

## **Georgia/Abkhazia Issue Outline**

### **Introduction:** Jonathan Cohen and Laura Gibbons

The introduction will outline some of the major issues at stake in the peace process and seek to draw out comparative lessons, referring to distinctions/comparisons with other ongoing peace processes.

Article length: 2,000 words;

**Map 1.** Map of the Caucasus region, with a more detailed map of the conflict region.

### **Article 1: The Georgia-Abkhazia Conflict in Context:**

Author: Bruno Coppieters, Vrije University Brussels

This scene setting article outlines the background of the conflict in both its historical and more contemporary context. The article points to what the conflict has been about: language, identity, inter-ethnic relations, conflicting perceptions of history, the impact of Soviet nationalities policy, security, politics of the region as the former Soviet Union collapsed - the objective will not to go into the issues in great depth, but to highlight the inter-relationships of a series of complex factors. This also means raising some of the contentious issues around descriptions of it as an ethno-political conflict, a secessionist one or a conflict generated by third-party manipulation. The article provides a brief overview of the progress of the conflict and the peace process, narrating pivotal moments, issues and shortcomings, but it will not seek to analyse these in depth (especially with regard to the peace process) since this will be the task of subsequent articles. The author will point to possible conclusions as to the impact the nature of the conflict has had on the search for a peaceful resolution, touching on factors such as, how the war was waged - Russia's involvement, claims of ethnic cleansing, human rights atrocities - seeking to convey the human cost of the conflict. Some of these issues will be dealt with in greater detail in subsequent articles.

Article Length: 3,500 words;

**Chart:** Demography and ethnic composition: the chart will provide information about the size and the changing composition of the population of Abkhazia since the 19th century, and the overall composition of the population of Georgia.

### **Extended Box: The Economic Dimensions of the Conflict and their impact on the peace process:**

This will be a one page free standing box emphasising economic issues as an important part of the war and peace process. The focus will be the economic consequences of the conflict and more particularly the way in which economic issues become part of the perpetuation of the conflict (and hence can be seen as obstacles to peace) as well as providing possible incentives for an accord. This is particularly important given that economic reconstruction, the blockade and economic co-operation are sensitive issues in the negotiations process. The box will touch on the way in which the war economy of Abkhazia functions and how it ties in to business opportunities or profiteering for groups in southern Russia and Western Georgia, and hence the vested interests at stake in a resolution.

Box Length: 600 words.

### **Article 2: An Analysis of the Georgian Engagement in the Peace Process:**

Author: Ghia Nodia, Director of the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development.

The author will explore the negotiations process from the Georgian perspective, looking at issues of substance and process as well as the constraints on the Georgian negotiating position. The article will identify problems there have been with the negotiations in terms of the process, relating to the roles and interests of the different mediators (UN,

Russia, second-track) as well as the nature of interchanges between the Abkhazian and Georgian sides. The article will also address whether or not there have been problems with the way in which key issues have been addressed by the parties (the substantive perspective): have the negotiations been able to address key issues in a way that has allowed meaningful debate? If not what have been the obstacles to this and what have the negotiations been about? In addressing these points the author is encouraged to refer to specific documents, protocols or agreements that have been signed or negotiated. This section of the article will require the author to reflect on the way in which Georgia is seeking to reach a resolution to the conflict with regard to bilateral negotiations and engagement in Russian and UN mediated processes. Additionally, the article will explore the structure of the political community in Georgia and how this exerts pressure on attempts to seek a resolution, looking at the different factions and interests that either promote or undermine a negotiated settlement. In addition to reflecting on issues of process and substance, the article will address why the conflict has been so intractable by looking at the inner Georgian debate, trying to encapsulate the complexity of this. Abkhazia is one of two conflicts that continue to bedevil the integrity of the Georgian state. Furthermore, Ajaria operates with a great deal of latitude and Armenian populated regions in Georgia are at times a source of tension relating - based on economic isolation but often perceived as another separatist ethnic struggle in the making. Therefore, although a new constitution was promulgated in 1995 (leaving the articles relating to Abkhazia and South Ossetia to be defined at a later date) the constitutional order of Georgia, and particularly the issue of regionalism leaves many problems. Thus the article will deal with nationalism and minorities and the influence of these on state-building in Georgia, and the issue of status (Abkhazia's refusal to have a vertical relationship with Tbilisi) in the context of the perceived structure of the Georgian state. Article length: 3,000

