



**Centre for
OSCE Research**
Institute for Peace Research
and Security Policy at the
University of Hamburg (IFSH)

Mission Information Package South Caucasus

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Preface

Purpose of the MIP

This Mission Information Package (MIP) on the South Caucasus is the second in a series of induction papers for incoming members of the OSCE, UN and other international field missions. Its purpose is to provide essential background information on the region and international field endeavours in a concise and user-friendly format.

The MIP includes:

- Basic country information on Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia
- A brief history and concise analysis of regional conflicts and conflict potentials in the South Caucasus
- A comprehensive overview of foreign interests in South Caucasus affairs
- A comprehensive overview of international organizations that are involved in conflict management and development co-operation in the region
- References to relevant Internet resources.

The MIP aims to offer the reader an academic synthesis of the vast literature available and to present it in a cogent, digestible and applicable form. As mentioned, it is to provide a compact source of information for members of international field activities in the region. It is also meant to be used by the participants in international peace mission training courses that are organized by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Likewise, it is hoped that the package will be of interest to officials of other international organizations, NGOs and governmental agencies as well as students and academics interested in this subject.

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MIP South Caucasus

The MIP covers the main political events in the South Caucasus until late 2002 and early 2003. It is divided into ten main parts.

Following a short *Introduction* on the Caucasus and its separate South, *Chapter One* gives an overview on the main conflict potentials in the region.

Chapters Two and Three focus on the three South Caucasus countries themselves, providing a history of national and regional events and conflicts. In particular, the relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan and especially the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are highlighted. Also, an introduction is given on conflicts and conflict potentials in a number of provinces of Georgia, namely Abkhazia (Georgia's north-west); South Ossetia (north); Ajaria (south-west); Javakheti (south), mainly populated by ethnic Armenians; Samegrelo (west); the Pankisi Gorge (north-east), populated by ethnic Chechens; as well as the district of Marneuli (south-east), considerably populated by ethnic Azeri. An attempt to reflect the specific security relevance these entities and sites have determines the order in which they are presented.

Chapter Four provides information on the various international players and their interests in the South Caucasus. *Chapters Five through Seven* give three brief country overviews on Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. *Chapters Eight and Nine* provide information on the OSCE, UN and CIS peacekeeping activities and other engagements in the South Caucasus. *Chapter Ten* gives a general idea on other international organizations' activities.

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Your Views and Comments The information covered here is subject to continual revision. The Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) would highly appreciate any feedback and suggestions from our readers.

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Introduction

The Caucasus and Its Separate South

This introduction is a brief description of the South Caucasus, its distinctive history, its peoples and inner driving forces which are seen as a unique and separate part of the Caucasus region.

The Caucasus

The Caucasus Mountains are a mountain range extending from the Black Sea in the west to the Caspian Sea in the east. It consists of two parts: the North and the South Caucasus. The North Caucasus encloses the southern part of the Russian Federation and is mainly inhabited by Russians and a multitude of the so-called Small Ethnicities of the North Caucasus. The South Caucasus embraces three countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. In the south-west, it borders on the northern part of Turkey. In the south-east, it neighbours Iran. The Caucasus Mountains are considered a dividing line between Europe and Asia.



The South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), neighbouring countries and districts

Source: <http://www.armenianholocaust.com/caucasus.htm>

The Separate South

While it is part of a larger geographic mountainous area, the southern part of the Caucasus (the South Caucasus, the Southern Caucasus or—especially in the Russian perception—the Transcaucasus) is commonly seen as a separate region with its own geography, history, and its own social and political rules. Like the North of the Caucasus, it is made up of a mixture of ancient cultures with dozens of different peoples all insisting upon their ancient pasts and wanting to assert their longstanding rights. It is something that is difficult for the people of the West to visualize, but history, religion and ethnic background in the South Caucasus are a lively element of daily public and even private life. In the conversations of men and women in the streets, history is often measured in millennia and centuries rather than in decades and years. History is largely seen as an integral part of the present and a driving force for the future. In fact, references to the deep roots of preceding civilizations serve as arguments in contemporary political disputes. Psychologically backward attitudes in public thinking to a large degree dominate reflections over present-day realities. In politically sensitive situations, this often leads to rigid positions that are hard to negate. For this reason, it is obvious that deadlocks over disputed issues have always been and will

remain a very typical scenario in the South Caucasus.

Furthermore, inter-ethnic and international relations in the South Caucasus are defined to a large degree by ethnic and tribal pride and self-esteem. In the view of the outsider, the native peoples of the region exhibit an indefatigable conviction in the uniqueness and historical mystery of their ethnic groups and areas of settlement. Close kinship ties within the various ethnicities (including families, communities, business circles or political groups) are simultaneously cornerstones of and threats to South Caucasus statehoods. The clan-like structure of public life serves as a means of ethnic and national self-protection.

Not only is the South Caucasus separate from the rest of the region, but it is divided internally. It is their diverse religious, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds that make the different peoples of the three little nations in this tiny sub-region so disconnected from one another.

As a rule, each ethnic group of the South Caucasus sees itself as indigenous people with a natural and exclusive right to live in their own specific homeland and only there. In this context, it is essential for political analysis and decision-making to realize that this self-understanding hardly contains a very accurate reflection of the particular moment of a people's historical emergence in what has now become their native land. On the contrary, it strictly and intrinsically rejects any of the likely demands of a people's (typically) expelled predecessors. In this sense, the South Caucasus is a place where a winner mentality reigns and everyone expects his neighbour to maintain a similar way of thinking. Disagreements have arisen over time and continue to arise over locations that have frequently changed tribal or national ownership. This is the case in most of the territories in the South Caucasus, and over the course of time some of them, like Nagorno-Karabakh, have acquired an exceptional sensitivity and symbology. Whenever a dispute occurs in this region, it is inevitably close to becoming highly emotional.

Throughout their histories, the titular nations of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have lived with one another and other ethnic groups in a permanent alternation of armed conflicts and the longer or shorter periods between them. Ceasefire and peace are accompanied by subliminal doubts about their actual sustainability. In this respect, it seems that the three main nations of the South Caucasus coexist with each other in a more or less unwanted but accepted trinity that is full of mutual enrichment and close affinity but also unfortunately has dominant elements of deep-seated scepticism and suspicion. The legendary image of the Caucasian man embodies highly appreciated values like honour, pride and obligingness. Hospitality is one of the character traits he values most. At the same time, he is the epitome of Caucasian belligerent strength and protectiveness.

The current major conflicts in the South Caucasus are imbedded in disputes over administrative units – to be precise, autonomous legal entities. Armenian-Azeri relations are overshadowed by the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. There are no disputes over the Azeri exclave of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, which has a special place in history. But it is hermetically isolated from Azerbaijan by its neighbour Armenia. Contemporary Georgia suffers from disputes between the central government and the autonomies of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Relations with Ajaria are sensitive. The provinces of Samegrelo, Javakheti and Marneuli as well as the Pankisi Gorge are also subject of special concern to the Georgian central government, although the situations there are less alarming.

Even though it is a fairly autarkic region, the South Caucasus has also been a crossroad for other cultures. It has been exposed *inter alia* to Arab, Mongol, Tatar, Turkic, Persian and Slavic influence. It was forced to deal with the neighbouring Byzantine and Ottoman empires. In the past as well as the present, it has been given special attention by Turkey, Iran and Russia. As a region with immense natural resources, it has been provided with special geo-political and economic attention by the Western world. Once, it was a major trade and transport corridor. Traditionally, it has been sensitive to the political balances that go beyond national borders.

Economic weakness and social hardship are a part of the logic that rules inter-ethnic and international relations within the South Caucasus.

Contribution to Non-Partisan Perception of South Caucasus Affairs In the following Mission Information Package, emphasis will be put on describing disputed issues in an unbiased manner, i.e. we will not favour any of the sides involved. The purpose of this package is to elucidate a complex and non-partisan perception of South Caucasus affairs as an aid to those who are generally interested or directly involved in regional conflict resolution and development co-operation. The complexity of the issues and the multitude of contradictory standpoints, not to mention the numerous conflicting connotations of related terminology, are equally considered.

In order not to value any one country above the others, the three South Caucasus countries; Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as the other states and regions involved in South Caucasus affairs will be mentioned in alphabetical order.

Chapter One

Main Conflict Potentials in the South Caucasus

This chapter will focus on the major conflict potentials endemic in the South Caucasus. In addition to the most important modern-day conflicts—the Nagorno-Karabakh issue between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the numerous regional disputes inside of Georgia—there are a large number of latent threats to regional peace building. For one, the atmosphere in the South Caucasus is widely characterized by a mutual suspicion and profound pessimism which are deeply rooted in history.

Atmos- pherics

1. Inter-Confessional and Inter-Ethnic Animosities in the South Caucasus

Suspicion is apparently one of the strongest underlying features of inter-confessional and inter-ethnic relations in the South Caucasus. Admittedly, this is probably a rather subjective and polemic observation which remains to be confirmed through sociological research. Nonetheless, to a witness of the developments in the South Caucasus, it may appear axiomatic. Independent of whether ancient and contemporary disputes have been settled or not, people are fundamentally wary, believing they will be outmanoeuvred by their neighbours. This affects relations between individuals, social and political groups, business circles or governments equally. Apart from the pride oaths and promises the Caucasians are famous for, their mutual distrust seems ever present. It may be that this attitude has grown in the region due to the experience of millennia of warfare, changing coalitions, betrayals and ethnic cleansing. The suspicion that sustainable peace building cannot be achieved in the region is probably an intrinsic key factor in inter-confessional and inter-ethnic relations. In contrast to Western cultures and values, historical optimism—including the belief in the ultimate resolvability of conflicts—is certainly not an attitude of the peoples of the South Caucasus. In addition, their inherent mistrust clouds the regional business atmosphere and even influences the way individuals plan their lives.

“The enemy of my enemy is my friend” is a guiding proverb in the South Caucasus. Sudden changes in the individual relations between ethnic groups or nations can easily lead to a rotation in the whole configuration of regional coalitions and counter-coalitions.

Inter- Confessional Disputes

As a rule, international, regional or inter-ethnic affairs are widely perceived by the Caucasians as necessarily having inter-confessional foundations. The ever-present religious dispute is a main pattern engrained in contemporary public thinking. It is chiefly based on the discrepancies existing throughout history between the Christian and Muslim beliefs. On the Christian side, Orthodox and Apostolic believers maintain reservations towards each other. On the Muslim side, Sunnites and Shiites have their own reservations about one another. Generally, the Christian/Sunnite/Shiite trinity may be seen as the crux of the conflicts and coalitions in the South Caucasus. Changing alliances in and around the Caucasus are continually made and remade along these lines.

The Armenian Apostolic Church, the Georgian, Megrelian, Ossetian and Russian Orthodox Churches represent the main Christian religions in the region. Armenia is proud that in the year 301 AD it became the world's first Christian nation. Georgia traces its roots back to the Holy Virgin. Russia, the northern neighbour, once believed Moscow would become the Third Rome. Coalitions between these Christians are subject to alteration.

The Abkhazians, Ajaris, Meskhetians and Turks, who are predominantly Sunnites, and the Azeri and Iranians, who are Shiites, make up the Muslim peoples of the region. In secular Azerbaijan and Turkey, the Muslim belief as well as the Turkic ethnicity are powerful nation-building elements. Shiism is the official religion of the Islamic Republic of Iran that sees itself as an advanced post of fundamental Shiite belief. There is friendliness and close co-operation between the Sunnite Turks, the Sunnite ethnicities in Georgia and, above all, the Shiite Azeri Turks. Conversely, Iranian/Turkish relations are a classical case of how animosities between Sunnite and Shiite Muslims characterize relations between nations. This is while the reserved attitude of Shiite Iranians towards the Shiite Azeri are due to the latter's Turkic background. Also, Iranians are alarmed about long-term prospects of cross-

border contacts between Azerbaijan and the considerable Iranian Azeri minority.

Erratic Inter-ethnic Relations

Inter-confessional relations, inter-ethnic and international relations in and around the South Caucasus have been erratic. In modern history, external disputes between Persians, East Slavs (Russians) and Turks have continually spilled over into the South Caucasus from the adjoining regions. The major internal dispute in the region is the one between Armenians and Azeri. This time, it is focussed on the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh. Furthermore, there is a number of conflicts between the various ethnic groups of Georgia.

Hostilities between Armenians and Azeri have produced highly bipolarized inter-ethnic relations within and between the two countries. They superimpose any other inter-ethnic relations and are almost resistant to other ethnic influences. Armenia has a nearly mono-ethnic population. Its Assyrian, Kurdish and Yezidi native minorities—to name the relatively large ones—are a very small per cent of the population. They keep rather marginal positions within the general inter-ethnic picture of Armenia. In Azerbaijan, the Avars, Georgians, Jews, Kurds, Lezghins, Meskhetian (including a large group of formerly deported persons), Russians, Talysh, Tatars, Udins and Ukrainians as well as other ethnic groups officially total about a fifth of the country's inhabitants. Apart from some vague separatist tendencies among ethnic Lezghins in the Northeast of the country in 1993, there have been no signals to indicate open inter-ethnic conflicts.

In Georgia, the picture is different. This multi-ethnic country is largely separated into compact minority areas. Inter-ethnic tensions define the atmosphere in Georgia and have been putting the very existence of the Georgian state in danger from the very moment of its post-Soviet foundation. Centrifugal forces are moving ethnic groups and their administrative entities away from the ethnic Georgian central government. The Abkhaz and South Ossete peoples are seeking either independence, or closer relations and/or unification with Russia and their ethnic relatives on the other side of the border. The Chechens are a threat to the districts near the north-eastern border. The Ajar people are considering autonomy. Armenians in the South are closer to Yerevan than to Tbilisi. Azeri on the Southeast periphery maintain close relations to their ethnic countrymen in Azerbaijan. Megrelians see themselves as a unique ethnic group (based on language) but they also consider themselves to be Georgians.

Iran's large Azeri minority plays a special role. It is estimated to be twice the size of the population of Azerbaijan. For the most part, this minority lives in the northern region bordering on Azerbaijan. Cross-border relations among the Azeri expanded with the weakening and dissolution of the Soviet Union. For a short period during the very first years of national independence, radical forces in Azerbaijan tried to raise the political issue of unifying the Azeri people. Understandably, with its multicoloured ethnic landscape, there was some cause for concern on the Iranian side. These worries still exist.

Ethnolinguistic Groups in the Caucasus Region



Ethnolinguistic Groups in the Caucasus

Source: <http://www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/Marina/6150/ethno.jpg>

Genocidal Trauma

The Armenian genocide of the late 19th century and in 1915 was a historical catastrophe that remains equally traumatizing for its victims as well as its perpetrators in the entire South Caucasus. Despite the totally contradictory standpoints of the parties involved, who either agree or disagree with the historical facts themselves (i.e., the extermination and mass deportation of ethnic Armenians from Turkey), “genocide” is a key term in the public perception of South Caucasus affairs. Involuntarily, recent acts of violence like the incidents in Sumgait (Azerbaijan) in 1988, Baku in 1990, Tskhinvali (Georgia) in 1991 or Khojali (Azerbaijan) in 1992 are associated with events that occurred in the region almost a century ago. Genocide is still an active political category in the region, blocking reconciliation and peace building. Large-scale physical violence including mass slaughters of members of hostile ethnic groups have come to be accepted and are even expected. In fact, they still serve as an instrument in resolving inter-ethnic and international relations in the region.

Pan-Turkism

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Turkey has gained considerable commercial influence in the post-Soviet area. Naturally, it has established close political links with former Soviet republics dominated by ethnic Turks. It maintains ties to administrative

districts and areas of compact Turkic settlements in Russia and Ukraine. Thus, there are concerns from various sides that there may be a further inner-Turkic rapprochement. With or without reason, there are fears that there may be a revival of the pan-Turkism that was propagated by the Young Turks under Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) at the beginning of the 20th century.

Shifts after September 11

The events of 11 September 2001 have also led to political shifts in the South Caucasus. In particular, they were followed by intensified endeavours for international recognition as the primary regional anti-terror partner. This became the new foreign-policy tenor equally in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The US government's *War Against Terrorism* campaign has mobilized political energies throughout the region, mainly because of expected shifts in the global players' political preferences. In political perceptions, the appearance of US military forces on post-Soviet territory (South Caucasus and Central Asia) was clearly a major change in regional geopolitics. Along with the recently established South Caucasus states' associated membership in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, it has on all three sides triggered expectations towards a broadening co-operation with the US and other Western countries. Georgia and Azerbaijan have intensified their military co-operation with the US and NATO member Turkey. Georgia applied for NATO membership in late 2002. Armenia is making efforts to strengthen relations with the US, while reconsidering its strategic alliance with Russia.

At all three sides, the complexity of these ongoing changes has produced fears a given country will be regarded, so to speak, as coming in second in a renewed competition over strategic partnerships. Against this backdrop, Russia's role in the region is—at least for the time being—more than ever being perceived as secondary. Even in Armenia, voices have been heard on changing political accents.

2. Complicated Geographic Realities

The Caucasus and Central Asia



The Caucasus and Central Asia

Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/caucasus_cntrl_asia_pol_00.jpg

Landlocked Location of Armenia and Azerbaijan

Armenia suffers due to its land-locked location. Moreover, its western and eastern borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan are closed. In the south, foreign trade with Iran can be expected to meet with US disapproval and is in any case limited by economic incapacities on both sides. The use of northern trade routes through Georgia is risky and extraordinarily

expensive. Taking advantage of Georgian roads and railway lines holds the risks of being blackmailed, kidnapped or drawn into military actions. Georgian customs duties are increasingly expensive. In addition, local authorities arbitrarily impose supplementary duties *en route*. Air travel is costly.

Azerbaijan is bordered on the east by the Caspian Sea, an inland sea also bordering on Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan. Azerbaijan's immediate neighbours are Armenia, Georgia, Iran and Russia. In the meantime, Azerbaijan would greatly prefer using the land route across some dozens of kilometres of Armenia to Turkey with whom it has close ties. The geographical reality and political peculiarities must be taken into account in the logistics of transporting Azeri oil to Turkey and Europe.

**No Link
between
Turkic
Countries**

The non-existence of a geographic link between Turkey and Azerbaijan is a political brainteaser which does not affect these two countries alone. If they were to become linked, this would open up a corridor from Turkey through Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea to the Turkic countries of Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Much to Turkey's displeasure, geopolitical realities are obstacles to inter-Turkic communication and are business unfriendly.

**No Link
between
Azerbaijan
and
Nakhichevan**

There is also no geographic link between Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan. The Azeri exclave is isolated from its motherland. Surrounding Turkish districts are not very well developed economically. Since the Nagorno-Karabakh war, the border to Armenia has been hermetically sealed. This has prevented Nakhichevan from achieving economic integration and social welfare. Increased communication between Armenia and Nakhichevan on energy and water supply, cross-border trade and transport etc. could improve the situation, but up to now there has been no contact between the two sides.

3. Controversies over Natural Resources. Oil and Water

Disputes over two natural resources plague the South Caucasus: oil and fresh water. They are destined to become the fuel for future conflicts in the region.

Caspian Oil

Potentially, crude oil is the most valuable natural resource and economic asset the Caucasus/Caspian region has to offer the world economy. According to different estimates, the region disposes of about five per cent of the world's oil reserves. Natural gas is another valuable resource in a greater part of the region. However, these treasures of the soil have up to now not materialized into a source of substantial regional economic growth and social well-being. This is due to a number of reasons:

First, a key problem in the South Caucasus is the asymmetric distribution of its oil deposits. While Azerbaijan is a traditional oil producer, Armenia and Georgia have virtually no oil or gas deposits.

Second, Azerbaijan is for all practical purposes a landlocked country (the Caspian Sea is a lake surrounded by land). It is forced to use international transit routes to export its oil. This is the reason internal stability or instability in all three of these South Caucasus countries as well as the bilateral and trilateral relations between them directly affect general prospects for Caspian oil exploitation, whether it be negatively or positively. For the time being, they have not improved these prospects. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is only one of the reasons for this.

Third, to keep pumping oil to Europe through the Russian pipeline system is not very attractive to Azerbaijan, as it is attempting to rid itself of inherited economic dependencies. Moreover, Russian infrastructures have deficits in areas like quality and management standards as well as in productivity and costs. Also, the use of Russian transit routes has been met with criticism from a number of other interested parties. Azerbaijan is seeking to develop alternatives, chiefly by intensifying its contacts with Turkey. But, as has been pointed out, Armenia—allied with Russia and to a certain extent with Iran—has prevented direct Azeri/Turkish oil links. Also, Azerbaijan and Turkey have closed their borders with Armenia. Constructions on an Azeri/Georgian/Turkish pipeline were started in 2002. However, it is subject to very dangerous security threats throughout Georgia.

Fourth, along with Russia, leading Western powers that have traditionally been involved in the global oil business also have a keen interest in becoming involved in the Caspian enterprise. This competition makes the South Caucasus countries subject to the political games of the big players. It may broaden commercial horizons, but narrows political options. The international players involved in the regional oil business may accelerate regional conflict solution by promoting the oil industry. However, they may instead cause quite the contrary.

Fifth, activities by Turkey and Iran to get involved in Caspian business are multiplying and complicating the amalgamation of competing international interests in the region.

Sixth, there are well-known international reservations about co-operation with Iran. This affects projects on an Armenian/Iranian oil pipeline link that have at best been met with hesitance.

Seventh, suggestions of linking the Central Asian oil and gas business to the Caspian region complete the picture of South Caucasus/Caspian affairs which is a complicated interwoven fabric of conflicting economic and political interests. In addition, they reinforce the above-mentioned scepticism on pan-Turkic links. The first Azeri/Kazakh agreements on constructing a trans-Caspian pipeline were signed in 2002.

***Caspian Sea
Demarcation***

The still unsettled demarcation of Caspian territorial waters must be mentioned separately. This case is subject to international law. Settlement must be reached by the Caspian countries of Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan. Its outcome will have direct implications for the individual shares of each country in the Caspian offshore oil reserves. During recent years, there have been reports that Iran and Russia have used military threat in individual cases. The conflicts that could arise due to disputes over the Caspian Sea endanger also the South Caucasus.

***Regional
Fresh Water***

Fresh water is one of the most vital natural resources in the South Caucasus. Locally and throughout the year, annual rainfall differs significantly. On the South Caucasus average, the amount of precipitation is low. Additionally, the region has a hot summer climate, which is partly sub-tropical. Meanwhile, a number of Georgian districts are rich in water resources. Lake Sevan in Armenia is the biggest fresh water reservoir of the region. A considerable number of regional rivers are used internationally. An increasing amount of water is being used by transit countries. Often, it either becomes polluted or does not reach its natural destination. Limited and diminishing water capacities are likely to turn the technical issue of access to water into a subject of forthcoming regional confrontation.

More to the point, water reservoirs and waterways are as asymmetrically allocated in the South Caucasus as regional oil deposits. In this case, however, Armenia is in a much better position than its neighbour Azerbaijan. Lake Sevan in northern Armenia is largely exploited for energy production, industrial and agricultural purposes as well as to provide drinking water. Many waterways of the mountainous South Caucasus region flow through Armenia and from the Armenian high regions down to all four neighbouring countries. In this regard, Armenia sees itself in an advantageous position.

Moreover, because of different geographic conditions in the different valleys, waterways often intersect regional borderlines in two directions. Water flows from one country to the other in one valley. It then flows back into the next one. Consequently, a really effective use of limited regional water reserves would require regional solutions of and co-operation on water issues. However, the integrated regional water management system of Soviet times was deliberately abolished during post-Soviet transition and armed conflict. There is no co-ordination in regionally implementing national and international legislation on the use of common waterways and water reservoirs. To a large extent, the exploitation of irrigation systems has become too expensive for many of the three countries' farmers.

Especially—but not only—in the Armenian/Azeri case, the reconstruction of cross-border water supply systems and the reopening of existing water channels with all related infrastructures would be of mutual benefit. It would be a small-scale but effective tool in conflict settlement. Furthermore, it would have to be imbedded in trilateral co-ordination.

Since 2001, when water-related security issues were made the focus of OSCE economic and environmental activities, special international attention has been paid to technical co-operation on the sustainable use and the protection of the quality of water in the region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.

***Regional
Aquifers***

Moreover, regional and international awareness is being drawn to the resources of internationally shared transboundary aquifers in the South Caucasus. This is a relatively new topic in the regional discussions. Academic research has begun to focus on this issue. Existing regional inventories of transboundary aquifers are nonetheless not very developed. One anticipates the discovery of considerable subterranean fresh water reserves.

4. Economic and Social Security Threats

At the moment and in the long term, conflict settlement and sustainable peace building in the South Caucasus are hampered by a number of economic, social, demographic and environmental security threats. Along with the ongoing political and military feuds, they are the portents of forthcoming hostilities.

***An Economic
Cul-de-Sac***

After decades of imposed stability under the Soviet system, the political and military atmosphere throughout the South Caucasus has now become very fragile. In economic terms, administrative instability, legal uncertainty, bad governance as well as inter-ethnic and international conflicts send few encouraging signals to local businessmen and interested investors abroad. Lack of goodwill on the part of the bureaucracy, little investment support, questionable quality of services, high levels of taxation, poor infrastructures, downgraded labour force standards and social problems additionally complicate the situation. Moreover, there is little enforcement of the law.

The three South Caucasus countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, are still at a cultural crossroad between the democratic West and the re-orienting East, between the prosperous North and the developing South. Democracy and the market economy have been a huge disappointment and still raise doubts at all levels of the social strata. Present-day reality proves that there has been a rather pragmatic return to the earlier pattern of public and economic administration. There are still no convincing national economic visions.

In all three states, large amounts of national values have been slipping through state hands. The governments themselves and their civil servants have been party to unsanctioned activities. It is not exceptional that individual and corporate income is not reported. Informal business arrangements, corruption and tax evasion are common practice. Barter trade has, to a large extent, replaced payment for goods and services with money.

The capital assets of the three national economies have been deteriorating steadily. Numerous production lines and distribution networks have collapsed. Large-scale industries have been removed from their previous technological cycles. Even during the late Soviet years, there was little renewal of existing equipment. On average, present-day investment rates have remained low. Many of the industrial and agricultural capacities are out of operation. Infrastructures such as road and railway networks, local telecommunication systems, electricity systems, water supply and sewage pipelines are overused and outdated. Electricity and central heating are turned off regularly in all three countries and their districts, although the frequency of this differs from country to country. What is more, the daily water supply often only lasts for a couple of hours.

Since the late Soviet years, all these circumstances have caused and deepened economic isolation within and around the region. The economic dissolution of the Soviet national economy followed by fragmentary market-oriented transitions has basically led to the collapse of all three national economies. Co-operation with former countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (COMECON) has been interrupted completely and has never been adequately replaced. Co-operation within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is at an all-time low. Residual domestic production is a low percentage of earlier figures.

The morale of the general public is for the most part pessimistic. Economic expectations are restrained. Comparative investment capabilities of the region are measured against investment opportunities of neighbouring countries.

**Social
Pressure**

Many South Caucasians have suffered from post-Soviet developments. A large majority of them have lost income and property. Social polarization and mass impoverishment define their life. There is a thin stratum of rich or well-situated persons. There is almost no middle class, but an overwhelming percentage of the population of these three countries lives near or beneath the poverty line.

High unemployment rates may be the most expressive indicator of the deplorable social and economic situation in the South Caucasus. The official statistics of the three countries show double-digit numbers but are usually understated. Unofficial estimates indicate that hidden unemployment rates are way over 50 per cent. There are significant imbalances on national and regional labour markets.

Average per capita monthly income is not more than circa 24 to 36 USD. A strong poverty mentality defines the social landscape. There is a direct connection between limited income and the narrow time frame for individual planning. This kind of poverty leads to “day-to-day” decision-making. Its outward appearance indicates a “hand-to-mouth” way of life. Its impact is large-scale social and economic passivity. The perpetual erosion of social security systems, deficiencies in public education and disparities in population growth narrow the likelihood of overcoming this situation. Moreover, demographic trends are generally imbalanced. Birth rates have dropped and are putting forthcoming social and economic recovery into question considerably. Birth rates are regionally imbalanced.

**Social
Migration**

Against this background, emigration became an important social phenomenon during recent years. Migration numbers for the three countries differ. However, net immigration is the general tendency. Most Caucasians leave their homelands for the comparatively prosperous Russian Federation, Western Europe and the US. Those who emigrate are of working age, highly qualified and have often completed general or specialized secondary and higher education. Growing deficiencies in the labour force and shrinking consumer demand contribute directly as well as indirectly to economic recession.

**Ethnic
Migration**

In Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, refugees and persons in refugee-like situations, such as formerly deported and internally displaced persons, constitute social groups of special concern to their governments. The degree of their desire to return to their native homes or whether to integrate into their new environment varies from country to country and poses long-standing problems to political decision-makers. In addition, refugees, FDPs and IDPs have increased the national armies of the unemployed.

South Caucasian history has proven that the increasing social pressures described above may easily become the breeding ground for intensified inter-ethnic tensions and international conflicts.

5. Environmental Security Threats

The main environmental security threats in the South Caucasus have emerged in the spheres of nuclear power generation, water use and water pollution as well as mineral wealth exploitation. Often, these threats are interrelated.

**Nuclear
Power**

Because of the high public awareness of the issue, nuclear power generation in the South Caucasus may be number one on the list of regional environmental security threats. However, it is only one of a larger number of similarly important topics.

The reactors of the Armenian nuclear power station Metsamor, located only some 20 km from Yerevan, are of Soviet manufacture. Since Metsamor was brought back into operation in 1995, there have been renewed public discussions on the security of nuclear power generation, especially against the backdrop of the catastrophe in Chernobyl (Ukraine) in 1986. Since the South Caucasus is a highly active zone seismically as well as totally unpredictable militarily, Metsamor is to many observers a ticking time bomb.

On the other hand, Metsamor is a foundation stone of Armenia's national economy. Up to now, there seems to be little chance of replacing nuclear power. Azerbaijan does not sell its crude oil to Armenia any longer. In addition, the Armenians do not want to be dependent on

imports from Azerbaijan. Natural gas from the Russian Federation has to cross the Caucasus Mountains through the vulnerable territories of Georgia. (Russia, moreover, provides nuclear fuel to Armenia and participates in its nuclear industry.) There are no significant coal or water reserves in Armenia that could completely replace nuclear power. A number of international organizations—predominantly the European Union—are striving for an early closure of Metsamor or a complete replacement of its technical equipment from the Soviet period, but have thus far not proposed a manageable alternative.

***Water and
Other Natural
Resources***

The overexploitation of water resources is one of the most sensitive environmental issues in the South Caucasus. It has not only led to a reduction of usable water reserves locally, but has diminished other renewable natural resources as well. Forests and large parts of arable land have been put in danger. Regional deforestation, land erosion and desertification are the unwanted results of previous years of social hardship.

Given the current economic and social trends, the ecosystems of the entire region are more or less endangered. Their loss would deprive the South Caucasus of the environmental prerequisites for sustainable development. As was mentioned above, the use of regional water reservoirs and waterways as well as the protection of water quality will unquestionably, sooner or later, be at the very top of the political agenda in the region.

The overexploitation of non-renewable natural resources—predominantly the exploitation of Caspian mineral wealth—is a unique issue in itself.

***Industrial
and Urban
Threats***

Shutdowns, barely functioning and outdated industrial and urban infrastructures are the scenarios which characterize the national economies of the three South Caucasus countries. Abandoned industrial facilities, slowly eroding and collapsing technical systems, ecologically obsolete technologies, inadequate maintenance capacities, chemically dangerous waste plus insufficient recycling capacities generate a largely hidden but latent danger to the environment.

The long-standing mismanagement of urban development has produced another category of environmental threats. Unsafe architecture and infrastructures which do not fulfil the basic requirements of technical and environmental safety, air and water pollution, illegal waste disposal causing soil and water contamination with heavy metals and hazardous chemicals are all cases in point. Related catch phrases on this issue are: the unregulated open and sanitary landfill in the field of industrial production; the underdeveloped municipal solid waste management; the pollution of water-supply systems due to deficiencies in sewage and water treatment mechanisms with local bacteriological contamination of drinking water.

***Social
Threats***

In terms of producing environmental threats, mass impoverishment has become a source of ecological problems in and around cities and rural communities. Conversely, aggravated environmental conditions have narrowed most basic income generation from farming, stockbreeding to orcharding. This is also the case, for example, of deforestation and the desertification following it, which have already reduced the region's inhabitable space.

***Post-Conflict
Damages
and Land
Mines***

Many urban and rural sites in the South Caucasus still show the damages of the inter-ethnic armed conflict and international war of recent years. Due to the deplorable overall economic situation, post-conflict rehabilitation is progressing. War damages pose an additional obstacle to economic recovery. The devastation of farms, plantations, livestock, irrigation systems, roads and electricity supply systems complicates the economic and social reintegration of individuals and their families. In Armenia, post-disaster recovery after the 1988 earthquake brought about additional problems and must be treated as a separate issue.

Landmines are a special security topic. Because of landmine fields, large strips of South Caucasus land are unusable for agricultural, industrial or any other purposes. Logistically, they divide the landscape. They obstruct transport and other communication between rural neighbouring districts and across international borders. Nonetheless, the military sees them as an effective and cheap component of national defence systems. International regulations like the 1997 Ottawa Anti-Landmine Convention have had little impact on national decision-making on this issue. Nonetheless, a number of international organizations have been

pressing for the provision of technical and financial assistance for de-mining programmes like those in Georgia.

For further reading:

Arms proliferation in the Caucasus: <http://www.saferworld.co.uk/CaucasusRep.htm>
 Armenian national and international studies: <http://www.acnis.am/main>
 Azeri news and analyses: <http://www.azerbaijan.com/>
 Caucasus news: <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/>
 Central Asian and Caucasus analyses: <http://www.eurasianet.org>
 Danish analyses of Caucasus issues: <http://www.caucasus.dk/>
 CIS-related news: <http://eng.gazetasng.ru/>
 Environmental issues in the South Caucasus and the Caspian area:
<http://www.grida.no/enrin/soe.cfm?country=caspiansea>
 Environmental outlook for the South Caucasus: <http://www.gridtb.org/projects/CEO/preface.htm>
 Georgian news and analyses: <http://www.civil.ge>
 Oil and gas reserves and further issues of the Caspian
 region: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/caspian.html>
 Politics and strategy in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Southwest Asia: <http://www.cornellcaspien.com/>
 Post-Soviet affairs (compilation of web addresses and analyses offered by Slavic – Eurasian Studies
 Web, Japan: <http://www.slavweb.com/eng/server-e-fr2.html>
 Reports on nations in transition: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/nattransit.htm>
 Russian and South Caucasus analyses: <http://www.csis.org/ruseura/caucasus/index.htm>
 Russian news and analyses on the Caucasus (in Russian): <http://www.kavkazweb.com/>
 Russian daily news in English (Moskovskie Novosti): <http://www.mn.ru/english>
 Swedish Central Asian and Caucasus studies: http://www.ca-c.org/dataeng/bd_eng.shtml
 Turkish analyses of Turkish and Caucasian affairs: <http://www.avsam.org/english/>
 Turkish Daily News: <http://www.turkishdailynews.com/>
 Turkish news and analyses on the Caucasus: <http://www.kafkas.org.tr>
 Russian online news in English (Russian Information Agency Novosti, RIA): <http://en.rian.ru/rian/index.cfm>
 US analyses of Central Asian and Caucasus affairs: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/>
 US analyses of Caucasus affairs: <http://repositories.cdlib.org/>
 War and peace reports, inter alia, on the Caucasus: <http://www.iwpr.net/>
 Water-related issues in the South Caucasus: http://www.daiwater.com/i/NATURAL_RESOURCES.PDF

Websites of Various Think Tanks:

Armenian Centre for National and International Studies: <http://www.acnis.am/main>
 ASAM Centre for Eurasian Strategic Studies: <http://www.avsam.org>
 Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management: <http://www.berghof-center.org/>
 Central Asia and Caucasus Institute(CACI) at the Johns Hopkins University: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/>
 Centre for European Policy Studies: <http://www.ceps.be/>
 Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue: <http://www.hdcentre.org/>
 Center for Journalism in Extreme Situations: <http://www.cjes.ru> (in Russian language)
 Centre for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia: <http://www.csrdg.caucasus.net/>
 Danish Association for Research on the Caucasus: <http://www.caucasus.dk/>
 Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution: <http://www.konfliktloesning.dk/>
 Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University: <http://www.pcr.uu.se/>
 Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (UK): <http://www.fewer.org/>
 Freedom Forum: <http://www.freedomforum.org/>
 Freedom House: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>
 Institute for War and Peace Reporting: <http://www.iwpr.net/>
 London Information Network on Conflicts and State-Building: <http://www.links-london.org/>
 Media Diversity Institute: <http://www.media-diversity.org>
 SIPRI - Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: <http://www.sipri.se/>
 VADA Foundation For Immigrants By Immigrants (Netherlands): <http://www.vada.nl/volkenaa.htm>

Chapter Two

The Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (Dagliq Garabakh, Artsakh)

This chapter will give an introduction to the current major conflict in the South Caucasus – the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It will cover the events related to the late-Soviet stage. In order to determine the conflict's roots, Armenian and Azeri positions in regional history will be examined. Finally, the impact of the Nagorno-Karabakh war in 1992-94 will be elucidated briefly.

1. The Present-day Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (Dagliq Garabakh, Artsakh)

Dissolution of the Soviet Union

When controversies began between the then-Socialist Soviet Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, this was one of the starting points of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This also marked the resurgence of one of the country's most ancient and inherent inter-ethnic conflicts. Moreover, it was an immediate echo of the fact that Moscow had weakened during the period of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. With the society's ideological realignment and the central government's inability to act, the once dormant and now escalating dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh re-emerged. This was imbedded in the nationwide appearance of civil rights and environmental protection groups. Especially on the country's peripheries, there was an atmosphere which led to individual protest actions developing into national liberation movements. To the public, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was probably the most obvious indication that the Soviet Union would collapse and that pre-Soviet regional resentments would return.



Nagorno-Karabakh

Source: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/nagorno-karabakh.gif>

Soviet Nagorno- Karabakh

Under Soviet legislation, the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which was dominated by ethnic Armenians, was a nominally self-governed administrative unit belonging to Azerbaijan—the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (Russian: *Nagorno-Karabakhskaya Avtonomnaya Oblast'*; Azeri: *Qarabakh*, *Daglıq Garabakh*, *Yukhary Garabakh* (Upper Karabakh); Armenian: *Artsakh*; English: Nagorno-Karabakh or Mountainous Karabakh).

Nota bene, the term “Nagorno-Karabakh” is basically an imperfect transliteration of Russian into English. Although this spelling contains an incorrect ending, “Nagorno” is the most popular expression.)

Over the centuries, the ethnic composition of the region of the today’s Nagorno-Karabakh went through numerous changes. According to the last Soviet census in 1989, it had a mixed population of about 180,000 inhabitants, including some 75 per cent Armenians along with mainly ethnic Azeri and Russians. The name “Nagorno-Karabakh” does not refer to any particular ethnic group. The region is located in the eastern part of Azerbaijan, virtually on the Azerbaijan/Armenian border. Yet there is no direct connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, which Armenian inhabitants of Karabakh viewed as their

ethnic homeland. The region of Nagorno-Karabakh has an area of approximately 4,400 sq km with four larger cities. Its capital is Stepanakert (Azeri: *Khankendi*). Even before the outbreak of hostilities, Stepanakert was largely populated by Armenians, while Shusha – Nagorno, Karabakh's pre-Soviet centre, had mainly ethnic Azeri inhabitants.

Subsurface Tensions and Stability During the Soviet period there were a number of on-site attempts to redefine the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. These endeavours influenced, but never significantly changed Moscow's ethnic policy towards the region. They also never led to any major confrontations with the Kremlin. To all appearances, they were mainly Armenian and Azeri attempts to reshuffle regional cards *within* the given Soviet arrangement of controlled inter-regional relations and supervised public administration and local self-government. In practice, they certainly did not affect the *status quo*. The stable incorporation of Armenia and Azerbaijan in regional and countrywide infrastructures of the Soviet national economy and security system circumvented any political moves from below. Regional interdependence and Russian superiority created a situation engendering a fairly workable peace. Nonetheless, subsurface inter-ethnic tensions never really disappeared, especially in the rural areas. Sporadic political discussions were an indication of the sensitivities still existing on inter-ethnic relations and territorial issues. On the eve of likely fundamental changes, these issues quickly regained significance.

August 1987 Petition In August 1987, a petition prepared by the Armenian Academy of Sciences reportedly containing hundreds of thousands of signatures was presented to the Soviet authorities in Moscow. The paper was a formal request for the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan (an autonomous exclave of Azerbaijan, which according to Armenian views in the pre-Soviet period had been inhabited mainly by Armenians and in the late Soviet period predominantly by Azeri) with the Armenian Socialist Soviet Republic.

February 1988 Resolution On 20 February 1988, there was an open debate on Nagorno-Karabakh in a session of the 20th Convocation of the Assembly of Delegates of Nagorno-Karabakh (*Oblastnoy Soviet*, Regional Council) – which was its local legislative body at that time. The assembly passed a resolution directly affecting the region's legal status. The resolution expressed Armenian fears that the Azeri would gain too much ethnic influence in Nagorno-Karabakh, as was the case in Nakhichevan. Prior to this resolution, individual cases of violence took place on both the Armenian and the Azeri sides. These incidents contributed significantly to increasing tensions.

According to the Armenian interpretation today, the above-mentioned resolution *proposed* to unify Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia. It was submitted to the Supreme Soviet in Moscow with a request for understanding and support. In contrast, the Azeri saw the document as a *declaration of secession* from Azerbaijan that would infringe upon its constitutional rights and was an affront to Azeri historical self-understanding.

Many Azeri see this Armenian attempt to take control over Nagorno-Karabakh as *the* turning point in contemporary Armenian-Azeri relations that ultimately led to the war.

Rallies in Yerevan and Baku After 20 February 1988, Moscow replaced some of the Communist Party leaders in Nagorno-Karabakh, simultaneously issuing statements that directly rejected Nagorno-Karabakh's secession from Azerbaijan. This was immediately followed by mass protests in the Armenian capital Yerevan, which Moscow more or less tolerated. However, in March 1988, the Moscow central government moved additional armed forces into the city. Mass political rallies also became a regular part of the political life of Baku. In November 1988, Soviet troops entered Baku.

On 24 February 1988, two young Azeri were murdered in Askeran, a city in Nagorno-Karabakh. Many Azeri see this date as the starting point of ethnic cleansing on both sides. Armenians interpret this event as an isolated incident with criminal implications.

February 1988 Pogrom in Sumgait (Azerbaijan) On 27-29 February 1988, the relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan became overshadowed by an anti-Armenian pogrom in Sumgait – an industrial city in the heart of Azerbaijan located in the vicinity of Baku. Despite the very restrictive Soviet information policy at the time, the massacre became known immediately all over the region. According to accounts from Moscow, more than 30 persons died. Armenians reported that hundreds of

the city's Armenian minority had been killed. They accused Azeri authorities of having arranged or channelled or, at least, closed their eyes to this outburst of ethnic fanaticism. Remarkably, the Sumgait militia and other security forces ignored the incident. Azeri authorities denied charges they had not responded adequately by claiming the casualties had been caused by the actions of individual criminals.

**Ethnic
Cleansing in
Armenia and
Azerbaijan**

In any case, the events in Sumgait rolled history back. Ancient underlying cross-ethnic animosities reappeared. Sumgait was a reminder of the massacres in the late 19th century and the Armenian genocide in Turkey in 1915 as well as the ethnic clashes after World War I. Physical violence again became political reality. Open hostility re-emerged. Azeri began to flee Armenia, claiming they were the victims of systematic Armenian deportation operations. *Inter alia*, they accused the Armenians of pogroms against their countrymen in the Armenian Ararat valley and the suburbs of Yerevan in March 1988. According to Azeri sources, about 165,000 Azeri fled Armenia until early 1988. Armenians, in turn, accused Azeri officials of spreading disinformation and rumours among their countrymen, thus intentionally causing Azeri mass migration. To them, the pogrom was a blunt Azeri reaction to the Nagorno-Karabakh resolution of 20 February. As a reaction to Sumgait, Armenians began to flee Azerbaijan. Ethnic cleansing was conducted in both countries, resulting in the almost total ethnic separation of their peoples.

**Nagorno-
Karabakh
Secession
from
Azerbaijan**

On the political scene, the Supreme Soviet of Armenia supported the resolution of 20 February (15 June 1988), while that of Azerbaijan rejected it (13 June 1988). This signal from Yerevan must have been alarming to Baku. Literally, the Armenian side *agreed* with Nagorno-Karabakh's request for reunification. In a further resolution, the Nagorno-Karabakh Regional Soviet declared the region's secession from Azerbaijan and its fusion with Armenia (12 July 1988). At that moment, Nagorno-Karabakh was already cutting off economic and political ties with Azerbaijan.

In an attempt to avoid an escalation of the dispute as well as the possible creation of unwanted legal precedents, the USSR Supreme Soviet expressed understanding for Azeri positions in a declaration on 18 July 1988. Two months later, renewed clashes between Armenians and Azeri in Stepanakert caused nearly all Azeri inhabitants to flee the city. In the meantime, a senior representative of the Moscow Communist leadership, who had been ordered to Nagorno-Karabakh in March 1988, was, in early 1989, appointed head of a newly established special Nagorno-Karabakh authority that reported directly to Moscow. Ethnic violence as well as clashes between Nagorno-Karabakh residents and troops of the USSR Ministry for Interior continued. At about the same time, Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians established a National Council consisting of what they called authorized people's representatives. Half a year later, the USSR Supreme Soviet abolished the aforementioned special Nagorno-Karabakh authority (28 November 1989) and made a decision to create a Republican Organizing Committee (15 January 1990) that fell under the jurisdiction of the Azerbaijan Socialist Soviet Republic. On the other hand, a number of Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh activists that were being held in Moscow jails were permitted to return back home.

Starting in November 1988, anti-Azeri rallies were held in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. Inter-ethnic tensions escalated. During 1989, 185,000 Azeri and 11,000 Kurds left Armenia for Azerbaijan.

**Earthquake
in Armenia**

On 7 December 1988, an earthquake shook Armenia, having a devastating effect on the little Caucasus republic. This natural disaster destroyed large parts of northern Armenia, causing tragic losses among the population with about 24,000 fatalities. Cities, industrial facilities and communications were largely destroyed. Although it was unusual for international missions to be permitted into the country until the late Soviet period, extensive international as well as Soviet aid was poured into Armenia's post-disaster recovery. Parallel to this, Armenia was intensifying its dispute with the Soviet capital and Azerbaijan. The traumatic experience of this disastrous earthquake strengthened the Armenian desire to fight for national statehood and the reunification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia.

**Armenian
Declaration
in December**

On 1 December 1989, the Armenian Supreme Soviet adopted a resolution on reunification with Nagorno-Karabakh. Thus, the basic setting for the impending ethnic conflict was finally in place. The two ethnically Armenian legal entities (Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh) were

1989 in opposition to Azerbaijan and vice versa. For its part, Azerbaijan was defending its right to sovereignty and territorial integrity (at that historical moment) based on the stipulations of Soviet law.

Armenians and Azeri have highly divergent perceptions of the events that followed.

**Armenian
Standpoint
on Azeri
Actions**

The Armenians believed that the Azeri were making intense efforts to increase the Azeri population in Nagorno-Karabakh. As they saw it, after the events of Sumgait, Azeri authorities rapidly began attempting to resettle Azeri refugees from Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenians are convinced there is a direct link between what they assume was a well-launched ethnic massacre in Sumgait and an endeavour to encourage Azeri migrants to move into Nagorno-Karabakh, thus increasing the number of ethnic Azeri there. They reported also that the Azeri side had increased the number of their military staff in the autonomy considerably. It is in any case true that, in November 1991, Azerbaijan abolished the autonomous status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

**Azeri
Standpoint
on Armenian
Actions**

The Azeri viewed the expanding confrontation over Nagorno-Karabakh as the result of Armenian expansionism aimed at a forceful seizure of parts of sovereign Azeri territory. The Azeri saw themselves as the affronted party to the conflict. In their interpretation, the activities of what they called separatist groups in Nagorno-Karabakh were supported and controlled from the outside (namely by Armenia and Russia) and in conflict with constitutional regulations and international law. At this point, Azerbaijan was in the process of separating from the Soviet Union, i.e., Russia. Soviet and Russian leaderships in Moscow appeared complicated to them, especially since Russia had changed its stance fundamentally during the conflict. It had shifted its support from Azerbaijan to Armenia, where its troops were stationed. The Azeri felt that there were concerted anti-Azeri actions (like rallies, strikes, civil disobedience and other forms of defiance and the death of Azeri civilians), the establishment of illegal shadow authorities and military structures which were endangering legitimate Azeri rights. In the official Azeri perception, Armenia was on the way to setting up a military bridgehead to invade Azerbaijan. In Azerbaijan, there was a lot of discussion on Armenian plans for a establishing a Greater Armenia.

**January 1990
Pogrom in
Baku**

In early 1990, Azerbaijan's capital Baku became the scene of another pogrom against Armenians. Armenian eyewitnesses allege there were unofficial early warnings on this from the Azeri authorities that were followed by open violence which spread slowly through all the Armenian sectors of Baku. The Azeri security forces did not intervene. Households were plundered and Armenians were killed in large numbers. Only after a couple of days did the Soviet troops deployed in Baku move into the city's streets, but they intervened too late and their operations were inefficient, which only increased tensions and the number of victims. According to Azeri reports, they committed unprecedented violence against the population of Baku. Thus, in addition to the atrocities against the Armenians, numerous Azeri were also killed.

Parallel to the intensification of inter-ethnic differences, Azerbaijan also witnessed increasing tensions between the young Azeri national liberation movement and the Azeri communist authorities dependent on Moscow. In early 1990, the Popular Front (a newly established nationalist party) had declared the end of Soviet rule in a number of Azeri cities. The intervention of Soviet troops in Baku was and still is seen as an armed reaction to these declarations. In Azerbaijan, the killing and destruction by the Soviet army in Baku during that period are remembered annually in a Day of National Mourning and the tragedy on 20 January 1990 is remembered as "Black January".

After the Baku incident, between two or three hundred thousand Armenians fled Azerbaijan, mostly to Armenia, but also to Russia.

By that time, the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians were moving towards setting up armed self-defence forces. The Karabakh Committee, which led the Karabakh movement in mainland Armenia, was renamed the Armenian National Movement. Its leader, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, was elected the first non-Communist chairman of the Armenian Supreme Soviet in July 1990.

**Dual Power
in Moscow**

In the interim, Moscow's position had weakened noticeably. Moscow underwent a period of dual political power in which President Boris Yeltsin, surrounded by his new elites who considered themselves representatives of Russia, confronted President Mikhail Gorbachev, who headed the Soviet authorities. In August 1991, old-guard Soviet leaders staged an unsuccessful military putsch. Mikhail Gorbachev gave up his function as Secretary-General, the Soviet government resigned (23 August 1991) and a new establishment under President Yeltsin began to draw power from Soviet structures. The Communist Party was largely forbidden. Various Soviet republics had declared independence or self-government or were in the process of doing so. A year before (12 June 1990), the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR, today the Russian Federation) had declared its "sovereignty within the USSR". The countries surrounding it were steadily breaking away. The Berlin Wall had been peacefully torn down and Eastern bloc allies were going their own way.

**Unclear
Positions of
Moscow**

In 1990/91, Moscow was occupied with making legal provisions for a peaceful dissolution of its entire empire. The Caucasus, including Nagorno-Karabakh, was seen only as a peripheral part of this. Moreover, after the failed military operations in the Baltics as well as the incidents at *Tiananmen Square* in Beijing in 1989, which both alarmed the Russian public, Moscow was hesitant about which steps to take to keep the peace in the Caucasus. The Kremlin kept its military forces in the region on a more or less observer position. Meanwhile, Moscow-subordinated Soviet special forces reportedly deported Armenians from the Shaumyan district neighbouring Nagorno-Karabakh. Ignoring Azeri legal regulations on Nagorno-Karabakh, Moscow abolished the above-mentioned Republican Organising Organizing Committee. However, in an attempt not to lose control over its area of interest, Moscow simultaneously supported the pro-Moscow Azeri leadership. On 27 November 1991, weeks before the Soviet Union's dissolution, the Kremlin annulled the Armenian resolution on reunification. However, neither the legal nor the practical impact of these measures was evident. After the pogrom in Baku, Moscow had declared a state of emergency in Nagorno-Karabakh and then in Baku.

