

Country/entity	Georgia Abkhazia
Region	Europe and Eurasia
Agreement name	Concluding statement on the results of the second meeting of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, Geneva, 23-25 July 1998.
Date	25 Jul 1998
Agreement status	Multiparty signed/agreed
Interim arrangement	Yes

Agreement/conflict level Intrastate/intrastate conflict

Georgian Separatist Conflicts (1989 -)

The Abkhazia-Georgia Conflict (1992 -)

Much like other conflicts that sprung up in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Abkhazia conflict emerged as an ethnic conflict following heightened nationalist awareness among Abkhaz and other minorities residing in the region. In 1978, protests against the Georgianization of Abkhazia emerged from Abkhaz intellectuals. Towards the end of the 1980s, both Georgian and Abkhaz nationalists demanded independence from the Soviet Union. Tensions began following clashes at Sukhumi University between pro-Unity protestors and Abkhaz nationalists in April-July 1989. However, the conflict remained a legal conflict up until August 1992 following the 1991 elections, wherein Abkhazians felt they were under-represented. War broke out between Abkhaz separatists, supported by Russian forces and hired fighters from the North Caucasus. Within Abkhazia, Abkhaz separatists were generally supported by ethnically Armenian and Russian residents. Within Georgia the conflict was exacerbated following conflict in South Ossetia from 1989 onwards in addition to political strife between the supporters of the ousted president, Zviad Gamsakurdia, and the post-coup government led by Eduard Shevardnadze.

Significant human rights abuses occurred, particularly after the capture of Sukhumi in September 1993, after which Georgian residents, which consisted of 45 per cent of the population in 1989, were faced with mass expulsion and ethnic cleansing. Russian Peacekeepers acting under the umbrella of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), were deployed on the Abkhazia-Georgia line following a ceasefire in 1994. Atrocities towards ethnic Georgian's continued with over 1,500 deaths post-conflict. In 1998 fighting re-erupted following a flare up of fighting in South Ossetia. Again it was resolved with a ceasefire agreement. However, as of 2016 the conflict remains unresolved.

The Russo-Georgian War (South Ossetia) (1989 -)

Following heightened nationalist awareness among Ossetians and policies undertaken at the expense of ethnic minorities by the Georgian government led by President Gamsakurdia, calls for Ossetian Independence increased. After clashes broke out in Tskhinvali during a pro-Georgia protest, the conflict began to militarize. When President Gamsakurdia maintained his position after elections in 1990, which were boycotted by South Ossetia, Ossetians organised elections for their own parliament. The central Georgian government reacted by abolishing the autonomous status previously held by South Ossetia. The formation of ethnic militias and increased attacks on civilians escalated on both sides and in December 1990 a state of emergency and an economic blockade were declared. Fighting was haphazard as fighters on both sides were poorly equipped and disciplined. The Georgian National Guard was primarily formed of volunteers due to a lack of resources and as a result fighters often acted out of self-interest. Assaults on Tskhinvali by Georgian forces were repulsed on several occasions, and Georgian forces were also noted to expel Ossetian residents and destroy villages out of revenge and as a means to re-claim territory.

The Sochi agreement (1992) established a ceasefire and security corridor, as well as divided the territory between Georgian and Ossetian administration. Relations deteriorated drastically in April 2008, and following shelling of Georgian villages on August 1, the Georgian military responded in force retaking most of Tskhinvali by August 7. Russian forces intervened on behalf of Ossetian separatists and after retaking Tskhinvali, opened another front in the Kodori Gorge. A ceasefire was brokered on August

Stage	Pre-negotiation/process
Conflict nature	Government/territory
Peace process	Abkhazia peace process
Parties	Georgia, Abkhazia
Third parties	UN (Chair), UNDP, UNHCR, UNDP, Russian Federation (Facilitator), OSCE, Group of Friends of the UNSG (France, Germany, Russian Federation, UK, US) as observers
Description	Welcomed implementation of 1997 Geneva agreement but noted several provisions had not been implemented. Expressed concern that parties were far from agreement on key issues and stressed importance of bilateral contacts and direct dialogue as well as need for immediate implementation of the Coordination Council decision. Reaffirmed determination to put an end to conflict and agreement to refrain from hostile propaganda. Expressed commitment to rights of refugees/displaced persons, and to freedom of movement and security of humanitarian aid workers, and supported strengthened UN involvement. Annexes outlined position of both sides on violence in the Gali district and on the return of refugees.