### **Article 3: An Analysis of the Abkhazian Engagement in the Peace Process**

**Author:** Liana Kvarchelia, Centre for Humanitarian Programmes and UNV

This article will seek to do three things. First, the article will identify what problems there have been with the negotiations in terms of the process, from the Abkhazian perspective. This can relate to the roles and interests of the different mediators (UN, Russia, second-track) as well as the nature of interchanges between the Abkhazian and Georgian sides. Additionally, it could address issues such as the politicisation of aid in Abkhazia and the way it has been used as a carrot/stick to urge the Abkhazians to change their approach (serving to further entrench their position rather than lubricate negotiations). Likewise, the political significance of the blockade/strict border controls could be addressed in this context (could lifting the blockade be a confidence building measure that acts as an incentive for peace?). Secondly, the article will address whether or not there have been problems with the way in which key issues have been addressed by the parties (the substantive perspective): have the negotiations been able to address key issues in a way that has allowed meaningful debate about the issues? If not what have been the obstacles to this and what have the negotiations been about? How has Abkhazian society responded to the peace process? (Are there any surveys that can be quoted in this context?) In addressing the two above points the author is encouraged to refer to specific documents, protocols or agreements that have been signed or negotiated. Thirdly, the article will reflect on Abkhazian aspirations and ways out of the impasse; this will involve the author reflecting on the spectrum of options and different perspectives on the usages of terms/concepts/political arrangements such as sovereignty, independence, autonomy, federation, confederation - vertical and horizontal relationships; and how the options are regarded by different constituencies in Abkhazia.

Article length: 3,000 words

**Extended Box: The South Ossetian case:**

The violent phase of the conflict in South Ossetia preceded that in Abkhazia, but the fighting was not as severe and prospects for a resolution, facilitated by the OSCE, have often seemed better. South Ossetia's relevance to the conflict over Abkhazia lies in the consequences for Georgia of trying to mediate two conflicts simultaneously as well as the different nature of the processes. Furthermore, the existence of two ethno-political conflicts over sovereignty challenges the concept of a Georgian state. The box would provide an assessment of the negotiation process in South Ossetia, looking at the way in which it has been conducted and the key issues negotiated - one issue of particular interest is the way in which there has been some movement in negotiations over small but concrete steps in the economic sphere.

Article length: 600 words

#### **Article 4: International Efforts At Resolving the Conflict:**

Jonathan Cohen will write a short introduction to this section and the three articles. This will outline the way in which multiple actors have attempted to engage in promoting the resolution of the conflict. Interventions have had different agendas: humanitarian, peacekeeping and conflict resolution. The objective of the articles in this section is to provide an examination of the peace process through the lens of different interveners, particularly in the area of conflict resolution, although recognising that conflict resolution initiatives are intertwined with humanitarian and peacekeeping ones. The scope for co-operation between different actors and different levels of intervention will also be explored. One question to be considered is whether there has been a competition in mediation initiatives and if so what has been the impact of this. The three articles will seek to capture a narrative of the different engagements and then examine the process, providing insights into the dynamics of different engagements. Authors will reflect on the contribution the interventions have made, as well as the problems and opportunities created through them. Negotiations between the Abkhazian authorities and the Georgian government have been mediated by the UN and Russian Federation since 1993. The negotiations have fluctuated between periods of fruitful dialogue (sometimes mediated and sometimes bilateral) and complete stalemate when the parties have disengaged and tensions have risen. Although there has been movement on some issues there has been little progress suggesting grounds for a political resolution. An underlying question is how can the interventions assist in transforming the process from the perpetuation of a fragile cease-fire to the achievement of a durable political resolution. If the latter can not be achieved is a military solution to the impasse an option that will be countenanced by either side and if so would it be decisive or merely prolong the stand-off but with an altered equilibrium? The articles should balance narrative and analysis and provide insight regarding the aims and objectives of the interveners and how their mediation efforts have interacted with parties to the conflict.

