

"With Objectivity, Not Indifference"

CONFLICTS & NEGOTIATIONS

**Published by the International Center on
Conflict and Negotiation**



ICCN

Issue No. 1-2 (18-19), Winter-Spring 1998

***This Publication is supported by
the John D. and Catherine T.
MacArthur Foundation.***

Conflicts & Negotiations are distributed free of charge with priority made for the subscribers. Subscription to C&N is possible through contacting the editors at the addresses below.

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• ICCN Projects

NEWMEC

Network for Early Warning and Monitoring
of Ethnic, Social and Religious Conflict

The International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation launched a scientific-analytical project entitled “Network for Early Warning and Monitoring of Ethnic, Social and Religious Conflict”. The project is funded by the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The project co-ordinator is candidate of sciences (physics and mathematics) Paata Jincharadze tells about the aims and objectives of the project in more detail.

The main purpose of the project is to assess the risk of outbreak and escalation of conflicts through studying the situation in the conflict/tension zones and regions of compact living of ethnic minorities in Georgia and to prepare recommendations for early warning and prevention of conflicts.

It may be said without exaggeration that the post-Communist period is one of the most important stages in the history of human development. It's a very complicated and painful process of re-division of spheres of political influence followed by changing mentality and reassessment of values established by many generations. This process should in no way be considered as an ordinary phenomenon in history. Unfortunately, this period is also marked by conflicts in the whole former “Socialist camp”, which entailed enormous number of human victims, internal displacement, famine. From this standpoint, the post-Soviet space is not an exception, above all the Caucasus region with its ethnic and religious diversity.

In the recent time, the Caucasus has been in the focus of international attention, the reason for which is not only its strategically important geographic situation but also the ethnic and religious diversity - one of the main causes of conflicts in the Caucasus. The central republic in the Caucasus, Georgia, with the most diverse population among the Caucasian states, is worthy of special mention. Conflicts of various nature broke out in Georgia following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The wounds inflicted by these conflicts have not healed yet and these conflicts should be urgently resolved.

The analysis of the current situation in the conflict zones indicates that most insignificant cause may lead to re-escalation of the already existing conflicts and emergence of new areas of conflict and unrest.

The International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation is entitled to make its contribution in searching for ways of peaceful resolution of the Caucasus conflicts and prevention of new ones.

The analysis of the works done under the present Project at this stage reveals many common features of the current conflicts in Georgia, the Caucasus and entire post-Soviet space. This makes it possible to create a generalised empirical model of early warning of conflicts in the “risk zone”, which is based to some extent on the existing experience of operation of the conflict early

warning and monitoring networks (here I'd like to explain the term "risk zone" which means regions of two categories: regions where conflict has already broke out and search for ways of its peaceful settlement is underway (e.g. Nagorny Karabakh, Abkhazia, former South Ossetia), and regions of compact living of ethnic minorities where conflicts may break out). Each risk zone can be described with a complex of socio-political indicators and factors having effect on the situation existing in the region, which we shall shortly define as "state variables". There is a concrete set of state variables for each risk zone. The empirical model and state variables help assess the possibility of conflict outbreak for a given risk zone at given time. Observation of the dynamic picture of state variables allows to forecast possible development of events. The basic method for processing the data and assessing results is derived from the works of American mathematician Thomas Saaty.

Any theoretical model is useful only if correctly reflects the real situation. It's especially the case of such area of social relations as conflicts, since, as is known, they are most difficult to forecast and simulate. At the first stage of the project implementation, the research group thought it expedient to carry out an empirical model-based analysis of Georgia's current conflicts (Abkhazia, former South Ossetia). It's sort of test allowing to see the extent to which theory corresponds to reality.

The historical prerequisites and concrete objective causes contributing to the outbreak of the above two conflicts were studied in the view. The restoration of the historical-political-economical chronological picture of Abkhazia and the former South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast of the pre-conflict period and creation of a full package of state variables (or socio-political factors) for these regions have been completed at this stage.

If such test proves effective, it will be possible to say that the conflict early warning empirical model (after appropriate improvement) may become an effective mechanism of impartial assessing, analysing and forecasting events in risk zones to identify common trends and prepare recommendations for avoidance of possible conflicts.

Concrete results of data analysis for Georgia's "risk zones" based on "empirical early warning" and the essence of the method will be presented in the following issues of the bulletin.

• Security Issues

GEORGIA'S SECURITY CONCEPTION

In the previous issue of the bulletin we wrote how various state institutions and departments are dealing with development of national security conception for Georgia. We acquainted you with the conception presented by the Georgian State Border Guard Department. In this issue we present the basic provisions of the version of security conception developed by the Centre for Strategic Studies.

Professor Niko Melikadze, the director of the Centre, agreed to answer C&N questions concerning this conception.

Question: Is Georgia ready to create and adopt such document?

-The problem is that the country has first realised the problem of its own security. We first begin thinking about what security means and what is the purpose of creation of security system. Security questions arise in a sovereign state. Georgia was not sovereign for 200 years and, consequently, did not have relevant departments, personnel, systems and forms of thinking to realise and develop security conception. Most Western-European states were developing security conceptions while forming their statehood. As to Georgia, it has to do in a short time what was being formed in the historical evolution process in other countries. The security conception as reviewing this process, taking into account the present-day requirements and identifying new development priorities, is intensive throughout the world. Such conception is necessary for Georgia since the country is building its statehood.

Question: Which national security aspects were focused on, which priorities were identified?

- First of all I'd like to dwell on the non-military aspects of security conception. Traditionally, security means protection of country from military attack, protection of territorial integrity, independence and state unity against any violence. However, in the present-day world, with too transparent borders of the integrated world, reviewing and reassessing security system is necessary. Social and economic problems are coming to the fore.

I'd like to mention the following three aspects of such system:

1. Security policy (policies in various areas);
2. Institutionalisation of the system, organisational structure;
3. Legal basis.

The conception should serve as a basis for implementation of these three aspects of state government. This draft is only a working version developed to the extent allowing to discuss it. The final draft version will take into account the results of such discussions, comments, etc. Over one hundred people were involved in the development of this conception. This draft is a product of collective thinking. The development of conception was launched on the President's initiative. The National Security Council co-ordinating the national security conception development and consideration was set up by his order.

Question: What will be the fate of the conception developed by your Centre and when will it be considered by the top legislative body? When will this conception be made public?

- Security is a feeling of stability. National security is a common matter of the whole nation, it concerns security, interests of every citizen, but also it creates certain obligations. All citizens should actively participate in the security conception development process, perform certain functions in this process, they should not be only observers. All citizens should show their activity within the law, with respect to the conception and get familiarised with it. The security conception should be a guarantor of security of the whole country and give all of us the feeling of security and stability in the state.

Now, we'd like to acquaint you

with main provisions of this conception.

The conception reflects the official viewpoint of ensuring security of Georgia, considering the essential conditions creating the main trends of the government policy.

The interests of every citizen, the society and state, system of guarantees of their rights and conditions for free development are recognised as the priorities of the conception. The conception determines the guidelines of the state strategy in internal and foreign policies, in the areas of public order, defence, social policy, civil and democratic building, spiritual life, economic development.

