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## **ARMENIAN GOVERNMENT DISTRIBUTING PASSPORTS TO ARMENIANS IN GEORGIA SINCE 2006**

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AVİM (17 December 2018)

Armenia introduced dual citizenship in 2006 to strengthen its links with diaspora Armenians. Since then, Armenian leaders have called for more diaspora Armenians to become citizens of Armenia. As a result, tens of thousands of diaspora Armenians have applied for Armenian citizenship since 2006.

Armenians living in neighboring Georgia are no exception. Some 20,000 Armenians of Georgia have received Armenian passports even though Georgia had banned its citizens from having dual citizenship. Recently, however, legislation to regulate dual citizenship was introduced in the Georgian parliament. The reason behind this trend is the fact that Armenians -especially youth- from the Javakheti region of Georgia used to go to Russia for work, and after 2008 Georgian Russian war, Javakheti Armenians in Georgia either could not go to Russia, or were subjected to visa procedures. Having Armenian passport allowed them to travel Russia without a visa.

Recently, there have been news of protests by Javakheti Armenians who received Armenian passports in the past. Reportedly, they are now obliged to be drafted into the Armenian armed forces or they face a criminal record for a term of five years in prison. These Armenians are now appealing to Armenia's authorities for the resolution of this problem.

Other than the fact that Armenia has been distributing passports to citizens of neighboring Georgia against Georgian law, this is in fact an attempt by Armenia to bolster an Armenian minority within Georgia's territory, which has had a past record of secessionism.

The article on those protests can be found below:

### **Javakheti youth holds protest near Armenian-Georgian border**

News.am, Dec 14 2018

The youth of Javakheti held a protest near the Armenian-Georgian border on Friday.

They claim to be in a difficult situation after returning home from Russia. Young people under the age of 27, who have dual citizenship and an Armenian passport, are faced with the fact that when they return from Russia, they must either be drafted into the

Armenian army, or they will receive a criminal record for a term of five years in prison.

According to the protesters, about 5,000 people are now wanted.

The demonstrators ended the protest, noting that they would meet in Yerevan with the head of the Armenian police Valery Osipyan to finally resolve the issue.

Video at link: <https://news.am/eng/news/486325.html>

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Kaynak/Source: