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Armed Conflict in Georgia: A Case Study in Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping

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Preface

During the past six years, the Humanitarianism and War Project has conducted numerous case studies about humanitarian action in conflict settings in a wide array of Asian, Latin American, and African contexts. Its study published last year on humanitarian action in the former Yugoslavia reviewed these issues in post-Cold War Europe. The present study represents our first in the former Soviet Union.

Such a study was a priority for us inasmuch as the region seems certain in the coming years to pose an increasing number of conflict-related humanitarian challenges to the international community. The lay of the land in Georgia, Russia, and the other 13 republics into which the Soviet Union splintered is largely terra incognita. In this region, the institutions that have responded often to the suffering of civilians in other crises—UN organizations, governments, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—have little if any experience.

The challenges of economic transition from centrally planned to market-based economic systems underlie and aggravate the humanitarian consequences of civil wars. The existence of Russia, until recently dubbed a "superpower" and still a regional hegemon in "post-Soviet space," complicates the definition of relationships between the outside world and the Newly Independent States. The fact that human need is imbedded in very different historical, social, political, and economic circumstances questions the applicability of many of the lessons learned in developing countries.

We selected the several armed conflicts in the Republic of Georgia as a vehicle for illuminating the problems of humanitarian action in the former Soviet Union and as a basis for comparisons with other cases of international humanitarian and peacekeeping involvement in civil and regional disputes. The experience of Georgia is particularly rich and intriguing because of the coexistence of three conflicts, the depth and multifaceted nature of international involvement, and the high stakes of the outcomes to Russia and the Newly Independent States—and of course to the international community as well.

The field research for this study extended over one year. It involved in the first instance a close review of existing primary and secondary literature on the situation in Georgia, including the civil conflicts and the international response. Available written materials were enlivened by over one hundred interviews by members of the research team with the actors in the drama. Contributors to the study included officials in Georgia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, and from the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the European Union. The team also sought out a broad array of officials of international and Georgian NGOs and a wide spectrum of academics and other experts. The research involved visits to Georgia in August 1994 and March 1995, as well as discussions throughout the year in Vienna, Moscow, Geneva, New York, and Washington.

The team made every effort to secure the views of the parties to the various conflicts and to ensure impartiality in the representation and analysis of those views. While it generally succeeded in arranging first-hand discussions with key actors, repeated efforts to arrange high-level meetings with the Abkhaz authorities were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the team also visited Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

We wish to acknowledge the active cooperation of the Georgian government, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) headquarters in Vienna and its mission in Tbilisi, and many NGOs. Most were pleased to share their views in detail and with candor. We are particularly grateful to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) personnel in Georgia for providing transport for the team's visit to Zugdidi and Gali and hospitality within Abkhazia. We are deeply indebted to Dr. George Khutsishvili and his International Centre for Conflict and Negotiation in Tbilisi for assistance in local arrangements and scheduling of interviews, as well as continual and invaluable advice and perspective.

As with earlier case studies, we have approached the finished product of our research as a vehicle for allowing those interviewed to speak for themselves. In drawing extensively on the views expressed, we have preserved confidentiality where requested, attributing comments only with the permis-

sion of those interviewed. The names of most of those who contributed their views to this study are listed in Appendix III. The authors of the report remain responsible for the analysis and conclusions based on that data and for any errors, omissions, or misstatements of fact.

Since for some readers this case study will represent their first contact with the Humanitarianism and War Project, we list other research monographs produced by the project and by the Watson Institute on the inside front and back covers. More information about the project and its sponsors is provided in Appendix IV. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support from these institutions, which has made the project as a whole and this case study in particular possible. We also wish to express appreciation for editorial assistance provided by Fred Fullerton and Amy Langlais of the Watson Institute.

As we circulate this study in early 1996, we are mindful that major political changes have taken place in Georgia in recent months, with still additional developments on the horizon. Georgia has adopted a new constitution. The government is acting with increasing vigor against its paramilitary former allies, the Mkhedrioni, who have been responsible for many of the abuses that have come to characterize Georgia's conflicts. National elections are to be held later this month. In December, when the current United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) mandate expires, the international community will face decisions about whether to extend its lease on life, and, if so, with what changes.

We offer this report as a resource in providing a context for understanding recent changes and for charting a future course. Committed to the continuing monitoring of these developments and to disseminating our findings from this and other studies, we welcome, as always, comments and criticisms from our readers.

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Co-director of the Humanitarianism and War Project
Providence, Rhode Island
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Executive Summary

This is a study of the world's response to internal armed conflicts in the Republic of Georgia. The principal features of that response on the humanitarian side were the delivery of emergency assistance and the protection of human rights. That response also included the establishment of peacekeeping operations, both by the Commonwealth of Independent States, with the United Nations' blessing, and by the United Nations itself. This report assesses the performance and effectiveness of humanitarian and peacekeeping activities and reviews the interaction between the two.

The humanitarian crises in Georgia were the result of fundamental dislocations associated with the collapse of the centrally planned Soviet economy. The consequences of this basic economic transformation were exacerbated by three civil conflicts in Georgia: between Georgians and Ossets, between Georgians and the Abkhaz, and among the Georgians themselves (that is, between supporters and opponents of former president Zviad Gamsakhurdia). While one in twenty Georgians suffered directly from the conflicts themselves, most of the population have been affected by the broader economic collapse. The fact that most Georgians were at risk had profound economic, social, and political consequences. Of special concern were the estimated 700,000 individuals who constituted the "most vulnerable." Particularly at risk were the five percent of the population who were internally displaced.

After the fall of Abkhazia in October 1993 and the expulsion of its approximately 250,000 ethnic Georgians, the international response was successful in preventing mass starvation or death from exposure and in stabilizing the circumstances of the internally displaced who sought shelter in Georgia proper. Yet international actors have been unsuccessful in finding a longer-term solution through the return of the displaced to their homes. This study analyzes in detail some reasons why international strategies have been unable to break a vicious circle. On the one hand, a political settlement is a prerequisite for the return of people to their homes. On the other hand, as long as people remain unresettled, that political settlement remains unlikely. A solution to the humanitarian

crises in Georgia is thus linked inextricably to a lasting solution of the conflicts themselves.

To date, efforts to use humanitarian instruments to facilitate normalization have been dysfunctional. Attempts to achieve the rapid return of the internally displaced populations before conditions were conducive jeopardized their security and set back the peace process. Denial of assistance to insurgent regions by UN and other aid agencies has had serious negative consequences for their populations while doing little to push Abkhaz and Osset leaders to compromise in the political negotiations. In short, politicization of humanitarian action—itself a departure from humanitarian principles—has undercut the attainment of humanitarian objectives.

Russian-mediated cease-fires in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia have produced two interpositions of peacekeepers—a Russian-dominated joint force (Russian-Osset-Georgian) in South Ossetia and a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (in practice, Russian) peacekeeping force (PKF) on the Inguri River between Abkhaz and Georgian forces. The force in South Ossetia is monitored by the small Mission to Georgia of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. A force of 136 UN observers monitors the CISPKF deployment in western Georgia.

In both instances, the interposition of peacekeepers has played a constructive short-term role in separating opposing forces, stabilizing cease-fire lines, and creating an environment conducive to the provision of humanitarian assistance. Thus far, however, the peacekeeping contingents have contributed little to humanitarian efforts or to the protection of vulnerable civilian populations. In both instances, moreover, Russian peacekeepers have had rules of engagement that have departed considerably from international norms. Both contingents have repeatedly demonstrated a disturbing lack of discipline as well.

In the South Osset case, OSCE monitors have played a significant role in smoothing the rough-edged Russian deployment. Their presence has contributed substantially to the protection of human rights. The OSCE also has systematically assisted humanitarian organizations to broaden activities in

South Ossetia. By contrast, UNOMIG has done little in Abkhazia to compensate for CISPKF nonchalance on human rights protection. UNOMIG has provided no structure for systematic coordination with or support for humanitarian efforts, although some ad hoc assistance has been proffered. None of the forces involved in peacekeeping has proved willing to take on the policing function necessary to ensure the security of returning internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Although freezing the two conflicts represents an undeniably positive achievement, a resulting state of suspended animation is likely to prove untenable in the longer term. On the outside, donor restiveness with the prospect of the continuing need for large-scale aid flows has combined with pressures on the inside fostered by Georgian politics to keep the issue of the internally displaced front and center. Unless significant progress is achieved in negotiations on political resolution, renewal of conflict is likely. As of the spring of 1995, the prognosis for political settlement of the Osset question appeared to be more positive than that for Abkhazia.

Against this backdrop, the study offers several major recommendations:

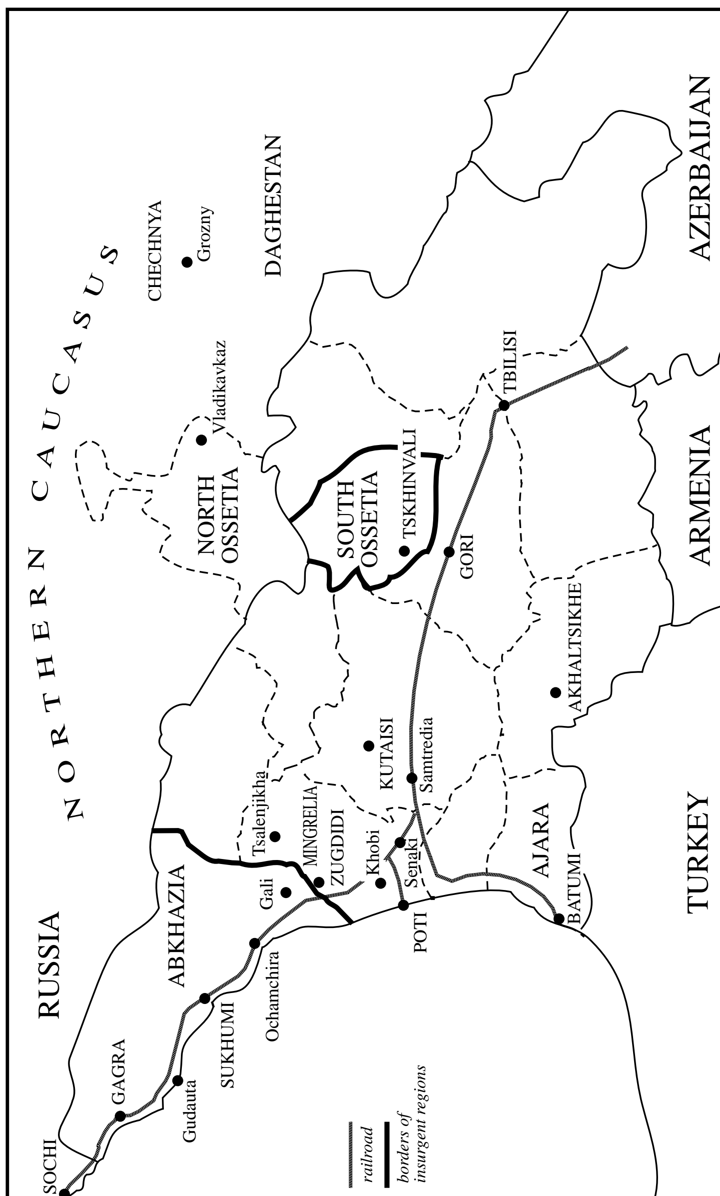
- make a greater effort to coordinate the activities of humanitarian actors among themselves and more structured consultation and cooperation between them and peacekeepers;
- give higher priority to detaching humanitarian action from political considerations;
- expand protection functions in peacekeeping mandates; and
- establish a deadline beyond which Russian and other peacekeeping mandates would not be extended, absent significant progress on the political front. Russian and CIS peacekeeping operations also might receive financial support in exchange for greater international involvement in training their peacekeepers, closer coordination and liaison between them and UN and OSCE monitors, and strengthened rules of engagement.

Acronyms

ACTS	A Call to Serve
AICF	Action Internationale Contre la Faim
AID	Agency for International Development (U.S.)
ASB	Arbeiter Samariter Bund
ASSR	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
ATHP	Atlanta-Tbilisi Health Partnership
CARE	CARE International in the CIS
CBM	Confidence Building Measure
COE	Council of Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CISPKF	CIS Peacekeeping Force
CSCE	Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ECU	European Currency Unit
EMSA	Evangelical Mission Society of America
EU	European Union
FTC	Feed the Children
FUND	Fund for Democracy and Development
GRC	Georgian Red Cross
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	International Organization
IOCC	International Orthodox Christian Charities
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
MAG	Multiple Assistance for Georgia
MERLIN	Medical Emergency Relief International
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization

NIS	Newly Independent States
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (formerly CSCE)
PKF	Peacekeeping Force
PKO	Peacekeeping Operation
SCF-USA	Save the Children (U.S.)
SOAO	South Ossetia Autonomous Oblast
SPF	Secours Populaires Français
TSA	The Salvation Army
UMCOR	United Methodist Committee on Relief
UN	United Nations
UNDHA	United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDPA	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMO	United Nations Military Observer
UNOMIG	United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme (UN)
WHO	World Health Organization (UN)

Map of Georgia



Map by Greg Kazarian

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Mounting and maintaining humanitarian action in armed conflict is one of the most serious challenges facing the international community in the post-Cold War environment. The end of the Cold War has brought with it an increase in the number of conflicts, particularly in the former Soviet Union. There, as indeed elsewhere, many have been fought with great intensity in pursuit of ethnonational agendas, with far-reaching and severe consequences for civilian populations. Since a major motive has been to displace civilians, the conflicts have tended to produce large-scale movements of people. Civil conflict by its very nature interferes with basic economic activities upon which human sustenance is based. It taxes government capacities to sustain basic services such as public health and income maintenance for vulnerable groups. In addition, it often involves massive and egregious violations of human rights.

Military operations themselves substantially obstruct delivery of assistance to affected groups and protection of their fundamental human rights in active conflict. The parties are often hostile to the impartial supply of basic needs, their military activities often damaging infrastructure critical to human welfare. The vulnerability of aid operations and personnel to the collapse of law and order in conflict zones, the ubiquity of weapons and the threat of mines, and the desire of all sides to enlist the support of humanitarian actors to their causes and to secure preferential access to relief materiel also impedes assistance.

Humanitarian action is often required in situations in which the international or regional actors deploy limited forces to stabilize the conflict and lay a basis for political negotiation to end it. The presence of outside military personnel raises the question of whether these same actors also may have a role in efforts to address the humanitarian needs of affected populations. How does the presence of such forces affect the effort to address humanitarian crises positively or negatively? Conversely, can and does the provision of hu-

manitarian assistance and the protection of human rights help in the quest for political settlement of the conflict?

During the Cold War, when stability in Europe and the former Soviet Union was largely a given, peacekeeping and humanitarian activity focused on the less developed and more unstable post-colonial periphery in the so-called South. The disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, the lifting of the Iron Curtain, and the collapse of the Soviet Union brought this stability to an end. The former Soviet sphere of influence and indeed the Soviet Union itself fell prey to economic and social collapse and political fragmentation traditionally associated with the less developed regions of the South. The process of disintegration has brought substantial human suffering to much of this region's population. Humanitarian agencies and international organizations have had to develop strategies for coping with crises set in conditions profoundly different from those in areas with which they are familiar. They have had to do so very rapidly and without much experience in the special circumstances of the region.

This study examines the interaction between peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance since 1990 in one arena of civil conflict in the former Soviet Union: the Republic of Georgia. The Georgian case shares many of the problems typically associated with aid delivery and protection of human rights in other conflicts. These problems include the collapse of local government institutions that otherwise might be in a position to address the daily needs of populations; the difficulties of delivering necessary assistance in the absence of political settlement of the accompanying conflict(s); logistical problems associated with aid delivery across fronts and active war zones; coordination of activities of a wide array of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations (IGOs and NGOs) with often-conflicting philosophies and overlapping mandates; definition of the role that peacekeepers should play in support of humanitarian operations; and security of the personnel involved in these activities.

In addition, the situation in Georgia possesses specific attributes that make it a rich, useful case for review. In the first place, the situation is particularly complex since it involves two simultaneous conflicts in different regions of the country.

In each instance, the Georgian government faces a different constellation of actors. Second, these conflicts take place on terrain unfamiliar to international humanitarian and politico-military actors. Most UN organizations and NGOs as recently as the early 1990s lacked much prior experience in the former Soviet Union. The populations and societies of the 15 new former Soviet republics are different in many important respects from those with which the UN and humanitarian organizations typically have interacted in the past.

On the positive side, near-universal literacy and an extensive skills base provide for wider local participation in human needs activities. On a more negative note, the economies are in complex transition from planned to market-based production and exchange. The unsettled nature of property relations and the collapse of infrastructure and exchange relationships with traditional trading partners, which have further disrupted economic activity, constitute a formidable impediment to economic normalization well beyond the consequences of the civil conflicts themselves. Thus, while the number of Georgians directly affected by civil strife was sizable, virtually the entire Georgian population felt the impact of the broader economic collapse accentuated by the strife.

The bureaucratic and political culture of the Soviet Union fostered a lack of initiative on the part of government officials dealing with these problems. The close control over social activity in the Soviet era prevented the emergence of an NGO culture that might have provided an indigenous institutional base for humanitarian action. The Georgian situation also presents significant challenges of language. Past activities give humanitarian institutions little capacity for operating in Russian, let alone in the indigenous Caucasian languages, Georgian or Abkhaz, which have no analogues outside the region.

For all of these reasons, the Georgia experience may provide valuable lessons on the process of adaptation of intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations to the unfamiliar conditions in the Newly Independent States. Understanding the particularities of operation in Georgia is of great importance as IGOs and NGOs are increasingly involved not only in Georgia but also in Moldova,

Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. The OSCE is now preparing for a major peacekeeping operation in Nagorno-Karabakh. In short, the widespread conflicts and economic disruption in the former Soviet region suggest that it is likely to be a major growth area for humanitarian action and peacekeeping. That prospect makes reviewing experience to date an urgent matter.

The Georgian case is a laboratory for cooperation among major international organizations. The first instance in which the UN and the OSCE have attempted a formal division of labor, the Georgia experience may hold useful lessons regarding cooperation between universal and regional organizations.[1] The third international organization active in the region is the Commonwealth of Independent States, which has deployed a peacekeeping force between the Georgians and the Abkhaz. The CISPKF deployment, representing preeminently the interest of a regional hegemonic power (Russia) in the affairs of Georgia, raises important questions.

These include whether and how the activities of international actors can moderate or harness the efforts of regional hegemons to pursue their interests at the expense of smaller states and whether and how much the presence of a regionally dominant power intimately involved in the affairs of a smaller state can facilitate the effort to address humanitarian imperatives in conflict.[2] The international community is hesitant to lead in managing conflict in the former Soviet Union and seems willing instead to acquiesce in Russian preeminence in the area. It is thus important to assess how much Russia and the regional organization it dominates can effectively address humanitarian and political issues relating to the conflicts in post-Soviet space. It should be remembered, as a senior Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) official noted, that Georgia represents the UN's first experience of peacekeeping in an area in which CIS peacekeeping is also proceeding.[3]

This study of humanitarianism and war in the Republic of Georgia covers the period from November 1989 (the beginning of open hostilities in the South Ossetia Autonomous Oblast [SOAO]) to April 1995. It is based on an extensive review of primary and secondary sources related to the evolu-

tion of the conflicts in Georgia and on extensive interviews in New York, Washington, Vienna, Geneva, Moscow, and the Republic of Georgia (including the SOAO and Abkhazia). Those sought out include more than 100 UN and OSCE officials responsible for humanitarian and peacekeeping efforts in Georgia, officials of international and Georgian NGOs, and Georgian, Osset, Abkhaz, and Russian officials, political figures, and scholars. Following this introduction, the study is divided into six parts: an examination of the political and historical background to the conflicts; a review of humanitarian activities; an analysis of peacekeeping operations; a discussion of interrelationships between the two; an examination of conflict resolution; and a set of conclusions and recommendations.

The study of the conflicts in the region is full of pitfalls. The intensity of emotion and the extent of politicization that surrounds them is particularly evident in the use of place names. For example, the use of the term “South Ossetia” was proscribed in Georgian political discourse from 1990 to 1995, commentators preferring the historical Georgian names for the region—Shida Kartli and Samachablo. Likewise, to many individuals, the spelling of the capital of the South Osset Autonomous Oblast (Tskhinval or Tskhinvali) or of the Abkhaz capital (Sukhum or Sukhumi) was a politically weighted choice. The “i” in Tskhinvali is erased from the roadsign in Gori pointing the way to South Ossetia.

In this study, we use spellings that are normally employed in international (and Russian) discourse on Georgia. We do this to facilitate communication and not to express political views or preferences. Similarly, we speak of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as parts of Georgia, although distinct from “Georgia proper.” We do so without taking a position on the underlying political question about the merits of their respective claims to independence.

Chapter 2

The Background

The Republic of Georgia is an ethnically heterogeneous state in the Transcaucasian region of the former Soviet Union. Its ethnic makeup in 1989 is shown in Table 2.1. While relations among Georgia's ethnic groups often were strained during the Soviet period, tensions among them were muted. Relations deteriorated rapidly during perestroika and the gradual collapse of Soviet power and the emergence of an independent Georgia in 1990-1991. The causes of this decay are discussed below. Ultimately, deteriorating intercommunal relations produced civil conflicts in South Ossetia and in Abkhazia.

Table 2.1. The Ethnic Makeup of Georgia (1989)

Ethnic Group	Share of Population (percent)
Georgians	70.1 *
Armenians	8.1
Russians	6.3
Azeris	5.7
Ossets	3.0
Greeks	1.9
Abkhaz	1.8
Ukrainians	1.0

* Note: the Ajar (Georgian Muslim) population is included in the total for Georgians, reflecting the judgment or the political preference of the census takers, not of the authors of this study.

Source: *Census of the USSR, 1989.*

South Ossetia

The first conflict was in the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast of the republic (see Chronology in Appendix I). Open conflict began in 1990 after the Republic of Georgia's effective declaration of independence.[4] In the fall of 1990, the South Ossetian Soviet responded by adopting a declaration transforming the oblast into the "South Ossetian Soviet Democratic Republic." A day later, the Supreme Soviet of Georgia annulled this decision. The Osset declaration was renewed in October of 1990. Elections to the Supreme Soviet of the breakaway "republic" followed in December. The meeting of the newly elected Supreme Soviet on December 11, 1990 provoked the Georgian Supreme Soviet (now dominated by ultranationalist partisans of Zviad Gamsakhurdia after Georgia-wide elections in October) to abrogate Southern Ossetia's status of autonomy.

Violence broke out in the region in December 1990 and military operations continued until mid-1992. By all accounts, the conflict between local militias at the village level was particularly brutal. Local forces were strengthened on one side by the Georgian National Guard and the paramilitary organization Mkhedrioni and on the other side by volunteers from North Ossetia. Tskhinvali, the capital of the region, was shelled over a long period with massive damage to buildings and infrastructure. Estimates of casualties in the war varied, although the dead certainly numbered over 1,000. Georgian authorities maintained that upwards of 40,000 Georgian refugees fled South Ossetia to the Gori region and to Tbilisi. Osset authorities claimed a flow of refugees of around 100,000 from Georgia to North Ossetia.[5]

By the time of the Sochi Accord in June 1992, which established a cease-fire and a process for political resolution, the economy of the region had been destroyed.[6] Beyond Tskhinvali itself, law and order collapsed and the countryside degenerated into heavily armed banditry. The lack of central control over the region, the loose authority of the regional government in Tskhinvali, and the region's contiguity to the Russian Federation made it a haven for organized criminal activity, notably smuggling.