Georgia has not much time for building its statehood. The country must form all political institutions capable to ensure their existence as soon and as effectively as possible. Among them is a security system of Georgia. First of all, it's necessary to define the term "security", identify the social mechanisms serving as a basis for its reliable operation, political structures responsible for effective operation of the state security system. A single system of inner and outer conditions decisive for forming security system and main trends of its development are analysed in this conception.

The main objectives of the conception are:

- to present the Georgian government's viewpoint on the problems related to forming security system;
- to create a rational basis for the development of Georgian security programme.
- to identify the areas of action for the near future.

Georgian Security System Structure

Sovereign statehood and effective development constitute the basis for development of the Georgian security strategy. This strategy is based on the state political system and is the choice of Georgia's people. It reflects the people's will to live and develop in accordance with its ideals and ways of life. The strategy of the country, as a rationally developed programme of embodiment of public aspirations, includes all aspects of the state life, creates a basis to control society organisation.

The general strategic policy of Georgia's development is included in the President's election campaign programme which was recognised and supported nationwide. This programme determines the following strategic areas of development of Georgia:

1. Statehood building;

- strengthening the state sovereignty and restoration of the territorial integrity;
 - continuation of the constitutional process;
 - resolution of the regional conflicts;
 - reforming the state control system;
 - development of democratic political system and strengthening Georgian parliament;
 - reforming and strengthening the executive branch of power;
 - decentralisation of the state control system and development of local self-government
-

system;

- establishing and strengthening relations with foreign countries;
- guarding of the state border and regulation of migration processes;
- army building;
- protection of the environment and natural resources.

2. Social Building:

- protection of human rights;
- strengthening national unity;
- civil society building.

3. Social and Cultural Development:

- creation and development of social security system;
- control of migration processes;
- development of culture and education system;

4. Economic Reform and Economic Development:

- forming market economy;
- development of private sector;
- creation of favourable macroeconomic environment;
- integration in the world economic system;
- liberalisation of foreign economic relations;
- attraction of foreign investments;
- active participation in international and regional economic organisations (BSEC, CIS, etc.);
- carrying out structural adjustment of the economy;
- reorganisation of economic departments;
- acceleration of privatisation processes;
- development of strategic priority sectors: energy, agriculture, transport and communication infrastructure, banking and finance sectors;
- development of export production.

Main Components of Georgia's Security System

The priority spheres of the state and social building are identified on the basis of analysis of the main problems of the Georgian development strategy. The components of the single security system are the following:

- reforming the state government system and state security;
 - settlement of regional conflicts and state security;
 - economic security;
 - state foreign policy and security;
 - military aspects and state security;
 - environmental security;
 - energy security;
 - information security;
-

- regulation of migration processes and state security;
- protection of legal order and personal security of citizens;
- public education and security of the country;
- public health care and state security.

Specific Problems of Security of Georgia

The position of each state is unique in the modern world. Unique are the fate of historical formation of social system, cultural identity of people, conditions of existence and development of a country, its nature and outer social and political environment, specific conditions of economic life of a country, aspirations of its people and existing social capital; original is the character of relations with the outer world, the neighbouring and far states; unique are the objectives of a country, policy chosen for use of its potential; unique is strategy of a country. So, the conditions determining state security are also unique.

Reconstruction of Social System

A social system reconstruction process is underway in Georgia. The new social system requires establishment of a new type of public relations based on human political and economic liberties. This form of social organisation has not formed in the process of historical development of Georgia and the country should create it.

The social system reconstruction period is the time of extreme uncertainty for the whole people. The current processes and phenomena have ceased being understandable for many, the future has become extremely vague, and the state elite plays a very important role in such situation. It should create a realistic picture of the future, develop long-term guides for social development, form state ideology. The government should stimulate these processes and actively support them.

Unity of Society

The ethnic diversity in the country poses a serious threat. In some Georgian regions, the threat of particularism is still increasing.

The real political unity of the country is based on the unity of society and social conditions of harmonised co-existence of all its constituent elements. In such situation, the presence of a system of the highest common values is most important, which requires a developed public opinion institution.

Building of Statehood

Statehood as a value means perception of one's own state as a single whole and obligation to ensure all conditions for protection of such integrity, it also implies belonging of each

group of society to the state as an integral whole; a person connects his fate with the fate of the state, shares its culture and future and thus becomes a citizen of a country. Introduction of state values ensures integration of society, being its most important condition to turn the population into a single whole.

Establishing the status of sovereign state in Georgia raises principally new problems before the public. Sovereign state must ensure physical existence of a country and all conditions for its normal development by itself. The fulfilment of all of these conditions is, above all, connected with realising statehood by the population; it's necessary to pursue such policy which can help to explain to every citizen that state protects his/her vital interests, ensures personal security and guarantees of creation of conditions for development. For the last two centuries Georgia has not had strong political institutions which could have state status, professional departments dealing with forming of state strategy, system of information, intellectual, organisational and personnel supply for them. Strengthening the executive and political branches of power is crucial.

Georgia should restore its political integrity - jurisdiction throughout the country. Aggressive separatism poses a real threat to the state unity. The conflicts in Abkhazia and Shida Kartli are an obstacle on the way to formation of statehood. Their final resolution will evidently be a long process, despite the international support. Internal conflicts, disconnection of society contribute to triggering centrifugal forces. Strengthening Georgian statehood will be the best condition for solution of these problems.

National Identity

The process of Georgia's integration in the civilised world complicates preservation of the national and culture identity. In conditions of opening information channels, intensified relations with the West and economic weakness, the cultural identity proved unprotected against the pressure of levelling global cultures, which is enhanced by spreading movie products and electronic mass media. The problem of preservation and development of cultural identity pertaining to the language, poetry, legends, customs, traditions and system of values arises. As to the cultural and national unity, the role of intellectual elites is crucial. Also, the role of the cells such as tribal and neighbour associations, group unions, co-operatives, sports clubs may be important.

Forming of Political System

The Georgian Constitution defines the principles of organising the social system and the basic form of its political structure. However, the constitutional process is not over yet, the administrative structure of the country should be yet defined. The specific forms of society's socio-political structure ensuring development of the country should be clarified.

The new political structure of Georgia is based on new principles of public order. The are designed to establish the human liberties ensuring social, political and economic relations

existing in society being not under fully controlled by the state; protection of the main human rights and liberties will be of top priority in the new system of social values. Creation of the above-mentioned social-economic environment requires creation of really guaranteed conditions for protection of spiritual and political rights and liberties of every citizen; there should be free access to information, free participation in decision-making processes. The most important problem in forming a democratic political system is creation of local self-government system. Actually, all political institutions typical of the modern democratic system have been created in Georgia up to date.

But democracy is not only its institutions, above of all, it is democratic processes.

Civil Society Building

The state government system is formed depending on the forms of relations existing in society. In democratic political environment government has to undertake overall governing if society is not ready to participate in the governing process; this excludes democracy and turns authorities into totalitarian ones. So, from the standpoint of democratic building, it becomes necessary to create a non-political space of action.

Civil society is, above all, institutionalised by non-governmental organisations which trigger civil confrontation with authorities, establish public control over the legislative, executive and judicial branches of power and become active participants in dialogue with the authorities. This provides society with the possibility of participation both in representative democracy in formation of authorities through regular elections and in implementation of direct democracy through dialogue with the authorities on day-to-day basis.