Agreement document	GE_970625_Concluding Statement on the results of the second meeting in Geneva.pdf (opens in new tab) Download PDF
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Groups

Children/youth	No specific mention.
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Disabled persons	No specific mention.
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Elderly/age	No specific mention.
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Migrant workers	No specific mention.
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Racial/ethnic/ national group	No specific mention.
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Religious groups	No specific mention.
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Indigenous people	No specific mention.
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Other groups	No specific mention.
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Refugees/displaced persons Groups→Refugees/displaced persons→Rhetorical
Page 1, [Summary] Discussed as an agenda item.

Page 3, 11. The parties again reaffirmed their previous commitment regarding the right of refugees and displaced persons to voluntary return to the places of their former permanent residence.

They held a comprehensive discussion of the practical issues linked to the return of the refugees and decided to continue work on these questions. (The position of the sides are annexed.)

Groups→Refugees/displaced persons→Substantive

Page 3, ANNEX: Positions of the sides on paragraph 8

The position of the Georgian side

The Georgian side condemns the hostilities and acts of violence which took place in the Gali district in May 1998, as a result of which, as is noted in the report of the United Nations Secretary-General (5/1998/647), approximately 40,000 people from the Gali district had to seek refuge for the second time on the other side of the Inguri River, and the international community had to witness how its assistance and efforts went up in flames, when houses that had been constructed at a cost of more than \$2 million out of UNHCR funds were deliberately set on fire in order to expel people from their home areas.

Page 3, ANNEX: Positions of the sides on paragraph 8

... The position of the Abkhaz side

As a result of the armed conflict provoked by the Georgian side in May 1998 in the Gali district of Abkhazia, and also of the continuing illegal actions of the "White Legion" and "Forest Brothers" terrorist and subversive groups, and of the continued laying of mines and other acts of violence, causing casualties first and foremost among the Abkhaz militia and the peacekeeping force, and also among local inhabitants, refugees and displaced persons, UNOMIG personnel and other international personnel working in Abkhazia, the situation in the region has deteriorated and is a cause for serious concern.

Page 4, ANNEX: Positions of the sides on paragraph 11

The position of the Georgian side

The Georgian side believes that certain conditions are necessary for the implementation of the process of the speedy return of the refugees and displaced persons. To this end it proposed the establishment of a working group with the participation of representatives of the sides, the United Nations, the Russian Federation, and the member States of the group of Friends of the Secretary General to formulate and implement a plan for the voluntary and safe return, with dignity, of the refugees and displaced persons, first and foremost to the Gali district (within the old borders).

At the same time, measures for international guarantees of the continuity of the process of the return of refugees and displaced persons and for ensuring their safety in the places of their return should be formulated and implemented.

In immediate and direct linkage with the process of the stable and organized return of the refugees and displaced persons, first and foremost to the Gali district (within the old borders), measures for the economic rehabilitation of the region and the normalization of the border and customs regimes should be implemented.

At the same time, measures should be undertaken to invite international organizations and donor countries to allocate resources for the process of the return of the refugees and displaced persons and for the restoration of the economy of Abkhazia, as recommended by the United Nations Needs Assessment Mission.

The Georgian side stressed that the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons is possible only on condition of the precise determination of the territory and time-frame for their return, concrete measures guaranteeing the security of the returnees and the

Social class No specific mention.

Gender

Women, girls and gender No specific mention.

Men and boys No specific mention.

LGBTI No specific mention.

