

Are there any signs of racism in Georgia and how international students live in Tbilisi ?

Nowadays, the representatives of almost all races and inhabited continents can be found in the capital of Georgia. "Versia" visited Tbilisi State Medical University where most of the international students (about 2000) study. Among them, nearly 40% - Indians.

Are our concepts regarding Georgian tolerance exaggerated or not? About this you will learn from special report of „Version".

21-year-old Ahmed is from Iraq. Here, he is fascinated with calm: "Georgia is close to us therefore a huge amount of money is not needed to come here. As we know, for centuries you do not have war with the representatives of other religions. A lot of Muslim, Jewish and Catholic Christians co-exist peacefully here". Today, in comparison with other countries, there are no religious battles in Georgia. "This is a peaceful land. Here live kind people. The local Professors treat us as the Georgian students. Despite of our group mostly consists of Iraqis, Turks and Sri Lankans, at the library we always meet Georgian students and feel their positive attitude to us - says Ahmed. There are also Georgians who are afraid of foreigners. I liked one Georgian girl but I could not make a declaration of my love to avoid problems for her". Ahmed confided to us that today he is in love with another Georgian girl, but no one knows the end of a love story, because the girl's parents are not familiar with him. Apparently, there is still a stigma. Future Cardiologist is going to stay in Georgia for 5 years. He wants to continue his study in Germany. If this girl marries him, he will be back and Georgia will become his second home country. I am from Iraq, but now your country became mine as well. According to Ahmed, Georgia will become more tolerant with time, but at present seeing so many foreigners is unusual for Georgians".

Shinsli is an Indian girl: "I arrived in Georgia in October. To be honest, at the airport people were staring at me so I felt very uncomfortable and wanted to return to India. My friends who were admired by the nature of Georgia recommended me to come to Georgia".

At Tbilisi State Medical University there are mixed groups of Georgians and foreigners as well and after completion of the courses they receive an international diploma. "Georgians need some time to become close friends and they are very friendly" - said foreign students.

Professor David Topuria is Head of the Department of Overseas Students Education. It should be emphasized that he is directly responsible for solving the conflicts, arisen between the students: „Citizens from 38 countries are studying at Tbilisi State Medical University. I work at the Department of Overseas Students Education for 8 years. There are some slight difficulties, but not racially motivated ones".

As it turned out, since 1996 foreign students are studying at the Tbilisi State Medical University. The question, why do they choose TSMU, Prof. David Topuria responds: "We have many students from

Eastern European countries, as well as the neighboring ones, where education is much cheaper. High-quality and safe environment are the main reasons for this choice. Study at our University does not only mean protection and safe environment within the university. We make every effort to help them to overcome their problems including domestic relations. In case of offenses the police always calls us.

Sometimes our students even call us to ask which medicine to take at high temperature". Ebru is a Turkish girl. She is a future surgeon and she lives in Tbilisi for 6 years already: "In my daily prayer I always thank the Lord I came here. I made many friends here. If I do not return to Turkey, I will work here. I know Georgian language and I have been to all big cities of Georgia. Of course, here are the Europeans as well. Many are married and have Georgian wives. TSMU senior students fully understand Georgian language. It is warm atmosphere here. It would be better if such a friendly attitude toward foreigners were throughout the country.

„Version " attended Indian festival, called -, Riviera", as well. In the festival participated Georgian, Canadian, German, African students as well...

This was a real celebration of youth and friendship. Mini Bollywood with their songs and dances ...

Maka Lomadze