

Mr. Irakli KOKAIA

Date of birth: 27 May 1975

Nationality: Georgian

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Core Qualifications

- ❖ Over 13 years of managerial experience in the public sector of Georgia (total tenure of 20 years in public service), leading the establishment and development of a European-standard asylum system, as well as building the repatriation system for the Meskhetian population deported in 1944 by the Soviet regime.
- ❖ Extensive experience in designing and implementing state policies focused on the reintegration of returned migrants and the integration of refugees and immigrants.
- ❖ Practitioner specialist in International Refugee Law, holding a Ph.D. in the field, ensuring a strong foundation in relevant legal principles and frameworks.
- ❖ Comprehensive background in developing policy and legal frameworks, including strategic documents, action plans, analytical policy papers, draft laws, guidelines, and standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- ❖ Expertise in developing educational curricula and modules, with proven experience in delivering lectures and training sessions.
- ❖ Exceptional understanding of political developments and national security contexts in Georgia and the broader region, with a demonstrated ability for in-depth analysis of implications and challenges.
- ❖ Experience in establishing and managing a legal aid organization, alongside active engagement in various civil society organizations.
- ❖ Completed extensive training programs conducted by international organizations (including UNHCR, IOM, and IIHL) and partner countries (including the US State Department, the US Department of Defence, and the MFA of Israel) in migration management, refugee law, development policies, and security issues.

Work Experience

LLC “Migration and Asylum Law Centre”

Director

Jun.2018 - present

- Managing and monitoring the activities of the company;
- Legal service in administrative and civil cases;
- Legal advocacy & consultancy;
- Target group: foreign citizens residing in Georgia; asylum seekers; Georgian citizens about to emigrate; Georgian emigrants.

NNLE “Public Advocacy”

Expert/Consultant

Jul.2024 – Jun.2025

Project: “Economic Empowerment of Returned Migrants and Remittance-Receiving Households in Guria” under the Programme STREAMinG, ICMPD (Funded by EU)

- Provision of expertise in migration management at every stage of the project implementation;
- Contribute to the development of the internal working guidelines; designing internal assessment/selection mechanisms & preparation of the respective documentation; to review training materials developed to ensure that they are tailored to the characteristics of the target groups.
- Participation in the selection process of funding the income-generating projects.

Expert

Jan. – Jun. 2023

Project: “Return Migration for Local Development” under the Programme STREAMinG, ICMPD (Funded by EU and SDC)

- Provision of expertise in migration management at every stage of the project implementation;
- Contribute to the development of the internal working guidelines; designing internal assessment/selection mechanisms & preparation of the respective documentation;
- Participation in the selection process of funding the income-generating projects.

Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia

Head of Department

Mar. 2014 – Jun. 2018

Department of Migration, Repatriation, and Refugee Issues

Deputy Head of Department

Jan. 2012 – Mar. 2013

Department of Migration, Repatriation, and Refugee Issues

Head of Division

Nov. 2005 – Jan. 2012

Refugee and Repatriation Division

- ❖ Policy advice, elaboration, and implementation of state policies and mechanisms, as well as making executive decisions concerning: a) Asylum system (RSD) b) Integration of asylum seekers and persons granted international protection; c) Integration of foreigners and stateless persons in Georgia; d) Reintegration of returned migrants to Georgia; and e) Repatriation and integration of Muslim Meskhetians.
- ❖ Supervising various data collection activities, including related to asylum seekers, international protection status holders, Repatriate Muslim Meskhetians, as well as returned Georgian migrants; establishing and managing databases.
- ❖ Monitoring of the development and implementation of the state support programmes for “The Reintegration Assistance to Returned Georgian Migrants” (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018), and “The Integration Assistance to Persons Granted International Protection in Georgia” (2017, 2018), as well as several donor-funded initiatives.
- ❖ Contribution to the development and implementation of several national/international strategic documents and action plans, including the EU Georgia Association Agenda and the EU-Georgia Visa Liberalization Action Plan;
- ❖ Elaboration of strategic documents, policy papers, draft laws, internal guidelines, and standard operating procedures; curricula and modules of the various pieces of training;
- ❖ Ensuring stakeholder coordination with international organizations, donors, and local civil society organizations operating on the issues under the authority of the Department; Participation in supporting and leading the activities of relevant formal structures (commissions and working groups) on behalf of the Ministry;
- ❖ Initiation of establishment and oversight of the functioning of the Asylum Seekers Martkopi Reception Centre and the State Integration Centre for Refugees;
- ❖ Ensuring smooth and efficient operation of the department; planning and implementing capacity-building activities and training for the staff of all subordinate structural units of the department as well as other departments of the Ministry.

UNHCR & Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia

Lead Consultant

Project “Legal Aid For Asylum Seekers”

Nov.2005 – Jun. 2018

- Provide expertise in Refugee Status Determination and integration of refugees;
- Policy advise and harmonization of the activities of UNHCR and the Ministry;
- Provision of training, workshops, and diverse capacity-building activities for involved parties (including other line ministries) in the field of asylum.

Parliament of Georgia

Lead Specialist

Staff of the Defense and Security Committee

Jun. 2003 – Nov. 2005

- Providing policy advice in foreign affairs, specifically concerning Georgia's integration into NATO;
- Elaboration of the official agreement between NATO and Georgia;
- Responding to conflict situations following international context.
- Providing consultancy in conflict management in Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions;

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

Lead Specialist

Department of the Relations with Russia

Sept. 2001 - Jan. 2002

Attaché

Foreign-Political Information and Public Relations Department

Jan. 1998 - Jul. 1999

- Monitoring and analysis of Russia-Georgia relations (economic and political);
- Providing an adequate response to crises;
- Preparation of reports, official documents, and other analytical materials.
- Preparation of informational and analytical material for Embassies and the Minister.

Additional Activities

Expert Member

Civil Society Network for Better Migration Policy (Facilitated by Innovations and Reforms Centre, funded by ICMPD)

2023-2025

Enhancing the capacity and involvement of civil society in the migration management process by disseminating knowledge and sharing experiences with member organizations of the platform.

Awards and Recognitions

Letter of Recognition

from the Minister Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia for undertaking the tasks of special importance (In the process of fulfilling the obligations under the EU-Georgia Visa Liberalization Action Plan).

2015

Order of Honor by President of Georgia

2011

Education

Ph.D

Moscow Diplomatic Academy

2001-2005

International Humanitarian Law

Masters Degree	Georgian Technical University	1996-1999
Foreign Economic Relations		

Bachelors Degree	Georgian Technical University	1992-1996
Foreign Economic Relations		

Additional qualification(s)

Specialized course	Moscow Diplomatic Academy	1999-2001
in International Relations		

Publications

Refugee Protection and National Security <i>[under the revision of the donor]</i>	2024-2025, Tbilisi
Project “Strengthening accountability of security sector through effective civil society oversight”, implemented by Innovation and Resource Centre (IRC)	
“Non-refoulement”	2022, Tbilisi
Magazine “My lawyer”, N8	
“Migration law, Development of judicial practice”	2021, Tbilisi
Magazine “My lawyer”, N6	
“Essence and Main characteristics of Refugee Rights”	2004, Moscow
Magazine “Law and Justice”, N3	
“Refugees: A new peril for Europe”	2002, Tbilisi
Georgian Foreign Affairs Ministry bulletin, N10	
“Refugees: Global Challenge of XXI Century ”	2002, Moscow
Magazine “Law and Justice”, N10	

Language	Reading	Speaking	Writing
Georgian		Native speaker	
English	C1	C1	B2
Russian	C1	C1	C1