Though Georgia has not had democratically organised society, the ideals of personal freedoms and most of the Western social norms proved acceptable for the Georgians. The Georgian civil society should be formed on the basis of its own potential. The society should be actively involved in consideration of social values, aims of development and strategy of forming viewpoints of the future as well as in the process of analysing its past. Such discussions are necessary.

Strengthening of Executive Branch of Power

Effective authorities are a decisive factor for development of a country. The authorities should create necessary institutions and develop appropriate rules and norms of mutual relations to ensure development of the market economy and civil society.

In the modern world, legitimacy of authorities is the main requirement of state government system. The authorities are legitimate if they correspond to people's idea of authorities, are supported by the majority of the population, their right to govern is recognised by most of the population which agrees to obey them and co-operate with them. Legitimacy of authorities as a sign of moral-political culture of society is a necessary condition for normal state development. The authorities should not only satisfy the requirements of the population but also stimulate

public activity.

It requires an effective and strong executive branch of power. Power and strength of the executive branch of power are its capability to solve problems arising in state development process and ensure carrying out its own decisions. The forming of administrative system of the state government is not over yet; the state budget needs reforming as an important tool of government, as well as the system providing officials, the single information service of state government. Improved should be also relations between the legislative and executive branches of power in Georgia. An action policy of all main state departments for all kinds of extreme situations (armed attack, internal conflicts, terrorist acts, natural and technological disasters) should be elaborated. We are faced with difficulties in dividing political and economic functions of the executive branch of power. The forms of co-operation of the executive authority with the private sector of the economy and civil society institutions have not been fully realised.

Protection of Public Order and Personal Security of Citizens

One of the main objectives of the state security system is protection of human rights and liberties, human dignity. Personal security is the top priority in the system of top priorities of any society.

The reforming of the whole state legislative system is being carried on against the background of forming principally new forms of public order in Georgia. The reforming of judicial system has been completed at the legislative level; complicated personnel selection is underway in the preliminary investigation system; the guarantees of protection of defendants have increased; court supervision over preliminary investigation has been established; the powers of the procurator's office have been altered: it won't consider civil disputes, its internal structure has been improved, strengthening of police continues.

At the same time, the judicial institutions have not been formed so far; the conceptual and organisational formation of the system has not been completed. The problem of norm-creating activity of the state administration which is not co-ordinated either horizontally or vertically, still remains; ensuring specific legal acts has not been institutionalised; a procedure system to protect the rights of the citizens from violation by the state has not been formed; the process of rational division of the functions of the judicial system main institutions has not been completed. Human rights violation by law-enforcement bodies is still a painful problem. These circumstances promote development of a nihilist attitude toward the law and create the feeling of insecurity among the people.

Specificity of Small Countries

In terms of territory and population, Georgia is considered as a small country on the political map of the world. In the state security conception, this term means physical might of the country, its capability to protect its existence and political independence using its own forces. In the new security conception, the meaning of the factor of "smallness" changed, the priority

of the factor of social development and foreign relations increases.

Important become the state internal potential, ensuring pursuance of chosen policy of state development on the one hand, and, on the other, the extent to which such policy is protected, taking into account global and regional interests. Great attention is attached to the following:

1. Strength of internal state administrative system and support of the government by the population;
2. Political interest of big states in the region, character of tension between the great states of the world.

Georgia needs internal and external straightening. The newly emerged country has proved to be without regional unions, stable allies, clear-cut political position in the international system. Strong state administration should be formed, the forming of the army and power structures should be completed.

In the new atmosphere of protection of state security Georgia gets an opportunity to remove the threat to its physical "smallness" and create guarantees similar to those of big states. The maximal use of this opportunity is the first duty of the Georgian government and people.

Military Aspects of State Security

Defensive war is Georgia's sovereign right. Under this article of the Constitution, Georgian armed forces shall be formed for the purpose of defence and their main aim is to preserve state sovereignty, territorial integrity and peaceful life of the people. Sovereign Georgia's vital interest is capability to pursue a balanced and effective military policy. In its turn, it requires a system answering the following questions: what is potential military threat for the state, what kind of war is expected, which military forces (both in terms of quality and quantity) threaten the state, how should the state and the army be prepared for the war.

In new political, economic and social conditions, reliable military security requires rational material and financial expenses. Armed forces should not be a burden for society.

Army reform is inevitable. The problem of relations between the army and society should be settled; social and legal protection of military officials should be ensured, civil supervision over the army should be established and the functions and responsibility of different army control bodies should be divided; it's necessary to start training officers and developing military ethics.

Development of Foreign Relations

In the process of state building Georgia is looking for its place in the international community and, accordingly, it is determining and developing its relations both with individual countries and international organisations.

Cultural and political integration are guarantees of development of sovereign Georgia. In the modern world the main strategic aims of Georgia's foreign policy are as follows:

- creation of political conditions for development of cultural and economic relations with
-

other states;

- integration into the European united political, economic and social system as well as security system;
- co-operation with the CIS and Russia;
- conducting active regional co-operation policy;
- development of foreign economic relations.

Georgia encounters many problems and difficulties on the way of the implementation of this strategy. The main aim of foreign political services is to search for political tools for overcoming them and ensuring conditions for the effective use of such tools.

Social Policy

Social problems arise in the social system reforming process (with simultaneous economic system reform within its framework). The population lost the traditionally guaranteed social security. The problem of ensuring liberties arose with the achievement of political freedom. The drastic reduction of production volume entailed lowering living standard of the most part of the population. This problem got the classic form: growing economic inequality.

The process of forming the middle layer - social basis of political life - is not over. Noteworthy is also the demographic situation. Georgia is a developing country with demographic problems typical of developed countries: the section of the population (students, pensioners, disabled people, etc.) living at the expense of the actively working section of the population is large. This situation is aggravated by a great number of refugees in the country.

Development of demographic policy and its state regulation are necessary to protect state interests.

Economic System Reform

Reforming the economic system is vitally important. The forming of liberal economic environment based on the market mechanisms of the national economy is underway. The structure of the national economy formed in conditions of the Soviet economic policy does not comply with the interests of the Georgian economic development. Its typical features are: physically depreciated and obsolete fixed assets, dequalified manpower and low culture of work; extreme deficit of qualified managers, non-developed market infrastructure, small investment capital, non-developed finance and banking system; non-developed internal and foreign economic relations and local market, weakness of domestic producers and non-competitive products.

Georgia could not avoid the main economic problems. The denationalisation process failed to create effective conditions for production labour development; the large-scale state property distribution in favour of directors and nomenclature workers began before the officially announced time.

The process of division of political and economic functions is developing in the executive

branch of power, monopolist structures are being created. State budget deficit is a great threat to state security. The budget deficit is still being covered due to international technical assistance, which intensifies political influence on the country from outside. Replenishing the budget with internal resources is not carried out effectively. The current tax system is not optimal.

Reduction of state expenses is an important way to reduce the deficit of the state budget. In this view, special emphasis should be placed on the state-financed areas on which formation the former ideology had the strongest effect. In Georgia this ideology most strongly affected science and culture. True, these areas played a great role in development of the national culture, but their current structure, scope and organisational form created to satisfy the ambitions and requirements of the great power are extremely extravagant and not effective, they do not correspond to the country's economic capability.