Introduction length: 400 words maximum

#### **Part I: The Role of the UN:** Author: Neil MacFarlane, Professor of International Relations, Oxford

The international community has engaged principally through the UN, which has been involved in mediation (Special Representative of the Secretary General), humanitarian assistance (UNHCR), peacekeeping (UNOMIG) and development (UNDP). The article will explore the approach the UN has taken to facilitating talks and comment on the place of Geneva talks (including the establishment of the new Co-ordinating Council established in November 1997). How has the UN's attempt to facilitate negotiations been affected by the role of Russian mediation? Has the international community engaged sufficiently with the conflict and Russia's security interests in the Caucasus? Where does the role of the Friends of the Secretary General fit into the mediation process? In addition the UN has been responsible for the deployment of UNOMIG. Has UNOMIG's mandate been conducive to an effective role in contributing to conditions in which political negotiations could move forward? How has it interacted

with the CISPKEF - has its role/mandate been appropriate? (policing function/protection force). [The role of UNOMIG could be addressed in a separate box if the author prefers - this would be placed within the text and be part of the total wordage for the article]. UNHCR was involved in brokering the first agreements in 1994 because of the displacement issue, but has the politicisation of humanitarian action undercut the attainment of humanitarian objectives and also impeded political progress? Were the April/May 1994 agreements flawed? UNDP has been involved in activities related to reconstruction in Abkhazia. In February 1998 it conducted a needs assessment which augured for a new approach to economic co-operation but has been scuppered - can progress be made on this sort of confidence-building infrastructural reconstruction level without there being progress at the political level? ). How effective has the UN been in co-ordinating the various functions and in contributing to the search for a political resolution to the conflict?

Article Length: 2,750

**Part II: The Role of the Russian Federation:** Author: Dmitri Danilov, Institute of Europe, Russian Academy of Sciences

This article will narrate and analyse the role of the Russian Federation in attempts to resolve the conflict. The Russian Federation, as the regional hegemon, has played a contradictory and inconsistent role - both in the overt phase of the conflict/war and during the negotiations phase. Having provided assistance of one sort or another to both parties during the conflict, Russia brokered the cease-fire agreement in 1994. The article will analyse the nature of Russian diplomacy as a form of "power mediation" - leaning on the conflicting sides to achieve a cease-fire, but being less able to facilitate a political resolution - and will point to the agreements that have been reached under Russian facilitation. Russia has been a co-facilitator of the mediation process with the UN; how should we evaluate Russia's attempts to work with the rest of the international community in facilitating a resolution? Have there been contradictions in the way that Russia and the UN have approached the mediation process, and if so what does this tell us about the prospects for a settlement? At the same time as collaborating with the UN, there have been a number of separate initiatives (some aimed at mediation others advocating support for one party (usually Abkhazia) or the other) conducted by different constituencies within Russia (and by the CIS, which should be included in this article). Have these initiatives fed into a coherent overall approach or complicated matters? What has been the nature of Russia's diplomatic infrastructure in mediating over the conflict? In this light the approaches of different power constituencies in Russia will be addressed and broader Russian motives in Georgia will be touched upon. The article will also briefly examine the operation of the CIS (but predominantly Russian) PKF: a stabilisation and separation of forces was achieved by the 1994 cease-fire. The CIS PKF has lacked discipline and been ill-trained, departing from international peacekeeping norms in its operation, but it has also been under considerable pressure as a target for the conflicting parties. What have been the implications of having an interested party and a key mediator playing a peacekeeping role? Has the role of the PKF served to freeze an unstable situation or can it contribute to providing the foundation for a political resolution? The section on the CISPKEF, like that on UNOMIG above, could be a separate box within the article.