**Three
Declarations
on Independence**

Four months before the official dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan adopted a "Declaration on the Re-Establishment of the National Independence of the Azeri Republic" (30 August 1991), which referred to the existence of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1918/20. This declaration was soon bolstered legally with a public declaration of independence (18 October 1991).

Within a week's time after the Azeri 30 August declaration, the legislative body of Nagorno-Karabakh issued the "Declaration of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh" (2 September 1991). In this declaration, the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh expressed its desire for independence rather than reunification with Armenia. Obviously, this was aimed at strengthening Armenia's international image. Conversely, Armenia has still not officially recognized the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Long before Nagorno-Karabakh's declaration of independence, the legislative body of the adjoining Shaumyan district had adopted a petition requesting administrative inclusion into the Nagorno-Karabakh Region (26 July 1989). This move plunged the mainly Armenian-populated Shaumyan into the political dispute, which in that way spilled over onto non-Karabakh Azeri territory.

Subsequently, Armenia acknowledged Nagorno-Karabakh's independence (21 September 1991). Once again, Azerbaijan declared Nagorno-Karabakh's independence illegal (23 November 1991). To counter this, Nagorno-Karabakh held a referendum which led to an almost unanimous vote for state sovereignty and underscored independence from Azerbaijan (10 December 1991). By mid-1992, Karabakh Armenian troops forced the entire Azeri population out of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In the meantime, the newly established Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), with its three founding members Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, had declared that the Soviet Union was no longer subject to international law and no longer a geopolitical reality (8 December 1991). In Moscow, Mikhail Gorbachev affirmed his retirement as the Soviet president (25 December 1991). The Supreme Soviet announced the dissolution of the Soviet Union (26 December 1991). Thus, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict occurred in a legal

grey area.

Without delay, Nagorno-Karabakh held elections to its parliament (28 December 1991), whereupon the first move of the new legislative branch was to adopt a "Declaration of Independence" (6 January 1992). Thus, inside Nagorno-Karabakh, the legal foundations of statehood appeared to be legally instituted and publicly legitimated.

Self-determination vs. Sovereignty

In retrospect, the legal situation in Nagorno-Karabakh during that period was unclear to outsiders, although it seemed entirely transparent to the conflict parties themselves. Each of them based their observations on different legal sources.

Undoubtedly, Soviet legislation itself had become inconsistent and conflicting during *perestroika* in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Nonetheless, it was the overall legal system that affected the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. From a point of view strictly founded on the rule of law, this system was legally binding regardless of the fact that it was becoming less recognized politically and had little actual influence. Meanwhile, Armenia and Azerbaijan had begun to develop their own national legislation, which had few similarities to Soviet law and even direct contradictions to it. Finally, Nagorno-Karabakh was at this time laying its own legal foundations. Even today, this legal confusion is an obstacle to mediating the conflicting legal interests.

Until the Nagorno-Karabakh referendum (December 1991), all three entities were integral parts of the Soviet Union. For this reason, Armenians cite the Soviet Constitution (Paragraph 86) which stipulated that the Union's autonomous regions had an obligatory right to be heard in defining their own legal status (within Soviet jurisdiction, nonetheless). Likewise, Armenians quote the 1990 Soviet law "On Procedures of the Separation of a Soviet Republic from the USSR", which was the first Soviet legal act explicitly regulating the Soviet Union's dissolution. It stipulated that the autonomous entities had the right to self-determination in the case the particular Soviet Republic, which they belonged to, would separate from the Soviet Union.

The Karabakh Armenians do not consider the secession of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to be a violation of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. In their perception, Nagorno-Karabakh has never been part of Azerbaijan. In particular, this goes for the period in the 1920s when the region was made part of the Soviet Union, as well as when it became independent in 1991. (In legal terms, this position is disputable.) Moreover, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh maintain that their independence was based on democratic procedures. As they see it, their will was reflected in the outcome of the September 1991 referendum and the democratically built bodies of public administration. They emphasize that international law stipulates the right to self-determination and self-defence. In the so-called Forum of the Unrecognised Republics, which also includes representatives from Abkhazia (Georgia), South Ossetia (Georgia) and Trans-Dnestria (Moldova), they regularly voice corresponding demands. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh are aware that the Karabakh conflict is a kind of linchpin for regional conflict settlement throughout the South Caucasus. The degree of autonomy which Nagorno-Karabakh reaches will have implications for entities like Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

In contrast to the Armenian claims to self-determination and self-defence, the Azeri insist on their right to state sovereignty and territorial integrity. *Above all*, they cite the 1975 CSCE Helsinki Final Act and later OSCE documents that guarantee the inviolability of existing European borders. They interpret Nagorno-Karabakh's attempts to secede from Azerbaijan as a direct threat to Azeri statehood.

All in all, the parties to the Karabakh conflict invoke international law. Also, they claim what they call historical rights. From a strict legal perspective, calls for a people's right to self-determination are in direct opposition to calls for a state's right to sovereignty and territorial integrity.

2. The 1992/94 War over Nagorno-Karabakh (Dagliq Garabakh, Artsakh)

Military Actions in

The disagreement over Nagorno-Karabakh increased step by step into war. The conflict's escalation after the failed coup d'état in Moscow in August 1991 led to: the emergence of

Nagorno-Karabakh

paramilitary groups, and due to this, the establishment of regular armies; raids on Soviet (Russian) weaponry and ammunition depots; the concentration of military forces and their operations in and around the region; turmoil in Nakhichevan (the Azeri exclave between Armenia, Iran and Turkey); changing Soviet (Russian) involvement; reciprocally breaking off economic and other ties finally leading to a joint Azeri/Turkish blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia; uncompromising ethnic cleansing with victims on both sides. In Summer 1991, Soviet (Russian) troops launched the “Kol'tso” (“Ring”) operation and took control of the Armenian-populated Shaumyan district and the northern parts of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, after August 1991, Moscow became increasingly caught up in contradictions and simultaneously the Soviet leadership started gradually to withdraw its armed forces from the region.

In late 1991/early 1992, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, which had originally been a Soviet domestic issue, in the end, became an international armed conflict between two sovereign states. The conflict continued to escalate, especially due to the fact that large amounts of weaponry and ammunitions were being channelled into the region. Beginning in early 1992, the Azeri military started shelling Armenian Karabakh sites with artillery. The Armenians responded by conducting extensive combat operations. A rather small-scale armed conflict had turned into an outright battle that became known to the world as the Nagorno-Karabakh war. At that time, both sides were able to build up regular armies – the Armenian side to a large extent used paramilitary formations while the Azeri side employed Azeri military units from former Soviet forces.

Massacre in Khojali

On 25-26 February 1992, during fights over the strategically important Shusha district (rayon) of Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenian armed forces launched combat operations against the town of Khojali which was inhabited by Azeri. The Azeri claim that Russian troops provided active support to the Armenians. According to Azeri reports, hundreds of civilians were killed during the attack and international accounts stated that this was the largest massacre in the conflict. At the same time, the Armenians maintain that no innocent persons were deliberately killed. Meanwhile, the Azeri side reports that 1,275 persons were taken hostage, but later most of them were released from captivity. Nevertheless 150 individuals remain missing. To the Azeri public, Khojali became an incident with symbolic meaning and worthy of national mourning. In commemoration of the Khojali atrocities and massacres in earlier history, 31 March was declared the Day of Genocide of Azerbaijanis. The Khojali episode was one of the reasons Azerbaijan's first president, Ayaz Mutalibov, resigned from office on 6 March 1992.

Taking of Shusha

Following February 1992, the Armenians had visible military success. Shusha, a city of key strategic value, was taken on 8-9 May 1992. (Since then this event has been celebrated on the traditional WWII Victory Day (9 May) in Armenia, giving the date a double meaning.) The taking of Shusha had emblematic significance for the troops on both sides, as the city was seized with almost no losses for the attacking Armenians.

Expansion and the End of War

Furthermore, the seizure of the so-called Lachin corridor provided Nagorno-Karabakh access to Armenian territory. In the early 20th century, Kurds had been deliberately resettled in the Lachin province for—according to the Armenians—an ethnically cementing the geographic divide between mainland-Armenians and Karabakh Armenians. In the early 1990s, the area was inhabited mainly by Kurds, but also by Armenians. The Karabakh Armenian military offensive in May-June 1992 allowed to take over large parts of Lachin province. Reportedly, 30,000 Azeri and Kurds were forcibly displaced. The taking of Lachin ended the geographic partition between the two ethnic Armenian entities.

The subsequent eastward advance by Armenian forces led to a sizeable occupation of Azeri territory. Armenians asserted that occupying Azeri land was a necessity to ensure a strategic advantage. There was no capture of bigger Azeri cities like Ganja – the former Kirovabad, which after Baku is the second largest city in Azerbaijan.

The main acts of war ended in 1993, but military operations continued until early 1994. They resulted in the defeat of the Azeri side and – according to Azeri sources – between 500,000 and 600,000 Azeri were internally displaced. The Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh considers itself an independent entity, but is not recognized internationally. Large sections of Azerbaijan adjoining Nagorno-Karabakh are under Armenian control.

- May 1994
Ceasefire** On 11 May 1994, a ceasefire agreement was signed by the ministers of defence of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the commander of the Nagorno-Karabakh defence forces. The resulting situation has commonly been called a state of “no peace, no war”. On 12 May 1994, the fighting stopped. Since then, the armistice has been broken by occasional incidents on the Line of Contact consisting of shooting on both sides.
- International
Inter-
mediation** Since 1992, the international community has taken measures to intermediate between the parties to the conflict. The OSCE started promoting and hosting special Nagorno-Karabakh peace talks. It acts through the so-called OSCE Minsk Group (named after a planned but so far not conducted Nagorno-Karabakh conference to be held in Minsk) that intermediates between the parties to the conflict. Negotiations have been conducted on bilateral levels between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh is then briefed on these meetings. The OSCE Minsk Group is headed by a Co-Chairmanship consisting of France, the Russian Federation and the United States. Minsk Group members are Belarus, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- Thus far, the key achievement of OSCE Minsk Group efforts has been the maintenance of dialogue and the prevention of a new military confrontation. Naturally, presidential elections scheduled for 2003 in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, did additionally slow down recent activities in the Minsk process at both sides. In general, critics demur the lack of breakthrough in the Karabakh peace talks.
- UN
Involvement** The UN has intervened diplomatically *inter alia* on the occasion of Armenian combat operations in the Kelbajar district. On 30 April 1993, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 822, which called for a ceasefire, the withdrawal of forces, the resumption of negotiations and access for humanitarian efforts. On 29 July 1993, it passed resolution 853, which mainly called upon the Republic of Armenia to convince the Karabakh authorities to make an effort to comply with corresponding UN resolutions and the Minsk Group initiatives.
- OSCE Peace-
keeping
Plans** Parallel to the Minsk Group efforts, the then CSCE considered sending a 3,000-strong multinational peacekeeping force to the conflict zone to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire. It was the first time the CSCE/OSCE would have taken an armed peacekeeping role. Meanwhile, intended operations were never executed.
- Lisbon
Principles** From May 1995 through November 1996, a series of peace negotiations followed within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group in Austria, Russia and Finland. However, they did not achieve any substantial results. In December 1996, the OSCE Summit in Lisbon voted on a declaration recognizing the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. It was not accepted by Armenia. In Annex 1 of the Lisbon Document, the OSCE Chairman-in-Office expressed support for the following principles for the settlement of the Karabakh conflict (*Lisbon Principles*) that include (1) the territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijan Republic; (2) the highest degree of self-rule for Nagorno-Karabakh within the Republic of Azerbaijan as well as (3) security guarantees for the population of Nagorno-Karabakh.
- Minsk Group
Troika** In February 1997, a triple Chairmanship of the Minsk Group (Minsk Group Troika) was established. It includes France, Russia and the US. The co-chairmen developed a common agenda, but also maintained their own individual negotiation schedules. Especially, as one of the traditional regional powers, Russia was initially sceptical of the Minsk Group favouring unilateral initiatives. According to many observers, early Russian peacemaking efforts were often not conducive to OSCE Minsk Group endeavours. On the other hand, Russia did play a decisive role in the ceasefire arrangement. France and the US have also tried to achieve their own goals. The general impression is that the efforts of the three co-chairmen are rather loosely related to what would be concerted Minsk Group activities. All three countries have hosted meetings between the two presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

3. The Historical Background of the War over Nagorno-Karabakh

- Nagorno-
Karabakh
History until** As all conflicts in the Caucasus, the war over Nagorno-Karabakh has deep historical roots and both sides have different views of this history. As shown below, these differences solidly preclude mutual rapprochement.

1917

Historically, Armenians see Nagorno-Karabakh, which is the mountainous division of a territory that geographically also includes the Karabakh plain lands, as part of larger settlement area that had initially belonged to their ancestors. The Azeri also believe the area belonged their forefathers. In general and usually to the surprise of the Western reader, written Armenian history goes back a couple of millennia. Azeri history starts somewhere during the first millennium BC. Meanwhile, the Karabakh history that has affected the contemporary conflict begins somewhere during the last pre-Christian centuries.

**Armenian
Interpretation**

The relevant Armenian history begins in the 1st century BC. The records state that during following periods sizeable immigration flows occurred in the area. One of them was during the 7th century AD, when another wave of both Armenians and Caucasian Albanians (not to be confused with the present-day Albanians in South-Eastern Europe) came to the region. After that, Nagorno-Karabakh fell *inter alia* under Arab control. As the Mongols expanded westward, they invaded Persia, the Caucasus and southern Russia in the 13th century before they went even further to Eastern Europe and Iraq. At about this time, the name "Karabakh" appeared. After a long Mongol occupation, Karabakh came under Turkic and, in the 17th century, under Persian control. According to Armenian historiography, in the subsequent Persian period the Armenian royals governed Karabakh under Persian rule. The present-day Armenian interpretation is that the Armenian-governed Persian Karabakh entities were later joined by or unified with a neighbouring Muslim khanate, building the relatively autonomous Karabakh khanate. On the issue of who has historical rights to Karabakh and other places in the Caucasus, Armenians see their Azeri neighbours as historical latecomers who are comparatively new to the region. In the Armenian view, the Azeri republic of 1918 is historically the first Azeri state ever. In the eyes of Armenia, contemporary Azerbaijan has very few historical claims to individual geographic areas such as Nagorno-Karabakh.

**Azeri
Interpretation**

In the official Azeri interpretation, Nagorno-Karabakh has always been an inalienable part of Azeri states or configurations of states. The Azeri see the territorial claims of the Armenians as the main reason for what they call "the so-called Karabakh problem". They emphasize that between the 4th century BC and the 8th century AD, Karabakh was a province of Caucasian Albania, which they consider the most ancient Azeri state in northern Azeri territories. Various Azeri sources indicate that the Christian churches in the area were built during first millennium AD, which gives architectural evidence to the Christians' early presence in the region, particularly the Caucasian Albanians. Other Azeri chronicles imply that Karabakh belonged to a successive number of (Azeri) states. From the 13th century on, Karabakh is seen to have been ruled, first by the Mongols and then by a series of other powers. Between the 15th and 18th century, the Safavids erected a new Persian kingdom. Beginning with the 16th century, they fought with their Ottoman and Russian neighbours for regional supremacy. Between the 16th and 19th century, Karabakh along with other duchies (among them one Azeri entity) fell under Turkic rule. In the 18th century, today's Nagorno-Karabakh belonged to a larger Karabakh khanate and later became a part of the Russian empire.

In this manner, the Azeri give evidence that Nagorno-Karabakh has never been a part of Armenia. In their history, the Armenians are not recognized as a native people of the area. Azeri official statements affirm that they immigrated to the Caucasus at a relatively late date. Specifically, the Azeri point to large-scale Armenian migration to Karabakh after the 1813 and 1828 Russian conquests of the areas that comprise present-day Armenia and Azerbaijan.

**Russian
Invasion**

Obviously, there is no dispute on main developments after parts of the South Caucasus including Karabakh fell under Russian jurisdiction as a result of the Persian/Russian war and the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813. In 1822, the Karabakh khanate was dissolved. Nagorno-Karabakh and its surroundings became a Russian province (namely a part of the Elizavetopol Guberniya) and were amalgamated into one administrative and economic unit with the surrounding Baku Province – the later Azerbaijan. In 1828, the Persian-Russian Treaty of Turkmenchai established further transfers of territory to Russia *inter alia* the entire northern part of the region inhabited by ethnic Azeri, as well as the Yerevan and Nakhichevan khanates. During the second half of the 19th century, the entire South

Caucasus fell under Russian rule.

Nagorno-Karabakh's Re-appearance

Armenians agree that Nagorno-Karabakh was an autonomous protectorate after the Russian February revolution in 1917. Up to that point, they see Nagorno-Karabakh as having been dominated by ethnic Armenians, but politically exposed to the military enmity and diplomatic games of Russia, the Ottoman empire and western powers. The Azeri have interpreted the situation differently. They see foreign rule as less important during the period, but place special emphasis on the fact that the population of Karabakh and partly its leadership was dominated by ethnic Azeri.

Three Republics plus Nagorno-Karabakh

After WWI and in the shadow of the political turbulence in post-war Europe, three independent South Caucasus states were founded – Armenia (28 May 1918), Azerbaijan (29 May 1918) and Georgia (26 May 1918). It would not be wrong to state that this was the first appearance of Armenia and Azerbaijan on the political map of modern history. In the spirit of the moment, an Assembly of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians declared self-administration of Nagorno-Karabakh in July 1918. The newly established republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan fought bitterly for control over the district. British troops also briefly occupied Karabakh.

Ethnic Massacres after 1917

During this period, ethnic clashes occurred in various Azeri and Armenian areas. The Azeri testify to political and ethnic hostilities in Baku leading to about 10,000 persons being killed in 1918. Two years later, Armenians reported more than 22,000 persons had been murdered in Shusha (Nagorno-Karabakh) by Turkish troops. Over the years, discord emerging between Armenians, Azeri and Ottoman Turks led to armed clashes and massacres throughout the region. Ethnic quarrels coincided with the military operations of Armenian and Azeri armed units aimed at national self-defence or expansion, with the advancement of the Red Army and regional revolutionary forces as well as the interference of Turkish military forces endeavouring to support the Azeri and reinforce pan-Turkic ties.

Perception of the 1915 Armenian Genocide

At this point, it was widely feared by the Armenians that general developments could return to a continuation of the Armenian ethnic cleansing occurring in Turkey in the late 19th century and the 1915 genocide, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of Armenians being killed and forced innumerable refugees to leave Turkey – mainly Anatolia (which is western Armenia to the Armenians).

As mentioned, genocide is a special historical topic throughout the Caucasus and adjoining areas. In the Armenian-Azeri (Armenian-Turkic) context, it plays a sensitive role, namely with regard to those territories that had been inhabited by Armenians and divided between the Ottoman Empire and Russia in accordance with the Treaty of Berlin of 1878. (Other relevant territories remained under Persian control.) After Sultan Abd Al Hamid II was forced to resign in 1909, the reform-oriented, pan-Turkic Young Turks attempted to create a large Turkish empire stretching from the Mediterranean to Central Asia. The Armenians and other non-Turkic ethnic groups (like the Greeks) were obviously a hindrance to these endeavours. At the end of the 19th century, mass arrests, executions and pogroms took place in the Ottoman Empire. On April 24-25 1915, mass deportations began again. The Armenian population was almost entirely forced out of the country. In 1917, the Turks declared the "Armenian question" in Anatolia as settled. In 1922, the deportations ceased.

Data on the 1915 genocide victims differ considerably depending on the source. Non-Turkish report figures of up to 1.5 million and more. Turkish textbooks record much smaller numbers. Moreover, in the Turkish accounts, the events are attributed to general wartime confusion and military necessities. In contrast, Armenians (but not only Armenians) see this ethnic cleansing as the first genocide of the 20th century.

These issues remain highly emotionalized and there are still unsettled disputes between the Turks and the Armenians. Since then, they have put a heavy burden on the public consciousness of all sides in the region. Among the Armenians, they have, on the one hand, contributed to strengthening national self-esteem, but have also helped to create feelings of revenge against Turkey and the ethnically Turkic Azerbaijan. To date, Turkey has refused to recognize the 1915 genocide.

Turkish-Azeri Alliance In their fight for national independence, their Turkish ethnic relatives were natural allies for the Azeri. Azeri see themselves as Azeri-Turks who are part of the greater ethnic Turkic family. In post-Ottoman Turkey, the political leadership emphasized the Turkic ethnic element as a means of stabilizing the country. (However, this was at the expense of other ethnic groups, such as the Greeks and Armenians.) In international affairs, Turkey began developing the idea of pan-Turkism – a concept similar to the pan-Slavic theories of its northern rival Russia. Politically and militarily, Turkey supported the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan founded on 29 May 1918. Influenced by the young Turkey of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was one of the first attempts by the Islamic world to create a secular and democratic state based on the rule of law. Until Turkey was advised through the stipulations in the armistice with Great Britain to leave the Caucasus in September 1918, it was actively involved in military operations throughout the region, including Baku. It gave continual support to Azerbaijan, albeit to varying degrees. A number of international agreements signed by Turkey up until 1923 favoured long-term Azeri interests.

Temporary Russian – Turkish Conformity During WWI, Russia had conquered large parts of the northern Ottoman Empire – mainly territories in Anatolia. Against the backdrop of the 1917 revolutionary turmoil and the beginning of civil war, it abandoned the region, but later returned to the adjoining Caucasus with its Red Army forces. Apparently, it was seeking a partnership with a potential revolutionary ally – the young Turkey under Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk). Because it very soon became obvious that in the long run both sides had different interests, it was necessary to come to agreements with one another. The primary outcome of these arrangements was that Soviet Russia made territorial concessions to Turkey. This was the demarcation of new borderlines in the region. Thus, relative stability ensued in the northern part of Turkey and the southern part of the Soviet Union, which was established in 1922 and had absorbed the South Caucasus. This also legally defined the borders and state territories of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the later parties to the Karabakh conflict.

Agreements Affecting the Disputed Territory As the Armenians see it today, the agreements signed between Turkey and Russia (or upon Turkish and Russian initiatives) were basically made at Armenia's expense. At that time, it was the Armenian's understanding that they would receive the material and military support promised to them at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The Azeri side believed that the same conference recognized Azerbaijan's claim to the territory. Due to the fact that the Treaty of Sèvres recognized Armenian independence in 1920, the Armenians felt that the international community supported them politically. In this treaty, the state boundaries of Armenia delineated by US President Woodrow Wilson were also acknowledged. However, the Allied powers' focus had already shifted to narrower domestic issues in Europe.

The Armenian and the Russian Communist government signed a preliminary peace agreement on 8 August 1920 also affecting the status of Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan. In November 1920, Turkish troops and the Red Army, which had already occupied the neighbouring Republic of Azerbaijan, advanced further and urged the Armenians to accept additional geographical rearrangement. The Treaty of Aleksandropol (Gyumri) of 3 December 1920 between the Communist-led Armenia and Turkey included mainly a renouncement of Armenian territorial claims and a rejection of the regulations of the Sèvres Treaty. The former treaty was never ratified, but set benchmarks for further Soviet, Turkish as well as Western geographical planning for the region. The Moscow Treaty between Russia and Turkey of 16 March 1921 reduced Armenia to its present size – by specifically excluding Nagorno-Karabakh. Accordingly, 26,589 sq km of Russian territory—in particular the Ardagan, Artvin, Batumi (partly), Kagyzman, Kars and the Surmalin (partly) districts—were transferred to Turkey. A special paragraph focussed on the Nakhichevan region, which was transformed into an autonomous protectorate belonging to Azerbaijan. The Biblical Ararat Mountain, which is a holy place to the Armenians and the major symbol of Armenianhood, was transferred to Turkey. The Treaty of Kars of 21 October 1921—a treaty of friendship signed by the Communist Armenian authorities and Turkey—urged Armenia to accept the conditions of peace. The Peace Treaty of Lausanne of 23 July 1923 between the Allied powers and Turkey reconfirmed these arrangements. (It recognized *inter alia* the sovereignty of the Turkish Republic including an undivided Anatolia.) Most generally speaking, this was the international legal environment which set the stage for regulating the Armenian/Azeri dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh.

**Trans-caucasus
SFSR and
Nagorno-Karabakh**

At the same time, the regulation of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute was imbedded in the Sovietization of the South Caucasus. In March 1918, Armenians, Azeri and Georgians established a Transcaucasus Federation. It was one type of state out of a whole range new legal entities that were being established in the region, its revolutionary northern and eastern neighbourhood as well as Europe. Nonetheless, against a backdrop of conflicting interests, the Transcaucasus Federation broke apart a month after it came into existence in May 1918 when the three member ethnicities each created their own independent states. Moreover, the expanding military conflict between Armenians and Azeri led to the abandonment of any initial intentions to form a regional state coalition. A ceasefire agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Tbilisi, 23 November 1919) as well as consecutive peace talks did not lead to peace. Instead, war broke out between Armenia and Georgia.

Only after the Red Army had taken the three South Caucasus states in 1921, and Communist governments had been set up there, was the Federation re-established on 12 March 1922 – now as the Federal Socialist Transcaucasus Soviet Republic with its capital in Tbilisi (Georgia). On 30 December 1922, the federation joined the USSR. It existed as an integral part of the USSR until 1936, when according to the new Soviet Constitution, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia became Soviet Republics.

**Nagorno-Karabakh
Autonomous
Region**

Initially, the Soviet governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as a part of Armenia (in November 1920 and June 1921, respectively). Then, the Caucasian Bureau of the Communist Party placed it under the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan (5 July 1921), after having only a day before acknowledged it as a part of Armenia. Azerbaijan, in turn, created the Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh on 7 July 1921.

**Non-Sustainable
Appeasement**

The Soviet period which followed brought stability, economic development and relative social well-being to the South Caucasus, including Nagorno-Karabakh. Depending on the interpretation, it was a period of inter-ethnic reconciliation and tranquillity. Unquestionably, this was also a time of Russian ethnic predominance and dormant inter-ethnic suspicion. Ethnic disputes were dealt with through the compulsory resettlement of entire ethnic groups throughout the Soviet Union. The permanent Russian presence deemed necessary to control the situation led to a local inter-ethnic equilibrium. However, the creation of an ethnic Armenian region in Azerbaijan, on the one hand, and an Azeri exclave in Armenia on the other, did not produce sustainable peace between the two parties. On the contrary, it made them more dependent on Russia.

**Return to
Ancient
Hostilities**

The developments in Nagorno-Karabakh during the late Soviet period have been mentioned above. Unsurprisingly, although the Soviet period in Nagorno-Karabakh was largely stable, it led to a situation open to legal debate. The region has now returned to its old patterns of hostility. The Nagorno-Karabakh war has created another intractable problem and an entrenched *status quo*.

4. The Outcome of the 1992/94 War over Nagorno-Karabakh

Since the ceasefire of 12 May 1994, the result of the Nagorno-Karabakh war has commonly been understood as a state of “no peace, no war”. Although there are ongoing negotiations, there have been few substantial successes.



Azeri interpretation of the post-conflict situation after the 1992-94 Nagorno-Karabakh war
 Source: Azerbaijan International 1998

Victims, Refugees and IDPs

Reportedly, the Nagorno-Karabakh war has led to between 15,000 and 18,000 persons being killed; three times as many have been wounded. The war and the years of ethnic cleansing have led to the fact that all Armenians have fled Azerbaijan as well as all Azeri having fled Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. There are large numbers (approx. one million) of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) on both sides.

Territorial Changes

The most essential territorial change of the last two-and-a-half decades is apparently the emergence of the two independent states of Armenia and Azerbaijan along with the foundation of a second ethnic Armenian entity – the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh. The latter is not recognized internationally, which has also had implications for the negotiations on Nagorno-Karabakh that are being hosted by the OSCE Minsk Group. Because Azerbaijan considers Nagorno-Karabakh as Azeri state territory, negotiations are being held on bilateral levels – between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Nagorno-Karabakh authorities are being briefed on the negotiations.

The Nagorno-Karabakh war has caused major territorial changes. According to official Azeri sources, Azerbaijan has lost about 17,000 sq km of its territory, which is now under Armenian control. This is about 20 per cent of its area during the Soviet period and includes Nagorno-Karabakh and six neighbouring districts. Armenians assert these figures are exaggerated, particularly since Nagorno-Karabakh is no longer legally part of Azerbaijan.

The UN Security Council has repeatedly adopted resolutions on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. Numerous high-level CSCE/OSCE bodies have appealed to the parties to the conflict to come to an agreement.

Economic and Social Damages

The conflict's impact on the national economies of both countries has been disastrous. It has additionally accelerated the economic slowdown after the Soviet Union's collapse. Its commercial attractiveness to foreign investors is minimal since the whole South Caucasus is considered a political high-risk zone. The war has damaged industrial and agricultural capacities. The Nagorno-Karabakh issue has in the past and continues today to tie up immense fiscal and human resources. In Azerbaijan, refugees and IDPs create immense problems for the government. The war has largely destroyed and disconnected the system of regional infrastructures including cross-regional lines of electric-power transmission, road and railroad communications, oil and gas pipelines, water supply and sewage systems as well as telecommunication networks. Transboundary trade has been stopped. Armenia is largely isolated from potential neighbouring markets and the world economy because of Azerbaijan's and Turkey's embargo on foreign trade. Between 1992 and 1994, Armenia was almost totally cut off of any energy resources. This had led to drastic years without

electricity, heating, and fuel. Nakhichevan, the Azeri exclave between Armenia, Iran and Turkey, is cut off from mainland Azerbaijan. A certain amount of trade has developed by using routes through its northern neighbour Georgia. The housing, employment, educational and other social problems of hundred of thousands of refugees on both sides aggravate the situation. They have been compounded by, the even now, fundamental problems of the survivors of the Armenian earthquake in 1988. The majority of both countries' inhabitants are impoverished. An official census in 2002 has indicated that the population has decreased alarmingly. Still, Armenia suffers from an ongoing exodus due to societal conditions. The war and the current *status quo* in the three state entities have given little hope to many of these emigrants. It has proved very difficult to exploit the natural resources in the region (especially Azeri Caspian oil resources) on international markets. Finally, the war has had devastating consequences for the environment.

5. Different Positions on Nagorno-Karabakh and the Search for Solutions

Armenian Positions

Among Armenians in both mainland Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, there is common agreement that Nagorno-Karabakh has inviolable rights to state sovereignty derived from international regulations on a people's right to self-rule and self-defence. Moreover, from a legal point of view, Karabakh Armenians believe the independence referendum of December 1991 fully justified the Nagorno-Karabakh Declaration of Independence of 6 January 1992. Therefore, they assume the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh will sooner or later enjoy international recognition. Moreover, it is seen as part of one common Armenia, although this is neither officially stated nor subject to the ongoing negotiations. In the long run, there seems to be no doubt that occupied Azeri territories will for the most part be returned to Azerbaijan. In the meantime, Armenia occupies them to ensure military security. Armenians are particularly concerned about the Lachin corridor because it is the only link between the two ethnic Armenian allies. While the Nagorno-Karabakh's independence is an issue of utmost significance, the return of the occupied territories is relatively secondary.

Azeri Positions

On the other hand, the Azeri refuse to acknowledge the factual status of Nagorno-Karabakh and are naturally not in agreement with the Armenian occupation of parts of Azerbaijan. The Azeri see the conflict as the result of Armenian expansionism. They see themselves as the affronted party to the conflict. The Azeri declare that they are prepared to grant a large amount of autonomy to Nagorno-Karabakh, but under Azeri state supremacy. They interpret Nagorno-Karabakh's attempts to secede from Azerbaijan as a direct threat to Azeri statehood. In any case, the Azeri insist they have a right to state sovereignty and integrity. They are adamant that Armenia withdraw from the occupied land adjoining Nagorno-Karabakh. The resettlement of internally displaced persons is a priority on the Azeri agenda. It has symbolic and political meaning as well as social explosiveness. Finally, the Azeri insist on re-establishing cross-border co-operation only after the resolution of the Karabakh conflict and the return of occupied land.

OSCE Inter-mediation

As mentioned, the Karabakh peace talks are being conducted under the aegis of the OSCE Minsk Group. To varying degrees, the Minsk Group Co-Chairmen (France, Russia, US) have tried to seize the initiative in these talks, but have achieved no detectable breakthrough. Still, international intermediation has led to two main achievements: (a) a lasting ceasefire and (b) an ongoing dialogue between the parties to the conflict.

It is obvious that the resolution of the Karabakh conflict will require compromises from all the parties involved. However, the situation appears deadlocked, as the claims of each side seem to be mutually exclusive. Furthermore, whatever negotiators agree upon, they will have to sell the conditions of peace to their highly emotionalized constituencies. This limits the prospects of the talks even further.

Further Issues

Moreover, there are a number of issues that are not directly related to the Karabakh problem but nonetheless have had some effect on it. Among these issues are the Turkish-Azeri trade embargo imposed on Armenia, the lack of a direct terrestrial link from Azerbaijan to the Nakhichevan exclave, the deployment of the Russian armed forces in Armenia and the fact that the Azeri oil supply to Armenia has been cut off.

Brief Chronology of the Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh (NK)

1813		Treaty of Gulistan between Persia and Russia
1822		Dissolution of Karabakh khanate
		Inclusion of NK into Elizavetopol Guberniya of Russian Baku Province
1828		Treaty of Turkmenchai between Persia and Russia transferring South Caucasus territories to the Russian Empire
1878		Treaty of Berlin dividing Armenian land between Ottoman Empire and Russia
1915		Genocide of the Armenian people in Turkey
1918	Mar	Establishment of Transcaucasus Federation
1918	May 28	Declaration of independence of Armenia
1918	May 29	Declaration of independence of Azerbaijan
1918	Jul	Declaration of self-administration of NK
1919		Paris Peace Conference
1919	Nov 23	Ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan
1920	Aug 8	Preliminary Peace between representatives of Armenia and Soviet Russia
1920	Aug	Treaty of Sèvres between the Allied Powers and the Ottoman Empire, later superseded by the July 1923 Treaty of Lausanne with Turkey
1920	Dec 3	Treaty of Aleksandropol between Communist-led Armenia and Turkey renouncing Armenian territorial claims and rejecting Treaty of Sèvres
1921	Mar 21	Treaty of Moscow between Soviet Russia and Turkey
1921	Mar 21	Transfer of Nakhichevan to Azerbaijan
1921	Jul 5	Administrative subordination of NK under Azeri authority
1921	Jul 7	Establishment of Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh
1921	Oct 13	Treaty of Kars between Soviet Russia and Turkey, also signed by Communist Armenian authorities
1922	Mar 12	Establishment of Federal Socialist Transcaucasus Soviet Republic
1922	Dec 30	Federal Socialist Transcaucasus Soviet Republic joins USSR
1923	Jul 7	Establishment of NK Autonomous Region as part of Azerbaijan
1923	Jul 23	Peace Treaty of Lausanne between the Allied powers and Turkey
1936		Establishment of Armenian, Azeri and Georgian ASSR according to new Soviet Constitution
1987	Aug	NK petition of Armenian Academy of Sciences
1988	Feb	Mass rallies of Armenians in Yerevan and Stepanakert (Karabakh capital)
1988	Feb 28/29	Anti-Armenian pogrom in Sumgait (Azerbaijan)
1989	Jul 12	NK Supreme Soviet declaration on secession from Azerbaijan
1989	Jun 13	Forced migration of Azeri population from Stepanakert
1989	Jul 26	Petition of Azeri Shaumyan district on administrative inclusion into NK
1989	Aug	Azerbaijan Popular Front declaration of embargo against Armenia
1989	Nov 28	NK formally under administration of Azeri Organizing Committee
1989	Dec 1	Armenian Supreme Soviet resolution on reunification of Armenia with NK
1990	Jan 15	State of emergency in NK and adjoining Shaumyan district
1990	Jan 20	Pogrom and intervention of Soviet troops in Baku (Azerbaijan)
1991	summer	Operation "Kolt'so" of Soviet troops in the area of NK
1991	Aug	Failed <i>coup d'état</i> in Moscow
1991	Aug 30	Independence of Republic of Azerbaijan
1991	Sep 2	Establishment of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh by NK authorities
1991	Sep 21	Independence of Republic of Armenia
1991	Nov 23	Abolishment of NK independence by Azeri government
1991	Dec 10	NK referendum on state sovereignty
1991	Dec 25-26	Dissolution of Soviet Union
1991	Dec 28	NK parliamentary elections
1992	Jan 6	NK declaration of independence
1992	Jan	Escalation of military operations
1992	Feb 25-26	Armenian combat operations and mass killings of civilians in Khojali
1992	Mar 24	CSCE decision on NK Conference (Minsk Conference)
		Begin of OSCE Minsk process of NK conflict intermediation
1992	May	Armenian seizure of Shusha and Lachin corridor
1992	Sep 19	Russia-mediated ceasefire (failed)

1993	Apr - Nov	UN Security Council Resolution 822, 853, 884 on NK conflict
1994	Feb 16	Russia-mediated ceasefire
1994	May 9-12	Bishkek protocol on the ceasefire
1996	Dec	Adoption of OSCE Lisbon Principles on settling NK conflict
1997	Feb	Establishment of OSCE Minsk Group Troika (France, Russia, US)

For further reading:

Nagorno-Karabakh history and conflict background:

<http://resources.net.az/3.htm><http://president.gov.az/azerbaijan/nk/conf1.htm>
<http://www.armeniaemb.org/ArmeniaUS/NKPeaceProcess/NKConflictBrief.htm>
<http://www.armenianhistory.info/artsakh3.htm>
<http://www.azembassy.com/conf/browse.htm>
http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/62_folder/62_articles/62_karabakh.html
http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/karabakh_current/keywest_background.html
<http://www.baku-vision.com/garabag.html>
<http://www.bartleby.com/65/na/NagornoK.html>
<http://caspiancenter.org/conflict.shtml>
<http://www.csis.org/ruseura/cs980302.html>
<http://www.db.idproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/wViewCountries/E1F4D30B9DE7443BC12568D9003C384D>
http://www.geocities.com/fanthom_2000/hrw-azerbaijan/hrw-contents/1.html (et al.)
<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/infoservice/secwatch/index.cfm?Parent=2101>
<http://www.karabakh.org/?id=3063>
<http://www.karabakh.org/?id=3064>
<http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1998/03/F.RU.980319150254.html>
<http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1998/05/F.RU.980515122020.html>
<http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1998/03/F.RU.980305134429.html>
<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journals/details/issue/sample/a010545.pdf>
http://www-scf.usc.edu/~baquiroy/azeri/svante_cornell.html
<http://www.slavweb.com/eng/fsu/karab-e0.html>
<http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/early/caucasus.html>
<http://www.washington-report.org/backissues/0493/9304013.htm>

Various issues:

Armenian genocide: <http://www.armenian-genocide.org/>; <http://www.genocide.am/>;
<http://www.genocide1915.info/>
 Armenian-Azeri history, Azeri view: <http://president.gov.az/azerbaijan/nk/conf3.htm>
 Islam and Soviet Heritage: <http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/war/2000/02/islam/367.htm>
 Khojali: <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/5078/index.htm>
 Khojali: <http://www.khojaly.org>
 Legislation (various): <http://www.iom.int/migrationweb/legislation/countries/>
 Mongols in the Caucasus: <http://users.rcn.com/j-roberts/mongol.htm>
 Nagorno-Karabakh inside-views: www.nkr.am
 Nagorno-Karabakh inside-views: www.president.nkr.am
 Ottoman Empire history: <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0860176.html>
 Persian history: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook05.html>
 Proposal on NK conflict resolution: <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/early/caucasus.html>
 Refugees: <http://www.unhcr.ch>
 Russian Caucasus policy <http://www.acnis.am/publications/>
 Sèvres Treaty 1920: <http://www.nv.cc.va.us/home/cevans/Versailles/Bibliography/Bibliography.html>
 South Caucasus history after WW I:
http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/61_folder/61_articles/61_chronology.html

Armenia NGO addresses and sources:

Armenian Center for National and International Studies: <http://www.acnis.com>
 Armenian Sociological Association: <http://www.asa.am>

Armenian Young Lawyers Association: aylaninformcentre@armpac.com
Caucasus Media Institute: <http://www.caucasusmedia.org>
Conflict Resolution Center of Armenia: nhovanes@sci.am
Democracy Union: sshah@arminco.com
Fund Against Violation of War: favl@intarnet.am Journalists in Armenia: <http://www.hltq.am/en/>
Nagorno-Karabakh Committee of "Helsinki Initiative-92": karandje@hca.nk.am
Yerevan Press Club: <http://www.ypc.am>

Azeri NGO addresses and sources:

Azerbaijan Human Rights Resource Center: mmehtiyev@rc-hro.baku.az
Azerbaijan Young Lawyers' Union: aylu@azeronline.com
Committee of Democracy and Human Rights: ganizadeh@azerin.com
Human Rights Centre of Azerbaijan: <http://www.koan.de/~eldar>
Institute of Peace and Democracy: <http://www.ipd.co.hypermart.net>
Journalists in Azerbaijan: <http://www.ruh-az.com>
Resource Centre on National Minorities: <http://www.rcnm.org>
Society for Humanitarian Research: <http://www.mg.klever.net/~shr>

Chapter Three

Conflicts and Security Threats in the Republic of Georgia

In the following chapter, an attempt will be made to trace a number of significant origins of local conflicts in Georgia and to outline the basic logic behind these struggles.

Georgia is a country with a colourful and ancient history. In contrast to Armenia and much more so than Azerbaijan, it has large ethnic groups that live in compact settlement areas. Tensions between them are the basis of the historical and present-day conflicts in the country. The following chapter will explore a number of features of domestic inter-ethnic disputes in Georgia. It will focus on the conflicts in and around Abkhazia (Georgia's north-west) and South Ossetia (north); it will highlight developments in Ajara (southwest), Javakheti (Samtskhe-Javakheti; south) and Megrelia (west) – all of which are striving more or less for independence or autonomy. In this chapter, the problems of the Pankisi Gorge (northeast), which is populated by ethnic Chechens and is suspected to be the area behind the front for Chechen fighters in the Russian Federation, will be studied. Finally, the situation in the district of Marneuli will be examined. Marneuli is part of Kvemo Kartli - the province in Southwest Georgia with the country's highest density of ethnic Azeri. The order in which these entities and locations are discussed is to reflect the individual significance they have for national and regional security building.

1. The Conflict over Abkhazia (Apsua)

Abkhaz Background

Abkhazia (Abkhazian: *Apsua*) is an administrative unit in the northwest of Georgia. It is located between the shores of the Black Sea and the Caucasus mountain range. It covers an area of 8,700 square kilometres and is bordered by the Russian Federation and by Georgian neighbouring territories. Its capital is the port town of Sukhumi (Abkhaz: *Sukhum*). According to unofficial estimates, the population of Abkhazia totalled approximately 525,000 prior to the 1992/94 armed conflict with Georgia's central government. Its pre-war ethnic composition was about 18 per cent Abkhaz, 46 per cent Megrelians and Svans, 15 per cent Armenians, 14 per cent Russians and Ukrainians, and 3 per cent Greeks. The Abkhaz are Christians and Muslims, but some pre-Christian pagan traditions are still practiced as well.



Abkhazia
Source: <http://www.usaid.org/ge/abkhazia.shtml>

It is assumed that about half a million Abkhaz live abroad, mainly in Turkey, the Middle East and western Europe. (However, the figures differ significantly depending on the source.) The Abkhaz speak Abkhazian, which is the official language of Abkhazia. It is an Abkhazo-Adyghey language belonging to the north-western Caucasian language group like Abazinian or the Circassian languages, Adyghey and Kabardian. The Abkhaz consider themselves, as they put it, linguistically, culturally and genetically related to their north-western Caucasian neighbours and other mountain peoples in the North Caucasus. To understand the political developments in and around Abkhazia, it is essential to bear in mind that these North Caucasian (i.e., non-Georgian) attitudes have indigenous roots in South Caucasasia.

The largest cities in Abkhazia are the capital Sukhumi and the industrial centre Tkvarcheli. Other well-known areas are the resorts of Gagra, Gudauta and Ochamchira as well as the spas of Pitsunda and Novy Afon. During more prosperous times, tourism, coal and iron mining as well as growing citrus fruits, tea and tobacco were the pillars of the Abkhaz economy.

The Abkhaz View of History

Throughout its history, Abkhazia has claimed both autochthony and autonomy from Georgia as well as shared lines of kinship with it. Two periods during the Middle Ages may be seen as symbolic for the Abkhaz-Georgian dichotomy in their mutual relations. One began in the 10th century, when Abkhazia and other territories were unified into one Georgian kingdom. The second period had its beginnings in 1325, when the Principality of Abkhazia was established as an integral part of the Georgian kingdom. Subsequently, it became independent (from Georgia) – shortly after the latter's decline in the 15th century – but was ruled by the Mongol-Tatar peoples, Turkic peoples, Russians and others. Today, the Abkhaz emphasize their independence while Georgians put an accent on the centuries of unity.

Muslim and Christian Influence

Religious issues are also significant for the Abkhaz in addressing their neighbours and ethnicities. Abkhazia became partly Christian in the 6th century, but was then exposed to the Sunni Muslim influence during the period of Ottoman rule in the 15th and 16th centuries. After Abkhazia had fallen under Russian rule in 1810, many of the Sunni Muslim Abkhaz were forced to migrate southwards to the Ottoman Empire in about 1870. Some of them went back from Turkey to their original homeland when, more than a hundred years later, the armed conflict of the 1990s forced many others to leave Abkhazia. Today, there are both Christians and Muslims in Abkhazia. In an environment where people are highly sensitive to religious matters, this gives the Abkhaz options, particularly in their relations with the Muslim Turks and the Christian Orthodox Russians, but also with their numerous South and North Caucasus ethnic neighbours.

Sharing Statehood

The Abkhaz see their present-day relations with the Georgians as emerging from pre-Soviet history and being imbedded in pan-Caucasian developments. They feel dependent on the geopolitical games of the three regional powers, Iran, Russia and Turkey, as well as the US and Western Europe. Russia's difficulty in silencing its southern territories in the North Caucasus – particularly Chechnya – is another regional issue the Abkhaz have been forced to confront. Finally, Georgia's endeavours to become less dependent on Russia puts Abkhazia between two fronts. In general, the Abkhaz are of the opinion that they were involuntarily forced into sharing a common state with Georgians and other ethnic neighbours. They underline that the pressure placed upon them historically is the reason they have temporarily postponed their efforts to achieve sovereignty. The Abkhaz explain the 1992/94 war mainly by referring to the Russian Caucasian wars during the 19th century and developments following World War I, particularly the revolutionary year of 1917.

1st Mountain People's Congress

In 20th century Abkhaz historiography, May 1917 is the first date relevant to the 1992/1994 war. This was when the 1st Mountain People's Congress was conducted in the Russian town of Vladikavkaz where Caucasian unity was declared and the of the United Mountain People of the North Caucasus and Dagestan was established. Among other things, the Abkhaz representatives declared the full membership of their people. In addition, a so-called Mountain Peoples' Government was built in November 1917. Simultaneously, an Abkhaz People's Congress in Sukhumi elected an Abkhaz Peoples Council (ANS) – the first Abkhaz legislative body – which later adopted the basic documents on Abkhaz national independence. During the following months, several other Caucasus entities declared

independence. Political changes in Russia and Turkey, along with the establishment of the states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (May 1918) and the self-governing regime in Nagorno Karabakh (July 1918), have been discussed in other chapters.

Batumi Peace Conference Unsurprisingly, the rather quiet Abkhaz voice was drowned out by the clamour of dominating foreign interests. Mainstream developments overpowered Abkhaz ambitions, which was also the case for the various aspirations of the other small peoples of the Caucasus – as they call themselves. This was also reflected in the many diplomatic endeavours undertaken in the region during the course of the civil and international war. Thus, the Batumi Peace Conference in May 1918, attended by Germany, Turkey, the Transcaucasus Republic and the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus and Dagestan, was surely an attempt to shift regional accents towards German and Turkish interests.

Caucasus Mountain Peoples' Republic Parallel to the Batumi Conference, the Caucasus Mountain Peoples' Republic declared independence and seceded from Russia. It was a union between Abkhazia, Adygeya, Checheno-Ingushetia, Dagestan, Kabarda, Karachai-Balkaria and Ossetia covering 260,000 square kilometres from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea with about 6.5 million inhabitants. Prior to this, the Transcaucasus Federation, a union between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, had been established in March 1918. A month later, this federation collapsed and the Caucasus Mountain Peoples' Republic as well as the three South Caucasus States were created. The creation and dissolution of states and their alliances did not resolve open questions over the demarcation of internal or international borders – depending on one's point of view. Disputes over the very existence of certain states that had declared their independence, and over where to draw their boundaries, were still on the agenda. There were numerous options, including joining together the newly established states and putting more or less emphasis on self-administration, founding new states or joining new coalitions. However, smaller ethnic groups did not have as many options. In this situation, Abkhaz representatives called upon Turkey for protection, which was an indication that Turkey was their main intended coalition partner at the time.

Today, the Abkhaz claim that, during the historical moment when the Republic of Georgia was established in May 1918, their country was not part of Georgia. In their interpretation, Abkhazia had become member of the Caucasus Mountain Peoples' Republic a few days before and was thus not subject to Georgian state rule. In any case, against the background of general military confusion in the region, Georgian troops, supported by Germany, invaded Abkhazia in June 1918.

From today's standpoint, it may be disputed that the Caucasus Mountain Peoples' Republic was a true state with real influence on regional developments. Then again, this question may not in fact be an issue. The Republic had unified several smaller Caucasus ethnicities in one political entity. Although it is questionable whether this can be recognized from a legal point of view, it set a political trend. Intercommunications throughout the Caucasus between the ethnicities of Abkhazia, Adygeya, Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia and South and North Ossetia are still an underlying pattern invisibly guiding regional developments.

Needless to say, Abkhaz narration gives the Caucasus Mountain Peoples' Republic a special place in history. It records that the subsequent 1918 Georgian intervention was the beginning of the end of a brief period of Abkhaz independence. The foreign powers outside the region certainly played a role when they deliberated on the Mountain Republic's place in the forthcoming regional arrangements. They also had an effect by encouraging Abkhaz military action against Georgia.

Autonomous Soviet Republic of Abkhazia With the establishment of Soviet rule in 1921, the Mountain Peoples' Government went into exile. The controversies between Abkhazia and Georgia ended with the Sovietization of the South Caucasus in 1921. This new era brought the establishment of the Autonomous Soviet Republic of Abkhazia on 31 March 1921. Still in December 1921, it became part of Georgia. This period also led, in March 1922, to the re-establishment of the Transcaucasus Federation – which was then called the Federal Socialist Transcaucasus Soviet Republic – with its capital in Tbilisi, Georgia. In December 1922, this republic became a member of the Soviet Union. With this, Abkhazia became an integral part of Georgia, the Transcaucasus Federation and the Soviet Union.