As to the Georgian economic development strategy, special attention is paid to development of strategic priority sectors: energy, agriculture, transport and communication infrastructure, banking and finance sectors as well as development of export production. Individual strategy and development programme should be elaborated for each of the sectors.

Use of Geopolitical Potential

In the political environment formed late in the 20th century, the Caucasian region found itself in the sphere of interests of the developed world. The vast area of the Central and East Asia with its numerous population and rich natural resources is considered as an important potential market and strategic source of energy and resources by industrially developed Europe.

The Caucasus will have the possibility to be included in the service transport system in the goods turnover between these regions. Also, Georgia will be given the possibility of providing services to passengers. The country should join the system of transit oil and gas transportation from Central Asia. The construction of the transport corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) indicates the interest of West European countries in the region. The transport corridor is of great strategic importance, both economically and politically, not only for Georgia but also for all states of the region: new transport routes will create additional conditions for protection of their political and economic independence; reliable conditions for political and economic stability which will greatly increase the possibility of peaceful resolution of ethnic conflicts will be created. Transportation of energy carriers and other goods will entail revival of various sectors of the economy, creation of new jobs and adequate infrastructure, new sources for state budget replenishment, road repair, development of tourism; introduction of qualitatively new forms of transport services in the new competition environment. The Eurasian transit routes, will include, along with the West-East route, the North-South route. Georgia has sufficient potential for creation of a transport corridor in this direction.

Anti-Corruption Policy

Corruption as a social phenomenon is a sign of degeneracy of public and administrative functions in a country. Corruption depraves the entire political system of a country and, actually, entails overall paralysis of state government system. Corruption is especially dangerous in a period of reform of social system when the established values, generally recognised public relations are falling into decay, the state power is weakened. Social tension within society - aggravation of economic situation, social conflicts, erosion of administrative system, refugees - immediately results in outburst of corruption.

The problem of corruption is especially topical in new democratic societies. Combating corruption requires comprehensive measures, taking into account specific situation in a country and its cultural peculiarities. Corruption know no borders. International co-operation is necessary in fighting against this phenomenon. The Georgian president declared corruption a priority objective of the country.

Protection of Nature and Use of Natural Resources

Protection of nature is important for state security. The environment and use of the natural resources are a stable basis for integration of the countries of the region. The national interests are: protection of the environment and natural resources, their correct and effective exploitation. The regional security interests require a policy based on compromises and co-operation.

The serious technogenic problems arisen in the region may entail disasters for other states. This makes it necessary to create a single regional nature control system, which is not always easy to do from the political standpoint.

Information

In the present-day world, information and communication systems have become an important state strategic resource. This resource is essential for state political and social might, state economic development, ensuring security system. Social integration is possible only in conditions of information freedom and diversity of social forms of providing it.

The Georgian information system formed in the Soviet times meet the requirements of centralised planned management of it. Its typical features were: closed information, firm centralised system of collection and processing of information.

The object of information security is information resources such as data banks, knowledge bases, audio and video records, as well as information infrastructure including dissipation and keeping of information, data processing and programming-engineering complexes of its dissipation. If reliable information is not provided to society, state security is faced with real threat.

Creation of information supply system to be integrated into the world information network is vitally important to Georgia.

The material prepared for publication by Tina Gogueliani.



European Actionweek Against Racism

14-22 March 1998

The UN General Assembly declared March 21 international actionday against racial discrimination in response to the murder of seventy protesters in Sharpevil, South Africa, in 1960.

During this week, dozens of thousands of people will express their commitment to equality and tolerance. The anti-racism campaign in Europe indicates yet another time that a great number of people believes in the present and future of open cross-cultural society. The campaign will give us new impetus for fighting against racism and intolerance on a day-to-day basis.

• Conflicts

Kosovo - International Problem

Serbia is a country with the population of 10.1 million, Serbs make up 66 % of the population, 17 % are Albanians dominating in Kosovo. It's a region of ethnic tension between the Serbs and Albanians. Most of the Albanians have settled in the region over the past 50 years. The Hungarians make up 4% and concentrated in Vojevodino. Rumanians, Croats, Ruts, Turks and Slovaks are also living in Serbia.

The Dreniza region - 1200 sq.m., with the population of about 60,000 people, Albanians make up 90 % of the



The beginning of the spring was marked by a terrible bloodshed in the region of Dreniza, Kosovo (capital-Pristina). When demanding independence, the Albanians making up 90 % percent of the population of the region, were attacked by the Serb police. Peaceful civilians were killed in the clash. Albanian newspapers



circulated throughout the world through Internet published pictures of atrocious murders of civilians. At least 24 Albanians, including children (aged from 3 to 10), women and elderly, were killed. Belgrade regards them as terrorists.

War. People dying, houses in ruins, firing from the ground and air. Population leaving their homes.

Another serious clash took place near the villages of Dongi Prekaz and Lausha, 25 kilometres from the capital of the region - Pristina. By the that time the sides reported 50 killed, though, according to other information, their number was up to 75 persons.

Ibrahim Rugov, the leader of the Kosovo Democratic Union (LDK) was elected president of the self-proclaimed republic in 1992 and

is remaining in this position up to date. The Liberation Army of Kosovo (UCK) called for nation-wide mobilisation of all young Albanians without exception, no matter if they lived in Kosovo, Albania or Macedonia.



The threat of ethnic conflict between the Albanians and Serbs, and also indirect religious conflict (most Albanians are Moslems) became imminent. The recent clashes in the Serb province of Kosovo is a result of tension between the majority of Albanian population and the Serb authorities in Kosovo which has lasted for over 10 years.

This region was the main place of the Serbs' battle against the Ottoman Empire, which was lost more than six centuries ago. The Serbs lost and the Albanians won the land in Kosovo. The Albanians settled there and their number increased during the Turkish rule. The population ratio changed. As a result, the Albanian population prevails in Kosovo - 90%. The Albanian authorities in Kosovo have the form of parallel government. The situation became tense.

The international community got engaged in the conflict resolution process. The Albanians living in the Kosovo region demand restoration of the autonomy they had between 1974 and 1989. Until conceptual solution of the problem is not found, the negotiating process cannot make progress. In the recent time, the Albanians demand independence for the region.

The leaders of the member states of the leading international organisations try to avoid the mistakes made in the Bosnian conflict. Russia is persuading Serbia's leaders not to internationalise the events in Kosovo and is against imposition of economic sanctions. Russia questions the effectiveness of the meeting of the foreign ministers of the six countries: Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the USA and Russia. The neighbouring states, such as Greece, Bulgaria, Rumania and Turkey, got involved in the conflict resolution.



The Kosovo events had influenced relations between the states, having changed them in terms of support of the Serb or Albanian sides. The world community divided into two parts. The West threatens Serbia with sanctions and the USA does not exclude use of weapons, whereas Russia reaffirms its solidarity with the Serbs as a country "ready to protect their religions orthodox Slav brother from being torn to pieces by the Moslems".

The Kosovo confrontation will hardly remain an "internal affair" of Serbia. The situation is almost unpredictable, so the question arises: Will Kosovo become a new seat of war in the Balkans?