Article length: 2,750

**Part III: Second Track Initiatives:** Author: Susan Allan Nan, The Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University

This article will present an analysis of the range of second track initiatives, involving both international and regional NGOs. It will also provide an insight into the sequence as to how and when non-governmental initiatives developed. Have the second track initiatives been credible? What has been the nature of the initiatives - at which levels, actors and objectives have they been aimed? Have accountability and confidentiality

been issues in second track initiatives? Have multiple initiatives been complementary or contradictory? Are the initiatives just talking shops or does anything concrete come out of them? What can we learn about the contribution second track initiatives make to the overall process (does it bring anything absent from track one initiatives and therefore feed into the first track?) and what impact have the initiatives had on the respective societies? Have initiatives been rooted in the societies, have they sought to forge new channels or have they been circumscribed by internal social and political conditions (i.e. lack of receptivity for such activities)? How have the parties engaged with the second track initiatives - for instance there is now a perception that the Abkhazians prefer initiatives to operate in a multilateral/pan-Caucasian context rather than a bilateral context: is this the case and if so what does this say about future prospects? Finally, have second-track initiatives been strategically planned or haphazard in operation and impact?

Article length: 2,000

#### **Article 5: The Politics of Displacement and Return**

Author: Greg Hansen, Humanitarianism and War Project & Local Capacities for Peace Project

As a result of the conflict a major displacement of population from Abkhazia occurred. IDPs have become pawns in the resolution process - the Abkhazians are reluctant for IDPs to return en masse until the status of Abkhazia is resolved (because in the event of a substantial return the Abkhazians would once again find themselves in a demographic minority) whereas the Georgians will brook no resolution until the IDPs have returned. The nature of displacement and return pose a number of challenges to the peace process and this article will address these. Some relevant issues include the following: Did attempts to facilitate a rapid return of IDPs in the immediate aftermath of the cease-fire prove dangerous and counterproductive to safety and the sustainability of the political process? What are the consequences of the failure to expedite the return? There are a number of factors surrounding the proposed return or the lack of progress with return that would appear to impinge on the prospects for peace and the way the process has been conducted: security (in particular the role of guerrillas and the safety of IDPs on return), social (the hardship confronted by the displaced), political (the consequences of the marginalisation of IDPs and the existence of political factions seeking to represent them and how this impacts on the negotiations process in general) and economic issues (the drain on the Georgian economy and the fact that it retards any reconstruction in Abkhazia, and poses the question as to whether Abkhazia is economically in a position to receive back the displaced). The fact that Mingrelians comprise a majority of IDPs in Georgia (pre-war some 90% of the Gali region, which is contiguous with the Georgian border, was inhabited by Mingrelians) adds to the complexity since they are regarded as retaining some loyalty to the deposed and now dead Georgian leader Gamsakhurdia. The article will also raise, although not going into great detail, the issue of justice and impunity and how this affects prospects for peace and the peace process: how can respective fears regarding reintegration of displaced communities and reconciliation be addressed? The issue of impunity could be addressed in a separate box within the article, if the author sees fit. What does the notion of 'bounded' populations tell us about the prospects for peace? The existence of a large IDP constituency creates a persistent instability that does not bode well for reconciliation in the long-term. Are communities in Georgia or Abkhazia psychologically prepared for the process? Are the IDPs pawns being manipulated and at times radicalised by political leaders - left in limbo because politically it is not acceptable to integrate them into wider Georgian society but return is not happening?

Article length: 2,500 words

### **Texts of Primary Documents**

This is a list of some of the main texts that could be included: it is not yet definitive and other suggestions by any of the authors will be gratefully received.