After the Sochi Accord, an effective cease-fire operated in South Ossetia. A tripartite peacekeeping force of Russians, Georgian government troops, and North Osset military units did a reasonably good job of minimizing intercommunal violence. Their performance, reviewed in Chapter 4, was monitored by a small OSCE observer mission. There was little progress on the political track, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Abkhazia

The roots of the conflict between the autonomous republic and the central government predated Georgia's reestablishment of independence and the collapse of Soviet rule. Abkhazia enjoyed status as a union republic in the USSR, linked to Georgia by a special treaty, from 1921 to 1931. After the inclusion of Abkhazia in the Republic of Georgia in the 1930s, the ethnic Georgian population of the region grew considerably as a result of policies favoring migration.

Between 1926 and 1979, the ethnic Abkhaz portion of the total population of Abkhazia declined from 27.8 percent to 17.1 percent, a trend that sparked alarm among Abkhaz elites concerning the long-term viability of their community.[7] In 1978, the Abkhaz petitioned the Soviet leadership for separation from the Republic of Georgia. Abkhaz nationalism strengthened considerably under the comparatively free conditions of the Gorbachev era, and leading Abkhaz intellectuals petitioned Gorbachev in 1988 for separation from Georgia. In the summer of 1989, the government in Tbilisi announced its intention to make the Georgian section of the Abkhaz State University a branch of the Tbilisi State University to improve educational opportunities for ethnic Georgians in Abkhazia. Civil violence ensued and 22 people died.

In 1990, "sectional parties" were excluded from the Georgian Supreme Soviet elections, a move clearly aimed at the Abkhaz, Ossets, and other minorities with ethnically and regionally based political formations. Abkhaz delegates to the autonomous republic's Supreme Soviet responded by declaring Abkhaz sovereignty in August 1990. This action was then annulled by the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Georgia.

When Gamsakhurdia's Round Table/Free Georgia coalition took power in October 1990, Abkhaz authorities refused to accept the centrally appointed prefect. In March 1991, they defied Gamsakhurdia's authority again by participating in the USSR referendum on the future of the union. Of the 52.4 percent of the Abkhaz republic's population that voted, 98.4 percent voted for the preservation of the union.[8] Nonetheless, relations between the Gamsakhurdia government and Abkhaz authorities were reasonably quiet in 1991, largely as a result of the preoccupation of the Georgians with the Osset question.

Matters changed rapidly in 1992. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the first president of independent Georgia, was overthrown and forced to flee Tbilisi at the end of 1991. Forces loyal to him mounted an insurrection against the new central authorities in the spring of 1992 in Mingrelia, a region of western Georgia contiguous with Abkhazia (see map p. xiv). As hostilities in Ossetia wound down in the summer of 1992, the Georgian government and Mkhedrioni were able to transfer substantial forces to the west to engage the supporters of Gamsakhurdia. This conflict, too, was notable for the disorganization and brutality of forces supporting the government. The insurgents used sanctuaries in areas of eastern Abkhazia populated by Mingrels in their struggle against the central government. In the summer, they kidnapped several Georgian officials, including deputy prime minister Sandro Kavsadze, and took them to hiding places in Abkhazia.

Such events drew the attention of central authorities back to Abkhazia. In a general sense, a solution to the security problem in Mingrelia required denial of Abkhaz sanctuary to Gamsakhurdia's supporters. More specifically, the Georgian government sought to move into eastern Abkhazia in order to free the kidnapped officials. An interest in ensuring the security of infrastructure essential to the Georgian economy (notably the rail link from Russia to central Georgia that crosses Abkhazia) provided another reason for military action.

Reports at the time suggested that the Georgian government had received tacit if not explicit agreement from the Abkhaz authorities for a limited operation in the Gali region.[9] When Tengiz Kitovani, then defense minister and head of the National Guard, encountered little resistance in his advance

on Gali, he decided, reportedly on his own initiative, to continue to Sukhumi in order to bring the autonomous republic's government under control.[10] The chair of the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet fled along with his government to Gudauta and the Georgian government, impressed by Kitovani's apparent success, dissolved the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet and installed a Georgian-dominated military council in the region. The result was a civil war in Abkhazia.

The Abkhaz side, benefiting from the arrival of volunteers from the North Caucasus and from the support of Russian forces stationed in the region, soon consolidated control over northwestern Abkhazia and took Gagra in October 1992. In the spring of 1993, this was followed by an offensive on Sukhumi. The failure in March and again in July to take the city, coupled with shifts in the composition of the Georgian government in May that rendered negotiation easier, led to a cease-fire agreement on July 27, 1993 that was both mediated and guaranteed by the Russian government.

The cease-fire agreement provided for the separation of combatants, the withdrawal of Georgian forces from Abkhazia, and the encampment of Abkhaz forces and equipment, all under Russian supervision. The Georgian side largely complied with the withdrawal stipulation, leaving southern and eastern Abkhazia defenseless.[11] In mid-September 1993, the Abkhaz resumed the offensive and after 11 days took Sukhumi and then the rest of Abkhazia up to the border with Mingrelia on the Inguri River.[12]

The fall of Abkhazia initiated a further major flow of refugees as the Georgian majority of the republic fled the Abkhaz advance, crossing into Georgia through the mountain passes of Svanetia or moving south and east into Mingrelia. According to 1994 UN estimates, this influx brought the total number of internally displaced persons in Georgia to some 240,000.[13] The success of ethnic cleansing of Abkhazia is indicated by the comment of a senior UN official who visited formerly Georgian-populated zones of the region in the spring of 1994. They resembled, he said, an empty desert.[14] Initial informal efforts at repatriation to the Gali region of Abkhazia, sponsored by the Russian military in September of 1994, resulted in violence against returning civilians.

The denouement to the Abkhaz conflict coincided with the renewal of rebellion in Mingrelia, as Gamsakhurdia took advantage of Shevardnadze's vulnerability. Mingrel insurgents took control of all the major towns in Mingrelia and then of the port of Poti, critical to the supply not only of the interior of Georgia but also of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Sources in Tbilisi suggest that the insurgents were assisted by the Abkhaz, the latter presumably seeking to establish a buffer between their own region and central Georgia, and by ex-defense minister Kitovani, who by this time had joined the opposition to Shevardnadze's government.

By mid-October 1993, forces supporting Gamsakhurdia were threatening the city of Kutaisi at the gates to Central Georgia and were apparently preparing for an offensive on Tbilisi itself. Government forces, demoralized and disorganized by their ordeal in Abkhazia and operating in a region (Mingrelia) where the population was sympathetic to the Zviadist rebellion, showed little effective resistance. It was at this stage that Shevardnadze capitulated to Russian pressure to join the CIS. After his meeting in October 1993 with Yeltsin in Moscow, the Russians finally weighed in on the side of the government. With Russian military assistance, the Georgians succeeded in eliminating the insurgency in Mingrelia in short order.[15]

In Abkhazia, the Russians brokered a cease-fire between the belligerents that involved the interposition of a Russian-dominated CIS peacekeeping force along the Inguri River separating the Abkhaz and Mingrelian regions of Georgia. This was followed in April 1994 by an interim peace agreement between the parties, mediated by the Russian government and the United Nations Special Representative for Georgia, that established general procedures for movement toward a political settlement. In particular, it envisaged a return of internally displaced persons and an eventual referendum on the political status of Abkhazia.

The cease-fire appeared reasonably durable, although through 1994 there were occasional violations in the Kodori Gorge, where the Georgian withdrawal was not complete. The Abkhaz also complained of repeated instances of infiltration by Georgian militants and acts of terrorism against Abkhaz

officials and installations. In addition, there were repeated attacks by Abkhaz military and militia personnel on Georgian civilians remaining in Abkhazia or returning without authorization to their homes. As in South Ossetia, progress toward a political settlement was slow (see Chapter 6).

In the Abkhaz instance, international involvement occurred largely under UN and CIS auspices. The United Nations, having refused Georgian requests for a full peacekeeping force, introduced a small observer force (UNOMIG) to monitor the cease-fire in Abkhazia in the summer of 1993. The force began with 40 monitors, but grew to 136 personnel in 1994 as its mandate expanded to include observation of CISPKF (see Chapter 4). The Security Council assiduously avoided any deeper commitment largely because of the overload of peacekeeping operations. Other contributing factors included the sensitivity of substantial UN involvement in the former Soviet Union, given the Russian predisposition to play a leading role in the management of conflict there;[16] the reluctance, given the experience of Yugoslavia, to contemplate broadened mandates in unsettled security situations; and disagreements among the parties as to what the peacekeeping mandate should be.[17]

Although the UN played a secondary role in the realm of peacekeeping, the UN Secretary General's special envoy assumed a very active part in the political negotiations while UNHCR took the lead on the intimately related issue of IDP return. In the spring of 1994, UNHCR assisted in brokering an agreement on refugee repatriation and the process of political settlement. Implementation foundered, however, on the slow pace of Abkhaz processing of returnee applications. At the time of writing this study, the situation remained essentially frozen, with an estimated 250,000 Georgian IDPs awaiting return from Central Georgia and Mingrelia. The CISPKF and UNOMIG mandates expired in mid-May 1995 but were renewed until the end of 1995.

The Sources of Ethnic Conflict

Ethnic conflict in the Republic of Georgia grew out of numerous factors, many of them implicit in the preceding historical account. Some were deeply rooted in Georgian

history. The expulsion of large numbers of Abkhaz by Russian authorities in the nineteenth century greatly reduced the Abkhaz population of what became Georgia and fostered an enduring sense of cultural insecurity with respect to the Georgian majority. As interviews with Abkhaz intellectuals attest, that insecurity increased dramatically during the Soviet era as a result of the policy by Stalin and Beria of resettling Mingrel Georgians in Abkhazia. This policy significantly eroded the Abkhaz share of the population of their own region.

In the Osset case, the profound historical origins of the conflict are different. The Ossets have never been under serious demographic threat in the SOAO. However, problems in relations between the Georgian government and the Osset minority during the period of Georgian independence from 1918 to 1921 had left a bad taste on both sides. Most important, perhaps, Georgians were embittered against the Ossets by their perception of Osset collaboration in the Soviet conquest of Georgia in 1921.

In addition to its impact on demographic distribution in Abkhazia, Soviet rule caused other effects that contributed to the eventual emergence of conflict. In the first place, Soviet nationality policy fostered development and strengthening of ethnonational identity among both majority and minority populations. Second, the institutional structure of Soviet federalism provided a political focus for this growing identity. The institution of autonomous republics and oblasts gave minority political elites institutions to occupy and resources from which to benefit.[18]

The Gorbachev era exacerbated intercommunal relations. At the level of the population as a whole, the gradual crumbling of communist and Soviet power left an ideological vacuum. The ethnic nation was the most prominent alternative focus of identity. Deepening economic hardship was frustrating to populations accustomed to the security of livelihood and stability of expectations, making them vulnerable to extremist political programs and scapegoating rhetoric.

The political conditions of the time allowed these deepening sentiments to be expressed with increasing openness. The emergence of a freer press provided a medium for nationalists to convey their message. The declining credibility of the coer-

cive power of the Soviet state encouraged open expression of national and populist ideologies. The dominant example of this ideological trend was the Georgian ultranationalism of the coalition supporting Zviad Gamsakhurdia. As this movement and the intolerance it represented gained in power, elites of minority jurisdictions were increasingly threatened. This development helped explain the rapid emergence of national secessionism in Abkhazia and South Ossetia outlined in the chronology (see Appendix I). The contradiction between Georgian unitary ethnonationalism and Abkhaz and Osset secessionism was the principal proximate cause of the two civil wars.

The main anomaly in the appearance of ethnic conflict in Georgia was not that it existed but that it involved the groups in question. As already noted, the substantial compactly settled minorities in Georgia are Armenian and Azerbaijani. There has been evidence of strain in the relationship between the Georgian majority and both minorities and between the two minorities. Notably, there has been repeated sabotage of infrastructural links from Georgia to Armenia and instances of hostage-taking between Armenian and Azerbaijani settlements. Georgian observers fear that if and when the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is resolved, one consequence will be a rapid deterioration in relations among the three communities. However, there has been as yet no open conflict.

The Abkhaz and Ossets, by contrast, made up an insignificant percentage of the population of Georgia and yet were involved in sustained conflict with the majority. One reason for the difference was that, unlike the Armenians and Azerbaijanis, the Abkhaz and Ossets had autonomous political institutions and well-entrenched autonomous political and intellectual elites threatened by Georgian ethnonationalist assertion. This created incentives and structures with which to challenge Georgian hegemony.

However, the power of the two communities on their own to face up to the Georgian majority was limited. Their ability to sustain themselves in rebellion was largely a matter of governmental and nongovernmental interference from the Russian Federation. Russian citizens of North Caucasian and Cossack extraction served in large numbers as volunteers in

both Osset and Abkhaz forces. Essential military and nonmilitary supplies for the two insurgent regions came largely from Russia, or (in the case of Abkhazia) from Russian bases located in insurgent areas. At various times, as noted in the chronology in Appendix I, local Russian forces intervened on behalf of the two insurgent groups. Russia made significant financial contributions to the budgets of both insurgent regions.

Although it would be wrong to dismiss these rebellions as Russian-inspired, Russia bears significant responsibility for them. This is a crucial point when considering the modalities of conflict management and conflict resolution, since the principal peacekeeping efforts in Georgia are controlled by Russia (see Chapter 5). These wars were in turn the immediate cause of the humanitarian crises in Georgia.[19]

Sources of the Humanitarian Crises

The impacts of the two wars on Georgia represented only one of the sources of the humanitarian crisis. The underlying condition was the collapse of the USSR and its consequences for the constituent republics, including serious humanitarian repercussions. The economic consequences of the Soviet collapse contributed both to the deterioration of interethnic relations and to the decay of the capacity of society to meet human needs. The disappearance of the centrally planned economy involved the loss of the natural markets for Georgian monoculture agriculture (wine, tea, and citrus), which contributed to a deep and growing crisis in agricultural production. The gradual marketization of Georgia's trading relationships with other former Soviet states—and the dearth of foreign exchange earnings with which to finance the import of energy, essential raw materials, and spare parts—produced shortages of oil and gas, as well as minerals for the metallurgical industry, and a catastrophic drop in production.[20]

The free-fall of the Georgian economy accelerated as a result of the diffident and contradictory approach taken by the government to economic reform.[21] The slow pace of reform of legislation and regulation governing outside involvement in the economy impeded foreign investment. The result was a more or less complete disintegration of the Georgian economy.

Despite expectations of international agencies, there was no sign of improvement in the economic situation in 1994 or early 1995. Consequent mass unemployment and underemployment and massive inflation have greatly worsened the personal circumstances of the bulk of the population, in particular persons on fixed incomes and children. Relevant data are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2. Economic Indicators for Georgia

	1991	1992	1993	1994
% Annual GNP Change	-17.9	-43.8	-16.2	NA
% Change in	79	913	10,000	
1,500 (forecast)				
Consumer Prices				
Budget Balances (% GDP)	-3.5	-35.1	-40	NA

Georgia led the former Soviet states in the average 1991 to 1993 inflation (3,664 percent) and in the 1989 to 1993 decline in GNP (66.2 percent). Georgia was third (after Tajikistan and Armenia) in the 1991 to 1993 average budget deficits.[22] A senior ICRC official summed up the relationship of the economic crisis to the humanitarian one by noting that “Only 1 of 20 Georgians is a casualty of the conflicts. The other 19 are victims of economic collapse. War is not the main hardship, but economic disarray. Everything is collapsing.”

The rise of an extremist government and political culture, subsequent internecine warfare among the various factions vying for power in Tbilisi, and rapid economic decay were accompanied by the disintegration of government administration at central and, frequently, regional levels. Government cadres were ill-prepared for the transition away from the central planning system and from the highly hierarchical Soviet administrative structure. Little effective direction was provided to local and regional authorities by the central government in Tbilisi, paralyzed as it was by leadership rivalries and parliamentary infighting, and preoccupied in dealing with threats to internal security posed by the rebellions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Law and order largely collapsed, particularly in rural areas. The resulting insecurity deepened the recession in agriculture while criminal interference with transport depressed interregional trade. By mid-1993, the writ of government seemingly extended no more than a few blocks beyond its offices, with real power in the country devolving to regional bosses and the mafia or disappearing altogether. In short, there was a woeful lack of resources of governmental institutions at all levels to deal with humanitarian exigencies. As one IOM official put it, "The most salient feature of the humanitarian crisis in Georgia is the extent to which the crisis has been exacerbated by the lack of adequate institutional response."

The effects of the collapse of Soviet power would have been intensely painful whatever the circumstances. Its consequences for the population of Georgia were exacerbated by the proximate cause of the humanitarian crisis—civil war—which in both South Ossetia and Abkhazia destroyed much of the urban and economic infrastructure. The lack of any political settlement forestalled efforts at reconstruction in both areas, which made civilian populations largely dependent on humanitarian assistance for survival. Producers abandoned the land, as the large numbers of mines subsequently delayed their return. The quality of civilian life also was undercut by the disruption of normal channels of transportation and interregional trade. The crisis of confidence to which the conflicts contributed depressed investment in recovery.

Most importantly, as discussed below, the Osset and Abkhaz conflicts produced a large number of refugees and IDPs.[23] Their temporary resettlement in government-controlled areas dramatically increased the burden on a government and economy already struggling with the consequences of economic collapse and the war effort. The effect was strongly felt within the population as a whole because of the large numbers of IDPs taken in by host families. The capacity of these areas in Georgia to cope with refugee flows was hampered by their own experience with civil conflict. In Tbilisi, for example, the violence associated with the ouster of Zviad Gamsakhurdia in October-December 1991 destroyed much of the urban core of the city, exacerbating the housing shortage by creating a further group of dispossessed people. Mingrelia, the area in

which the bulk of refugees from Abkhazia settled, was severely affected by the 1992 conflict between the central government and supporters of Zviad Gamsakhurdia and by the renewal of the rebellion in September.

Chapter 3

Humanitarian Action

Humanitarian action involves the twin challenge of relieving life-threatening suffering and of ensuring respect for human beings. It embraces activities directed at alleviating physical suffering (for example, emergency food and medical assistance) and at protecting fundamental human rights. It involves not only addressing immediate crises but also building local institutional means to avoid future emergencies.[24] Humanitarian action as framed by international law requires responding to needs without regard to political considerations, a significant problem in the Georgian case.

An analysis of humanitarian action in Georgia requires attention to three questions. First, what are the principal dimensions of the humanitarian crisis? Second, how have humanitarian institutions responded and how effective has been their response? Finally, what has been the interrelationship between humanitarian action and efforts to bring these conflicts to a peaceful resolution? The first two questions are answered in this chapter; the third, explored here, is also addressed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Dimensions of the Humanitarian Crisis

The humanitarian crisis has developed in three stages. The first was associated with the flight in 1990-1991 of Georgian inhabitants of South Ossetia, mainly to Tbilisi and the Gori region, and of Ossets from various regions of Georgia to South and North Ossetia. The combined total of displaced persons was in the range of 70,000-100,000, depending on whose figures are accepted. The second stage was a result of the conflicts in Tbilisi, Mingrelia, and then Abkhazia in 1992-1993. The numbers involved are difficult to ascertain, although interviews suggest that several thousand were displaced as a result of the civil violence in Tbilisi, while Abkhaz sources indicate that roughly 30,000 left Abkhazia at the time of the Georgian offensive in 1992.[25] The third stage—numerically by far the most significant—was a result of the renewal of war in

Abkhazia in the autumn of 1993, when approximately 250,000 Georgians (mainly Mingrelians) were forced out of their homes in Abkhazia by the advance of Abkhaz forces to the Inguri River.

As a result of these three phases of conflict, approximately 280,000 people, according to UN estimates, have been displaced within the country.[26] Particularly large concentrations, mainly from Abkhazia, are found in Zugdidi (65,594), Tsalenjikha (12,884), and Senaki (13,268). In addition, 66,220 IDPs now reside in Tbilisi, and 20,294 in Kutaisi, in addition to smaller numbers from South Ossetia in Shida Kartli.[27] The remainder are distributed throughout the country.

There have also been at least three major phases to the humanitarian response in Georgia. In the first phase (1991-1993), Georgian government authorities, civic organizations, and a limited number of international aid agencies were faced with a relatively small-scale displacement of population from South Ossetia into the Gori and Tbilisi areas. Coupled with civil violence in Tbilisi and in Mingrelia at the end of 1991 and in early 1992, and with associated economic disruption and destruction of infrastructure and housing, this displacement stretched local resources to the limit. These stresses occurred at a time when, for reasons already discussed, the Georgian economy was in a tailspin and when resources were further constrained by a substantial earthquake in the Kutaisi and Shida Kartli areas in 1991.

The second phase was the humanitarian emergency associated with the flight of Georgians from Abkhazia in September and October 1993. This population was displaced into areas of Georgia remote from the center and at the time not under central control. The Georgian government, dealing with a military rout in Abkhazia and a growing rebellion in Mingrelia and experiencing an overextension of its limited human services infrastructure, was unable to respond.[28] The gap was filled by a very rapid response on the part of a wide array of NGOs and IGOs. The majority of the agencies listed in Appendix I arrived in the immediate aftermath of this dramatic worsening of the humanitarian situation.

The third phase began in the spring of 1994 after the immediate humanitarian emergency had been addressed. It

involved sustaining the IDP population until political settlements would allow them to return to their homes. This phase also involved coping with the broader and deeper issues of recovery and restructuring of the administrative and social fabric of the republic. In addition, aid agencies were preparing to fulfill the needs of returnees to both Abkhazia and South Ossetia once the repatriation effort began in earnest.

From a functional standpoint, the humanitarian crisis in Georgia had several dimensions. The country experienced a critical food gap, reflecting the legacy of Soviet agricultural planning, conflict and insecurity in the countryside, and the lack of fuel and transport. Disruption of trading links and a lack of foreign exchange precluded resorting to international or regional commodity markets to make up the shortfall. The UN estimated a total minimum grain requirement in 1995 of 1.1 million metric tons, of which 450,000 would be met by domestic production. The rest had to be made up from assistance programs.

Agricultural shortages had serious nutritional consequences. They drove up the prices of food in private markets, straining the budgets of many urban Georgians whose salaries (predominantly in the state sector) or pensions had not kept pace with rapid inflation. This problem was exacerbated by the pressure of the International Monetary Fund on the Georgian government to remove subsidies of staple products in 1994.[29] By early 1995, the incomes of many professionals and pensioners alike were inadequate to cover food needs, to say nothing of housing, medical, and other essentials.

As the conflicts affected many who had not fled their homes, so the food crisis affected many beyond the specific population of the internally displaced. The Food Aid Coordination Group for Georgia estimated that about 700,000 people in Georgia fell within "vulnerable groups." Such groups were defined to include—beyond IDPs—their host families, single elderly pensioners, disabled and handicapped persons, single parent and large families, pregnant and lactating women, and children under five.[30]

Shelter was another important dimension of the humanitarian crisis in Georgia. Some 5-6 percent of the total population of Georgia was forced from their homes in three waves.

The figure covered only persons displaced by conflict and did not reflect rural-urban migration associated with the collapse of the rural economy and with law and order problems in the countryside. The specific dimensions of the shelter problem were variable and difficult to ascertain.

IDPs were accommodated in collective centers and host families. Early surveys indicated that a surprisingly large portion of the displaced population resided with host families (primarily relatives and friends). A Georgian government survey in March 1994, for example, indicated that 84 percent of IDPs were living in family homes, the remainder in collective centers. Studies by the Georgian Committee on Refugees found that in February 1995 about 35 percent of the IDP population resided in collective centers. The pattern—more akin to that of the former Yugoslavia, where some 90 percent of refugees were settled with host families, than to the traditional refugee camps of developing countries—posed problems for aid agencies that were more accustomed to channeling assistance through social institutions.