<i>Disputes over Abkhaz Status</i>	With the adoption of the 1936 Soviet Constitution and the abolishment of the Transcaucasus Federation, Abkhazia became an Autonomous Soviet Republic within the newly established Georgian Socialist Soviet Republic. In the perception of the Abkhaz, this administrative subordination was the equivalent of being degraded. Repeated arguments between the Abkhaz and the Georgians on changing the status of Abkhazia took place before the central authorities in Moscow. There were even demands for making Abkhazia part of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic. Abkhazia petitioned Moscow for this in 1956, 1967 and 1978. In the middle of the <i>perestroika</i> period in 1988, the so-called Abkhaz Forum (an NGO) declared Abkhaz independence from Georgia and, in this manner, provoked the first military clashes in the conflict.
<i>Ambivalent Abkhaz-Russian Relations</i>	The Russian side had early on recognized that inter-ethnic relations between the Abkhaz and the Georgians posed a significant regional security problem. The Russian Empire supported Abkhaz endeavours to stress their cultural differences from the Georgians, but also made clear that there would have to be a Georgian inter-ethnic leadership under Russian control. Language use was a sensitive case in point on which Russia kept changing its tactics. During the mid-19th century, Russia had introduced the Cyrillic script for written Abkhazian, thus replacing the Georgian alphabet. During the Soviet period, Latin script was in use until 1938, and Georgian until 1945. In the end, Abkhazian returned to using the Cyrillic script. In the 1930s, Abkhazian was abolished as the language of instruction at Abkhaz schools. As a consequence of long disputes over these and other ethnic issues, Moscow agreed, in 1978, to open the Abkhaz State University and launch Abkhaz TV channels. This was a symbolic gesture. It indicated that Russia was in agreement with strengthening ethnic Abkhaz elements in Georgian internal affairs, namely in such visible fields like higher education and the mass media. Later on, this historically rather unimportant episode gained significance for the beginning of the war in 1992/94. In the Abkhaz understanding, the ethnically Russian-dominated Soviet system was protecting Abkhazia from unwanted Georgian domination and the threat of ethnic assimilation. Under the Russian umbrella, the Abkhaz people even managed during the Soviet decades to place their ethnic countrymen in key positions of Abkhaz political and administrative life. Nonetheless, relations between Abkhazia and Russia were not free of tensions. For example, their pro-Turkic stance, which led the Abkhaz to call for Turkish protection in 1918, later served as a justification between 1937 and 1941 for Soviet leader Josef Stalin to repress the Abkhaz people. As they did with other ethnic groups, the Russians controlled Abkhaz culture with an iron hand.
<i>Urbanization and Industrialization</i>	In the meantime, especially after World War II, there was general economic and social consolidation throughout the Soviet Union, including the Caucasus and Abkhazia. Throughout the entire Soviet period, the South Caucasus made steps towards urbanization and industrialization. Abkhazia was part of a wide-ranging civilizing transition. Nonetheless, old disputes on inter-ethnic relations remained in existence although they appeared dormant.
<i>Revival of Abkhaz-Georgian Conflict</i>	In the course of the late-Soviet period of dissolution, the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict flamed up again. It reached a temporary peak on July 1989 after a seemingly insignificant administrative step in which the Georgians had made the Georgian Branch of the aforementioned Abkhaz State University a section of the Tbilisi State University. In Sukhumi, this caused two weeks of inter-ethnic violence with 22 persons reported as having been killed. Figuratively speaking, the old enmity had emerged again from the trenches of the past. That other events of symbolic importance took place and that finally armed confrontation occurred was inevitable.
<i>Restoration of the United Mountain Peoples' Alliance</i>	Thus, there was a revival of the historical United Mountain Peoples' Alliance of 1917 and the 1st Congress of Caucasus Mountain Peoples established the Assembly of Caucasus Mountain Peoples (Sukhumi, 25 August 1989). Also in this respect, history had come back to one of its starting points. In the public's perception, Abkhazia was again drifting away from Georgia and becoming part of the North Caucasus.

Abkhaz Independence	In 1990, the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet declared independence and simultaneously agreed to negotiations on setting up an Abkhaz -Georgian federation based on equality between the two independent entities. Georgia viewed this as a threat to its state integrity and therefore rejected the idea. The Georgian concept as expressed by president Eduard Shevardnadze in October 2001 was an Abkhaz autonomy within a federal Georgian state. Up to now, Abkhazia has not accepted this either.
Caucasian National Liberation Movements	The proclamation of an independent Chechen Republic in the southern part of Russia (October 1991) led to new euphoria among the small peoples of the Caucasus. Their national liberation movements acquired new driving forces. Now as before, the Abkhaz insist they have a historical right to independence as they see themselves as the indigenous people of their republic.
The Georgian View of History	Georgians emphasize those parts of history that testify to proximity between them and the Abkhaz as well as to common statehood. In their view, whenever the Georgian territory was unified, Abkhazia was always a part of it. During certain periods, the entire part of western Georgia was unified under the name of Abkhazia (Abkhazeti), while in other periods approximately the same territory bore the name of Egrisi, which means "land of the Megrelians", whom Georgians consider one of their own ethnic groups. The Georgian kingdom of the 10th century and those following, which had incorporated Abkhazia, have been mentioned above. Georgians believe that Abkhazia was and is a legitimate part of Georgia, despite the fact that the Abkhaz people are not ethnically related to the Georgians.
Abkhaz-Georgian Agreements	Regarding the recent history of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict, Georgians refer <i>inter alia</i> to an October 1917 agreement Abkhaz politicians signed in order to participate in the establishment of the South-Eastern Alliance of Cossacks and the People of the Caucasus and the Steppes. The ultimate goal of this alliance, which existed until March 1918, was to become a part of an intended Democratic Federative Republic of Russia, which was to be divided into units similar to cantons. This is obviously another line of Abkhaz history of that period, which paralleled developments around the Abkhaz Peoples Council (ANS) and the Caucasus Mountain Peoples' Republic. The Georgians have vivid recollections of Abkhaz-Georgian talks during those days, which focused on creating closer mutual relations and stressed the good relationship between the Georgian and Abkhaz peoples, which certainly has existed in history. The following revolutionary changes in Russia and the Russian peripheries, civil war and foreign interventions overturned these and other earlier regional intentions. While the Georgian declaration of independence in May 1918 is now acknowledged to be the starting point of contemporary Georgian statehood, these circumstances were in fact overridden by military and political mainstream events leading eventually to the creation of the Soviet Union. The same was the true for Abkhaz independence.
Favouring Abkhaz-Georgian Unity	There are several points to the contemporary Georgian argumentation on Abkhaz-Georgian relations. <i>First</i> , reference is made to what Georgians call the first official agreement between the National Council of Georgia and the People's Council of Abkhazia of 8 June 1918. This agreement stipulated that both parties guaranteed Abkhazia full autonomy along with economic and military assistance, which implied common statehood. <i>Second</i> , in the agreement, Georgia made a commitment to restore the historical borders of Abkhazia between the river Mzymta and the river Enguri. <i>Third</i> , Georgia now insists that limits be placed on Abkhaz jurisdiction over the territories determined in the negotiations of 1918. It questions whether Abkhazia had the legal authority then to make international agreements regarding specific geographic locations. Administrative regulations from tsarist Russia are quoted. <i>Fourth</i> , Georgia places emphasis on the ethnic composition of the Abkhaz population of that period. According to 1917 statistics, more than forty per cent of the Abkhaz inhabitants were of ethnic Georgian origin, while only some twenty per cent were of Abkhaz origin (Armenians, Greeks and Russians had a share of about ten per cent each). Georgians are convinced – along with the Abkhaz – that they are one of the indigenous peoples of Abkhazia. <i>Fifth</i> , Georgia underlines that, historically, Germany (1918), Turkey and the Entente (1920/21) and the Soviet authorities represented by the Caucasian Bureau of the Central Communist Party Committee (1921), have acknowledged Georgian rule over

Abkhazia. A declaration by the Revolutionary Committee of Georgia on the independence of the Abkhaz Soviet Socialist Republic (21 May 1921) left the future of Abkhaz-Georgian relations open. The status of Abkhazia was later defined through Soviet legislation in 1931, when Abkhazia and Georgia were merged into one republic. *Finally*, Georgians interpret the renewed attempts by the Abkhazians to gain state independence as an unnatural political episode and primarily a Russian policy tool to help maintain its sphere of influence, thus undermining Georgian domestic stability.

Late Soviet and Post-Soviet Arguments and War

The dispute between Abkhazia and Georgia flared up again during the late-Soviet years of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Both entities began redefining their most basic cultural orientation and revitalizing ethnic self-esteem as well as arguing for national emancipation and independence. Both liberation movements had an anti-Soviet (politically anti-Communist, ethnically anti-Russian) element. At the same time, Russia itself was changing.

Moscow's Undecided Positions

The disputed point between Abkhazia and Georgia brought before Moscow was and still is the extent of Abkhazia's autonomy or independence. In late-Soviet years, the conflicting interests of the parties in the various parts of the outer edges of the Soviet Union were utilized for either preventing or bargaining over the conditions for the Soviet Union's dissolution. Furthermore, the Soviet Republics and their administrative sub-units were drawn into controversies between the competing bodies of the two factions in the Soviet capital. The pro-Soviet camp around Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev tried to weaken the Soviet Republics' demands by supporting the claims of their ethnic minorities. The pro-Russian camp around Russian President Boris Yeltsin made its own arrangements after they had declared Russia's independence (a rather contentious move) a year and a half before the Soviet Union collapsed (12 June 1990).

Abkhaz State Sovereignty

In August 1990, the Georgian Supreme Soviet suspended regional parties from parliamentary elections. The Abkhaz reply to this was to proclaim state sovereignty (25 August 1990). In December 1990, Vladislav Ardzinba was elected parliamentary chairman of the newly established Abkhaz parliament. He is a largely visible person who later became Abkhazia's first president. For some years now, Vladislav Ardzinba has been in poor health, which might have effects on political stability in Abkhazia.

Georgian Independence and Abkhaz Separation

Under Vladislav Ardzinba's leadership, Abkhazia turned its attention towards a possible coalition with Moscow. It was hoping to become an autonomy within the Soviet Union and thus gain a certain self-sufficiency away from Georgia. In the pan-Soviet referendum in March 1991, the Abkhaz electorate supported the preservation of the Soviet Union while Georgia imposed a boycott on the referendum. Arguments between the two sides continued after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Georgian Declaration of Independence signed on 9 April 1991. These disagreements reached a peak in early 1992 during heated discussions on the design and status of the Abkhaz parliament. The new Georgian government had restored its 1921 constitution, thus reducing Abkhaz autonomy. On 23 July 1992, the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet reinstated the Abkhaz Constitution of 1925, which explicitly emphasized separation from Georgia. The Georgian State Council rescinded the Abkhaz Constitution and deployed troops to Sukhumi.

National Radicalism of Zviadists

The Georgian nationalist movement surrounding the first post-Soviet Georgian President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, was rather insensitive to minority issues. It was fighting Soviet (*i.e.*, ethnic Russian) occupation, but was not aware of the most obvious parallels between Russian-Georgian and Georgian-Abkhaz relations.

Armed Conflict

On 18 August 1992, Georgian armed forces tried to take over the Abkhaz parliament. Vladislav Ardzinba and other deputies called upon the Abkhaz people to conduct armed resistance from the northern part of the country. In the fall of 1992, Abkhaz forces seized control of the northern part of Abkhazia. Military actions turned into war. On the Georgian side, the new President Eduard Shevardnadze, a former Georgian KGB chairman, first secretary of the Georgian Communist Party and Soviet foreign minister, led the operations. He was forced simultaneously to fight the armed forces of the national liberation movement in Abkhazia and the rebellious armed formations around his presidential predecessor and opponent Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Megrelia (Samegrelo) in western Georgia. Although they were keeping Sukhumi (Abkhazia) under control, the Georgian military was facing a war on two fronts. The first Abkhaz-Georgian ceasefire agreement of 3 September 1992 mediated

by the Russian Federation was unsuccessful. In early 1993, fighting increased with both Abkhazia and Georgia accusing Russia of supporting the other side. Until September 1993, about 200,000 civilians were reportedly driven out of the conflict area.

Peace Talks

Between 1993 and 1994, peace talks were conducted under UN moderation. On 27 July 1993, Abkhazia, Georgia and Russia signed an armistice agreement in the town of Sochi. Military operations continued. In September 1993, the Abkhaz took Sukhumi within days and forced Georgian troops completely out of Abkhaz territory. Later on, the intermediation of the United Nations and Russia led to the signing of the April 1994 Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces, which brought an end to the war. This agreement is not a peace treaty but merely a ceasefire arrangement. The parties agreed, *inter alia*, to the deployment of a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeeping force that was to monitor compliance with the agreement. A United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) was tasked with monitoring the implementation of the agreement and observing CIS force operations.

**Conflict and
Conflict
Management**

In October 1993, Georgia signed an agreement on the status of Russian troops in Georgia. This was interrelated with the fact that Georgia, after prolonged Russian insistence, had finally joined the CIS on 8 October 1993. Because Georgia was now a CIS member state, Russia was in a better formal position to mediate a ceasefire and draw up the future peace process. In February 1994, Georgia signed a Treaty of Friendship with Russia. From June 1994 on, a Russian-led CIS Peacekeeping Force of 2,500 troops separated the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict parties along the Ingur River and the Kodori Gorge. (This force is still deployed today.) In September 1994, Russia closed its border with Abkhazia, thus implicitly expressing appreciation of Georgia's new pro-Russian attitudes. Against the backdrop of these unfriendly developments, on 26 November 1994, Abkhazia adopted a new constitution, which demonstratively declared the independence of the Republic of Abkhazia (Abkh: *Apsua*). This was based on the wide public approval shown in a referendum on 3 October 1994. In March 1995, a Georgian-Russian agreement on military co-operation followed. According to Abkhaz sources, Russia imposed a sea blockade against Abkhazia in October 1995. In January 1996, the CIS introduced additional economic sanctions against Abkhazia. In May 1998, there was brief renewed fighting between Georgian troops and Abkhaz Militia forces in the Gali district, which reportedly led to another 40,000 Georgian internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing Abkhazia, most of whom later returned. The May 1998 fighting may be indicative of the general lack of certainty in the situation. The media is saying this is not far from being a lingering trench war. The political dialogue appears deadlocked.

**Current
Situation**

Since the beginning of the Abkhaz conflict, the Georgians have blamed the Abkhaz for having carried out ethnic cleansing, which they also call genocide. The number of IDPs or refugees, as well as their return to their homes, is still subject of dispute. The Abkhaz report that about 7,000 to 10,000 persons were killed during the war. According to UNHCR, more than 270,000 IDPs have left Abkhazia for other Georgian districts. The some 80,000 ethnic Abkhaz, who had earlier constituted merely about a seventh of the total Abkhaz population, now oppose the likely return of their former neighbours. They fear that the resettlement of ethnic Georgian IDPs will turn them back into an ethnic minority in their own country. They are also sceptical of possible Armenian, Greek, Jewish and Russian returnees. Those ethnic Georgians who have returned are mainly Megrelians of the Gali district bordering on Georgia.

The Georgian government has made IDP return a key precondition for starting talks on the status of Abkhazia.

Along with the return of IDPs, the fundamental issues of Abkhaz sovereignty or autonomy as well as Georgian territorial integrity are still unsettled. Fighting across the CIS-secured line of contact has not stopped completely. Occasional incidents of fighting are not exceptional. Up until 2002, there were frequent short-term escalations of tensions between the Georgians and the Russians, based on or causing military misunderstandings. They are certainly to be seen in the broader context of Georgia's endeavours to free themselves of Russian control as well as Russia's endeavours to tighten its overall command over its North Caucasus districts and adjoining South Caucasus regions. A formal peace agreement has not yet been made between Abkhazia and Georgia.

The Abkhaz now proclaim that twelve centuries of Abkhaz statehood have reached a new zenith. They underscore the democratic character of their successful aspirations to restore state sovereignty. They see the legal and actual independence of their state as an important outcome of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict.

Due to permanent economic difficulties and unfavourable military conditions, the Georgians as well as the Abkhaz have sought and continue to seek arrangements with the Russians. Nevertheless, the Georgians have pursued their ties to Russia with changing enthusiasm and have never forgotten their ultimate goal of territorial integrity and real independence. They frequently play inscrutable political and military games with the Russians, which are intended to change the stalemated *status quo* in the country affecting all its sensitive components including Abkhazia, South Ossetia, etc.

In Abkhazia, Russia has once again proved it is capable of influencing regional peace and stability. Its military presence within the CIS peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia and other parts of Georgia as well as Russia's high-handed military operations on Georgian territory are the most visible indicators.

Russia has played an ambivalent role in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. It seems to act as kind of third party to the conflict and peace mediator. By December 2001, more than 70 per cent of the Abkhaz people were granted Russian citizenship. Russia has introduced obligatory visas for Georgian citizens, but the Abkhaz and South Ossetes are exempted. Abkhaz-Russian railway line between Sukhumi and Sochi were reopened in late 2002, directly violating CIS sanctions. Steps like these have, as a general rule, been reactions to Georgian political decisions. Georgians interpret them as direct interventions into their internal affairs and consider this a Russian game in which they play their Abkhaz and South Ossete cards. In any case, Russia has directly or indirectly been urging Georgia to enter into closer relations with them.

The international community supports Georgian political endeavours. In October-November 1993, a first round of peace talks opened the so-called *Geneva Peace Process* which has brought various intermediation efforts into one common course of action. It is conducted under UN chairmanship and with the participation of the so-called UN Secretary-General's Friends of Georgia (FOG). The Friends of Georgia include France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. The OSCE has had observer status since 1997.

Abkhaz-Georgian relations were also affected by 11 September 2001. Georgia supports the US-led campaign against terrorism in order to strengthen its political ties to the US as well as using it to bolster its own attempts to settle its internal affairs. Georgia is considering joining NATO. There are US armed forces stationed on Georgian soil. Georgia offered military bases to the US and British armed forces during the Iraq war of 2003. All this has been met with resistance from Russia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia and therefore seems to complicate the resolution of the Abkhaz conflict.

On the regional level, Georgia is looking to the south towards Turkey to establish a new partnership. However, Turkey seeks, in general and with regard to the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict, to maintain some equilibrium in its relations to Russia and Georgia. Also, minority-related issues in the Caucasus could easily have implications for Turkish domestic ethnic issues. Abkhazia seems to be developing its relations with Russia (especially the bordering North Caucasus) and parts of the Islamic world.

To a certain degree, the Abkhaz conflict has influenced Armenian-Georgian relations as well. The success or failure of the Abkhaz national movement could affect the atmosphere of the Karabakh conflict. Moreover and in more practical terms, land-locked and isolated Armenia depends heavily on land routes via Georgia. Armenia is now suffering because Georgia has to a large extent denied it access to Abkhazia for its transports. Closing the Abkhaz railway line between Armenia and Russia means a vital loss of potential commercial links for Armenia. Furthermore, Armenians state a possible resumption of military activities would expose dangers to the ethnic Armenian majority in the Gulripsh region of Abkhazia. On the other hand, Georgians fear that the wrong developments in Abkhazia could lead to a further separation of the ethnic Armenian district of Akhalkalaki in the southern part of

Georgia.

Economically, both Abkhazia and Georgia have suffered considerably. They have put the blame on the enemy – an act which is committed by both sides – to distract attention from the problems both national economies are facing. Bad governance and unskilful economic management, public insecurity and lawlessness have little to do with the impacts of war. Meanwhile, Abkhazia and especially its capital Sukhumi – which was once among the most popular Soviet resorts – have indeed experienced heavy losses from warfare and are now languishing in commercial insignificance. This is also true in relation to many Georgian sites. Moreover, the disintegration of the common Soviet economic space, the loss of former markets as well as the complications of managing political and economic transition have led to heavy economic and social losses.

In Abkhazia, the peculiarities of the Russian-Abkhaz border and the Georgian-Abkhaz demarcation line have created favourable conditions for smuggling and other illegal activities. Groupings of the commercial underground that have appeared during recent years profit from this and therefore largely control the post-war situation. Especially in the Gali district in southern Abkhazia and in the Kodori Valley in northern Abkhazia, the situation remains tense. Similar developments are also detectable in various other parts of Georgia.

2. The Conflict over South Ossetia (Tskhinvali)

South Ossete Background

South Ossetia covers an area of 3,900 sq km. It is located in the northern part of Georgia, and is bordered by Georgian districts and by North Ossetia (Alanya) in the Russian Federation. The last Soviet census in 1989 indicated that a total of 164,000 Ossetes lived in Georgia, which was about three per cent of the Georgian population; and 65,000 Ossetes lived in South Ossetia, which had a multi-ethnic population totalling 99,000. (The remaining Ossete majority was spread throughout other Georgian districts.) During that period, over three-fifths of the residents of Ossetia were ethnic Ossetes and about one-third were of Georgian ethnic origin. There were also Armenian, Jewish and Russian minorities living in South Ossetia. Like their Georgian neighbours, the South Ossetes are of the Orthodox Christian belief. Few of them are Sunni Muslims. (This is also true of the North Ossetes in the Russian Federation.) In addition, there are inherited elements of paganism in Ossete religious life.



Georgia with South Ossetia in its northern part

Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia02/georgia_sm02.gif

The Ossetian language belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. It is related to Farsi, Afghan and Kurdish and is not a cognate of Georgian. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the attempts to implement an Ossetian script were initially based on the Georgian script and later on the old Cyrillic alphabet. Between 1923 and 1938, written Ossetian was based on the Latin and until 1954 on the Georgian alphabet. In 1954,

a slightly modified set of Cyrillic characters was introduced and is still in use. The use of the Ossetian language is declining. There are Ossetian TV channels and newspapers, but the *lingua franca* in the region is Russian which is spoken and written by most Ossetes. Commonly, South Ossetes have a command of Georgian.

In the Georgian legislation on its administrative structure, the district including South Ossetia is called Tskhinvali. The town of Tskhinvali is the capital of South Ossetia where about three fourths of South Ossetes live. During Soviet times, the South Ossetian Autonomous Region (Oblast) consisted of the districts of Java, Akhalgori (former Leningori), Tskhinvali and Znauri. As is the case for the entire Caucasus, Ossetia was a relatively prosperous district. Mining, agriculture, health resorts and tourism, especially in the mountainous regions of Java, added up to a comparatively solid national income.

Views on Early and Pre-Soviet Ossete History

The Ossetes call themselves *Iron* and Ossetia *Iriston*. They see themselves as autochthon ethnicity and descendants of Scythians and Alans, tribes that were once nomads wandering through the southern parts of today's Ukraine and Russia as well as the North Caucasus. The legendary Georgian Queen Tamar, who reigned from 1184 through 1213, married David Soslan, son of the Ossete ruler. Thus, the Ossetes were directly involved in ruling during the Golden Age of Georgian history when the Georgian kingdom developed into a regional power. With the Mongol invasion in the 13th century, the Ossetes were forced to withdraw to the upper plateaus of the Caucasus. In the 14th century, they began to cross the Caucasus mountains again and started to settle in Georgian territory. In the 17th-18th century, the Ossete migration flow reached its peak ending in the 19th century. Georgians agree with this, but only partially. The Georgians are convinced that South Ossetia is one of their oldest historical and spiritual centres and an indivisible part of Georgia. In particular, the capital Tskhinvali, has special historical significance for Georgians. They believe the Ossetes were, relatively speaking, latecomers to the region. In Georgian view, it was only in the 17th and 18th centuries that the Ossetes began to drift slowly southward from (Russian) North Ossetia southwards to Georgia.



South and North Ossetia

Source: http://www.fpif.org/selfdetermination/conflicts/ossetia_body.html

However that may have been, one should not forget that the territories under discussion were finally included in the Russian Empire during and after the last Persian/Russian war in 1804/13 and the Russian military expeditions to the Caucasus during the second half of the

19th century. In 1801, Georgia was incorporated into Russia. Between 1801 and 1806, the entire Ossete territory was annexed to the Russian Empire. In 1878, Russian dominance over the South Caucasus had completely replaced that of Persia and the Ottoman empire.

Due to the new historical mainstreams in the region, the Ossetes had voluntarily already submitted to Russian supremacy in 1774. As they stress now, in the agreements with the Russians, there was no distinction made between North and South Ossetes. This is a central point in the contemporary argumentations of the Ossetes who see themselves as one ethnic group.

Russian and afterwards Soviet domination was a foreign element that still causes reverberations today. At the end of the day, the present-day conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia appears to have arisen due to Russian dominance, revolutionary changes and Soviet transformations.

From the early 20th century on, Soviet historiography indicates that South Ossetia was the location of revolutionary activities. In 1918, Ossetia was divided into various parts. As Georgians underline, South Ossetia was included in the Democratic Republic of Georgia (founded on 26 May 1918), while North Ossetia around its capital Vladikavkaz was partitioned in different ways. (See Georgian-Russian friendship treaty of 7 May 1920.) Adhering to the general trend of national liberation, South Ossetia declared independence on 8 June 1920.

Views on Soviet Ossete History

As a consequence of civil war and the revolutionary changes in 1918/21, North Ossetia was taken over by Russia, and South Ossetia by Georgia. A bitter chapter in the history of the relations between Georgia and South Ossetia was that Georgia invaded South Ossetia to prevent it from taking further steps towards independence. Georgia has justified its actions in the name of protecting its territorial integrity. The South Ossetes have called these actions an invasion where Georgians committed genocide. Georgians have called South Ossete endeavours during that period to achieve autonomy a forcible and artificial act.

On 20 April 1922, South Ossetia was made the South Ossetian Autonomous Region (Oblast) of Georgia, which in turn had joined the Federal Socialist Transcaucasus Soviet Republic (12 March 1922). On 30 December 1922, the Federation joined the USSR. The new Soviet Constitution of 5 December 1936 confirmed the autonomous status of South Ossetia within the newly established Georgian Socialist Soviet Republic.

Parallel to this, North Ossetia had been made the Ossetian District (Okrug) of the Mountain ASSR (17 November 1920). It was then transformed into the North Ossetian Autonomous Region (Oblast, 7 July 1924) and then the North Ossetian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (5 December 1936). After World War II, the Checheno-Ingush ASSR and the Stavropol Territory (Kray) were placed under North Ossete authority administratively. In the late-Soviet period, North Ossetia had about 299,000 inhabitants.

As a result of these developments, the two Ossetias became integral parts of two different Soviet Republics. As mentioned, South Ossetia was incorporated into Georgia, while North Ossetia was included into the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic. This division of Ossetia between Georgia and Russia has since then been the *casus belli* for all disputes between Georgians, Ossetes and Russians. In addition, changing the borders of Checheno-Ingushetia, Ossetia and Stavropol not only caused additional discord, but also gave rise to the permanent need for Russian intermediation.

Renewal of Hostilities

In the spirit of the late-Soviet *zeitgeist* and especially due to Georgian calls for independence, the South Ossetes began to openly discuss reunification with North Ossetia. Against this backdrop, beginning in 1988, tensions between Georgia and South Ossetia intensified. In Georgia, President Zviad Gamsakhurdia stoked up Georgian nationalist aspirations and the South Ossetes led by the *Adamon Nikhas* (People's Talk) movement also strengthened their position. At that time, a rather technical issue—the construction of the Roki tunnel that links South and North Ossetia – was the additional focus of political attention. Moscow had decided that construction work begin despite Georgian protest.

South Ossete Sovereignty	In 1989, the South Ossete Supreme Soviet expressed its will that the Autonomous Region (Oblast) of South Ossetia become an Autonomous Republic. However, South Ossetia's affiliation to Georgia was not placed in doubt. Nevertheless, even in 1989, first cases of violence took place between ethnic Georgians and Ossetes. The Georgian Parliament responded to this by placing restrictive measures on Ossete public considerations of independence. In August 1990, South Ossetes were deprived of the right to nominate representatives of local parties to the Georgian parliamentary elections. On 20 September 1990, South Ossetes replied to this by declaring independence. The South Ossete Democratic Soviet Republic was established. It was meant to be directly subordinated to Moscow.
Georgian Counter-measures	In October 1990, the South Ossetes boycotted the Georgian elections. In December 1990, they held elections to their own parliament. The Georgians responded by completely abolishing the South Ossete autonomy on 11 December 1990. A state of emergency was imposed; freedom of speech and freedom of the media, which were barely in existence anyway, became more restricted. Georgians declared Georgian the official language in South Ossetia. The South Ossetes declared Ossetian as their official language. In 1990/91, the primary goal of South Ossetia was to join the Russian Federation. (Later on, this shifted to calls for associations with the small Caucasian ethnicities.) Subsequently, Georgia began to form ethnic Georgian military units and the South Ossetes created armed detachments. In the first days of 1991, Georgian military forces entered Tskhinvali where they – according to Ossete sources – carried out massacres. The South Ossetes saw these incidents as having triggered the conflict, which has yet to be resolved, as well as creating tens of thousands of Georgian refugees.
Intensified Armed Conflict	At the Soviet-wide referendum of 17 March 1991, the majority of South Ossetes voted to maintain and reform the Soviet Union. In April 1991, Georgia declared independence. Grossly neglecting minority interests, Georgian policy-makers made greater Georgian nationalism their main goal during that period. The settings for violent confrontations were thus in place. Military operations were expanded. It was reported that Russian troops were also actively involved in the ensuing confrontation. Nonetheless, Russia appeared to be following a much softer approach to resolving the conflict than it had in relation to the Abkhaz issue. In this context, observers suggest that Russia had rather little interest in a reunification of North and South Ossetia. Georgia's reason for shifting to armed intervention was obviously that it feared it would lose all control over its already administratively and ethnically divided territory. In January 1991, still before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict had moved from armed clashes into outright war. In a repetition of earlier history, this was accompanied by the devastation of countless settlements and efforts by both sides to force the other hostile ethnic group out of their compact settlements.
Preliminary Peace	In summer 1992, the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia was brought to a preliminary end. Under Russian mediation, a ceasefire was declared. The Sochi ceasefire agreement of July 1992 provided for South Ossete control over Java, Tskhinvali, Znauri and parts of the region of Akhagori. At the same time, Georgian authorities were guaranteed control over Akhagori along with a number of Georgian exclave villages. The latter are still under Georgian jurisdiction. Their inhabitants participate in parliamentary and presidential elections, as was the case on 5 November 1995. The ceasefire did not resolve the dispute over the status of South Ossetia. On the other hand, it was agreed that a Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF) be set up with Georgian, Russian and South Ossetes participation. North Ossetia was also involved. In December 1992, the CSCE/OSCE began monitoring the ceasefire.
Outcome of the Conflict	In political terms, the outcome of the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia has been that positions have become intransigent on both sides, with the parties either favouring or opposing the independence of South Ossetia. The Georgians are attempting to hold the districts of their young republic together by not allowing them to secede. The South Ossetes strive for reunification with their northern ethnic relatives. With this, pan-Ossete dialogues have the broader objective of establishing closer ties with other ethnic groups in the North Caucasus. The Confederation of Peoples of the Caucasus – an amalgamation of small

North Caucasian peoples in Russia which is not recognized by the central government in Moscow – supports these goals. Now as before, in the bilateral relations between Georgia and South Ossetia, the principle of national self-determination is pitted against the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In November 2001, presidential elections were held in South Ossetia. Although not recognized by the international community, the elections led to actual power being transferred to the new South Ossete President Eduard Kokoyev and new local officials. The Georgian authorities have little influence on the internal affairs of South Ossetia. Eduard Kokoyev favours a course towards reunification with North Ossetia and accession to the Russian Federation. Military co-operation with the Russian Federation is seen as a means of preventing Georgian intervention.

The new Georgian constitution of 1995 leaves those territorial and administrative issues open that would affect South Ossetia and Abkhazia. This is a reflection of the actual situation wherein none of the sides have been able to move things fundamentally. It appears that this is why the South Ossetes have played a rather inactive role. It seems they are waiting for external changes such as the settlement of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict. Indeed, Abkhaz and South Ossete issues are interrelated. There can hardly be an agreement on the status of Abkhazia without implications for other Georgian districts, including South Ossetia. Thus, South Ossetes compare their situation directly with that of the Abkhaz. In contrast, Georgians differentiate between the South Ossetes and the Abkhaz. Meanwhile, they appear to accept South Ossetes and Abkhaz as each being native to their own homelands, just as the Georgians are to theirs.

A major result of the war has been that the ethnic South Ossetes have been separated from ethnic Georgians. Each side accuses the other of committing ethnic cleansing. The majority of ethnic Georgians who lived in South Ossetia have moved to other districts in Georgia. According to UNHCR figures, they total about 14,000. Reportedly, more than 100,000 Ossetes fled from Georgia and South Ossetia to North Ossetia. Due to this, ethnic Ingush people living in North Ossetia were urged to leave North Ossetia and go to Ingushetia. According to the UNHCR, this created about 25,000 Ingush refugees. Statistics differ considerably according to their source.

The economic and social situation in South Ossetia as well as other districts in and around Georgia is deplorable. Unemployment is immensely high. The educational system barely functions. Daily life is characterized by electricity fall-outs (because deliveries from Georgian companies have been stopped), heating systems being shut down and water shortages. The production of fruit, wine, grain and cotton along with lumbering and livestock have risen and become key sources of income. The fact that the Georgian-South Ossete conflict has not been resolved has given politicians a topic to improve their images. It opens the door to local businessmen to make a profit from the situation. A mixture of smuggling, robbery and kidnapping has become the new pillar of the national economy of South Ossetia. These profitable businesses have created the main obstacles to a peace settlement. They produce and are to a large extent based upon an unstable public atmosphere. This situation was a reason for taking joint action. In early 2000, a Joint Law Enforcement Co-ordination Body with representatives of Georgian and South Ossete local authorities was set up. The EU and the OSCE support this common activity. A Joint Control Commission (JCC) supports confidence-building and serves as a mechanism for each side to address issues of mutual concern while excluding the issue of the South Ossetia's status. The JCC focuses on military and security issues, economic issues and refugees and IDPs. (Further international peace endeavours will be shown below.)

As is characteristic for the entire Caucasus, subliminal pragmatism, which is beyond the threshold of conscious perception, is a governing rule in daily life. The ceasefire line is porous. Even regular bus lines operate across these lines. Cross-border trade is common. Military security seems to be stable. The JPFK monitors the ceasefire and also maintains a rapid reaction force, which has proven capable of responding quickly to threats to the peace and defusing tense situations. The OSCE observes JPFK operations. A Memorandum on Measures to Provide Security and Strengthen Mutual Trust Between the Sides in the Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict was signed in Moscow in July 1996. This is the first framework agreement between the conflict parties. (Still in the same year, Georgia changed

the name of South Ossetia to Tskhinvali and simultaneously created an enlarged administrative province under this name.) The memorandum provides for refugee return, political negotiations and the involvement of civil society. Since March 1997, both sides have been in negotiation, but there has been no fundamental progress.

So far, South Ossetia has been comparatively peaceful. The continual deterioration of Georgia's economic and social situation, along with political instabilities in Tbilisi, have created an external threat to internal developments in South Ossetia. Additionally, in late 2002, President Eduard Shevardnadze made declarations that Georgia intended to regain control over both Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Concerns were expressed in both entities about a Georgian – allegedly anti-Chechen – military operation in the Pankisi Gorge in August 2002 (see below). These fears emerged because of likely similar operations against Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In September 2002, the Abkhaz and South Ossete leaders Anri Jergenia and Eduard Kokoyev discussed the creation of a bilateral defence agreement in order to be protected against, how they called it, Georgian aggression. Parallel to this, President Kokoyev appealed to his compatriots to obtain Russian citizenship. There are estimates that about 60 per cent of the residents of South Ossetia have become naturalized Russian citizens. In any case, like the Abkhaz, citizens of South Ossetia do not need visas to enter Russia. However, the Georgians do.

On 8 April 2001, South Ossetia conducted a referendum on implementing constitutional amendments to increase presidential power. The referendum was held unilaterally, without Georgian participation or agreement. This gave the EU and OSCE reason to declare the referendum illegal and void.

3. The Relations with Ajaria (Ajara)

Ajar Background

Ajaria (Ajara) is located in the Southwest of Georgia. It has a territory of 2,900 square kilometres expanding from the Black Sea to the Caucasus Mountain Range. In the South, it borders with Turkey. Ajaria has a population total of some 400,000 (Ajar reading) inhabitants with more than 80 ethnic groups including, *inter alia* (in alphabetical order), Armenians, Georgians, Greeks, Jews, Russians and Ukrainians. In a large sense, the ethnic Ajarians see themselves as members of the Georgian people. Ajarians speak Georgian (Kartulad). Many of them are still fluent in Russian. Ajarians are predominantly Sunni Muslims. Orthodox Christian belief is popular especially among the young generation. Churches are built like elsewhere in Georgia. It is not exceptional, that Ajar Muslim parents baptize their children. Ajarians are tolerant towards other confessions and accept Catholic, Jewish and other parishes. The freedom of faith is constitutionally guaranteed.



Ajaria

Source: <http://www.usaid.org.ge/ajara.shtml>

The capital of Ajaria is Batumi, which is also the main seaport of Georgia. The Batumi/Tbilisi/Baku railway route is a central transport communication of the South Caucasus. It links the Black Sea with the Caspian Sea and gives access to worldwide navigation. Ajaria has a number of natural resources. There are hopes to discover oil and gas deposits in the Ajar Black Sea shelf. Strategically important are the numerous springs of mineral and fresh water all over Ajaria in a region which commonly faces droughts and water deficits. During Soviet times, Ajar industries reached from oil processing, electromechanical industries, shipbuilding and machine tool construction, stone work industries, to textile industries, tobacco and tea processing, and fruit canning. The region had a comparatively diversified agriculture. The tourism and health resort industry was largely developed. As stated by Ajar official sources, the national economy is still in comparatively good conditions. Historically, family clans have ruled and are still governing Ajaria.

In political self-portraits, Ajaria is a peaceful oasis within the conflict-loaded Caucasus. Ajarians view themselves as good-natured, polite persons with a rare sense of hospitality. The special Ajar way of predominantly emphasizing the beneficial sides of history and present-time relationships with their neighbours attracts the outsider's attention.

Ajar History

As all Caucasians do, Ajarians refer to a millennium-long history of their people. From what Ajar sources write, first Ajar settlements can be traced back to the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. Ajar territories had once been a most densely populated and largely developed part of the historic Kolkha kingdom. This was in the 7th and 8th centuries BC. The Christian line of Ajar history goes back to the 1st century. Since the 10th century AD, Ajaria has been part of Georgian land. In the 11th century, Seljuk Turks marched into Adzhar territories, followed by Mongols in the 13th century and other foreign occupiers. The 15th century is the starting point of the regency of the feudal family of the Abashidzes who are mentioned in present-time Adzhar textbooks as the direct ancestors of Aslan Abashidze, today's Chairman of the Supreme Council and Head of Ajar Autonomous Republic. From the 17th century on, Ajaria fell under Ottoman rule. Under Turkic influence, most of the Ajarians converted to Muslim belief. In 1878, it was included into the Russian Empire and re-subordinated to Georgian administrative territories. Ajarians mark this date as a moment of historic reunification with their Georgian motherland. It followed a period of comparative economic advancement and European influence. The region was opened to

mainly English, French, German and Russian investments.

The years of revolutionary changes, civil war and foreign intervention led initially to Turkish occupation between 1918 and 1920. In compliance with the spirit of the Armenian-Turkish Treaty of Kars and confirmed by the new Georgian constitution, Ajaria became an autonomous region of Georgia in October 1921. The Ajar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was proclaimed, at once, being a constituent part of the Georgian SSR. In their interpretation of history, Ajarians lay emphasis on economic growth and social betterment of the following Soviet decades. This special way of reading history is an attempt to charm all relevant partners – that is, Armenia, Georgia, Turkey and Russia plus the separating regions of Georgia – into neighbourly relations. It may once again reflect the Ajarians' effort to imbed their own prosperity into a responsive and stable international environment.

Ajar Federal Positions

Since Georgian independence in 1991, Ajarians understand their outstanding role in bolstering Georgian state sovereignty and territorial integrity. Ajarians regard themselves as a specific Georgian ethnicity. They demand an outstanding Ajar position within Georgian federalism. Ajar leader Aslan Abashidze makes himself a symbol and defender of law and order, civil agreement, peace and stability in the entire Georgia. The revival of Georgian culture, art, science, and the reinforcement of democracy are a central part of his public announcements. In 1992, he founded the All Georgian Union-Revival Party.

The intermediating role of Ajaria in all-Georgian affairs is simultaneously utilized for the purpose of widening Ajar self-government. Not unintentionally, Ajar policy is directed at developing federal elements in Georgian state construction. Since Soviet times, Aslan Abashidze has kept high political positions in the Georgian central government. In 2001, he was asked to become the Georgian President's personal envoy in settling the Abkhaz conflict.

Ajar and Georgian Conflict Potentials

Meanwhile, the Ajar-Georgian relations are not free of tensions. Logically, the Ajar activities to enlarge their autonomy and keep commercially at distance from Tbilisi worries the Georgian authorities. Ajar attempts to establish direct links with Turkey were perceived as affronting all-Georgian interests. (The central government itself is looking for intensifying relations to Ankara.) Also, the Ajarians' friendly relations with political forces opposing President Shevardnadze have raised questions. Particularly, the personal ties between Mr. Shevardnadze's opponent Zviad Gamsakhurdia and Aslan Abashidze has caused lasting annoyance. To Mr. Abashidze's Georgian critics, the fact that his forefathers had been Turkish protégées has unpleasant connotations. It is seen as reviving the sensitive components of Ajar and Georgian history. Furthermore, the Ajarians' resoluteness to keep Russian military forces in Batumi openly conflicts with Georgian intentions. Conversely, Ajarians disliked the idea of being ousted from the Azeri-Georgian-Turkish oil pipeline project and the proposed railways link. It was politically showing signs that, after years of discussions, Ajaria would finally be included into the projected route of the Baku/Cheikhan oil pipeline.

Ajar-Georgian reservations that exist irrespective of proximity and ethnic relationship are most probably based on the difference in religious belief, which seems to be the main issue dividing the Christian Georgians and the predominantly Islamized Ajarians. In this context, it is in some places believed that Moscow had intentionally established Ajar Soviet autonomy at exactly this confessional edge of Ajar-Georgian relations. Besides, today's conflict potentials in Ajar-Georgian relations might be enclosed in contrary economic interests of Batumi and Tbilisi and their governing elites as well as the logics of changing coalitions in and around Georgia.

4. The Problems with Javakheti (Javakhk, Meskhethi-Javakheti)

While Javakheti is still figuring in public perception and political reality, its very existence as a separate administrative unit has ended after the central government's rearrangements of the country's administrative division. In 1994, Javakheti and four adjacent districts were merged into the common province of Samtskhe-Javakheti (Meskhethi-Javakheti) with Samtskhe (Meskhethi) being the Western, and Javakheti the Eastern half of the province. In the following, issues concerning Javakheti rather than the administrative unit of Samtskhe-

Javakheti (Meskheta-Javakheti) will be addressed.



Samtskhe-Javakheti

Source: http://www.usaid.org/ge/samtskhe_javakheti.shtml

Javakheti Background

The predominantly Armenian-populated Javakheti (Armenian: *Javakhk*) is a land-locked territory on the southern fringe of Georgia bordering with Armenia and Turkey. Javakheti consists of the two districts (rayons) of Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda (the former Bodganovka).

As part of Samtskhe-Javakheti, its capital is now Akhaltsikhe, which is a town on the Samtskhe side. There are six administrative units in the province, each of which is governed by Tbilisi-subservient governors. An overall province administration does not exist. Samtskhe-Javakheti (Meskheta-Javakheti) has a territory of more than 6,300 square kilometres and a population of 253,000 inhabitants.

Javakheti itself is a territory of about 2,200 square kilometres with roughly 100,000 residents. Some 90 per cent of the Javakhetians are ethnic Armenians. (Armenian figures differ considerably.) It is the most compact settlement of Armenians in Georgia. In Georgian literature, the Armenians' final appearance to the district is sometimes dated with 1828. Armenian sources naturally reveal different views. They refer to the centuries or millennia of Armenianhood in the region.

Present-time Javakheti

Javakheti is in deplorable economic and social condition. It is reportedly one of the most underdeveloped regions of Georgia. Individual farming and cattle breeding are the population's main source of income. Small farmers conduct border-near trade. Local industries have collapsed. Cannery is still functioning. Quarrying of marble, basalt and construction stones is reported. Besides, the major driving force in local business is the Akhalkalaki-stationed 62nd Russian Military Base. Reportedly, far more than the half of the approximately 2,000 military staff who do their service at the base are Russian citizens of Javakh-Armenian descent. Many Javakhetians live from trade with the soldiers. Others live from side effects of the transit trade from and to Turkey. While Turkey and Azerbaijan have imposed a trade embargo on the Republic of Armenia, Armenian-Turkish business has in reality never stopped, but was redirected via Georgian transit routes. Javakhetians who have established their own customs duty regime – the norm in the various provinces of Georgia – benefit from the situation.

Meanwhile, road communications are in extremely bad condition, which puts the Javakheti-dwellers in extreme isolation. Cross-country roads are not maintained. In the course of time,

large parts of the roads decayed into virtually impassable field paths. The rocky region became difficult to traverse. Central authorities are disinclined or unable to finance reconstruction works. The electricity supply from Georgia is cut off. Javakhetians blame Georgians for not delivering; Georgians blame Javakhetians for not paying. To Georgian displeasure, a new power line now links the district to the Armenian national grid bringing Javakheti economically closer to Yerevan than to Tbilisi. Most Javakhetians are extremely poor. They are unable to afford basic amenities, including TV and newspaper, which adds another dimension to Javakheti's isolation.

Prices in Javakheti are often not shown in Georgian *lari*, but in Armenian *dram*, which is the main currency unit circulated in the district.

Armenian is the common language of communication. Command of Georgian is little developed among the Javakh-Armenians. It is rather seen as the neighbours' language. Russian as the *lingua franca* is gradually disappearing. While Georgian has been made subject to school agendas countrywide, there are only few Georgian teachers willing to go to Javakheti. Lack of capacities to teach and propagate Georgian on the one hand, and disinclination to accept Georgian, on the other, does not help the situation. The shrinking abilities to communicate with the non-Armenian environment also isolate Javakheti.

History of Javakheti

According to Georgian historians, today's Javakheti was populated during the 1st millennium BC. In the 3rd third century BC, it became part of the Iberian Kingdom. In the 2nd century BC, it was included into the Armenian Kingdom. Since the 1st millennium AD, the territory has had a mixed Armenian and Georgian population. As all the surrounding South Caucasus, it was exposed to permanent changes in territorial adherence, size of territory and ethnic composition. Persians, Byzantines, Abkhazians and Mongols and the Ottoman-Turks invaded Javakheti. During the regency of Queen Tamar in the 12th–13th century, Meskheta-Javakheti was one of the cultural centres of the Georgian kingdom. The monastery Vardzia and the fortress Khertvisi were established. The Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli is said to come from the little village Rustavi near Akhaltsikhe. The Mongol invasion in the 13th century ended Georgian rule. Beginning with the 16th century, Turkic-Persian controversies started to dominate Javakheti. In the 17th century, Javakheti fell under Ottoman subordination. Its population was partly converted to Muslim belief and partly to Roman Catholicism, enjoying some Ottoman toleration. The Turkish language began to drive out the languages of Javakheti-dwellers. The Peace of Adrianopol after the Russian-Turkish war in 1829 gave favour to the Georgian language. In the 19th century, Javakheti became part of the Tiflis Province of the Russian Empire. After the Russians took over, many Turkish and Kurdish Muslims were forced to leave the region. It became Russian policy to settle Dukhobors (Russian Christian sectarians) and, to some extent, Greeks and Christian Kurds as well as Armenian migrants, mainly from Anatolia – the former West-Armenia and today's Northeast of Turkey – in Javakheti and its surroundings. Georgians say this was the time when Akhalkalaki became mainly Armenian-populated, while Armenians are convinced that they have ancient roots in the region. During the revolutionary years, Javakheti was included into the briefly existing Transcaucasus Federation (March 1918), which was then occupied by Turkish troops and later incorporated into the Georgian Democratic Republic (May 1918).

At about this time, war emerged between Armenians and Georgians. This was the one and only armed conflict between the two peoples in modern history and, up till now, ordinary people on both sides make sure to express their regret for this unfortunate episode.

On the whole, the regional turmoil of the Armenian-Georgian conflict was finally taken up by the radical social changes that had spiralled down to the Caucasus from Russia. After successful operations of the Red Army and the establishment of Soviet rule, Javakheti became part of the Federal Socialist Transcaucasus Soviet Republic. In December 1922, the Federation joined the USSR. As an integral part of the USSR, it existed until 1936, when Georgia (along with Armenia and Azerbaijan) was made a Soviet Republic. Javakheti went through the seven decades of Soviet modernization as integral part of Georgia.

Armenians in Javakheti

Within Javakheti, Armenians still make up the ethnic majority. After the administrative restructuring and the establishment of Samtskhe-Javakheti, this majority has been, to the sullenness of the Armenians, evaporated within the larger ethnic Georgian environment.

The Javakh-Armenians say that the forced Georgianization of the country is the very reason for the restructuring.

The particular sensitivity of the issue is intensified by the outstanding role Armenians are convinced of having played in Georgian history. As a matter of fact, Armenians traditionally represent a large and relatively prosperous ethnic group of the country. Their population share, over the last century, has constantly varied around ten per cent, while, among the other ethnic groups, they normally exceeded their numerical strength.

Over the centuries, Armenians have undeniably succeeded in favourably positioning themselves within Georgian society. Based on their strong inner-ethnic coherence and family ties, skilled trade, craftsmanship, science and convenient intermarriages, they often had a decisive hand in governing local or even national issues. In a number of districts in the country, Armenian churches and cemeteries, with their distinctive architecture and ornaments, testify to the earliest Armenian traditions in Georgia. Reported cases of the removal of Armenian inscriptions and the conversion of these holy places into Georgian sacral houses and sites have caused pain to the Armenians. Conversely, Georgians point at Armenians and accuse them for having done the same with their churches.

These circumstances were the background for brief but intrusive expressions of frustration among the Javakh-Armenians. Influenced by and confronted with the spirit of national liberation in the late-Soviet years, a number of Javakh-Armenians raised their voice for establishing the district's autonomy or unifying Javakheti with Armenia. When in 1994 Samtskhe and Javakheti amalgamated and an ethnic Georgian was appointed State Representative to the province, they were not far from causing public unrest. Nonetheless, clear-headed judgment of the land-locked situation of Javakheti and Armenia as well as of their economic dependence on Georgian trade routes kept them from aggravating the conflict.

***Georgians
and
Russians in
Javakheti***

The Armenian-dominated Javakheti is also domicile to Georgian inhabitants. With political intentions or not, some hundred Ajar families had been resettled in the district after a natural disaster in the 1980s. Frequently, rumours spread among Javakh-Armenians, who speak about tries of nationalistic-tempered political circles to bring in more Georgian settlers. Since the late 1980s, a Georgian Resettlement Foundation and a Revival of Javakheti Society are reported to having been buying abandoned houses and transferring them to ethnic Georgians from other areas. Nonetheless, Georgian immigration is restrained. Until recently, Russians and the aforementioned Dukhobors who have now largely left for Russia also populated the district. The share of the non-Armenian groups in Javakheti's population varied around ten per cent.

***Dukhobors in
Javakheti***

The religious community of the Russian-speaking Dukhobors (Russian for Spirit Wrestlers or Fighters for the Spirit and the Truth) came to Javakheti from Ukrainian and Russian territories in the 1830/40s. They had been sent to Javakh in exile for rejecting external authority in favour of direct individual revelation. In Javakheti, they thought to have found Dukhoboria, the Dukhobors' paradise. In the 1980/90s, the nearly 4,000 Dukhobors left after having settled there for about a century and a half.

***Meskhethians
and
Javakheti***

Samtskhe-Javakheti's second name, Meskhethi-Javakheti, is reminiscent of the ethnic group Meskhethians—or Meskhethian Turks as others call them—who had lived in the area until their deportation to Central Asia in 1944, when they were accused of potentially being sympathisers of Germany and Turkey. Reportedly, between 90,000 and 120,000 individuals (among them also several thousand Kurds) were forcibly resettled at that time. More than 30,000 individuals of other ethnicities from all over Georgia replaced them. From their point of view, Meskhethians have since then been forced to live in exile. Meskhethians (or Meskhi) consider themselves historically and ethnically as descendants of the above-mentioned Georgian Meskh tribes, who, in the 17th century when Meskhethi-Javakheti fell under Ottoman rule, converted to Muslim belief. This understanding makes them see themselves as being founders or co-founders of Georgian culture, language and finally statehood. While officially Georgia regards them as Islamized Georgians and therefore as Meskhethian Turks, the Meskhethians call themselves Georgians of Muslim belief.