Teo Kandelaki

Photographs from Internet

• Terror

Terrorism: End Justifies Means?

The February incident in Georgia, an assassination attempt on the president of the country, which had repercussions throughout the world, reminded of the terrible threat of the 20th century, and, probably, also the 21st century, to everybody. The failed terrorist act prompted us to acquaint in more detail our readers with the results of studies and opinions of experts on these theme.

In the past, groups of persons or individuals were engaged in terrorism *. They killed heads of state or officials, though others replaced them, and terrorist acts did not have much effect on the events. At present, terrorists have actually unlimited possibility of creating chaos. The electronic age also had an effect on the dark forces of society, their destructive capacity has enormously increased. What they can do through information war, or use of bacteriological, chemical and nuclear weapons poses a threat to a much greater number of people than it could be imagined, say, several decades ago.

After its emergence in the form of armed attacks on royal persons and state figures late in the 19th century, terrorism has been undergoing continuous modification. Leftist terrorists were replaced by anarchists operating in Germany, Italy and Japan in the 1970s. Then the rightist took the initiative.

The modern terrorism is mostly of ethnic and religious character. One of its feature is worthy of special attention: terrorists' interest in wide coverage of terrorists acts in mass media for having greater repercussions. The aim of such acts is clear: to influence and intimidate the majority of population and thus influence governments.

The composition, number of members and principles of terrorist groups have become more diverse in the recent years.

The 20th century statistical data indicates that 70 heads of state, 555 state figures have been killed by terrorists.

In 1992, 364 terrorist acts were committed, in 1993 - 427 and in 1994 – 1502 (the growth in number is evident).

Georgia is also on this sad list:

* English politician and philosopher Edmund Burk first used the term "terrorism" in the present-day meaning of the word in his work on the French revolution.

assassination of Tbilisi prosecutor Mikhail Kurdadze;
 explosion on Chikovani street;
 assassination of Mkhedrioni armed group members Vepkhvadze, Svanidze and Talakhadze;
 assassination of Democracy and Revival Foundation Chairman Soliko Khabeishvili;
 assassination of general Gia Gulua;
 assassination of National Democratic Party Chairman Georgi Chanturia;
 two failed assassination attempt on Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze;
 hostage-taking of UN military observers in Jikhaskari, Western Georgia.

Assassinations, assassination attempts, taking and detention of hostages, means of transportation, various facilities, organising explosions, kidnapping, arson etc. are considered as terrorist acts in some international legal documents.

After the first case of hijacking a plane in 1958, 117 such attempts have been made in the CIS territory. Cases of taking and hijacking aircraft have become especially frequent in the past 5 years.

The leading Western countries have long been concerned over international terrorism. The present-day society calls for creation of common international conception to define terrorism and fight against it.

The official documents defining the ways of combating terrorism were adopted at international meetings:

1962 - The Tokyo Convention on Offences on Board Aircraft.

1970 - The Hague Convention on Hijacking Aircraft.

1971 - The Montreal Convention on Illegal Acts Against Civil Aviation Security Measures.

1973 - The Convention on Illegal Acts against Persons being under International Protection and Punishment of Criminals

1979 - The International Convention on Fighting Against Hostage-Taking

1988 - Addendum to the Montreal Convention.

1991 - The Convention on Marking Plastic Explosives for Their Detection

May 4, 1994 - Georgia joined the international acts on fighting against terrorism (the conventions adopted in Tokyo, the Hague and Montreal).

At present, each state is guided by its own criteria in defining terrorism and fights against its using its own forces.

Types of Terrorism

There are several types of terrorism which are greatly different by their roots, aims and

scope.

Criminal terrorism - taking of means of transportation and hostages for money

Herostrates terrorism - terrorist acts of schizoids.

Ideological terrorism (revolutionary, religious-fanatical) - it is rooted not in notoriety or desire for money but in defects of political and economic system of society.

Terrorism of insurgent organisations in countries with dictatorial regimes - kind of ideological terrorism but with more severe consequences.

Guerrilla terrorism - punitive measures targeted at occupants. Organised national liberation operations similar to guerrilla movement: in both cases, it is resistance to foreign state.

State terrorism - most dangerous form of terrorism since it tramples on the common human values on a broader scale. Nowadays it is well-organised and is marked by emergence of presently well-known terrorist organisations.

According to expert estimates, there are about 100 big terrorist groups in various developed countries. These groups maintain contacts between each other on a permanent basis and their purpose is to prepare terrorist acts, exchange of information and financial support of criminal activity. Such groups are aimed at political game, are engaged business, participate in elections, while purely terrorist groups provide all assistance to them.

The following terrorist groups are most often mentioned in the mass media: The Irish Republican Army (IRA, North Ireland), "Motherland and Freedom" (ETA, Basque terrorist group), Hamas (Palestine resistance movement), Islamic Jihad (fundamentalist organisation) Abu Sajaf (Philippine Islamic Group), Tamil-Ilam Liberation Tigers (Shri Lanka), Hezbollah (Shiah organisation), Ku-Klux-Klan (anti-Semite organisation), Kurdish Worker's Party (KKP, Kurdish terrorist organisation on the territory of Germany), Corsican National Liberation Front (organisation of Corsican nationalists), Tupak Amaru (the hostage-taking in the Japanese Embassy in Lima, Peru, which became known throughout the world), Aum Sinrike (Japanese religious sect)

Israel, Italy, Algeria, Egypt, Turkey, France, Bolivia, Columbia, Spain, Germany, England most suffered from terrorism.

There are countries supporting terrorism: Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Jordan, Syria, Afghanistan.

The analysis of terrorist activity in different countries indicates that this phenomenon is multifaceted. This partially explains the fact that neither the international law nor criminal law of individual states does not contain a clear and single definition of terrorism.

In view of experts, among the existing definitions of terrorism, the most acceptable is the following: terrorism is use of non-state violence or threat of violence to create panic in society, weaken and even topple the government and cause political changes.

The material prepared by Teo Kandelaki

• elections

NEW PRESIDENT, NEW HOPES

As a result of presidential elections, one of the leaders of the Karabakh movement, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, came to power in Armenia in 1990. At that time many pinned great hopes on the new government and president, above all, for the Karabakh conflict resolution in favour of Armenia.



Robert Kocharyan

His government was marked by the breaking of the blockade, beginning of some economic growth and, what's more important, the conflict became moderate to some extent after cessation of military operations and conclusion of the peace agreement in May 1994.

President actively participated in the negotiations on peaceful, non-violent resolution of the crisis.

A new Armenian ideology was being formed, under the guidance of the government and president the country launched state building, formation of state structures. It is from this time that his friends and supporters began leaving power one by one.

The processes of forming real and strong opposition which forced President Ter-Petrosyan to leave the post of president began in 1997. At the 1996 elections, his main rival was Vazgen Manukyan, whose program reflected a radical position on the Karabakh conflict. The program of Ter-Petrosyan was vague, it did not propose concrete ways of the crisis resolution, the presidential campaign slogan "Victory, Stability, Progress" did not imply any concrete actions. According to some information, Vazgen Manukyan won the 1996 presidential elections, having received 1 percent more votes than his rival, but the tanks of Defence Minister Vazgen Sarkisyan prevented him from entering the presidential palace.

