

Archives in Georgia

Giorgi Kldiashvili

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The following presentation covers the information about the archival institutions in Georgia, the most important documents preserved there and the procedures for accessing archives and working there. Also, the presentation concerns the [Institute for Development of Freedom of Information's \(IDFI\) Open Archives](#) project and the [results](#) of the evaluation carried out within the frame of it.

The most important archival institutions in Georgia are [the National Archives of Georgia](#) and [the Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs \(MIA\)](#) of Georgia. Other major archival institutions in Georgia are as follows: [Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts](#), [Archival Division of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara](#), [The National Parliament Library of Georgia](#) and Departmental archives: Archive of [the Ministry of Defence](#); Archive of [the Department of Common Courts](#); Archive of [the Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) etc. Also there are several private archives in Georgia. The Abkhazian Virtual Archives (www.ava.ge) - web-based archive including the information about [occupied Abkhazia](#) in the form of photos, videos, books, newspapers, manuscripts, maps and family archival materials, deserves special attention.

[The National Archives of Georgia](#) has four divisions: [Central Historical Archive](#), [Central Archive of Contemporary History](#), [Central Archive of Audio-Visual Documents](#) and [Kutaisi Central Archive](#). The documents of the National Archives of Georgia are [included](#) in the UNESCO World Heritage List and are protected internationally: Vakhushti Bagrationi's "Description of the Kingdom of Georgia" and "Geographical Atlas" (XVIII cent.) and Eight Ancient Manuscripts (IX-XV centuries). The most important fonds kept there cover one of the most principal period of the history of Georgia - [the annexation of Georgia by the Russian Empire](#) and subsequent rule (1801-1917). Georgian capital, Tiflis (Tbilisi) was the central city of southern Caucasus during the rule of the Russian Empire. Therefore, the National Archive holds materials on the whole region including archival documents of [Russian governorates](#) of Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as materials on the North Caucasus region during this period. Also, the most important collection is the documents of [the First Democratic Republic of Georgia \(1918-1921\)](#), [occupation](#) of Georgia by the Bolshevik Russia (1921), the national [uprising](#) of the Georgian people in 1924, the whole period of the existence of the Soviet Union, the information about the Soviet institutions etc. Demographic materials (birth, death, marriage parish records and certificated) created over the period of 75 years are kept in the National Archives of Georgia as well.

As for [the Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs \(MIA\) of Georgia](#), it encompasses the materials of the Security archive (Archive of the [State Security Committee of the Georgian SSR](#)) and the Party Archive (The Archive of the [Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Georgian SSR](#)). These materials include the documents of the Georgian [repressive state institutions](#) (Cheka / GPU / OGPU / NKVD / MVD created between 1921 and 1990) and the Party archive - the Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Georgian SSR, archival fonds and materials on the history of the Communist Party of GSSR as well as the history of the [Young](#)

[Communist League \(Komsomol\)](#) of GSSR. These documents concern such important topics of the history of Soviet Georgia as the repressions, deportations, and executions, the demonstrations and [tragic events of March 1956 in Georgia](#), anti-Soviet activities, dissident organizations, [tragedy of 9 April 1989](#), Abkhazia and South Ossetia, intra-Party conflicts, etc. One of the most important fond is №13, [Transcaucasia Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Russia](#) (1922-1937) - it consists of presidium, plenum and secretariat protocols of the Transcaucasia Regional Committee of [the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic \(RSFSR\)](#), and stenographic records from Communist organization meetings of Armenian, Georgian and Azerbaijan SSR. Documents concerning the Transcaucasia Bolsheviks' fight against [Mensheviks \(Georgia\)](#), [Dashnaks \(Armenia\)](#) and [Musavats \(Azerbaijan\)](#) are of a special interest.

Moreover, the presentation gives a detailed information about the arrangement of documents in different archives, the electronic and non-electronic [finding aid](#), reading rooms of [the National Archives](#) and [the MIA archives](#) and regulations for accessing them, remote and online services, [main archival legislation](#), relevant legislative regulations and also [challenges](#) the Georgian archives face in terms of enhancing the accessibility of their documents for researchers.

[The Open Archives project](#) carried out by IDFI in 2017-2020 with the support of [the Open Society Institute - Budapest Foundation](#) was aimed at promoting the openness of state archives by creating the Rating of the Openness of State Archives. Within the frame of the project, a [methodology](#) for evaluating the openness of state archives was created and 36 state archives of 18 former Soviet and Eastern European countries were evaluated - 2 state archives in each country. The results of evaluation and [subsequent research](#) are used for advocacy of improvements in access to archival documents by the experts, archivists and historian in particular countries. The evaluation has revealed that, in terms of the openness of state archives, Georgia holds 8th place among 18 countries. Based on the observations made during the research, in 2019, IDFI [submitted a legislative proposal](#) on the amendments in [the Law on National Archival Fund and the National Archives](#) and [the Law on Personal Data Protection](#) to the Parliament of Georgia to improve the access to archival documents in Georgia. However, the Parliament rejected the legislative amendments.