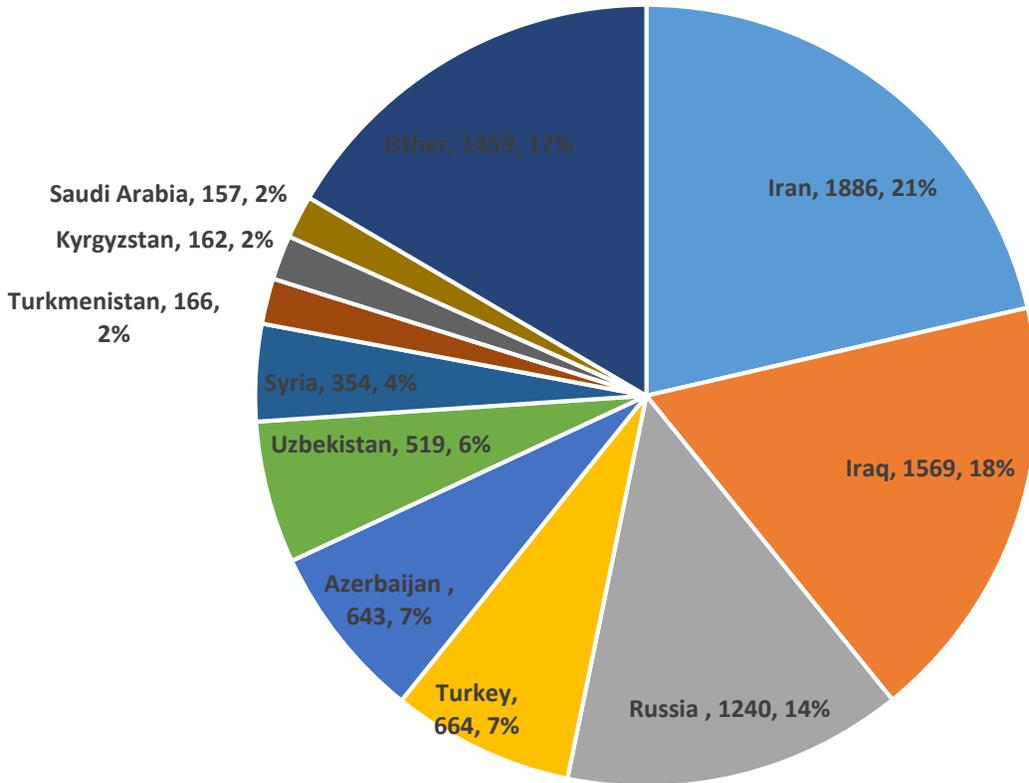
The following tendencies were observed in 2015: Turkey - 2,764 cases (33% of the total), Azerbaijan - 1,063 (13%), Russia - 776 (9%), Armenia 521 (6%), Iran - 509 (6%), Syria 402 (5%), India 306 (4%), Nigeria - 243 (3%) and Uzbekistan 233 (3%). Citizens of the abovementioned countries represented 81% of the total statistics. The remaining cases from this year (1,331 – 16%) were distributed among citizens of 91 different countries (with additional 40 cases of persons with no citizenship status).