Ter-Petrosyan was elected president but he felt his position as not stable and the people did not trust him any more. To win support of the people and political parties, he dismissed the prime minister and replaced him by the head of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic Robert Kocharyan to use him in his interest and neutralise the radical opposition. However, Kocharyan did not intend to reconcile with



Karen Demirchyan

the role of puppet.

He was the head of the Karabakh State Defence Committee and first president of the unrecognised republic.

Serious military victories of the Karabakh Armenians in the areas of Fizuli, Kelba-Jar, Zangelan, Kubatli and Agdam are associated with his name. His emergence as prime minister made the Armenians recall the role of Karabakh in the Armenian political life and further strengthened the position of the Karabakh group in the country's power structures.

Against such changes in the government, the president's statement on a "new approach" to the conflict settlement seemed especially strange. Levon Ter-Petrosyan could not but predict possible reaction of the prime minister and other radically-minded members of the government and most of the political parties of Armenia. The state of the society could be defined as "we don't want war but we do not intend to lose Karabakh".

In his speeches, in his article "War or Peace? The Time to Think" published in the newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, the president called for compromise with Azerbaijan and placed emphasis on preservation of Nagorny Karabakh as a territory inhabited by the Armenians; he believed that independence of the former autonomous republic was unrealistic, admitting that "Armenian is stronger today, but this won't last forever". Ter-Petrosyan proposed to return the territory until the status is determined. In fact, he agreed to the peace plan of the so-called OSCE Minsk Group, which envisages a stage-by-stage solution of the problem.

The president's position was regarded as betrayal in Karabakh and caused sharp reaction of the opposition political parties in Armenia. Official Stepanakert insisted on returning the territory taken in the war in exchange for the status of Nagorny Karabakh, but it turned out that the Armenian president failed to protect the national interests. The Karabakh residents protested; the president's initiatives were met at dagger points in his own team as well.

Interior and National Security Minister Serge Sarkisyan, along with Defence Minister Vazgen Sarkisyan, supported the anti-president coalition in the government. This alignment of forces was fatal for Petrosyan.

Struggle for power began. The opposition had a radical position on the conflict resolution, all its members came to politics from the Karabakh war and they could not accept the idea of concessions to Azerbaijan.

According to unofficial information, it was the so-called power officials who forced the president to resign, having said they refused subordinate to him. This happened following the president's attempt to bring their question to parliament for discussion.

Pressure was exerted on the president's closest associates who had to leave the political scene one by one. Foreign Minister Alexander Arzumanyan, head of the Armenian Central Bank, Yerevan Mayor Vano Siradegyan tendered their resignation. The parliamentary faction of the ruling party, the Armenian National Movement, disintegrated after their withdrawal.

The result of the struggle for power is known: the president resigned and presidential

elections were scheduled for March 16, 1998.

It was clear from the very beginning of the election campaign that the main candidate for president will be Robert Kocharyan. However, the Constitution article saying that only Armenian citizen residing in the republic for the past ten years may become president of Armenia was an obstacle for Kocharyan coming to power, though the same Constitution allows any member of the Armenian diaspora to hold top positions in Armenia.

As compared to gentle intellectual Petrosyan, the electors liked his firmness and resolve in actions which, in view of many, would be useful in reforming activity and decriminalisation of the power structures.

Armenian opposition representative Vazgen Manukyan was regarded as Kocharyan's main opponent. Unlike the case in 1996, he was not the leader of the united opposition to Petrosyan any more. Leader of the Armenian Communists Sergo Badalyan, as well as Paruir Airikyan, one of the main dissidents of the former USSR and close relative of Ter-Petrosyan, former ambassador at large David Shakhnazaryan also ran for presidency. Nobody expected the re-emergence of former first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia Karen Demirchyan on the scene.

It became clear at the first stage of the election campaign that the main struggle will be between Kocharyan, Demirchyan and Manukyan.

In the first round, the most number of votes were received by Armenian Prime Minister Robert Kocharyan (38%), and former first secretary of the Communist Party of the Armenian SSR Karen Demirchyan.

In the second round, Kocharyan became the leader again not only in Armenia but also in Armenian Embassies in foreign countries. He won in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Greece, Austria, Lebanon and Iran, while his opponent won in Ukraine, Georgia and Bulgaria. According to the final data, the vote distribution was as follows: Kocharyan- 59.49%, Demirchyan - 40.51%; thus the president for the next five years was elected.

The new head of Armenia will be faced with many problems in the implementation of the election program, including solution of political, economic, social and other problems. Kocharyan repeatedly mentioned replenishment of the budget with tax and customs revenues among the priority economic problems. He believes that the country has entered 1998 with the tax legislation providing favourable conditions for investors. Above all, investors should be Armenians living abroad. The new president intends to remove all obstacles on the way to attraction of investments from the Armenian diaspora and other finance sources. Robert Kocharyan insists on introduction of dual citizenship in the country, which will "remove psychological barriers for the Armenian diaspora".

If the newly elected president is able to break the isolation of the government from the people, calm the opposition through providing a seat in the government to it, this will become a step on the way to stability and civil society. Also let's see what the policy on the Karabakh pro-

blem will bring - positive results or new freezing? The new president believes that the Karabakh problem could be solved through recognition of the right of Nagorno-Karabakh to self-determination, security and geographical connection with Armenia. He supports direct negotiations between the sides and he doesn't rule out that the negotiation may be trilateral. Kocharyan does not intend to agree to compromises.

Kocharyan believes that Armenia's main strategic partner was and remains Russia.

The events in Armenia indicated yet another time that the Karabakh factor is one of the most important one in Armenia's politics. The time will show how the new government and president will manage to cope with this problem.

• Dialogue

Confidence Building

The first meeting of representatives of Georgian and Abkhaz non-governmental organisations in the framework of the project "Confidence Building Measures in Georgia/Abkhazia" funded by the European Union's TACIS program took place in Sochi on April 1-4. The equal partners in the project are: International Alert (IA), London; International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN), Tbilisi; the foundation "Civil Initiative - Man of the Future" (CIMF), Sukhumi. Six meetings should be held within the project framework. The purpose of this project is to provide the participants with the possibility to meet to exchange ideas, viewpoints and professional experience, as well as the possibility of co-operation; implementation of joint or parallel projects facilitating the restoration of trust between the two sides. The following persons are engaged in the project:

Project facilitator: **Ed Garcia** (IA special political adviser, whose country of origin is Philippines). The project co-ordinating team: **Gevork Ter-Gabrielian** (manager of programs for the former Soviet Union - FSU, IA), **George Khutsishvili** (ICCN director), **Manana Gurgulia** (CIMFco-chairman). IA officers: **Martin Honeywell** (IA director), **Phil Champaign** (IA training manager), **Sofi Cook** (IA officer for FSU projects), **Sara Gil** (finance officer).

The participants in the meeting were selected according to their ability to suggest ideas and initiatives aimed at development of co-operation and overcoming aggression.

The following representatives of the regions and states of the North and South Caucasus were the participants of the Sochi meeting:

Abdulayeva Heda. Research worker of the Institute of Humanities Studies of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, adviser for culture of the representation office of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in the Russian Federation.