It should be noted that the most recent survey found that fewer IDPs as of early 1995 were sheltered with host families. The study by the Norwegian Refugee Council mentioned earlier concluded that 53 percent were living in collective centers.[31] The difference was not so much an indication that the earlier official data was wrong than that there had been a gradual movement over time of IDPs from family situations to collective centers. As in the former Yugoslavia, the trend reflected host family fatigue and impoverishment, coupled with growing reliability of access to relief through institutional channels.[32]

Both collective and individual situations involved substantial overcrowding. The NRC survey concluded that IDPs lived on average with 3.2 persons per room. Some 54.9 percent stated that they had access to private facilities (bathroom, toilet, kitchen), while 41.2 percent shared facilities. The remaining 4 percent stated that they had no such facilities where they lived. The potential health consequences of such overcrowding are obvious, particularly when combined with water shortages, intermittent hot water supply, and lack of heating in the winter in many urban areas of Georgia.

Regarding the health issue, one consequence of the economic collapse and war was a dramatic deterioration in preventive and other health care of the Georgian population. Hospitals faced chronic shortages of equipment, medicines, and vaccines, and suffered from regular interruptions in heating and electricity. The UN estimated that "over half the hospitals in Tbilisi were basically nonfunctional because of lack of heating, electricity, as well as basic pharmaceutical and surgical inputs."[33] A telling result was the large increase in patient mortality at those facilities that remain in operation.

Given the lack of Georgia's capacity to produce drugs, roughly 80-90 percent of the medicines in the country in 1994 were provided by humanitarian assistance programs.[34] The collapse of immunization programs, coupled with overcrowding and demands placed on outmoded and poorly functioning public infrastructure, raised a serious prospect of epidemics.[35] The incidence of hepatitis, acute respiratory diseases, bronchial asthma, tuberculosis, and diphtheria increased during 1993-1994.[36] In early 1995, UNICEF officials in Tbilisi expressed grave concern about a coming pandemic of diphtheria, with women and children particularly vulnerable.[37] The recent NRC report, however, found that a majority of the IDPs surveyed had experienced in recent years "no changes in the health of their children."[38]

The fourth dimension of the humanitarian crisis concerned human rights abuses. The conflicts affecting Georgia were particularly cruel ones, with many violations of international norms including torture, treatment of military and civilian prisoners, and the political and civil rights of opponents of both the government and the ruling groups in insurgent areas of the republic. Violations were particularly severe during periods of active conflict. In the Osset case, for example, it is generally accepted that Osset villages outside the SOAO were forcibly depopulated in 1990-1991. More generally, as an observer commented in 1992:

> The polarization of ethnic relations caused innumerable personal tragedies. Georgian mothers who were driven away by their radical Ossetian sons; Ossetians who were terror-

> ized because they objected to the ethnic cleansing practices of their fellow countrymen, Georgians who were compelled to leave their villages because they tried to maintain relations with Ossetian friends, etc.[39]

In Abkhazia, it is widely agreed that when Georgian government troops entered Sukhumi in August 1992, "a pattern of vicious, ethnically based pillage, looting, assault, and murder emerged."[40] Likewise, when Abkhaz forces and those supporting them took Sukhumi and advanced to the Inguri River in September 1993, they "committed widespread atrocities against the Georgian civilian population, killing many women, children and elderly, capturing some as hostages and torturing others...[T]hey also killed large numbers of Georgian civilians who remained in Abkhaz-seized territory."[41] Soldiers on both sides raped many women. Women abused in this fashion were reluctant to seek assistance in dealing with the physical and psychological consequences of these assaults because of the stigma attached to the victim in this cultural context.

The severity and extensiveness of human rights abuses points to a more general fifth dimension of the humanitarian problem—the socio-psychological consequences of the experience of civil war, displacement, and economic collapse. These impacts were evident in increases in suicide rates, juvenile delinquency, violence against persons, drug abuse, and depressive disorders throughout the population. "The whole country has gone crazy," remarked one Georgian academic. The effects were particularly severe among IDPs, notably among the children. Academics and intellectuals also committed suicide.

Violations of human rights continued on both sides of the conflict after the military phase concluded in late 1993. In March 1995, for example, Abkhaz militia units entered the district of Gali in a search for Georgian spontaneous returnees and tortured and murdered 20 Georgian civilians under the eyes of CIS peacekeepers and UNOMIG observers.[42] For its part, the Georgian government was accused of the systematic use of torture against opponents to secure confessions for

judicial proceedings against alleged members of the Zviadist opposition. There is every reason to believe that, given the evolving pattern, any large scale unpoliced return of refugees to Abkhazia would result in further massive violations of the human rights of the Abkhaz minority in western Georgia.

It is difficult to determine whether such violations of human rights reflected a rejection of the rule of law by Georgian and minority authorities, whether they were a product of poor control over forces in the field, or both. In the August 1992 example cited above, most flagrant violations were perpetrated by members of Mkhedrioni, a paramilitary organization under only the loosest supervision of the Georgian government and heavily involved in criminal activity throughout Georgia.[43] The National Guard forces that formed the bulk of Georgian presence in Abkhazia at the time also were acting more or less independently of central government authority. Many of the atrocities committed by Georgians in Abkhazia, moreover, appeared to have had criminal rather than political intent. More recently, Georgian government officials themselves have acknowledged and criticized the commission of human rights abuses by police and prison authorities and have requested assistance of international agencies, notably the OSCE, in ending such practices.[44]

In the Abkhaz case, the authorities apparently had little control over activities of units in the field during the September 1993 operation. Interviews with international aid personnel active in Abkhazia in 1995 suggested that the Abkhaz government at that time exercised very little control over armed formations in areas under their de facto jurisdiction. On the other hand, the 1993 cleansing was so complete that it is difficult to believe that it was not the policy of the Abkhaz authorities themselves. Refugees from Abkhazia report that when Abkhaz troops reoccupied Sukhumi, they used prepared lists of names and addresses to hunt down and kill Georgian civilians.[45]

Regarding more recent violations, interviews in Abkhazia in March 1995 indicated that those responsible for attacks on Georgian civilians in the Gali District at that time were carrying Abkhaz militia identity papers. CISPKF personnel justified nonintervention by noting that the identity papers showed

that these were Abkhaz government personnel pursuing internal security matters. Whether the continued pattern of human rights abuses represented omission or commission on the part of authorities, the effects on civilians and their eventual resettlement were profoundly negative.

The final dimension of the humanitarian crisis concerned the zones of conflict themselves. In both South Ossetia and Abkhazia, infrastructure was largely destroyed in major urban areas while the productive population left rural areas.[46] Those that remained had serious security problems, since many of the areas in question lacked effective policing and were overrun with uncontrolled gangs of heavily armed bandits.[47]

In the Abkhaz case, local security was complicated by infiltration of Georgian militants from the Mingrelian side of the Inguri. Large numbers of mines had been laid both in the area along the Gumista River north of Sukhumi and along the Inguri River between Abkhazia and Mingrelia, resulting in many injuries and deaths among those who remained in these areas or who crossed the cease-fire lines as they went to and from their homes. The mines were laid in haste, with little record of their placement. Spring runoff in the river valleys complicated the removal problem by shifting their location. Efforts to clear mines along the Inguri were impeded by the fact that the Abkhaz viewed mines to be essential to their defense against the possible return of Georgians. As a result, they were likely to replace those that were removed. A UN demining consultant accordingly concluded that there was little point to attempt systematic demining until both sides stopped placing new ones: that is, until a political settlement was reached.

The effort to address many of these problems in areas not under the jurisdiction of the Georgian government was complicated by various political factors. At a practical level, it was often difficult to transport supplies from government-held areas to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Interviews in Tbilisi in August 1994 indicated, for example, that the Osset authorities were then unwilling to allow trucks with Georgian license plates to enter Osset-held territory. In August 1994, when the Salvation Army attempted a food delivery from Georgia to

South Ossetia, the trucks were confronted by hostile crowds and returned to Tbilisi. The agency then suspended deliveries, pending improvement in the security situation. A senior UN official noted similar unwillingness at times on the part of the Abkhaz authorities. In both instances, alternative routes through the Russian Federation had to be developed.

Moreover, the Russian government at various times and to varying degrees attempted to control the flow of humanitarian supplies into Abkhazia, in particular to press the Abkhaz to compromise in the negotiations on a political settlement of the dispute. In addition, some UN agencies and NGOs were reluctant to mount substantial activities within these territories for fear of prejudicing political negotiations on their fate or of jeopardizing their own role in post-settlement assistance. As discussed in greater detail below, UN aid activities in Abkhazia were linked to the issue of repatriation of refugees.[48] Most observers agree that this politicization of humanitarian assistance has impeded efforts to address the needs of the populations living in these regions.

International Responses

International responses to the initial stages of the evolving crisis in Georgia were limited. The humanitarian emergency associated with the flight of a quarter million Georgians from Abkhazia into Svanetia and Mingrelia in September and October 1993, by contrast, evoked a rapid and broadly gauged response on the part of intergovernmental organizations, bilateral aid programs, and NGOs. Appendix II provides an account of major activities by institution during 1994-1995, including, where available, the dates of their initiation.

Major bilateral players included the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and USAID (which mounted a $50 million assistance program for the region in fiscal years 1994 and 1995), several European governments, and the Turkish government. Principal multilateral actors were United Nations agencies (including most notably WFP, UNHCR, and UNICEF in provision of humanitarian assistance and UNDP, UNDHA, and IMO in capacity-building) and ECHO (the annual budgets of which for Georgia have been in the $19-21 million range in 1994 and 1995).

UN activities were financed through annual Consolidated Appeals for the Transcaucasian region as a whole. The 1995 Appeal target for Georgia was $36,473,385, of which $5,025,746 had been raised as of 30 June 1995. The target was divided among UN agencies as follows: UNHCR $9,126,300; UNICEF $2,145,000; WHO $2,794,000; UNDP $2,075,250; ILO $48,000; UNESCO $485,000; UNV $395,000; IOM $335,010; NGOs $5,858,170; DHA $1,036,000; and WFP $11,882,300 (food) and $293,355 (nonfood).

Bilateral donors tended either to fund NGOs providing services directly to the population (for example, the USAID Caucasian program administered by SCF-USA) or to give commodities directly to the Georgian government for distribution by its agencies (as with Turkish and American shipments of food aid). UN agencies and other major multilateral players (notably ECHO) were involved both in direct provision of assistance and in the funding of NGO projects.

The SCF-USA monthly report on humanitarian assistance in Georgia for March 1995 gives a useful snapshot of the relative shares of the various aid programs. In food distribution, for example, principal donors were WFP (6 percent), ICRC donors (2 percent), the National Foundation for Reception and Resettlement of Repatriated Greeks (EIYAPOE) (6 percent), USAID (17 percent), USDA (26 percent), and ECHO (38 percent), with others making up 5 percent. Major implementing agencies were TSA (3 percent), AICF (6 percent), EIYAPOE (6 percent), IFRC (33 percent), and CARE (43 percent), with others comprising a further 9 percent.[49]

The larger assistance programs in Georgia (for example, ECHO, USAID, and the UN appeal itself) were situated in the broader context of regional (Transcaucasian) approaches to humanitarian needs. These approaches were appropriate inasmuch as Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia faced similar problems of civil conflict, population displacement, and economic crisis. However, more closely examined activities that appeared to reflect regional programming and that were grouped together for interpretive purposes consisted mostly of discrete country-specific projects.

A major exception was the establishment by WFP of a Caucasus Logistics Advisory Unit (CLAU). Recognizing that

rehabilitation of regional infrastructure (particularly ports and railroads in Georgia) and of associated power-generation capabilities was necessary for efficient delivery of assistance in all three countries of the region, CLAU developed an effective infrastructural strategy in Georgia specifically designed with the needs of all three states in mind. Several NGOs also carried out coordinated program planning for activities throughout the region.

Most humanitarian efforts were directed in the first instance at addressing the crisis associated with the flight from Abkhazia and the onset of winter in late 1993. Subsequently, priority was given to rehabilitation and recovery and to bridging and capacity-building activities directed at normalizing the socio-economic situation in Georgia. The strategic plan of SCF-USA as administrator of the USAID Caucasus program, for example, envisaged three phases: activities to address the urgent relief needs of vulnerable populations in the winter of 1993-1994; a mix of emergency relief and new interventions and bridge programs through the spring and summer of 1994; and the transition from "delivery of free handouts to the utilization of development-oriented techniques in program delivery."[50]

The humanitarian effort in Georgia had both positive and negative aspects. In Svanetia, the aid community managed to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Georgia in late 1993. The refugees from Abkhazia moved suddenly and in large numbers through mountain passes into Svanetia or across the Inguri River into Mingrelia. In the first case, many perished from exposure as winter had already arrived. There were few if any resources in Svanetia to deal with large numbers of IDPs. The area is remote, rugged, poor, and lightly populated, with little surplus food or shelter. In the second case, IDPs entered a region of active civil war in which central authorities had no control over the centers into which refugees moved. The situation in the capital was not much better. The rebellion in Mingrelia had interrupted flows of food to Tbilisi. In October 1993, the city had only a one week supply of grain for bread.

Despite these conditions, the emergency response averted large scale loss of life. It addressed the immediate food and health needs of IDPs and created an infrastructure to stabilize

their situation. Subsequently, international agencies, in cooperation with Georgian authorities, succeeded in sustaining the uprooted populations with capacity-building and income-generating activities. In southern Georgia, income generation projects were linked to preventive diplomacy in the hope that the creation of cooperative ventures between Azeri and Armenian villages would diminish the probability of violence.

Many of the regionally specific difficulties that might have been expected do not appear to have materialized. Most notably, the lack of experience in delivering assistance in the former Soviet Union does not appear to have posed substantial obstacles to agencies in the field. The language problem was mitigated by the presence of reasonably large numbers of English speakers in the indigenous population and by using Russian as a universal language with local interlocutors throughout the country.

Although the country was split along the lines of military confrontation, that bifurcation did not obstruct the flow of resources between areas under government jurisdiction and those beyond it. Interviews with aid providers suggested that government authorities were willing to allow assistance across cease-fire lines into Abkhazia and South Ossetia, although, as indicated below, local authorities and personnel often had their own misgivings or insisted on a share of the supplies in transit. As noted above, where such shipments were impeded for political reasons, it was often the result of the reluctance of local authorities in areas outside central jurisdiction to accept materials originating in areas under central government control. A more serious obstacle to humanitarian action was the reluctance of some aid providers to extend assistance to persons in insurgent areas.

Despite the absence of some of the expected difficulties, the aid effort faced formidable obstacles. One set of constraints concerned the local economic, social, and political conditions within which humanitarian assistance was delivered. The political and economic transition associated with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the one-party state, and the command economy dramatically reduced Georgian capacity to cope with the humanitarian crisis. Massive displacement of populations occurred at a time of profound disorganization in the

state apparatus. The latter's ability to deal effectively with the crisis or to contribute substantially to the aid efforts to address the needs of affected population was minimal.

Second, the dispersed settlement pattern of IDPs created serious difficulties in assessing and delivering humanitarian assistance. To judge from both available documentary evidence and from interviews, no one knew how many IDPs there were or where they were located. In the Osset conflict, for example, estimates of the number of Ossets displaced dropped steadily from up to 100,000 to less than 50,000 as progress was made toward a political settlement.[51] Difficulties among aid agencies in fixing a "target population" created problems in determining how much assistance was necessary and in assessing whether it was being delivered effectively.

Third, logistics issues created other difficulties. All major entry points for assistance to Georgia lay in areas affected by conflict. The ports of Batumi and Poti both experienced substantial civil unrest at various times during these years. The third port, Sukhumi, lies in Abkhazia, outside Georgian government jurisdiction and separated from central Georgia by the security zone along the Inguri River. The major rail line from Russia also passes through Abkhazia and was at various times subject to interruptions of transport as a result of war damage or guerrilla attack.

Transporting assistance from staging points in southern Russia into Abkhazia was interrupted by the imposition of a blockade on the Abkhaz by the Russians in 1994. Road routes from Russia into central Georgia pass through very arduous terrain in southern zones of the Russian Federation where law and order is notional. One of them enters central Georgia via South Ossetia, also outside Georgian government jurisdiction. The most secure land route lies through Turkey and via Batumi to central Georgia. Agencies using this route reported problems of theft of supplies and difficulties in securing reliable trucking contractors in Turkey.

The logistics of distribution within Georgia was closely related to that of security, a serious and growing problem. An internal document summarizing a series of aid agency meetings on security issues reported incidents at every stage along the way. Trucks bringing commodities to central distribution

points from Tbilisi airport and from Batumi were attacked, as were central warehouses in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Secondary deliveries to regional and local distribution centers—along with NGO personnel and vehicles accompanying the trucks—also were targeted.

The problem may have reflected the weakness of law and order structures in the country and the tenuous government authority in much of the countryside. However, indigenous humanitarian aid and local government and security personnel were frequently involved, either through direct complicity or through indifference to, or obstruction of, NGO demands for action. In many instances, those interfering with shipments and extorting commodities or fuel were uniformed military or police personnel. In addition, there were numerous instances in which agency personnel were attacked and robbed. Intergovernmental humanitarian organization personnel experienced similar difficulties.

A review of the minutes of meetings between NGOs and intergovernmental aid organizations since early 1994, as well as interviews in Tbilisi and in western Georgia, suggest that such harassment continued into 1995, despite the representations of the aid community and bilateral donors to the authorities. The problem was particularly severe in Western Georgia in the Zugdidi area. That was where much of the IDP assistance moved with the stabilization of the political situation in Mingrelia at the end of 1993 and the establishment of the CISPKF security zone in May 1994.

Insecurity and extortion were merely examples of the many difficulties faced by the aid community in its interaction with the local community and local agencies. The situation was complicated by the relative paucity of indigenous NGO capacity, reflecting the absence of an established nongovernmental sector in Georgia. Many of the NGOs that existed were leftovers from the communist era and had little sense of what genuinely independent activity involved. To judge from the accounts of local NGOs themselves, there were serious problems in mobilizing people and promoting local initiatives in pursuit of defined objectives. There were many leaders, few followers, and a proliferation of organizations that had not succeeded in making the transition from debating clubs to

active organizations. Many viewed their activities as a means of accessing hard currency and scarce equipment rather than of delivering needed services. This situation inhibited reliance on local organizations to assist in the delivery of services and rendered NGO capacity-building a major priority in the overall humanitarian effort.[52]

The aid community faced similar difficulties with the Georgian government at central, regional, and local levels. The principal aid interlocutor was the Coordinating Bureau for International Humanitarian Assistance. Although by all accounts its personnel were cooperative and receptive to international advice and involvement, the organization was weak, inexperienced, and lacked basic equipment and technical expertise in assessing and coordinating needs. The indigenous institution was called a “blank sheet” by international aid officials. Describing the broader problem in its 1995 appeal, the International Organization for Migration said, “The humanitarian crisis has been severely exacerbated by inadequate institutional response, to the point that technical assistance to the Government of Georgia has become an emergency requirement in itself.”[53]

A second difficulty of the bureau was its low rank within the government and its limited ability to compete for government resources and attention, or to control the aid-related activities of other government branches. Aid agencies frequently complained of being charged well above the market rate for transport of goods. In addition, at the time of writing, the government intended to levy a tax of 32 percent on the incomes of local staff of humanitarian organizations. Such behavior obviously impeded aid activities while diverting portions of aid budgets from service delivery to the government and transportation contractors. The need for higher level and more assertive government support of aid activities was addressed to a degree in the appointment in 1994 of an energetic deputy prime minister, Irakli Menagarashvili, to spearhead and oversee government involvement.

Aside from the problem of capacity, there was corruption, although of undetermined magnitude. Aid officials and Georgian government personnel acknowledged that a large portion of assistance to Georgia was diverted into both the black

and the open markets. While the practice may have increased the supply of locally available food and other relief items, a portion of international assistance also may have been exported beyond Georgia to Russia and Turkey.[54] Aid diversion to private markets also disadvantaged those lacking the means to patronize them. While the amount of diversion is unknown, limited indirect evidence suggests that it was probably considerable. One deputy prime minister came to be known in the aid community as "Mr. Twenty-five Percent," suggesting the high-level and large-scale nature of the problem.

An example from the health sector, where large quantities of pharmaceuticals were delivered to Georgia in 1993 and 1994 to address the needs of IDPs, illustrates the consequences of diversion. The 1995 NRC survey found that "As regards health issues, it is quite surprising to note that 82.5 percent of the respondents had never received any medicines for free when needed. Only 1.7 percent say that they receive medicines free of charge regularly."[55] An indicator of prevailing patterns indigenous to Georgia, the problem of diversion also reflected insufficient attention by aid providers to controlling and monitoring supplies and distribution. As one UN official put it, humanitarian groups were "more concerned about what they are giving away than what happens to it. There is plenty for sale on the open market."

Several aid organizations got off on the wrong foot as a result of their rapid arrival on the scene. Comparative indifference to the problems of Georgia until the autumn of 1993 gave way overnight to an avalanche of activity responding to the humanitarian emergency associated with the mass exodus of Georgians from Abkhazia. The result was that initial activities were poorly coordinated. Many organizations came for a brief assessment and then left. Among those who remained, many had little knowledge of what their counterparts were doing. There were no formal channels of communication for the systematic exchange of such information. These difficulties were intensified by the fact that aid personnel had little knowledge of the local terrain. The learning curve was further depressed by the fact that many of those initially posted to Georgia were short-term contract personnel rather than experienced employees of the agencies.

Such problems were later resolved to a limited extent. The average term of posting for UN and other agency personnel lengthened. Assisted by a USAID grant, Save the Children-USA began to publish a monthly report on humanitarian activities in mid-1994 and established a data bank on aid activities for the Caucasian region as a whole. The government's Coordinating Bureau for International Humanitarian Assistance began to host regular meetings for aid agencies active in Tbilisi. Agency officials complained, however, that these meetings were too large and unwieldy to produce effective coordination. The UN office in Tbilisi also held regular interagency meetings on its premises. The UNHCR coordinator in the Gali District began to hold similar meetings for aid agencies in Mingrelia and Abkhazia. Even with such modifications, however, there was, in the words of IOM representative Dennis Nihill, "too much relief and too little synergism."

A second and growing difficulty concerned financing aid activities. The resources of most agencies were heavily committed to other humanitarian emergencies at the time the Georgian crisis emerged. Some bilateral aid programs also suffered from deepening domestic pressures against aid expenditures. A senior official involved in USAID programming, interviewed in March 1995, envisaged continuing congressional pressure to cut aid to the Caucasus and speculated that the high-water mark of U.S. resource availability for Georgia might already have been reached. The 1995-1996 SCF-USA administered USAID program budget for the Caucasus dropped from a level of $50 million in the previous year to $17 million, of which $7 million was allocated to Georgia.

Many multilateral organizations, too, faced austerity in aid levels. With regular budgets already committed, some were obliged to finance activities through extraordinary appeals, raising serious questions about their potential to sustain activities.[56] UNHCR threatened in April 1995 that if new funds were not forthcoming, it would suspend operations in Georgia. A senior WFP official expressed the fear that donors to operations in the Caucasus might lose interest if the region's wars continued. There was an intimate connection between humanitarian action and political settlement. Lack of progress on the political front imperiled agency efforts to sustain hu-

manitarian action. A factor in the languishing UN consolidated interagency appeal for 1994-1995 was the concern among donors that ongoing human needs aid—absent such a settlement—was a risky proposition. As of October 1995, only 54 percent of the UN Consolidated Appeal for the twelve months of 1995 had been pledged.

Perhaps the most serious issue affecting the performance of aid agencies in the field was the emergence of significant policy disputes between them. The first instance in which this became a serious problem was in plans for repatriating IDPs from Mingrelia back into Abkhazia. An agreement between Georgia, Abkhazia, the Russian Federation, and UNHCR in April 1994 laid the basis for repatriation of Georgian IDPs, and established a Quadripartite Commission made up of Abkhazia, Georgia, Russia, and UNHCR to oversee the process.[57]

One group of interested parties strongly supported rapid repatriation. This group included the Georgian government and UNHCR, which chaired the Quadripartite Group handling negotiations on this subject. The UNHCR position from all accounts reflected the preferences of the Security Council and the UN Secretariat for moving rapidly to resolve the matter. According to some sources, the desire to move quickly also reflected budgetary pressures facing UNHCR and the burden that crises elsewhere placed on its resources.

