

Shota Rustaveli Tbilisi International Airport[2] (Georgian: თბილისის შოთა რუსთაველის სახელობის საერთაშორისო აეროპორტი) (IATA: TBS, ICAO: UGTB) formerly Novo Alexeyevka International Airport, is the main international airport in Georgia, located 17 km (11 mi) southeast[1] of the capital Tbilisi.

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History[edit]

The first airport terminal building was constructed in 1952. Designed by the architect V. Beridze in the style of Stalinist architecture the building featured a floor plan with symmetric axes and a monumental risalit in the form of a portico. The two side wings featured blind arcades in giant order. A new terminal building was finished in 1990, designed in the International style.[3] In 1981 Tbilisi airport was the 12th largest airport in the Soviet Union, with 1,478,000 passengers on so-called central lines, that is on flights connecting Tbilisi with cities in other Soviet republics.[4] In 1998, the number of passengers had shrunk to 230,000 per year.[5]

Tbilisi International Airport is operated by TAV since October 2005. In Georgia, the company also operates Batumi Airport for 20-year term starting from May 2007.[6] TAV Airports Holding, which owns 76% shares in Tbilisi airport operator TAV Urban Georgia, agreed with the Georgian state-owned United Airports of Georgia to reconstruct the unused runway, one of the two runways at the Tbilisi airport. The old runway will be reconstructed and extended according to ICAO standards and code F regulations and will be able to accept all type of aircraft, including the Boeing 747-8, Airbus A380-800, Antonov An-225 and Antonov An-124. A new F Code taxiway is also planned.[7]

Passenger traffic at the airport tripled between 2009 and 2016 to 2.2 million passengers.

Overview[edit]

February 2007 saw the completion of a reconstruction project, with the construction of a new international terminal, a car park, improvements to the apron, taxiway and runway and the acquisition of ground handling equipment. A rail link to the city centre has been constructed, with an infrequent rail service of two trains per day each way.[8] George W. Bush Avenue leads from the airport[9] to downtown Tbilisi.[10]

The airport has a contemporary and functional design. It is designed to provide the optimum flow of both passengers and luggage from the parking lot to the planes, with a 25,000 m² (270,000 sq ft) total usable area. There is scope for future expansions without interrupting terminal operations. It has high-tech contemporary systems, keeping

passenger convenience and efficiency of the terminal operations in mind, throughout functional spaces organized in an elegant manner. The food and beverage operations are carried out by BTA at 7 points with a staff of 75, while ATU provides Duty Free services at its four stores.[11] The total project cost was US\$90.5 million. The capacity of the terminal building is 2.8 million passengers per year.[12] The implementing agency and the borrower for the project is TAV Urban Georgia, a concessionaire and special purpose vehicle for the construction and operation of the airport.

During 2016, the main runway of the airport was resurfaced and fitted with new navigation lights, which will improve the safety level of the runway. Runway guard lights, LED stop bar signals and guidance signs at all the holding positions on the airport's main runway were also added. The instrument landing system was also upgraded to CAT II, which enables aircraft to land during poor weather conditions. The airfield lighting control and monitoring system was upgraded, including installation of new lighting signals on all four taxiways.[13] In June 2016, due to an increase in passenger demand, TAV Georgia started construction of a new arrivals terminal. The new complex will be integrated with the existing terminal building and is expected to increase the airport's terminal capacity to 3.5 million passengers annually. The new arrivals terminal will occupy a total area of 12,000 m² (130,000 sq ft) and will be completed by the end of 2017.[14]

The new arrivals terminal was opened by the Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Kvirikashvili, TAV Holding President Sani Senar, Minister of Transport, Maritime and Communication of Turkey, Ahmet Arslan and Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia, on September 26, 2017. With an investment of \$33 million from TAV Georgia, the new terminal occupies 12 000 sq. meters. It has a new two-exit boarding bridge, five new parking lots for planes, three 150 meter long luggage carriers, and a new parking lot for 250 cars.[15]

A new Tbilisi metro overground line linking airport with the city was announced in October 2018. Proposed extension would connect an airport with Samgori station as a transfer point with the first line. Construction was set to begin in late 2019,[16] but the project is still abandoned.