Jangiryan Svetlana. Nagorno-Karabakh Committee of Helsinki Initiative - 92, Stepanakert.

Khatukayev Khaji-Murat. General Secretary of the International Circassian Association, MP of the Karachayevo-Circassian Republic.

Nedolyan Ara. Editor-in-chief of the 'Gnosis' journal, Yerevan, Armenia.

(Note: The invited Azeri representative was unable to arrive for the meeting.)

The Abkhaz side was represented by:

Bartsits Marina. Eth-nologist, the Abkhaz Institute of Humanitarian Studies.

Gumba Tsiza. Lawyer, MP of the Republic of Abkhazia.



Gurgulia Manana. De-puty director of the news

agency Abkhazpress, co-chairman of the foundation Civil Initiative - Man of the Future, project co-ordinator on the part of Abkhazia.

Kerselyan Diana. Student of the faculty of philology of the Abkhaz State University.

Khagba Vakhtang. Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Abkhazia, president of the Abkhaz Association for UN Assistance.

Kobakhia Batal. Head of the Centre for Humanitarian Programs, Sukhumi.

Lepsaya Abesalom. Historian, research worker of the Abkhaz Institute of Humanitarian Studies.

Mikaa Levan. Historian, teacher of the Abkhazian State University, MP of the republic of Abkhazia.

Narmania Timur. Student of the law faculty of the Abkhaz State University, the foundation Civil Initiative - Man of the Future.

The Georgian side was represented by:

Anchabadze George. Professor, doctor of sciences (history), co-chairman of the non-governmental organisation 'Abkhazeti'.

Darjania Manana. Journalist, Resident (IDP) of Abkhazia. At present, administrative assistant for the Georgian-Abkhaz dialogue project on the Georgian part.

Devdariani Nana. Journalist, chairman of the Co-ordination Council of Women's Non-Governmental Organisations of Georgia.

Geradze Levan. Resident (IDP) of Abkhazia, member of the Board of Youth Organisations of Georgia, presidium member of the Abkhaz Peace Foundation.

Zurabyan Elza. Surgeon, candidate of sciences (medicine), member of the public Council

under the Georgian President, member of the Co-ordination Council of the Union of the Citizens of Georgia.

Lordkipanidze George. Biophysicist, candidate of sciences (bi-ology), member of the non-governmental research centre East-West.

Margania Teimuraz. Neuropathologist.

Nizharadze George. Candidate of sciences (psychology), member of the executive council of the Open Society - Georgia Foundation.

Odisharia Guram. Writer, resident (IDP) of Abkhazia.

Pagava Marina. Doctor, resident (IDP) of Abkhazia, president of the non-governmental organisation Help Yourself.

Khutsishvili George. Doctor of sciences (philosophy), director of the International Centre on Conflict and Negotiation, project co-ordinator on the Georgian part.

Tsuladze George. Doctor of sciences (his-

tory).

“I promise you a different and better future . . . if you have enough skills, valour and strength to create it with your hands”...

- This abstract from Albert Camus's essay “Prometheus in Hades” seemed most suitable for the beginning of the Georgian-Abkhaz meeting with the participation of representatives of other Caucasian peoples.

One of the meeting participants, Mr. Khaji-Murat Khatukayev said: “We should use reason and every possibility so that our children could live in peace and accord. We have not much learned from the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict so far. If we thoroughly analyse the 1992-1993 events in Georgia and Abkhazia, we shall be able to avoid conflicts in future. Please note the similarity of our problems. We shall be able to draw a common conclusion and implement common plans only through sitting face to face at the negotiating table. We have experienced the tragedy of the Caucasian war of the past century, and would not like to be “pawns in somebody else's game””. That was the standpoint of the “mediators” (how we perceived the Caucasian participants in the Georgian-Abkhaz meeting)



which also contributed to the beginning of the work in the atmosphere of ease and freedom, with the desire to achieve a compromise with respect to the interests of the parties.

The participants got acquainted with the current socio-political situation in the Georgian and Abkhaz societies, and in the whole Caucasus. Georgia's position in the Caucasian context raised particular interest of the sides. Professor Khutsishvili, the project co-ordinator on the Georgian part, said that "the time has come to search for ways to switch over to a basically new stage of co-operation and interaction of the peoples of the Caucasus, which will prove that this region is self-governable and has political and economic capacity for its development. May the unresolved conflicts (Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, etc.) be an obstacle on the way to the unification of the Caucasus? To avoid this, we should take into account the common Caucasian interests, which, above all, means economic and cultural co-operation". It was noted that historically, Georgia is the conductor of the ideas of unification of the Caucasus due to its geopolitical situation.

Despite the general interest of the participants in the standpoint, problems and outlook of the present-day Georgia, the distrust factor was still present and was worded. The question arises: What prevents Abkhazia from trusting Georgia and the idea of the common Caucasian Home?

The Abkhaz participants' answer:

1) Uncertain status of Abkhazia in the Caucasus: What role will be given to Abkhazia in the common Caucasian Home? 'Younger brother' again?

2) Call by some Georgian political elites "to coerce Abkhazia to peace" (the so-called Dayton model), an attempt to show all initiatives of the Abkhaz side in a negative way.

3) Continuing economic blockade.

"The Georgian politicians are doing their utmost to prevent us from getting recovered, but Abkhazia has rich resources. Strabo wrote that



people from many countries gathered in Dioscuria, 70 languages could be heard there", noted the Abkhaz delegation members.

"Indeed, any blockade is to the detriment of people and contributes to radicalisation of public opinion. We should not forget that diversity of languages was one of the important factors not only in Dioscuria but also in Tskhum, Sukhum-Kale and Sukhumi. Today, revival of Abkhazia should become a common matter of all its citizens, including those who were forced to leave it.

Abkhazia should become multinational again. Without understanding this, we obstruct achieving trust and accord in societies” - that was the response of the Georgian side.



The participants in the first meeting came to an agreement on the meaning of the Caucasian home. The parties agreed that the Caucasian Home is not a political union, it's a community united by common principles in which recognised and unrecognised states, as well as peoples, organisations and even individuals may be represented. Thus a project entitled “The Caucasus – 21st Century” emerged, and it is

not alone.

Another proposed project entitled “Forming Peace Culture in the Caucasus - Document of Human Solidarity” is aimed at collecting, publishing and making public the facts of mutual assistance by Georgian and Abkhaz, their mutual life saving during the war. A group of researchers are already doing this work.

As usual, the sides could not avoid political discussions and arguments at the meeting of non-governmental organisations. But the following became clear: the trust already exists at the civil level, in human communication. Now, will the spark of trust and accord emerged during the meeting reach our societies and shall we manage to help them in forming tolerance and citizen attitude depends on our joint efforts.

It seems that we touched the thin thread of Ariadne in a dark labyrinth, we said in conclusion to each other.

Five more meetings on confidence building measures will be

held. We hope for progress not only in resolving the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, we hope that we shall achieve more: we shall be able to develop a common peace construction in the Caucasus.