Also figuring in UNHCR's approach in 1994, senior UNHCR officials acknowledge, was a misreading by the agency's Geneva and Tbilisi staff of how likely Abkhaz resistance was to large-scale repatriation. As one of them put it, "UNHCR was insufficiently aware of the political realities and should have understood that the Abkhaz were never going to be decent." UNHCR also underestimated the reservations of NGOs described below to a resettlement plan in which they were expected to participate as implementing partners.[58]

One reason for UNHCR's sanguine perspective on repatriation in Abkhazia appears to have been its earlier apparent success in a similar effort in another former Soviet republic, Tajikistan. There the agency moved a large portion of Tajik refugees in Afghanistan back to their homes, despite the lack of a political settlement of the issues dividing the Tajik government and its opposition. In retrospect, however, the parallel-

ism seemed questionable. In Tajikistan, communal divisions between the refugee population and those who had remained in situ were less severe than in Georgia. Russian units in Tajikistan, moreover, engaged in active peace enforcement, unlike in Georgia. Subsequent events in Tajikistan suggest that, there too, UNHCR may have been perhaps too optimistic about the safety and viability of repatriation. Interviews with agencies active in Tajikistan suggest that large numbers of resettled IDPs have since left their resettlement areas owing to security concerns.[59]

In the Georgian instance, the reasons for Abkhaz opposition to repatriation were straightforward. Resistance reflected underlying ethnic animosity, a prevailing tradition of blood feuds in the Caucasus, and the continuing backlash from Georgia's use of force in Abkhazia in the autumn of 1992. More specifically, however, Abkhaz success in any referendum on the political future of the region depended on the demographic balance within the territory.

At the time of Georgian independence, the Abkhaz constituted roughly 18 percent of the population of their own republic and Georgians 46 percent. The Abkhaz facility to control the outcome of a referendum was seen to require excluding the Georgians. Consequently, the Abkhaz desired a political settlement prior to the resolution of the IDP question. The result, as a senior Russian diplomat put it, was that in the negotiations leading up to the repatriation accord in April 1994, the Abkhaz "played at cooperation." The Georgian government, for identical reasons, desired repatriation before any resolution of the political question. The Georgian ability to control the outcome of a referendum, it was held, would be enhanced by their early return.

On this pivotal question of great political sensitivity, the United Nations essentially took the side of the central government. In addition, the fact that UNHCR in particular had assumed a prominent role in the negotiations on repatriation and therefore had an interest in a rapid solution to the problem appears to have influenced its perception of repatriation and protection issues. Acknowledging that the refugee agency had been deflected from its essentially humanitarian purpose, a senior UNHCR official noted retrospectively in this context

that it was evident that "there were moments when we were more concerned about compromise than about our clients."

Looking back, UNHCR officials recall immense pressure from all quarters, including Georgian and Russian authorities, the UN in New York, and the displaced persons themselves. All pressed for return of the displaced at the earliest possible moment. The pressures were so intense that, as one UNHCR official described them, the key question was "whether, in April 1994, UNHCR could have dissociated itself from a process which had elicited the support of all parties concerned." UNHCR answers that question negatively. "Considering that a successful repatriation would have alleviated the hardship of thousands of displaced persons; reduced the risk of military hostilities between the two sides and hopefully contributed to a reconciliation progress, even with the benefit of hindsight," writes one senior official, "I believe the decision taken in April 1994 was right."[60]

Some NGOs strenuously opposed UNHCR's advocacy of repatriation at the time and continue to believe that it was ill-considered. Focal point for the resistance was Save the Children-USA, the administrator of the USAID umbrella grant for NGO work in the Caucasus region. In its view, UNHCR had made little effort to determine the willingness of IDPs themselves to return. Subsequent research by the Norwegian Refugee Council confirmed that three quarters of the IDP population viewed the restoration of Georgian jurisdiction as a precondition for their return, a requirement far beyond the terms of the interim agreement on repatriation reached with the Abkhaz in 1994.[61] That being the case, there is much doubt that a return under the contemplated terms would have been genuinely voluntary, particularly given the Georgian authorities desire for rapid return.

A second NGO reservation was that there had been little effort to ascertain the extent of willingness by the Abkhaz population to receive returnees. Doubts about how much safety the returnees would enjoy were particularly important since, as discussed below, the peacekeeping forces in the region had no policing function. Instead, responsibility for local security would have resided in the first instance in the hands of the Abkhaz militia, with complaints to be adjudi-

cated by joint local councils comprised of returnee and host representatives.

UNHCR reckoned that the accompanying presence of large numbers of humanitarian aid workers in eastern Gali, where most of the initial IDP return would occur, would discourage Abkhaz action against the Georgian population. To many in the aid community, however—some bilateral aid donors shared the concerns expressed by NGOs—such arrangements did not inspire confidence in the safe and sustainable return of the displaced persons. Some aid workers interviewed indicated that UNHCR representatives in Tbilisi in the spring and summer of 1994 had displayed a callous indifference to these concerns when raised, leading them to conclude that the agency was placing its own institutional agenda ahead of the interests of those whom it was there to serve.

A final reservation that also questioned the advisability of pressing for IDP return was the threat posed by mines. The parties had laid between 70,000 and 150,000 mines during the conflict, primarily along the Gumista River outside Sukhumi, in the Kodori Valley, in the Ochamchira District, and in the border regions of the Gali District, especially along the Inguri River. CIS peacekeepers conducted demining operations along patrol routes, leaving the rest of the ordnance largely untouched.

During the summer of 1994, when the ICRC and MSF were reporting two to four mine incidents a week, there were also repeated reports of new mining in the Gali region and in the Kodori Valley as the Abkhaz consolidated their defensive positions. There were also reports of "terrorist mining" in trafficked areas in Abkhazia.[62] One Russian diplomat suggested that despite CISPKF mine clearance along patrol routes, more mines had been laid by the end of 1994 than had been present at the conclusion of hostilities. Large numbers of mines in areas to which returnees would move heightened NGO concern over their safety.

Nevertheless, UNHCR placed its institutional weight behind repatriation. It established an elaborate mechanism for assisting in the return to the Gali District in Abkhazia of up to 40,000 individuals in 1994.[63] A substantial computer processing facility was set up in UNHCR's Zugdidi office to process

departing IDPs. The agreement on repatriation, however, included a clause allowing the Abkhaz government to review applications of returnees and to deny return to those posing security risks. Since the Abkhaz authorities interpreted this exclusion clause broadly, processing was extremely slow. As a result, during the months that the program was in operation (October-November 1994), only 311 IDPs received permission to return.[64] When the research team visited Zugdidi and Gali in March 1995, the program had been deferred and the computer facility, fully outfitted, stood idle.

The failure of repatriation significantly affected the efforts of UNHCR and other aid agencies. It occasioned critical self-examination by UNHCR and an apparent reemphasis on its humanitarian mandate. UNHCR officials in Georgia underlined that the timing and extent of any future return depended on the willingness of the parties. As Tore Borresen, UNHCR representative in the Gali District, said in early 1995, "We should not be exploited by political interests into sacrificing safe and secure return. We have redefined our role as one of waiting for the parties themselves to be ready for repatriation, at which time UNHCR will assist in carrying it out." UNHCR also moved to rebuild relations with NGOs that had been strained by the organization's previous direction.

The false start on repatriation also contributed to UNHCR's reluctance to take on a key role in South Ossetia. Although the OSCE had made a point of inviting UNHCR to consultations on South Ossetia and although UNHCR provided assistance within that region, the agency was not a major player. In the judgment of informed observers, its low profile reflected reticence in contemplating involvement in a new and difficult repatriation process after the collapse of its effort in Abkhazia. It did rehabilitate a hotel in Tskhinvali for use as an IDP hostel and worked with the International Rescue Committee on the rehabilitation of communal centers for IDPs and with NRC on small-scale income generation projects for IDP women.

UNHCR's reemphasis on its humanitarian mission did not completely eliminate the element of politicization from its participation in the aid process. Interviews in Tbilisi and Gali suggested that the agency kept assistance to Abkhazia and South Ossetia to a minimum to pressure the Abkhaz and Osset

authorities to accept a federal settlement of the war. One UNHCR official referred to "the policy that HCR not assist Abkhaz locals." The agency and the UN system as a whole apparently did little to assess needs among the Abkhaz population and still less to meet those needs identified, but to its credit UNHCR maintained a presence in Abkhazia throughout.[65]

In limiting the amount of assistance to persons in insurgent areas, UNHCR appeared to be supported by the UN's political representation in Tbilisi. There may have been some merit in the explanation that granting assistance to the Abkhaz and the Ossets might have complicated the process of negotiating settlements to the conflicts by conferring de facto recognition upon their authorities, thereby reducing international leverage. However, withholding assistance also carried costs for the credibility, not to say the outreach, of UN humanitarian aid efforts.[66]

The most obvious effects were in the needs not addressed. Residents of the two marginalized regions had far more limited access to necessary food supplies than did their counterparts in the rest of Georgia. According to several accounts, malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable groups, was a more serious problem in insurgent areas than in those controlled by the Georgian authorities. Critical health-related programs such as immunization were less quickly or comprehensively implemented there as well. In neither region was a substantial effort mounted to move from humanitarian assistance to income generation and economic recovery, with the result that, once a settlement is achieved, reconstruction will be a greater challenge in those areas than elsewhere. The policy worked against the possibility that enhanced international presence might moderate the behavior of local authorities and acculturate them to international norms. It also may have raised doubts about how the UN could serve as an impartial interlocutor in the quest for a settlement.

In addition, the approach contributed to serious divisions in the aid community. The most obvious opponents of the UN position were agencies operating within Abkhazia itself, although interviews with aid officials in Tbilisi suggested that unhappiness with the use of aid as leverage also extended to

other groups. As a senior official of a European agency said, "We don't see any reason the Abkhaz should suffer more than people living on the other side of the border." Similar reservations were voiced at the UN office itself, where several people interviewed were extremely critical of the prevailing UN approach.

The record shows that the UN was not alone in isolating insurgent areas. In fact, U.S. government policy was even more emphatic. Whereas limited UN aid activities were undertaken in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the use of U.S. government resources was not allowed to be used for the conduct of assistance activities in insurgent areas. Moreover, humanitarian activities in Georgia were handled by the State Department's regional desk, the Agency for International Development's Bureau for Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States, and a State Department coordinating group. Had responsibility remained with AID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), experienced in providing aid to all parties in highly politicized situations, a stronger case for allocations based on needs might have resulted. Like UN policy, U.S. policy ostensibly reflected the U.S. government's desire to retain close relations with a Georgian government committed to restoring the territorial integrity of the country.

At issue was a recurring dilemma associated with humanitarian assistance in times of war: whether aid should simply be given to those in need, letting the political chips fall where they may, or whether such aid—one of the few potential sources of outside influence—should serve political objectives such as the quest for peace. The conflicting pressures were expressed well by a senior OSCE official who stated, "We have a conflict of goals at work: promoting the territorial integrity of Georgia, but for humanitarian reasons assisting the most vulnerable parts of the civilian population."

In the "forced choice" situation of Georgia, the UN chose the first goal. The fact that its lead humanitarian agency, UNHCR, was also a participant in the political process (it was represented at the political talks and chaired the Quadripartite Commission on Repatriation) gave it an interest in promoting resettlement and in rapid movement toward political settle-

ment. Had UNHCR not been involved in the negotiations, it might have been freer, as noted by one UN staff person, to voice humanitarian assistance and protection concerns.

In broader compass, effective humanitarian action was hampered by the performance of the United Nations as a whole. Although many highly competent, dedicated, and compassionate UN officials were present in Tbilisi and the field, there was little sense that their agencies viewed the situation in Georgia as an unresolved emergency, with hundreds of thousands of conflict-affected and economically distressed people suffering great hardship and, in some cases, life-threatening need. Lacking the sense of urgency that quickened the pace of action in other emergencies, Georgia's problems seemed something of a side show.

A UNDHA-led mission, visiting the region in mid-1995 to update the needs assessment and bring additional attention to the region's plight, spent only a week in the country (and a similarly brief time in Armenia and Azerbaijan). Such brief visits, officials explained, are standard operating procedure, validating needs assessments already carried out by in-country staff rather than carrying out new reviews. They conceded, however, that the mission was prohibited by UN policy from visiting either Abkhazia or South Ossetia. The needs of those areas did not receive proportionate attention in the resulting appeal, although food and nonfood assistance was requested for them.

There were also serious difficulties within the UN office in Tbilisi that impaired the effective functioning of UN and other agencies. Despite UN efforts to ensure interagency coordination, agency personnel in Tbilisi left the impression that coordination was generally viewed as a second-order obligation rather than as a priority commitment of time and resources. One UN agency representative in Tbilisi in August 1994, informed that the interagency weekly meeting was about to begin, described efforts to enhance coordination with contempt.

The impression of complacency, disorganization, and indifference was confirmed by comments from more junior UN officials, frustrated with UN performance and anxious to get out of the Georgian operation. The UN's situation contrasted

sharply with other humanitarian organizations that treated the emergency with greater urgency, were more highly sought after by local job-seekers, retained locally hired staff for longer periods, and enjoyed a more positive reputation among the local population.

Summary

The aid community was by and large effective in addressing the humanitarian emergency resulting from the massive flight of Georgians from Abkhazia in September-October 1993 and in stabilizing their situation. Although the IDPs imposed significant burdens on host populations and on the Georgian government, secondary effects from this mass migration such as epidemics or the collapse of social services and public health infrastructures were largely avoided. The effort to move away from, rather than to bridge, humanitarian assistance for vulnerable groups to generating income and self-sustaining activity had begun, at least in government-controlled areas.

International efforts were unsuccessful in promoting a return of IDPs to their homes or in adequately addressing human needs in regions outside the effective jurisdiction of the Georgian authorities. Implicated in the failure were the intransigence of the warring parties on political issues related to repatriation and the politicization of the aid process itself. The intrusion of political factors extraneous to the humanitarian mission of UNHCR, the de facto lead agency on Abkhaz human needs issues—in particular the institutional commitment to an early and rapid return of IDPs to Abkhazia—placed their security and the credibility of the broader international assistance effort at risk. Urgent needs went unmet in South Ossetia as well. UNHCR's approach reflected a variety of pressures, including external ones emanating from the UN Security Council and UN Secretariat and from the Georgian and Russian governments.

In a deeper sense, the difficulties encountered in Georgia's civil wars illuminated a fundamental dilemma that faces international agencies in many current complex emergencies. As a Russian diplomat pointed out in December 1994, effectively

addressing the humanitarian crisis required a political settlement, yet progress toward political settlement required a resolution of the humanitarian crisis. As with other dilemmas, the key issue of how effectively such dilemmas were resolved was a function of how knowledgeably they were approached. Lessons from the Georgia experience are identified in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 4

PEACEKEEPING

This section provides a description of peacekeeping in the Republic of Georgia, assesses its effectiveness, and examines specific problems that emerged. The following section reviews relationships between peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance, including how much peacekeeping contributed to the management of the humanitarian crisis and vice versa.

Four forces (the PKF in South Ossetia, the OSCE mission to Georgia, CISPKF, and UNOMIG) were involved in various aspects of peacekeeping in the republic. The Dagomys Accord of June 24, 1992 ended active hostilities in South Ossetia that summer and provided for positioning a mixed force of North Ossets, Georgians, and Russians to police the cease-fire, offering a modicum of security during the negotiation of a political settlement. The mandate was essentially to freeze the situation. Disarmament was not the responsibility of the force at the time of this writing, although there was talk of the possibility that it could be included.

Initially, the Russian force consisted of one regiment of the 76th Airborne Division. Again, at the time of this writing, Russia had one battalion of the 129th regiment of the 45th Motor Rifle Division, comprising 500 men and 37 armored combat vehicles, in the field. As specified in the accord, these were deployed in conjunction with one battalion of North Osset forces and a battalion of Georgian forces.[67] The joint peacekeeping force was not deployed on the basis of a CIS mandate but was one element of the bilateral accord reached between Russia and Georgia. The peacekeeping force was subordinate to a Joint Control Commission (JCC) comprised of the three sides and responsible for moving toward a political settlement. There is no explicit reference to humanitarian assistance in its mandate. Its rules of engagement are clear and direct: any violation of the cease-fire would be "immediately and severely punished."[68]

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (formerly the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe [CSCE]) was the international organization with the

closest involvement in the peacekeeping process in the SOAO. The CSCE established a mission in the Republic of Georgia in December 1992, with the objective of facilitating a peaceful political settlement of the conflict in South Ossetia. As of December 1994, it consisted of 17 persons from 12 countries.[69] The OSCE mission was not, strictly speaking, a peacekeeping force. Its mandate in Georgia was much broader; the traditional peacekeeping function of monitoring the cease-fire was only one of many facets of the organization's activities.

The OSCE mandate called for supporting negotiations to reduce tension between the two sides; establish contacts with political circles and the population; cooperate with military forces in support of the cease-fire; collect information on the military situation; investigate military incidents; and cooperate in the creation of a political basis for the achievement of durable peace. The OSCE was an observer in the Joint Control Commission. Following the arrival of Ambassador Hansjorg Eiff in 1994, the mission moved more actively to promote political settlement through the organization of an unofficial dialogue between the political forces of the two sides to supplement formal discussions in the JCC. The OSCE-sponsored forum held its first session in Vladikavkaz in January 1995.

After its establishment, the mission's mandate expanded to include participation in the quest for a political settlement in Abkhazia. Consistent with the agreed division of labor in Georgia, the mandate recognized the leading role of the United Nations in matters relating to that region. The mission's monitoring role did not extend to Abkhazia. Among other activities, the OSCE mission became involved in the process of drafting the new Georgian constitution, having a constitutional expert on staff, and sponsoring working visits by teams of experts from OSCE countries.[70] The activities of the mission also included direct provision of small amounts of humanitarian assistance, as noted in the previous section, and support for humanitarian organizations in establishing their activities in South Ossetia.[71]

Peacekeeping in Abkhazia had two phases. The first was associated with the cease-fire agreement of July 27, 1993, brokered by the Russian government and signed at Sochi. The

Sochi Accord provided for the insertion of a small group of Russian observers to monitor compliance with the accord's disengagement and disarmament provisions. The United Nations responded to Georgian government pleas for assistance in peacekeeping by authorizing deployment of a small observer force in the summer of 1993. As already noted, these tentative initial efforts were overwhelmed by the events in September and October. The ejection of Georgian forces and much of the Georgian population from Abkhazia during this period created a fundamentally new situation for peacekeeping. In this second phase, Russian forces interposed themselves along the Inguri River in November and December 1993, presumably as a result of negotiations in October of that year between Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze. They also intervened on behalf of the Georgian government to restore order in Mingrelia.

The presence and roles of Russian forces in the region were formalized on May 14, 1994 in an agreement between Georgia and Abkhaz authorities, mediated by Russia and the UN. The agreement provided for observance of a cease-fire on land, at sea, and in the air. It also established a security zone extending 12 kilometers wide on each side of the Inguri River. Armed forces and heavy military equipment belonging to the parties were prohibited inside the zone. The accord further established a restricted weapons zone on the eastern and western sides of the security zone. Heavy military equipment (artillery, tanks, and "armored transport vehicles") withdrawn from the two zones was to be stored in designated areas monitored by UN observers. The police authorities of the two sides were permitted to operate within the security and restricted weapons zones. Finally, the agreement provided for disengagement in the one area of Abkhazia where Georgian forces were still present—the Kodori Valley.[72]

The protocol to the agreement that governed CISPKF specified that its primary purpose was "to maintain the cease-fire and to see that it is scrupulously observed." The protocol stated that CISPKF would supervise implementation of the agreement's provisions regarding the security and restricted weapons zones.[73] The CISPKF also had responsibility for supervising disengagement in and the Georgian withdrawal

from the Kodori Valley. Finally, in a provision with major bearing on resettlement, the text stated that CISPKF "presence should promote the safe return of refugees and displaced persons, especially to the Gali District."[74]

On the basis of this document and of associated CIS resolutions, the Russian Federation deployed a force initially composed of 3,000 men. With the passage of time, this number declined to between 1,100 and 1,800 men. Although much of the initial force was deployed from units based in Abkhazia and received little training in peace-related operations, personnel were mostly replaced over time by better-trained units from other sectors of the Russian Federation. Although the force as originally envisaged was to be multilateral, no CIS state other than Russia, as of this writing, had provided forces. The Abkhaz case of Russian peacekeeping differed from the Osset one—and for that matter from Moldova and Tajikistan—in the absence of force components to the parties to the conflict.[75]

The second phase also brought significant change to the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia. The parties requested the UN Security Council "to expand the mandate of the United Nations military observers in order to provide for their participation in the operations indicated" in the May 14 accord. Acting upon a recommendation from the Secretary-General in July, the Security Council in July 1994 adopted Resolution 937, expanding UNOMIG from its original complement of 40 to 136 persons and redefining and expanding its mandate.[76]

In addition to formally recognizing and commending the CISPKF effort in Georgia, the council's resolution defined the UNOMIG mandate as including such functions as monitoring and verifying the implementation by all parties of the terms of the May 14 agreement; observing the operation of the CISPKF within the implementation framework; verifying the exclusion provisions of the agreement regarding troops and heavy military equipment; monitoring of storage areas for heavy military equipment; monitoring the Georgian withdrawal from the Kodori Valley; patrolling the Kodori Valley; investigating (at the request of the parties or on its own initiative) alleged violations of the agreement and contributing to the

resolution of such violations; maintaining close contacts with the parties; and cooperating with CISPKF. With regard to resettlement, UNOMIG was charged, "[b]y its presence in the area," with contributing "to conditions conducive to the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons."[77]

UNOMIG deployed in three sectors on both sides of the Inguri River: Gali, Zugdidi, and Sukhumi. In addition to central locations, it established permanently manned team sites in villages throughout the security zone. The mandates of the CISPKF and of UNOMIG, each of which lasted six months, were renewed in the spring of 1995.

Assessment of the performance of the various organizations involved in peacekeeping in the Republic of Georgia suggests that all have been successful in carrying out the basic element of their mandates—that of maintaining the cease-fires in South Ossetia and in Abkhazia. There were no organized hostilities involving South Ossetia after deployment in 1992. Military activity there was limited generally to dealing with informal armed formations. In the Abkhaz case, there were no hostilities along the Inguri cease-fire line following the CISPKF deployment. Although exchanges of fire continued through the first part of 1994 in the Kodori Valley, where Georgian evacuation of Abkhazia was incomplete, a cease-fire was put in place there in the autumn of 1994 and held. This was a major contribution.

By most accounts, the stabilization of conflict zones greatly reduced loss of life and facilitated efforts of humanitarian agencies to operate in the field. Moreover, as noted in the previous chapter, the presence of international personnel—and, in this instance, notably UNOMIG and UNHCR in Abkhazia—enhanced transparency and furthered the local authorities' understanding of international human rights norms.[78] Steady interaction between UN agencies and the local administration in Gali, for example, had a substantial impact in moderating local perspectives on the issue of IDP return. Finally, the establishment of CISPKF observation posts and UNOMIG team sites in villages somewhat removed from the principal bases of the two forces appears to have had an important effect in building the confidence of the remaining population. The same was true of patrolling activity by the two forces.

