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Failed States Index 2009 | Rankings for the South Caucasus

The US magazine *Foreign Policy* and the D.C. think tank Fund for Peace released their [2009 rankings of failed states](#), presenting Armenia as a “borderline” state and Georgia and Azerbaijan in the “in danger” category.

Thanks to last year’s war and protests, Georgia jumped up to #33 from #57 in 2008 and is now nestled between Sierra Leone and Liberia on the list. Azerbaijan stands at #56, and Armenia is ranked the most stable of the three at #101.

According to this study, “failed states” come in many guises, including those that have lost control over their territory, have poor state authority, fail to provide adequate public services, or cannot interact with other states in the international community.

The rankings are based on 12 indicators of state instability and vulnerability. Georgia’s worsening score on many of these can be traced back to the August 2008 war and its fallout: “Refugees/IDPs” (from South Ossetia and Abkhazia), “Group Grievance” (in the breakaway regions), “Delegitimization of the State” (mass protests), “Public Services” (failure to protect citizens from violence), “Factionalized Elites” (political opposition), and of course, “External Intervention.”

Both Armenia and Azerbaijan rate poorly on “Refugees/IDPs,” likely due to the frozen Karabakh conflict. Armenia’s worst score is in state legitimacy, possibly from high levels of corruption. Azerbaijan also gets poor scores on state legitimacy and security -- although, oddly, scores better than Georgia on human rights.

The [methodology](#) used to determine the rankings is rather opaque. The indicator scores are based primarily on keyword hits on full text open source articles and reports. This leads one to wonder whether the sheer amount of media attention on a given country has an impact on the results, but without more detail about the data collection, it is difficult to know.

The full results can be found [here](#).