

## Report BY BBC TV about Punjabi farmers in Georgia

Punjabi farmers Manjit Bishnoi and Kuldeep Singh Pandher are out hard at work most days. Cheap land entices outsiders Amid the crumbling remains of heavy industry factories from the Soviet era, the pair grow tonnes of tomatoes, potatoes and watermelons. **They are among an estimated 2,000 Indian farmers who have established themselves in Georgia** over the last few years. They bought all their own agricultural machinery with them and say in the peak season they hire 20-25 workers. **"We came here because land is very cheap compared to India and the quality of the soil is very high. The climate is good and people are helpful, Mr Singh says, adding: "We would like to buy more hectares of land and stay here."**

He says opposition to these policies played a role in Saakashvili's government loss of power in last October's elections. In Batumi, in the run up to the vote crowds accused him of allowing "Turkish expansionism" at the expense of Georgian culture and sovereignty.

"Some people said that his government brought too many foreigners. This kind of openness is considered by some to undermine Georgian and sell the country to foreigners,"

The new government of billionaire businessman Bidzina Ivanishvili has already started to tighten up the rules just as GDP growth and foreign investment are slowing down.

Visa clampdown

While it has vowed to stay market-focused and announced a review of the liberal visa regime. she told the BBC. "We want it to be closer to EU regulations." Indian farmers, may also affected by the new restrictions towards foreigners. Former Prime Minister Nikoloz Gilauri is not convinced. "We believe that more workers coming to the country, to the economy, will end up in good things. It brings capital, it brings know how, it brings everything. It is not bad for a country to be a hub for employment"