With regard to other aspects of their mandates, the peacekeeping forces acquitted themselves less well. CISPKF and UNOMIG did not contribute significantly to the creation of conditions conducive to the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons. Responsibility for this shortcoming lay more with the CISPKF than with UNOMIG. The latter, it should be stressed, was a monitoring force and not a peacekeeping force in the classical sense. Nonetheless, observer mission or not, UNOMIG's mandate stipulated attention to population displacement.

Ironically, performance was better in South Ossetia, where humanitarian responsibilities were not part of the peacekeeping mandate, than in Abkhazia, where this function was specified in the mandates of both forces. Neither instance showed substantial progress in orchestrating a formal return of IDPs. However, UNHCR and Georgian government officials reported spontaneous returns in 1993-1995 of several thousand Osset refugees displaced to North Ossetia from areas of Georgia outside South Ossetia and of some displaced Georgians to South Ossetia. The team encountered no reports of harassment of returnees in either direction; movement of goods and people across the border was also reasonably free.

By contrast, although there were several episodes of small and large spontaneous returns into the Gali District, these were followed by substantial harassment of returnees by Abkhaz militia.[79] The reception included egregious violations of the human rights of returnees, including torture and murder. During the period covered in this study, there was little if any effort on the part of CISPKF or UNOMIG to address this problem, as the events of March 11-13, 1995 suggest.

During a sweep at that time by Abkhaz militia arriving by bus from other sectors of Abkhazia, two hundred Georgian returnees were arrested in the Gali District and twenty, mostly male and of military age, were murdered. Many of the murders took place in the open, some of them reportedly observed by CISPKF and UNOMIG personnel. In some instances, Georgians sought CISPKF protection, with highly variable results. Some fleeing civilians were allowed into CIS compounds and then turned over to police; others were protected from harm at the hands of Abkhaz personnel.[80]

The variation in treatment apparently reflected the different origins of CISPKF battalions involved in the PKO. Those with close ties to Russian bases in Abkhazia tended to be reluctant to oppose Abkhaz authorities. Those deployed from bases in the Russian Federation proper were more impartial in their approach to the civilian population. The treatment provided also apparently reflected differences of opinion within the CISPKF on the meaning of the clause concerning conditions for safe return of refugees. Interviews with CISPKF personnel suggested that the official interpretation of this aspect of the mandate was extremely narrow and did not include interference with the activities of local authorities possessing appropriate documents.[81] The variations in interpretation and implementation from one unit to another indicated a weak central command and control of units in the field.

For its part, UNOMIG took no measures to interpose itself between the Abkhaz militia and IDPs,[82] although it provided substantial medical assistance to people hurt in the operation and assisted in burying the dead.[83] UNOMIG officers also compiled lists of civilians killed, injured, and detained in the operation. The Abkhaz had warned UNOMIG, whose personnel were unarmed, that the militia could not guarantee the security of those who attempted to intervene, and efforts to do more to prevent these abuses of the civilian population might have been risky. Nevertheless, the presence of UNOMIG, its mandate notwithstanding, did not contribute much to creating conditions conducive to safe return.

The inadequacy of UNOMIG in addressing the problems faced in the field created serious morale problems for its personnel. As one officer put it, "We are the dog that barks but has no bite." The weakness of the peacekeeping operation also delegitimized UNOMIG and its sister UN organizations in the eyes of the host population. Interviews with both UNOMIG and aid personnel confirmed that the local population had high expectations that the United Nations would attend to the needs and problems they faced. Residents did not distinguish among UN organizations, whether military or humanitarian, or for that matter between the UN's aid organizations and NGOs. The specifics of the mandates of outside organizations in Abkhazia and Mingrelia and the limitations placed on field

personnel were of little relevance: the UN was simply there to solve their problems.[84]

This confusion extended to the highest levels of the Georgian government. As one senior UN official, reacting to repeated Georgian requests for an expansion of the UNOMIG mandate, put it: "We just can't get across to the Georgians the difference between a Chapter VI observer mission and a Chapter VII enforcement effort." A senior Russian diplomat complained similarly that Georgian criticism of the inadequacy of the CISPKF mandate and Georgian requests that the force assume police functions or deploy to protect returning refugees were nonsense: both the CIS Charter and Chapter VI of the UN Charter require the consent of both parties to a PKO mandate.

The disjuncture between local expectations of peacekeepers and the reality of peacekeeping combined with a lack of movement on the political front to foster growing bitterness toward the United Nations and the associated humanitarian aid community in general and toward UNOMIG in particular. That bitterness was captured in the frequently-heard Georgian criticism that the UN had taken away the sword of Georgia's patron saint, St. George, leaving the nation to confront the dragon empty-handed.

Criticism not only originated outside the UN organization. Several UNOMIG personnel judged the mission's failure to respond effectively to the events of March 1995 as having undermined the credibility of both the UN and CISPKF with the local community and considered this damage possibly irreparable. Some even speculated that local reaction might include reprisals against UN personnel. As one staff member said, "this is the Caucasus and people have long memories." The fears were apparently not without substance. UNOMIG personnel reported an increasing number of incidents directed at them involving hostile civilians after the events of March 1995.

The disarray of perceived and real peacekeeping in the area of resettlement again confirms the importance of the problem of returning IDPs. The previous chapter noted that a principal source of contention within the humanitarian assistance community was the issue of security of returnees. The

peacekeeping experience in Abkhazia in 1994-1995 appears to validate the concerns of opponents of rapid repatriation into the Gali District. It is difficult to envisage how a safe and secure return could have been achieved without a substantial redefinition of the peacekeepers' mandate to include the policing function that the Georgian government had advocated for some time. The problem was that the Abkhaz were reluctant to accept an expansion of the mandate that would facilitate the return of IDPs. For their part, neither the CISPKF nor the UN was eager to take on policing functions.[85]

The failure on the political side to address this problem, among other issues, contrasted starkly with the relative success regarding strictly military aspects. The most striking shortcoming of the peace-related efforts of international actors was the lack of progress toward a political settlement of either conflict. Although deploying a reasonably effective peacekeeping force played an important role in shifting the locale of activity to negotiating forums, it was not enough to move toward settlement. The net effect of the CISPKF and UNOMIG presence in Abkhazia and of the trilateral peacekeeping force in South Ossetia was to freeze an abnormal situation. In this context, a senior Russian diplomat said that this was exactly the Abkhaz agenda—to freeze the situation as happened in Cyprus, allowing time for a return of the Abkhaz diaspora and for immigration of North Caucasians. Placing a long-term hold on the situation had the further advantage of gradually accustoming the international community to the fact of Abkhaz independence.

In any event, the impasse had negative effects on politics in the Republic of Georgia. The refugees and their political allies blamed the sitting government for the lack of progress on issues of their return. The frustration and bitterness that built up as a result of long absence from their homes also increased the probability of renewed bloodletting if and when the peacekeeping forces left. At that time, Georgian returnees might be more disposed to attempt to settle scores with the Abkhaz.

Several other points are worth noting in reviewing peacekeeping in Georgia. The first concerned the general performance of CISPKF. The obvious weakness of command and

control in its response to human rights violations was part of a broader lack of accountability. There were widespread reports of CISPKF corruption involving extortion of bribes from individuals and groups attempting to cross the cease-fire line,[86] looting of homes and public facilities in the security zone, and the theft of humanitarian supplies. Russian and associated peacekeeping elements in South Ossetia were the subject of similar criticism.[87]

There were also problems in the interaction between the CISPKF in Abkhazia and UNOMIG. Russian forces in the region pursued a national interest-based policy in peacekeeping. To the extent that these interests diverged from those of international peacekeepers, this policy created tension. Moreover, Russian and international understandings of peacekeeping were fundamentally different. The OSCE and UNOMIG had traditional conceptions of peacekeeping, stressing interposition and monitoring according to extremely circumscribed rules of engagement. Neither UN nor OSCE monitors carried weapons.

Russian forces in South Ossetia, by contrast, were heavily armed. Their rules of engagement were expansive. In this respect, they departed from traditional UN rules concerning Chapter VI operations and reflected the broader evolution of peacekeeping doctrine in Russia. This doctrine involved the deployment and use—if necessary—of superior force to extract compliance with agreements. As a ranking general and senior adviser on peacekeeping to the Russian defense minister said in an international seminar in Moscow in June 1995: "All of this definitional debate about peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace enforcement, peace building is irrelevant. These operations are limited war and should be treated as such." Similarly, a Russian NGO representative had noted six months before that in Russian doctrine and practice, peacekeeping was counterinsurgency warfare.

Beyond this conceptual dissonance, a lack of clarity on the formal nature of the relationship between the several peacekeeping institutions was evident in the comments of CISPKF personnel. One Russian officer noted that it was not UNOMIG's role to monitor CISPKF, whereas it was clearly stated in the UNOMIG mandate that it was. There had been difficulties

between the two organizations at the outset. In particular, CISPKF had restricted UNOMIG access to southern sectors of the security zone when UNOMIG sought to investigate apparent thefts of Georgian fishing equipment by Abkhaz authorities. Interviews with UNOMIG officers and other UN personnel in the field suggested that more recently cooperation has been better. The two organizations consulted and exchanged information regularly and conducted joint patrols.[88] At the time of writing, there was no obvious effort on the part of CISPKF to interfere in any way with the mandate of UNOMIG. Furthermore, the two sides have agreed that, in the event of rapid deterioration of the situation in the security zone, CISPKF would evacuate UN civilian and military and civilian NGO personnel.

This evolution in the cooperative dimension of peacekeeping was related to the central issue of impartiality. In the early stages of the conflict, Russian forces in Georgia tilted perceptibly toward the Abkhaz side. This may have reflected the interests of Russians based in Abkhazia itself, the preferences of specific groups in the Ministry of Defense in Moscow, or, for that matter, a Russian policy of pressuring the Newly Independent States of the Transcaucasus to bring them back under the Russian mantle, based on the perceived Russian national interest of reestablishing a degree of control over the region's affairs.

Whatever the case, the Abkhaz benefited during 1993 from substantial supply of weaponry from Russian forces and Russian use of air power against the Georgians. Volunteers from the Russian Federation played an essential role in Abkhaz military success. The Russians monitoring the cease-fire put in place by the Sochi Accord in July 1993 managed to secure a substantial (if delayed) Georgian withdrawal of forces and heavy weaponry from Abkhazia, although they failed totally in achieving a similar demilitarization on the Abkhaz side. Some observers argued that the net effect of the cease-fire was, while disarming the Georgians, to give the Abkhaz an opportunity to rest and reconsolidate their forces prior to their final advance.

The situation changed once Eduard Shevardnadze brought Georgia into the CIS and concluded a status of forces agree-

ment with Russia in October 1993.[89] Russian assistance to Georgian forces in suppressing the rebellion in Mingrelia was indicative. In late 1994, Russia mounted a blockade of Abkhazia in order to pressure the Abkhaz government into compromise on the territory's political status. There is reason to believe that this is why the Abkhaz government abandoned at the Moscow round of quadripartite talks in November 1994 its insistence on full independence. (The blockade complicated the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Abkhazia from staging points in southern Russia in late 1994 and early 1995.) There is also evidence that the Russians increased pressure on South Ossetia to settle with the Georgian government in 1994-1995.[90] Most of those interviewed on the subject suggested that one likely result of the initialing of the Russian-Georgian agreement on military cooperation in March 1995 would be a further increase in Russian pressure on the two secessionist regions.[91]

Russian pressure for settling Georgia's conflicts in a fashion that maintained the territorial integrity of the state also was reinforced by the war in Chechnya in late 1994 and 1995. Russia was now faced by an armed conflict with a secessionist minority, a reality that injected caution into Russian policy toward secessionist movements in other former Soviet states. Moreover, Chechnya's one external border was that with Georgia. The cooperation of the Georgian government in suppressing the insurgency in Chechnya consequently became an important objective of Russian policy.

Moreover, the war in Chechnya highlighted the strains on the Russian military establishment resulting from, among other factors, its multiple commitments in peacekeeping operations. A shortfall in the capacity of airborne units to sustain a pattern of rotation for the ten airborne battalions deployed to Moldova, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Croatia had been discovered as early as 1993.[92] This shortfall reflected in part the fact that when the USSR dissolved, a considerable portion of Russian "rapid intervention forces" were stationed outside Russia's borders. These units were either nationalized by other former Soviet republics or redeployed, with serious consequences for Russian readiness. Two ground forces units—the 27th and 45th Motor Rifle Divisions—were designated as peacekeeping forces in 1992-1993, but these required retrain-

ing and reequipping to be brought on line.[93] These physical constraints on peacekeeping were exacerbated by financial ones. As Maxim Shashenkov pointed out, peacekeeping operations were an almost unsustainable burden for a Russian Defense Ministry in a seemingly permanent budgetary crisis and contributed to the sustained Russian campaign at the UN and in the OSCE to secure international recognition of and financial support for its peacekeeping operations.[94] Manpower and financial constraints also figured in Russian pressure on the Abkhaz and Ossets to reach a political settlement.

For a variety of reasons, Russia has not been a disinterested observer of the conflicts in Georgia and others elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. Russia has had strong interests in the outcomes of the conflicts, pursuing them consistently in the CIS, in the UN, in relations with the parties, and in the field. Russia's peacekeeping activities were part of a national-interest based policy and reflected neither a broader concern for international peace and security nor altruistic humanitarian motives.

Foreign Minister Kozyrev acknowledged as much in an interview in late 1993, when he argued that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia faced three options. One was to attempt to hold the USSR together, which was not feasible given Russian capabilities. The second option was to pull out of the other former Soviet republics altogether. This, too, was impossible, given the wide array of Russia's security, economic, and political interests in the area. The third option was to maintain bases throughout the region from which it would be possible to mount peacekeeping operations.[95]

The reality of Russian interests combined with the failure of CISPKF to provide security to returnees and the corruption of its personnel in the field to create skepticism and even cynicism about Russia's involvement in peacekeeping activities. These factors are reflected in the viewpoint of a senior UN official who summed up Russia's performance by noting that "the Russians have shown here that they don't possess the moral qualifications for this kind of mission." Certainly, the record of Russian peacekeeping in Georgia fueled serious reservations concerning international cooperation with, and support and possibly legitimation of, the Russian peacekeeping agenda in Georgia and in the CIS.

Such negative judgments, however, may assume the existence of viable alternatives to Russian peacekeeping that were not evident at the time. The Georgian government repeatedly requested a UN peacekeeping force for Abkhazia before finally turning to Russia; however, the United Nations was not willing to accept such a role. UNOMIG was a form of sop that reflected the unwillingness of the UN to play a more active part. Nor did the OSCE ever evince willingness to contemplate a substantial peacekeeping mission in Georgia. Russia was "the only game in town."

From a humanitarian point of view, the question becomes not whether Georgia would have been better off had an organization other than the CIS taken on peacekeeping responsibilities but whether Georgia was better or worse off for Russian involvement. As evident in the second chapter, if Russian involvement is viewed broadly, taking into account Russian manipulation of ethnic conflict in Georgia in 1990-1993 as well as its later peacekeeping role, then the situation of the Georgian population today would be better off had Russia not intervened in the republic's internal affairs in the first place.

Even that conclusion, however, is far from certain. Given the acrimonious nature of relations among the parties and the ethno-chauvinist utopianism of the early months of independence, domestic violence in Georgia was probable even without Russian interference. It was also clear that Russian interference made the Georgian government more willing to compromise on minority issues than it otherwise would have been, promoting greater respect for the political and human rights of these groups. Russia's support for Osset resistance to Gamsakhurdia's efforts to create a "Georgia for the Georgians," for example, was one factor among several causing the abandonment of a strategy of ethnic cleansing by the Georgian majority.

In any event, from the perspective of this study, the key question is not the overall record of Russian interference. It is whether deployment of a CISPKF monitored by UNOMIG in Abkhazia and of a Russian-dominated PKF in South Ossetia observed by the OSCE mission contributed to, or detracted from, the international effort to address the human needs of

Georgia's minority and majority populations as these existed at the time of and after the deployment of the forces. The answer to this question arrived at by most close observers and concurred by the research team is that despite all of the problems discussed above, the Russian deployments overall made a positive contribution.

Chapter 5

Interaction

An assessment of the interaction between peacekeeping activities and humanitarian assistance involves reviewing how much the two sets of activities were complementary or contradictory with each other. Experience in other conflicts has provided examples of each kind of effects. In the case of Georgia, the interactions were less numerous for several reasons than in other settings.

First, durable cease-fires in both zones of conflict, maintained by peacekeeping presence, or monitored by it, or both, helped keep violence to a minimum. Humanitarian agencies were not on the whole attempting to deliver supplies as bullets flew, nor did they need to turn to the military for protection or assistance in carrying out relief activities. In this sense, the humanitarian challenges of Georgia were not like those of Somalia or Bosnia.

Second, most humanitarian activity, for better or worse, took place outside zones in which peacekeepers were active, again limiting the interaction between humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel.[96] Many aid organizations had policies not to be active in Abkhazia, either for fear of the safety of staff, because of a reluctance to be associated with the 1994 repatriation effort, or because they believed that aid should follow and perhaps provide an incentive for a resolution of the conflict rather than preceding a negotiated settlement. International aid efforts also were limited in South Ossetia by a combination of discouragement, each for their own reasons, by the Osset and Georgian government authorities and of logistical difficulties among the agencies in mounting aid programs other than through Georgia proper.

Third, the aid effort in Abkhazia in particular was mounted by agencies that traditionally preferred arms-length relationships with the UN in the interests of protecting their own impartiality. While some of them welcomed the presence of international peacekeeping troops, they viewed the assistance they provided as important in its own right. They opposed the idea that such aid should be proffered or withheld as part of a larger effort to achieve a political settlement.

The most significant contribution of the peacekeeping effort to the humanitarian enterprise was that it stabilized the lines of conflict and ended open hostilities. This facilitated the more or less free movement of goods and aid personnel through the lines of the conflict and allowed humanitarian agencies to operate with a reasonable level of security within these zones.

The contribution was particularly important in addressing the needs of the large IDP population in the Zugdidi, Kobi, and Senaki areas of Mingrelia, which had been in more or less complete anarchy during and after the rout of Georgian forces in Abkhazia in October 1993. The establishment of the security zone of up to 12 kilometers along the eastern side of the Inguri River and the removal from it of armed formations and heavy weapons introduced a degree of order that permitted a systematic effort to meet the needs of these populations. The large CISPKF contingent deployed throughout the zone operated as a deterrent to blatant attempts to interfere with the distribution of assistance.

The presence of CISPKF and UNOMIG forces in the Gali District of Abkhazia played a similar role there. As one official of a humanitarian agency put it: "If they weren't here, we wouldn't be either." In addition, the deployment of the PKFs and observers allowed the Georgian government to redirect its focus from waging war to addressing the needs of IDPs and other vulnerable groups of their population, as well as to begin to address issues of economic recovery.

Even though none of the major peacekeeping formations viewed humanitarian assistance as a basic part of their mandate, they made significant, although limited, contributions to the aid effort. All of the forces delivered immediate assistance (medical, protection, transport) on a spontaneous and ad hoc basis in response to specific needs and requests. Such was the case when UNOMIG provided medical assistance to victims of the Abkhaz sweep in March 1995, or when the CISPKF Urals battalion protected civilians fleeing the same action. During the team's visit to Abkhazia, the UNOMIG patrol it accompanied returned unexpectedly to base, where it was needed to assist in a medevac across the Inguri River bridge to the hospital in Zugdidi. CISPKF also assisted in medical evacua-

tions in instances where tracked vehicles were necessary. In addition, UNOMIG participated in human rights monitoring and regularly passed information to UNHCR. One NGO reported that UNOMIG had been very helpful in providing contacts, advice, and security information regarding Abkhazia.

The fact remained, however, that such activities were largely incidental to the basic missions of peacekeeping and observer operations—in UNOMIG's case the basic mission the monitoring of the cease-fire. Interviews with peacekeeping personnel suggested that they felt that humanitarian assistance was not their business. Indeed, UNOMIG personnel in Abkhazia left the distinct impression of resenting the dearth of civilian assistance activity, since this forced them to fill the breach at the expense of their basic mission. When they could not or did not do so, relations with the local community were damaged. As one Gali-based UN military observer (UNMO) noted:

> We do nothing to alleviate the problem when we shuttle the upset or confused civilian from one faceless UN/NGO agency to another; it gives the people the impression that we are uncaring or incompetent. The problem is further aggravated by what many (including the UNMOs) view as ineffective/unresponsive aid by UNHCR and/or the NGOs. Only recently—using the 'boot in the rear' approach—have we energized the UNHCR into transporting bodies and addressing local needs, as well as convincing the AICF, MSF and ICRC to consider opening local services in the Gali area.[97]

Many aid personnel had equally little respect for their peacekeeping counterparts. The prevailing view seemed to be that, apart from helping to ensure a climate of stability, the peacekeepers were at best irrelevant and at worst a hindrance to the humanitarian effort in zones affected by conflict.[98] One aid worker characterized the attitude of UN observers with the

quip that, when faced with immediate human needs, their reaction, instead of doing anything, was to get on the radio and transmit a message such as "destitute woman at two o'clock." Despite the sarcasm, he would have preferred to see the peacekeepers given a serious humanitarian mandate and expected to deliver.

Reviewing the interaction from the other side, the contribution of humanitarian organizations to the success of peacekeeping operations was without doubt less significant. Although for obvious reasons aid personnel had no involvement in the military aspects of peacekeeping, their activities made a contribution to the potential for building peace. Several international agencies took seriously the matter of conflict prevention and of confidence-building among communities potentially in conflict. As noted, the IOCC mounted an innovative project to prevent the emergence of conflict between Azeri and Armenian communities in southern Georgia through income-generating activities that fostered economic interdependence and mutuality of interests.

All things considered, cooperation between humanitarian assistance providers and peacekeeping forces was limited and the climate of relations between the two groups unsatisfactory. In South Ossetia, there was no systematic interaction between the Russian peacekeeping force and the humanitarian community. The experiences of TSA discussed earlier would suggest that CISPKF did not provide adequate protection for humanitarian convoys. The experience of CARITAS (Denmark) in November 1994 indicated that reliance on CISPKF for transport assistance was risky.

At the same time, however, the OSCE mission provided significant assistance to humanitarian organizations, putting them into contact with local authorities and providing them with a necessary orientation to the situation on the ground. OSCE officials also met and accompanied aid deliveries, as with the CARITAS shipment in November 1994. OSCE personnel also participated in a UNDP/UNDHA fact-finding trip to South Ossetia in early 1995. OSCE seemed willing to help as much as its capacities allowed, although its primary mission was political and not humanitarian. Aid organizations recognized the limitations but welcomed the assistance received.

The experience in Abkhazia was different. Utilizing narrow conceptions of their humanitarian mandate, CISPKF and UNOMIG assistance to aid providers was fitful and small.[99] The Abkhaz case is striking for the apparent lack of structured interaction between UNOMIG on the one hand and the rest of the UN and aid agencies on the other. UNOMIG in particular viewed the humanitarian mission as the responsibility of other UN agencies, notably UNHCR. Given the constraints under which UNHCR labored, humanitarian needs tended to fall between the cracks, sometimes with considerable acrimony.

UNHCR personnel criticized UNOMIG for its passive approach to humanitarian needs, and in particular for its timidity in exercising a protection role for civilian populations. UNOMIG personnel resented the tendency of both UNHCR and NGOs to blame UNOMIG for not fulfilling functions that, in UNOMIG's view, properly resided with those other organizations. It seemed that each organization, trapped by restrictive mandates and unwieldy procedures, took out its frustrations on the other. One casualty was the credibility of the UN with the local population and authorities and with international actors operating in the area. Nor did the animosity contribute to addressing the needs of vulnerable groups.

In general, the Georgia experience regarding the humanitarian and peacekeeping interaction demonstrates lost opportunities for synergism amid the several mutual benefits that resulted. Comparing the two conflicts, the more positive climate of relations between the OSCE mission and assistance providers in South Ossetia, as well as the mission's proactive stance on assistance and protection matters, made cooperation in that region more effective than in Abkhazia. In neither conflict did Russian or CIS peacekeeping forces make much of a contribution to the humanitarian challenge.

