



**Georgia – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 28 May 2015**

**Any research of an incident in Telavi on 6 September 2006 when members of Samartlianoba were arrested en masse by government forces, how many were arrested in Telavi and how many were arrested nationwide, and particularly any evidence of those members who evaded arrest. Whether there is any evidence that Givi or Gia Natsarashvili was a member of Samartlianoba and/or the subject of an attempted arrest in September, any evidence that his wife Irma or wives of suspected members in general, were interrogated as to whereabouts of any members who escaped.**

An Associated Press International report states:

“Georgian police raided the offices of opposition groups and a political party early Wednesday and detained dozens of activists, whom authorities accused of plotting to overthrow the government. Interior Minister Vano Merabishvili said 29 activists from the Justice Party and several affiliated groups had been detained during the pre-dawn sweep, which involved 450 police officers. The detained activists would be charged with high treason and plotting a coup to replace President Mikhail Saakashvili with former Security Minister Igor Giorgadze, who is believed to be in Russia, Merabishvili said.” (Associated Press International (6 September 2006) *Georgian police raid offices of opposition organizations; arrest activists*)

A BBC News report states:

“Thirteen opposition activists in Georgia have been charged with conspiring to overthrow the government. They are among 29 people arrested across Georgia on Wednesday. Among them are prominent members of two small pro-Russian opposition parties - the Justice Party and the Conservative Monarchists.” (BBC News (7 September 2006) *Georgia charges 13 with coup plot*)

A Civil Georgia report states:

“Criminal charges have been officially brought against 13 people suspected of plotting a coup, Chief Prosecutor of the capital Tbilisi Giorgi Gviniashvili said on September 7. 29 activists from the Russian-leaning, wanted Igor Giorgadze's Justice Party and its affiliated organizations were arrested on September 6. Of these, only 13 people are being charged and the others have been released, according to the General Prosecutor's Office.” (Civil Georgia (7 September 2006) *Officials Say Coup Attempt by Russian-Leaning Party Foiled*)

A Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty report states:

“Georgian police detained 29 supporters and alleged associates of fugitive former National Security Minister Igor Giorgadze during raids in Tbilisi and other Georgian cities on September 6, Georgian media reported. Interior Minister Vano Merabishvili told journalists the same day that his ministry had information that suggested that the people in question were planning to overthrow the present Georgian leadership and install Giorgadze as national leader, RFE/RL's Georgian Service reported. Fourteen of those detained have been charged with treason and plotting a coup d'etat, including Conservative-Monarchist Party Chairman Temur Zhorzholiani. Also arrested were Maia Nikolaishvili, chairman of the Anti-Soros movement, and Maia Topuria, a relative of Giorgadze who heads the youth organization of Giorgadze's Samartlianoba (Justice) party.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Europe (7 September 2006) *Former Georgian minister's associates accused of planning coup d'etat; Georgian opposition deplures arrests*)

An article from The Moscow Times states:

“Georgia said Wednesday that it had uncovered a plot by opposition politicians sympathetic to Russia to overthrow the country's pro-Western leadership. A Georgian official said Tbilisi would be asking its neighbor Russia whether it funded the alleged plot. Georgia has fraught relations with Russia and accuses the Kremlin of trying to undermine it. Georgian Interior Minister Vano Merabishvili announced the alleged coup plot after masked police carried out early-morning raids throughout the country. They rounded up 29 people linked to the opposition Justice Party. ‘A special operation ... was carried out today at 5 a.m. across Georgia,’ Merabishvili told a news conference. ‘These people are charged with plotting a coup d'etat.’ Georgia's leadership has said in the past that the Justice Party is financed by Moscow. It is led from exile by Igor Giorgadze, a former Georgian national security chief charged with trying to assassinate former President Eduard Shevardnadze.” (The Moscow Times (7 September 2006) *Anti-Saakashvili Plot Uncovered*)

A report published by the International Federation for Human Rights, in a section titled “The case of Maya Topuria”, states:

“On 3 September 2006, criminal proceedings were instituted against Maya Topuria and 12 other people on the basis of two witness statements. In particular, these witnesses claimed to have heard from third parties that, during a meeting of political forces connected with Giorgadze, the conspirators had plotted a *coup d'état*. The written witness statements were similarly worded. On 6 September 2006, the so-called conspirators, including Topuria and some 30 others, were arrested during a nationwide police operation that comprised 63 searches in 40 Georgian communities. Topuria and 12 others were charged on the following day, and via an order dated 8 September 2006, the Tbilisi city court authorized the detention of all 13 pending trial. One of those arrested, Maya Nikolaishvili, entered into a plea-bargain agreement and became a prosecution witness in exchange for release on bail and a suspended sentence.” (International Federation for Human Rights (August 2009) *After the Rose, the Thorns: Political Prisoners in Post-revolutionary Georgia*, p.36)

Information on an individual named “Givi (Gia) Natsarashvili” was not found among sources available to the Research and Information Unit.

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

### **References:**

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