**Meskhethian
Conflict
Potential**

Against the background of reactivated inter-ethnic tensions, Meskhethians intensely began to voice their opinions in late-Soviet period. Hereby, they—intentionally or unintentionally—provoked animosities and aggression among the population of the territories of their current stay. In 1989, members of their community were massacred in the Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan. (It was one of the first hard ethnic shakes of the Soviet Union.) In the South-Russian region of Krasnodar they had also become subject to violence over the years. Numerous Meskhethians were forced to leave Uzbekistan, mainly for Azerbaijan. International reports speak of about some 70,000 Meskhethians refugees.

The Meskhethians' desire to return is not a case of individual requests. Meskhethians are pressing for repatriation as a people. According to different estimates, there are between 250,000 and 300,000 Meskhethians living mainly in the Russian Federation, in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. This adds a new dimension to the issue. Georgia politically agreed to repatriate Meskhethians within ten years when it joined the Council of Europe (CoE) in 1999. The issue was one of the conditionalities for Georgian CoE membership. Practically, central authorities in Tbilisi are nonetheless reluctant to make the Meskhethians' repatriation possible, and only Georgian-speaking Meskhethians have so far been given the chance to get repatriated. Still not forgotten are the incidents of 1992, when Georgian nationalists around the first post-Soviet president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, forced more than 200 Meskhethian families out of the country.

Two simple reasons for Georgian hesitations over the Meskhethian issue are economic and social shortcomings. Georgia's national economy is, as mentioned, in utterly bad condition. As a consequence of the Abkhaz and the South Ossetian conflicts, the country is furthermore overburdened with the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, whose future is regarded to be more urgent than arranging the Meskhethians' resettlement. New immigrants would therefore not be welcomed. Also, the Meskhethians' intended destination itself has been converted into a poor region. Ill feelings towards returnees have, figuratively speaking, become fruitful breeding grounds in Samtskhe-Javakheti (Meskhethi-Javakheti). In regard to social issues, Georgian authorities do not feel responsible for addressing the Meskhethians issue. *Inter alia*, they declare that Uzbekistan as the Meskhethians' former host country would carry main responsibility.

In any case, social issues are barely at the very crux of the problem. The specific destination of return is the main subject of dispute between Georgian authorities and the Meskhethians. Meskhethians wish to go back to their homeland, Samtskhe-Javakheti, and only there. This is the case while Georgian authorities favour a scheme of scattered resettlement throughout the country, if at all. The Georgian approach revives earlier small-scale concessions dating back to 1979 when the then-Georgian CP First Secretary, Eduard Shevardnadze, had permitted the return of some first Meskhethian families to Georgia, although not to Samtskhe-Javakheti.

In company with the Javakh-Armenians, Georgians fear a new escalation of inter-ethnic relations in the already sensitive triangle between Armenia, Georgia and Turkey. The Meskhethians are Sunni Muslims, like the neighbouring Turks. Resentments against Muslims are widespread among the Christian Armenians and Georgians and *vice versa*.

Javakh-Armenians strictly oppose the idea of opening Javakheti to a Turkic minority. Inherited Armenian-Turkish hostility is publicly discussed in plain terms. It is the number one issue in local public awareness. The remembrance of the 1915 genocide still produces vivid worries under the roofs of Javakheti. The current atmosphere among Javakh-Armenians contains uncertainty and a strong feeling of being unprotected and of history possibly repeating itself. They fear what they call another invasion of the Turks and greatly wish to keep hosting the 62nd Russian Military Base in Akhalkalaki as long as possible. To the annoyance of the Georgians, the Javakh-Armenians have therefore given reason to Russians for delaying the withdrawal of troops while they, in turn, feel threatened by the Georgians' endeavours to completely remove the four Russian military presences and the Russian peacekeeping forces in the country. (All in all, Russia runs border troops along the Georgian-Turkish border, a garrison that Russia inherited from the Soviet period, the CIS Peacekeeping Force in Abkhazia and the Joint Peacekeeping Force in South Ossetia.) To the Javakh-Armenians, the 62nd Base is not only a bulwark against Turkey, but, in a certain sense, also against Georgia, which is considering political and military liaisons with Turkey.

Georgian troops in turn are not stationed in Javakheti.

On the whole, the Meskhetian question is a highly explosive inter-ethnic issue in Georgia. A revival of ethnic conflicts in Samtskhe-Javakheti (Meskheti-Javakheti) would necessarily leave no other choice to all sides – Armenia, Georgia, Russia, Turkey, to name the inner conflict circle, so to speak – than to take partisan and active positions. From the international side, the CoE and the OSCE have been monitoring the situation. A number of NGOs have been trying to raise awareness of these issues.

Pankisi Gorge Geography

5. Irritation over the Pankisi Gorge

The Pankisi Gorge is situated in Northern Georgia, not far from Tbilisi, and borders with Chechnya in the Russian Federation. In the mid-1990s, it was drawn into the first, and later into the second Chechen-Russian conflict, when thousands of Chechens fled to the valley. After September 11th, it became subject to the international war against terrorism. In Russian and US intelligence reports, the Pankisi Gorge serves as a base of operations for Chechen fighters and transit point for members of the al-Qaeda movement. Chechen fighters use the gorge as a base to stage attacks against Russian troops and as a shelter for refuge. As reported by the media, they are said to be running a business in weapons smuggling, drug trafficking and kidnapping. With its geographical setting, military access to the Pankisi Gorge is complicated.



Pankisi Gorge

Source: http://www.civil.ge/pankisi_map.shtml

Pankisi Gorge Population

The Pankisi Gorge is home to the Kist people who are Chechen by ethnicity and Muslim by belief. Orthodox Christian Georgians have allegedly fled the gorge after military operations had begun. In late 2000, between 4,000 and 7,000 Chechen refugees were counted in the Pankisi Gorge. All in all, some estimated 15,000 Chechen civilians have sought temporary or permanent shelter there. It is assumed that some 6,000 refugees have gradually settled down in the region. The exact number of fighters is obviously unidentified. As a minimum, it goes up to the hundreds.

Russian Annoyance over the Pankisi Gorge

The Pankisi Gorge has repeatedly become subject to Russian annoyance. *Firstly*, Russian authorities and the media accuse Georgian security forces of not having effectively prevented and ultimately brought down the use of Georgian territory for Chechen military preparations. Moreover, they suspect the Georgian Government of tolerating or passively utilizing Chechen activities to the disadvantage of Russia. *Secondly*, Georgia strictly opposed the idea of Russian activities in the gorge, above all military ones. Also, it had rejected Russian proposals for international military operations under Russian participation, fearing a further enlargement of the Russian military presence in the country. It has, however, successfully sought military support from the US. *Thirdly*, in this context and imbedded in the worldwide US War against Terrorism, US troops have been flown into Georgia and hereby into former Soviet territory. The number of the US military experts who train Georgian troops in anti-terror techniques is limited. It is rather symbolic, but this is the issue at hand. The political subtext to their presence is their course of action on this traditional Russian territory of interest. In this regard, the very action of Russian forces stepping on Pankisi ground were, symbolically speaking, analogous to the conflict. (Understandably, Abkhazians and South Ossetians support Russian positions.) *Fourthly*, prior to the Pankisi affair, Georgia had made its intention clear in establishing military co-operation with NATO-member Turkey. On the whole, this sets political landmarks against Russia's long-term military interests in the South Caucasus. In particular, it could have a curbing effect on Russian engagement in Abkhaz and South Ossetian issues and, in the end, have a roll-back effect in North Caucasus (inner-Russian) affairs. *Fifthly* and in strict military terms, the gorge is still not under control.

Interests in the Pankisi Gorge

In the general course of the Russian-US talks on the War against Terrorism, some visual progress has been made. Both sides have maintained a positive tone in their discussions. Also, Russia has come to some formal rapprochement with NATO. Russia is linking now the Chechen issue and the Pankisi Gorge to international operations in Afghanistan. Along these lines it is internationalizing its internal problems. This gives the Chechen war an anti-terrorist and anti-criminal quality. Moreover, it promotes the idea of Georgia as still being part of its sphere of influence, naturally requiring Russian military assistance. The United States has practically moved their activities forward into the Black Sea/Caspian region and onto post-Soviet territory. It seems that the US has identified Georgia as its main ally in helping manifest its presence in the South Caucasus. The arguments around the Pankisi Gorge may have enhanced public receptiveness for enlarged US endeavours in the region. Finally, the Georgian central government is concerned about protecting state integrity and sovereignty, as in all other affairs with its other separate regions, too. The political business around the Pankisi Gorge has so far served to Georgian authorities as another tool for steadily gliding out of Russian dominance. Regional richness in natural resources, including Chechen oil, has boosted political eagerness among all sides involved.

6. Uncertainties about Megrelia (Samargalo, Samegrelo, Mingrelia)

Megrelian Background

Megrelia (Megrelian: *Samargalo*, Georgian: *Semegrelo*) is located on the Black Sea coast in the West of Georgia. It borders with Abkhazia in the north and Ajaria in the south. The capital is the town of Zugdidi. Along with Sukhumi (Abkhazia) and Batumi (Ajaria), Poti represents one of the three main ports of Georgia. Since the new administrative division of the country, Megrelia has been part of Samegrelo - Zemo Svaneti province, which has an area of 7,400 square kilometres and a population of more than 430,000.



Megrelia

Source: <http://www.usaid.org.ge/samegrelo.shtml>

During the Soviet period, Megrelia was mainly an agricultural region with stockbreeding, citrus, tea and tobacco growing as well as ethereal oil production. Industries were mainly concentrated in and around Poti and Zugdidi. Today, Megrelia and particularly the coastal district of Khobi cherish economic hopes for the commercial recovery of the port of Poti. Other districts – especially those in the highlands – may merely have no other future than in agriculture. The whole province of Megrelia and Zemo Svaneti suffers from being cut off from traditional communications with the South of Russia, which previously ran through Abkhazia.

Numerous internally displaced persons, who fled Abkhazia during the war in 1992/93, have aggravated the complicated economic and social situation in Megrelia. About 250,000 internally displaced persons settled in and around the province. (Megrelia had temporarily hosted a share of up to fifty per cent of all IDPs in Georgia.) Most of them live as permanent migrants in compact reception centres which had been initially renovated for them as provisional dwellings. Others stay with their local relatives.

Megrelia is among the eight arch-Georgian core provinces that are shown in Georgian history books as places of constant settlement of Georgian tribes and ethnicities over the about thirty centuries of Georgian statehood. (The other provinces are Abkhazia, Guria, Imereti, Kakheti, Kartli, Samtskhe (Meskheta) and Svaneti.) Megrelian history knows changing borders, subordination and ethnic influence. After the disintegration of the Georgian lands in the 15th century, the Principality of Megrelia (Odishi) gained regional importance. At the end of the 17th century, it was incorporated into the Principality of Abkhazia. Megrelians speak of the following period as the cultural Abkhazianization of Megrelia. In 1803, Megrelia fell under Russian supremacy and was finally – as part of Georgia – integrated into the Russian Empire and afterwards into the Soviet Union.

Megrelian and Megrelians

Megrelians (or Mingrelians) call their native land Samargalo or Megrelia (Georgian: *Samegrelo*) and their language *margaluri nina* (Georgian: *megruli ena*). Megrelians speak Megrelian. Like Georgian (Kartvelian) and Laz (Iberian), Megrelian belongs to the South Caucasian language group. Georgians see Megrelian as one of a number of Georgian dialects, while the Megrelians see their language as that which makes the most evident cognitive difference between their land and other parts of Georgia. Megrelians insist on Megrelian being an own language, at least due to significant differences in grammar and vocabulary.

Megrelian is used in daily life at home and in all social activities where the use of literary language is not required. It is not used as means of instruction and is not taught at school. In writing, Megrelians apply Georgian characters. Most Megrelians are bilingual and fluent in Megrelian as well as Georgian or Abkhaz. Russian as a language of inter-ethnic communication is steadily disappearing.

Megrelian is used in compact linguistic areas in western Georgia. It is predominantly spoken in the southern half of Megrelia, in some districts of Abkhazia and in a number of places on the southern slopes of the Great Caucasus. Concerning their language and history, Megrelians exhibit their pride in being an individual group among the Georgian ethnicities.

Megrelian Revolt

In 1993, Megrelia became area of retreat and combat operations for fighters opposing the then newly-elected President Eduard Shevardnadze. Supporters of Mr. Shevardnadze's predecessor and adversary, the Megrelian Zviad Gamsakhurdia – the so-called Zviadists – captured the towns of Poti and Samtredia and blocked the entire rail traffic and food supply to Tbilisi, which had, until this moment, come from or been transported via Megrelia. Openly, Megrelians supported their Abkhazians neighbours in fighting Georgian governmental troops in 1992-1994. They also supported a strong Russian presence in Georgia and therefore enjoyed support from Russia.

Tbilisi found itself in a complicated situation. In July 1992, it had reached ceasefire in South Ossetia, but was still heavily involved in the Abkhaz war. In September 1993, it suffered defeat in Abkhazia, when it first lost Sukhum and then the entire Abkhaz territory. Economically, Georgia was in rapid decline and socially in dire straits. Confrontation had become the norm in inter-ethnic relations. The country was under the acute threat of falling apart.

Along with the Abkhaz war, the Zviadist Megrelia offensive was one of the sharpest arguments for the Georgian central government to ask Russia for immediate military support. On 8 October 1993, Georgia also joined the Commonwealth of Independent States. These were two steps for which Russia had persistently campaigned.

On 9 October 1993, Georgia and Russia signed an agreement on the status of Russian troops in Georgia, the core of which was a contract on the lease of Georgian military bases, including the one in Poti. Straight away, Russian troops were set in motion. They took control over the main railway and road communications in Megrelia. In November 1993, they marched into Poti. At about this time, Georgian troops occupied Zugdidi and brought the whole Megrelia *hinterland* under control. Zviad Gamsakhurdia died from unknown causes on 31 December 1993. (According to different reports he was either killed or – so the official Georgian version – committed suicide.) The Zviadist Megrelia intermezzo had collapsed. As a result, Georgian forces were theoretically free to march into Abkhazia. Meanwhile, they were kept back by their own military shortcomings as well as Russian and UN diplomatic intervention. The ceasefire under the Moscow Quadripartite Agreement of April 1994 brought an end to the fighting.

Megrelia is monitored by the United Nations Military Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), which characterizes the situation in the province "as calm but unstable". CIS Peacekeeping Forces (CISPKF) are still present in the region. Bad economic and social conditions bring the local population to regular protests against the central government. Rallies are a common event in the province. The atmosphere is politicised. Political demands are accompanied by ethnic animosities. Social demands are linked to calls for the withdrawal of the CISPKF. Largely, organized crime resides over the region. Partisan units conduct illegal business, such as smuggling. Especially in the Russian media, this is what distinguishes headlines on Megrelia and the Megrelians. The danger of further tensions based on ethnic grounds is dormant. Tbilisi will hardly forget the rebellion of 1993.

7. Attention towards Marneuli

Marneuli Background

Marneuli, historically also known as Trialeti, is a district in the triangle between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. It is part of Kvemo Kartli - the province in Southwest Georgia with the country's highest density of ethnic Azeri. Here, Azeri constitute the population's majority.

Other inhabitants are, for the most part, of Georgian, Greek and Armenian background. (To give an idea of the general picture: Georgian statistics show a countrywide Azeri population share of about five per cent, while Azeri themselves speak about more than ten per cent.) In the west, Marneuli neighbours with the Armenian-populated Samtskhe-Javakheti (Meskheta-Javakheti) province. Roads from Baku and Yerevan lead, from the check points stretching over some dozens kilometres, directly to Georgia's capital Tbilisi.



Kvemo Kartli

Source: http://www.usaid.org.ge/kvemo_kartli.shtml

Most Azeri in Marneuli are peasants. Usually, they run family-based small enterprises. Many of them benefit from regional trade which is transacted via Marneuli. The market in the border-near town of Sadakhlo is the biggest market-place for regional trans-shipment. It is, for the most part, specialized in fruits and vegetables. Taking little notice of political tensions or economic blockades, Armenians, Azeri, Georgians and Turks do their business here as usual. As it is the case in other provinces too, the Georgian regional economy benefits from diverted trilateral traffic streams.

Many rural dwellers of Marneuli are actually monolingual. Colloquial language is Azeri. Meanwhile, the language of international communication with Armenians and Georgians is Russian. The population is impoverished. Unemployment is at a high level. Illiteracy is increasing. Basic infrastructures do not work. It is a rather typical circumstance that towns and villages are cut off from electricity. In this way, TV and radio cannot be received. Print media is barely affordable. Culturally, Marneuli is falling back to pre-Soviet times. In general areas such as language, education, information or economic interaction, Marneuli is alienating from the rest of the world as other parts of Georgia. Hereby, this new isolation has the potential to implode into a new economic and social backdraft. Links to the outside world develop within narrow regional frames. Individual ties are primarily maintained with the ethnic compatriots living across the border in the Azeri province of Kazakh.

**Attention
towards
Marneuli**

So far, Marneuli is not an active conflict area although its destitution creates, in combination with the inherited inter-ethnic animosities, a latent security endangerment. What makes Marneuli subject to special attention is, *first*, the general insecure context at national levels set by the instabilities in Abkhazia, Ajaria, Javakheti, the Pankisi Gorge, in Megrelia and South Ossetia. *Second*, the unsettled tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan jeopardize safety in the district. They could easily spill over especially since main Armenian trade routes go via the Azeri-populated Marneuli. *Third*, Marneuli has been selected as a base for the operation schemes in the War against Terrorism. Of special concern to Russia is the Marneuli military airport which has been recently reconstructed with US and Turkish

assistance. Radar stations have been correspondingly modernized. The Russian media are discussing the likelihood of the airport being used by Turkish and US air forces. Joint projects between Georgia, the US and the two Turkic neighbours are being sceptically watched by Armenia.

Brief Chronology of Events in the Context of Contemporary Georgian Conflicts

1917	May	1st Mountain People's Congress in Vladikavkas
		Alliance of the United Mountain People
	Nov	Establishment of the Mountain Peoples' Government under Abkhaz participation
	Nov	Abkhaz People's Congress in Sukhum
	Nov	Establishment of the Abkhaz Peoples Council (ANS)
1918	Mar	Establishment of Transcaucasus Federation under participation of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia
1918	May	Dissolution of Transcaucasus Federation
		Independence of Georgia (also of Armenia and Azerbaijan)
	May	Batumi Peace Conference
	May	Establishment of the Caucasus Mountain Peoples' Republic uniting South and North Caucasus ethnicities including Abkhazians
		Georgian intervention of Abkhazia
	May	Collapse of the Transcaucasus Federation
1920	Jun 8	South Ossetian independence declaration & following Georgian invasion
1920	Nov 17	North Ossetia becomes Ossetian District of Mountain ASSR (Russia)
1921	Jun 8	Abkhaz-Georgian agreement touching upon Abkhaz autonomy
1921		Sovietization of the Caucasus
1921	Mar 31	Establishment of the Autonomous Soviet Republic Abkhazia
1921	Jul 16	Establishment of the Autonomous Soviet Republic Ajaria
1921	Oct	Ajar accession to Georgia
1921	Dec	Abkhazian accession to Georgia
1922	Mar 12	Re-establishment of the Transcaucasus Federation of Socialist Soviet Republics with the member states Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia
1922	Apr 20	Establishment of South Ossetian Autonomous Region of Georgia
1922	Dec 30	Accession of Transcaucasus Federation to Soviet Union
1936	Dec 5	Soviet Constitution dissolves Transcaucasus Federation and founds Georgian SSR
		Abkhaz ASSR becomes part of Georgian SSR
		South Ossetian Autonomous Region becomes part of Georgian SSR
1944	Nov 15	Deportation of Meskhetians from Georgia to Central Asia
1988		Increase of South Ossetian-Georgian tensions
1988		First casualties in South Ossetian-Georgian clashes
1989	Mar 19	"Abkhaz Letter" requesting Abkhaz separation from Georgia and re-establishment of the Abkhazian Soviet Republic
1989	Jul	Inter-ethnic turmoil between Georgians and Abkhazians in Sukhumi
1990	Aug 25	Declaration of Abkhaz ASSR sovereignty
1990	Aug	Exclusion of South Ossetes from Georgian parliamentary elections
1990	Oct	South Ossetian boycott of Georgian parliamentary elections
1990	Sep 20	Declaration of South Ossetian independence
		Reestablishment of South Ossetian Democratic Soviet Republic
1990	Dec	South Ossetian parliamentary elections
1990	Dec 11	Georgia abolishes South Ossetian autonomy
1990	Jan	Start of Georgian-South Ossetian war with Georgian occupation of Tskhinvali
1991	Ma 17	Abkhazia participation, Georgian boycott of Soviet referendum on preserving USSR
1991	Apr 9	Independence declaration of Republic of Georgia
1991	Sep 29	Abkhaz parliamentary elections
1991	Dec 22	Independence declaration of South Ossetia
		Begin of armed conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia
1992	Mar	Eduard Shevardnadze returns to Georgia
1992	Jul	Georgian-South Ossetian ceasefire agreement
1991	Jul 23	Reinstatement of Abkhaz 1925 Constitution answering reinstatement of Georgian 1921 Constitution
1992	Aug 14	Georgian invasion of Abkhazia

1992	Oct 11	Parliamentary elections in Georgia
1993	Sep 30	Georgian defeat in Abkhazia Forced migration of about 200.000 Georgians from Abkhazia.
1993	Fall	Zviad Gamsakhurdia-led Megrelian rebellion against Tbilisi
1993	Oct 8	Georgia joins Commonwealth of Independent
1993	Oct 9	Georgian-Russian agreement on the status of Russian troops in Georgia
1993	Nov-Dec	Start of the Geneva Peace Process on Georgian-Abkhaz conflict
1994	Feb 3	Georgian-Russian Treaty on Friendship & Good Neighbourhood
1994	April	Moscow Quadripartite Agreement settling Georgian-Megrelian relations
1994	May 14	Georgian-Abkhaz ceasefire agreement
1994	Jun	Russian-led CIS Peacekeeping Force separates Abkhaz-Georgian conflict parties
1994		Administrative unification of the districts of Samtskhe and Javakheti
1995		Georgian Constitution
1996	Jul	Memorandum on Measures to Provide Security and Strengthen Mutual Trust Between the Sides in the Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict
1998	May	Forced migration of about 40,000 Georgians out of Abkhazia
2000	Dec	Introduction of Russia visa regime for Georgian residents
2001	Nov	Presidential elections in South Ossetia (internationally not recognized)

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Press Office of the President of Georgia: <http://www.presidpress.gov.ge>

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Sakartvelo: <http://www.sakartvelo.ru> (in Russian language)

Sarke Information Agency: <http://www.sarke.com>

Space Daily: <http://www.spacedaily.com>

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 Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development: <http://www.cipdd.org>
 Caucasus Links: <http://www.caucasuslinks.org>
 Centre for Humanitarian Programmes: chpabkhazia@yahoo.com
 CIPDD News on Human Rights: <http://www.cipdd.org/HRGeorgia/>
 International Centre on Conflict Negotiation: <http://www.iccn.ge>
 Open Society in Georgia: <http://www.civil.ge>
 Partner Georgia: <http://www.partners.ge>
 United Nations Association of Georgia: <http://www.una.org.ge>

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 Abkhaz analyses and background information: <http://dmoz.org/Society/Issues/Secession/Georgia/>
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<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/031e827fb483019685256d6e0068a5b8?OpenDocument>

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 North and South Ossete conflict history: <http://www.saferworld.co.uk/ossetia.pdf>

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Ajar background information: <http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajaria>
 Head of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (Georgia) on Georgian affairs:
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Chapter Four

Main Foreign Interests and Further Conflict Potentials in the South Caucasus

This chapter gives an introduction on the main foreign political interests affecting the South Caucasus. Traditionally, the three competitors, Iran, Russia and Turkey, are those immediate neighbours that have a clearly detectable impact on South Caucasus affairs. Conflicts between them have regularly taken place on Caucasian territory. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Western countries are back on the scene, as well. The United States is developing its global interests throughout the region and a number of European countries, such as Germany, France and the UK, have renewed their historical involvement in South Caucasus issues. These are the main forces that intend and are able to utilize regional inter-relations for their purposes. Largely, regional peace-building and sustainable stability depend on their engagement. The layout of the following chapter reflects, to some extent, the countries' historical and contemporary presence in the region.

1. Scope of Main Foreign Interests

The main interests of all sides involved in South Caucasus affairs may be listed in order of importance as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Natural
Resources</i> | <i>First</i> , access to natural resources. This mainly affects access to the oil and gas resources of the Caspian Sea basin. Oil and gas are <i>the</i> issue invisibly directing regional security planning. Other natural resources play a role too, but are far from being of similar global importance. Within the immediate neighbourhood of the region, access to water resources is beginning to gain significance. |
| <i>Military
Presence</i> | <i>Second</i> , military presence. This mainly affects the strategic role of the South Caucasus in how it influences security-building in the sub-regions of the Commonwealth of Independent States (namely, the North Caucasus and Central Asia), Iran and Turkey. Furthermore, the South Caucasus has become subject to military planning in the region in and around Afghanistan. |
| <i>Trade and
Commerce</i> | <i>Third</i> , conducting trade and commerce. Apart from the oil and gas business, the South Caucasus is the subject of interest in other trade and commerce, too. Potentially, it represents a market with a total of some 16 million consumers, although the total purchasing power, at the moment, is at rather low levels. For various reasons, the region's economic capacities are presently quite limited. Besides, the South Caucasus is a transit region connecting Iran and Turkey with South Russia. It links the Black Sea region to the Caspian Sea and Central Asia. |

The Caucasus and Central Asia



The Caucasus and Central Asia

Source: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/commonwealth/caucasus_cntrl_asia_pol_00.jpg

2. Russian Interests

South Caucasus as an Area of National Interest

Historically, Russia perceives the South Caucasus as an area of national interest. It pays careful attention to political and military stability in this region that is neighbouring its southern peripheries. Russia has strong commercial interests in the region, including the oil reserves of the Caspian Basin, other natural resources and the three national energy markets. Russia is one of the main arms suppliers to the three South Caucasus countries.

Through its North-Caucasian population, Russia, which has a multitude of ethnicity-based administrative units among its 89 Federal Entities, is directly linked to the ethnic situation in the South Caucasus. Therefore, restraining the influx of foreign instabilities from the South is seen by Russia as contributing to internal stabilisation.

Also, Russia is religiously divided. It is a predominantly Christian Orthodox country, but has a large Muslim population share that is often living compactly in the aforementioned administrative units. This is why Russia is trying to curb interferences from the Islamic world, which might encourage separatist movements like the one in Chechnya.

However, the picture is not a balanced one. Russia has been repeatedly reproached for playing Abkhazian, Chechen, Ossetian or Karabakh cards as a means of taking a one-sided influence on internal developments in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Fading Influence

Russia enduringly suffers from its still shrinking authority in the post-Soviet area. This includes the South Caucasus. Here, Russia's cultural influence (Russian-language, Soviet-style administration, national defence, education, art, TV, commercial thinking, etc.) still exists, but is diminishing. Russia's regional ascendancy is gone. With great scepticism, Russia looks at international competitors in the region, first of all, the US and Turkey.

A main point of concern is the prospect of being deprived of the position as a regional oil and gas carrier monopolist. At the moment, the US and Turkey, along with Azerbaijan, Georgia and other partners, are constructing the oil pipeline Baku/ Ceyhan linking Azeri oil fields, via Georgia, to Turkey and the world market. In the future, the pipeline should also

provide possibilities to Central Asian states to link up through the Caspian Sea. An earlier Russian effort – to make up for the predictable loss in some way – was to build a pipeline from the Tengiz oil fields in Kazakhstan to the Russian Black Sea port town of Novorossiysk. Meanwhile, Russian positions on regional and, thus, global oil and gas markets are about to fundamentally worsen.

Since late 2001, the US military presence in the former Central Asian Soviet republics has become a new experience for Russia. In November 2001, Russia was forced to take note of the entrance of Western military forces into Afghanistan. Global measures like the abolition of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty by the US and the new US National Missile Defence programme have additionally shifted strategic balances, which are not to the advantage of Russia. Moreover, the worldwide anti-terrorist activities of the US have pushed aside a number of previous contrarities and created new alliances. Russia had to finally accept the three South Caucasus countries becoming associated NATO members. The results of Russia's tactical manoeuvres could also not prevent Azerbaijan and Georgia from seeking direct alliance with the US and Turkey. US and Turkish military forces are now based in the South Caucasus, too.

Russia tries to politically absorb these new mainstream developments and to diplomatically couch its own interests in the new anti-terrorist terminology. It indicates its readiness for common anti-terror measures towards the US. With practical impact or not, Russia has institutionalized its NATO co-operation. It hopes to take advantage of the moment in order to re-define its areas of interest and zones of co-operation with the US and the West. It depicts Chechen and similar internal problems in terms of international terrorist and anti-terrorist activities.

Traditionally speaking, Russia has little sympathy for Turkish activities in its area of interest. Mutual animosities have deep-seeded cultural roots and a history of war. There is a marked contrast between Turkey's commercial success in the area and Russia's economic calamities. Turkey's military presence in Azerbaijan and Georgia is perceived as openly offending Russian security calculations. From a long-term perspective, the interests of both countries seem to be on a collision course with each other.

Forms of Keeping Contact

In any case, Russia has kept its presence in the South Caucasus. Through the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Russia attempts to generally commit the three South Caucasus countries to closer relations. Russia utilizes the United Nations. It participates in the United Nations Military Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). It keeps contacts at various OSCE levels. By means of co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group, Russia is involved in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It also participates in other regional initiatives.

Russia is engaged in the three national economies. The exploitation of natural resources, generation and delivery of electricity are of exceptional meaning. Russia is trying to reintegrate regional infrastructures of oil and gas shipment into its pipeline systems which supply West-European countries. Russian companies took part in national privatization campaigns. The large emigrant groups from the South Caucasus that live in Russia maintain considerable cross-regional trade and commerce.

In Armenia and Georgia, Russia still puts emphasis on military presence. In Armenia, Russian troops secure the Turkish frontiers. Russia runs military bases in the South of Georgia. It builds the core of CIS Peacekeeping Forces (CISPKF) in Abkhazia and Samegrelo. It is engaged in the Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF) in South Ossetia. Its troops are involved in cross-border fighting on both sides of the Chechen/Georgian border. Russia tries both to press and persuade Georgia and Azerbaijan into more favourable relations.

3. US Interests

South Caucasus as an Area of National

US activities in the South Caucasus are an element of on-going re-definitions of worldwide zones of national interests. The South Caucasus is proving its importance with its geo-strategic location and its attractive natural resources.

In the three South Caucasus countries, the US is politically and commercially active. As

Interest

mentioned, military co-operation has been given concrete form now. With respect to the regional powers around the South Caucasus, the US is still endeavouring to force back Russian dominance from the former Soviet peripheries. Its relations with Iran have been developing for a number of years. They are complicated – still unfriendly although somewhat pragmatically improving. The bilateral relations between the US and NATO ally Turkey cause careful awareness in Russia.

Increasing Influence

Since 11 September, 2001, the US tends, more than ever before, to be making independent decisions on foreign affairs. Still, US policy-implementation is imbedded in sharing responsibilities with international partners. It is based on co-operation within organizations such as NATO, the OSCE or the UN. Meanwhile, accents have shifted to strictly adjusting regional and global constellations to US security concepts. In the South Caucasus, it has been carefully observed that US-friendliness or non-friendliness has explicitly become a new key criterion for international decision-making.

Within the frame of the US-led War Against Terrorism, all three South Caucasus countries have been attempting to stress their openness to helping the US. Between them, a kind of competition to earn special US attention has started. This may possibly be the main new trend in South Caucasus foreign affairs.

Even in Armenia, voices demanding that the country rethink its military and economic dependence on Russia became audible. Azerbaijan and Georgia started endeavours to free themselves from Russian care and qualify for economic and military co-operation with the US. The deployment of a rather limited number of US military advisers in Georgia created – at least in the public's perception – new military realities in the South Caucasus. In October 2001, the US Congress lifted sanctions under Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. They had been a reaction to the Azeri economic blockade against Armenia and were limiting US assistance to the country. Now, lifting Section 907 has gained symbolic meaning for a new ranking of political priorities in the region. The Azeri blockade is still imposed and the influential Armenian diaspora in the United States has had to accept the exclusivity of Washington's new US centrism.

A milestone in regional economic relations and an indicator of successful diplomatic US engagement was the decision to construct a new regional oil pipeline. As mentioned earlier, after years of discussions the decision to link Baku via Georgia with the Turkish town of Ceyhan is now being realized. This US-mediated arrangement is another means of creating new regional realities. It favours Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey and should produce an axis of stability between these countries. At the same time, however, it neglects Armenia, Iran and Russia.

The economic interests of the US in the South Caucasus region do not only concentrate on Caspian oil. Other natural resources and the energy sector are of additional importance. Given the small size of markets and the complicated investment conditions, commercial engagement of US companies is so far restrained. Through promoting a multitude of governmental and non-governmental projects on development co-operation and democratization, the US creates a favourable environment for forthcoming activities.

4. Turkish Interests**South Caucasus as an Area of National Interest**

As a country adjoining the South Caucasus, Turkey looks for peace and military stability in the region. Primarily, because of its ethnic kinship with Azerbaijan, Turkey sees itself directly involved in South Caucasus affairs. Conversely, inter-ethnic and international conflicts in the South Caucasus have implications for Turkey's internal affairs. There is a danger that minority problems in the South Caucasus might have a domino-effect on the minority situation in Turkey as well. The Kurdish issue is a case in point. Last but not least, the settlement of territorial arguments between Armenia and Azerbaijan would simultaneously require and contribute to overcoming volatile situations in Armenian/Turkish relations. There is no doubt that Turkey and Armenia must become interested in ending historical disputes over Anatolia (ancient West-Armenia) once and for all.

Concerning the use of regional natural resources (predominantly oil and gas) and conducting trade and commerce, Turkey strives to favourably position itself. Of strategic

relevance are border-near districts using South Caucasus watercourses. Finally, Turkey has a natural interest in developing ties with its ethnic relatives — the Azeri-Turks in Azerbaijan and the Turkic ethnicities and countries behind the South Caucasus.

***Increased
Influence***

Turkey is a dominant political, economic and military power in the region. As a NATO member and EU candidate, it maintains favourable ties with the Western world. In post-Soviet countries from Russia to the South Caucasus and Central Asia, it has had extensive success in advancing into new markets. Commercially, Turkey is highly present in the area. The South Caucasus itself is a potential market for Turkish companies and geographically opens the way for trade beyond the region.

***Relations
with
Armenian
and
Azerbaijan***

Politically, Turkey's interests to tighten relations with Turkic ethnicities and countries are taken into careful consideration. In Russia with its large Turkic minorities, in Ukraine with its Crimean Tatars and especially in Armenia, there is much concern about a revival of pan-Turkic ideas. Geographically, Turkey's communication with its ethnic relatives in Eastern Europe spreads across the Black Sea and through the South Caucasus. In the South Caucasus, however, this communication is restrained by a narrow strip of Armenian land that does not admit Turkey to having direct geographic contact to Azerbaijan, except the Azeri exclave of Nakhichevan.

Since the Nagorno-Karabakh war and the imposition of the economic blockade against Armenia by Azerbaijan and Turkey, any terrestrial interaction between the two allied Turkic states has to be conducted mainly via Georgia. Although Turkish goods inundate Armenian markets by taking a detour via Georgia, it is in the strategic interest of all three sides to overcome this situation. Meanwhile, Armenian/Turkish and Armenian/Azeri relations are still burdened by the historical enmity that is far from disappearing. There is still neither reconciliation nor forgiveness for the 1915 Armenian genocide. In Turkey, topics like the genocide and human or minority rights are now as before to be publicly discussed. Recent amendments to Turkish legislation on minority and human rights indicate first moves in a new direction.

Turkey criticizes the Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh. It considers the OSCE Minsk Process a useful mechanism to reach a peaceful and lasting settlement in the conflict.

Following a US State Department suggestion, a Turkish/Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC) has been established. A Turkish/Armenian Business Council has also been opened. At the moment, major repentance and gestures of reconciliation are nonetheless unlikely. The Christian Armenians are still mourning over the loss of their holy lands to the Muslim Turks. The Nagorno-Karabakh issue additionally divides the region.

Turkish relations to Azerbaijan are neighbourly and productive. Turkey politically supports Azerbaijan. Commercially, it is developing an increasingly strong presence. Some activities of military assistance have been conducted. In general, common ethnic roots are the basis for mutual understanding. Adherence to the different Sunni and Shiite factions of Islam does not play a major role.

***Relations
with Georgia***

In recent years, Turkey has started to support Georgia in a variety of ways. Especially economic and political support have been provided. Co-operation expands into commercial and military spheres. This directly coincides with Georgian efforts to leave the sphere of Russian dominance. In this context, Turkey's rather insignificant military appearance in Georgia was an emblematic step toward reaching a new quality of the relations with Georgia. Within the US-led War against Terrorism, Turkey provided support for the reconstructing of air force facilities in the southeast of Georgia. Turkey participated in UNOMIG activities. Turkey is proud to have mediated between Georgia and Abkhazia within the framework of the Geneva Process, especially having hosted an Abkhazia conference in Istanbul on 7-9 June 1999.

Muslim Georgian minorities, as for example in Abkhazia or in Ajaria, are looking forward to receiving Turkish support. The Meskhetians are counting on Turkish political support in their efforts to return to their historical settlements in Samtskhe-Javakheti (Meskheti-Javakheti). Chechens have repeatedly signalled their hopes towards Turkey. In the meantime, Turkey

has to think about how it can find a balance between assisting the separate administrative units and the central government of Georgia.

Trade and commerce with Georgia are expanding. The above-mentioned oil pipeline project Baku/Ceyhan marks the opening of a Georgian route linking the Caspian and the Black Sea region. It largely considers the interests of Turkey.

5. Iranian Interests

South Caucasus as an Area of National Interest

Historically, Iran (Persia) has always been one of the dominating regional powers in the South Caucasus. It has influenced the cultures of all neighbouring countries. Today, its large Azeri minority creates a main ethnic link to the South Caucasus. Commercial interests arise from the common exploration of the Caspian Basin's oil reserves and further trade and commerce. Of strategic significance are border-near districts in Iran which depend on the South Caucasus watercourses. South Caucasus affairs have an effect on the complicated relations with Iran's neighbour Turkey.

Reduced Influence

After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iranian relations with the US and other Western countries considerably deteriorated. Since then, access to Western markets has been minimized. The general deplorable conditions of Iran's national economy have become a fundamental obstacle to influencing regional affairs.

Limited Co-operation

Correspondingly, Iran was impelled to regionally shift its international engagement. This ameliorated Iran's approach toward its Russia-dominated northern neighbourhood. Iran started to establish affable ties to the Soviet Union and felt encouraged to develop these ties after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the following years, special attention was paid to possible partners in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, among them especially Iran's Shiite neighbour Azerbaijan and the Farsi-speaking Tajikistan. Russia is seen as a key player which decisively influences regional affairs. Iran has repeatedly offered to mediate between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. As neighbouring country with a large Azeri minority, it is highly interested in a resolution to the conflict. Meanwhile, Iranian interests find limited access to Nagorno-Karabakh talks.

Iran maintains rather reserved relations with Turkey. Turkey is the most significant Sunni opponent to the Shiite Iran. Rivalry between both countries and their predecessor-empires date back to ancient times. Iran's mentioned interests in taking advantage of co-operation with the CIS have developed from its competition with Turkey, but are limited by Iran's rather underdeveloped economic resources. Due to its stringent political conditions, Iran attracts little direct foreign investment.

Unsurprisingly, Iran has enlarged its economic and political relations to the Turkey-critical Armenia, paying little attention to the changing past of their bilateral relationship. Armenia, Greece (as another country feeling itself in opposition to Turkey) and Iran are developing forms of trilateral co-operation.

Iran has interests in curbing a possible growing-together of Turkey and the ethnically Turkic states of the post-Soviet area. Since the first moderate changes in its internal affairs, Iran has been trying to reappear on the international political stage. Its key assets are its natural oil reserves. Iran holds a share of about five per cent of the world's oil production. One of its long-term intentions is to enlarge its position as an oil producer and carrier. In this context, it has an interest in settling the dispute over sovereignty and the exploitation of the Caspian Basin. Potentially, Iran could profit from providing transit routes for Central Asian gas and oil coming from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan. It is now considering constructing a pipeline to Armenia. (Corresponding talks had been once again renewed in late 2002.) For understandable reasons, this and other plans of economic co-operation have been met with critical comments from the US.

6. EU Interests

Following US Leadership

The South Caucasus interests of the EU seem to have drifted in the wake of US foreign policy settings. This is possibly a comfortable position for EU members, but may become

politically costly should positions diverge. In 2002, misunderstandings over the military assistance of EU member states to US Middle East endeavours have proved that corresponding worries were not unjustified. There was extensive gap in attitude between the British, French and German. At the moment, an EU Common Foreign and Security Policy is still to be developed. Arguably, it would also have to include a conceptual frame for an EU South Caucasus policy. In addition, there have been recent considerations about including the South Caucasus into the Wider Europe effort.

Political and Development Assistance

In the South Caucasus, the EU and their member states promote conflict resolution, regional co-operation and democracy-building. Individually and through international organization, EU member states provide technical and development assistance. Corporate EU activities are mainly developed within the frame of EU Partnership and Co-operation Agreements. Through its on-site activities, the EU gives strategic and technical advice. Projects of the agendas of TACIS, TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia) and INOGATE (Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe) are major contributions to technical development in the region. Using the capacities of organizations such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe, EU countries have been able to tie in the three South Caucasus states to European security dialogues. Along with Russia and the US, France co-chairs the OSCE Minsk Group, which includes other EU member states. Likewise, vehicles of EU engagement in comprehensive security-building are the OSCE Mission to Georgia, and the OSCE Offices in Baku and Yerevan.

Utilizing EU / Turkish Relations

Logically, it should be in the vital interests of the EU to develop solid security links with the South Caucasus by taking advantage of its close relations to Turkey. Nonetheless, there is little utilization of Turkish NATO membership and EU candidacy. As mentioned already, Turkey is a regional power. It maintains neighbourly relations with Azerbaijan and it has taken steps toward meeting Georgian aspirations to establish closer co-operation. Very recently, first steps were made toward resolving the deadlocked situation with Armenia. Turkey is being cautiously watched by Russia. Iran is weighing its endeavours against Turkish ambitions in the region.

Part of the admission talks between the EU and Turkey is the issue of Turkish human and minority rights. Necessarily, these talks have a South Caucasus dimension, too. To be precise, they would not be consistent without a final rethinking of the 1915 Armenian genocide. (Among other things, a settlement of Turkey's Kurdish problem would be directly affected.) On the other hand, Turkey's settling of foreign relations with its close neighbours would contribute to a general democratic stabilization on the European outskirts. It would usefully buffer Europe against external pressure. In the public's perception, the settlement of Armenian/Turkish disagreements would probably have implications for Turkey's relations with other neighbours. On various levels, such as minority issues, territorial questions or the shared use of cross-border water resources, this would contribute to developing a friendly environment with regard to relations with Bulgaria, Greece, Iran, Iraq and Syria. It would also have connotations for Turkey's role in overcoming of the division of Cyprus.

Economic Interests

In the economic sphere, access to Caspian crude reserves has always attracted European attention. A potential interest would also be the mining of other natural resources in the region as well as further engagements in consumer markets, and the generation and distribution of electricity. However, high risks to foreign investments limit these and other fields of business. Those risks include the latent danger of war, instable political developments, changeable legal provisions, bad governance, lack of infrastructures, diminishing qualities of labour forces and environmental threats.

7. Others' Interests

A number of other countries have shown a certain interest in the South Caucasus region. China maintains a more or less active dialogue on the political level. Japan promotes a friendly climate in its relations with the South Caucasus countries. It sponsors little but well-recognized projects that are of visible notice to the public, as for example in the fields of culture and agriculture. It grants technical co-operation and humanitarian assistance to all three South Caucasian countries. Especially in connection with Chechnya, various Arab countries are frequently alleged of having been involved in regional affairs on both sides of the Caucasus mountain ridge. As one of the measures of levelling instability in its dialogue

with Turkey, Greece runs various co-operations with Armenia, politically, commercially and militarily. Bilateral military co-operation activities exist. As mentioned, Armenia, Greece and Iran maintain tri-lateral co-operation. Armenian telecommunications are largely in Greek hands. In Armenia, Greeks run some major food production.

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Chapter Five

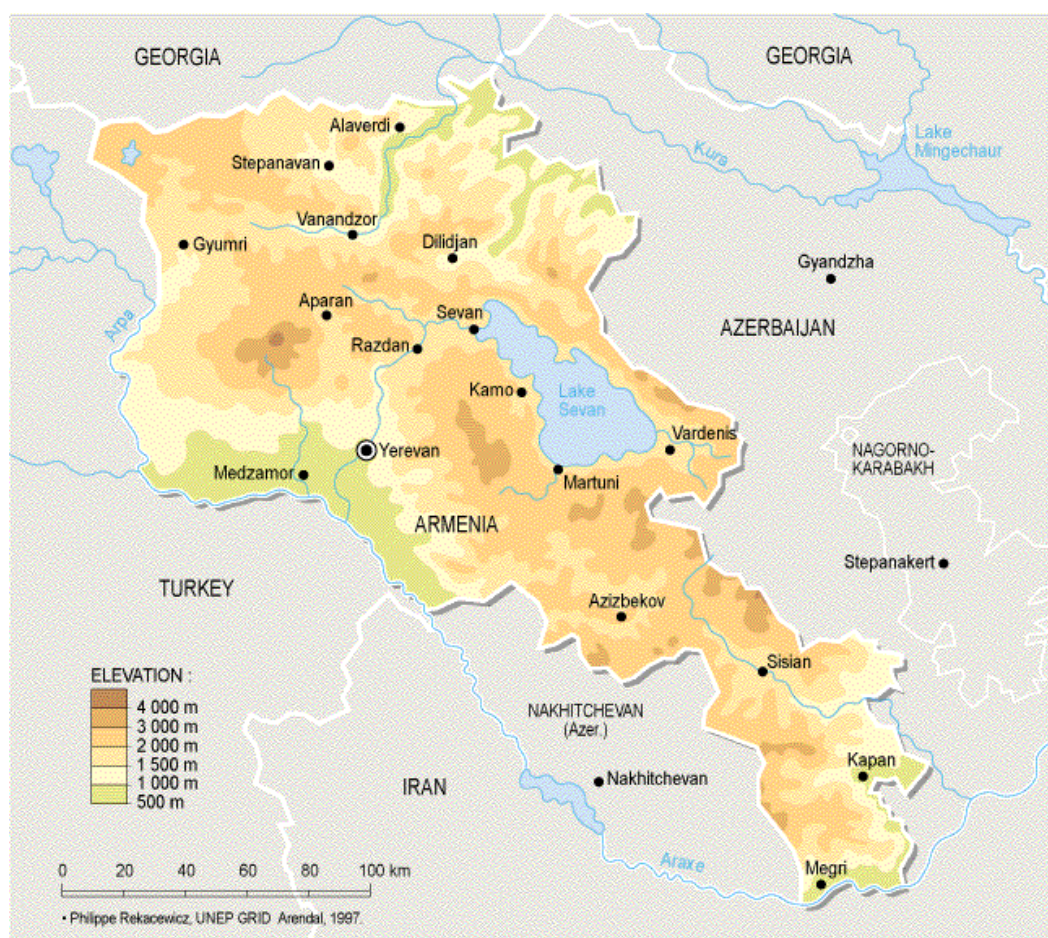
Armenia in Brief

The previous chapters have given an introduction into historical and contemporary aspects of the lack of security in the South Caucasus. Social, economic, ethnic, confessional and geographic issues have been described. The Armenian/Azeri conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh has been highlighted. Georgian domestic disputes in and around Abkhazia, Ajaria, Javakheti, Marneuli, the Pankisi Gorge, Samegrelo and South Ossetia have been portrayed as well. Moreover, foreign interests in regional affairs have been discussed. The following chapters will now offer three brief country reviews. (Again, the countries are presented in alphabetical order.) Largely, the reviews will refer to corresponding country analyses provided by international organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Elements of Armenianhood

Geographically, Armenia (Arm.: *Hayastan*) is not a large country. It has a small but outstandingly cohesive, ancient and mono-ethnic population. When referring to themselves and their national self-understanding, Armenians talk about what they call Armenianhood, the qualities and conditions of being Armenian. Its primary elements are the fact that Armenians have their own language and alphabet as well as a geographic affiliation to the Armenian Highland. Here, Christianity is under the roof of its own national (Armenian) church. Armenians consider their country the oldest Christian nation in history proselytised before the Roman Empire. Armenia has a national architecture with centuries-old churches and picturesque Khachkars – stone crosses made of tuff (that are also known as Trees of Life), which can be found all over the country. In addition, Armenia still has traces of pre-Christian pagantry with rituals and ornamentation that have partly been incorporated into Christian traditions. Biblical names are widespread and understood as distinctively Armenian. As a rule, their names and family names, that typically end with “-yan”, allow Armenians to recognize each other easily. Moreover, Armenians often claim that they have ethno-physiognomic features that make it even easier for them to identify one another.

Armenianhood is based on strong family ties and inner-ethnic solidarity between all Armenians, which is a means of individual and ethnic self-preservation. Armenians support Armenians. The worldwide Armenian diaspora strongly supports its motherland, politically and financially. Armenians are highly adaptable to foreign cultural environments and have a strong predisposition to integrate. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that Armenian emigrants almost never assimilate completely into other ethnicities. They adapt quite well to their environment, but make efforts to preserve their language as well as maintaining national traditions and contacts among themselves.



Armenia

Source: http://www.grida.no/db/maps/prod/level3/id_1260.htm

Geographic Conditions and Population

The Republic of Armenia is a mountainous country in the southern part of the Caucasus Mountain range. It occupies about 29,800 square kilometres. A little more than the half of this area is inhabited. In the preliminary results of a 2001 census, the population was estimated at about 3.3 million compared to 3.9 in 1989. Meanwhile, migration has continued since the late Soviet years. Thus the real number of residents is unofficially estimated to be much lower. As a matter of fact, many Armenian residents are seasonal or semi-permanent migrants travelling to Russia for employment. People who are sceptical about the census results guess that roughly one third of the initial (i.e., late-Soviet) population reside permanently in Armenia, one third are temporary residents and the remaining third have left Armenia completely.

Two thirds of Armenia's official residents are reported to live in cities and one third rurally. The population of Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, accounts for about a third of the total population; some sources even estimate half of the total. Since the eve of the Karabakh conflict, Armenia has become an almost mono-ethnic country. The members of the Azeri minority have all left the country, as conversely, the members of the Armenian minority have all left Azerbaijan. However, there are some very small minorities in Armenia including the Assyrians, Kurds and Yezids.

The average altitude of Armenia is 1,830 metres above sea level. About two fifths of its area is over 2,000 metres above sea level. Armenia is a land-locked country bordered by Azerbaijan to the east, Georgia to the north, Iran to the southeast and Turkey to the west. The Azeri exclave of Nakhichevan also forms part of Armenia's southern boundary and is bordered by Iran to the west and southwest as well as by a short strip of Turkish land to the north. The state borderline is 1420 kilometres long. Russian forces are stationed along the entire 240 kilometres of the Armenian/Turkish border. The border with Azerbaijan is not legally demarcated as Armenians have occupied large parts of its eastern neighbour's territory since the war over Nagorno Karabakh in 1992/94.