Chapter 6

Conflict Resolution

A major conundrum of humanitarian action in the Republic of Georgia was the inextricable linkage between solution to the humanitarian crisis and resolution of the political one. Always a reality, this linkage grew increasingly pivotal and unavoidable as time passed.

There were two major dimensions to the issue of conflict resolution: the political and the societal. The issue of repatriation already has been treated at length and will not be discussed in detail here, except as it relates to political settlement. Parenthetically, it was noteworthy that repatriation posed far less of a problem in the case of South Ossetia where, even after full repatriation of IDPs, the Ossets would enjoy a strong majority position. In contrast, repatriation would prejudice the means of the Abkhaz to control the affairs of their region, rendering the issue of conflict resolution far more troublesome.

In principle, a settlement of the Osset question is not difficult to conceive. In return for a Georgian retreat from their previous abrogation of the autonomous status of the SOAO, the Osset leadership would abandon its effort to secede and accept a form of autonomy within the republic. Although the Georgian government already has backed away from its previous insistence on a unitary form of government and has accepted federalism as a constitutional organizing principle, the application of this to South Ossetia remains ill-defined and ambiguous. The region would to be included in the larger region of Shida Kartli, where Ossets would be a minority. The Ossets would be allowed to enjoy some cultural and territorial autonomy within Shida Kartli, where the functions of the larger administration would be mainly economic. The principal problem on the Georgian side was the sensitivity of the government to criticism for betraying the Georgian nation through compromise with the "Osset enemy." The sensitivity of the issue inhibited clear and viable compromise proposals from the government side.

The Osset authorities faced a similar problem. They did not appear willing to abandon fully the effective independence enjoyed during the years of the conflict and also found it difficult to stake out viable middle ground. Since the beginning of hostilities in 1990, a delicate political balance had existed, with considerable turnover in leadership. The leadership at the time of writing this text was relatively weak, with real power residing with the Osset military battalion. The military, however, had no particular interest in a settlement since normalization would undercut its power and since it benefited from criminal activities spawned by the abnormal political situation. Russia, the other major party in the settlement process, appeared reluctant to pressure the Ossets into compromise, arguably since the unresolved nature of the situation enhanced Russian influence on the southern slope of the Caucasus.

At the societal level, there appeared to be growing fatigue in both the Georgian and Osset communities and growing desire for normalization. Georgian NGOs such as Women for Peace made serious efforts to build organization-to-organization and people-to-people contacts with Osset counterparts. Representatives of both sides participated willingly in the unofficial dialogue sponsored by the OSCE. There was increasing economic interaction between the two communities and increasing freedom of movement across the confrontation lines, and there were reports of the beginnings of spontaneous IDP returns. These developments were grounds for optimism, not only that pressure would grow on the authorities of both sides to settle but also that increasing contact between the two communities would weaken the barriers of ethnic bitterness dividing them. The confidence-building impact of OSCE monitoring had an important positive effect in this regard. In these respects, the Osset case differs from that of Abkhazia.

In the Abkhaz case, the design of a settlement was more complex. The Georgian authorities insisted on reestablishing territorial jurisdiction in the Abkhaz republic and on maintaining the territorial integrity of Georgia. As time passed and they moved toward the embrace of a federalist model, they became more receptive to granting substantial autonomy to Abkhazia in the context of a federal constitution. The Abkhaz,

meanwhile, had oscillated between secession and the advocacy of a confederal solution to the conflict. Their conception of confederation, however, fell far short of the federalism envisioned by the Georgian side. Faced with an Abkhaz design for a union of two sovereign states, it became clear that Georgia would have minimal influence within Abkhazia, that the border between the jurisdictions would remain militarized, and that the Abkhaz would remain extremely reluctant to allow freedom of movement across it.

Political negotiations, chaired by Ambassador Edouard Brunner, the special envoy of the UN Secretary General, brought together the two parties, along with the Russian Federation as facilitator and representatives of the OSCE and UNHCR. Under much pressure, the two sides in November 1994 reached "an understanding on certain provisions of a future agreement concerning a state within the boundaries of the former Georgian SSR as at December 21 1991, including the establishment of a 'federal legislative organ' and a 'supreme organ of executive power,' acting within the bounds of agreed competence."[100] This outcome represented a great advance from the early negotiations in which the two sides had spent two rounds arguing about whether to refer in the title of the negotiations to the "conflict in Abkhazia" or the "Abkhaz-Georgian conflict."

Yet there remained considerable distance still to go. The Secretary-General noted the existence of several "core areas of disagreement," including "recognition of the territorial integrity of Georgia, characterization of the union state as federal in nature, the issue of a joint army, and popular legitimization of an agreement."[101] The latter area pointed to the further fundamental problem of repatriation. The outcome of any referendum legitimizing a political agreement could have been expected to depend on whether Georgian IDPs were permitted to return before holding the vote. The Georgians steadily clung to the position that repatriation should precede any referendum. The Abkhaz took the opposite position.

This dispute continued to affect the issue of IDP return at the time of writing. Following the round of negotiations February 7-9, 1995, the Georgian and Abkhaz governments agreed again to develop a timetable for voluntary return to replace the

one that failed in 1994. This led to a follow-up meeting of the Quadripartite Commission on IDPs in Moscow on February 16. At this meeting, however, the Abkhaz once again demonstrated unwillingness to accept returnees in any significant numbers, causing the meeting to fail. Efforts by Russia to push the Abkhaz into a compromise were ineffectual, partly due to Russian inconstancy, but also because, as a Russian diplomat said, "we overestimated our influence over the Abkhaz." Having contributed much to the emergence of a secessionist Abkhazia, the Russians found that they could not control it.

These factors pointed to the fundamental political problem. No one could answer how the Abkhaz political elite would retain control over their region if Georgians returned, given the imbalance between the two populations. Underlying this political problem was a cultural one: the deep sense of ethnic insecurity of an Abkhaz population whose demographic weight in their own homeland had shrunk continually from the nineteenth century onwards, reinforcing their fear of extinction.

At the societal level, UNHCR officials and others noted that in Abkhazia as in South Ossetia, criminal groups on both sides benefited from the unstable situation. These groups could be expected to resist any normalization being discussed and to sabotage initiatives once on their way to success. Just as seriously, and unlike South Ossetia, no parallel unofficial dialogue between the two populations emerged. Local NGO links between the two communities were practically nonexistent. Relations between the Georgian and Abkhaz communities remained deeply embittered.

As Paula Garb, a U.S. specialist on Abkhaz culture and politics has stressed, the psychology of blood revenge at the grass roots in Abkhazia was "a major obstacle to a final peace settlement." The same was true of Georgian IDP attitudes toward the Abkhaz. Trading ties across the Inguri existed, but remained far more rudimentary than those between South Ossetia and central Georgia. Although movement of population across the Inguri grew, it was accompanied by attacks on Abkhaz police and civilians, and there were repeated efforts by the Abkhaz authorities to stop and reverse the movement. These attacks embittered the relationship even further. The

prognosis for resolving the conflict through negotiated means was consequently poor.

The societal dimension of conflict resolution in Abkhazia, however, is not entirely without hope. Public opinion data from the Georgian side indicate a degree of moderation of attitude on the constitutional status of Abkhazia. By January 1995, for example, a near-majority of Georgians polled in Tbilisi affirmed their willingness to grant Abkhazia status as an autonomous republic. Their growing war weariness was evident in the fact that 42 percent felt that keeping Abkhazia and South Ossetia was not worth the sacrifices of war.[102] Such an evolution of view may reduce societal impediments to compromise settlement.

Yet there is little evidence of a similar trend on the Abkhaz side. Recent fieldwork in Abkhazia indicates a willingness to accept the necessity that some Georgian IDPs would return, particularly those not involved in the war. However, a recent poll in Abkhazia indicated that 87 percent of the region's population felt that early return of IDPs would cause a renewal of war.[103]

Several NGOs and IGOs seek to address a few of the attitudinal impediments to change. A number also are seeking to involve in given projects on common sites participants of all backgrounds. Working with indigenous groups, the UN Volunteers (UNV) are attempting to mount several local confidence-building and conflict resolution initiatives at the community level in Abkhazia and Central Georgia. The Carter Center has sent a delegation to Abkhazia to participate in conflict resolution seminars and to suggest alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. These efforts may be important in preparing the ground for eventual political accommodation and for IDP return.

The impression as of mid-1995, however, is that efforts at conflict resolution and conciliation at both the political and the societal level were progressing too slowly and receiving inadequate priority and support. Should open hostilities be rekindled, such activities would be in great danger of being set back and indeed overrun.

Equally ominous was mounting evidence of a loss of interest on the part of the international community in Georgia

and its conflicts. By early 1995, shortfalls in funding were forcing the downsizing of humanitarian operations.[104] Meanwhile, although few would advocate continuing the peacekeeping activities of the CISPKF, UNOMIG, and OSCE indefinitely, concerns grew that the further reduction or termination of such presence might represent a setback to hopes that the protagonists would turn the corner on their various conflicts. Rekindled fighting would once again have enormous consequences for Georgia's civilian population.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This monograph has examined humanitarian action in the Republic of Georgia from 1990 to 1995, particularly in its interaction with peacekeeping activity. The Georgian case has illuminated not merely generic problems faced by humanitarian actors in armed conflict but also the specific problems of working in the new terrain represented by the former Soviet Union. The experience also contains useful lessons about the interaction between universal and regional organizations in the quest for regional security.

In the realm of humanitarian action, specific problems emanating from the local Georgian cultural and political environment have been identified. The collapse of the Soviet planned economy and the uneven transition to a market economy exacerbated the humanitarian consequences of the conflicts. The Soviet bureaucratic legacy handicapped the Georgian government's response to humanitarian problems. A culture of criminality made it difficult to rely on local structures for delivery of assistance. The proscription of independent organized economic, social, and political activity during the Soviet era left post-Soviet Georgia with no real private sector base. Consequently, the ability of aid providers to rely on local NGOs in identifying needs and implementing programs was substantially limited. Caucasian traditions also made it difficult for local organizations to address specific humanitarian problems, as in the case of women victims of rape.

The interplay of factors such as these suggests that experience gained and lessons learned from humanitarian crises in developing countries may offer an inadequate base for charting and implementing humanitarian strategies in the post-Soviet context. At a minimum, approaches successful in certain Third World settings will require considerable adaptation before application to the special circumstances of the Newly Independent States.

Regarding the relationship between internal armed conflict and humanitarian assistance, the rapid (if somewhat

belated) response of the international community to the dramatic deterioration of the political and the military situation in Georgia in late 1993 was effective in preventing a massive disaster. Since then, humanitarian action has provided succor to the conflicting communities while they seek a political settlement. However, the question of how long such action can be sustained in the absence of progress on the political front is unclear. Moreover, the speed of the response created problems of coordination both among humanitarian actors and with peacekeeping forces that have yet to be adequately resolved.

The most serious problems in the humanitarian sphere lay less in the actual delivery of assistance than in its politicization. The UN, centerpiece of the international response to the crisis, proceeded in a manner situated humanitarian activities firmly within a political rubric. Reflecting a now-familiar structural bias toward UN member governments in its political support of the Georgian authorities, the UN displayed questionable judgment in promoting the rapid return of refugees. Facilitating their return reflected the imperatives of the political process, to which the UNHCR through its role on the Quadripartite Commission lent its institutional weight, to the detriment of their safety and protection.

The politicization of humanitarian action was also evident in the denial by the UN of access on the part of populations in insurgent areas to outside assistance, a stance that had serious humanitarian and political consequences. The humanitarian responses of NGOs and governments showed a similar bias toward civilian populations that found themselves in Georgia proper. Only the ICRC and a handful of NGOs established presence and activities in the insurgent regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where they faced serious problems of security as well as difficulties in importing relief supplies over routes other than through Georgia proper. UN strategies were reinforced by the approaches of donor governments such as the United States, which for political reasons proscribed expenditure of funds in the conflicted areas themselves. By contrast, the European Community through its Humanitarian Office (ECHO) allocated funds to ensure a more even-handed approach toward civilians in the breakaway regions.[105]

The issues of repatriation and assistance to areas outside the effective jurisdiction of the Republic of Georgia highlight the intimate relationship between resolution of the politico-military crisis and a solution to the humanitarian emergency. On the whole, the interposition of regional peacekeepers was successful in calling a halt to the conflicts. The presence of UN and OSCE monitoring missions enhanced transparency and was reasonably effective in constraining regional peacekeeping operations. Yet UNOMIG contributed little to the protection of vulnerable civilian populations or to addressing specific human needs through strategic cooperation with assistance providers. The humanitarian mandates of both CISPKF and UNOMIG were narrow and were thus interpreted. As a result, interaction with humanitarian actors was sporadic, unstructured, and generally unsatisfactory.

The Georgia experience also shed light on Russia's capacity to act constructively as a peacekeeper in the former Soviet region. Its behavior in Georgia was clearly not impartial, as its earlier role of fomenting conflict to weaken Georgian resistance to Russian influence suggests. Peacekeeping itself was one instrument in a self-interested regional hegemonic policy. Nevertheless, Russia's role was constructive overall in limiting conflict and its humanitarian consequences. Russian peacekeeping was hardly an ideal solution to civil war in the region because the conduct of its troops in the field left a great deal to be desired. However, with the reluctance of the international community to engage, there were no alternatives. In the final analysis, the world cannot lament problems associated with Russian presence and yet refuse to step into the breach itself.

The basic conclusion is positive. International and regional actors achieved considerable success in the suspension of hostilities in Georgia and in forestalling further human tragedy, despite the many problems and difficulties analyzed in this study. Yet the future is anything but secure. The danger now is that the current situation cannot be sustained in the longer term. There is a serious risk that, in the absence of a political resolution of the conflicts and despite significant unmet needs of large segments of the Georgian population, the international community gradually will lose interest and contribute to a further radicalization of the country's politics.

Uncertainty about how long the various peacekeeping mandates can be renewed increases the potential for a reversion into chaos. The humanitarian consequences of renewed bloodshed would doubtless dwarf those experienced so far.

Recommendations

1. Humanitarian Action

• Internally displaced persons should not be returned to their homes until adequate security structures have been established and local willingness to receive them is evident. A decision by humanitarian organizations to support such returns will require discerning judgments by professionals knowledgeable about the local contexts and drawing on relevant experience from other settings.

• Where and when the return of persons to their homes is encouraged, international assistance should be provided in balanced fashion to both returnees and needy local populations to avoid the rekindling of intercommunal tensions.

• UN agencies, bilateral donors, and NGOs should abandon discrimination against Abkhazia and South Ossetia in their aid programs and delivering assistance. The integrity and credibility of the humanitarian enterprise depends on fidelity to the allocation of assistance that is based on need and devoid of political preconditions or agendas.

• The deep dependency of Georgia on humanitarian assistance and the continuing absence of recovery in the Georgian economy suggest that programs that provide a bridge between emergency assistance and rehabilitation should be expanded and receive adequate international resources.

• Efforts to strengthen the resources of the Georgian government at the central, regional, and local levels to coordinate and implement assistance programs should be accelerated and augmented.

•Efforts to enhance the capacity of local nongovernmental organizations should likewise be expanded. Particular stress should be placed on organizations attempting to address the needs of currently underserved groups (for example, victims of rape and populations in the conflict areas).

•Higher priority should be given to monitoring the distribution of international assistance.

•In light of the serious problems in interagency relations, coordination should be strengthened in the UN's Tbilisi office and between the UN mission there and UNOMIG. The UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs should assume its intended role.

2. Peacekeeping

•UNOMIG and CISPKF should implement more energetically and systematically the human rights component of their existing mandates.

•Substantial repatriation should be accompanied by the expansion and extension of peacekeeping mandates to include police functions. Consideration should be given to the deployment of civilian police (CIVPOL).

•Greater international involvement in the preparation and monitoring of CIS peacekeepers is essential. Lapses in the performance and deportment of CISPKF personnel might be reduced by tighter links between UNOMIG and CISPKF (for example, the stationing of UNOMIG liaison officers, ideally at company level, with CISPKF). A similar approach should be considered for OSCE interactions with peacekeeping units in South Ossetia. The contrast between UNOMIG, OSCE, and CISPKF in humanitarian action suggests that CISPKF should be encouraged to take humanitarian tasks more seriously.

•Language problems facing UNOMIG should be addressed by increasing the proportion of Russian-speaking officers in the mission.

• In view of the possibility that the presence of UN, OSCE, and Russian peacekeepers may freeze indefinitely the political status quo in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, a firm time limit on all mandates should be established. Without political agreement and repatriation of IDPs, the regional and international peacekeeping forces should be withdrawn. The interval before withdrawal should be a time of intensified diplomatic activity.

• Acknowledging Russia's difficulty in sustaining its peacekeeping operations, serious consideration should be given to contributing to its costs, in return for a combination of the following:

-acceptance of international norms concerning rules of engagement;
-inclusion of non-Russian units in CIS and SOAO peacekeeping operations (in the latter case in addition to or in place of Osset and Georgian units);
-closer monitoring of and liaison with Russian peacekeepers;
-Russian compliance with the setting of a firm time limit beyond which peacekeeping forces would be withdrawn in the absence of significant movement on political and IDP questions;
-Russian good offices in pressuring the Abkhaz and Osset sides to compromise on a political settlement retaining the territorial integrity of Georgia.

3. Interactions

• Greater conceptual clarity is needed regarding the connections between, and separation of, humanitarian assistance and political and peacekeeping issues.

• More regular, structured, and effective coordination and information exchange should be established between humanitarian actors and peacekeepers. In this regard, the existing OSCE approach provides something of a model.

• Priority should be given to informing the Georgian public, including the populations of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, about the nature of the mandates of the various international organizations involved.

• The international community should be encouraged to understand better the complexities of the circumstances in Georgia and to stay the course in its support for humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping activities.

4. Conflict Resolution

• A more balanced approach should be taken to the broader international effort in Georgia, giving increased priority and resources to conflict resolution efforts, from which both humanitarian and peacekeeping activities stand to benefit.

• Paralleling greater attention to conflict resolution at the political level, greater emphasis should be placed in international efforts on confidence-building at the societal level across the lines that divide communities. Humanitarian organizations should be encouraged to explore ways of making a contribution through their own activities and personnel.

Notes

[1] Whereas the UN and the OSCE are both involved in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, they operate there without a formal division of labor.

[2] In this respect, the Georgian case is similar to that of Liberia, which has also featured intervention by a regional organization (ECOWAS) dominated by a major regional power (Nigeria). For a discussion of humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping in Liberia, see Colin Scott, Larry Minear, and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarian Action and Security in Liberia, 1989-1994* Occasional Paper #20 (Providence, R.I.: Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, 1995).

[3] Observations and quotations referenced in this monograph are taken from interviews conducted by the research team, unless otherwise noted.

[4] In March 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Georgia abrogated the 1921 agreements by which Georgia joined the Russian Federated Soviet Socialist Republic, thereby effectively declaring independence.

[5] These figures are somewhat higher than those mentioned by the United Nations in its assessment of humanitarian needs in Georgia in 1993. See *UN Consolidated Appeal for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for the Most Vulnerable among the Conflict-Affected Population in Georgia* (New York: United Nations, March-December 1993): 2-3. The UN cites numbers of displaced Georgians at 15,000 and Ossets at 12,600 at the time the report was written. These figures, however, do not include Ossets and others who crossed the frontier into North Ossetia. The North Ossetians claim that around 50,000 such people took refuge in the North Ossetian Autonomous Oblast of the Russian Federation. In a March 1995 informational meeting on the situation in South Ossetia, a UN agency estimated that there were 55,000 refugees from the SOAO in North Ossetia, of which 21,000 came from South Ossetia.

[6] The destruction was a result not only of the military conflict but also of a severe earthquake in the region in 1991.

[7] See Darrell Slider, "Crisis and Response in Soviet Nationality Policy: The Case of Abkhazia," *Central Asian Survey* no. 4 (1985).

[8] Catherine Dale, "Turmoil in Abkhazia: Russian Responses," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 34 (August 27, 1993), 48. For useful background on the roots of the Abkhaz conflict, see Elizabeth Fuller, "Georgia, Abkhazia, and Checheno-Ingushetia," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Report* 1, no. 6 (February 1992), 4-5.

[9] See S. M. Chervonnaya, *Abkhazia—1992: Post-kommunisticheskaya Vandeya* (Moskva: Mosgorpechat', 1993): 189.

[10] Dale (see "Turmoil in Abkhazia," 48) notes the significance of the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet's declaration of sovereignty in July 1992 in explaining Kitovani's decision. Interviews in Tbilisi in 1992 and 1993 suggest, however, that his motivation was essentially political. He felt that a rapid victory by forces under his leadership in Abkhazia would make him a national hero.

[11] It is useful to note, however, that the Abkhaz side claims that the Georgians delayed their withdrawal of equipment beyond the deadlines stipulated in the agreement and thus were in noncompliance. For an account of the Abkhaz position on these events, see John Colarusso, "Abkhazia," *Central Asian Survey* 14, no. 1 (March 1995), 91.

[12] For useful accounts of the evolution of the conflict in Abkhazia, see Elizabeth Fuller, "Transcaucasia: Ethnic Strife Threatens Democratization," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 1 (January 1, 1993); and "The Transcaucasus: War, Turmoil, Economic Collapse," *RFE/RL Research Report* 3, no. 1 (January 1994).

[13] *United Nations Consolidated Interagency Appeal for the Caucasus, 1 April, 1994-31 March, 1995* (Geneva: United Nations, 1994): 8. Georgian sources originally put the total number of refugees from this latest outflow at approximately 200,000 (interviews in Tbilisi, August 1994). More recent estimates of displacement from Abkhazia cluster around 250,000. For further discussion of IDP estimates in Georgia, see Chapter 3.

[14] Interviews in Tbilisi, August 1994.

[15] Sources in Moscow indicate that a battalion of Russian marines landed at Poti to clear the Zviadists out of the port, while another Russian battalion intervened in the interior to secure the railway running through Mingrelia and to provide logistical support for Georgian attacks on the insurgents. See Akaki Mikadze, "Big Changes on the Western Front," *Moscow News* 1993, no. 44.

[16] For an extended discussion of Russian attitudes toward peacekeeping in the former Soviet space, see S. Neil MacFarlane, "Soviet Conceptions of Europe," *Post-Soviet Affairs* (Summer 1994); and S. Neil MacFarlane and Albrecht Schnabel, "The Russian Approach to Peacekeeping," *International Journal* (Spring 1995). See also Stephen Shenfield, "Armed Conflict in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union," in Thomas G. Weiss (ed.), *The United Nations and Civil Wars* (Boulder, Colo., and London: Lynne Rienner, 1995): 31-48.

[17] Notably, as far as the Abkhaz were willing to contemplate a more substantial UN involvement, it was along the lines of traditional peacekeeping (disengagement and interposition). For their part, the Georgians have sought expansion of the mandate to embrace monitoring of repatriation and security for the groups involved.

[18] Three such jurisdictions were established in Georgia: Abkhazia, the SOAO, and the Ajar ASSR. The third has been the most stable zone

of Western Georgia since independence, reflecting in part a belief among Georgians that the Ajars are a distinct part of their own community rather than an alien apparition. Even here, however, as indicated in interviews conducted in Batumi in August 1992, there were significant problems when the Gamsakhurdia government sought to impose central control on the area in 1991 by threatening the position of institutionalized Ajar elites.

[19] For a more complete discussion of the causes of ethnic conflict in Georgia, see George Khutsishvili and S. Neil MacFarlane, "Ethnic Conflict in Georgia," in S. Neil MacFarlane (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict and European Security* (forthcoming, 1996). The specific Georgian example is consistent with Shenfield's account of the causes of conflict in the former Soviet region as a whole. See Shenfield, "Armed Conflict."