Airlines and destinations[edit]

Passenger[edit]

Airlines Destinations

Aegean Airlines Athens

Air Arabia Sharjah

Seasonal: Abu Dhabi[17]

Air Astana Almaty, Nur-Sultan[18]

Air France Paris–Charles de Gaulle[19]

airBaltic Riga

Aircompany Armenia Gyumri, Yerevan

AnadoluJet Ankara, Istanbul–Sabiha Gökçen[20]

Arkia Seasonal: Tel Aviv[21]

Belavia Minsk

Bees Airline Kherson, Kyiv–Zhuliany

Buta Airways Baku[22][23]
 China Southern Airlines Beijing–Daxing,[24] Ürümqi (both suspended)[25]
 Eurowings Düsseldorf[26]
 flydubai Dubai–International[27]
 Georgian Airways Amsterdam, Berlin, Kyiv–Boryspil, London–Gatwick, Paris–Charles de Gaulle, Tel Aviv,[28] Vienna, Yerevan[29]
 Seasonal: Bahrain, Barcelona,[30] Batumi, Bologna, Prague, Sharm El Sheikh
 Gulf Air Bahrain
 Israir Airlines Tel Aviv
 Jazeera Airways Kuwait City[31]
 Kuwait Airways Seasonal: Kuwait City
 LOT Polish Airlines Warsaw–Chopin
 Lufthansa Munich
 Middle East Airlines Seasonal Charter: Beirut
 MyWay Airlines Tel Aviv, Yerevan
 Pegasus Airlines Istanbul–Sabiha Gökçen[32]
 Qatar Airways Doha
 Qeshm Air Tehran–Imam Khomeini (suspended)[33][34]
 SCAT Airlines Aktau
 SkyUp Kharkiv,[35] Kyiv–Boryspil, Lviv,[35] Odessa[35]
 Sun d'Or Tel Aviv
 Taban Air Tehran–Imam Khomeini (suspended)[33][34]
 Turkish Airlines Istanbul
 Ukraine International Airlines Kyiv–Boryspil
 Uzbekistan Airways Tashkent[36]
 Zagros Airlines Tehran–Imam Khomeini (suspended)[33][34]
 Cargo[edit]
 Airlines Destinations
 Cargolux Baku, Kuala Lumpur–International, Luxembourg, Singapore, Zhengzhou
 (Suspended),[25] Taipei–Taoyuan
 Silk Way Airlines Baku
 Turkish Cargo Bucharest,[37] Istanbul–Atatürk
 Statistics[edit]
 Annual passenger statistics[38]
 2019
 3,692,202
 3.1%
 2018
 3,808,619
 20.4%
 2017
 3,164,139
 40.5%

2016
2,252,535
22.0%
2015
1,847,111
17.3%
2014
1,575,386
9.7%
2013
1,436,046
17.8%
2012
1,219,175
15.2%
2011
1,058,679
28.7%
2010
822,772
17.1%
2009
702,916
1.7%
2008
714,976
16.1%
2007
615,873
8.5%
2006
567,402
3.7%
2005
547,150

Annual passenger numbers (millions)[edit]

See source Wikidata query and sources.

Most Popular Routes[39]

Country Destination Airport Weekly flights Airlines

Turkey Istanbul Atatürk Airport, Sabiha Gökçen Airport 47 Turkish Airlines (35 weekly),[40] Pegasus Airlines (12 weekly)

UAE Dubai Dubai-International 28 flydubai (4 daily)

Ukraine Kyiv Boryspil, Zhuliany 26 Georgian Airways (1 daily), Ukraine International Airlines (2 daily), SkyUp (5 weekly)

Israel Tel Aviv Ben Gurion Airport 18 Georgian Airways (12 weekly), El Al (3 weekly), MyWay Airlines (3 weekly)

Qatar Doha Hamad International Airport 18 Qatar Airways

Azerbaijan Baku Heydar Aliyev Airport 14 Azerbaijan Airlines

Iran Tehran Imam Khomeini Airport 13 Kish Airlines (1 daily), Qeshm Air (6 weekly)

Germany Munich Munich Airport 9 Lufthansa

See also[edit]

Georgian Civil Aviation Administration

List of the busiest airports in the former USSR

List of airports in Georgia

Transport in Georgia