Figure #5 - 2015 Data by Citizenship Status



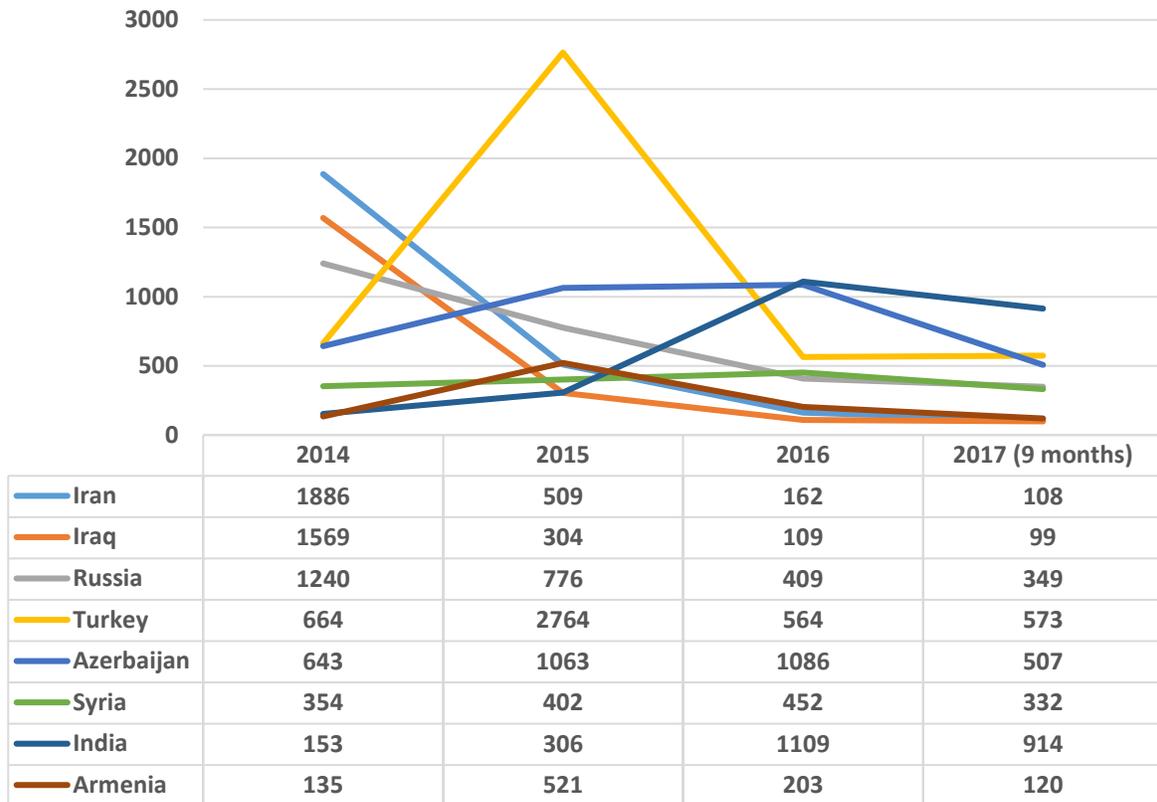
In 2014, citizens of Iran and Iraq were often refused entry at the border, representing a share of 21% (1,886) and 18% (1,569), respectively. They were followed by citizens of Russia (1,240 - 14%), Turkey (664 - 8%), Azerbaijan (643 - 7%), Uzbekistan (519 - 6%), Syria (354 - 4%), Turkmenistan (166 - 2%), Kirgizstan (162 - 2%), and Saudi Arabia 157 - 2%). In total, these ten countries account for 83% of the total number of cases of refusal to enter Georgia in 2014. Meanwhile, the remaining 1,398 cases were distributed among citizens of 105 different countries (with additional 61 cases of persons lacking a citizenship status).

Figure #6 - 2014 Data by Citizenship Status



Interesting trends can be pointed out in the data of the refusal to enter Georgia to citizens of those countries that fell in the top five in terms of numbers in any of the last four years. Among these seven countries, only three showed declining tendencies in the number of refusals to enter Georgia at the border: Iran, Iraq and Russia. The statistics of Iran and Iraq are especially noteworthy, as compared to 2014, the number of refusals declined 12 times and 14 times, respectively.

Figure #7 - Trends of Refusals to Enter Georgia at the Border by Citizenship Status



Citizens of Azerbaijan and especially Turkey were refused entry at the Georgian border the most in 2015. For the citizens of Azerbaijan, the number increased slightly in 2016, while the number of refusals to Turkish citizens saw a sharp decline (5 times).