[20] Agricultural production was estimated in early 1995 to have fallen by 50 percent since 1990. Department of Humanitarian Affairs, *United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Caucasus* (New York: United Nations, 1995): 4. Georgian government estimates indicate that net material product for Georgia declined 21 percent in 1991, 43 percent in 1992, and 40 percent in 1993.

[21] Given Shevardnadze's communist past and his careful efforts to balance various political forces, many of which are unsympathetic to reform, some analysts question whether the current leadership is capable of articulating and implementing a serious reform project. See Stephen Jones, "Georgia's Power Structures," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 39 (October 1993), 5; and Burns H. Weston et al., *Georgia on Our Minds: Report of a Fact-Finding Mission to the Republic of Georgia, July 1994* (Iowa City: Psychologists against Nuclear Arms for Peace and Ecological Balance, 1994): 30-31.

[22] These data are taken from U.S. General Accounting Office, *Former Soviet Union: Creditworthiness of Successor States and U.S. Export Credit Guarantees* (GAO/GGD-95-60): 84, 88-89.

[23] Discussion of the "refugee" problem in Georgia tends to focus on those displaced within the country—primarily ethnic Georgians from South Ossetia and Abkhazia. It ignores the large number of Ossets, not only from South Ossetia but also from other sections of Georgia, who took refuge in North Ossetia. In addition, tens of thousands of Abkhaz, Russians, Greeks, and Armenians either left or were forced to leave Abkhazia for southern Russia and (in the case of the Greeks) for Greece during the Georgian offensive in the region in the autumn of 1992. The Georgian State Committee on Refugees currently estimates the total number of displaced persons inside Georgia to be 286, 639.

[24] For an elaboration of the concept of humanitarian action as used in this monograph, see Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humani-*

tarian Action in Times of War (Boulder, Colo., and London: Lynne Rienner, 1993): 8-9. Also, Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, *Mercy Under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1995): 18-30.

[25] This figure covers ethnic Abkhaz refugees. For an Abkhaz estimate of this problem, see Stanislav Lakoba, "Abkhazia is Abkhazia," *Central Asian Survey* 14, no. 1 (March 1995), 101. The recent survey by the Norwegian Refugee Council of IDPs within Georgia indicates that 8.9 percent of those currently displaced from Abkhazia left that region at the beginning of hostilities in August 1992, with a further 9.1 percent exiting after the fall of Gagra in October 1992. The rest left during the later stages of the war. Norwegian Refugee Council, *Survey on Internally Displaced People in Georgia* (Tbilisi: Norwegian Refugee Council, 1995): 17.

[26] Estimates of displaced persons vary. Little precise data is available as a result of the dispersal of the displaced among the population as a whole. As the NRC Report noted: "it is very difficult to find reliable information about this deficiency group." Norwegian Refugee Council, *Survey*, 5. Most figures converge around 250,000 IDPs from Abkhazia and an IDP total of between 280,000 and 300,000.

[27] Department of Humanitarian Affairs, *United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Caucasus: Georgia* (New York: United Nations, 1993): 55, 60.

[28] The dramatic deterioration in Western Georgia in the autumn of 1993 had far-reaching consequences not merely for Georgia but also for its neighbors Armenia and Azerbaijan. Assistance efforts in these two countries were largely dependent on rail, road, and port connections in Mingrelia and adjacent regions of the Republic of Georgia. For an elaboration of related humanitarian impacts, see *WFP in the New Independent States: Situation Report No. 1* (Rome: World Food Programme, January 1994): 11-12.

[29] Price pressure extended to bread, the basic staple. In October 1994, the Georgian government announced that the price of bread would rise 285-fold. This increase, along with substantial increases in the prices of energy and transport, fulfilled a Georgian government pledge to the IMF to free subsidized prices. See *COVCAS Bulletin* 4, no. 19 (October 5, 1994), 5.

[30] *Ibid.*, 8. In November 1994, a WFP official stated that 483,000 people in Georgia faced starvation during the winter of 1994-1995. *COVCAS Bulletin* 4, no. 21 (November 9, 1994), 3.

[31] Norwegian Refugee Council, *Survey*, 15.

[32] The stress placed by IDPs on host family units in Georgia was amply evident in interviews conducted during 1994-1995. For data from the former Yugoslavia on comparable experiences with IDPs,

host families, and a burgeoning target population over time, see Larry Minear et al., *Humanitarian Action in the Former Yugoslavia: The UN's Role* Occasional Paper #18 (Providence, R.I.: Watson Institute, 1994): 11-13.

[33] *UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal*, 66.

[34] *Ibid.*, 61. Georgian officials with responsibility for humanitarian assistance also noted that 80 percent of the drugs used in Georgia in 1992-1994 came from outside the country.

[35] Immunization of one year olds for measles declined from 91 percent in 1989 to 60 percent in 1992, that for diphtheria and tetanus from 92 percent in 1990 to 72 percent in 1992. The decline continued in 1993. Some reversal is probable in 1994-1995 as UNICEF, USAID, MSF (Spain), and REACH vaccination programs were put into place. UNICEF, *Children and Women in Georgia: A Situation Analysis* (Geneva: United Nations, 1994): 54-55.

[36] A tentative projection of trends in infectious diseases following the post-1991 decline in immunization is provided in UNICEF, *Children and Women in Georgia*, 53-54.

[37] See *ibid.*, and in particular the sections on child health (46-53) and maternal health (61-62).

[38] Norwegian Refugee Council, *Survey,* 26, 28. This statistical peculiarity may have resulted from Georgian cultural attitudes toward children. Given the value that the culture places on children, adults are likely to sacrifice to ensure their well-being; however, for the same reason, respondents might be reluctant to confirm such a decline, which would acknowledge their own failure.

[39] Egbert Wesselink, *Minorities in the Republic of Georgia* (Amsterdam: Pax Christi, 1992).

[40] *Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1995): 25. Although many in Georgia do not view Helsinki Watch and Human Rights Watch to be impartial, interviews suggest that official and unofficial Georgian circles acknowledge widespread violence against Abkhaz civilians committed by Georgian military and paramilitary personnel at this time.

[41] United States State Department, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1993* (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1994): 877-881. Human Rights Watch essentially confirms these U.S. government findings in *Georgia/Abkhazia,* 45. For a reasonably comprehensive and balanced treatment of human rights violations during the Abkhaz war, see "Report of the Secretary-General's fact-finding mission to investigate human rights violations in Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia," S/26795 (November 17, 1993).

[42] Interviews in Gali, March 1995.

[43] The government itself has recently taken action against

Mkhedrioni, depriving it of the right to bear arms in the capital and using Ministry of Internal Affairs forces to suppress its extortion activities in southern Georgia. After an apparent attempt to assassinate head of state Shevardnadze, several Mkhedrioni leaders were arrested and the government campaign against the organization intensified.

[44] See, for example, "Georgian Ambassador Acknowledges Human Rights Problems, Offers Cooperation," *CSCE News Release* (Washington, D.C.: Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, March 28, 1995): 30-31.

[45] On this point, see Stephen Shenfield, "The Potential for Genocide in the Caucasus," Paper prepared for the first meeting of the Association of Genocide Scholars, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va., June 14-16, 1995, 6. Shenfield concludes that the Abkhaz government has "proven more capable than the Tbilisi government of exercising centralized control over its own forces, so that what these forces do must in general be considered done on orders from above."

[46] In the Osset case, there was also significant infrastructural damage associated with the 1991 earthquake that affected central Georgia.

[47] Interviews with UN officials. See also Raymond Bonner, "In Caucasus, Separatist Struggle Is Pursued as Pogrom," *New York Times,* February 5, 1995.

[48] It is noteworthy, however, that some UN agencies were involved in small scale relief efforts in Abkhazia. UNHCR did some distribution in the Gali District of Abkhazia and cooperated with AICF in the provision of limited assistance in the Ochamchira District. The WFP sent some convoys into Abkhazia. UNICEF was active in vaccination programs in both Abkhazia and the SOAO.

[49] SCF-USA, *Monthly Report on Humanitarian Assistance in the Republic of Georgia, March 1995* (Tbilisi: SCF-USA, 1995). Data are presented in nonaggregated form for nonfood and medical assistance, and may be found in detail on 25-46.

[50] SCF-USA Caucasus Regional Program, *Implementation Plan: August 1993-September 1995,* pp. 3-4.

[51] The example was provided in an interview in March 1995 by a senior Georgian foreign ministry official involved in the negotiations on the SOAO. Whatever the credibility of the source, the example does indicate the nature of the problem.

[52] For a clearheaded evaluation of NGO activities by NGOs themselves, see *Georgian NGOs and the Peacebuilding Process: Summary Transcript of a Workshop Held Saturday 1 April, 1995* (Tbilisi: UNV, 1995): particularly 7-8.

[53] UNDHA, *Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal* Volume IV, p. 89.

[54] Diversion outside of Georgia was mentioned in several interviews conducted by the project in August 1994.

[55] Norwegian Refugee Council, *Survey,* 6.

[56] For an overview of bilateral and multilateral trends in official development assistance, see James H. Michel, ***Development Co-operation: Efforts and Policies of the Members of the Development Assistance Committee*** (Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1995).

[57] The agreement, signed on April 4, 1994, envisaged repatriation of 100,000 persons to Abkhazia, 80,000 of them Georgians to Gali District, and a further 20,000 Russians, Armenians, and other ethnic minorities, to their homes throughout Abkhazia. The agreement also set up working groups on procedures, information, registration, and program development.

[58] Confidential documents obtained from one NGO quote the Tbilisi UNHCR representative in the early summer of 1994 as openly stating that UNHCR supported repatriation as "the only efficient use of UNHCR resources which are currently 'wasted' in assisting the displaced in Georgia." The representative reportedly indicated as a further rationale for UNHCR's support of repatriation—rather than integration of refugees into host populations—the reality that "this is the Georgian government's position and...the UNHCR has to follow it."

[59] In Tajikistan, the conflict tended to be largely regional within the Tajik ethnos, except in the case of the Pamiri inhabitants of Gorno-Badakhshan, rather than between disparate ethnic groups. For further particulars, see Human Rights Watch, "Return to Tajikistan: Continued Regional and Ethnic Tensions," Report D709, New York, May 1995.

[60] Hasim Utkan, acting director, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe, Letter to Arthur C. Helton, Director of Migration Programs, Open Society Institute, August 23, 1995, 1. A report by Helton's Institute had faulted UNHCR for having "squandered" the credibility of the international community by its "hasty repatriation plan."

[61] Norwegian Refugee Council, *Survey,* 29.

[62] This description comes from an account of an NGO meeting with Tore Skedsmo, a UNDPKO mine adviser, and Boris Eisenbaum of the UNDP, on August 30, 1994 after their return from a mine assessment mission to Abkhazia. The team's own interviews at DPKO in December 1994 and in Gali in March 1995 suggested that little had changed in the intervening months. In April 1995, a UNOMIG vehicle was destroyed by a mine on a frequently patrolled and previously cleared road, suggesting that new mining continues.

[63] For the system proposal, see Information and Communications Systems Section, Field Software Development Unit, "Voluntary Repa-

triation of Abkhazian Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia" (July 5, 1994), pp. 1-10 and appendices.

[64] An aid official working in Abkhazia estimated in March 1995 that at least half of the 311 official returnees had since recrossed the Inguri to areas under Georgian jurisdiction.

[65] DPA officials explained the relative lack of UN activities in Abkhazia as a function of a relative absence of need, noting that UN agencies were obliged to target the "hardest hit groups." A senior NGO official dismissed this explanation on the grounds that the UN, having done no research to determine relative need in Abkhazia, had no basis for such a conclusion.

[66] The problems encountered by the United Nations as an intergovernmental organization in dealing on aid matters with insurgent movements that are challenging UN member states constitutes a structural limitation on its effectiveness as a humanitarian institution. That limitation has been identified in many of the country case studies of the Humanitarianism and War Project. See, for example, Minear and Weiss, *Mercy Under Fire*, 111-116.

[67] For a description of the force's origins, mandate, and activities, see *Operations Involving the Use of Armed Forces in the CIS* (Moscow: Center for Political and International Studies, 1995): 3.

[68] Pavel Baev, "Russia's Peacekeeping in the Caucasus," a discussion paper for the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs/ Western European Union conference on "Peacekeeping in Europe: Assessing UN and Regional Perspectives" (Oslo: November 17-18, 1994), mimeograph, 14. Baev notes that the Russian peacekeepers suffered casualties upon their initial deployment in the summer of 1994 and rapidly adopted the basic principle of deterrence in their peacekeeping operations: "inevitable devastating retaliation for any hostile action."

[69] Austria, Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, the U.S., Ukraine, Finland, France, and the Czech Republic. See OSCE Tbilisi Mission, "SBSE: Missia v Gruzii" (Tbilisi, December 1994).

[70] For an account of these activities and also a number of general proposals from the mission on the restructuring of the Georgian constitution, see Simon Palmisano (Acting Head of Mission) *Territorial'noe Ustroistvo Gruzii: Soobrazhenie o vozmozhnykh Podkhodakh* (Tbilisi: OSCE, January 26, 1995).

[71] Interviews with OSCE personnel in Tbilisi and Tskhinvali, March 1995.

[72] See "Agreement on a Cease-Fire and Separation of Forces, signed in Moscow on 14 May 1994," Annex I to S/1994/583.

[73] *Ibid.*

[74] The mandate was later expanded to include the performance of

"other tasks" with the consent of the parties. One Russian diplomat suggested to us that this could be construed as a basis for expanded support of humanitarian activity, including demining, by CISPKF.

[75] A Russian officer explained that the animosity between the Georgians and Abkhaz was considerably more intense than that dividing the parties in the other cases, making their participation unwise. However, the lack of participation also may have reflected Russian unhappiness with the way the experiment had worked out in South Ossetia. In July 1995, the Russian officer in command in South Ossetia called for the removal of the Georgian and Osset force components, saying that they were no longer needed. Major General Anatolii Merkulov, as cited in *Jamestown Foundation Monitor* 1, no. 58 (July 24, 1995).

[76] See "Report of the Secretary-General Concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia," S/1994/818 (July 12, 1994).

[77] S/RES/937 (1994) (July 21, 1994).

[78] In this context, the assistance that particularly UNHCR provided to journalists, and, for that matter, to our own research team in visits to conflict zones was significant. The OSCE played a similar role in South Ossetia.

[79] It is useful, however, to differentiate between different sections of the Abkhaz authorities. Those actually based in Gali (the civil administration under Mayor Lomia and the locally stationed police) seemed to accept the inevitability of a substantial return of Georgian IDPs and to believe that this was a necessary component of normalization in an essentially depopulated city. The militia implicated in the most serious violations of human rights were generally bussed in from adjacent districts of Abkhazia, perhaps reflecting a concern on the part of the Abkhaz leadership in Sukhumi that the local authorities in Gali were excessively accommodating. Interviews in Gali, March 1995.

[80] Documents from the CISPKF command in Sukhumi indicate that Russian commanders were warned in advance of the operation and approved it. See Lt.-General V. Yakushev, "Statement of the PKF commander, Zone of Abkhaz-Georgian Conflict," (March 21, 1995).

[81] Since the completion of our fieldwork in March 1995, and perhaps in response to the events of that month, UN personnel in the region have reported that CISPKF is talking about playing a much more active role in the area of civilian protection. Mobile patrols have increased, and the force is now making efforts to shadow Abkhaz patrols passing through Georgian-populated areas. The new battalion commander in Gali has improved discipline in his force and is attempting to improve relations with the local civilian population. The CISPKF responded to an Abkhaz sweep south of Gali in April 1995 by sending an armored personnel carrier to investigate and to halt the action.

[82] According to information provided by DPKO in New York in December 1994, one reason for tripling UNOMIG's size in late 1994 was to minimize Abkhaz reprisals against the returning Georgian population. Their performance in March 1995 and in earlier operations strains the credibility of such statements.

[83] The doctor posted to the Gali District of UNOMIG treated the injured steadily for 48 hours. UNOMIG also requested support from MSF to deal with the crisis. It is noteworthy that we were told that UNOMIG personnel providing this assistance were disobeying instructions from UNOMIG command.

[84] It was noted by some interviewees that this confusion was in part the result of a failure by UNOMIG and other UN organizations to clarify their mandates to the local population. As one source said: "Other than a few desultory attempts to clarify roles and missions via TV and/or newspapers, no one in this region apparently understands the differences among the UN bureaucracies (UNHCR, UNOMIG) and among the NGOs." In his view, this extended to confusion within the ranks of UNOMIG itself, and cited as one cause the failure of the UNHQ in Tbilisi and UNOMIG HQ in Sukhumi to provide detailed information on the roles and activities of the various organizations operating in the theater.

[85] In an interview in December 1994, a Russian diplomat noted that an extension of the CISPKF mandate that included policing, or the deployment of CIS forces to accompany returning IDPs without the consent of the Abkhaz, would violate both the Chapter VI quality of the existing mandate and the provisions of the CIS Charter regarding peacekeeping. In light of the record of Russian peacekeeping, this distinction seems fatuous. After all, Russian forces were deployed along the Inguri several months before they obtained formal consent. In this sense, the formal consent of the parties legitimated a situation that already existed on the ground instead of serving as a necessary precondition for deployment. Moreover, CISPKF crossed the line into peace enforcement in the Kodori Valley in 1994.

[86] This has important human implications beyond extortion. At various times since 1993, people attempting to cross the river have avoided the checkpoint because of the extortion. This has resulted in numerous mine-related injuries and deaths.

[87] As an Osset interlocutor of the research team noted, all three components of the peacekeeping forces in South Ossetia were bandits. An example is provided by the logistics report of a humanitarian agency that made a delivery from Europe to South Ossetia in 1994. After being shaken down by border guards in Rumania and Bulgaria, a portion of their cargo was stolen in Istanbul as it was being transferred to trucks for the trip to Georgia. When Turkish drivers refused to honor the agreement to transport items beyond Tbilisi to distribu-

tion points elsewhere, another portion of their cargo disappeared as it was reloaded and transported by Russian peacekeepers. According to Georgian vendors in the market in Tskhinvali, the peacekeeping contingent guarding the market required a cut of their take in return for "protection."

[88] UNOMIG monitoring of CIS operations was, however, incomplete. Although the team was told in December 1994 by a UNDPA official that all CISPKF patrols were accompanied by UNOMIG monitors, personal observation in the security zone suggested otherwise.

[89] The shift away from the Abkhaz was not completed overnight. Most observers agreed that the CISPKF units deployed at the outset remained pro-Abkhaz in their orientation. The restriction of UNOMIG movement in the southern sections of the Gali sector mentioned above was indicative. This stance of locally deployed forces presumably reflected the fact that the first units had been deployed to the cease-fire line from bases in Abkhazia and had strong ties to the Abkhaz population.

[90] At a seminar in Moscow in June 1995 on nontraditional military operations, a senior delegate from South Ossetia, commenting on the state of relations between Russia and South Ossetia, complained that Russia no longer met its obligations to pay the soldiers of the Osset battalion in the PKF and to equip the unit.

[91] Senior Georgian officials interviewed during March 1995 insisted that the agreement would not be signed formally until the Georgian government's jurisdiction had been reestablished over its full territory and that its interlocutors had promised to assist in this process.

[92] See Roy Allison, *Peacekeeping in the Soviet Successor States* Chaillot Papers #18 (Paris: WEU, 1994); Pavel Baev, "Russia's Rapid Reaction Forces: Politics and Pitfalls," *Bulletin of Arms Control Proposals* no. 9 (February 1993).

[93] For an overview of the problems that peacekeeping missions caused for the Russian military, see Michael Orr, "Peacekeeping and Overstretch in the Russian Army," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (July 1994). For a review of the broader challenges to international peace and security posed by conflicts in the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe, see Jarat Chopra and Thomas G. Weiss, "Prospects for Containing Conflict in the Former Second World," *Security Studies* 4, no. 3 (Spring 1995), 552-83.

[94] Maxim Shashenkov, "Russian Peacekeeping in the 'Near Abroad,'" *Survival* 36, no. 3 (Autumn 1994), 59.

[95] *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (November 24, 1993).

[96] This balance shifted in 1994-1995 as more aid agencies deployed

to Mingrelia to service the IDP population that remained there. However, if the trend of IDP spontaneous relocation toward the center of the country continues, the balance may shift back to favor regions removed from PKOs.

[97] Interview with UNMO in Gali, March 1995.

[98] As an example of the hindering role, those interviewed mentioned the theft of humanitarian supplies by PKF personnel and CISPKF behavior at the Inguri River border crossings.

[99] For the UNOMIG command, the policy was deliberate and considered. Reports from Abkhazia suggest that UNOMIG commanders wanted to take a more active role in such matters as protecting civilians and preventing looting but were not permitted to extend their functions to do so.

[100] "Report of the Secretary-General concerning the Situation in Abkhazia, Georgia," (March 6, 1995) S/1995/181, 2.

[101] *Ibid.*

[102] From unpublished surveys conducted in Tbilisi by Dr. Yurii Aryutyunian, head of the Sociology Department of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences.

[103] See Leila Tania, "Problema Vozvrashchenia Gruzinskikh Bezhentsev v Abkhazii: Konfliktogennyi Aspekt," Mimeograph (Sukhumi, 1995).

[104] As an example, the UN Secretary-General in his March 1995 report on Georgia noted that "the funding situation of UNHCR's programs in Georgia continues to be critical and has now compelled UNHCR to reduce its presence in the country."

[105] See ECHO, *Transcaucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan-Georgia Humanitarian Assistance Strategy* (ECHO, January 1995): 53-58.

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In addition to the above, much useful information and analysis can be found in the articles of Elizabeth Fuller in *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Reports* (1991-1994). Events and analysis on a week-by-week basis are provided in the *COVCAS*

Bulletin (Nationalities, Conflicts, and Human Rights in the Caucasus), published by the COVCAS Center for Law and Conflict Resolution in Geneva, Switzerland.

There has been little independent analysis of peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance efforts in the Transcaucasus and in Georgia. Among those that are particularly useful, the Norwegian Refugee Council's *Survey on Internally Displaced People in Georgia* (Tbilisi: Norwegian Refugee Council, 1995) provides a useful account of the situation and attitudes of internally displaced persons in Georgia. *The UN Consolidated Appeal for the Caucasus* (1993-1994 and also 1995-1996) (New York: UNDHA, 1994 and 1995) provides much useful background on both the humanitarian situation in Georgia and on the efforts of IGOs, bilateral donors, and NGOs to address the situation.

APPENDIX I

CHRONOLOGY

1988

June—Publication of "the Abkhaz Letter" from 60 Abkhaz intellectuals to Mikhail Gorbachev requesting creation of an Abkhaz Soviet Socialist Republic.

1989

March—30,000 Abkhaz sign independence petition.

March 18—Abkhaz Popular Forum "Aidgylara" appeal at Lykhny to Mikhail Gorbachev demanding union republic status for Abkhazia.

April 9—Riot in Tbilisi; 21 demonstrators killed by Soviet forces.

May 14—Georgian Council of Ministers announces creation of branch of Tbilisi State University in Sukhumi.

July 15-18—Riots in Sukhumi over status of Abkhazia and possible Tbilisi State University branch in Sukhumi. 17 killed; martial law declared.

August 25-26—First Congress of Peoples of the Caucasus held in Sukhumi, bringing together representatives of informal groups from the Abkhaz, Abaz, Adygei, Ingush, Kabardin, Cherkess, and Chechen populations. Decision to create Assembly of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus.

September 14—Aidgylara calls national strike against Georgian violation of Abkhaz national rights.

November 10—South Ossetian regional Soviet decides to change status of the area from autonomous region to autonomous republic within Georgia; Georgian Supreme Soviet annuls decision.