Armenia's high altitude and the fact that it is landlocked have created a unique diversity of natural conditions. Armenia has six basic climate types ranging from dry subtropical to severe alpine. The climate during the spring and fall is delightful, but in contrast, winter and summer conditions are extreme. Especially in the highlands, winters are frosty and snowy often making the mountain roads impassable. During the summer, temperatures in the Ararat Valley regularly go above 40° C and average between 24-26° C during July and August. Summers are extremely dry and dusty. The country's biodiversity is unique but endangered.

Armenia is seismically highly active. The last devastating earthquake occurred on 7 December 1988. This natural disaster demolished large parts of northern Armenia resulting in about 24,000 fatalities, a tragic loss of human life. Cities, industrial facilities and communications were largely destroyed. Although it was unusual for international missions to be permitted into the country (late Soviet period!), they were allowed to offer disaster aid at the time. In addition, a Soviet-wide aid campaign was conducted to assist in Armenia's post-disaster recovery.

The country's terrain is composed mainly of volcanic rock. Visitors are impressed by the huge amount of stone and rock covering the entire country. There is only a small percentage of arable land or space suitable for urban use, which estimates show as ranging from about a third of the land to up to some 40 per cent. The per capita amount of arable land is estimated at 0.13 ha.

Armenia cannot be defined as a country where water is scarce. However, the accessible water supply differs regionally and according to the time of the year. The largest fresh water reservoir in the country and in the entire South Caucasus is Lake Sevan. It is 1,980 meters above sea level. Its outlet is the River Hrazdan which feeds into irrigation channels and reservoirs throughout the country. Constructed during the Soviet period as an integral part of the South Caucasus regional irrigation and drinking water system, Armenian water infrastructures are now technically in bad condition. The amount of water lost *en route* is incredible. It is not exceptional that wastewater flows into the cities. In the country's north and northeast, pumping stations near the border and cross-border irrigation channels have not been functioning since the Karabakh war. Lack of water is one of the population's most pressing problems. Armenia is a land of large semi-deserts. There is an increasing amount of desertification and deforestation.

Language and History

Armenians speak Armenian, which belongs to the Indo-European language family. Their written language has its own set of characters, which was invented in 406 to translate the Bible from Greek into Armenian and has not changed fundamentally since then.

According to national historiography, Armenians are descendents of ancient tribes, which during prehistoric times inhabited the area between Asia Minor, Eastern Anatolia and the Armenian Highlands.

Armenians perceive the biblical legend of Noah's ark, which is said to have landed on the Ararat Mountain after the deluge, as directly affecting their history. The Great Ararat and the Little Ararat (Arm.: *Ma Sis* and *Sis*) represent the national symbol as well as being the holy mountain of the Armenian people. The Ararat overlooks Yerevan and the whole Ararat Valley reminding the Armenians of their ancient history. The fact that the Ararat is now located on Turkish territory is a deep sadness to the Armenians. Also in this respect, the mountain is emblematic.

Those Armenian chronicles that are comparatively relevant to contemporary regional issues date back to about the 7th century BC. Pre-Armenian empires like Urartu or the Armenia of King Tigran the Great were great powers of their times who, during different periods, were either rivals or formed alliances with their neighbours like Assyria, the Roman Empire or Persia. Armenians until now use the ancient geographic term "Armenian Highland" to describe expanding areas within and greatly around the South Caucasus. For centuries, Armenia was conquered or dominated by the Romans, Byzantines, Persians, Arabs, Mongols, Turks and Russians, in approximate chronological order. For centuries, periods of independence were brief. In the 19th century, today's Armenia became part of the Russian Empire. Armenia was one of the fifteen Soviet republics of the Soviet Union. In 1991, it

declared its independence. If one does not consider the short existence of an Armenian republic during the revolutionary years of the early 20th century, the Republic of Armenia is actually the first independent Armenian state in modern history.

**Christianity
and
Confessional
Minorities**

As mentioned above, the Christian belief and traditions are another constituent element of Armenian self-perception. The Armenians were converted to Christianity by St. Gregory the Illuminator in 301 AD. Armenians proudly consider their country as the first Christian nation in the world. In the South Caucasus, Armenians regard themselves as an advanced post of Christianity among their predominantly Muslim neighbours.

The Armenian Apostolic Church is canonically autonomous, neither related to the Catholic nor Orthodox churches. Its claim to the title Apostolic can be traced back to the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew who were believed to have evangelized Armenia. The Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin (Echmiadzin, Armenia), the Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia (Antelias, Lebanon) and the Armenian Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Constantinople are the main ecclesiastical institutions of Armenian Christianity. The existence of an Armenian quarter and a residence of the Armenian Church in Jerusalem is an indication of the earlier sphere of Armenian ethnic and ecclesiastical influence. In 1995, the election of the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, Garegin the First, the 131st Catholicos of All Armenia residing in Echmiadzin to some degree ended a long history of schism between the Mother See and the Great House. After his demise in 1999, Garegin the Second from the Araratian Pontifical Diocese in the motherland Armenia was elected 132nd Catholicos.

Roman Catholics and Protestants are confessional minorities in Armenia. Statistically, other beliefs are almost irrelevant except perhaps the Yezidi religion, which is often regarded by outsiders as Zoroastrianism. The Jehovah's Witnesses have filed a lawsuit against the government because they have not been granted official registration. The so-called new religions are generally met with scepticism and administrative barriers.

**Armenian
Diaspora**

There is strong inner-ethnic cohesion between the members of the Armenian community all over the world. The Armenian diasporas often have a considerable influence on the national cultures and politics where they live. In addition, they maintain often loose but effective commercial and political networks among themselves.

There are vague estimates that the number of ethnic Armenians worldwide could total up to seven million. Three fifths of them live outside Armenia in more than sixty countries. Over a million Armenians live in the US and Russia. There are influential Armenian communities in Argentina, Canada, France, Georgia, Iran, Lebanon, Portugal and Syria. The members of the Armenian community often belong to the educated and well-situated social strata of the countries they inhabit. The Armenian diaspora in the United States has a strong hand in Caucasus-related US foreign policy. The largest Armenian diaspora of the European Union can be found in France, where many Armenians fled to during the genocide in Turkey in 1915. To a large extent, the diaspora leads the worldwide Armenian campaign for legal recognition of the 1915 genocide.

The Armenian diaspora is actively engaged in setting things in motion for the implementation of humanitarian aid and private investment. It has successfully lobbied the US Government to intensify country assistance programmes (totalling about 90 million US dollars annually), while simultaneously blocking similar assistance programs to Azerbaijan.

Per capita, Armenia is one of the leading recipients of international assistance. In 2000, it was granted a total of about 240 million US dollars in official governmental assistance. This was more than ten per cent of the national GDP or approximately 75 US dollars per capita. Additionally, humanitarian and technical assistance is also provided but not reflected in the state budget. Moreover, Armenians benefit from the transfer of personal funds from the income of family members working abroad. These transfers total another ten per cent of GDP annually. About a seventh of Armenian households receive regular private transfers from outside the country.

Due to the diaspora's active financial engagement and the regular guest performances of Armenian artists, musicians and painters from all over the world, particularly the capital,

Yerevan, has a modern and high-quality cultural life.

***The Vital
Problem of
Exodus***

Although the public does not fully admit to this threat, the ongoing exodus of the Armenian people is apparently just the tip of the iceberg of a vital problem facing contemporary Armenia. In essence, this emigration is socially motivated, a tacit comment on societal polarization and the continuous economic downswing. Impoverishment, social isolation, lack of legal protection and the citizens' subsequent withdrawal from public life have become distinguishing features in Armenia's current development. To many, there seems to be no other way out of these social calamities than leaving their homeland. Since 1992, more people have emigrated than have moved into the country. The effect of this has been a further decrease in the quality of labour force, a decline in purchasing power and demand and finally an additional decline in economic activities in general. Emigration, which in itself is a result of social and other instability, has in turn become a new source of destabilization. It has already begun to endanger the country's self-sustainable development.

More to the point, the welfare of the Armenian diasporas has great magnetism for Armenians living in the motherland.

***State
Construction
and Politics***

Under its 1995 constitution, the Republic of Armenia is a semi-presidential democracy. It is a democratic state based on social justice and the rule of law. Initially, Armenia established the institutions to ensure these basic rights. However, in reality, the country seems far from aligning public and economic life with democratic procedures and written law. In cultural terms, the country is still at a fork in the road on its historical journey.

The head of state is the elected president. He has the highest post of the country's political system and disposes of the most extensive administrative competencies. Legally and in terms of governing the country practically, he to a large degree dominates the parliament – the Armenian National Assembly. He appoints the prime minister, the government and the province governors.

In February 1998, Armenia's first post-Soviet President Levon Ter-Petrossian resigned from office after public protests against irregularities during the elections in 1996 and accusations of having implemented the wrong policy on the issue of Nagorno Karabakh. In an extraordinary vote, Robert Kocharyan – a Karabakh Armenian, the then prime minister of Armenia – was elected new president in 1998. He was re-elected on 5 March 2003 after the first round of presidential elections on 19 February 2003 had yielded no outright majority either for the incumbent or his challenger, Stepan Demirchyan – the son of former Speaker of Parliament Karen Demirchyan.

The parliamentary elections on 30 May 1999 brought the Unity Block to power – an election coalition under the above-mentioned former Communist Party leader, Karen Demirchyan, who was elected speaker of parliament, and the highly popular former defence minister, Vazgen Sargsyan, who obtained the post of the prime minister.

The assassination of both Karen Demirchyan and Vazgen Sargsyan, along with other politicians, on 27 October 1999 (see below) deprived the Unity Block of its leading and unifying personalities. Following this, the two coalition partners of the Unity Block were divided into the Republican Party and the Armenian People's Party with the latter being forced to join the opposition camp.

The National Assembly of Armenia has 131 seats. At the last parliamentary elections of 25 May 2003, the Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) that is headed by Prime Minister Andranik Markarian won a 25.35 per cent relative majority, followed by the Orinats Yerkir (Law-Based State Party or Law-Governed Party) with 13.76 per cent, the Justice Bloc with 10.96 per cent, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Dashnaktsutyun (HHD) with 10.84 per cent and the oppositional National Unity Party with 8.34 per cent. The remaining votes fell to a number of smaller parties that had failed to surmount the five percent threshold for parliamentary representation. Among them was the Communist Party of Armenia, which for the first time is not being represented in parliament.

As a rule, political parties in Armenia are based on strong personalities rather than on specific ideologies or platforms. The political parties' frequent fragmentations, mergers and recurrent building of changing coalitions are a political standard as they are in other post-

Soviet countries.

Conduct of free and fair elections in compliance with international norms and practices is one of areas that still requires major political reforms in Armenia. Despite reported improvements, elections still raise the concern of international observers. In the people's perception, fair elections would indicate the country's real democratization.

The Armenian government consists of about twenty ministries and a number of state agencies and institutions. At the bottom level, the Republic of Armenia is divided into ten administrative provinces (Marzes) and the capital Yerevan.



Armenia's ten administrative provinces (Marzes) and Yerevan

Source: <http://www.ngoc.am/ngo/default.htm>

The appointed governors rule the provinces. Their direct subordination to the president is thought to ensure administrative stability. However, the province governors and their administrations do not dispose of significant financial means. There are no province budgets. Budgetary dependence on the president as well as lack of resources reduces the governors' positions to those of administrative executives. Elected mayors and Elderly Councils (village and town councils) exercise local self-government in the communities. The number of communities totals 831. Public administration at this level suffers from the gap between the primary tasks of managing the social problems of the impoverished citizens and maintaining urban infrastructures, on the one hand, and having insufficient tax revenues, on the other.

The judicial power is executed by the Armenian Constitutional Court, the courts of original jurisdiction, the courts of appeal and the Armenian Court of Cassation, the country's highest court. There are economic, military and other courts. Judicial institutions are independent. The constitution guarantees extensive human rights and freedoms.

The country's fundamental problem in public administration is bad governance due to clan-like informal ties, insider mentality, little observance of the law and the limited competence of state servants. Apart from a few legal amendments giving it formal support and some individual government initiatives to promote it, foreign investment is confronted with rather hostile climate. It is not just the region's bad image that keeps even potentially interested entrepreneurs from the Armenian diasporas at distance.

The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

A key topic on the political agenda in Armenia is still the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Relations with Azerbaijan are even now “neither peaceful nor warlike”. There have been no detectable successes in the negotiations under the aegis of the OSCE Minsk Group. The maintenance of peace is the main achievement of bilateral and international efforts since 1994. Armenian claims to the Karabakhians’ right to self-determination have been met with Azeri arguments espousing state sovereignty and territorial integrity. Armenian relations with Turkey, the Azeri ally, continue to be reciprocally unfriendly.

The October 1999 Assassination

A heavy setback to the country’s democratic beginnings was the assassination on 27 October 1999 of the Speaker of Parliament Karen Demirchyan, his two deputies, Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan and a number of other officials who were all killed during a National Assembly session. Fortunately, the incident led neither to political upheaval nor was there an escalation in foreign affairs or public turmoil. The following court investigations are still continuing. The public was largely sceptical of the validity of the investigations into the causes of the incident, which were led under the official assumption that the assassins initiated the crime on their own with no other backing.

Economic and Social Conditions

During Soviet times, Armenia developed into an industrial country with a strong agricultural sector. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, it is now on the way back to a predominantly small-scale agricultural economy that is merely supplemented by industrial activities. The previously large agro-industrial complex has disintegrated into individual farming and cattle breeding. Armenia has become a net food importer. Domestic industries have dramatically reduced their production. Many factories are at a standstill. Technologically, those enterprises still functioning are often antiquated. Privatization has not brought any significant acceleration of industrial renewal. Investments are lacking. There are natural deposits of gold, bauxite, copper, zinc, aluminium and molybdenum. The national economy has yet to overcome the aftermath of the 1988 earthquake. It is permanently burdened with military expenses related to Armenia’s complicated foreign affairs, namely the unsettled Karabakh conflict.

With regard to official pronouncements, the trade embargo imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey has inflicted serious problems on the landlocked Armenia. In addition, the embargo meanwhile often serves as a pretext to justify the country’s deplorable economic situation. This pretext detracts from the maladministration there. Besides, the foreign observer is able to witness significant trade flows between the hostile sides. Regular Armenian/Turkish trade is conducted via Georgian transit routes. At market places in southern Georgia, Armenian and Azeri entrepreneurs exchange orders with one another. Nonetheless, the embargo did have dramatic effects during war times. Between 1992 and 1994, Armenia had almost no fuel or energy sources. Electricity production was near to zero. Heating systems were cut off. Road and railway transport was minimal. Armenia’s population was forced to survive three bitter winter periods.

At present, the picture is not yet homogeneous. Encouragingly, the monetary system has developed into the stable core of the national economy. The new national banking system has acquired some exemplary characteristics. Monetary policy as well as fiscal activities have been stabilized. Inflation rates are moderate. Unfortunately, these positive trends in the monetary system are not paralleled in the real economy.

On the one hand, first major infrastructure renewals have been made. With EU, direct French and US assistance, the Metsamor nuclear power plant has been put back into operation. For the most part, this covers the country’s energy demands. Russian companies provide the nuclear fuel. Under Russian and other foreign participation, facilities generating and supplying electricity have been transferred into private hands. Some of them are under reconstruction. Oil and gas imports from Russia (and to a certain extent from Iran) have been reinstated. Within the country and in the communications with Georgia, railways are functioning again. Due to the diaspora’s heavy financial involvement, road networks are being renewed countrywide. Telecommunications have been sold to Greek partners. In Yerevan and some other cities, a mobile phone system has been installed. In structural terms, most small- and medium-sized enterprises have now been privatized. Security in the political system along with legal and administrative improvements have produced some general stabilizing effects in the national economy.

On the other hand, overall economic development is still at very low level, although the Armenian government has been reporting positive growth rates for a number of years. During the most dramatic period over a decade ago, GDP shrunk by more than 50 per cent. The previously important industries (chemical, producing chiefly synthetic rubber and fertilizers; machine tool and electrical engineering; building materials extraction and processing; textiles) barely recovered. The loss of traditional Soviet and East Block markets is a long way from being replaced with new markets. Foreign trade is imbalanced. Imports largely exceed the exports. The privatization of large companies is not being implemented without problems. With some exceptions, domestic and foreign investments are restrained. Agricultural production requires technical modernization. The population is impoverished. The public's mood is all but enthusiastic. It is largely passive. Numerous environmental problems aggravate economic and social difficulties.

International organizations like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development or the United Nations accompanied by national development agencies (CIDA, DESA, DFID, GTZ, SIDA, USAID) as well as humanitarian and aid organizations are engaged in supporting economic recovery and social mitigation. Their programmes aim at poverty reduction and growth facility, structural adjustment and supporting good governance. Since mid-1994, an internationally supported programme of macroeconomic stabilization and structural reform has been implemented. International organizations have already felt obliged to report on encouraging macro-stabilization – statements that are better met with a certain amount of reservation. Recent developments have not led to a breakthrough in economic and social issues.

Armenia**Basic Geographic, Social and Economic Indicators**

Population (2001):	3.3 million
Surface area:	29.8 thousand sq km
Forest area:	3,510.0 sq km
Arable land (%):	17
Forests and wood land (%):	15
Permanent pastures:	24
Land boundaries:	total: 1,254 km border countries: Azerbaijan proper: 566 km, Azeri Nakhichevan exclave: 221 km, Georgia: 164 km, Iran: 35 km, Turkey: 268 km 0 km (landlocked in the Lesser Caucasus Mountains)
Coast line:	
Climate:	severe continental
Natural hazards:	occasionally severe earthquakes; droughts
Population density (2000):	136 persons per sq km
Life expectancy (2000):	73.6 years
Population growth (% annual, 2001):	-0.21
Fertility rate, total (births per woman):	1.3
Adult Literacy Rate (% 1999):	98.8
Official unemployment rate (1999):	9.3 (2000, registered: 11.7)
Population below national poverty line (% 1999):	45
Personal computers (per 1,000 people):	7.1
Internet users:	50,000
Ethnic groups (%):	Armenians 97 Kurds, Yezids 1.7 Russians 0.8 Others 0.8
Languages:	Armenian (official), Russian
Religions:	Armenian Apostolic Church
Major Cities:	Yerevan (capital) with 1.2 million inhabitants Vanadzor, Gyumri
Administrative units:	10 regions (marz) and Yerevan
GNP per capita (USD, 2001):	557
GDP at market prices (USD, 2000):	2.117 million
GDP per sector, value added (% of GDP, 2001):	Industry: 20.2 Agriculture: 25.0 Services: 39.0
Exports of good and services (% of GDP, 2001):	25.6
Imports of good and services (% of GDP, 2001):	45.9
Industries:	metal-cutting machine tools, forging-pressing, machines, electric motors, tires, knitted wear, textiles, leather goods, chemicals, mini busses, instruments, microelectronics, gem cutting, jewellery manufacturing, software development, brandy distillery
Natural resources:	small deposits of gold, copper, molybdenum, zinc, aluminium
Highest mountain:	Aragats Lerr 4,095 m

Sources:

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2. *CIA World Factbook Armenia (CIA)* at: www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook;
3. *World Development Indicators Database, July 2000 (The World Bank Group)* at: www.worldbank.org

For further reading:

Armenian Constitution: http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/am__indx.html
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 Armenian Church of America (Eastern) on Armenian affairs:
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 CIA World Factbook on Armenia: www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook
 Cilicia.com on Armenian genocide: <http://www.cilicia.com/armo10.html>
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<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/caucasus.html#armen>
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 GRIDA on Armenian environmental issues: <http://www.grida.no/enrin/soe.cfm?country=AM>
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 OSCE election report: http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports/am/arm3-2.pdf
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http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports/am/am_19feb2003_ehr.pdf
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http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports/am/am_25may2003_eps.pdf
 UNDP Briefing Report: Armenia: <http://www.undp.org/rbec/related/>
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<http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/docs/foreign/foreigna.html>
 US Department of State on Armenian background data: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5275.htm>
 USAID on Armenia: <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/bj2001/ee/am/>
 World Learning Armenia on Armenian NGOs (website compilation):
http://www.worldlearning.am/links/ngo_pages.html
 World Legal Information Institute on Armenian legislation (compilation):
<http://www.worldlii.org/catalog/50545.html>

Chapter Six

Azerbaijan in Brief

This chapter presents a brief country review of Azerbaijan. It will reflect mainly country analyses and conclusions of international organizations working in the field.

Geographic Conditions and Population

Azerbaijan covers an area of about 86,600 square kilometres and is the largest of the three South Caucasus countries. It is located on the western shore of the Caspian Sea. In the north, Azerbaijan borders on the Russian Federation, specifically on the administrative district of Dagestan. Its north-western neighbour is Georgia. In the west and south, it has common borders with Armenia and Iran respectively. The overall length of Azerbaijan's frontiers is more than 2,000 kilometres. Azerbaijan has been independent since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

There are two autonomous entities related to Azerbaijan. The Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan is an exclave that is located some dozens kilometres southwest of Azerbaijan. It is sandwiched between Iran and Armenia and has a short border with Turkey. Nagorno-Karabakh (Azeri: *Qarabag*) is an autonomous republic. Under Soviet legislation, it became a part of Azerbaijan. After repeatedly declaring independence, it finally separated in 1991. Its population is ethnic Armenian and it is now an independent entity but not recognized internationally. During the war in 1992-94, Karabakh and the surrounding Azeri territories came under Armenian control. Official Azeri sources claim that about 20 per cent of Azeri land is now occupied by Armenia. Armenian sources maintain the percentage is smaller. The general status quo including territorial issues is still to be settled between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Azerbaijan is a mountainous country with expansive plains surrounding two rivers, the Kura and the Araks. The capital and largest city is the Caspian port town of Baku (also spelled *Baki* in Azeri). It has a population of about two million inhabitants. Other large towns are Ganja (Azeri: *Gənc*), Mingachevir (Mingäevir), Nakhichevan and Sumgait (Sumqayit). The climate of Azerbaijan ranges from cold winters in the highlands to subtropical summers in the lowlands. Average temperatures start at +1°C in January and reach +27°C in July. In the mountains during the winter, there are extreme frosts. Baku has a moderately warm and dry subtropical climate with a hot summer and short, mild winter. Frosts occur there about once every ten years.



Azerbaijan

Source: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/mapshells/europe/azerbaijan/azerbaijan.htm>

According to official Azeri sources, the country has a population of more than 7.6 million. Due to social hardship, this number is declining steadily. The birth rate has dropped considerably over the last few years.

About four fifths of Azerbaijan's population are ethnic Azeri. Other ethnic groups include mainly Avars, Georgians (or Ingiloi – Islamized ethnic Georgians living in the northwest of Azerbaijan), Jews, Kurds, Lezghins (a Daghestani Sunnite Muslim group), Meskhetians, Russians, Talyshs (an Iranian Shiite Muslim group), Tatars, Udins and Ukrainians. All in all, Azerbaijan is home to more than 70 ethnic groups. In 1992/94, the entire population of ethnic Armenians left Azerbaijan before and during the Karabakh conflict. On the other hand, all Azeri have left Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and the occupied Azeri territories. Sources indicating that there are ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan may be referring to women of Armenian origin who are married to Azeri men. At any rate, due to their names and the language they speak they are not as a rule recognizably non-Azeri. There are also some sources that report Karabakh Azeri living in Armenia.

According to Azeri statistics, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has created about a million Azeri refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). (Some international organizations have reported about 750,000.) They make up about a seventh of the entire population of Azerbaijan. They have an enormous affect on the social and economic situation of the country. Their integration receives international support, but proceeds slowly and with differing success. Even today, a vast number of IDPs are still living in reception camps. There is some suggestion that the Azeri government has been intentionally hesitant to give assistance to those IDPs from territories that are now under Armenian control.

The number of refugees in Azerbaijan also includes about 45,000-50,000 Meskhetian Turks who fled Uzbekistan after the massacres in the Fergana Valley in 1989. Along with the Meskhetians who live in the Russian Federation they are striving to return to what they see as their historical homeland in the district of Samtskhe-Javakheti (Meskheti-Javakheti) in Georgia. In Azerbaijan, Meskhetians have been granted refugee status. The total number of Meskhetians now living in Azerbaijan is reported to be about 100,000.

As a result of the Chechen conflict in Russia, there are up to 10,000 Chechen refugees living in Azerbaijan.

On the other hand, a large Azeri ethnic group lives in the northern districts of Iran. According to Azeri estimates, they number at least 20 million. Due to the fact that they are such a sizeable ethnic group, this has touched a sensitive spot in Azeri/Iranian relations. However, Azeri President Heydar Aliyev has succeeded in pacifying nationalists who had at the beginning of the 1990s campaigned for closer ties with their Azeri countrymen in Iran.

Language

Since 1995, Azeri (or Azerbaijani, or more precisely North Azerbaijani) has been the official language in Azerbaijan. Its vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax are distinctly different from the Southern Azerbaijani language of the Azeri ethnic group living in Iran. Azerbaijani belongs to the Southern Turkic language family. Azeri and Turks are able to communicate with one another without translation.

During the 20th century, written Azeri experienced four major alphabet changes from Arabic to Early Latin, Cyrillic and New Latin. In 1929, the Latin script was introduced, but only to be replaced by Cyrillic some ten years later. In December 1991, the Azeri Latin alphabet with its five additional letters was once again reinstated. Latin is now the official script in Azerbaijan. Nonetheless, in everyday life, the Cyrillic alphabet is still used. The Azeri ethnic group living in Iran writes Southern Azerbaijani in Arabic script.

Although at first glance it does not seem a very significant issue, the change from Cyrillic to Latin points to a more fundamental change in Azeri society. It is an indication of the cultural return from the Slavic influence back to Turkic traditions. The Latin alphabet has re-erected the historical bridge to Turkey.

The inter-ethnic language of communication in Azerbaijan is still Russian. However, the number of people with a command of the Russian has been declining. In the late-Soviet years, virtually the entire adult population was literate. Now, literacy and educational qualification is one of the social problems of the country, especially in rural areas and refugee sites.

Religious Beliefs and History

Azeri are predominantly Muslim. The majority are Shiites who follow the Jafarite doctrine like their Iranian neighbours. Nevertheless, the Azeri relationship with the Iranians is not as close as their ethnic kinship to the Turks. Whether they are practicing Muslims or not, the Azeri see themselves as a Muslim nation. However, Azerbaijan is a secular state, *de jure* according to its constitution, and *de facto* in everyday life. In particular, the inhabitants of Baku and the younger generation are open-minded about this status. For a brief period during the early independence years, the beginnings of religious fundamentalism emerged. Alongside the larger group of Shiite Muslims there is a smaller group of Sunnite Muslims. Other religions in Azerbaijan include mainly Catholicism, some Protestantism, Orthodox Christianity and Judaism.

The Azeri are an ancient people. During the fourth century BC, the Kingdom of Albania (the later Arran; not to be confused with the Albania of contemporary Europe) covered large areas of the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan. (In this context, Azeri historiography also places special emphasis on Nakhichevan and Nagorno-Karabakh.) In the south, the Kingdom of Albania bordered on the Kingdom of Atropan covering the territory of today's northern Iran. It took its name from its founder Atropat and is by some sources believed to represent the linguistic origin of the word *Azerbaijan*. Other sources trace the name of Azerbaijan back to the Persian word *azar* (fire) referring to Azerbaijan as the *Land of Fire* because its earliest inhabitants were of the Zoroastrian belief.

In Azeri historiography, the Kingdoms of Albania and Atropan are said to have emerged simultaneously, the former in the northern and the latter in the southern parts of today's Azerbaijani settlement areas.

By the 2nd century AD, Albania had developed into a major regional power. It was conquered by Arabs during the 7th century and converted to Islam. With the collapse of the Arab empire in the 11th century, nomadic Seldjuk-Turk tribes including Huns and Khazars invaded the region where eventually the Turkic peoples dominated. Today, Azeri consider these Turkic nomads along with the Caucasian Albanians as being their ethnic ancestors.

During the 13th century, today's Azerbaijan was occupied by Mongols and subsequently

divided into separate khanates. At the end of the 15th century, it served the Safavids as one of the foundation stones of a new Persian kingdom. Under Shah Ismail I (1502-1524), Shiite Islam was made the official religion, thus separating Azeri from Ottoman Turks. Beginning with the 16th century, the Persian, Ottoman and Russian empires started fighting for supremacy over today's Azerbaijan. In the 17th century, Russia took control of the northern territories, while more than two thirds of Azeri-inhabited territory remained in Persian hands. Safavid rule ended in 1722. In 1723, the Russian Emperor Peter the Great captured Baku. In 1735, Baku was returned to Persian rule. The second half of the 18th century was marked by political fragmentation and conflicts between the independent khanates, which facilitated the emergence of Russian power in this region. Two wars between Russia and Persia in 1804-1813 and 1826-1828 changed the *distribution* of power in the region. As a result, the Treaty of Gulistan of 1813 gave Russia supremacy over the khanates of Karabagh, Ganja, Sheki, Shirvan, Quba, Derbent, Baku and Talysh as well as western Georgia (Imeretia and Abkhazia) and Dagestan. The Treaty of Turkmanchai of 1828 gave the two large khanates of Nakhichevan and Yerevan to Russia and finally put what is Azerbaijan today under the jurisdiction of the Russian Empire.

With the beginning of the industrial age, the Caspian oil region around Baku experienced an immense economic upswing. The industrialization and urbanization process began to develop at a quick rate. Baku became one of the fastest-growing cities of the Russian Empire. At the societal level, an Azeri free enterprise and a working class emerged accompanied by a budding intelligentsia. Culturally and politically, the region developed rapidly.

After World War I, Azerbaijan, along with Armenia and Georgia, were the co-founders of the Transcaucasus Federation. After not more than a month of its existence, the Federation broke apart in May 1918. Azerbaijan established the first Azeri state of modern times – the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. This secular state existed for 23 months, between 28 May 1918 and 28 April 1920. It had a parliament and cabinet of ministers similar to European ones. Therefore, the Azeri emphasize that the republic had a pioneer function for the whole Muslim world comparable to that of the Turkish republic of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk). The Azeri understand the establishment of the today's Republic of Azerbaijan in 1991 as a continuation of the democratic traditions established during those times. (Today, the Azeri celebrate their independence on 28 May.)

In 1920 and 1921, Russian troops took control of Azerbaijan and the two other South Caucasus states. Subsequently, the Communist system was established. Russia and Turkey agreed on making the region of Nakhichevan—which was at that time predominantly Armenian, as Armenians say—an autonomous territory under the protection of Azerbaijan. The Autonomous Region of Nagorno-Karabakh was made an integral part of Azerbaijan. The newly established Armenian government legally agreed to these terms and conditions. In 1922, Azerbaijan joined the Soviet Union. In 1936, Azerbaijan became a Soviet Republic.

State Building and Politics

In 1988 and the following years, ethnic violence and military operations around Karabakh became one of the main issues defining public thinking and policy-making in Azerbaijan. The ethnic massacre in the Azeri town of Sumgait was a traumatic event affecting Armenian/Azeri relations. The sentiments created by it led, in 1989, to the creation of the first significant Azeri opposition force – the Popular Front. It was established as a platform to voice demands aimed at inducing Moscow to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It rapidly grew into a national independence movement embodying anti-Russian and pro-Turkish positions. In January 1990, tensions between the Popular Front and the Azeri Communist authorities escalated. In a number of cities, the Popular Front declared Soviet power abolished. At about the same time, acts of violence were conducted against the country's Armenian population. In early 1990, bloodshed overshadowed the streets of Baku. The Azeri remember this as Russian troops committing violence against Azeri. The Armenians remember it as another pogrom against Armenians.

On 30 August 1991, the national parliament of Azerbaijan adopted the "Declaration on the Restoration of the State Independence of the Azerbaijan Republic". On 14 September 1991, the Communist Party of Azerbaijan was dissolved. On 18 October 1991, the "Constitutional Act on the State Independence of the Azerbaijan Republic" was issued. On 21 December 1999, Azerbaijan joined the Commonwealth of Independent States. During the last few days

of the same year, the Soviet Union ended its existence. Azerbaijan became completely independent.

Prior to this, in September 1991, former First Secretary of the Azerbaijani Communist Party Ayaz Mutalibov was elected the first president of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In June 1992, the head of the Popular Front, Abulfaz Elchibey, replaced him by winning the country's first democratic elections. Since 1993, Heydar Aliyev – the then chairman of the Nakhichevan Parliament, a former first secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party and member of the Soviet Union's Communist Party Politbureau – has been president of the country. Under his leadership, nationalist exaggeration and religious fundamentalism have come to an end. A Russian-mediated ceasefire with Armenia was signed in May 1994. Azeri appreciate President Aliyev's successful efforts to bring public peace and order back to the country. Public administration has been stabilized. Political insecurity belongs to the past. In the 11 October 1998 elections, President Aliyev was re-elected by more than 75 per cent of the vote. In the October 2003 elections, Heydar Aliyev's son Ilham Aliyev (his father's political heir and head of the Azeri state oil company Socar) was elected new President.

Azerbaijan has a modern constitution that was drafted under the chairmanship of President Aliyev and adopted by referendum on 12 November 1995. It came into force on 27 November 1995 and was amended by another referendum on 24 August 2002.

According to the constitution, Azerbaijan has a system of public administration that is divided into the legislative, executive and judicial branches. The president, who nominally heads only the executive branch, has a strong hand in the government. The president is the head of state and the supreme commander-in-chief. He appoints the prime minister and builds the government, while the parliament (Milli Majlis) approves his nomination of candidates. (Since 26 November 1996, Artur Rasizade has held the post of prime minister. In August 2003, on the presidential elections' eve, he was replaced by Ilham Aliyev.) In addition, the president appoints the heads of the executive branch in the cities and the 65 administrative districts (rayons). The president is elected for a five-year period. As an institution and *in propria persona*, President Aliyev is a key element of stability in the country. On the other hand, the political power he wields does to some extent weaken the democratic foundations of the system.

The parliament (Milli Majlis) consists of 125 deputies. They are elected on the basis of a majority election system and universal, equal, direct elections by free, individual and secret ballots. A term of office in the Milli Majlis lasts five years. According to the constitution, the speaker of parliament has seniority after the president as the head of state.

The political system of Azerbaijan is based on the principles of pluralism and a multi-party democracy. There are more than thirty registered political parties. Most of them were established after 1992. To a large extent, a party leader's personality creates the image of the party.

Among the major political parties of Azerbaijan is the Yeni Azerbaijan Party (New Azerbaijan Party - YAP) that was founded in 1992. It is a coalition of various parties and represents the ruling party headed by President Heydar Aliyev and a number of his family members. Ilham Aliyev, his aforementioned son, is the party's first deputy chairman.

The Azerbaijan Xalq Cabhasi or Azerbaijan Popular Front was established in 1989 to lead the country's movement for national independence. As mentioned, it was at this time chaired by Abulfaz Elchibey the first freely elected president of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, other political parties include *inter alia* the Azerbaijan Milli Istiglal Party (AMIP) or Azerbaijan National Independence Party, the leading oppositional Musavat Party or Equality Party, the Azerbaijan Liberal Party, the Azerbaijan Democratic Party, the Azerbaijan Demokratik Istiglal Party (ADIP) or Azerbaijan Democratic Independence Party, the Social Democratic Party of Azerbaijan (SDPA) and the oppositional Yurddash Party or Compatriot Party. In the opposition camp, the Democratic Congress unites twelve parties.

On 4 November 2000, the last parliamentary elections were held. The Yeni Azerbaijan Party (YAP) and its allies gained 108 parliamentary seats, the Reform Faction of the Azerbaijan Popular Front (APF) gained six seats, the Civic Solidarity Party (CSP) three, the Party for

National Independence of Azerbaijan (PNIA), the Musavat Party two and the Communist Party of Azerbaijan (CPA) each two, the Classic Faction of the Azerbaijan Popular Front and the Compatriot Party each one seat. The National Independence of Azerbaijan (PNIA), the Musavat Party and the Classic Faction refused to take their seats.

During the parliamentary elections, an International Election Observation Mission—established jointly by the OSCE/ODIHR, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Europe—confirmed that there was a functioning system of political pluralism. However, substantial deficits in fulfilling international election standards were also reported. Cases of election fraud became the object of international and national investigation. The next parliamentary elections are to be held in November 2005.

Judicial power is executed by the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, the courts of appeal, the ordinary and the specialized courts. Judicial power is exercised via constitutional, civil, administrative and criminal legal proceedings and in other forms specified by the law. Judges are autonomous and subordinate only to the constitution and the laws. They enjoy immunity. The constitution stipulates extensive human rights and freedoms.

The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan has a special section regulating the affairs of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan. The Constitution does not mention Nagorno-Karabakh. However, it does touch upon the issue of the occupied territories indirectly.

The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

A key topic on the political agenda of Azerbaijan is the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The region's autonomy was abolished by the Azeri Supreme Soviet on 26 November 1991. In the 1992-94 war, Armenians and Azeri fought for control of Nagorno-Karabakh. Even today, relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia are neither peaceful nor warlike. There has been no detectable success in the negotiations under the aegis of the OSCE Minsk Group. Maintaining the peace has been the main achievement of bilateral and international efforts since 1994. In substance, Azeri arguments on state sovereignty and territorial integrity have been met with Armenian claims to the Nagorno-Karabakh people's right to self-determination. On this issue, its main regional ally Turkey supports Azerbaijan. The economic blockade against Armenia imposed by the two countries is still functioning, but has had the side effect that Armenia has closed its transit routes between them. The hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons who still live in reception camps are a political as well as a social problem.

Economic, Social and Environmental Conditions

During Soviet times, Azerbaijan produced crude oil and chemicals, industrial machinery, silk and cotton textiles, carpets, food and agricultural products like cotton, tobacco, tea, and wines. Azerbaijan exports Caspian Sea caviar.

Azerbaijan's major national assets are natural oil and gas deposits. They are what the country is famous for. Since the early 20th century, Azeri oil reserves have been exploited on a large scale. British and Russian oil companies made history in the Baku-Sumgait area. Although the Soviet years brought an extensive increase in output, Azerbaijan's petroleum industry was subsequently faced with major deficiencies in its exploitation and processing technologies that were not advanced enough. It was unable to come up with urgently required capital investments. At present, Azerbaijan's energy sector is largely a state-controlled industry divided into two distinct branches: oil extraction and oil refinement.

During the first few years of independence, overall oil production declined. Only in the mid-1990s was there a turning point, when an initial 18 production-sharing arrangements with foreign oil companies were signed. As a result, large foreign direct investments (FDIs) have been flowing into reconstructing and developing oil capacities. Currently, the trend is that FDIs are declining. The recently launched project on the Baku/Ceyhan pipeline opens commercial links to Georgia, Turkey, western Europe and other markets around the world. Its is a joint project mainly implemented by British Petroleum (UK), Statoil (Norway), Unocal (US) and the Azeri state-owned Socar. When put into operation, it will end Azerbaijan's dependence on Russian pipeline systems. There are considerations about making it accessible to Central Asian countries, too. In December 2002, plans were already announced that Kazakh oil fields would be linked to the pipeline. The intention is to lay a route from Aktau (Kazakhstan) to Bubandi (Azerbaijan) above the bottom of the Caspian

Sea.



The Baku/Ceyhan pipeline project

Source: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/azerbjan.html>

The pillars of Azerbaijan's ongoing economic reforms are (a) economic liberalization mainly through the government's retreat from direct economic management, the opening of foreign trade and the removal of price restrictions; (b) monetary stabilization by controlling the money supply and balancing the state budget; and finally (c) wide-ranging privatization of enterprises. Since early 1995, Azerbaijan has adopted a corresponding programme on economic reforms. The World Bank and the IMF assist in its implementation.

In structural terms, post-Soviet reforms have given the national economy new market-oriented contours. Azerbaijan has a new bi-level banking system. The monetary system has proven relatively stable. A number of industries have been privatized, among them trade, transport and public utilities. The private sector makes up more than a third of Azerbaijan's GDP. It employs over half of the country's working population. Not only but predominantly in the oil business, the national economy has encouraged foreign investment. There have been regional changes in the structure of foreign trade. Azerbaijan has been redirecting commercial efforts from Russia and the CIS mainly to Turkey. Commercial links have been established with Iran, the United Arab Emirates and western Europe. Crude oil remains the number one export item.

Macroeconomic developments are reported as being stable. The tenor of government statements is in general optimistic. Annual inflation is being kept at a minimal level. The fiscal deficit has been reduced to three to four per cent. The government has accumulated solid foreign exchange reserves. The exchange rates of the *manat* have been along acceptable lines. The GDP shows positive growth rates. Nonetheless, general growth has been comparatively low since GDP dropped by more than three fifths previous to the mid-1990s. Per annum and per capita, it is now developing slightly beyond the mark of 530 USD, placing Azerbaijan among Europe's poorest countries. During recent years, the economy's legal framework has been amended; law enforcement procedures have been tightened. The overall environment for doing business has improved comparatively. However, the government still insists on controlling the economy. There are few major

businesses with which governmental officials are not familiar or in which they do not participate.

Additionally, critics blame the government for basically having made unfavourable production-sharing arrangements with the international oil companies, ensuring too few benefits for the Azeri themselves. In fact, the oil business has not created the anticipated breakthrough in the overall economic development that was expected. Furthermore, the non-oil branches of industry have yet to show a significant revival. Here, a rather unfriendly environment hampers commercial expansion. There are no regulations and privileges equal to those in the oil and gas business. Corruption, inadequate legal regulations, overburdening taxes, arbitrary tax collection procedures, underdeveloped infrastructures and a lack of access to financial sources are still major problems.

Azeri agricultural enterprises traditionally produce cotton, tobacco, fruits and vegetables. As a rule, they are on a small scale and family based. They keep about 40 per cent of the country's workforce employed, but produce less than some ten per cent of GDP. Lack of contemporary technologies, simplest forms of management, lack of extension and support services and problems in maintaining irrigation systems from the Soviet period result in generally low agricultural efficiency. On the whole, peasant families lack the finances for acquiring the basic means of mechanization and fertilization. The country is a food importer. At the same time, agriculture with its family- and community-based forms of life absorbs potential social tensions.

Poverty and social stratification remain a major concern for the country. Official unemployment is reported to be at about twenty per cent. In fact, it is assumed to have reached a much higher level. Under national standards, about sixty per cent of Azeri households are poor; twenty per cent are very poor. They can only afford less than half of the estimated subsistence food basket. Average food consumption falls far short of a healthy diet.

Despite essential social changes during Soviet times, kinship ties have remained a strong fundament of Azeri society. The extended family still plays an important role in private and professional life, politics and business. Regardless of the legal guarantees ensuring equal rights, there is an inherited gender gap dividing Azeri society. Azeri women and men are both focussed on the family. However, traditionally, men see themselves and are expected to be the family heads and breadwinners. After decades of nearly full employment during the Soviet period, many women have now returned from income-generating and civic activities to taking care of the family and housework. Most employed women are low-wage workers. Typically, women have a lower income than men.

Over the years, public expenditures on social issues have been cut permanently. To a large extent, social security systems have deteriorated. To many, access to health services has become too expensive. Pension schemes are not designed to prevent the widespread impoverishment of the older generations. Whether or not education is financed has become largely dependent on parental income.

Azerbaijan has environmental problems that cast negative shadows on economic and social developments. The oil industry has caused serious environmental pollution due to badly sealed and leaking oilfields, rusting oil derricks and other abandoned infrastructures. (A number of these were built at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century.) Although theoretically there would be sufficient fresh water reserves, Azerbaijan is in fact suffering from a deficiency in fresh water. Surface water is polluted with heavy metals and pesticide residues. Channel systems are highly inadequate technically as well as being poorly managed. Sustainable use of aquifers would require regional co-operation. Air pollution remains high. Land cultivation has been reduced due to considerable soil salinization.

Azerbaijan**Basic Social and Economic Indicators**

Population (2000):	approximately 7.6 million
Surface area:	86.6 thousand square kilometres, including the exclave of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, Nagorno-Karabakh and occupied territories
Arable land (%):	18
Forests and wood land (%):	11
Permanent pastures (%):	25
Land boundaries:	total: 2,013 km border countries: Armenia (with Azerbaijan proper) 566 km, Armenia (with the Azerbaijan-Nakhichevan exclave) 221 km, Georgia 322 km, Iran (with Azerbaijan proper) 432 km, Iran (with the Azerbaijan-Nakhichevan exclave) 179 km, Russia 284 km, Turkey (with the Azerbaijan-Nakhichevan exclave) 9 km
Coast line:	Caspian Sea (800 km)
Climate:	dry, semiarid steppe
Natural hazards:	droughts; earthquakes
Population density (2000):	93 persons per sq km
Life expectancy (2000):	71 years
Population growth (% annual, 1999):	0.9
Fertility rate, total (births per woman, 1998) :	2.0
Official unemployment rate:	about 20 per cent (estimated) (2000, officially registered: 1.2 per cent)
Population below national poverty line (%):	ca. 60 per cent classified as poor and very poor
Internet access (per 10,000 people, 1999):	0.2
Ethnic groups (%):	Azeri (82.7) Avars, Daghestani, Georgians, Jews, Kurds, Lezghins, Meskhetians, Russians, Talyshs, Tatars, Udins, Ukrainians and others (17.3)
Languages:	Azeri (or Azerbaijani) (official language) Russian
Religions:	Muslim (about 90 per cent, mainly Shiite), Russian Orthodox, Catholic, Baptist, Jewish etc.
Major Cities:	Baku (capital) with 1,796 million inhabitants Ganja (Gänc), Mingachevir (Mingäevir), Nakhichevan, Sumgait (Sumqayit)
Administrative units:	65 districts
GNP per capita (USD, 2001):	715
GDP at market prices (USD, 2001):	5,717 million
GDP per sector, value added (% of GDP, 2001):	Industry: 35.5 Agriculture: 15.7 Services: 45
Exports of good and services (% of GDP, 2001):	42.4
Imports of good and services (% of GDP, 2001):	37.5
Industries:	petroleum and natural gas, petroleum products, oil field equipment; steel, iron ore, cement; chemicals and petrochemicals; textiles
Natural resources:	oil and natural gas
Highest mountain:	Bazarduzu Dagi (4,485 m)

Sources:

1. World Development Indicators database, July 2000 (The World Bank Group) at: www.worldbank.org;
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3. Country Report: Azerbaijan. (UNDP) at: www.undp.org/rbec/related

For further reading:

Azerb.com on Azeri history: <http://geo.ya.com/travelimages/az-hist.html>
 Azeri Presidential Administration, home page: <http://www.president.az>
 Azeri legislation (compilation): <http://geo.ya.com/travelimages/az-law.html>
 Azeri legislation (compilation): <http://www.worldlii.org/catalog/50618.html>
 Azerbaijan International on miscellaneous Azeri issues: <http://www.azer.com>
 Azerbaijan official view on Azeri investment climate: <http://azembassy.msk.ru/html/economics.html>
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 Energy Information Administration (US) on Azeri energy resources:
<http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/azerbjan.html>
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<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/election/azerbaijan/azparties.html>
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 Geo.ya.com with various geographic maps of Azerbaijan (compilation):
<http://geo.ya.com/travelimages/az-maps.html>
 Human Rights Centre of Azerbaijan on Azeri refugee situation:
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/usazerb/refugees.htm>
 Int. Relations and Security Network on Armenian and Azeri affairs:
<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/infoservice/secwatch/index.cfm?Parent=2101>
 Jamestown Foundation on Islamism in Azerbaijan:
http://www.jamestown.org/pubs/view/pri_006_008_003.htm
 OECD on Azerbaijan:
http://www.oecd.org/infobycountry/0,2646,en_2649_37425_1_70255_1_1_37425,00.html
 OSCE election reports:
http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports/az/aze2000fin.pdf
http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports/az/azer01-1-prelim.pdf
http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports/az/azer00-2-prelim.pdf
http://www.osce.org/odihr/documents/reports/election_reports/az/azer2-1.pdf
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Chapter Seven

Georgia in Brief

This chapter presents a brief country review of Georgia. It reflects mainly analyses and conclusions of international organizations working in the field.

Geographic Conditions and Population

Georgia is a mostly rugged and mountainous country with access to the Black Sea. The Greater Caucasus forms its northern boundary and the Lesser Caucasus occupies the southern part of the country. The Kolkhida Lowlands in the west extend to the shores of the Black Sea. Georgia has an area of almost 70,000 square kilometres. It has common borders with the Russian Federation in the north, Azerbaijan in the east/southeast, Armenia in the south and Turkey in the south/southwest.

Geographically, Georgia can be divided into an eastern and a western section. It has a number of climate zones and a very diverse topography. The arid and semi-arid east is characterized by non-forested zones. Other areas of the country have a comparatively mild climate and fertile soil. Dense forests cover the west. The country has alpine and sub-alpine zones. Georgia is a country with an unusually rich biodiversity. Its flora and fauna have a mixture of European and Central Asian species. The fauna also has some North African species, mainly migrating birds.



Georgia

Source: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/mapshells/europe/georgia/georgia.htm>

Georgia is a strategically important location, providing the main Caucasus transit routes to all neighbouring countries. This is underscored by the complicated international relations that historically characterize the region. At present, the Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the economic blockade that Azerbaijan and Turkey impose on Armenia after the Karabakh war make Georgia *the* beneficiary of the hostilities between its two South Caucasus neighbours. For Azerbaijan, Georgia now offers the only direct link to the Black Sea. For the two Turkic states, Azerbaijan and Turkey, Georgia provides road and railway routes. For the land-locked Armenia, it also gives access to the sea. It provides market places for Armenian entrepreneurs conducting business with their Azeri and Turkish counterparts. In addition, Georgia offers the only land connection between Armenia and its main regional ally – the Russian Federation. Georgia connects Turkey and Iran to Russia. Georgia links the Caspian basin to the Black Sea region. The largest commercial project of

the region – the Baku/Ceyhan oil pipeline, currently under construction – is being routed through Georgian territory. This will open Azeri oil to world markets and is likewise an indication of the potential role that trade and commerce can play in regional conflict resolution. From the Caspian Sea and through Azerbaijan, trade routes from the Central Asian countries lead also to Georgia.

Officially, Georgia has an estimated population of 5.4 million people. On the other hand, the 2002 national census showed that about a million inhabitants of Georgia had emigrated between 1997 and 2001. Thus, it would be more realistic to estimate Georgia's population at about four million (The countries of destination of the still ongoing emigration process are mainly Germany, Russia and the US.). The reasons for emigration especially among young and well-educated people are often of a socio-economic nature. In addition, people leave due to the highly instable conditions in many regions of the country, and in a vicious circle, soaring emigration is also one of the causes of the country's destabilization.

Approximately 100 ethnic groups inhabit the country. They are identifiable not only by their numerical strength, but also by the compactness of their settlement areas. The main ethnic groups are Georgians making up some 70 per cent of the population, followed by Armenians at eight per cent, Russians at four, Azeri at six, Ossetes at three and the Abkhaz at two per cent. Greeks, Jews and Yezids make up the majority of the remaining percentage. This data is largely based on the last Soviet census of 1989. It is assumed that the disproportionately high emigration of people of non-Georgian ethnic background (especially Russians, Armenians and Greeks) has changed the percentage of the various ethnicities in Georgia's population. Moreover, the ethnic groups themselves have significantly differing perceptions of their numbers.

Ethnic Georgians call themselves Kartveli and their country Sakartvelo. This name appeared in the 10th century, indicating several kingdoms with common language features had merged together into one state with one unifying Christian belief. The name Georgia is relatively new. It goes back to the 13th century. Linguistically, it may have Persian and Arabian roots.

Languages

The country's official language is Georgian (Kartuli ena), which belongs to the South-Caucasian language group along with the Megrelian, Lazic (the Lazic people now live mainly on Turkish territory) and Svanic languages.

Georgian is a language with its own set of characters. It is said to have been created by King Parnavas who reigned from 290 to 234 BC. The oldest Georgian script is Asomtavruli, which is to be found on the walls of Georgian monuments dating back to the 4th-5th centuries AD. Another script that has been widely used since the 9th century AD is the Nuskhuri script. The Mkhedruli script that has dominated since the 19th century forms the basis of modern written Georgian. It is used not only by the Georgians but also by the Svans and the Megrelians.