Family No specific mention.

State definition

Nature of state (general) No specific mention.

State configuration No specific mention.

Self determination No specific mention.

Referendum No specific mention.

State symbols No specific mention.

Independence/secession No specific mention.

Accession/unification No specific mention.

Border delimitation Page 4, ANNEX: Positions of the sides on paragraph 11
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Cross-border provision No specific mention.

Governance

Political institutions (new or reformed) No specific mention.

Elections No specific mention.

Electoral commission No specific mention.

Political parties reform No specific mention.

Civil society No specific mention.

Traditional/religious leaders No specific mention.

Public administration No specific mention.

Constitution No specific mention.

Power sharing

Political power sharing No specific mention.

Territorial power sharing No specific mention.

Economic power sharing No specific mention.

Military power sharing No specific mention.

Human rights and equality

Human rights/RoL general Page 3, ANNEX: Positions of the sides on paragraph 8
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... The Georgian side believes that these actions are a manifestation of a new wave of ethnic cleansing directed at the Georgian population of Abkhazia.

Bill of rights/similar No specific mention.

Treaty incorporation	No specific mention.
Civil and political rights	Human rights and equality→Civil and political rights→Other Page 3, 11. The parties again reaffirmed their previous commitment regarding the right of refugees and displaced persons to voluntary return to the places of their former permanent residence.
Socio-economic rights	No specific mention.

Rights related issues

Citizenship	No specific mention.
Democracy	No specific mention.
Detention procedures	No specific mention.
Media and communication	Rights related issues→Media and communication→Media roles Page 2, 10. The parties again reaffirmed their agreement to refrain from hostile propaganda towards each other and to take measures to promote the establishment of an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding. The participants at the meeting gratefully acknowledged the invitation of the Government of Greece to hold a special meeting of the parties this year in Athens to elaborate measures to strengthen mutual trust and understanding as envisaged in the Protocol of the third session of the Coordination Council.
Mobility/access	Page 3, 12. The parties reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the freedom of movement and security of humanitarian aid workers so that they can gain access to those in need and provide assistance to them.
Protection measures	No specific mention.
Other	No specific mention.

Rights institutions

NHRI	No specific mention.
Regional or international human rights institutions	No specific mention.

Justice sector reform

Criminal justice and emergency law No specific mention.

State of emergency provisions No specific mention.

Judiciary and courts No specific mention.

Prisons and detention No specific mention.

Traditional Laws No specific mention.

Socio-economic reconstruction

Development or socio-economic reconstruction Socio-economic reconstruction→Development or socio-economic reconstruction→Socio-economic development
Page 1, [Summary] Reconstruction mentioned as part of the Agenda

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National economic plan No specific mention.

Natural resources No specific mention.

International funds Page 4, ANNEX: Positions of the sides on paragraph 11
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Business No specific mention.

Taxation Socio-economic reconstruction→Taxation→Reform of taxation
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Banks No specific mention.

Land, property and environment

Land reform/rights No specific mention.

**Pastoralist/
nomadism rights** No specific mention.

Cultural heritage No specific mention.

Environment No specific mention.

**Water or riparian
rights or access** No specific mention.

Security sector

Security Guarantees

Page 2, 8. The participants at the meeting are seriously concerned about the situation with regard to security in the conflict zone, which has recently sharply deteriorated. The parties gave their assessments of the events which have taken place in the security zone, and exchanged views on ways of resolving the existing situation. Consultations on these issues will be continued. (The positions of the sides are annexed.)

Ceasefire

Security sector→Ceasefire→Ceasefire provision

Page 1, [Summary] Ceasefire mentioned as part of agenda.

Page 2, ... 7. The parties reaffirmed their adherence to the Tbilisi Declaration of 14 August 1997, in particular:

- the commitment not to resort to the use of force to resolve the problems dividing them and not under any circumstances to permit a renewal of bloodshed. Any differences will be resolved exclusively by peaceful and political means, through negotiations and consultations.