Manana Darjania

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- International organizations

INTERNATIONAL ALERT

International Alert is a non-governmental, non-political organisation working in the fields of conflict resolution and human rights. The organisation was founded by the human rights activist Martin Ennals in 1985 to oppose regular human rights violation typical of any violent conflict. The organisation emerged from the commitment to protection of social justice and human rights of all peoples, united or divided by state borders, throughout the world. The IA is working for ensuring peace and stability in the countries shaken by violent conflicts. The IA concrete strategic objectives are the following:

- *to help bring peace to the countries with internal conflict,*
- *to participate in practical development and application of early warning systems and conflict prevention strategies and mechanisms,*
- *to promote preventive diplomacy at all levels of potential and existing conflicts,*
- *persuade the world community of the necessity of preventive diplomacy and conflict transformation,*
- *create and strengthen strategic coalitions including both governments and citizens, despite traditional barriers,*
- *develop and support the possibilities of conflict resolution and prevention through training on site.*
- *to lay the foundation of peace-making organisations based on the initiative of citizens, which would operate over a longer term.*
- *to protect human rights and conditions for all-sided development of groups and individuals both within the national borders and internationally, to search for and offer conceptions and measures which would protect and cause respect of the rights of ethnic, religious, linguistic and other minorities,*
- *to provide the possibility for dialogue and discussion aimed at international conflict resolution and offer mediation, if necessary.*

The organisation is carrying out activities aimed at exerting influence on the policy of the international community and contributing to conflict prevention. The organisation developed an early conflict identification network project allowing to identify the areas of possible future conflicts. The headquarters are located in London, the organisation has no regional offices, it prefers to work directly through co-operation with partners. Its activity is performed at different levels: political level, level of middle leaders, non-governmental organisations, etc. The organisation facilitates establishing dialogue between conflicting parties, develops strategies for establishing peace, trust between them.

“Violation of Human Rights and Discrimination of Meskh Repatriates in Georgia”

The Union of the Georgian Repatriates, with the assistance of the US Information Agency (USIA) held in Tbilisi, April 15-16, a conference on the theme “Violation of Human Rights and Discrimination of the Meskh Repatriates in Georgia”. The presentation of the booklet “Legal Status of the Meskh Repatriates in Georgia” was also on the conference agenda. The booklet was published within the framework of the project “Studying Violation of Human Rights and Discrimination of the Meskh Repatriates in Georgia” (with USIA financial support). The author of the booklet is NGO entitled Union of the Georgian Repatriates, Chairman Marat Baratashvili. The booklet is simultaneously published in the Georgian, Russian and English languages.

The deported Meskhs (often incorrectly united under the name of Meskhetian Turks) are the only group of the victimised for political reasons in the entire post-Soviet space which has not been legally rehabilitated. It was noted at the conference that the Georgian government does not fulfil the paragraphs on restoration of the rights of deported peoples of the Action Program adopted in Geneva on May 30-31, 1996.

The conference resolution reads: the legislative acts adopted by the Georgian parliament in the recent time, in particular the Law On Recognition of Georgian Citizens as Victims of Political Repression and Social Protection of the Victimised, Law On Refugees, are discriminating toward the Meskhs. The law applies only to the citizens of Georgia and “does not apply to the persons considered as members of

ethnic groups deported in the period between February 25, 1921 and October 28, 1990. The rehabilitation procedure for them will be determined separately”. So, the law does not apply to 90 percent of the victimised - not only the Meskhs but also the Germans, Greeks, Kurds.

To correct the current situation, the conference resolved:

1. To request the Georgian parliament to speed up the adoption of the law rehabilitating the deported Meskhs.

2. To request the Georgian President for:
 - a) the full-scale implementation of the state program on solution of legal and social problems of the Meskhs deported from and repatriated in Georgia, which was approved by the president;

- b) taking measures to implement the Action Program.

3. To approach the relevant international organisation with a proposal on creation of a permanent working group including representatives of the OSCE, IMO, HCREC, UNO, Georgian legislative and executive authorities, International Association of Victimised Peoples, Meskhian NGOs for co-ordination of actions aimed at favourable solution of the problem of the deported Meskhs.

Guram Mamulia, the head of the Georgian Department for Repatriation noted: “The state conception on solution of the problem of the Meskh repatriates should be first clearly formulated, then it should be analysed what the executive and legislative authorities are doing and what they can do for the implementation of

such conception.”

Georgia has clearly determined that this people is of the Georgian origin and should return to the Georgian state. As to the future of this people within Georgia, whether it will be a Turkish ethnic minority or an ethnic group in Georgia, it's clearly determined: The Georgian state policy is aimed at restoration of the historical roots of these people. They are repatriated not for the purpose of creation a Turkish ethnic minority since its was the injustice once committed against the Meskhs to make them non-Georgians, deprive them of their homeland.

This people is a victim of ethnocide and the Georgian President's Decree confirms this. The international convention and the relevant legislative acts indicate that state has no right to change any religious or ethnic groups through resettling other ethnic groups and thus change the existing ethnic balance. I must say that now this balance is changed in favour of the Armenians in Meskhetia. Taking into account the fact that the return to Meskhetia is voluntary, the international organisations won't recognise the change in the ethnic balance in this region since the people is a victim of ethnocide and has the right to return to its historical homeland. True, this people has the right to live in any region of Georgia, and when this process begins, it will go on only on the legal and constitutional basis”.

As to the opinion that the legislative acts are discriminating toward the Meskh repatriates, G. Mamulia said on this score: “First, it contains the reference that a special law on deported peoples will be adopted. It's a general statement and the law shouldn't refer to anything to be adopted in future. The law does not clearly define the legal norms. It does not specify what will be adopted - a rule, law or regulatory act. And what's most important, the time is not fixed: When? Will a

separate legislative act or law be adopted for the persons considered as belonging to ethnic groups deported in the period between February 25, 1921 and October 28, 1990?

Moreover, the Meskhs living in Georgia over 10 years cannot enjoy the rights provided by the existing law. At the same time the main principle of equality of the citizens of Georgia is violated. The law also violates the rights of the Meskh in another way: Article 14 says that the people having the appropriate documents on rehabilitation received from the Soviet state shall be considered as victims of political repression. The Meskhs and Germans from Germany are the only ethnic groups which were rehabilitated in the Soviet times.

The law cannot and should not divide people by nationality and make selective choice with respect to some ethnic group. All the more so since present-day Georgia is responsible toward this people at least because it is the legal successor of the 1921 Constitution in the period when this people were citizens of Georgia. Undoubtedly, it's discrimination in view of legal norms, and it should be corrected. The first thing to be done is to determine the status of repatriates by the parliament and it should be applied, above all, to the Meskhs, but specify: directly to the people who are victims of ethnocide, with the international right to return to their historical homeland, restoration of the nationality and name, integration in the Georgian society as part of the Georgian nation as soon as possible.

Because of the absence of such legal acts, the state program signed by the Georgian President cannot be implemented”.

Manana Darjania

დღეს ნომერშია:

NEWMEC - ეთნიურ, სოციალურ, რელიგიურნიადაგზე აღმოსენებული კონფლიქტების აღრეული გამოვლენისა და მონიტორინგის ქსელი 4

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კონფლიქტები და მოლაპარაკებები

იბაძღვა კონფლიქტოლოგიისა და მოლაპარაკებათა სტრატეგიის საერთაშორისო ცენტრის მიერ

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Conflicts & Negotiations

Published by the International Center on Conflict and Negotiation

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