The other ethnic sub-groups or groups speak either their own dialects of Georgian or their own languages. While the Ajars speak a Georgian dialect, Megrelians emphasize that Megrelian is a language in its own right. (In contrast, many Georgians claim Megrelian is a derivative of Georgian.) In Abkhazia, one speaks Abkhazian, which belongs (like Chechen, Avaric and Dagestan) to the North Caucasian language group and is the official language as confirmed by the Georgian Constitution. The South Ossetes speak Ossetian, which belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European language group and is related to Farsi. Armenians and Azeri speak their national languages, as a number of smaller ethnic groups do. To a declining degree, Russian is the language of inter-ethnic communication. Especially in the Georgian capital, there is a large group of Armenians with a solid command of Russian.

Confessions

Georgians believe their ecclesiastical roots go back to the Most Holy Mother of God. Saint Andrew the Apostle and Saint Simon the Canaanite are understood to be the founders of the Orthodox Apostolic Church of Georgia. Holy Nino of Cappadocia plays an outstanding role in Georgian faith and self-esteem. Christianity was established in the 330s as the state religion by King Mirian III of Kartli-Iberia who had been proselytized by Holy Nino. Georgia is one of the first Christian nations in history. However, various pagan rituals still persist,

especially in the mountainous regions of Georgia. In the 6th century, the so-called Thirteen Syrian Fathers consolidated Christian belief in Georgia. Ecclesiastical sites like the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Palestine (11th century), the Monastery of Iviron at Mount Athos (11th - 12th centuries) and the Academies of Iqalto and Gelati (12th century) were significant for the country's spiritual and public life. Georgians are proud of the hundreds of ancient churches and monasteries located throughout the country and they are important in understanding historical and contemporary Georgia. Since 1977, His Holiness and Blissfulness the Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II has been the head of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Georgians are a people who take pride in their religious tolerance.

In Georgia, there are approximately 75 per cent Orthodox Christians (Georgian Orthodox totalling 65 per cent and Russian Orthodox believers totalling 10 per cent), Muslims total 11 per cent and Armenian Apostolic Christians eight per cent. The other six per cent are *inter alia* Jews, Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Religious considerations have had a certain impact on the country's foreign relations. In general, there appears to be a specific traditional understanding in the South Caucasus region that worldly solidarity and commitments have roots in religious origins. Thus, Christian ethnic groups often feel an affinity for other Christian groups and Muslims for other Muslims. Nonetheless, this underlying pattern of thinking is far from being a guiding principle. Canonically, Georgia is related to its Orthodox northern neighbour Russia. Between the 19th and 20th century, Russia was both Georgia's protector and a colonial power over it. Georgia welcomed the former capacity and rejected the latter. It still feels it is suffering from Russian domination. Long efforts by Georgia to gain independence or Russia trying to prevent this have created serious tensions in the relations between the two countries. Currently, Georgian state policy makers are attempting to improve ties with Muslim Turkey and Azerbaijan rather than Russia. At the same time, Georgia has taken an ambivalent stance towards its Apostolic Christian neighbour Armenia.

Ethnic Divide As in many other countries, language and religion are the main criteria for determining ethnic identity. Moreover, in Georgia they mark the inner boundaries of the country's ongoing disintegration.

In this context, it may not be a problem *per se* that Georgia is the home of an ethnically heterogeneous people. What creates the dilemma is that many of the country's ethnic groups have not placed any focus on trying to structure their lives in a way that would engender one all-encompassing Georgian identity. Quite the opposite, even today, non-Georgian ethnic groups neither have any sense of being Georgian nor do they try to discover their Georgian identity. Furthermore, they put an emphasis on their differences with ethnic Georgians. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the idea of ethnic or national liberation has continued to fuel their spirits. They understand the concept of ethnicity as an argument for state sovereignty and territorial demarcation. To them, the traditions and future integrity of Sakartvelo are of little meaning.

On the basis of linguistic, cultural and historical background, the Abkhaz are seeking independence from Georgia and at the same time have asked for unification with the Russian Federation. The Abkhaz are divided into two religious groups: the Orthodox Christians and the considerably smaller group of Surini Muslims (mohajiri). The oppressive policy of the Russian Empire forced many of the latter to flee to Turkey in 1870. Also, as a result of the post-Soviet armed conflict with the Georgian central government, many Abkhaz have left the country. At the same time, there has also been migration of Surini Muslims from Turkey back to Abkhazia.

The South Ossetes have been seeking closer relations with their ethnic relatives on the northern side of the Ossete/Russian border. The Ajars are seeking to strengthen their autonomy but do not want secession from Georgia. Megrelians see themselves as a unique ethnicity amidst other ethnic Georgians. This often causes misunderstandings with Tbilisi. Armenians in the southern part of the country are closer to Yerevan than to Tbilisi. The Azeri in the southeast are ethnically linked to their countrymen in Azerbaijan. The Chechens are endangering northern districts near the border.

In their attempt to overcome the forces of disintegration, ethnic Georgians emphasize that in

any event all ethnic groups in Georgia have a common historical background. They see the phenomenon of ethnic bias and animosities as being the core of the tragedy of contemporary Georgia.

Historically, the territory of today's Georgia has always been multinational. As said, its geopolitical location makes it a crossroads for general migration and trade routes linking Asian and European regions. It has always been of military interest to foreign countries. Over the centuries, it has been permanently exposed to its neighbours' ethnic influence and state domination.

Georgian culture has elements of both Western and Eastern civilizations. In the meantime, Georgians understand themselves as predominantly Western. The fact that they are Christians tends to strengthen this attitude. In contrast, there are pillars of their society which prove Georgians have a powerful Eastern heritage, e.g. their strong family-based (clan-like) traditions in individual, commercial and public life, the men's dominance over women, the superiority of the older generation over the younger or the widespread authority of customary law or even the right to use physical force rather than follow written law.

In the minds of ethnic Georgians – and this is what we are attempting to convey in this chapter, after having highlighted the attitudes of the other South Caucasus people– they represent one of the most ancient peoples of the world. To them, Sakartvelo (Georgia) is the country that during history united the settlement areas of those ethnicities that are now collectively called Kartveli. By ignoring the various ethnic and sub-ethnic peculiarities of the today's Georgian provinces, they portray the country's history as though its people were more unified than they actually are. They suggest dividing Georgia into only two main cultures – the west Georgian (Kolkhian) and the east Georgian (Iberian) – both of which are understood to represent two forms of one common culture.

History

Georgians trace their history back to the 2nd millennium BC. The consecutive periods of Greek, Roman, Persian, Arab, Mongol and Turkish domination that have left marks on Kolkhian and Iberian history are of a certain relevance to contemporary Georgian affairs. The collection of Georgian kingdoms and peoples whose cultures were based on Christianity are definitely significant. It is also important that Russia became Georgia's protecting (colonial) power and guaranteed Georgian unification. Moreover, it was a vital point that Russia conquered Georgia politically and developed into a culturally dominating force there.

According to Georgian historiography, the Megrelian/Chan and Svan tribes in the west as well as Kart tribes in the east laid the fundamentals for earliest Georgian entities, when they over the centuries (6th–4th century BC) erected the Kingdom of Kolkhis (Egrisi; in western Georgia) and the Kingdom of Iberia (Kartli; in eastern Georgia). In 65 BC, Pompeius defeated Iberian King Artaxerxes. The Georgian kingdoms became part of the Pax Romana. As said, Georgian territories were christianized during the 330s; Christianity was made the state religion. During the 5th century, the Iberian King Vakhtang Gorgasali (the founder of the town of Tbilisi) made attempts to resist Persian occupation. By strengthening Georgian royal power and through national consolidation around the Christian belief, the Iberians fought the Persians in the 6th century. In the 7th century, Arabs invaded the country. Subsequently, anti-Arab sentiment began to unite the Georgians. In the 11th century, the Seljuk Turks conquered the region during the Great Turkish Conquest.

At the beginning of the 12th century, "David the Builder" strengthened the nation once again and reinforced Christianity. In 1103, he convened the all-Georgian Church Council and the church was subordinated to the state. He formed a regular army and ended the Turkish occupation.

During the reign of Queen Tamar from 1184 through 1213, the Georgian kingdom developed into a regional power. This was the Golden Age of Georgian history. During this period Shota Rustaveli wrote his famous poem, "The Knight in the Panther's Skin", which is considered the most important achievement in Georgian literature. The Golden Age ended in the 13th century when the Mongols invaded Georgia. Only in 1314, was Giorgi V, otherwise known as "Giorgi the Brilliant", able to drive the Mongols out of Georgia, but later Tamerlane (the Tartar conqueror) conducted eight military campaigns between 1386 and

1403 and caused Georgia to sink back into economic and military insignificance. Alexander I was the last king of a united Georgia. After his reign from 1412 through 1442, the country was divided into the three independent kingdoms of Kakheti, Kartli and Imereti and five principalities of Guria, Abkhazia, Megrelia, Svanetia and Samtskhe.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Persians and the Turks fought continuously for domination over the territories of the today's Georgia.

Under the reign of King Irakli II of Kartli-Kakhetia (1720-1799), the eastern parts of these territories were reunified after around 300 years of division. The Persians adversaries were expelled successfully. However, the Turks remained a continual military threat. In 1783, King Irakli II signed the Georgievsk Treaty of Protection with the Russian Empire, which guaranteed Russian protection and Georgian unity simultaneously.

In 1795, the Persians again invaded eastern Georgia killing Georgians on a grand scale. This marked a significant moment in Georgian history. Only six years thereafter in 1801, Russia annexed eastern Georgia. Following this, the Kingdoms of Kartli-Kakhetia and Imereti as well as the Megrelian principality were abolished administratively. Georgia was made a Russian colony. Georgian land was converted into Russian provinces. Culture and language felt the effects of russification. The Throne of the Catholicos of all Georgia was eliminated. Autocephaly, announced by the Georgian Church in the 5th century, was abolished.

**Georgia's
Re-
appearance
on the World
Map**

After World War I and the Russian February Revolution in 1917, Georgians initially recognized the provisional government in Saint Petersburg, but also took first steps towards regaining independence. In March 1917, autocephaly was restored to the Georgian Church. In September, Kirion III became Catholicos Patriarch of all of Georgia. Following the turmoil after the Russian October Revolution in 1917, Georgians with their neighbours, the Armenians and Azeri, established the Transcaucasus Federation – an independent state that disintegrated after only a month of its existence whereupon these three ethnic groups each created their own state. Georgia declared independence on 26 May 1918.

At about the same time, various mountainous peoples in the northern and southern Caucasus mountain ranges established the Alliance of United Mountain People of the North Caucasus and Dagestan and also a Mountain Peoples' Government. On the Georgian side, Abkhazians were actively engaged in this initiative. This and similar developments were a reflection of the ethnic divisions in the region. On 7 May 1920, Russia recognized the Georgian Democratic Republic. *De facto*, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan followed suit in January 1921, but the League of Nations did not admit Georgia as one of its members.

In 1921, the Red Army took over the South Caucasus. On 25 February 1921, it entered Tbilisi. During this period, Communist governments were simultaneously established in all three South Caucasus countries regardless of local uprisings against Soviet power continuing until 1924. On Georgian territory, a number of autonomous entities appeared. The Autonomous Soviet Republic Abkhazia was established on 31 March 1921, followed by Ajaria on 16 July 1921 and the Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia on 20 April 1922. On 12 March 1922, the aforementioned Transcaucasus federation that had unified Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia was re-established, now as Federal Union of Socialist Soviet Republics with its capital in Tbilisi. On 13 December 1922, it was renamed the Transcaucasus Socialist Federal Soviet Republic. When the USSR was formed on 30 December 1922, the Transcaucasus Federation became one of its republics. It existed as an integral part of the USSR until 1936, when according to the new Soviet Constitution, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were made constituent republics of the Soviet Union. Although this caused Georgia to become incorporated into another state for a long period, it also made it visible again on the world political map. The borders of Soviet Georgia are now the borders of the today's Republic of Georgia.

Soviet Period The following Soviet period had inconsistent and contradictory features. It brought years of dictatorship and ethnic cleansing. Remarkably, it was the Georgian, Joseph Stalin, who led ethnic separation campaigns and conducted the most intensive russification of the country in history. The Soviet period brought years of forced appeasement and decades of peace,

industrialization and collectivization. Economically, Georgia benefited from the establishment of the Soviet state. It developed comparatively modern industries, large agricultural production facilities and contemporary scientific institutions. Politically and culturally, it was dominated by Russia. On the other hand, it became an integral part of the large Soviet economic and cultural space. In a certain sense, it also came culturally closer to Europe. Socially, Georgia enjoyed a period of well-being. It had a developed health care system and social infrastructures. It had no nutrition problems. It had a high literacy rate and officially no unemployment. Georgia's high life expectancy was legendary.

**State
Sovereignty**

The period of *perestroika* led to a revival of the Georgian national liberation movement. Simultaneously, independence movements reappeared in the ethnically constituted administrative entities of the country. First democratic elections were held. On 9 April 1991, the Georgian parliament issued an initial declaration on the country's independence. The former dissident, Zviad Gamsakhurdia – an ethnic Megrelian – was elected head of state. His emphasis on Georgian nationalism led to rapid estrangement between the central government and the still existing anti-Soviet opposition forces among the non-Georgian ethnic groups. In December 1991, the Soviet Union was dissolved. Georgia obtained full state sovereignty. In the winter of 1991/92, a coup d'état led to Zviad Gamsakhurdia's replacement by the today's President Eduard Shevardnadze, who had earlier been first secretary of the Georgian Communist Party as well as the Soviet foreign minister. With him, the administrative elite of Soviet Georgia returned to power.

The October 1992 elections were a confirmation of Eduard Shevardnadze's political leadership. He was re-elected chairman of parliament. On August 24, 1995, a new constitution was adopted. On 5 November 1995, presidential elections were held. On 26 November 1995, Eduard Shevardnadze became the president of Georgia. On 9 April 2000, he was elected for a second term. He has survived two assassination attempts, one in August 1995 and one in February 1998.

**Inner
Dissolution**

During the first half of the 1990s, armed conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia dampened the spirits of the Georgian people. The controversies surrounding these issues have yet to be settled. CIS/Russian peacekeeping forces and international organizations (UN, OSCE) have intervened. Negotiations are underway. Relations with Ajaria and Samegrelo are complicated. They are still clouded by mutual scepticism. Besides, the central government is forced to give special attention to other regions such as Javakheti with its many Armenians and the Pankisi Gorge with its numerous Chechens. Developments there have had implications for the entire country. The government has been unable to implement consistent policy throughout the nation.

**State
Building and
Politics**

According to its constitution, Georgia is a democratic republic based on the rule of law. The 17 October 1995 Georgian Constitution declares state sovereignty based on a 31 March 1991 referendum and the 9 April 1991 declaration of independence. It proclaims Abkhazia and "the former Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia" integral parts of the country. With the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on 21 December 1991, the borders of Soviet Georgia were assumed by the Republic of Georgia. The Republic of Georgia sees itself as legal successor to the 26 May 1918 Georgian Democratic Republic.

State power is constitutionally divided into the legislative, executive and judicial branches. According to the constitution, the Georgian parliament is the supreme representative body of the country. It consists of 150 deputies elected for a four-year term by a proportional representation system and 85 deputies also elected for a four-year period by popular majority. Thus far, the parliament has one chamber. According to the constitution, it will have to be restructured into a legislative body with two chambers which take into consideration the regional peculiarities of the country.

The president of Georgia is the chief of state and head of government. He exercises executive power and has extensive responsibilities. He has a leading voice in elaborating and implementing legislation, running the public administration and judiciary. He is responsible for and executes the domestic and foreign policy of the state. He guarantees the unity and integrity of the country and the activity of state bodies. He is the supreme commander-in-chief of the armed forces of Georgia. The president is elected for a five-year term.

In practice, the entire public administration system depends immensely on the personality of the president. Under presidential rule, individual relations play a more decisive role than legal regulations. Often, compliance with public law is minimal. Due to Georgian society's cultural heritage, the formally established institutions of this democratic state based on the rule of law have very little impact on public decision-making.

**Political
Parties and
Judicial
Power**

The multicoloured political landscape of Georgia is characterized by many political parties and parliamentary blocs which undergo frequent changes. At present, there are eleven more or less influential political parties. A pro-presidential bloc called "For a New Georgia" was established by the Citizens' Union of Georgia and the Socialist Party. The National Democratic Party, the Georgian Greens and others have joined it as well. Four of these eleven parties are considered pro-governmental; seven are opposition parties. The Citizens' Union of Georgia (pro-governmental) was founded in 1993. Reformers and former Soviet officials supporting President Shevardnadze lead the party. The National Democratic Party heads the parliamentary opposition. Among the other important parties are the People's National Democratic Party, the United Republican Party, the Georgian Popular Front, the Georgian Social Democratic Party, the All-Georgia Revival Union, the Green Party, the Agrarian Party, the United Communist Party of Georgia and the Socialist Party. The New Rights Party was established in June 2001.

In the last parliamentary elections in 1999, 32 parties and electoral blocs nominated candidates. Meanwhile, only President Eduard Shevardnadze's party, the Citizens' Union of Georgia, as well as the two election blocs The Revival of Georgia (led by Eduard Shevardnadze's opponent and Ajar leader Aslan Abashidze) and Industry Will Save Georgia surmounted the seven per cent threshold required to hold parliamentary seats. Most of the political parties are not popular due to specific ideologies or platforms but rely for votes on their leaders' strong personalities.

The judicial power is executed by the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court and by ordinary courts. There are no extraordinary or specialized courts. Judicial power is independent of the other branches of government. Judges are autonomous, enjoy immunity and are only subordinate to the Georgian constitution and the laws. The constitution stipulates extensive human rights and freedoms.

**Administrative and
Territorial
Boundaries**

Division of administrations and territories in Georgia is a complicated issue. (Its main contours are shown at the map below.) The constitution stipulates that the citizens of Georgia may regulate matters of local importance through local self-government as long as this does not encroach upon national sovereignty. In fact, because the issues in different parts of the country are highly interrelated, there are few that do not affect national concerns. Since the beginning of the armed conflicts with its separatist entities, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Georgian central government maintains little or no jurisdiction over either. In general, it has difficulties in managing authorities in public administration without dealing with the unsettled disputes affecting them and other separatists or supporters of autonomy. Nonetheless, there were attempts to rearrange territorial administration during the mid-1990s and also to eliminate some of the ethnic provinces and autonomous entities from the map of Georgia. As a result (which did not go unopposed), South Ossetia disappeared nominally and became part of the Province of Shida Kartli. Some territories, for example, Megrelia and Javakheti, were put together with other provinces in newly established conglomerates.

Under Georgian law, the country's main administrative entities are now:

- The Ajar Autonomous Republic (capital: Batumi);
- Abkhazia (no specified political status, capital: Sukhumi);
- Guria Province (capital: Ozurgeti);
- Racha-Lechkhumi and Lower Svaneti Province (capital: Ambrolauri);
- Megrelia and Upper Svaneti Province (capital: Zugdidi);
- Imereti Province (capital: Kutaisi);
- Kakheti Province (capital: Telavi);
- Mtskheta-Mtianeti Province (capital: Mtskheta);
- Samtskhe-Javakheti Province (capital: Akhaltsikhe);

- Lower Kartli Province (capital: Rustavi) and
- Shida Kartli Province (capital: Gori).

Tbilisi is the capital of Georgia. It has a population of about 1.2 million inhabitants.



Administrative entities of Georgia

Source: <http://www.usaid.org/ge/tbilisi.shtml>

The lower administrative subdivisions consist of 63 districts, including those within the two autonomous entities Abkhazia and Ajaria, and seven cities. On 15 November 1998 and 2 June 2002, local elections were held in many parts of the country with candidates from the above-mentioned main political parties and political blocks.

Economic and Social Conditions

Georgia has benefited from decades of extensive Soviet industrialization. In addition, tourism and agriculture bolstered the national economy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a drastic decline in all production shook the country. Many former industries and agricultural facilities are no longer in operation. The lost Soviet markets and markets that were part of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (COMECON) in eastern Europe have never been regained. The focus of foreign trade has now begun to shift towards Turkey. The armed conflicts of the 1990s brought additional damages. Over the first post-Soviet years, GDP dropped far below the 50 per cent mark. Maladministration and corruption hamper economic reforms. Large parts of the national economy now belong to the grey market. The most important economic activities remain unrecorded. It is assumed that the grey economy's GDP share is sixty per cent or more of the total.

Thus, tax revenues are correspondingly minimal. The country's foreign debt capacity has reached its limits. In comparison to the hyperinflation of the early 1990s, the national currency, the *lari*, has now stabilized somewhat since the National Bank of Georgia (NBG) floated its exchange rate. On the other hand, widespread barter trade keeps the *lari* more or less out of the real economy thus limiting the influence the government's financial and monetary apparatus has on economic trends.

All over the country, infrastructures barely function. Electricity cut-offs are a daily occurrence even in Tbilisi. There have been times this has resulted in public unrest. Parts of the country have no electricity at all. The central heating systems in the cities do not operate. Water supply and wastewater treatment are desperately inadequate. The Russian Federation reacts to Georgia's inability to pay its debts by repeatedly stopping gas deliveries to the country. Transport and communication structures remain in poor condition. Mobile phones function only in and around the principal cities.

International organizations, like the World bank or the IMF, have reported some economic recovery since 1995. Nonetheless, this recovery is still at a very low level. Structurally, manufacturing companies have converted into small and medium enterprises. A privatization campaign has removed parts of the national property from direct governmental control. About half of all large-scale companies have been privatized. Strategic companies, especially defence industries, remain state-owned. Foreign investment is low because of the general lack of security and absence of financial incentives as well as corruption and maladministration, an unreliable judicial system, criminality, poor infrastructure etc. Georgia is considered a high-risk zone because of the latent threat that armed conflict may occur and the fact that hostage-taking is frequent.

The government cherishes special hopes of exploiting the country's natural resources. Georgia has deposits of oil, coal, peat, manganese, precious metals like gold and silver, copper, arsenic, lead and zinc ores, barite, bentonite, diatomite, calcite, andesite, zeolite, chalk, lime stones and dolomite. There are deposits of decorative stones like marble, basalt, tuff, diabase granite and gabbro. During Soviet times, these minerals were mined and a mining industry developed. But the early 1990s marked drastic cutbacks in all mining activities. Currently, the government wishes to revive the production of primarily oil, gas and a number of metals. The last two or three years have shown indications of a minor recovery. The Baku/Ceyhan oil pipeline project that will connect Azerbaijan with Turkey via Georgia is a priority issue on the economic agenda of the government.

In general terms, the country has largely been rediscovering its pre-Soviet family-based agricultural roots. Livestock breeding has begun to recover. Grain production is increasing slightly. Tea, hazelnut, citrus and wine production have been increasing but will require special external assistance for complete revitalization.

Over the last 12 years, Georgia's population has become dramatically impoverished. In 2001, the average monthly income amounted to be less than 20 US dollars. The minimum subsistence wage was estimated at between 50 and 60 USD. At present, monthly wages are generally below 50 USD. Large parts of the population live below the official poverty line. The poor have suffered disproportionately from the collapse in public spending on health and education, which has led to an increase in disabilities due to untreated health conditions and a decrease in the quality of education. Illiteracy is growing. Accumulated arrears in pensions and salaries aggravate these dire conditions and cause additional distrust in the government. Negative reverberations from the monetary crisis in Russia along with the drought in 2000 have made the situation even worse. To many, health care has become barely affordable. Poverty reduction measures have not proven very successful. On the other hand, some international organizations have already seen encouraging signs in the recent rehabilitation of approximately 400 social and economic facilities, such as schools, health facilities, cultural centres, water systems, irrigation systems, roads and bridges, which all together have provided approximately one million people with benefits. A social insurance model of health care financing is on the way to being implemented.

The country has immense post-industrialization environmental problems in terms of air and water pollution. While the dramatic decrease in industrial production has had a positive influence on the state of the environment, there is little awareness of environmental problems among politicians and the population.

Georgia**Basic Geographic, Social and Economic Indicators**

Population (2000):	5 million (estimated)
Surface area:	69.7 thousand square kilometres
Arable land (%):	9
Forests and wood land (%):	34
Land boundaries:	total: 1,461 km border countries: Armenia 164 km, Azerbaijan 322 km, Russia 723 km, Turkey 252 km
Climate:	warm and pleasant Mediterranean-like on Black Sea coast
Natural hazards:	Earthquakes
Geography note:	strategically located east of the Black Sea; Georgia controls much of the Caucasus Mountains and the routes through them
Population density (1999):	72.1 persons per square kilometres
Life expectancy (1999):	73 years
Population growth (annual):	negative
Fertility rate, total (births per woman):	1.1
Literacy (% , acc. to late-Soviet statistics):	99
Official unemployment rate (2000):	10.8 (general; registered: 5.9)
Population below national poverty line (% , 1997):	11.1
Internet hosts (per 10,000 people, 1999):	1.7
Ethnic groups (% acc. to 1989 Soviet Census):	Georgian (70.1), Armenian (8.1), Russian (6.3), Azeri (5.7), Ossetian (3), Abkhazian (1.8) other (5)
Languages (%):	Georgian (71; official language), Russian (9), Armenian (8), Azeri (6), other (6) Abkhazian is the official language in Abkhazia.
Religions (%):	Georgian Orthodox (60), Russian Orthodox (10), Muslim (11), Armenian Apostolic (8)
Major Cities:	Tbilisi (capital) Batumi, Chiatura, Gori, Kutaisi, Poti, Rustavi, Sukhumi, Zugdidi
Administrative units:	Autonomous Republic of Ajaria, Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, 9 regions plus Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia, status under discussion), 65 districts and 8 city units
GDP per capita (USD):	590
GDP at market prices (USD, 2001):	3,159 million
GDP per sector, value added (% of GDP, 2001):	Industry 17.1 Agriculture 19.7 Services 52.1
Exports of good and services (% of GDP, 2001):	22.0
Imports of good and services (% of GDP, 2001):	37.9
Industries:	steel, aircraft, machine tools, electric locomotives, trucks, tractors, textiles, shoes, chemicals, wood products, wine
Natural resources:	hydropower, manganese deposits, iron ore, copper, minor coal and oil deposits; forests, tea, citrus
Highest mountain:	Mt'a Mqinvarsveri (Kazbek; 5,048 m)

Sources:

1. CIA World Factbook Georgia (CIA) at: www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/;
2. Facts about Georgia (UNDP) at: www.undp.org/rbec/related/;
3. World Development Indicators database, July 2000 (The World Bank Group), at: www.worldbank.org

For further reading:

Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia, homepage: <http://www.patriarchate.ge/>
 Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development on various Georgian issues: www.cipdd.org
 Central Election Commission of Georgia: <http://www.cec.gov.ge>
 Civil Georgia On-line Magazine: <http://www.civil.ge/about.shtml>
 EBRD Georgia: <http://www.ebrd.org/country/index.htm>
 Energy Information Administration (US) on Georgian energy resources: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/caucasus.html#georgia>
 Ethnologue.com on languages in Georgia: http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Georgia
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 Georgian Ministry of Environment on Georgian natural resources: <http://www.bisnis.doc.gov/bisnis/country/020206ggnatrs.htm>
 Georgia Development Gateway with compilation of Georgia-related homepages: <http://georgia-gateway.org/index.php3?cid=330>
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 Georgian Orthodox Patriarchate, homepage: <http://www.orthodox-patriarchate-of-georgia.org.ge/indexe.htm>
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 Relief Web on various web resources on Georgia: <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/vBS?OpenView&StartKey=Georgia:+Government+and+Politics&ExpandView>
 Sacartvelo.com on Georgian history: <http://www.sakartvelo.com/Files/history.html>
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 US Department of State with International Religious Freedom Report 2002, Georgia: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/13937.htm>
 Worldbank Country Brief, Georgia: <http://www.worldbank.org/ge/eca/georgia.nsf/ECADocbyUnid/59F092065E1535F2C4256C3E004513E6?Opendocument>
 Worldbank on Georgia: <http://www.worldbank.org/ge/>
 World Legal Information Institute on Georgian legislation (compilation): <http://www.worldlii.org/catalog/50361.html>

Chapter Eight

OSCE Operations in the South Caucasus

This chapter gives an introduction to the main institutionalized OSCE operations in the South Caucasus. *First*, it highlights the so-called OSCE Minsk Process – an effort to intermediate in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This process includes the OSCE Minsk Group, the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and the OSCE High Level Planning Group. *Second*, the chapter highlights the activities of the OSCE Offices in Baku and Yerevan. Their activities are (only and intentionally) indirectly related to the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. They each have their national agendas. Along with the OSCE Mission to Georgia, they have set an example in OSCE regional networking. *Third*, the chapter provides a general idea about the activities of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. With references to OSCE web sources, it will offer information on these operations' mandates, tasks, staffing and financial frames. In addition, the mandate documents of these operations are reviewed in detail.

1. OSCE Activities Regarding the Conflict Dealt with by the Minsk Conference

Intended OSCE Minsk Conference

With the intensification of military operations between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh, the OSCE (then CSCE) commenced engagement in corresponding conflict mediation activities. The CSCE Ministerial Council (Helsinki, 24 March 1992) decided to start preparations for a Nagorno-Karabakh Conference. The intention was to make it a CSCE-hosted process of peace negotiations. The city of Minsk was chosen for the conference. Initially, it was expected to include eleven participants: Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Czech and Slovak Republic, Germany and Sweden (the CSCE Troika of that period), the host country, Belarus, and a limited number of interested states (France, Italy, Russian Federation, Turkey and the US). Steps were taken on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions 822, 853 and 874 (1993). However, this conference has yet to take place and the mediation process has moved in a different direction. Meanwhile, CSCE/OSCE involvement in attempting to settle the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been dubbed the Minsk Process.



OSCE Field Activities in the Caucasus

Source: OSCE at: http://www.osce.org/field_activities/caucasus-map.htm

The Minsk Process / Minsk Group

<i>Adjusted Timetable</i>	In 1992, an adjusted timetable proposed by the initial Minsk Process provided for measures like the withdrawal of troops from the occupied territories, the restoration of communications and transport, the exchange of hostages and prisoners of war, unimpeded access to the region for international humanitarian relief efforts and the establishment of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire to be monitored by the OSCE. There was no consensus reached on these proposals.
<i>Other Processes</i>	Noteworthy and surely contrary to its original objectives, the Minsk Process did not take the lead in international intermediation in the Karabakh conflict, as is evident by the examples of individual Russian and US initiatives. Both countries assumed different lines of negotiation. Even during the war, Russia had already developed its own diplomatic calendar. This was independent of the Minsk Process and led to an interim settlement. Later, the United States took the strategic initiative. On the other hand, Armenia and Azerbaijan also focussed on bilateral relations and utilized international fora outside the Minsk Process, each for its own purposes. Alongside the CSCE, the UN was also made stage of the Karabakh dispute.
<i>Russian-Brokered Ceasefire</i>	The Nagorno-Karabakh war was ended through Russian diplomatic efforts. Armenia and Azerbaijan accepted an informal ceasefire brokered by the Russian Federation on 12 May 1994, which has been in force since then. The ceasefire has led to a situation that is largely ascribed to being “no peace, no war”. There is no formal peace treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan. There is a <i>de facto</i> self-governing regime of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh which is Azeri perception Armenian occupation of their land. The status of Nagorno-Karabakh has not been settled. Also, Armenia still controls other Azeri territories. This is an additional point of contention between the Armenians and Azeri. The two armies are still positioned opposite one another along the so-called Line of Contact. The CSCE/OSCE has remained active in assisting in further talks on the conditions for peace.
<i>Minsk Process</i>	From 1994 on, the Minsk Process was headed by a Co-Chairmanship that initially was comprised of Russia and Sweden (Budapest Summit, 6 December 1994) and subsequently Russia and Finland. There were considerations for promoting peace building by deploying multinational peacekeeping forces. A High Level Planning Group (HLPG) was created to evaluate prospects for the operations involved. Meanwhile, these intentions and also the idea behind the Minsk Conference itself were obscured by ongoing bilateral and multilateral peace talks, which had by that time developed their own procedure and logic. (Reflections on implementing peacekeeping forces re-appeared briefly at certain points between 2000 and 2002. In addition, the mere existence of the HLPG is an indication these goals have not been forgotten.) Basic difficulties in the negotiation process arose because Azerbaijan refused to recognize Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh as being two different parties to the negotiations. Initially, it had been proposed that also elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh be invited to attend the proposed Minsk Conference. Now, the OSCE uses the collective term “parties to the conflict”. Negotiations are assisted on the bilateral level – between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh is briefed on these meetings.
<i>Minsk Group Troika</i>	In spring 1996, a troika consisting of France, Russia and the US replaced the Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship. Other members of the Minsk Group now include Belarus, Germany, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Turkey as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan. In May 1997, the troika developed a new negotiation strategy that requires postponing any decisions on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh until the return of occupied territories to Azerbaijan. The three Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group pay regular visits to the parties to the conflict. They brief the Chairman-in-Office and the other members of the Minsk Group.
<i>Negotiations</i>	Over the years, a number of individual talks have been conducted between Presidents Heydar Aliyev and Robert Kocharyan. These talks also included meetings that were hosted individually by the governments of the Minsk Group Troika. They are conducted behind closed doors and their results are not published. The crux of the negotiating process is that mediators have not been able to agree on regulations for the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. The creation of a corridor that would connect Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh is of vital importance to both parties. Regulations on issues like the armed forces’ withdrawal from occupied territory or the return of refugees to

their homelands would be derived from the issues mentioned before. A 1998 Minsk Group proposal provided for the establishment of a “common state”, which would have been a loose confederation between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. However, it did not find the approval of the parties to the conflict. Until now, there has been little willingness to making concessions. Apart from providing a platform for dialogue, the Minsk Process has so far not been able to develop feasible proposals to resolve the conflict.

For years, there has been ongoing competition over who will take the unilateral lead in the Minsk Process. Russia has had to give considerable leeway to the efforts of the United States. Talks in Key West led to some minor successes, but do not represent much progress and have placed Russia more or less on the sidelines. Thereafter, the incidents of 11 September 2001 and the US War against Terrorism created a worldwide change in political priorities that also affected the South Caucasus. Like Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have begun vying intensively to see which of them would be able to maintain the closest ties with the United States, which has clear implications for the Nagorno-Karabakh talks.

A potential breakthrough in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will depend more than before on whether the mediators demonstrate specific engagement than whether the parties to the conflict overcome their sensitivities towards one another. Some of the Minsk Group countries, especially the troika, but predominantly the United States, have become decisive actors in attempting to settle the conflict. In this context, recent developments have shown that prerequisites for peace may not necessarily be shaped entirely within the framework of the Minsk Process.

It is a general aim that the Minsk Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh remains on the OSCE agenda. The same participating States that are members of the Minsk Group would attend this conference, which would have to be headed by the three Co-Chairmen.

As a marginal note, the newest format of the Minsk Process is negotiations between the special representatives of the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Mr. Tatul Margaryan and Mr. Araz Azimov (both deputy foreign ministers of their countries) met each other for a first time in Prague in May 2002 in an effort to revitalize the peace dialogue.

Management and Budget

In 2003, the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group are: Ambassador Henri Jacolin (France), Ambassador Nikolai Gribkov (Russia) and Ambassador Rudolf Perina (US). In 2003, the budget of the Minsk Process was 999,300 euro.

The Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference

Foundation and Mandate

On 10 August 1995, a Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference was appointed. The duration of his mandate has no limitations. He is tasked with:

- representing the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in issues related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, assisting him in achieving an agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict and in creating conditions for the deployment of an OSCE peacekeeping operation, in order to facilitate a lasting comprehensive political settlement of the conflict in all its aspects;
- reporting on all aspects of his activities to the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, reporting through the Chairman-in-Office to the Co-Chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Conference and, as appropriate, to the Minsk Group, and receiving instructions from the Chairman-in-Office;
- assisting the Co-Chairmanship at its request;
- assisting the High Level Planning Group in planning an OSCE peacekeeping operation in accordance with the Budapest Summit Decisions;
- assisting the parties in implementing and developing confidence building, humanitarian and other measures facilitating the peace process, in particular by encouraging direct

contacts;

- co-operating, as appropriate, with representatives of the United Nations and other international organizations operating in the area of conflict.

Location, Staff, Budget The Personal Representative runs a head office in Tbilisi (Georgia) and three field offices in Baku, Yerevan and Stepanakert/Khankendi (the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh). A team of five field assistants rotates regularly between the four offices. In 2003, the budget for the Personal Representative and the field assistants is 1,000,800 euro.

Management Since January 1997, Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk of Poland has held the post of the Personal Representative. In Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh, the Personal Representative is a highly visible political institution. He participates in the political discussions with all parties to the conflict. He maintains personal contacts with all relevant political decision-makers from the presidential level down to the authorities of local self-government in communities near the border. Among the operational procedures of his work are also confidence-building meetings with the field commanders right at the Line of Contact.

The High Level Planning Group (HLPG)

Foundation and Mandate As mentioned, the High Level Planning Group (HLPG) was established in 1994. It is aimed at intensifying activities related to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Its open-ended mandate was adopted on 23 March 1995. The HLPG is tasked with:

- making recommendations for the Chairman-in-Office on developing as soon as possible a plan for the establishment, force structure requirements and operation of a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force;
- making recommendations on, *inter alia*, the size and characteristics of the force, command and control, logistics, allocation of units and resources, rules of engagement and arrangements with contributing States.

Location, Staff, Budget, Management The directives of successive Chairmen-in-Office have supplemented these tasks. The HLPG is based in Vienna. At present, the HLPG includes eight military and one non-military staff. Colonel Cornelis H. Blok of the Netherlands is currently the Head of the HLPG. In 2003, the HLPG budget is 211,900 euro.

2. The OSCE Offices in Baku and Yerevan

At the request of the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the OSCE has opened representations in both capitals. Their activities are not directly related to the task of conflict resolution or intermediation. On the contrary, there is a strict division of competencies between the OSCE offices and the Minsk Group. On the OSCE side, it is understood that the Minsk Group Troika and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office are the only responsible bodies conducting activities on the Nagorno-Karabakh issue. The offices in Baku and Yerevan have broad framework mandates that intentionally do not mention the conflict. Nonetheless, the mandates reflect the OSCE concept of comprehensive security building. Implicitly, they contain the obligation to contribute to security building through promoting democracy, developing a resolution-friendly public atmosphere, assisting in regional rapprochement and cross-border co-operation as well as economic and social consolidation.

For reasons of balance, the Offices in Baku and Yerevan have similar mandates. They are almost equally staffed and budgeted. Their working agendas are similar as well.

OSCE Office in Baku

Office Background The OSCE Office in Baku was established by OSCE Permanent Council (PC) Decision No. 318 of 16 November 1999. It became operational in July 2000 and has a staff of six

international members that are supported by a number of local experts and technical employees. Since December 2001, it has been run by Head of Office Ambassador Peter Burkhard of Switzerland. For 2003, the budget of the OSCE Office in Baku was established at 1,366,300 euro.

Mandate

The OSCE Office in Baku has a mandate with a one-year term that is prolonged yearly on the basis of the corresponding PC decisions. It comprises a broad range of tasks consisting of:

- promoting the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments as well as the co-operation of the Republic of Azerbaijan within the OSCE framework in all OSCE dimensions, including human, political, economic and environmental aspects of security and stability;
- facilitating contacts, co-ordinating activities and promoting information exchange with the Chairman-in-Office and other OSCE institutions, as well as co-operation with international organizations and institutions;
- establishing and maintaining contacts with local authorities, universities, research institutions and NGOs and assisting in arranging events with OSCE participation;
- performing other tasks deemed appropriate by the Chairman-in-Office or other OSCE institutions and agreed on between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the OSCE.

Structure and Fields of Activity

The Office in Baku is divided into four sections focussing on:

- *Political issues.* The office promotes legal stabilization. It makes political statements on security-relevant legal issues, such as election legislation or the media. It highlights security-relevant political subjects before government and society. It promotes cross-border rapprochement. It monitors the media situation in co-operation with local and international NGOs.
- *Economic and environmental issues.* The office puts emphasis on topics like good governance, security-related environmental issues (including water and energy), developments in non-oil related economic branches, rural development and small and medium enterprises. The UNECE Århus Convention is a special tool in its environmental activities.
- *Democratization issues.* The office has set priorities on elections, gender issues, national minorities, trafficking in human beings and migration.
- *Human rights issues.* The OSCE is engaged in enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights, human rights monitoring activities, torture prevention, humane treatment of detainees, as well as training police officers and civil society representatives. The office deals with individual complaints on human rights violations.

The office is not a funding or implementing organization. Nonetheless, its budget shows special allotments for various project work. The office co-operates with a broad range of international organizations, which are active in development co-operation, technical assistance, human rights implementation, humanitarian aid etc. Due to the similarity of their mandates and good prospects for mutual complementation, the office employs an expert seconded from the Council of Europe.

OSCE Office in Yerevan

Office Background

The OSCE Office in Yerevan was established by OSCE Permanent Council (PC) Decision No. 314 of 22 July 1999. It became operational in February 2000. It has a staff of six international members and eight local experts and technical employees. For 2003, the budget of the OSCE Office in Yerevan was established at 1,133,400 euro.

Mandate

The OSCE Office in Yerevan has a mandate with a one-year term that is prolonged yearly on the basis of the corresponding PC decisions. It comprises a broad range of tasks consisting of:

- promoting the implementation of OSCE principles and commitments as well as the co-operation of the Republic of Armenia within the OSCE framework in all OSCE

dimensions, including the human, political, economic and environmental aspects of security and stability;

- facilitating contacts, co-ordinating activities and promoting information exchange with the Chairman-in-Office and other OSCE institutions, as well as co-operation with international organizations and institutions;
- establishing and maintaining contacts with local authorities, universities, research institutions and NGOs and assisting in arranging events with OSCE participation;
- performing other tasks deemed appropriate by the Chairman-in-Office or other OSCE Institutions and agreed upon between the OSCE and the Government.

Structure and Fields of Activity

The office is divided into four sections focussing on:

- *Political issues.* The office focuses on anti-corruption, freedom of the media, elections, refugees and minority issues. It assists in drafting election legislation. It addresses minority and refugee problems. It co-ordinates the activities of the International Task Force on Combating Corruption and the International Working Group on Elections.
- *Economic and environmental issues.* The office promotes economic stabilization. It raises public and governmental awareness towards environmental security issues. The UNECE Århus Convention is a special tool in its environmental activities. The office pays attention to transboundary water projects. It also targets social issues.
- *Democratization issues.* The office gives priority to areas like supporting NGOs, gender issues, local self-government, trafficking in human beings, assistance to prisoners, army and police reform, population registration and youth issues.
- *Human rights issues.* The office is involved in promoting the protection of human rights. Specific issues include ombudsman legislation, freedom of religion, human rights education and individual complaints.

The office is not a funding or implementing organization. Nonetheless, its budget shows special allotments for various project work. The office co-operates with a broad range of international organizations, which are active in development co-operation, technical assistance, human rights implementation, humanitarian aid etc. Considering the similarity of their mandates and good prospects for mutual complementation, the office employs a Council of Europe desk with one seconded CoE expert and one locally hired assistant.

3. The OSCE Mission to Georgia

Mission Background

The OSCE Mission to Georgia was established to promote negotiations and a peaceful settlement of the armed conflicts within the country. It became operational in December 1992. Originally, the mission was mandated for a period of three months, but it now operates on the basis of half-year terms. The mission's headquarters is in Tbilisi. A branch office has been established in Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia. The mission runs four patrol bases which monitor the Georgian/Russian border. One or two OSCE officers are permanently staffed at the UN Human Rights Office in Abkhazia. The mission is active throughout the whole country.

Mandate

The Mission's original mandate was adopted on 13 December 1992. Over the years, its mandate, dimensions and size have been amended repeatedly. Initially, it had eight mission members. This number has increased to 76 international members who are assisted by a number of national experts and technical employees. In 2003, the mission budget was established at 22,070,300 euro. Since 2003, it is run by the Head of Office Ambassador Roy Reeve of the United Kingdom.

The mission's mandatory regulations are divided into the following priority areas.

In relation to the *Georgian/South Ossetian conflict*, the mission has been tasked with:

- facilitating the creation of a broader political framework, in which a lasting political settlement of the conflict can be achieved;
- intensifying discussions with all parties to the conflict, including the organization of

round tables, in order to identify and seek to eliminate sources of tension and extend political reconciliation throughout the area of conflict;

- making recommendations regarding the early convening of an international conference under OSCE auspices and with the participation of the United Nations, aimed at the resolution of the conflict, including the definition of the political status of Southern Ossetia;
- in pursuit of the monitoring role concerning the joint peacekeeping forces, establishing appropriate forms of contact with the military commanders of the forces within the overall context of the OSCE negotiating efforts, gathering information on the military situation, investigating violations of the existing ceasefire and calling local commanders' attention to the possible political implications of specific military actions;
- being actively involved in the reconvened Joint Control Commission in order to facilitate co-operation with and among the parties concerned;
- establishing contact with local authorities and representatives of the population and maintaining a visible OSCE presence throughout the area.

In relation to the *Georgian/Abkhazian conflict*, the mission has been tasked with:

- ensuring liaison with the United Nations operations in Abkhazia, in order to follow events closely and report regularly to the OSCE, *inter alia* with a view to facilitating the participation of the representative of the Chairman-in-Office, at the invitation of the United Nations, to the negotiations carried out under United Nations auspices. By doing so, the mission looks at ways of accommodating the aspirations of the Abkhazians while maintaining the territorial integrity of Georgia. By appointing an officer to the United Nations Human Rights Office established in Sukhumi, the OSCE has been able to play an active role in promoting compliance with human dimension standards in Abkhazia.

In relation to *cross-border Georgian/Chechen developments*, the mission has since 1999 been tasked with:

- observing and reporting on movement across the border between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. OSCE monitors are unarmed and have no enforcement responsibilities. The Georgian government provides guarantees for their security and freedom of movement. The monitors operate from three bases: Shatili, Girevi and Omalo. In December 2002, the border monitoring operation was expanded to the border between Georgia and the Ingush Republic of the Russian Federation. A base was established in Sno. In 2002, the OSCE Mission to Georgia with Russian participation monitored the Chechen population in the Georgian Pankisi Gorge.

In relation to *cross-border Georgian/Dagestan developments*, the mission has been mandated since January 2003 with:

- observing and reporting on movements across the border between Georgia and the Dagestan Republic of the Russian Federation.

In relation to *Georgia as a whole*, the mission has been the tasked with:

- promoting respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms and assisting in the development of legal and democratic institutions and processes, including providing advice on the elaboration of a new constitution, the implementation of a legislation on citizenship and the establishment of an independent judiciary as well as monitoring elections;
- co-ordinating these activities with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the ODIHR, and co-operating with the Council of Europe, also keeping in touch with other international organizations active in Georgia in this field.

4. Networking OSCE Operations in the South Caucasus Region

The four OSCE operations in the South Caucasus have taken initial steps to set up a regional network. The point of departure for co-operation has been to determine which

problems all three South Caucasus countries are facing at the moment. Similar patterns of economic, social and legal transition processes are visible throughout the region.

The activities of the OSCE Mission to Georgia and the two Offices in Baku and Yerevan complement the conflict mediation efforts being made through the Minsk Process. The field operations see promoting regional co-operation as tools of contributing to comprehensive conflict resolution in the largest sense. Activities oriented towards co-operation are intended to contribute to political peace-making endeavours significantly. Restoring regional co-operation is understood as being an instrument which would create fruitful grounds to re-establish a friendly neighbourhood in the region. In particular, reviving cross-border co-operation indicates public readiness to maintain peaceful relations.

Thus, in their host countries, OSCE field operations follow the objective of opening governmental and non-governmental doors to international organizations and foreign governments, which, in turn, are asked to finance and implement a part of the international development co-operation endeavours. Public awareness is raised on the prospects for economic recovery in the region. The OSCE operations in the South Caucasus consider it their task to serve as a connection between national and international institutions that are directly or indirectly supporting regional stabilization. They are prevailing upon the civil societies of the three South Caucasus countries to implement more and better security-building measures.

In this context, preference is being given to promoting trilateral rather than bilateral (direct) Azeri-Armenian co-operation. This relates to the diverse positions of the parties to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on bilateral co-operation, which in their understanding is leading either to conflict resolution (the Armenian view) or reinforcement of the post-war *status quo* and corresponding conflict aggravation (the Azeri view).

Accordingly, the OSCE has been attempting to promote Armenian/Azeri projects on a regional basis, i.e., also with Georgian participation. Especially in non-governmental, academic and media issues, cross-border interests are very visible and would be easy to develop in order to achieve regional rapprochement. OSCE schemes on good governance and environmental protection have yielded initial positive experiences.

The three OSCE missions to the South Caucasus countries support grass roots cross-border co-operation initiatives in the region. The districts of Marneuli (Georgia), Kazakh (Azerbaijan) and Tavoush (Armenia) in the triangle of the three South Caucasus countries have been selected to become pilot districts for the implementation of first practical steps. Within these districts, co-operation will be promoted on the level of partner communities (villages).

Over the last two years, the Heads of Mission/Offices as well as international experts from these operations have conducted regular meetings to plan the OSCE regional agenda. Nonetheless, OSCE co-operation at regional levels has thus far been rather sporadic.

For further reading:

OSCE in Armenia

<http://www.osce.org/yerevan/>

<http://www.osce.org/docs/english/pc/1999/decisions/pced314.pdf>

http://www.osce.org/documents/oy/2002/12/147_en.pdf

OSCE in Azerbaijan

<http://www.osce.org/baku>

<http://www.osce.org/docs/english/pc/1999/decisions/pced318.pdf>

<http://www.osce.org/publications/survey/survey20.htm>

OSCE in Georgia

<http://www.osce.org/georgia/>

<http://www.hdcentre.org/Resources/Documents/South%20Caucasus.pdf>

Nagorno-Karabakh issues

Azerbaijan International on Minsk process:

http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/karabakh_dussions/karabakh_greene.html

Centre for European Policy Studies with NK conflict resolution approach:

<http://www.ceps.be/Commentary/May01/Emerson.php>

Genocide.am on NK and OSCE: http://www.genocide.am/genocide/karabakh/nkr/kar_osce.htm

Harvard University on NK conflict resolution:

http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/news/opeds/2002/shaffer_conflict_solved_072602.htm

Int. Relations and Security Network with NK peace process web links (compilation):

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/infoservice/secwatch/index.cfm?Parent=2101>

NK MFA, home page: <http://nkr.am/eng/>

NK MFA on NK peace process: <http://nkr.am/eng/mid/process.htm>

OSCE on Minsk process: <http://www.osce.org/publications/survey/survey21.htm>

US Institute of Peace on NK peace process: http://www.usip.org/pubs/peaceworks/pwks25/chap2_25.html

Chapter Nine

UN, CIS and Joint Peacekeeping Operations in Georgia

This chapter gives an introduction to the main peacekeeping operations of the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Georgia. *First*, it provides an overview of the activities of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). *Second*, it highlights the activities of the Russian-led CIS Peacekeeping Forces (CIS PKF) in Abkhazia and the Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF) in South Ossetia. With reference to corresponding web sites, it examines the mandates, tasks and staffing of these operations.

1. The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)

Mission Background

Against the backdrop of the expanding military conflict in Abkhazia, the United Nations made the decision to engage in intermediation. In May 1993, the UN Secretary-General appointed a special envoy for Georgia. His first mission to the region reaffirmed that all parties supported an active United Nations role in reaching a peaceful resolution to the conflict. After the 27 July 1993 agreement between the government of Georgia and the Abkhaz authorities on re-establishing a ceasefire, the UN saw good reasons for sending the first international observers to the region. As a result, an advance team arrived in Abkhazia on 8 August 1993.

On 24 August 1993, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) was established (Security Council resolution 858 (1993)). Initially, the authorized strength of the Mission was 88 military observers. After 1994, it was increased to 136. At present, the staff totals 107 military observers, 90 international civilian personnel and 175 local civilian staff.