Page 2, ... 9. The parties stressed the need for the immediate implementation of the decision taken by the Coordination Council to elaborate a mechanism in which the representatives of the sides, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and/or the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States ("the CIS peacekeeping force") might participate for the investigation and prevention of violations of the Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces of 14 May 1994 and of subversive terrorist acts carried out in the conflict zone.

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The position of the Abkhaz side

When the process of the organized return of the refugees to the Gali district begins, measures shall be taken to lift the restrictions established by the decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of 19 December 1994 and by the decision of the Heads of State of CIS of 19 January 1996. In this connection, the Abkhaz side believes that there is a need for the speedy signing of the draft agreement on peace and guarantees for the prevention of armed confrontation and protocol on the return of refugees to the Gali district and measures for economic rehabilitation prepared during the June Georgian-Abkhaz consultations.

Police

No specific mention.

Armed forces

No specific mention.

DDR

No specific mention.

Intelligence services

No specific mention.

Parastatal/rebel and opposition group forces

No specific mention.

Withdrawal of foreign forces	No specific mention.
Corruption	No specific mention.
Crime/organised crime	No specific mention.
Drugs	No specific mention.
Terrorism	<p>Page 2, 9. The parties stressed the need for the immediate implementation of the decision taken by the Coordination Council to elaborate a mechanism in which the representatives of the sides, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and/or the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States ("the CIS peacekeeping force") might participate for the investigation and prevention of violations of the Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces of 14 May 1994 and of subversive terrorist acts carried out in the conflict zone.</p> <p>Page 3, ANNEX: Positions of the sides on paragraph 8 ... The position of the Abkhaz side As a result of the armed conflict provoked by the Georgian side in May 1998 in the Gali district of Abkhazia, and also of the continuing illegal actions of the "White Legion" and "Forest Brothers" terrorist and subversive groups, and of the continued laying of mines and other acts of violence, causing casualties first and foremost among the Abkhaz militia and the peacekeeping force, and also among local inhabitants, refugees and displaced persons, UNOMIG personnel and other international personnel working in Abkhazia, the situation in the region has deteriorated and is a cause for serious concern.</p>

Transitional justice

Transitional justice general	No specific mention.
Amnesty/pardon	No specific mention.
Courts	No specific mention.
Mechanism	No specific mention.
Prisoner release	No specific mention.
Vetting	No specific mention.
Victims	No specific mention.

Missing persons	No specific mention.
Reparations	No specific mention.
Reconciliation	Page 2, ... 7. The parties reaffirmed their adherence to the Tbilisi Declaration of 14 August 1997, in particular: ... • the conviction that the time has come to embark on a policy of peace and well-being and to act jointly with dignity and mutual tolerance in a spirit of compromise and reconciliation;

Implementation

UN signatory	UN (Chair), UNDP, UNHCR, UNDP (Facilitator); 3. Parties renewed support for more involvement of the UN in the peacekeeping process.
Other international signatory	with the participation of representatives of the Russian Federation, in its capacity as facilitator, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the States belonging to the group of Friends of the Secretary-General, namely France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as observers
Referendum for agreement	No specific mention.

International mission/force/similar

Page 1, ... 3. The participants at the meeting renewed their support for the proposals of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to strengthen the involvement of the United Nations in the peacekeeping process aimed at achieving a comprehensive political settlement. They recognize that the process begun on the initiative of the Secretary-General is continuing and should be stepped up.

Page 2, ... 9. The parties stressed the need for the immediate implementation of the decision taken by the Coordination Council to elaborate a mechanism in which the representatives of the sides, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and/or the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States ("the CIS peacekeeping force") might participate for the investigation and prevention of violations of the Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces of 14 May 1994 and of subversive terrorist acts carried out in the conflict zone.

Page 3, ... 13. The participants at the meeting noted the importance of coordination of the activities of UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force for the stabilization of the situation in the conflict zone and for the prevention of armed conflicts.

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Enforcement mechanism

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