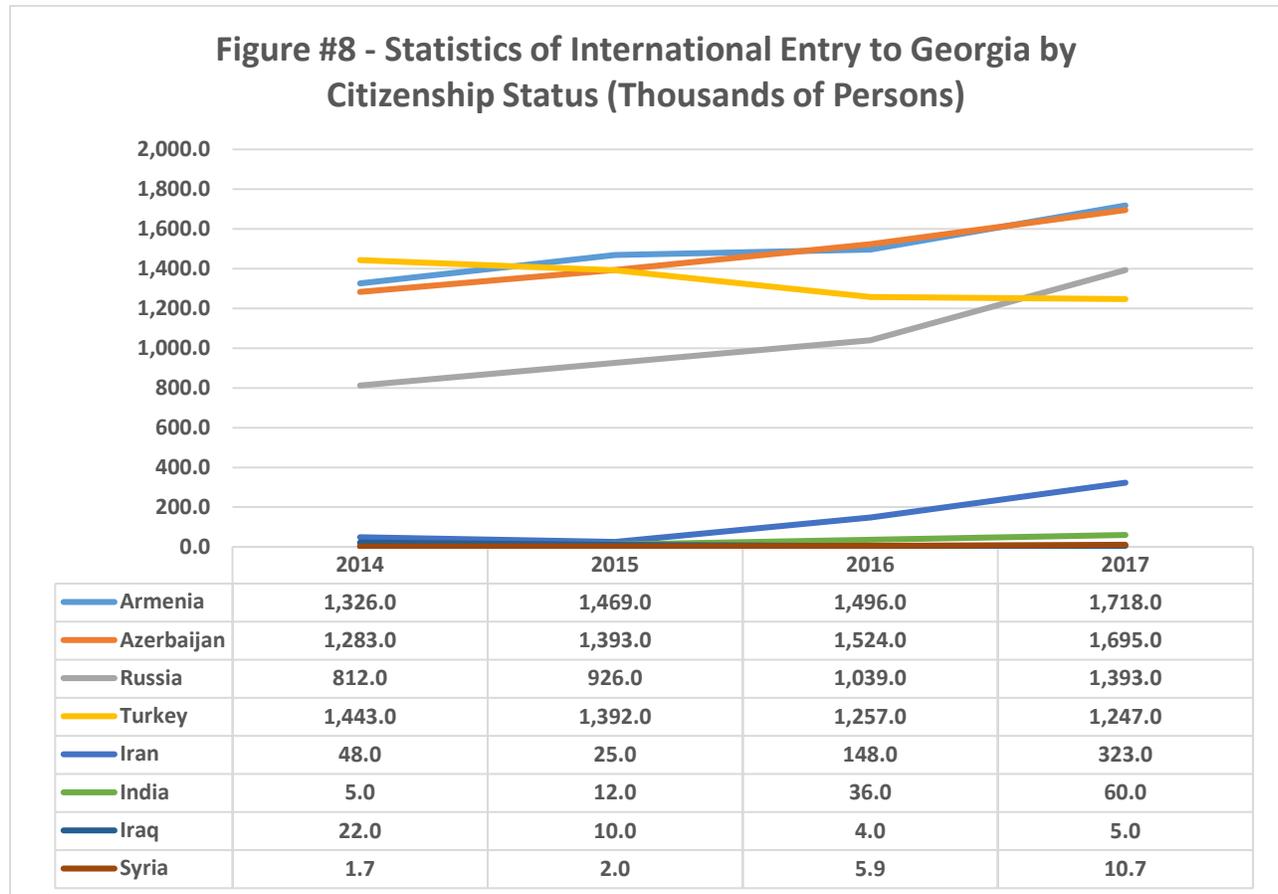
The statistics of refusal to enter Georgia to citizens of India, in contrast, was increasing annually: in 2014 the number of such cases was only 153, which doubled next year and by 2016 exceeded the indicators of all other countries.

The number of refusals to enter Georgia to Armenian citizens increased especially in 2015 (almost 4 times compared to the previous year), up to 521 cases. The following year, however, this number decreased to 203.

Among these seven countries, the indicators for Syria were relatively stable and the number of cases of refusal of entry into Georgia increased only modestly.

The Georgian border was crossed most often by the citizens of the following six countries: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, Russia, Iran and Ukraine. Among the eight countries mentioned above, whose citizens are often refused entry at the border, more than a million persons crossed the Georgian border in the

cases of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Russia. With the exceptions of Turkey and Iraq, the number of persons coming into Georgia was increasing in all cases.



IDFI also attempted to analyze the reasons for the refusal to enter Georgia. However, unfortunately, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia does not record the mentioned data in terms of bases for refusal. Keeping a record of this information would promote the transparency of state policies in this regard and improve the effective planning of the informational campaign about Georgia. There would also be fewer reasons to raise questions about unjustified treatment and decisions made at the border regarding citizens of specific countries.