The mission has established its headquarters in Sukhumi. It runs two so-called sector headquarters in Gali (on the Abkhaz side) and Zugdidi (on the Georgian side), whose members are responsible for liaising with the Georgian local authorities. In Gali, the sector headquarters' responsibilities also include liaising with the local population, internally displaced persons, Abkhaz local authorities, local hospitals and CIS Peace Keeping Forces. A Mission Liaison Office has been established in Tbilisi. This is the political head office of the mission where the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), who is simultaneously Head of Mission, also has his or her duty station. With the expansion of the UNOMIG Mandate (UN Resolution 937 (1994) of 27 July 1994), UN military observers have also been tasked with monitoring the withdrawal of Georgian troops from the Kodori Valley to places beyond the Abkhaz-Georgian border and with patrolling the Kodori Valley regularly.

Currently, the SRSG and Head of Mission is Ms. Heidi Tagliavini of Switzerland. The Chief Military Observer is Major-General Kazi Ashfaq Ahmed of Bangladesh.

For the period of July 2002 / June 2003, the UNOMIG budget was 33.1 million US dollars. For the period of 1 July 2003 / 30 June 2004 it is 32.10 million US dollars.

Mandate Regulations

The original UNOMIG task was to verify that the Georgian government and the Abkhazian authorities were both complying with the ceasefire agreement of 27 July 1993. Special attention was to be given to the situation in the Abkhaz capital, Sukhumi. An additional responsibility was to investigate reported ceasefire violations and to attempt resolving such incidents with the parties involved.

The initial mandate of UNOMIG was invalidated when military operations were resumed. In September 1993, Abkhazian forces took Sukhumi and forced Georgian troops out of Abkhaz territory. UNOMIG was given an interim mandate based on Security Council resolution 881 (1993) of 4 November 1993. Its new task was to maintain contacts with both sides of the conflict and the Russian military contingent. In addition, UNOMIG was to monitor and report on the situation, with particular reference to developments relevant to United Nations efforts to promote a comprehensive political settlement.

After the Abkhaz-Georgian Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces of May 1994, the UNOMIG mandate was once again amended to be able to deal with the new situation. Based on Security Council resolution 937 (1994) of 27 July 1994, UNOMIG was tasked with:

- monitoring and verifying the implementation by the parties to the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces signed in Moscow on 14 May 1994;
- observing the operation of the Peacekeeping Force of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) within the framework of the implementation of the agreement;
- verifying, through observation and patrolling, that troops of the parties do not remain in or re-enter the security zone and that heavy military equipment does not remain or is not reintroduced in the security zone or the restricted weapons zone;
- monitoring the storage areas for heavy military equipment withdrawn from the security zone and the restricted weapons zone in co-operation with the CIS PKF as appropriate;
- monitoring the withdrawal of troops of the Republic of Georgia from the Kodori Valley to places beyond the boundaries of Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia;
- patrolling the Kodori Valley regularly;
- investigating, at the request of either party or the CIS PKF or on its own initiative, reported or alleged violations of the agreement and attempting to resolve or contribute to the resolution of such incidents;
- reporting regularly to the Secretary-General within its mandate, in particular on the implementation of the agreement, any violations and their investigation by UNOMIG, as well as other relevant developments;
- maintaining close contacts with both parties to the conflict and co-operating with the CIS PKF and, by its presence in the area, contributing to conditions conducive to the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons.

Human Rights Office in Abkhazia

On 10 December 1996, a United Nations Office for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Abkhazia, Georgia, was established (Security Council resolution 1077 (1996) of 22 October 1996). The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the OSCE Mission to Georgia staff this office jointly.

The Human Rights Office forms part of UNOMIG and reports to the High Commissioner for Human Rights through the UNOMIG Head of Mission.

A primary focus in the work of this office is facilitating the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons who wish to return to the Gali district in conditions of dignity, safety and security. In this context, the Secretary-General welcomed the co-operation extended by both sides in facilitating the November 2000 joint assessment mission to the Gali district, led by the head of the UN Human Rights Office. The absence of effective law enforcement and the persistently extreme economic hardship throughout the UNOMIG mandate area contributes additionally to the overall volatility of the situation.

UNOMIG Activities

UNOMIG carries out its mandate by executing daily ground patrols from its bases in Sukhumi, Gali and Zugdidi as well as through regular helicopter patrols. UNOMIG covers the entire area of responsibility with the exception of the upper Kodori Valley, where patrolling was temporarily suspended for security reasons.

The Chief Military Observer of the Mission chaired meetings of the Joint Fact-finding Group that had been established in January 2000. This group includes representatives of the CIS Peace Keeping Forces as well as the representatives from the Georgian and Abkhaz sides. UNOMIG runs an engineering and construction programme for supporting the Mission's operational needs. UNOMIG provides advice, good offices and logistical assistance for projects aimed at confidence building between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides. There is close co-operation between UNOMIG and the CIS PKF.

Even after the 1994 Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces, the situation in Abkhazia is still unresolved. It remains calm but vulnerable. A high crime rate and little deference for the law endanger the overall security situation. There have been repeated complaints by the civil populations on both sides that armed terrorist groups have been

intimidating them. The humanitarian and human rights situation in Abkhazia and Georgia remains complicated. There have been violations of the ceasefire and frequent restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNOMIG.

Thus, from August to October 2001, fighting resumed in the conflict zone between Abkhaz forces and irregular armed fighters created new difficulties for peacekeepers. UNOMIG established regular helicopter patrols over the Kodori Valley. On 8 October 2001, a UNOMIG helicopter was shot down at the entrance to the valley, some 20 kilometres from Sukhumi. Apparently, this was the most serious security incident in UNOMIG history.

The Kodori Valley remains a point of contention for both the Georgian and the Abkhaz sides. Abkhaz authorities fear the Kodori Valley could be used for Georgian military operations and have insisted that a CIS PKF checkpoint be established in the upper part of the valley. Georgian authorities have reiterated that their armed presence in the valley is of a defensive nature used to control the border.

In November 2001, the so-called *Boden Paper* (Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi, named after former UN Secretary-General Special Representative Ambassador Dieter Boden) was presented to serve as a basis for further negotiations with international involvement. This paper focuses, *inter alia*, on joint international peacekeeping efforts with a broad range of activities. Nonetheless, proposals such as establishing a joint OSCE/UN Office for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and a UN/OSCE Mission for Investigation in the Gali district were met with Abkhaz hesitation. This has had a direct effect on prospects for enlarging UNOMIG efforts.

Adjoining Political Activities

Over the years, the UN Secretary-General and his special envoys, with operational support from representatives of the Russian Federation, the OSCE and the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, have continued efforts to promote stabilization in Abkhazia. The main task of these activities is to contribute to a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict. This includes, first of all, the definition of the status of Abkhazia within the Republic of Georgia. The UN has insisted that the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Georgia must be respected. Furthermore, a safe and secure return of refugees and displaced persons to their previous areas of settlement in Abkhazia is to be guaranteed. Over the years, a number of meetings on confidence-building measures have been conducted under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. Moreover, the parties to the conflict adopted a Programme of Action at one of these meetings in March 2001 in Yalta (Ukraine). Nonetheless, up to now, there has been little substantial progress in resolving the issues. Negotiations on the Abkhaz conflict do not seem to be moving forward.

Furthermore, the UNOMIG has been addressing activities that are intermingled with the Abkhaz conflict like acts of violence, hostage-taking, a general rise in criminality and the activities of illegal armed groups, which have severely hindered peace endeavours.

2. The CIS Peacekeeping Forces (CIS PKF) and the Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPKF) in Georgia

In general, collective CIS peacekeeping engagements go back to the CIS Collective Security Treaty (1992), the Agreement on Military Observer Groups and Collective Peacekeeping Forces in the Commonwealth of Independent States (1992), the Agreement on Co-operation among CIS Member States to Ensure Stability on External Borders (1992) and the Concept for the Prevention and Settlement of Conflicts on the Territories of the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (1996).

In essence, the CIS member states were in agreement that Russia take a leading role in the settlement of conflicts throughout the CIS region. Nonetheless, the fact that they also paid special attention to international legal regulations as well as giving UN and OSCE peacekeeping activities a distinctive role makes it evident they wanted to counterbalance the danger of lasting Russian domination within the commonwealth. It is not an accident that there is an explicit requirement the UN Security Council authorize CIS peacekeeping operations.

In Georgia, CIS PKF are stationed in Abkhazia. Alongside this, Russia contributes to joint peacekeeping operations in South Ossetia.

***CIS PKF in
Abkhazia***

In the autumn of 1992, the Abkhaz-Georgian dispute over Abkhaz independence or autonomy had become a regular war. It led to a defeat for Georgia in September 1993 and was legally sealed when the Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces, which was intermediated by the UN and Russia, was signed in April 1994. Russia had achieved an agreement on the ceasefire and separation process which stipulated that the CIS peacekeeping force operate with UN authorisation. The mandate of the Russian forces was developed under consideration of the UN experience. A result of post-war regulations was the deployment of CIS PKF – the “Collective Forces for Maintaining Peace in the Zone of Conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia”. To some extent, these forces carry on the activities of the previous Russian military forces in the region. Their operations are based primarily on decisions made by the CIS Council of the Heads of States.

The CIS PKF were tasked with monitoring compliance of the April 1994 agreement along the Abkhaz-Georgian line of contact (Ingur River and Kodori Valley). It also had the task of monitoring the withdrawal of the armed forces of both conflict sides and disarmament procedures. It was to secure strategic facilities and communications as well as humanitarian aid shipments.

Three battalions were positioned on the territory of Abkhazia. One battalion was positioned inside Georgia. The commander and headquarters of the peacekeeping forces were situated in Sukhumi. The deputy commander was stationed in the Georgian regional centre of Zugdidi. The peacekeeping forces have been involved in an extensive operation to remove mines and allow the inhabitants of Abkhazia to resume agricultural activity. Moreover, they have assumed the responsibility of protecting the Inguri hydroelectric station which supplies energy to the region. The peacekeepers, however, have not succeeded in carrying out the most important task from the Georgian point of view, namely, securing the return of refugees.

The CIS PKF began operations at the same time the above-mentioned United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) was mandated to monitor the implementation of the April 1994 ceasefire agreement as well as observe the actions of the CIS PKF. As its observers are unarmed, UNOMIG regards joint patrols with the CIS PKF as a necessary prerequisite for conducting its own activities. In the end, the OSCE Mission to Georgia also became involved in the process of conflict resolution.

CIS operations were started in June 1994 with initially between 2,500 and 3,000 troops, composed mainly of Russian armed forces with support from a number of Tajik units. According to Russian sources, the number has now been reduced to some 500 troops. However, foreign sources state that there are around 1,700 Russian troops still stationed in Abkhazia.

A number of observers view the CIS PKF not only as a means of settling the Abkhaz conflict, but also as yet another means by which Russia is renewing its military presence in the country. They point to the direct link between the various armed conflicts in Georgia (including the one in Abkhazia), Russia's political interventions and military presences in the country and to the fact that after much resistance, Georgia finally agreed to join the CIS (October 1993). They regard these developments as Russian moves to urge Georgia back into to a closer bilateral relationship. The Russian-dominated CIS PKF may indeed have played and may still play a certain role in this game.

Due to these reservations, Georgian authorities were very sensitive about Russia lifting border controls on the Abkhazian-Russian border in 1999 and later introducing a visa regime for Georgian citizens. As a result, CIS PKF continue their activities along the (inner-Georgian) Abkhaz-Georgian buffer zone, but Russian border police have reduced controls along the Abkhazian-Russian border in the north. Unquestionably, this may be seen as an affront to Georgia's sovereignty and has implications for the reception of the CIS peacekeepers' roles and intentions.

In April 2002, the CIS PKF tried to establish a new base in the Kodori Valley without asking

for permission from Georgia. This resulted in severe criticism by Tbilisi.

**JPKF in
South
Ossetia**

The confrontation between South Ossetian supporters of independence (demanding unification with North Ossetia in the Russian Federation) and Georgian nationalist forces led to war in early 1991. Already at this stage, it was reported Russian troops were involved in the conflict.

In July 1992, a ceasefire was declared under Russian mediation. On the bilateral level, Georgia and Russia signed the "Agreement on the Principles of Regulating the Georgian-Ossetian Conflict" in 1992. Detailed ceasefire regulations provided for South Ossetian control over Java, Tskhinvali, Znauri and parts of the region of Akhagori, while Georgian authorities were guaranteed control over Akhagori and a number of Georgian exclave villages. Part of the agreement was the establishment of a Joint Peacekeeping Force (JPKF) consisting of Georgian, Russian and South Ossetian troops.

The JPKF initially totalled about 1,500 troops, but later these were reduced slightly. According to Russian sources, there are some 500 Russian troops in South Ossetia also including combatants from North Ossetia. The JPKF is not a CIS peacekeeping operation but simply a trilateral peace endeavour. As is the case with the CIS PKF, the Russian Federation dominates the JPKF politically as well as controls its command structures.

At the outset, the JPKF was mandated to create a buffer zone between South Ossetian and Georgian military forces separating the parties to the conflict. The JPKF was to ensure compliance with the ceasefire, the withdrawal of the armed forces, the break up of independent self-defence forces, as well as to guarantee security throughout the monitoring zone.

In the course of time, it expanded its activities to include policing and monitoring functions. It has attempted to curb the expansion of South Ossetia's shadow economy, where smuggling, robbery and kidnapping are rampant and have created new obstacles to a peace settlement. The JPKF monitors the ceasefire and maintains a rapid reaction force. Since December 1992, the CSCE/OSCE Mission to Georgia has been tasked with observing JPKF operations.

Since 1997, a UNHCR Mobile Team gives international assistance on humanitarian issues in South Ossetia. International efforts are complemented by a Joint Control Commission (JCC), which includes representatives from Georgia and Russia as well as South and North Ossetia.

For further reading:

UNOMIG

UN Human Rights Field Presence in Georgia-Abkhazia: <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/5/georgia.htm>

UNOMIG deployment map: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/dpko/unomig.pdf>

UNOMIG history: <http://www.unomig.org/unomig/role/role.asp>

UNOMIG in Gali sector: <http://www.unomig.org/unomigoperations/gali/gali.asp>

UNOMIG homepage: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unomig/index.html>

UNOMIG in Kodori valley: <http://www.unomig.org/unomigoperations/kodori/kodori.asp>

UNOMIG mandate: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unomig/mandate.html>

UNOMIG Sukhumi headquarters: <http://www.unomig.org/unomigoperations/sukhumi/sukhumi.asp>

UNOMIG in Zugdidi sector: <http://www.unomig.org/unomigoperations/zugdidi/zugdidi.asp>

CIS PKF / JPKF

CIS on the agendas of the summits of the CIS Heads of State: http://www.cis.minsk.by/english/meet_cis.htm

CIS on peacekeeping (in Russian language) http://www.cis.minsk.by/russian/cis_peace.htm

CIS Executive Committee home page: <http://www.cis.solo.by>

CIS Peacekeeping Forces http://www.cis.minsk.by/russian/cis_peace.htm

CIS Peacekeeping Forces: <http://www.ca-c.org/journal/eng-01-2001/05.malyshe.shtml>

Miscellaneous issues

Cornell Caspian Consulting on peacekeeping in the Caucasus etc.:

<http://www.cornellcaspien.com/sida/sida-cfl-2.html>

National Defence University (US) on CIS, CIS peacekeeping efforts etc.:

<http://isuisse.ifrance.com/emmaf2/peace/sproch4.html>

RAND (Research and Development) on Georgian-Abkhaz war and Russian peacekeeping:

<http://www.rand.org/publications/CF/CF129/CF-129.chapter5.html>

Chapter 10

Activities of Main International Organizations, Regional Inter-Governmental Associations and Governmental Development Agencies in the South Caucasus

The following chapter gives an overview of the history and activities of the main international organizations and governmental agencies that are active in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. The chapter is a compilation of information distributed by the organizations and agencies themselves, for the most part via internet. It mainly comprises direct quotes from their mission statements, mandates, websites, etc.

It was not possible to give a complete picture of international activities in the country in this chapter. Therefore, the authors of this Mission Information Package would appreciate any further additions and amendments to this chapter by the interested organizations.

Key background information on the various organizations is mainly given in the section on Armenia. For this reason, it is not repeated in the paragraphs on Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The following organizations and agencies are presented in alphabetical order.

1. Armenia

AI (Amnesty International)

Background Amnesty International is a worldwide campaigning movement that works to promote internationally recognized human rights. Amnesty International promotes the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. It engages in research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination.

Amnesty International was founded in 1961 and is a democratic movement, self-governed by a nine-member International Executive Committee (IEC) whose members are elected every two years by an International Council representing sections.

Main Intentions Amnesty International members, supporters and staff around the world mobilize public opinion to put pressure on and influence governments and others to stop human rights abuses. Activities range from public demonstrations to letter-writing, from human rights education to fund-raising concerts, from approaching the local authorities to lobbying intergovernmental organizations, from targeted appeals on behalf of a single individual to global campaigns on a specific country or issue.

AI Reports Since 1997, AI publishes Reports on Human Rights in Armenia.

In Armenia since 1997

Links <http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/countries/indx454.htm>

BSEC (Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation)

Background On 25 June 1992, the Heads of States or Governments of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine established the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation. In 1998, the BSEC Charter was adopted. BSEC headquarters are in Istanbul. The BSEC operates on intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary levels. BSEC member states co-operate in the spheres of commerce, banking, finance and science.

In Armenia 1999

since

Links <http://www.bsec.gov.tr/homepage.htm>

CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States)

Background

On 8 December 1991, the leaders of the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine signed an Agreement on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan and Ukraine joined the Agreement on 21 December 1991, followed by Georgia in December 1993. Thus, the CIS has 12 member states – all former Soviet Republics excluding the three Baltic countries. The CIS performs its activities on the basis of the Charter adopted by the Council of Heads of States on 22 January 1993. The CIS was formed on the principle of sovereign equality of all its members, and that the member states were independent and equal subjects of international law. The CIS aims its activities at goals such as:

- Further development and strengthening of relations of friendship;
- Good neighbourhood;
- Inter-ethnic accord;
- Trust and mutual understanding;
- Co-operation between states.

The CIS is not a state, but rather a loose coalition of its members. It does not have supranational powers. In September 1993, the heads of states signed a treaty on establishing an Economic Union, in which they developed the concept of transformation of economic interaction within the Commonwealth, taking into consideration the current realities. The treaty strives to form a common economic space based on the principles of:

- Free movement of goods, services, workers and capital;
- Elaboration of concerted money and credit, tax, price, customs and foreign economic policies;
- Rapprochement of the methods of management of economic activities, creation of favourable conditions for the development of direct production links.

The member countries' interaction within the CIS is accomplished through its coordinating institutions:

- Council of Heads of State;
- Council of Heads of Government;
- Councils of Foreign Ministers;
- Defence Ministers;
- Inter-Parliamentary Assembly;
- Executive Committee;
- Interstate Economic Committee of the Economic Union.

Armenia in 1991
CIS since

Links <http://www.cis.minsk.by/>

CoE (Council of Europe)

Background The Council of Europe was established on 5 May 1949 by Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In 1993, the CoE defined its new political priorities as protecting national minorities and combating all forms of racism, xenophobia and intolerance. The work of the CoE leads to the formulation of European conventions and agreements with the aim to harmonize national legislation throughout Europe. Some conventions and agreements are open for adoption by non-member states. Any European state can become a member of the Council of Europe provided it accepts the principle of the rule of law and guarantees human rights and fundamental freedoms to everyone under its jurisdiction. The Council of Europe has 45 member states.

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organization which aims to:

- protect human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;
- promote awareness and encourage the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity;
- seek solutions to problems facing European society (discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance, environmental protection, human cloning, AIDS, drugs, organized crime, etc.);
- help consolidate democratic stability in Europe by backing political, legislative and constitutional reform.

The CoE should not be confused with the European Union. The two organizations are quite distinct. The European Union states, however, are all members of the Council of Europe.

The CoE covers all major issues facing the European society other than defence. Its work programme includes the following fields of activity: human rights, media, legal co-operation, social cohesion, health, education, culture, heritage, sport, youth, local democracy and trans-boundary co-operation, the environment and regional planning.

Armenia in the CoE Armenia became a CoE member on 25 January 2001. The CoE ordinary budget for 2003 is 175,490,000 euro. The contribution of Armenia is 210,588 euro. Armenia ratified the European Convention on Human Rights on 26 April 2002.

In Armenia since 2001

Link <http://www.coe.int/>
http://www.coe.int/T/e/Communication_and_Research/Press/Countries_Info/e_ar.asp

Development Agencies of Foreign Countries

Along with [USAID](http://www.usaid.gov/) (US, see below and <http://www.usaid.gov/>) and [GTZ](http://www.gtz.de/) (Germany, see below, <http://www.gtz.de/>), the Department for International Development ([DFID](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/), UK, see below and <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/>) and the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency ([SIDA](http://www.sida.se/), see <http://www.sida.se/>) are probably the most visible foreign national development agencies active in Armenia. The Japanese International Co-operation Agency ([JICA](http://www.jica.go.jp/), see www.jica.go.jp/) appears to have interests in the country and the region. *Inter alia*, there are single activities conducted by Canadian organizations ([CIDA](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index-e.htm), see <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index-e.htm>), Denmark ([DRC](http://www.drc.dk/), see <http://www.drc.dk/>), Norway ([NRC](http://www.nrc.no/engindex.htm), see <http://www.nrc.no/engindex.htm>) and Switzerland ([DEZA](http://www.deza.ch/), see <http://www.deza.ch/>).

DFID (Department for International Development)

Background The Department for International Development (DFID) was established in 1997 as the successor to the Overseas Development Administration, previously part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

DFID is the UK Government department responsible for promoting sustainable development and reducing poverty. DFID policy is focussed on:

- Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger;
- Achieving universal primary education;
- Promoting gender equality and empower women;
- Reducing child mortality;
- Improving maternal health;
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
- Ensuring environmental sustainability;
- Developing a global partnership for development

The overall aim of DFID is to contribute to global poverty reduction and promote sustainable development. DFID seeks to maximize the impact of its work by co-operating with international organizations, bilateral agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

**DFID in
theSouth
Caucasus**

DFID focuses its efforts on countries that have demonstrated their commitments to economic and democratic reforms, and to address urgent social needs of the society. In the South Caucasus, DFID deepens its partnerships especially with Armenia and Georgia. DFID activities in Azerbaijan are so far limited. DFID focuses on technical co-operation. Activities have been spread over various areas of public sector reform, mainly in agriculture, health, financial services, energy, media, small and medium-sized enterprises, good government and the environment, and, more recently, strengthening civil society and statistical capacity.

Links

www.dfid.gov.uk/
http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Pubs/files/casiacaucasus_csp.pdf

EU (European Union)

Background The establishment of the European Union is the result of a long post-war development. It started in 1951 with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) founded by Belgium, West Germany, Luxembourg, France, Italy and the Netherlands. In 1957 followed the Treaties of Rome creating the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the European Economic Community (EEC). In 1967, the institutions of the above-mentioned three European communities were merged. Thus, a single Commission, a single Council of Ministers as well as the European Parliament were established. In 1979, first direct elections to the European Parliament were held. In 1992, the Treaty of Maastricht introduced new forms of co-operation between the member state governments - for example on defence, and in the area of "justice and home affairs". By adding this inter-governmental co-operation to the existing "Community" system, the Maastricht Treaty created the European Union (EU). Also in 1992, the EU decided to found the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The single currency - the euro - became a reality on 1 January 2002, when euro notes and coins replaced national currencies in twelve of the 15 countries of the European Union (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland).

The EU has grown in size with successive waves of accessions. Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined in 1973 followed by Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986 and Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995. The European Union is now preparing to welcome a further ten countries from eastern and southern Europe: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. These countries plan to join the EU in 2004. Bulgaria and Romania expect to follow a few years later and Turkey is also a candidate country. To ensure that the EU can continue functioning efficiently with 25 or more members, its decision-making system must be streamlined. That is why the Treaty of Nice lays down new rules governing the size of the EU institutions and the way they work. It came into force on 1 February 2003.

The European Union is an association of countries. The member States delegate sovereignty on certain matters to independent institutions, which represent the interests of the Union as a whole, its member countries and its citizens. The Commission traditionally upholds the interests of the Union as a whole, while each national government is represented within the Council, and citizens directly elect the European Parliament. Democracy and the rule of law are therefore the cornerstones of the structure. Two more institutions - the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors - and five other European bodies flank the "institutional triangle" of Commission, Council and Parliament. In addition, thirteen specialized agencies have been set up to handle technical, scientific and management tasks.

EU Activities in Armenia

A Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) with the EU was signed in April 1996, and entered into force on 1 July 1999. An Interim Agreement containing the trade and economic provisions of the PCA was signed in December 1996 and entered into force on 1 December 1997. The EU-Armenia Joint Committee conducts meetings annually. Main EU activities in Armenia are condensed in the Tacis framework programme, focussing, *inter alia*, on the following issues:

Providing policy advice and consultancy

A major Tacis project started early in 1998 to create an independent economic policy and legal advice centre, to help Armenia in meeting its PCA and WTO commitments. It has assisted the Armenian authorities in their negotiations on accession to the World Trade Organization, and will help in the implementation of the impending PCA. Tacis programmes in 1998 included projects on post-privatization, such as creating an Accountancy Training Centre, consultancy and in-house advice for companies, and developing support organizations so that entrepreneurs can exert influence on political decision makers.

Supporting the energy strategy and improving nuclear safety

The Tacis programme is one of the frameworks of EU activities in Armenia. It provides assistance in key areas such as the energy sector. It aims at restructuring, demonopolization and attracting foreign investments. Electricity sources have been developed to the level that Armenia is now exporting electricity. The Tacis strategy covers national energy security and diversification, decommissioning of the Medzamor nuclear power station, as well as structural reforms.

Supporting agricultural reforms

Enterprise support became vital in helping Armenia upgrade its agriculture after early privatization of land left it with many private farmers who need training and finance. The Agricultural Cooperative Bank of Armenia, set up by Tacis in 1996 in response to a direct request from the government for help in enterprise development, has continued to help increase arable land use with small-scale loans. In 1998, the bank started to broaden its financial services activity, opening more branches and offering new lending services.

Further Tacis projects include:

- Support for an inter-institutional education information system;
- The reform of the health system;
- Feasibility studies on exploiting minerals valuable in the construction sector (such as basalt and granite), with an investment plan to attract foreign investors;
- Assistance to the development of employment policies;
- Reform of public administration;
- Support for legal and judicial reform;
- Development of human resources.

Tacis interstate programmes such as TRACECA and INOGATE have built confidence and have promoted sustainable development across the Caucasus. In September 1998, Armenia's Prime Minister signed a Multilateral Transport Agreement supported by TRACECA at the Transport Summit in Baku. Armenia has also asked the EU to prepare a project to rehabilitate the railway between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In Armenia since

1996

Links

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/nis/tar98/armenia.htm
<http://europa.eu.int/>
http://europa.eu.int/abc/index_en.htm

EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development)

Background The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development was established in 1991. The EBRD uses its tools of investment to help building market economies and democracies in 27 countries from Central Europe to Central Asia. As important investor, the EBRD mobilizes significant foreign direct investment beyond its own financing. It invests mainly in private enterprises, usually together with its commercial partners. It provides project financing for banks, industries and businesses for both new ventures and existing companies. It also works with publicly owned companies to support privatization, the restructuring of state-owned firms and the improvement of municipal services. The Bank uses its close relationship with governments in the region to promote policies that will bolster the business environment. The mandate of the EBRD stipulates that it shall only work in countries that are committed to democratic principles. Respect for the environment is part of the strong corporate governance attached to all EBRD investments.

**EBRD
Activities in
Armenia**

EBRD priorities include:

- Institutional strengthening of the telecommunications sector;
- Restructuring the energy sector project portfolio;
- Developing the financial sector;
- Strengthening and financing local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- Identifying investments that will facilitate the privatization of large enterprises;
- Supporting legislative measures that are intended to encourage and facilitate the creation of an improved legal environment for the conduct of commercial transactions, especially facilitating foreign direct investment.

**In Armenia
Since** 1996

Links

<http://www.ebrd.com/>
<http://www.bisnis.doc.gov/bisnis/country/020802EBRDArmenia.htm>

GTZ (German Society for Technical Co-operation)

Background German technical assistance is represented in the South Caucasus mainly by the German Society for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) and activities of the German Development Bank (KfW). Efforts are co-ordinated with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ). GTZ projects include support for elaboration and implementation of legislation, capacity-building within the health system, democratization, development of the education sector, development and rehabilitation of power and water supplies, road repair and maintenance, solid waste disposal, housing rehabilitation, and measures to promote economic activity in sectors other than agriculture and employment.

In 2001, the German Government launched the South Caucasus Initiative aiming to support conflict-prevention by focusing on democratization and economic stabilization. The main goals of the South Caucasus Initiative are:

- Establishment and implementation of a legal systems and strengthening democracy;
- Development of energy sector;
- Support of micro-entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- Support of health sector;
- Support of the preservation of biological reserves.

Links

<http://www.gtz.de>
<http://www.kfw.de/DE/Service/OnlineBibl48/Entwicklun38/Lnderinfos.jsp>
<http://www.deutschebotschaft-eriwan.am/de/wirtschaft/zusammenarbeit/kaukasus.pdf>
<http://www.dse.de/entwick.htm>

IFES (International Foundation for Election Systems)

Background By providing expert technical assistance in all areas of election administration and election management, the International Foundation for Election Systems works to encourage national and international democracy. Since 1987, IFES has supplied world governments with election observation and analysis and has developed into one of the world's leading centres of election information and resources. In addition to election monitoring, IFES seeks to bolster democracy by developing programmes that strengthen rule of law, good governance and civil society. IFES is dedicated to the success of democracy worldwide and the prospect that each person in every corner of the world is entitled to have a free and informed say in how he or she is governed. A non-profit NGO, IFES has been part of the electoral process in over 100 countries, lending its expertise to supporting democracy.

IFES in Armenia IFES in Armenia is committed to the success of a vibrant and effective civil society. IFES believes that fair and free elections, good governance, rule of law and civic awareness and participation are necessary components of a flourishing, stable and prosperous democracy. IFES in Armenia provides non-partisan, locally defined, technical assistance and information to the Armenian population and institutions for the development of civil society and democracy. IFES is implementing a major democracy strengthening and civic education project to empower the citizens of Armenia.

In Armenia Since 1996

Links <http://www.ifes.am/>
<http://www.ifes.org>

IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross)

Background Established in 1863, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was one of the founders of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in general.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian organization, providing assistance without discriminating against nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. Founded in 1919, the International Federation is comprised of 178 member Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, a Secretariat in Geneva and more than 60 delegations strategically located to support activities around the world. Initially founded as the League of Red Cross Societies, the organization was renamed in October 1983 the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and in November 1991 the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Main Purposes The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and co-ordinates the international relief activities conducted by the organization in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters, and combines this with development work to strengthen the capacities of its member National Societies. The Federation's work focuses on four core areas: promoting humanitarian values, disaster response, disaster preparedness, and health and community care.

**ICRC / IFRC
in Armenia**

The ICRC started operating in Armenia – as well as in Azerbaijan – in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 1992. It addresses the missing persons' issue and the problems of people affected by the conflict, as well as vulnerable detainees. ICRC supports authorities in bringing the spread of tuberculosis in prisons under control. It also promotes the national implementation of international health legislation. It gives support in training armed and security forces and developing university and school curricula. In Nagorno-Karabakh, ICRC supports primary health-care services.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) opened its Delegation in Armenia immediately after the devastating earthquake in December 1988 for providing assistance to disaster victims. In this period, IFRC has implemented humanitarian assistance programmes valued at about USD 260 million, assisting vulnerable people in different areas such as rehabilitation, food and medical supply and social services. In recent years, the International Federation has focused its assistance on strengthening the Armenian Red Cross Society's capacity to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity.

At present, the IFRC works mainly in disaster response, disaster preparedness, health and care, promotion of humanitarian values, organizational development and regional co-operation. It acts with the support of the Red Cross and other donors including Armenian Diaspora organizations.

**In Armenia
since**

1988 (IFRC)
1992 (ICRC)

Links

<http://www.icrc.org/>
<http://www.ifrc.org/>
<http://www.armeniadiaspora.com/projects/noncom/Redcross.html>
<http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2003/ifrc/ifrc-arm-30jun.pdf>

ILO (International Labour Organization)**Background**

The International Labour Organization is the oldest specialized agency of the United Nations System. Born in 1919 as an outgrowth of the social thought of the 19th century, it has a unique tripartite structure, bringing together governments, employers and trade unions of 175 member States. Today, the ILO is focussing on four strategic objectives: Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, Employment, Social Protection and Social Dialogue. Decent work for all is at the heart of its action. ILO values are based on the fundamental principles embodied in the ILO Constitution and its annex, the Declaration of Philadelphia. The Declaration anticipated and set a pattern for the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus, the ILO is an international organization aiming to implement fundamental goals such as employment, freedom of expression and of association, poverty reduction, equal status of workers, employers and governments and common welfare.

Main tasks The ILO promotes:

- Full employment and increasing standards of living;
- The employment of workers in the occupations in which they can have the satisfaction of giving the fullest measure of their skill and attainments and make their greatest contribution to the common well-being;
- The provision, as a means to the attainment of this end and under adequate guarantees for all concerned, of facilities for training and the transfer of labour, including migration for employment and settlement;
- Policies in regard to wages and earnings, hours and other conditions of work calculated to ensure a just share of the fruits of progress to all, and a minimum living wage to all employed and in need of such protection;
- The effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the co-operation of management and labour in the continuous improvement of productive efficiency, and the collaboration of workers and employers in the preparation and application of social and economic measures;
- The extension of social security measures to provide a basic income to all in need of such protection and comprehensive medical care;
- Adequate protection for the life and health of workers in all occupations;
- Provision for child welfare and maternity protection;
- The provision of adequate nutrition, housing and facilities for recreation and culture;
- The assurance of equality of educational and vocational opportunity.

In Armenia since 1992

Links <http://www.ilo.org>
<http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/appl-byCtry.cfm?lang=EN&CTYCHOICE=0030>

IMF (International Monetary Fund)

Background The IMF is an international organization of 184 member countries. It was established to promote international monetary co-operation, exchange stability, and orderly exchange arrangements; to foster economic growth and high levels of employment; and to provide temporary financial assistance to countries to help ease balance of payments adjustment. Since the IMF was established, its purposes have remained unchanged, but its operations – which involve surveillance, financial assistance, and technical assistance – have developed to meet the changing needs of its member countries in an evolving world economy.

Main goals The main goals of the International Monetary Fund are to:

- promote international monetary co-operation through a permanent institution which provides the machinery for consultation and collaboration on international monetary problems;
- facilitate the expansion and balanced growth of international trade, and to contribute thereby to the promotion and maintenance of high levels of employment and real income, and to the development of the productive resources of all members as primary objectives of economic policy;
- promote exchange stability, to maintain orderly exchange arrangements among members, and to avoid competitive exchange depreciation;
- assist in the establishment of a multilateral system of payments in respect of current transactions between members and in the elimination of foreign exchange restrictions, which hamper the growth of world trade;
- give confidence to members by making the general resources of the Fund temporarily available to them under adequate safeguards, thus providing them with the opportunity to correct maladjustments in their balance of payments without resorting to measures destructive to national or international prosperity;
- in accordance with the above, to shorten the duration and lessen the degree of imbalances in the international balances of payments of members.

**Main
Activities in
Armenia**

The IMF together with the World Bank have been partners of the Government of Armenia since the beginning of the post-Soviet reform process. The government's programme of stabilization and structural reform was supported in December 1994 by a first purchase under the Systemic Transformation Facility (STF), coinciding with a Rehabilitation Credit from the World Bank.

Considerable progress has been made in the compilation and reporting of statistical data with the help of IMF and World Bank technical assistance in the areas of monetary, fiscal, balance of payments and price statistics; and in national account statistics, with OECD assistance.

The IMF and the World Bank will be providing the Armenian authorities with technical assistance in a number of areas. The IMF has assigned a resident advisor to assist the authorities with setting up a treasury. Both the IMF and the World Bank plan to provide assistance with tax administration, in particular, with respect to customs administration and electronic data processing of tax information. UNCTAD will also provide assistance with customs administration, and the U.S. Treasury is prepared to provide assistance with training of auditors in co-ordination with the IMF. Both the IMF and the World Bank have promised to provide technical assistance in developing a legal framework compatible with a market economy.

**In Armenia
since**

1994

Links

<http://www.imf>
<http://www.imf.org/external/country/arm/>
http://www.imf.org/external/np/pfp/arme/arme-01.htm#

IOM (International Organization for Migration)

Background

Established in 1951 as an intergovernmental organization to resettle European displaced persons, refugees and migrants, IOM has now grown to encompass a variety of migration management activities throughout the world.

**Main
Commitment
s**

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As the leading international organization for migration, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to:

- Assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management;
- Advance understanding of migration issues;
- Encourage social and economic development through migration; and
- Uphold the human dignity and well being of migrants.

With offices and operations on every continent, IOM helps governments and civil society through:

- Rapid humanitarian responses to sudden migration flows;
- Post-emergency return and reintegration programmes;
- Assistance to migrants on their way to new homes and lives;
- Facilitation of labour migration;
- Assisted voluntary return for irregular migrants;
- Recruitment of highly qualified nationals for return to their countries of origin;
- Aid to migrants in distress;
- Training and capacity-building of officials;
- Measures to counter trafficking in persons;
- Migration medical and public health programmes;
- Mass information and education on migration; and
- Research related to migration management and other services for migrants.

IOM in Armenia

IOM activities in Armenia are conceived as part of the IOM Caucasus strategy with similar programmes in Azerbaijan and Georgia. IOM plans and activities in the three countries are co-ordinated, and cross-border networking and dialogue among project partners and the IOM staff is promoted.

Since 1996, IOM and the Government of Armenia have been working together in the framework of IOM's Capacity-Building in Migration Management Programme (CBMMP) to establish a unified system and the operational capacity for the management of migration processes in Armenia. In the absence of an identified state migration entity, the CBMMP provided a rudder for guiding the development of the migration management structure by facilitating the decision-making process, preparing and gathering support documents for government review, drafting laws, and training staff on migration related issues. With the 1999 decision of the Government of Armenia to create a state migration and refugee entity, IOM is facilitating efforts to define and delineate the functions of this new entity.

The CBMMP has laid much of the groundwork to establish a unified system and corresponding operational capacity for the management of migration processes and migration flows in the Republic of Armenia that includes:

- Establishing an initial overall migration policy of the Government of the Republic of Armenia;
- Establishing the administrative structures necessary for the effective implementation of migration policies;
- Strengthening the legislative basis for the management of migration processes in the Republic of Armenia.

In Armenia since

1996

Links

<http://www.iom.int/>
<http://www.iom.int/austria/tcc/htmlfiles/Armenia.htm>

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation)**Background**

The North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington on 4 April 1949, creating an alliance of 12 independent nations committed to each other's defence. Four more European countries later acceded to the Treaty between 1952 and 1982. On 12 March 1999, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland joined the Alliance, which now numbers 19 members.

The North Atlantic Treaty aims to guarantee the security of its member countries. Today, following the end of the Cold War and the division of Europe, the Alliance has been restructured to enable it to contribute more effectively to the development of co-operative security structures for the whole of Europe. It has also transformed its political and military structures in order to adapt them to peacekeeping and crisis management tasks undertaken in co-operation with countries, which are not members of the Alliance, and with other international organizations.

**Armenian
Mission to
NATO**

In 1994, Armenia signed a Framework Document and the Invitation Document of the NATO Partnership for Peace Program (PfP). Armenia is one of the 46 PfP members. Armenia is also one of the founding members of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) which was established in 1997. An Armenian Mission to NATO was set up in 1997.

Partnership with NATO within the framework of the EAPC and PfP is one of the priorities of Armenian foreign policy. Co-operation is mainly focused on the following areas:

- Civil emergency planning;
- Defence policy and strategy;
- Planning, organization and management of national defence research and technology;
- Global humanitarian mine action;
- Language training;
- Small arms and light weapons;
- Conceptual, planning and operational aspects of peacekeeping;
- Military exercises;
- Military education, training and doctrine.

**Armenian
Co-operation
since**

1994

Links

<http://www.nato.int>
<http://web.wanadoo.be/armembel/natoabout.htm>

OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe)

Background

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was established in 1995. It is an organization established as a result of the CSCE process. It has 55 participating States. Its headquarters are in Vienna. As a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in Europe, the OSCE plays a role in stable, peaceful, democratic and self-sustaining development in a region reaching from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

The main activities of the OSCE in the South Caucasus are shown in Chapter Eight of this Mission Information Package.

**OSCE in
Armenia**

The OSCE Office in Yerevan was established on 22 July 1999. It started full operations on 9 February 2000.

In detail, the activities of the OSCE Office in Yerevan and other OSCE activities affecting the country are shown in Chapter Eight of this Mission Information Package.

**In Armenia
since**

1999

Links

<http://www.osce.org/>
<http://www.osce.org/yerevan/>

TI (Transparency International)

Background **Transparency International** is an international non-governmental organization leading a global anti-corruption movement. Through its national chapters, the Berlin-based TI Secretariat co-ordinates anti-corruption activities in more than 90 countries. The chapters are independent local NGOs that are free to choose their own policies and raise funds for their activities. TI brings civil society members, business circles and governments together in a global coalition to make public administration transparent and democratic. Tools of TI policy implementation are:

- the establishment of national, regional and global coalitions embracing the state, civil society and the private sector, in order to fight domestic and international corruption;
- the establishment of and co-operation between National TI Chapters;
- assistance in designing and implementing effective integrity systems;
- the collection, analysis and dissemination of information for raising public awareness on the damaging impact of corruption (especially in low-income countries) on human and economic development.

TI in Armenia The Centre for Regional Development/Transparency International Armenia (CRD/TI Armenia) is a non-governmental organization that focuses on promoting an accountable and transparent governance system, increasing public awareness on reform processes and encouraging civil society participation in policy decision-making. The activities of the organization are being implemented through close co-operation with other NGOs, government institutions and the international community both in Armenia and the region.

CRD was established in July 2000. Since November 2000, it has been officially recognized as TI contact/partner organization in Armenia. In May 2001, CRD was given the status of a Chapter in Formation, and in October 2001 it became a fully fledged National Chapter of TI. The mission of CRD/TI Armenia is to promote good governance and prevent corruption.

CRD/TI Armenia activities include the following projects:

- Promoting Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making in Yerevan City;
- Improvement of Legislation on Environmental Assessment in Armenia;
- Expenditure Tracking and Performance Monitoring in Schools of Shirak Marz of Armenia;
- Monitoring of Parties' Campaign Finances during the 2003 Parliamentary Elections;
- National Integrity System Assessment;
- National Anti-Corruption Resource Center;
- Production of Anti-Corruption Films;
- Who is Who in the Environment in Armenia;
- Country Corruption Assessment: Public Opinion Survey;
- Translation and Adaptation of Selected Chapters from the TI Source Book;
- TI Regional Workshop "South Caucasus Cooperation in Combating Corruption";
- Promoting Transparency at Regional Customs.

Links

<http://www.transparency.am/Website/ws/default.htm>
<http://www.corisweb.org/article/articlestatic/47/1/189/>

UN (United Nations)

Background The United Nations was established on 24 October 1945 by 51 countries committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security. Today, 191 countries are members of the UN. According to the UN Charter, the UN has the following four key purposes:

- Maintaining international peace and security;
- Developing friendly relations among nations;
- Co-operating in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights;
- Being a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

The UN has six main organs. Five of them – the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Secretariat – are based at the UN Headquarters in New York. The sixth, the International Court of Justice, is located at The Hague. The [International Monetary Fund](#), the [World Bank](#) and 12 other independent organizations known as “specialized agencies” are linked to the UN through co-operative agreements. These agencies, among them, the [World Health Organization](#) and the [International Civil Aviation Organization](#), are autonomous bodies created by intergovernmental agreements. They have wide-ranging international responsibilities in the economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related fields. Some of them, like the [International Labour Organization](#) and the [Universal Postal Union](#), are older than the UN itself. In addition, a number of UN offices, programmes and funds – such as the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)) and the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) – work to improve the economic and social condition of people around the world. They report to the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council. All these organizations have their own governing bodies, budgets and secretariats. Together with the United Nations, they are known as the UN family, or the [UN system](#). Together, they provide technical assistance and other forms of practical help in virtually all economic and social areas.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)

Background The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's principal provider of development advice, advocacy and grant support. It has long enjoyed the trust and confidence of governments and NGOs in many parts of the developing and developed world. Its commitment to a universal presence has proven especially useful in post-conflict situations and with states that had been otherwise isolated from the international community. UNDP delivers most of its services through its 131 country offices, but it also engages in global and regional advocacy and analysis to increase knowledge, share best practices, build partnerships, mobilize resources, and promote enabling frameworks, including international targets for reducing poverty. In addition, UNDP supports Technical Co-operation Among Developing Countries. At the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, world leaders pledged to cut poverty in half by 2015. UNDP is charged with helping to make this happen. Its focus is on providing developing countries with knowledge-based consulting services, and building national, regional and global coalitions for change.

Priority areas UNDP works within the following priority areas:

- Democratic Governance;
- Poverty Reduction;
- Crisis Prevention and Recovery;
- Energy and Environment;
- Information and Communications Technology;
- HIV/AIDS;
- South-South co-operation; and
- Empowerment of women.

UNDP in Armenia

UNDP is a main development agency in Armenia. It covers the following key programme areas:

- Democratic Governance – capacity-building for democratic governance, decentralization, human rights;
- Poverty - poverty reduction strategy, monitoring and analysis;
- Post-Crisis Activities - crisis prevention and recovery, rehabilitation, disaster management;
- Environment - environment and energy, global environmental facility;
- ICT - information and communication technologies for democratic governance;
- HIV/AIDS - national strategies, policies and practices for prevention of HIV/AIDS.

The UNDP-Armenia Partnership Programme for the period of 2002 – 2005 is focussing on the following key areas:

- Democratic Governance;
- Socio-Economic Governance and Poverty Reduction;
- Environmental Governance;
- Information and Communication Technologies;
- Disaster Management;
- HIV/AIDS.

In Armenia since 1996

Links

<http://www.undp.am/>
<http://www.undpi.am/new/page2.html>
<http://www.un.int/armenia/>

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

Background

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was established in 1945. It has its headquarters in Paris and runs 73 field offices and units around the world. At present, it has 188 Member States.

Main Objectives

The main objective of UNESCO is to contribute to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communication in order to further universal respect for justice, the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed, by the Charter of the United Nations, for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion.

UNESCO acts through the establishment of international standards: conventions, agreements, recommendations, declarations; conferences and meetings; studies and research; publications – books, periodicals, reports and documents; technical and advisory services to Member States – staff missions, consultants, supplies and equipment; training courses, seminars and workshops; subventions to NGOs; financial contributions as well as fellowships, study grants and travel grants.

Co-operation with UNESCO

The Republic of Armenia became a member state of UNESCO on 9 July 1992. In October 1992, the National Assembly committed the Foreign Ministry to establish the National Commission for UNESCO and to elaborate its Statutes. In fact, the Armenian National Commission for UNESCO began its work in 1993 and since that time has implemented about 50 different projects in the fields of education, culture, science, communication, i.e., in the fields covered by UNESCO mandate.

In Armenia since 1992

Links

<http://www.unesco.am/>
<http://www.unesco.am/about/history.htm>

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

Background The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established on 14 December 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. The agency is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state, with the option of returning home voluntarily, integrating locally or resettling in a third country.

UNHCR work is based on the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention. The Convention spells out who is a refugee and the kind of legal protection, other assistance and social rights he or she should receive from states that are a party to the document. Equally, it defines a refugee's obligations to host governments and certain categories of persons, such as war criminals, who do not qualify for refugee status.

Main Activities in Armenia

The overall strategy of UNHCR Armenia for 1998 is the following:

- Facilitating and assisting the relevant government bodies in the drafting and adoption of refugee legislation;
- Promoting and facilitating the application of legislation on citizenship;
- Enhancing public awareness on the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers;
- Establishing a joint Government/UNHCR framework for legal counselling, psycho-social support and assistance to extremely vulnerable cases;
- Monitoring the progress in the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process with a view to drawing up a contingency plan for the assistance of refugees from conflict areas;
- Strengthening the capacity of national institutions through the gradual transfer of responsibilities in the assistance programme to the relevant local institutions.

UNHCR stated that local integration is the only durable solution for the majority of ethnic Armenian refugees and, hence, UNHCR assistance programme are to be aimed at facilitating integration processes. UNHCR assistance targets the following areas:

- Shelter and infrastructure;
- Health care;
- Education;
- Income generation;
- Community development.

In Armenia since 1998

Links <http://www.cidi.org/humanitarian/hsr/97a/0015.html>

UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)

Background UNICEF was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 to help children after World War II in Europe.

UNICEF helps children get the care and stimulation they need in the early years of life and encourages families to educate girls as well as boys. It strives to reduce childhood death and illness and to protect children in the midst of war and natural disaster. UNICEF supports young people, wherever they are, in making informed decisions about their own lives, and strives to build a world in which all children live in dignity and security.

Main tasks UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children. The organization insists that the survival, protection and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress.

UNICEF mobilizes political will and material resources to help countries, particularly developing countries, ensure a "first call for children" and build their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families. The organization is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children – victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation and those with disabilities.

Main Activities in Armenia An assistant representative, subordinate to the Tbilisi regional office, heads the UNICEF office in Armenia. UNICEF activities in Armenia focus on:

- Assistance in Education;
- Assistance in Public Health;
- Information on Children's Social Status in Armenia;
- Promotion of Youth and Child Participation;
- Protection of Children's Rights;
- Support to Children in Need of Special Protection.

In Armenia since 1993

Links <http://www.spyur.am/unicef.htm>
http://www.undp.am/archive/gender/UN/undp/WSR/Chapter_4/4_4.htm

USAID (U. S. Agency for International Development)

Background USAID is responsible for the administration and management of the official US bilateral foreign assistance programme. USAID has a total annual budget of approximately 6 billion USD and has programmes in over 75 countries in Europe, Asia, the Near East, Latin America and Africa. Main USAID goals are to promote broad-based economic growth, protect human health, encourage sound environmental management and provide emergency humanitarian assistance to countries in transition. The Agency works in partnership with host governments, other U.S. government agencies, other international donors, U.S. and local businesses and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

**USAID
Objectives in
Armenia**

USAID is a main development agency in the country. The strategic objectives of USAID in Armenia focus on helping the country to establish a vibrant market economy within a democratic society, while easing the impact of this transition on its populace. In particular, USAID assistance focuses on:

- Economic restructuring and private sector development;
- Restructuring and reform of the energy sector to promote economic and environmental efficiency;
- Improving water quality and water management; strengthening democratic governance;
- Improving social welfare and health systems;
- Facilitating recovery from the 1988 earthquake in Lori and Shirak provinces, including improving housing opportunities for families still living in temporary shelters.

USAID also has a special cross-cutting objective that supports efforts under the other six objectives, including enhancing the regional dialogue on water management issues, promoting small business development, good governance and strengthened civil society, and improving media and communications capacity.

In 2002, USAID efforts in the economic sector were:

- Improving the tax, fiscal and customs systems;
- Improving the legal and regulatory environment for trade investment and economic growth;
- Reforming and developing Armenia's accounting and auditing infrastructure.

USAID will also increase access to financial capital through:

- Capital markets development; improving bank supervision;
- Providing small loans for micro-entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

In 2003, funds will be used largely to implement the on-going programmes described above.

In addition to the bilateral programme described in this document, USAID is carrying out a farmer-to-farmer assistance programme in Armenia that provides short-term, U.S. volunteer technical assistance to increase farming and agribusiness productivity and incomes.