- 14 May 1993, cease-fire agreement
  - 27 July 1993 Sochi Agreement
  - Memorandum of Understanding, Geneva, 1 December 1993
  - Communiqué on the second round of negotiations between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides in Geneva, 13 January 1994.
  - "Declaration on Measures for a Political Settlement of the Georgian / Abkhaz Conflict" signed on 4 April 1994; "Quadripartite Agreement on voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons" signed on 4 April 1994
  - "Agreement on a cease-fire and separation of forces" signed in Moscow on 14 May 1994; "Proposal for the Establishment of a Co-ordinating Commission" signed in Moscow on 11 May 1994
  - UNOMIG / CIS Peacekeeping mandates - they are regularly renewed but the initial mandates and a note on subsequent additions to them
  - summer 1995, Moscow protocol spelling out the principles of future relations
  - Informal document published in Resonance in early 1997 outlining the Georgian offer in regard to features of autonomy
  - Berezovskii proposal: published late summer 1997. Published in the press but not an official document.
  - Zaiavlenie o vstreche gruzinskoi i abkhazskoi storon (g. Tbilisi, 14 avgusta 1997 goda). Joint Declaration signed 14/8/97 after meeting of Shevardnadze and Ardzinba in Tbilisi - inadmissibility of military means of solving the conflict
  - Protokol vstrechi Gruzinskoi i Abkhazskoi storon, g. Sukhum/i 20.08 1997 g.[on the creation of Co-ordination Commission, signed by Bagapsh and Lekishvili
  - Establishment of the Co-ordinating Council in Geneva November 1997. This created three working groups on security, IDPs and socio-economic development.
  - Cease-fire/Separation of forces agreement May/June 1998
  - Declaration of the Athens Confidence Building Meeting between the Georgian and Abkhazian Sides, 16-18 October 1998
- Section length: 30 pages

**Chronology:** this will provide the key moments in the conflict and peace process. It will be very sensitive because conflicting accounts of the past are in themselves a source of conflict between the parties. Brief comments on the 19th century and into the 20th century will be provided to mark important trends and events. A year by year account will be provided from 1989 onwards.

Section length: 3,500 words;

**Profiles/Key Actors:** local and international, individuals and organisations, and some issues, who/which have played a significant role in the conflict and peace process: the profiles will be 100-300 words in length and provide a description of who they are and comment on motivation/significance.

#### **Actors in Georgia and Abkhazia**

- Eduard Shevardnadze.
- Vladislav Ardzinba.
- Zviad Gamsakhurdia
- Paramilitary groups active in Georgia in the early 1990s, e.g. the Mkhedrioni:

● Political factions/parties/movements in Georgia: Civic Union of Georgia, the Abkhaz government-in-exile (led by Tamaz Nadereishvili), the Organization for the Liberation of Abkhazia (led by Boris Kakubava), Co-ordinating Council of Refugees from Abkhazia.

● Aidgylara (The Abkhaz Popular Front)

● The Abkhaz Parliament

● Guerrilla/paramilitary formations

● The Media in Georgia and Abkhazia

● Civil Society in Georgia and Abkhazia

**Actors from the Russian Federation and former Soviet Union**

● CIS PKF

● The Russian Federation: role of different constituencies MFA, MOD/Military, Supreme Soviet/Parliament

● Russian Military bases in Georgia, and the Russian - Georgian bilateral treaty of co-operation

● CIS, in particular Boris Berezovskii, Executive Secretary of the CIS

● The Confederation of Peoples of the Caucasus

**International Agencies**

● UN - key mediators have been diplomats Eduard Brunner and Liviu Bota

● UNHCR

● UNOMIG

● The Friends of the Secretary General (on Georgia)

● OSCE - observer of negotiation process; facilitating South Ossetia process; High Commissioner on National Minorities has become involved in Abkhazia in 98

● European Union/Community Policy

● US Policy

● Other states: Ukraine, Turkey

● Aid agencies: outline of the role of humanitarian aid in the conflict

**Regional Factors**

● the operation of the Inguri Hydro Electric Power Station

● Oil pipeline/terminal and the TRACECA project and the transport corridor

Section length: 3,500 words;

**Bibliography/References for further reading:**