November 23—Armed confrontation in Tskhinvali begins, lasting until January 1990.

1990

March 9—Georgia declares sovereignty.

March 11—Victory of Round Table/Free Georgia in elections to Georgian Supreme Soviet.

May 31—Mass meeting of representatives of mountain peoples of the Caucasus in Sukhumi demands exit of Abkhazia from Georgia.

August 25—Supreme Soviet of the Abkhaz ASSR adopts "Declaration on the state sovereignty of the Abkhaz SSR."

August 26—Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Georgia declares actions of the Supreme Soviet of the Abkhaz ASSR without legal foundation or force.

October—Elections in Georgia bringing Zviad Gamsakhurdia to power as Chairman of the Parliament.

December 4—V.G. Ardzinba chosen as chairman of the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet.

December 11—Georgia annuls autonomy of South Ossetia.

December 12—State of emergency declared in South Ossetia.

1991

April 9—Georgia declares independence.

May 26—Gamsakhurdia elected President of Georgia.

July 9—New electoral law in Abkhazia giving the Abkhaz population 28 seats out of 65 (43 percent) in supreme soviet. Adopted August 27, 1992.

December 1—Abkhaz elections give Ardzinba majority control in ASSR supreme soviet.

December 8—USSR ceases to exist.

December 22-January 6—Zviad Gamsakhurdia driven from power in Tbilisi; Military Council takes power under direction of Tengiz Kitovani, Dzhaba Ioseliani, and Tengiz Sigua.

1992

January—Referendum in South Ossetia on joining the Russian Federation. 99 percent vote yes.

January-March—Military operations against supporters of Gamsakhurdia in Western Georgia.

February—Intensification of Georgian military action against South Ossetia.

March—Eduard Shevardnadze returns to Georgia as head of state (Chairman of State Council).

April 6—Departure of Soviet (now Russian) Interior Ministry troops from South Ossetia.

June—Renewed Georgian offensive in South Ossetia.

June 19—Russian helicopter gunships bombard Georgian positions around Tskhinvali.

June 24—Coup attempt in Tbilisi by supporters of Gamsakhurdia.

June 24—Dagomys meeting between Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze; agreement on regulation of conflict in South Ossetia.

July 23—Abkhaz Supreme Soviet annuls 1978 Constitution of the Republic of Abkhazia, restoring 1925 Constitution, and states intention to secede from Georgia.

July 25—Georgian Supreme Soviet declares decision of Abkhaz Supreme Soviet null and void.

August 4—Georgia enters United Nations.

August 11—Georgian forces enter Abkhazia.

August 14—General mobilization in Abkhazia.

August 18—Georgian National Guard assaults Abkhaz Parliament.

August 22—Musa Shanibov, president the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus, calls for volunteers to assist Abkhazia.

September 3—Russian-mediated cease-fire agreement in Abkhazia.

October—Fall of Gagra to Abkhaz forces.

October 11—National elections. Shevardnadze elected chairman of Parliament.

December 14—Missile from Georgian-held territory destroys Russian helicopter evacuating Russian refugees from Tvarkcheli.

December—Arrival of OSCE resident mission in Abkhazia.

1993

January 18—Georgian forces down Russian helicopter returning from relief flight to Tvarkcheli.

February 22—Russian Air Force Su-25 bombs Sukhumi.

March 19—Georgian forces shoot down Russian air force Su-27.

May 14—Yeltsin and Shevardnadze agree on cease-fire in Abkhazia. Cease-fire begins on May 20.

July 27—Sochi Accord on cease-fire in Abkhazia.

August 14—Abkhaz attack Sukhumi.

September 27—Abkhaz take Sukhumi.

September—Georgian forces ejected from Abkhazia.

October—Georgia joins CIS.

November 30-December 1—First round of negotiations on a comprehensive settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

December 19—Abkhaz-Georgian exchange of prisoners of war.

December 31—Zviad Gamsakhurdia commits suicide.

1994

January 11-12—Second round of Georgian-Abkhaz negotiations on settlement.

February—Georgia and Russia sign bilateral treaty of cooperation.

February 22—Third round of Georgian-Abkhaz negotiations; continues March 7-9.

March 15—Abkhaz suspend negotiations on settlement.

April 4—Four-party framework agreement on IDP repatriation and political settlement.

May 14—Quadripartite Accord on cease-fire, separation of forces, and insertion of CISPKF.

July 21—Expansion of UNOMIG and its mandate.

September 16—Large scale attempted spontaneous return of IDPs to Abkhazia.

November 26—Abkhazia adopts new constitution as sovereign state.

1995

March—Georgian-Russian accord on military cooperation signed.

Appendix II

Principle Humanitarian Activities in Georgia[1]

Implementing Organization	Area of Activity[2]	Type of Activity
A Call to Serve (ACTS)	Countrywide[3]	Provision of medicine, food, and clothing to vulnerable groups, initiation 1992
Action Internationale Contre la Faim (AICF)	Kutaisi, Mingrelia, Abkhazia	Emergency food assistance to IDPs, initiation January 1994
Arbeiter Samariter Bund (ASB)	Countrywide	Provision of food, medicine, and clothing to vulnerable groups, initiation 1993
Atlanta-Tbilisi Health Partnership (ATHP)	Tbilisi	Technical assistance and training to Ministry of Health, Tbilisi State Medical University, Tbilisi Hospital #2, initiation December 1992

CARE/International in the CIS	Countrywide	Supplemental and emergency food distribution to vulnerable groups, assistance to farmers
Catharsis	Tbilisi	Provision of food and psycho-social support to vulnerable groups, initiation 1989
European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO)	Countrywide, including SOAO and Abkhazia	Emergency food and medical aid, bridging activities, initiation June 1993
The National Foundation for Reception and Resettlement of Repatriated Greeks (EIYAPOE)	Countrywide	Delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations, mostly of Greek origin, initiation June 1993
Evangelical Mission Society of America (EMSA)	Countrywide	Emergency non-food assistance, Fall 1993

Feed the Children (FTC)	Mingrelia	Food distribution to children and pregnant and lactating mothers, winter clothing and blankets for children, support of the educational system and schoolchildren
Fund for Democracy and Development (FUND)	Tbilisi area	Import of fuel oil for hospitals, bakeries, and schools, winterization of schools, initiation 1991
Georgian Foundation	Countrywide	Provision of medicine and health equipment, initiation 1992
Georgian Red Cross (GRC)	Countrywide	Humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups, medical assistance to urban institutions for single elderly, initiation 1918
German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ)	Countrywide	Medical assistance and training, capacity-building of government agencies

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Principally Mingrelia and Abkhazia	Humanitarian assistance to POWs and victims of armed conflict, provision of medical care, establishment of hospitals and rehabilitation centers, dissemination of Principles of Humanitarian Law, February 1992
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Countrywide	Food and non-food assistance to vulnerable groups, provision of medicines and medical supplies to hospitals, capacity-building of the GRC, initiation February 1993
International Organization of Migration (IOM)	Tbilisi	Capacity-building of the Coordinating Bureau for International Humanitarian Assistance (in cooperation with DHA and SCF-USA), initiation October 1993

International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)	Tbilisi and Southern Georgia	Humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups (in cooperation with the Georgian Orthodox Church), initiation October 1993
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Countrywide	Humanitarian assistance to IDPs, including water, sanitation, and shelter rehabilitation, income generation activities, initiation November 1993
Lazarus	Tbilisi, Southern Georgia	Distribution of foodstuffs
Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)-Holland	Adjaria	Provision of medicine and medical support to hospitals and polyclinics, training of medical personnel, initiation November 1993
Medecins sin Fronteras (MSF)-Spain	Tbilisi, Imereti, Mingrelia	Provision of medicine and training in regional hospitals and polyclinics, initiation May 1993

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)-France	Abkhazia, South Ossetia	Provision of medical assistance
Medical Emergency Relief International (MERLIN)	Tbilisi	Medical assistance, initiation October 1993
Multiple Assistance for Georgia (MAG)	Countrywide	Medical assistance, capacity-building for local NGOs, initiation May 1994
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	Countrywide, including Abkhazia and South Ossetia	Mine awareness, household surveys of IDPs in Georgia, income generation for vulnerable groups
OXFAM-UK	Tbilisi, Imereti, Mingrelia	Income generation projects for IDPs, public health assistance to IDPs, grants to local NGOs, initiation October 1993

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)	South Ossetia, Shida Kartli	Small-scale food and non-food assistance to residents of South Ossetia and refugees from South Ossetia, monitoring of peacekeeping and human rights activity in South Ossetia, initiation December 1992
Premiere Urgence	Tbilisi, Imereti, Mingrelia	Provision of hygiene products and food to institutions, initiation October 1994
Red Barnet-Denmark	Countrywide	Provision of food, clothing, and hygiene products to institutions
Save the Children -USA (SCF-USA)	Countrywide	Management of umbrella USAID grant, data acquisition on agency activities in Georgia, capacity-building in government bureau for coordination of humanitarian assistance, initiation October 1993

Secours Populaires Français (SPF)	Imereti, Mingrelia, South Ossetia	Distribution of food to multichild families in isolated regions, and of food and non-food aid to the mentally handicapped in South Ossetia, drug education, initiation October 1994
The Salvation Army (TSA)	Tbilisi, Rustavi, Imereti, Mingrelia	Management of feeding sites, distribution of relief commodities
Shevardnadze Foundation	Countrywide	Small enterprise income generation, inititation 1992
Tri-Valley Growers	Countrywide	Small-scale agricultural production enterprises, seed distribution, initiation January 1995
United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)	Tbilisi, countrywide	Distribution of pharmaceuticals, physical training, rehabilitation and winterization of health facilities, initiation October 1993

United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNHDA)	Countrywide	Facilitation of interagency coordination process, capacity-building for government coordination of humanitarian assistance, field coordination unit opened July 1994
United Nations Development Programme	Countrywide	Capacity-building of the government of Georgia in the area of aid coordination and public administration of reform, initiation July 1994
United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Countrywide	Assistance to public education
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Countrywide, including Abkhazia	Emergency assistance to IDPs and returnees to Abkhazia, including the provision of food, non-food assistance, medicines, shelter and rehabilitation projects, small-scale income activities, initiation July 1993

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Countrywide, including Abkhazia	Medical assistance and clothing with a focus on children and mothers, initiation April 1993
United Nations Volunteers (UNV)	Countrywide, including Abkhazia	Institutional capacity-building, promotion of community-based CBMs with local NGOs, volunteer assistance to UNICEF
Wellstart International	Countrywide	Promotion of breast feeding
World Food Programme	Countrywide	Management of Caucasus Logistics Advisory Unit, emergency ports rehabilitation, assistance to Caucasus railways, field based communications support, emergency food assistance to vulnerable groups, initiation May 1993

World Health Organization (WHO)	Countrywide	TB program, workshops on disease and health problems, capacity-building in the Ministry of Health
World Vision International	Tbilisi	Small income generating enterprise activities for vulnerable groups, provision of seeds, initiation November 1993

[1] Most of the information in this table is from *United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Caucasus: Georgia* (New York: United Nations, 1995): 20-26. In addition, we have used OSCE data and ECHO information on humanitarian assistance.

[2] Reports on aid activities often distinguish between Western Georgia and Abkhazia. From the perspective of the Georgian government, however, Abkhazia is part of Western Georgia. In order to avoid the political connotations of this use of terms, we avoid the term Western Georgia and instead use the normal regional designations (Imereti, Mingrelia, and Abkhazia).

[3] The "countrywide" designation in aid reports does not include Abkhazia.

Appendix III

Persons Interviewed

Government Officials

Etera Astamirova	Member of Parliament, Head of Abkhazian Division of the State Committee for Human Rights
Kakha Chitaia	Department Head, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Boris Chochiev	Department on National Minorities and Migration, South Ossetia (Tskhinvali)
Archil Gegeshidze	Political Adviser, Staff of the Head of State
Nodar K. Giorgadze	Chief, Georgian permanent delegation to the OSCE
Tedo Japaridze	Ambassador of Georgia to the United States and Canada, former National Security Adviser to the Head of State
Grigorii Kalekhsaev	Department of National Minorities and Migration, South Ossetia (Tskhinvali)
Kosta Kochiev	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, South Ossetia (Tskhinvali)
Konstantin Kokoyev	Parliamentary Adviser (Tbilisi)
Zurab Lomashvili	Counselor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Valery Lomia	Mayor, City of Gali
Irakli Machavariani	Deputy Chief of Staff of the Head of State
George D. Makharadze	State Adviser, National Security Council Office, Staff of the Head of State
Peter Mamradze	Chief of Staff to the Head of State
Dmitri Medoyev	Foreign Ministry of South Ossetia (Tskhinvali)
Irakli A. Menagarashvili	Deputy Prime Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Government of Georgia
Dmitri A. Manjavidze	Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Levan Mikeladze	State Adviser, National Security Council Office, Staff of the Head of State
George Nikolashvili	Chief of Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Irina Sarishvili	Leader, National Democratic Party, and Member of Parliament

UN Officials

Pat Banks	UNDHA Coordinator, Tbilisi
Tore Borresen	Head of Gali Office, UNHCR
Gregor Boventer	Political Affairs Officer, UNDPA (NY)

Jorge Chediek	Program Development Officer, UNDP (NY)
Dean Echenburg	UNICEF/UNV (Tbilisi)
Gedolph Everts	Head, Tbilisi Office, UNHCR
Greg Hansen	UNV (Tbilisi)
Maarit Hirvonen	UNICEF (New York)
Rudolph Hoffman	UNICEF (New York)
Stephen Johnson	Programme Consultant, UNICEF
Lama Khouri	Georgia Desk Officer, DPA (New York)
Levan Khubulava	Radio Operator, UNHCR (Zugdidi)
Michele Lipner	UNDHA (Tbilisi)
Robert Maurer	Senior Urban Specialist, The World Bank
John Murray	WFP (Tbilisi)
K. Denis Nihill	IOM (Tbilisi)
Taslimur Rahman	Head of Office, UNHCR (Tbilisi)
Lt. Col. Haroun al-Rashid	Georgia Desk Officer, DPKO (New York)
Fedor Starcevic	Head, UN Office (Tbilisi)

Humanitarian Officials

Gunnar Andersen	Executive Director, NRC (Oslo)
George Antoun	IOCC (Tbilisi)
Gunther Beuche	Regional Coordinator in Georgia, ECHO
Dominique Blin	MSF-F (Sukhumi)
Sherry Carlin	Coordinator, USAID (Tbilisi)
Nani Chanishvili	Women of Georgia for Peace (Tbilisi)
Marie Davy	Regional Representative, MSF-F (Tskhinvali)
Dominique Dufour	ICRC (Sukhumi)
G.L. Dutt	Unit Administrator, CARE (Georgia)
Elizabeth Dyer	Manager, Data Collection and Analysis, STC (Tbilisi)
Akram Ali Eltom	Field Office Director, STC (Tbilisi)
Guranda Gabunia	Vice-Chairwoman, White Scarf
Helen Godfrey	Assistant to the Coordinator, ECHO
Kakhaber Gogashvili	Chairman, Georgian Committee against Human Torture
Valery V. Guergel	Executive Secretary, The UN Peace-Keeping Operations Contributing Club (Moscow)

Allen Jelich	International Rescue Committee (Tbilisi)
Jean-Marc Jouineau	Country Coordinator, AICF (Tbilisi)
Nino Kiguradze	Chairwoman, Women's Society of the City of Tbilisi
Zaal Kikodze	Special Project Coordinator, Open Society Georgia (Tbilisi)
Shalva Kokochashvili	Liaison Officer, CARE (Georgia)
Merethe Kvernroed	NRC (Tbilisi)
Natalie Latapy	AICF Administrator (Abkhazia)
Martha Leishman	IRC (Zugdidi)
Randy Martin	Regional Coordinator, IRC (New York)
Tom McAloon	Rehabilitation Engineer, IRC (Tbilisi)
Marina Merianashvili	Center for Social and Humanitarian Initiatives of the Union of Citizens of Georgia (Tbilisi)
Michel Meyer	Head of Delegation, ICRC (Tbilisi)
Mona Mnatsakanian	Congress of Citizens of Georgia
Archil Ordenidze	Vice-Chairman, Georgian Committee against Human Torture
Emily Rees	IOCC (Tbilisi)
Alexander Russetsky	Helsinki Citizens Assembly (Tbilisi)

Odile Sauzeat	Logistics Officer, AICF (Zugdidi)
Richard Spencer	UMCOR (Tbilisi)
Michael Stone	IFRC (Tbilisi)
Robin Waure	ICRC Head of Delegation, Abkhazia

OSCE Officials

Hansjorg Eiff	Ambassador, Head of OSCE Mission to Georgia
Lt. Col. R. MacDonald	(Ireland) Military Staff, OSCE Mission to Georgia
Ulrich Martin	Humanitarian Officer, OSCE
Simon Palmisano	Deputy Chief, OSCE Mission to Georgia
Piotr Switalski	Assistant to the Chairman in Office, OSCE (Vienna)
Michael G. Wygant	Consultant, OSCE Mission to Georgia

Peacekeeping Personnel

Major Mark Fussio	(U.S.) Military Information Officer, UNOMIG (Gali)
Major Hanishatnawi	(Jordan) Officer in Charge, UNOMIG (Gali)
Lt. Col. Jahangir	(Bangladesh), Officer in Charge, UNOMIG (Zugdidi)

Col. Vladimir Ilich Kopylev	Chief of Staff, Gali Batallion, CISPKF
Lt. Col. Lazlo Szabo	(Hungary), Military Observer and Officer in Charge, UNOMIG Liaison Office (Tbilisi)

Diplomats

Denis Corboy	Ambassador of the EU to Georgia
Andrei E. Granovsky	Senior Counsellor, Mission of the Russian Federation to the UN
Donald Lu	Political Officer, US Embassy to Georgia
Alexander Yakovenko	Counselor, Embassy of the Russian Federation to Georgia

Academics and Journalists

Nadezhda Arbatova	Researcher, Institute for the World Economy and International Relations (Moscow)
Sergei Arutiunov	(Arutyunyan), Chairman of Caucasian Studies, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (Moscow)
Yurii Arutyunyan	Head of Department of Sociology, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (Moscow)
Manana A. Guseinova	Research Fellow, Institute of the USA/Canada (Moscow)

Irina Isakova	Head, Section on US Policy in European post-Soviet States (Moscow)
Lia Melikishvili	Researcher, Caucasian Ethnology Department, Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography (Tbilisi)
Gia Nodia	Caucasian Institute for Peace, Development, and Democracy (Tbilisi)
Alexander Rondeli	Chair of International Relations, Tbilisi State University
Nikolai E. Rudensky	Senior Research Fellow, Institute for the Economy in Transition (Moscow)
Valentin N. Shalenko	President, Association of Conflict Studies (Moscow)
Nodari Simonia	Deputy Director, Institute for the World Economy and International Relations, (Moscow)
Taras M. Shamba	Professor, President of the World Congress of Abkhazian-Abazian Peoples
Boris G. Shumeev	Head of Section, Institute of the USA/Canada (Moscow)
Sergei Tarasenko	Director, Centre for Realism in Policy (Moscow)
Jemal Tsurmanidze	Political Adviser, Foreign Policy Committee, State Duma

Aniko Tsvinaria	Deputy Director, Center for Cultural Interrelations (Caucasian House) (Tbilisi)
Gia Turkhan-Muravi	Caucasian Institue for Peace, Development, and Democracy
Alla Yazkova	Professor and Head of Section, Institute of International Economic and Political Studies (Moscow)
Andrei Zagorsky	Vice-Rector, Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO)

APPENDIX IV

ABOUT THE HUMANITARIANISM AND WAR PROJECT AND THE AUTHORS

Day in and day out, from Yugoslavia to Somalia, Chechnya to Rwanda, Angola to Haiti, civil strife inflicts widespread human suffering. Even where bloodshed has abated, as in Cambodia, El Salvador, and Mozambique, tensions and the awesome task of rebuilding war-torn countries remain.

How can the international community better protect those caught in national and regional conflicts? How can it more effectively assist nations to turn the corner on violence and become productive societies? Can aid become an effective force for the resolution of conflicts? Must humanitarian action await the request of warring parties or, with the ebbing of East-West tensions, can humane values form the new cornerstone of international relations?

These are questions being addressed by the Humanitarianism and War Project. The initiative is an effort by an independent team of researchers based at Brown University and drawing on the expertise of scholars and practitioners from around the world to assist the international community chart its course in the post-Cold War era. The co-directors of the project are Thomas G. Weiss, Associate Director of the Watson Institute and Executive Director of the Academic Council on the United Nations System; and Larry Minear, Senior Fellow at the Watson Institute and the Project's principal researcher.

During the first phase (1991-1993), the project was co-sponsored by the Refugee Policy Group (Washington, D.C.), and support was provided by two dozen practitioner organizations and interested foundations. These included four governments (Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, and France); six intergovernmental organizations (UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR, UNDP, DHA/UNDRO, and the UN Special Program for the Horn of Africa); ten nongovernmental organizations (Catholic Relief Services, Danish Refugee Council, the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development [Canada], International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Lutheran World Federation,

Lutheran World Relief, Mennonite Central Committee, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam-UK, and Save the Children Fund-UK); and three foundations (Pew Charitable Trusts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Arias Foundation).

The second phase (1994-1996) of activities has financial support to date from: four governments (Australia, Netherlands, United Kingdom, and the United States); seven intergovernmental organizations (UNICEF, UNDP, UN Volunteers, International Organization for Migration, OECD Development Centre, European Commission Humanitarian Office, and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs); fifteen nongovernmental organizations (American Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services, Danish Refugee Council, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Orthodox Christian Charities, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran World Federation, Lutheran World Relief, Mennonite Central Committee, Norwegian Red Cross, Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children-US, Swedish Red Cross, World Vision, and Trócaire); and three foundations (Pew Charitable Trusts, McKnight Foundation, and U.S. Institute of Peace).

To date the project has conducted field research in the Horn of Africa, the Persian Gulf, Central America, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, Liberia, Rwanda, and Georgia in order to publish a series of case studies and policy recommendations. In addition to journal articles and op-eds, the project has also published four books: *Mercy Under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community* (1995); *Humanitarian Politics* (1995); *Humanitarian Action in Times of War: A Handbook for Practitioners* (1993, also available in Spanish and French); and a volume of collected essays by practitioners, *Humanitarianism Across Borders: Sustaining Civilians in Times of War* (1993). The project has also prepared a training module which is currently in use by UN organizations.

During the present three-year phase, the project will carry out additional field research; complete a practical guide for the media and humanitarian action; share findings and recommendations in conferences and training events; and continue an extensive array of publications.

S. Neil MacFarlane is currently professor of political studies and director of the Centre for International Relations at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. He was recently elected to the Lester B. Pearson Professorship of International Relations at the University of Oxford. In recent years, he has written widely about regional and political security issues in the Newly Independent States. In that context, he has been a regular visitor to the Caucasus region in general and to Georgia in particular. In 1992 he served as a member of a CSCE team monitoring the conduct on the Georgian elections.

Larry Minear is co-director and principle researcher of the Humanitarianism and War Project. He has worked on humanitarian and development issues for more than twenty years, serving as staff to two nongovernmental organizations (Church World Service and Lutheran World Relief) and as consultant to the United Nations and to governments and intergovernmental groups. He has conducted research in many recent humanitarian emergencies and has written extensively for specialized and general audiences.

Stephen D. Shenfield is a research associate at the Watson Institute, specializing in post-Soviet political and security affairs, with special stress on ethnic politics. In addition to teaching courses on conflict in the post-Soviet world, he has written articles on the problems of security in the former Soviet Union. He also serves as research coordinator for a new project at the Watson Institute dealing with security relations among core post-Soviet states, including Georgia.