**In Armenia
since** 1997

Links <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/cp97/countries/am.htm>
<http://www.usaid.gov/country/ee/am/>

WB (World Bank)

Background Founded in 1944, the World Bank Group is one of the world's largest sources of development assistance. In the fiscal year of 2002, the institution provided more than 19.5 billion USD in loans to its client countries. It works in more than 100 developing economies with the primary focus of helping the poorest people and the poorest countries. The Bank offers a mix of finance and ideas to improve living standards and eliminate the worst forms of poverty. For each of its clients, the Bank works with government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to formulate assistance strategies. Its country offices worldwide deliver the Bank's programme in the various countries. They co-operate with government and civil society, and work to increase understanding of development issues.

Main Purpose

The World Bank uses its financial resources and know-how to individually help developing countries onto a path of stable, sustainable and equitable growth. The main focus is on helping the poorest people and the poorest countries, but, for all its clients, the World Bank emphasizes the need to:

- Invest in people, particularly through basic health and education;
- Focus on social development, inclusion, governance, and institution-building as key elements of poverty reduction;
- Strengthen the ability of the governments to deliver quality services, efficiently and transparently;
- Protect the environment;
- Support and encouraging private business development; and
- Promote reforms to create a stable macroeconomic environment, conducive to investment and long-term planning.

Effective poverty reduction strategies and poverty-focused lending are central to achieving the World Bank's objectives. The World Bank gives high priority to sustainable, social and human development, and strengthened economic management with a growing emphasis on inclusion, governance and institution building. The World Bank also assists in improving investment conditions.

The World Bank Group comprises the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and the International Centre for Settlement Investment Disputes (ICSID).

Main Activities in Armenia

The World Bank supports the main elements of the government's reform programme outlined a Draft Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This support is the main component of the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy for Armenia. Main objectives to support governmental reform efforts are focussed on:

- Promoting reforms in public administration and budget management systems;
- Developing the private sector and accelerating public enterprise reforms to facilitate sustainable growth and employment;
- Advancing social sector reforms to ensure social sustainability of the reforms and reduce poverty.

In Armenia since

1992

Links

<http://www.namag.com/news/armenia/1633.htm>
<http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/extme/1451.htm>

WHO (World Health Organization)**Background**

The World Health Organization, the United Nations specialized agency for health, was established on 7 April 1948. The main WHO objective is the attainment of the highest possible level of health by all peoples. Health is defined in WHO's Constitution as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The WHO is governed by 192 Member States through the World Health Assembly. The Health Assembly is composed of representatives from WHO's Member States. The main tasks of the World Health Assembly are to approve the WHO programme and the budget for the following biennium and to decide major policy questions.

WHO in Armenia

Spheres of special WHO concern in Armenia are:

- Health of women and children;
- Communicable diseases ;
- Non-communicable diseases ;
- Environment and health.

In detail, WHO priorities are as follows:

1. Policy development
 - Support for the further development of national health policy with emphasis on health system;
 - Reform;
 - Support for the development of sectoral policy and action plan on tobacco control
 - Support for updating a Malaria national programme and action plan.
2. Infrastructure and system development
 - Development of strategies for strengthening of primary care services;
 - Review of CD surveillance and control system and options for reform;
 - Support for NEHAP implementation.
3. Technical interventions
 - Support for the improvement of quality of care for mother and baby and the introduction of;
 - Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI);
 - Guidance on reproductive health and development of genital cancer screening;
 - Advice on improved case detection of tuberculosis at PHC level;
 - Advice on improved case detection of HIV/AIDS and STIs at PHC level;
 - Guidance on implementation of EPI.

Links

<http://www.who.int/country/arm/en/>
<http://www.euro.who.int/document/bca/arm.pdf>
<http://www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/who/country/Information/Country?AreaCode=ARM>

2. Azerbaijan**AI (Amnesty International)****AI reports on Azerbaijan**

The first AI report on Azerbaijan dates back to 1996.

In Azerbaijan since

1996

Links

<http://www.amnesty.org/>

CoE (Council of Europe)**Tasks and Azerbaijan**

On 9 November 2000 the CoE Committee of Ministers invited Azerbaijan to join this pan-European organization. A similar resolution for Armenia was adopted on that same day. There had been concerns about admitting both countries at the same time, so as not to give advantage to one over the other. On 25 January 2001 – on the same day as Armenia – Azerbaijan joined the CoE.

On 21 December 2001, Azerbaijan signed the following CoE documents:

- The European Charter for Local Self-Government;
- The European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment as well as its Protocols 1 and 2;
- The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

**Main
Activities in
Azerbaijan**

The Council of Europe's main activities in Azerbaijan include:

- Providing intergovernmental assistance in the field of local democracy and cross-border co-operation;
- Assisting the development of free, independent and pluralistic media in accordance with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights;
- Assisting in adapting national legislation to European legal standards;
- Assisting in environmental and regional planning;
- Assisting in ensuring human rights guarantees;
- Supporting developments in the spheres of education, culture, sport, youth and health protection, etc.

**In Azerbaijan
since 2001**

Links

www.coe.int
<http://www.president.az/office/information.htm>

CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States)

**Azeri
Participation**

Azerbaijan is a CIS member. However, its co-operation within the organization is somewhat restrained. After Azerbaijan had signed the Alma-Ata Declaration in December 1991, the Azeri parliament voted against ratifying the declaration in October 1992. At this time, Azerbaijan maintained an observer status. Azeri representatives took part in some CIS activities. In 1993, Azerbaijan finally signed the CIS charter, its Treaty on Collective Security and an agreement on economic co-operation after considerable parliamentary controversies. The year of 1993 is obviously the starting point of active Azeri CIS participation. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan rejects the CIS-based Customs Union because of Russian predominance. In 1999, Azerbaijan was among those three countries that did not prolong the CIS Collective Security Treaty of 1992. In general, Azeri positions towards the CIS seem ambivalent.

**Azeri
Membership
Since
Links**

1991 (1993)

<http://www.cis.minsk.by/>
http://www.cis.solo.by/eng_3.shtml

EU (European Union)

EU and Azerbaijan

The EU Luxembourg Summit of 22 June 1999 marked the entry into force of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA). At this occasion, a joint declaration on relations between the EU and the Caucasus countries was adopted.

The PCA covers co-operation in all non-military areas and its main elements are:

- Elimination of trade quotas and provision of most favoured nation treatment;
- Provision of MFN or national treatment to companies and freedom of capital movement;
- Protection of intellectual, industrial and commercial property rights;
- Yearly political dialogue at ministerial, parliamentary and/or senior official levels.

In February 2001, a first visit of the EU Ministerial Troika to the three South Caucasus countries republics became an important event for the region as it confirmed EU interest and willingness to provide assistance in peace-making, post-conflict rehabilitation and democratization activities.

Main Issues in EU-Azeri Relations*Trade*

Azerbaijan is the largest trading partner of the EU in the Caucasus, primarily in the field of oil, gas and cotton. Since 1993, total trade with the EU has been growing steadily. Since Azerbaijan holds a central geographic location between the EU and Central Asia, the development of the TRACECA trade route provides a cornerstone for future economic co-operation. The EU helped to prepare the multilateral transport agreement, which was signed in September 1998. Trade in textiles is covered by a specific agreement, which is currently being renegotiated. The EU is giving Tacis assistance to prepare Azerbaijan for WTO membership.

EC Assistance

As trade levels are still relatively low, a main aspect of EC-Azerbaijani relations has been assistance. Since its independence Azerbaijan has benefited a total of € 333 Million of EC assistance in the form of humanitarian aid, food aid and budgetary food security assistance, exceptional assistance, rehabilitation and technical assistance. With the entry into force of the PCA and the improvement of the economic situation in the country, the focus of EC assistance is shifting from humanitarian aid to rehabilitation and reconstruction and promotion of trade and investment links. EC assistance will also be used increasingly to promote the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by supporting regional co-operation, post-conflict rehabilitation and by linking assistance levels to progress in conflict resolution.

Other

The EU strongly feels that the Minsk Group (OSCE) offers the best mechanism for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and fully supports the efforts made by the Azerbaijani Government and the Armenians to improve the dialogue in recent months. Until progress is made over Nagorno-Karabakh regional, stability will continue to be threatened and development stifled. Reopening of the railway line to Nakhichevan is seen as a vital element in this process.

The Tacis-funded INOGATE project – a cross border energy initiative – should contribute to implementing cross-border, small scale investments projects.

In Azerbaijan since 1996**Links**

http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/azerbaidjan/intro
<http://www.eubusiness.com/easteuro/980529co.htm>

EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development)

EBRD Aims in Azerbaijan

One of the Bank's strategic objectives is to significantly contribute to poverty alleviation in the context of the implementation of the State Programme on Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth, within the boundaries of its mandate. Opportunities for new, sound investment projects will, however, largely depend on the climate created for them. Thus, the level and nature of the Bank's activities will be strongly influenced by the government's commitment to reform. In summary, the strategic priorities presented below are in response to Azerbaijan's current transition challenges, are consistent with the Bank's operational priorities for the medium-term, are in line with measures identified in the State Programme for Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth and are, whenever possible, aimed at fostering regional economic co-operation.

Long-term Priorities

EBRD long-term priorities in Azerbaijan are:

- Promotion of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and non-oil private sector projects through the provision of direct financing and via the financial sector and through policy dialogue aimed at improving the investment climate;
- Building an effective and competitive financial sector that commands the confidence of the population and efficiently intermediates between savers and investors;
- Supporting the creation of a market-based economy through the promotion of commercialization, the strengthening of the institutional and regulatory frameworks, private sector involvement and the financing of sound infrastructure projects;
- Help Azerbaijan to realize substantial economic growth, ensure sound business practices, catalyse commercial co-financing and foster regional competition for the transport of oil and gas.

In order to ensure the successful implementation of the above priorities, the Bank will continue to have an active policy dialogue with government authorities with the objective of improving the investment climate as well as an ongoing dialogue with the private sector and NGOs. The Bank will also continue to support the application of international environmental standards and, while implementing this strategy, the Bank will closely co-ordinate and co-operate in its work with other international and bilateral institutions to ensure a complementary approach in their activities to support the transition process in Azerbaijan.

In Azerbaijan since

1991

Links

<http://www.ebrd.com/about/strategy/country/azer/main.htm>
<http://www.ebrd.com/new/pressrel/1998/37july21.htm>
<http://www.caspiandevlopmentandexport.com/ACG/eng/pcdp1/pcdp1.pdf>

GUUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova)

The GUUAM Group – a regional coalition of Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova – was founded as a political, economic and strategic alliance designed to strengthen the independence and sovereignty of these former Soviet Union republics. Cooperation among delegations of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were started in 1996 in Vienna at the CFE Treaty Conference, where four states issued joint statements and proposed common initiatives. On 24 April 1999, Uzbekistan joined GUUAM. Most visibly, the GUUAM Group issues joint declarations on specific political issues. The five GUUAM member states stress the importance of co-operation for the sake of a stable and secure Europe guided by the principles of:

- Respect for the sovereignty;
- Territorial integrity;
- Inviolability of state frontiers;
- Mutual respect;
- Co-operation;
- Democracy;
- Supremacy of law.

**Political
Emphasis**

GUUAM member states put emphasis on co-operation in the fields of:

- Peaceful settlement of conflicts and cooperation in combating separatism;
- Peacekeeping activities;
- Arms control;
- Development of a Eurasian Transcaucasus transport corridor (TRACECA);
- Interaction within the framework of processes of integration to Euro-Atlantic and European structures of security and co-operation.

GUUAM member states oblige themselves to combat aggressive nationalism, separatism and international terrorism, while continuing their interaction in peacekeeping and other missions with the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) as well as NATO (Partnership for Peace), the Council of Europe, the Joint Consultative Group of States-Parties to the CFE Treaty, and WEU.

**Azeri
Membership
since
Links**

1996

www.guuam.org

IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies)
ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross)

**IFRC and
IFRC in
Azerbaijan**

In March 1992, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) opened an office in Azerbaijan. The ICRC started operating in Azerbaijan – as well as in Armenia – in the context of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It addresses the missing persons issue and the problems of people affected by the conflict and vulnerable detainees. ICRC supports authorities in bringing the spread of tuberculosis in prisons under control. It also promotes the national implementation of international health legislation. It gives support in training armed and security forces and in developing university and school curricula. In Nagorno-Karabakh, ICRC supports primary health-care services.

In May 1993, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) also started operating in Azerbaijan. The IFRC carries out relief operations to assist victims of disasters, and combines this with development work to strengthen the capacities of its Azeri counterparts. IFRC work focuses on humanitarian values, disaster response, disaster preparedness, and health and community care.

**In Azerbaijan
since**

1992 (ICRC)
1993 (IFRC)

Links

<http://www.ifrc.org/>
<http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/partner/azprofil.asp>
<http://azredcrescent.aznet.org/azredcrescent/>
<http://www.icrc.org/>
<http://www.ifrc.org/address/az.asp>
<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/fromthefield/599969>

IFES (International Foundation for Election Systems)

IFES in Azerbaijan

Since 1995, IFES has assisted democratic reform in Azerbaijan by strengthening electoral processes. During the presidential, municipal, and parliamentary elections, IFES conducted civic education and election official training programmes in co-operation with the Central Election Commission (CEC). In addition, IFES assisted the Milli Majlis in drafting legislation for municipality elections, which were held for the first time in Azerbaijan in 1999.

IFES continues its dedication to Azerbaijan's electoral reform process and to the development of municipalities and regularly undertakes civic education activities to inform citizens about local self-government and democracy.

Through its Democracy Resource Centre, IFES also provides interested citizens with a library of information about elections, municipalities, civic education, and other topics related to democratic governance. IFES plans to expand the Democracy Resource Centre and to open regional Information Centres outside of Baku later in 2003.

In Azerbaijan since 1995

Links <http://www.ifesaze.org/>

ILO (International Labour Organization)

Background The ILO is an international organization aiming to implement fundamental goals such as employment, freedom of expression and of association, poverty reduction, equal status of workers, employers and governments and common welfare.

In Azerbaijan since 1992

Links <http://www.ilo.org>
<http://www.itcilo.it/english/actrav/telearn/global/ilo/seura/ilostand.htm>
<http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/appl-byCtry.cfm?lang=EN&CTYCHOICE=0060>

IMF (International Monetary Fund)

IMF activities in Azerbaijan Since accession to the International Monetary Fund in September 1992, there have been a number of IMF missions to study the macro-economic stabilization and reform programme, and to identify the priority issues which are to be addressed through IMF technical assistance. The IMF office, which opened in Baku in 1993, is operating in close contact with the government. Through advice and financial resources, the IMF assists Azerbaijan to implement economic reforms mainly in the fields of:

- Liberalization of prices;
- Widespread cuts in government subsidies;
- Reforming budgetary and fiscal systems;
- Restructuring the banking sector;
- Modernizing the tax system;
- Instituting a land reform programme;
- Privatizing state-owned assets.

In Azerbaijan since 1993

Links http://www.imf-az.org/latest_news.html
<http://www.baku.com/baku1.html>

IOM (International Organization for Migration)

IOM in Azerbaijan

The International Organization for Migration established its presence in Azerbaijan in 1996 to assist the Government in its capacity to deal with migration issues. On 8 December 1999 the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the International Organization for Migration was signed. The Agreement establishes a legal basis for the further development of friendly co-operation between Azerbaijan and the IOM in handling migration issues. The National Assembly endorsed this agreement on 8 February 2000.

Strategies on migration management need to take into account the legislation, policy, management and operational issues, as well as optimize the use of information, recruitment, training, supervision and professional staff. A progressive use of supportive technologies is a necessary tool for controlling and facilitating migration processes.

Professionalism of migration services will be a key in the sustainability of migration management for Azerbaijan. IOM offers its services to develop strategies for more effective capacity-building, and to enhance programmes that address the various migration challenges of the 21st century for Azerbaijan. At the 81st session of the IOM governing body in Geneva on 7 June 2000, Azerbaijan became a member of the Council.

Projects

Projects in Azerbaijan are implemented in the following areas:

- Capacity Building in Migration Management (CBMMP);
- Programme of the Azerbaijan National NGO Migration Sector Development;
- Community Development and Micro Credits;
- Women Producers and Marketing Co-operatives in Nakhichevan;
- Migrant Movements Project;
- Study on Irregular Migration.

In Azerbaijan since

1996

Links

<http://www.iom.int/>
<http://www.un-az.org/iom/>

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation)**Azerbaijan-NATO Relations**

In 1994, NATO co-operation with Azerbaijan started within the frame of the Partnership for Peace Program (PfP), which Baku considers a prologue to building its national security. It exclusively relies on Western military-political guaranties and sees this as an opportunity for closer integration into NATO structures, eventually leading to accession to the alliance.

Moreover, NATO countries, in particular Turkey, are assisting Azerbaijan in the technical re-equipment of its army and fleet, in defence planning, in material provision and in the training of military staff, as well as the creation of a system of civic defence. Political and military information exchange has been established, as well as a functioning political consultation mechanism. In July 1996, the parliaments of Azerbaijan and Turkey settled the legal basis for co-operation. With Turkish financial and technical support, an Azeri peacekeeping battalion was created. Since September 1999, a platoon from this battalion has been participating in the international peacekeeping force in Kosovo, in subordination to the Turkish battalion. Over the last few years, Ankara, Baku and Tbilisi have been co-operating actively on various military issues.

Azeri PfP Participation since

1994

Links

<http://www.nato.int>
<http://www.azembassy.com/azerbaijan/points.html>

OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference)

Background The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), established in Rabat (Morocco) on 25 September 1969 is an international organization consisting of 57 member states which aim to represent the interests and well-being of their peoples and of all Muslims in the world.

The Organization aims to support co-operation in political, economic, social, cultural and scientific fields, the struggle of all Muslim people to safeguard their dignity, independence and national rights, efforts against racial discrimination and all forms of colonialism, as well as endeavours to create a favourable atmosphere for the promotion of co-operation and understanding between member states and other countries.

Since 1991

Links <http://www.oic-un.org/>

OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe)

The OSCE Office in Baku The OSCE Office in Baku officially launched its operations on 18 July 2000, following the ratification by the Parliament of Azerbaijan of a Memorandum of Understanding between the OSCE and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Main activities of the OSCE Office in Baku as well as other OSCE activities in the South Caucasus are covered in Chapter Eight of this Mission Information Package.

In Azerbaijan since 2000

Links www.osce.org/baku/
<http://www.osce.org/publications/survey/survey20.htm>
http://www.osce.org/news/in_focus/2001-04-03_nagorno_karabakh.php3

Transparency International Azerbaijan (TI Azerbaijan)

TI in Azerbaijan TI Azerbaijan was established in October 2000 by civil society representatives and representatives of the Azeri academic family. TI Azerbaijan became a fully accredited national TI chapter in October 2001. TI Azerbaijan works mainly in the areas of business ethics and research into reasons and forms of corruption in Azerbaijan and ways to reduce this destructive social phenomenon. TI Azerbaijan focuses its activities on public awareness-raising events, screening Azeri legislation for anti-corruption loopholes, designing recommendations for the government as well as introducing business ethics into national and local business practices.

Links <http://www.transparency-az.org/>
<http://www.transparency.org/acrc/azerbaijan/index.html>
<http://admin.corisweb.org>

UN (United Nations)

UN in Azerbaijan

UN Representation in Azerbaijan has been in operation since 1992. Three main agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF) conduct activities on a regular programming basis. The Programme cycles of these agencies are completely harmonized, with the current cycle closing in 2004. UNHCR and UNWFP continue to provide special development situation assistance on the basis of humanitarian/emergency operations. IOM has an office in Baku, UNIFEM a project office and WHO a liaison office. Other UN Agencies (FAO, ILO, UNESCO) also implement projects/activities in Azerbaijan but do not reside there.

Co-ordination between agencies is achieved through the division of responsibilities by thematic areas. UNDP leads efforts in alleviation of poverty and governance, UNICEF in health reforms and education, UNWFP and UNHCR in provision of relief assistance to refugees and IDPs, and UNFPA in the area of population and reproductive health. Formal thematic groups support operations. In most general terms, the UN Country Team works on sustaining efforts in alleviating extreme poverty and changing main developments from relief and emergency towards development.

In Azerbaijan since 1992

Links <http://www.un-az.org/>

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)

UNDP Objectives in Azerbaijan

UNDP is a main development agency in the country. *Inter alia*, main objectives of UNDP activities in Azerbaijan are to:

- Contribute to the eradication of extreme poverty;
- Contribute to implementation of the principles of a state based on the rules of law that consider human and citizen rights;
- Assist the country in building structures of a modern democracy with a special focus on good governance principles that are in line with the principles of the United Nations Charter;
- Support the introduction and development of modern information and communication technologies;
- Assist in post-conflict rehabilitation efforts;
- Contribute to the protection and sustainable use of natural resources.

In Azerbaijan since 1992

Links <http://www.un-az.org/undp/>
<http://www.un-az.org/undp/Doc/ccfaze.pdf>

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

Azerbaijan-UNESCO Co-operation

Azerbaijan became member of UNESCO on 3 June 1992 and is a member of three subsidiary bodies of the General Conference:

- International Co-ordinating Council of the Programme on Man and the Biosphere (1999);
- Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme (1999);
- International Bioethics Committee (2001).

Azerbaijan is party to a number of conventions adopted under the auspices of UNESCO. Two UNESCO Chairs have been established in the different fields of human rights, democracy and peace (Academy of Public Administration, Baku), as well as translation studies (Azerbaijan University of Languages, Baku).

In Azerbaijan since 1992

Links <http://www.un-az.org/>

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

Main Activities in Azerbaijan UNHCR began its work in Azerbaijan in 1992 by protecting and assisting refugees and internally displaced persons. Since 1996, assistance priorities have shifted from emergency relief to the search for durable solutions. UNHCR is an active partner in the government's programme for refugees and internally displaced persons. Since 1996, UNHCR assistance priorities started to gradually shift from relief assistance to activities aimed at reaching durable achievements in the areas of shelter, health, education and income generation.

In Azerbaijan since 1992

Links <http://www.un-az.org/>
<http://www.unhcr.ch>

UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)

Main Activities in Azerbaijan The programmes of UNICEF in Azerbaijan are focussed on providing advice and guidance for design models of social policy reform and the efficient, effective implementation of these reform activities. Across all programmes, UNICEF has also endeavoured to promote the Convention of the Rights of the Child. UNICEF applies basic principles such as:

- Introduction of self-financing mechanisms at the school level in the form of conditional matching grants;
- Decentralization of financial and administrative management through opening of school bank accounts;
- Rationalization of the district education structure to be more cost-effective;
- Improved community participation through school committees to apply the self-financing systems in schools and to contribute community resources.

UNICEF is active in mine risk education.

In Azerbaijan since 1992

Links <http://www.un-az.org/>

USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development)

USAID Activity in Azerbaijan Through USAID-funded NGOs and contributions to international organizations, the U.S. government has been providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Azerbaijan since 1992. Given the Section 907 restrictions on assistance, the USAID programme remained initially focussed on humanitarian assistance. Since the lifting of Section 907 restrictions, USAID has been actively seeking to support Azerbaijan's transition to a democratic society and an open market economy. The USAID country strategy comprises three main objectives:

- Economic growth;
- A better organized and represented civil society;
- Reduced human suffering in conflict-affected areas.

In Azerbaijan since 1992

Links <http://www.usaid.gov/country/ee/az/>

WB (World Bank)

Main Activities in Azerbaijan Azerbaijan became member of the World Bank in September 1992, and of the International Development Association (IDA) in March 1995. Azerbaijan joined the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in 1992 and 1995, respectively.

The major focus of the World Bank's work to date has been to assist Azerbaijan by providing policy advice, financing for both investments and the government budget, and the co-ordination of aid. In particular, the World Bank is working with the authorities to strengthen the government's institutional capacities in managing its petroleum resources and formulating key policy changes to accelerate reforms.

In Azerbaijan since 1992

Links <http://worldbank.org>
<http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/eca/azerbaijan.nsf>

WHO (World Health Organization)

Activities in Azerbaijan Active co-operation between WHO and Azerbaijan started in 1997. Various projects have been implemented.

In Azerbaijan since 1997

Links <http://www.who.int/country/aze/en/>

3.Georgia

AI (Amnesty International)

AI Reports Since 1997, AI has been publishing Reports on Human Rights in Georgia.

In Georgia since 1997

Links <http://www.amnesty.org/>
<http://www.ccehr.eu-frankfurt-o.de/hr/states/georgia/03.htm>

CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States)

CIS and Georgia In December 1993, two years after the founding of the CIS, Georgia joined the organization. Co-operation with the Russia-led CIS is an ambivalent issue from Georgia's perspective. Georgian foreign relations especially try to put emphasis on co-operation with Western countries and organizations.

The activities of the CIS Joint Peace-keeping Forces in Georgia are described in Chapter Nine of this Mission Information Package.

Georgia in CIS since 1993

Links <http://www.cis.minsk.by/>

CoE (Council of Europe)

CoE and Georgia In 1999, Georgia ratified the Statute of the Council of Europe. In 2002, Georgia became CoE member. In 2001, the CoE was represented in Georgia.

In Georgia since 2001

Links http://www.coe.int/t/e/communication_and_research/press/countries_info/e_ge.asp
[http://press.coe.int/cp/2000/449a\(2000\).htm](http://press.coe.int/cp/2000/449a(2000).htm)
[http://press.coe.int/cp/2000/362a\(2000\).htm](http://press.coe.int/cp/2000/362a(2000).htm)
<http://www.mfa.gov.ge/coe.html>

EU (European Union)

Political Objectives in Georgia

Based on the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA) which entered into force on 1 July 1999, EU co-operation with Georgia is focussed on the implementation of democratic principles, the rule of law and human rights, as well as on the fostering and support of the consolidation of a market economy. The PCA provides for trade liberalization and co-operation in a wide range of areas. TACIS is the main financial instrument which supports the implementation of the PCA and provides grant assistance for projects in priority areas that are defined on a biannual basis. The EU aims at developing Georgia within the context of a politically stable and economically prosperous South Caucasus. In this respect, the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Tskhinvali) remain a major impediment to development in Georgia and contribute to regional instability. The EU supports the principle of Georgian territorial integrity.

The EU assists Georgia in creating the political, economic and social environment necessary for the country to fully exploit its natural comparative advantages at the crossroads of important transport and energy corridors between Europe and Central Asia. This is done in the context of further promoting regional co-operation and integration.

Target Areas in Georgia

EU assistance to Georgia is implemented in the field and/or within the frames of:

- European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights;
- TACIS National Allocations;
- Rehabilitation in conflict zones;
- Humanitarian aid (ECHO and ad hoc extraordinary interventions);
- FEOGA food aid;
- Food Security Programme;
- Exceptional Financial Assistance;
- Exceptional Humanitarian Aid;
- Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) Assistance to Border Guards;
- European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights.

In Georgia since 1996

Links http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/georgia/intro/

EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development)

**EBRD
Priorities**

The main objective of EBRD is to expand private sector development in Georgia. The Bank's priorities are:

- Contributing to an improved investment climate;
- Strengthening the Georgian banking sector;
- Providing financial assistance to business start-ups and existing micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Selectively supporting critical investments in infrastructure and promoting the commercialization of infrastructures, particularly in the energy sector;
- Catalysing private sector developments;
- Further evaluating and supporting regional projects, particularly those that are of mutual interest to the neighbouring countries, for example, oil and gas pipelines and transport.

EBRD co-operates with other IFIs and bi-lateral organizations. In particular, EBRD works with the IMF, WB and USAID on strengthening the banking sector, with the WB, KfW and USAID on electricity generation and distribution privatization. Contributing to the improvement of the general investment climate and supporting related reforms is a joint concern of EBRD and all its partners.

**In Georgia
since**

1994

Links

<http://www.ebrd.com/>
<http://www.ebrd.com/country/country/georgia/main.htm>
<http://www.bisnis.doc.gov/bisnis/country/020802EBRDGeorgia.htm>

GUUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova)

The GUUAM Group (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova) was founded as a political, economic and strategic alliance and was designed to strengthen the independence and sovereignty of these former Soviet Union republics.

Since

1996

Links

www.guam.org

ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross)**ICRC in
Georgia**

The ICRC has been working in Georgia since 1992. It visits detainees and runs a tuberculosis control programme in prisons. It also aims to help strengthen local resources in running physical rehabilitation programmes for handicapped persons. Projects to promote international humanitarian law are underway. With the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the ICRC is working on a development plan for the national Red Cross society in Georgia. Further projects are focussed on:

- Medical Assistance in Western Georgia;
- Dry Food Assistance Programme;
- Land Mines and Orthopaedic Centres;
- Canteen and Home Assistance Programme;
- Tuberculosis (TB) Programme;
- Agro-Assistance Programme.

**In Georgia
since
Links**

1992

<http://www.icrc.org/>
<http://www.helpicrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/georgia?OpenDocument>
http://www.assistancegeorgia.org.ge/orgs/orgs.html?org_id=57

IFES (International Foundation for Election Systems)

IFES in Georgia

IFES has undertaken technical assistance activities in Georgia to support the establishment of a sustainable system of democratic elections and to encourage broader public understanding of democracy and democratic institutions. Since establishing a permanent presence in Tbilisi in 1998, IFES has provided sustained technical support to the Central Election Commission (CEC) for both nation-wide elections and by-elections. This support has consisted of both material support and technical advice on legal drafting, management, training, and organizational development. IFES activities have also included extensive voter education and civic education activities aimed at promoting broader public knowledge of election procedures, the roles and responsibilities of government institutions, and the rights and duties of democratic citizenship.

IFES provides technical assistance in election legislation development, election administration development support and civic education. It works closely with Georgian partners, including the Parliament of Georgia, the CEC, and numerous non-governmental organizations both in Tbilisi and in regional centres. This work resulted in the adoption of a Unified Election Code (UEC), which was lauded for its contribution to deterring fraud in the local government elections, and a more accessible election information infrastructure, including a live-update site managed by the CEC. IFES has also undertaken a review of Georgia's voter registry, with the hopes of attracting international support for an improved voter registration system, and conducted sociological research to support programme evaluation and development.

In Georgia since

1998

Links

<http://www.ifes.ge/>

http://www.ifes.org/reg_activities/georgia-reg-act.htm

ILO (International Labour Organization)**IOL in Georgia**

The programme of co-operation between ILO and Georgia for 2002-2003 includes the following four main objectives of the Organization:

- application of international standards and fundamental principles and rights at work;
- assistance to employment creation;
- social protection;
- social dialogue .

In Georgia since

1993

Links

<http://www.ilo.org>

<http://www.ilo.ru/countries/gr0203e.htm>

<http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/appl-byCtry.cfm?CTYCHOICE=0230&lang=EN>

IMF (International Monetary Fund)**Main Activities in Georgia**

Georgia joined the IMF on 5 May 1992. Its quota is SDR 111.0 million (about \$153 million). Its outstanding use of IMF financing currently totals SDR 133.2 million (about \$183 million). Since joining the IMF, Georgia has borrowed about \$280 million through annual structural adjustment loans. In co-operating with the IMF, Georgian authorities are committed to accelerating the implementation of structural reforms. In addition to banking sector and tax administration reforms, the IMF agenda in Georgia includes restructuring the energy sector, pursuing an ambitious privatization programme for medium- and large-scale enterprises, accelerating agricultural land reform, developing a legal framework for the privatization of urban and industrial land, and further developing the enforcement of existing laws and regulations.

In Georgia since 1992

Links <http://www.imf.org/>
<http://www.imf.org/external/country/geo/>

IOM (International Organization for Migration)

IOM in Georgia IOM started its Capacity Building in Migration Management Project in Georgia in 1996. The goal is to achieve a unified migration management approach in Georgia that is tailored to national and regional needs, which is consistent with international norms.

The objectives are to:

- Draft and/or to revise key migration legislation in order to provide the basis for an internationally accepted system of migration management;
- Reduce the gaps between legislation and the corresponding operational capacity to implement migration management measures;
- Institute a system of border management that is consistent with international practice and standards.

In Georgia since 1996

Links <http://www.iom.int/>
http://www.assistancegeorgia.org.ge/orgs/orgs.html?org_id=127

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation)

NATO-Georgia Co-operation Georgia has been a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Programme since 1994. Georgia participates in the NATO Planning and Review Process (PARP), under which defence planning data are shared and evaluated. Georgia has contributed with a platoon to KFOR in Kosovo. *Inter alia*, this initiative hopes to enhance interoperability between NATO and the Georgian Armed Forces.

For Georgia, co-operation with NATO is a high-priority security issue. Repeatedly, Georgia has considered applying for NATO membership. In November 2002, the Georgian President officially raised a corresponding request before the Prague NATO summit.

Georgia since 1994

Links <http://www.nato.int/pfp/ge/georgia.htm>
<http://civitas.hypermart.net/public/nato.html>
<http://www.atlantic.ge/en/index.html>

OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe)

In response to armed conflicts in the country, the OSCE Mission to Georgia was established in December 1992. It is headquartered in Tbilisi. The activities of the OSCE Mission to Georgia as well as other activities of the OSCE in the South Caucasus are shown in detail in Chapter Eight of this Mission Information Package.

In Georgia since 1992

Links <http://www.osce.org/georgia/>

TI (Transparency International)

TI in Georgia TI Georgia was created in May 2000. TI Georgia is a non-profit, non-governmental, public organization. It is the Georgian national chapter of Transparency International. The founders of TI Georgia include the League of Constitution's Defence, Liberty Institute, League of Protection of Landowners' Rights, Georgian Institute of Economic Development, and the Tbilisi Press Club. TI Georgia interacts with the USAID programme on Good Local Governance and political decision-making.

Links <http://www.transparency.ge/ge/index.html>
<http://www.corisweb.org/article/archive/196/>

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)

UNDP Activities in Georgia UNDP is a main development agency in Georgia. UNDP activities in the country focus on three priority areas:

- Improved economic, political and social governance;
- Poverty reduction through advocacy and support to economic growth;
- Improved management and conservation of natural resources.

The UNDP programme in Georgia is shaped by the UNDP Global Agenda. Activities of UNDP in Georgia are focused on poverty reduction, democratic governance and environmental protection, as outlined in the second Country Co-operation Framework for Georgia (2001-2003), which was approved by the Executive Board in January 2001. In the area of governance, UNDP has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at strengthening government institutions. Tools such as modernization of methods and instruments of information, analysis and internal administration were used for capacity-building of the State Chancellery, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Finance. A similar approach is being piloted in the Imereti region. UNDP is working with the Aid Co-ordination Agency to strengthen the management of international assistance and has been instrumental in supporting the Georgian government in the elaboration of the national security policy. The new Public Defender's Office was assisted in better defining its role and responsibilities through improvement of its organizational structure to better suit the mandate of the institution. A nation-wide public awareness campaign was initiated to disseminate information on human rights and the function of the Public Defender's Office. The Constitutional Court, another recently established institution, benefited from similar support.

In addition to these collaborative efforts with more traditional partners, UNDP has engaged in innovative partnerships. A good example is the capacity-building project for the Georgian International Oil Corporation (GIOC) whose mission is to assist the Government in its efforts to turn Georgia into an effective transit corridor for oil export. Having recognized corruption as one of the impeding factors for the country's development, UNDP provided background research for the guidelines of the National Anti-corruption Programme.

As part of its poverty reduction work, UNDP has taken an active part in the preparation of the interim Poverty Reduction and Economic Growth Programme, UNDP is also starting intervention in Samtskhe-Javakheti region through area development project.

Remaining faithful to the provision of policy support and innovative solutions, UNDP engaged in the New Approach to Internally Displaced Persons. Environmental challenges are mainly met by increasing the capacity of the Ministry of Environment to refine policies and by supporting energy-efficient measures with innovative projects aimed at the conservation of natural resources. Special effort has been made to build regional alliances, as is the case with the regional initiative to protect the Kura-Aras river basin against pollution.

UNDP Georgia has achieved good working relations with bilateral donors operating in the country. A number of projects are fully or partially financed by bilateral donors.

In Georgia since 1993

Links <http://www.undp.org.ge/>
<http://www.undp.org.ge/rc/cca2001.pdf>

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

UNESCO in Georgia Priorities for Georgia's co-operation with UNESCO focus on the fields of education, science, culture and information, informatics and communication. Special attention has been placed on co-operation within the Caucasus and on bilateral links with the Commission for UNESCO of other countries. The Georgian National Commission for UNESCO was founded on 7 October 1997. In 1999, UNESCO launched the Caucasus Project aiming at sub-regional co-operation for the sustainable development of the Caucasus region. In the context of sustainable development of the Caucasus and Black Sea region, attention is paid to the use of the ecologically clean technologies and renewable energies.

In Georgia since 1997

Links http://www.unesco.org/bpi/intangible_heritage/georgia.htm
http://www.unesco.org/webworld/portal_observatory/Action_Plans_-_Policies/Europe/Georgia/
<http://www.mfa.gov.ge/unesco.html>

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

Main goals Main goals of the UNHCR in Georgia are:

- Support the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict-resolution process sponsored by the OSCE, and facilitate the voluntary return and reintegration of the refugees and displaced persons from South Ossetia and Georgia proper;
- Support the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict-resolution process sponsored by the United Nations, promote the self-reliance of IDPs while conditions do not allow for their safe return, and provide assistance to those who have returned to their homes in Gali district in Abkhazia;
- Provide protection and assistance to Chechen refugees and support the Government in implementing the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol;
- Seek improvements to the refugee law and asylum procedures and help Governmental and NGO structures build up sufficient resources and expertise to respond to involuntary displacement;
- Promote accession to the conventions relating to statelessness.

In Georgia since 1993

Links <http://www.unhcr.ch/pubs/fdrs/my2001/geo.pdf>
<http://www.unhcr.ch/pubs/fdrs/ga2002/geo.pdf>

UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)

Main Objectives in Georgia

The major objectives of UNICEF activities in Georgia include:

- Improvement of maternal and child survival, health and development;
- Increasing enrolment rates and quality of education in pre-primary and basic education;
- Better protection of vulnerable children;
- Young people's health and development;
- Promotion and implementation of the CRC and CEDAW;
- Policy development.

In Georgia since 1994

Links <http://www.unicef.org/>
<http://www.unicef.org/programme/highlights/cee/georgia/support.htm>

UNOMIG (United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia)

In detail, UNOMIG activities are shown in Chapter Nine of this Mission Information Package.

In Georgia since 1992

Links <http://www.un.int/georgia/un>
<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unomig/background.html>

WHO (World Health Organization)

WHO in Georgia In Georgia, WHO policy has set the following priorities:

1. Policy development
 - Support the review and update of the National Health Policy components related to thematic areas with a special focus on poverty reduction
 - Support the development of tobacco control policy
2. Infrastructure and system development
 - Support the development of strategies to strengthen primary health care
 - Support building capacity in the management of non-communicable diseases
 - Support the improvement of the communicable disease surveillance system
 - Support the development of national health information system
 - Support the review of legislation on mental health and drug abuse
3. Technical interventions
 - Support the implementation of IMCI together with appropriate partners
 - Support the consolidation of partnerships on TB and malaria programmes
 - Support the promotion of healthy lifestyle approaches

Links <http://www.who.int/country/geo/en/>
<http://www.euro.who.int/document/bca/geo.pdf>
<http://www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/who/countryInformation/Country?AreaCode=GEO>

USAID (U. S. Agency for International Development)

USAID / Caucasus Mission USAID/Caucasus Mission, established in July 1998, co-ordinates all USAID programmes in Georgia and Azerbaijan. USAID/Armenia continues to administer programmes in Armenia.

The vision of USAID/Caucasus Mission programmes is to support a stable, more prosperous market-oriented economy that empowers citizens, is governed by rule of law and promotes the basic welfare of the population. USAID/Caucasus Mission strategic themes are private enterprise, legal framework, reducing corruption, gender equality, institutional strengthening, citizen participation, local development, conflict prevention, public awareness and capacity-building. Activities are focussed on areas like economic growth, energy & environment, democracy & governance, humanitarian response & social transition and cross-sector activities. USAID is a main development agency in Georgia.

In Georgia since 1998

Links <http://www.usaid.org.ge/>
http://www.usaid.gov/regions/europe_eurasia/countries/ge/

WB (World Bank)

Main Activities in Georgia Georgia joined the World Bank in 1992 and the International Development Association (IDA) in 1993. Lending activities began in 1994 with the approval of an Institution Building Credit to provide technical assistance and training to strengthen public institutions.

The Bank has a diverse portfolio in Georgia. Eighteen IDA credits totalling 334.9 million US dollars are currently under implementation. Ten operations totalling 323.6 million US dollars have been completed. To date, WB commitments to Georgia amount to 714.1 million US dollars for 31 IDA credits.

The Bank's overall programme focuses on support in the reduction of poverty through:

- Assisting Georgia to attain stronger and more broad-based growth, including removing policy, institutional and infrastructure obstacles to private sector development.
- Developing and strengthening Georgia's human capital, and the provision of some minimum short-term social protection, and setting up longer-term sustainable programmes to protect the most vulnerable;
- Better fiscal management for macroeconomic stability;
- State divestiture from commercial activities;
- Improving the environment for the private sector.

In Georgia since 1992
Links <http://www.worldbank.org.ge/>

Further Web Addresses

Websites of Institutions and Services Reporting on or Discussing South Caucasus Affairs

Armenia

ANCA - Armenian National Committee of America (US)	http://www.anca.org/anca/
Armenian Church of America (Eastern)	http://www.armenianchurch.org/
Armenian Centre for National and International Studies	http://www.acnis.am/main
Armenia.com (Miscellaneous issues)	http://www.armenia.com
ArmeniaDiaspora.com	http://www.armeniadiaspora.com/
Armenian Government	http://www.gov.am/en/
ArmanianHistory.info	http://www.armenianhistory.info/
Armenian Parliament	http://www.parliament.am/
Armenian President	http://www.president.am/
Arminfo News Agency	http://www.arminfo.am/index.htm
Artsakhworld.com (Karabakh)	http://www.news.artsakhworld.com/
ASAM Centre for Eurasian Strategic Studies (Ankara)	http://www.avsam.org/
Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management	http://www.berghof-centre.org/
Central Asia and Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University	http://www.cacianalyst.org/
Centre for European Policy Studies	http://www.ceps.be/
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue	http://www.hdcentre.org/
Centre for Journalism in Extreme Situations	http://www.cjes.ru/(in Russian language)
Centre for Regional Studies (Brussels)	http://poli.vub.ac.be/
Cilicia.com	http://www.cilicia.com/
CSIS Centre for Strategic and International Studies (USA)	http://www.csis.org/
Danish Association for Research on the Caucasus	http://www.caucasus.dk/
Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution	http://www.konfliktloesning.dk/
Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University	http://www.pcr.uu.se/
DEZA Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation	http://www.deza.admin.ch
EBRD	http://www.ebrd.com/country
Energy Information Administration (US)	http://eia.doe.gov/
EU	http://europa.eu.int/
Eurasia Foundation	http://www.efscpp.org/
Eurasianet.org	http://www.eurasianet.org/
Freedom Forum	http://www.freedomforum.org/
Freedom House	http://www.freedomhouse.org/
Gazeta SNG	http://eng.gazetasng.ru/
Genocide.am	http://www.genocide.am
Holy Echmiadzin	http://www.holyetchmiadzin.am/flashhi.htm
IMF	http://www.imf.org/external/country/ARM
Institute for Armenian Research (Turkey)	http://www.eraren.org/
Institute for War and Peace Reporting	http://www.iwpr.net/
Int. Eurasian Institute for Economic and Political Research	http://iicas.org/insten.htm
International Relations and Security Network (Switzerland)	http://www.isn.ethz.ch/
London Information Network on Conflicts and State-Building	http://www.links-london.org/
Media Diversity Institute	http://www.media-diversity.org
Moskovskie Novosti	http://www.mn.ru/english
NK MFA	http://nkr.am/eng/
Noyan Tapan News	http://www.nt.am/eng
OSCE	http://www.osce.org
Partnership for Peace Information Management	http://www.ppc.pims.org/
RFE/RL	http://www.rferl.org/
SIPRI - Stockholm International Peace Research Institute	http://www.sipri.se/
Slavic – Eurasian Studies Web (Japan)	http://www.slavweb.com/eng/
Strategy Turk	http://www.strategyturk.com/
TESEV Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation	http://www.tesev.org.tr/eng/
Turkish Daily News (Ankara)	http://www.turkishdailynews.com/
UCIAS University of California International and Area Studies	http://repositories.cdlib.org/
UNDP	http://www.undp.org/rbec/related
	http://www.undp.org/rbec/programmes
UNHCR	http://www.unhcr.ch
USAID	http://www.usaid.gov/am
US Committee for Refugees	http://www.refugees.org/
US Department of State	http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/
US Institute of Peace	http://www.usip.org/

VADA Foundation For Immigrants By Immigrants (Netherlands)
 Worldbank
 World Legal Information Institute
 World Press (Stanley Foundation)

<http://www.vada.nl/volkenaa.htm>
<http://www.worldbank.org>
<http://www.worldlii.org/>
<http://www.worldpress.org/>

Azerbaijan

Artsakhworld.com (Karabakh)
 Azerbaijan International
 Azerbaijan News
 ASAM Centre for Eurasian Strategic Studies (Ankara)
 Azeri Presidential Administration
 Baku Vision
 Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management
 CSIS Centre for Strategic and International Studies (USA)
 Central Asia and Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University
 Centre for European Policy Studies
 Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
 Centre for Journalism in Extreme Situations
 Centre for Regional Studies (Brussels)
 Danish Association for Research on the Caucasus
 Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution
 Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University
 DEZA Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation
 EBRD
 Energy Information Administration (US)
 EU
 Eurasia Foundation
 Eurasianet.org
 Freedom Forum
 Freedom House
 Gazeta SNG
 IMF
 Institute for War and Peace Reporting
 International Centre for Caspian Studies, Azerbaijan
 Int. Eurasian Institute for Economic and Political Research
 International Relations and Security Network (Switzerland)
 London Information Network on Conflicts and State-Building
 Media Diversity Institute
 NK MFA
 Moskovskie Novosti
 OSCE
 Partnership for Peace Information Management
 RFE/RL
 SIPRI - Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
 Slavic – Eurasian Studies Web (Japan)
 Strategy Turk
 TESEV Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation
 Turkish Daily News (Ankara)
 UCIAS University of California International and Area Studies
 UNDP
 UNHCR
 US Committee for Refugees
 US Department of State
 US Institute of Peace
 VADA Foundation For Immigrants By Immigrants (Netherlands)
 Worldbank
 World Legal Information Institute
 World Press (Stanley Foundation)

<http://www.news.artsakhworld.com/>
<http://www.azer.com/>
<http://www.azerbajian.com/>
<http://www.avsam.org/>
<http://www.president.az>
<http://www.baku-vision.com/>
<http://www.berghof-Centre.org>
<http://www.csis.org/>
<http://www.cacianalyst.org/>
<http://www.ceps.be/>
<http://www.hdcenre.org/>
[http://www.cjes.ru/\(in Russian language\)](http://www.cjes.ru/(in Russian language))
<http://poli.vub.ac.be/>
<http://www.caucasus.dk/>
<http://www.konfliktloesning.dk/>
<http://www.pcr.uu.se/>
<http://www.deza.admin.ch>
<http://www.ebrd.com/country>
<http://eia.doe.gov/>
<http://europa.eu.int/>
<http://www.efscpc.org/>
<http://www.eurasianet.org/>
<http://www.freedomforum.org/>
<http://www.freedomhouse.org/>
<http://eng.gazetasng.ru/>
<http://www.imf.org/external/country/AZE>
<http://www.iwpr.net/>
<http://caspiancentre.org/aboutus.shtml>
<http://iicas.org/insten.htm>
<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/>
<http://www.links-london.org/>
<http://www.media-diversity.org>
<http://nkr.am/eng/>
<http://www.mn.ru/english>
<http://www.osce.org>
<http://www.ppc.pims.org/>
<http://www.rferl.org/>
<http://www.sipri.se/>
<http://www.slavweb.com/eng/>
<http://www.strategyturk.com/>
<http://www.tesev.org.tr/eng/>
<http://www.turkishdailynews.com/>
<http://repositories.cdlib.org/>
<http://www.undp.org/rbec/related>
<http://www.undp.org/rbec/programmes>
<http://www.unhcr.ch>
<http://www.refugees.org/>
<http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/>
<http://www.usip.org/>
<http://www.vada.nl/volkenaa.htm>
<http://www.worldbank.org>
<http://www.worldlii.org/>
<http://www.worldpress.org/>

Georgia

Abkhazia Government (Tbilisi-based)

<http://www.abkhazia.ge/>

AbkhazetiNews	http://www.abkhazeti.ru
Abkhazian Centre for Global Peace and Conflict Studies	http://hypatia.ss.uci.edu/gpacs/abkhazia/
Apsny (Republic of Abkhazia)	http://www.apsny.org/home.html
ASAM Centre for Eurasian Strategic Studies (Ankara)	http://www.avsam.org/
Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management	http://www.berghof-centre.org/
Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia	http://www.patriarchate.ge/
Caucasus Press News Agency	http://abkhazia.caucasus.net/
Caucasus Foundation	http://www.kafkas.org/
Central Asia and Caucasus Institute, Johns Hopkins University	http://www.cacianalyst.org/
Centre for European Policy Studies	http://www.ceps.be/
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue	http://www.hdcentre.org/
Centre for Journalism in Extreme Situations	http://www.cjes.ru/(in Russian language)
Centre for Regional Studies (Brussels)	http://poli.vub.ac.be/
Centre for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia	http://www.csr dg.caucasus.net/
CSIS Centre for Strategic and International Studies (USA)	http://www.csis.org/
Danish Association for Research on the Caucasus	http://www.caucasus.dk/
Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution	http://www.konfliktloesning.dk/
Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University	http://www.pcr.uu.se/
DEZA Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation	http://www.deza.admin.ch
EBRD	http://www.ebrd.com/country
Energy Information Administration (US)	http://eia.doe.gov/
EU	http://europa.eu.int/
Eurasia Foundation	http://www.efscpp.org
Eurasianet.org	http://www.eurasianet.org/
FEWER - Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (UK)	http://www.fewer.org/
Freedom Forum	http://www.freedomforum.org/
Freedom House	http://www.freedomhouse.org/
Gazeta SNG	http://eng.gazetasng.ru
Georgian Parliament	http://www.parliament.ge/
IMF	http://www.imf.org/external/country/GEO
Institute for War and Peace Reporting	http://www.iwpr.net/
International Relations and Security Network (Switzerland)	http://www.isn.ethz.ch/
London Information Network on Conflicts and State-Building	http://www.links-london.org/
Media Diversity Institute	http://www.media-diversity.org
Moskovskie Novosti	http://www.mn.ru/english
Partnership for Peace Information Management	http://www.ppc.pims.org/
National Defence University (US)	http://www.ndu.edu/
OSCE	http://www.osce.org
Parliament of Georgia	http://www.parliament.ge/
Press Office of the President of Georgia	http://www.abkhazia-georgia.parliament.ge/
RFE/RL	http://www.presidpress.gov.ge/
Republic of Adzharia (official website)	http://www.rferl.org/bd/ge/
SIPRI - Stockholm International Peace Research Institute	http://www.adjara-ar.org/
Slavic – Eurasian Studies Web (Japan)	http://www.sipri.se/
Strategy Turk	http://www.slavweb.com/eng/
Turkish Daily News (Ankara)	http://www.strategyturk.com/
UCIAS University of California International and Area Studies	http://www.turkishdailynews.com/
UNDP	http://repositories.cdlib.org/
	http://www.undp.org/rbec/related
	http://www.undp.org/rbec/programmes
UNHCR	http://www.unhcr.ch
UNOMIG	http://www.unomig.com/
USAID	http://www.usaid.gov/ge
US Committee for Refugees	http://www.refugees.org/
US Department of State	http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/
VADA Foundation For Immigrants By Immigrants (Netherlands)	http://www.vada.nl/volkenaa.htm
Voice of Abkhazia	http://www.qsl.net/yb0rmi/abkhazia.htm
World Legal Information Institute	http://www.worldlii.org/
Worldbank	http://www.worldbank.org

Foreign Policy think tanks (compilation of web sites)

<http://www.bilkent.edu.tr/~sbahadir/ttank.html>