

IDPs in Georgia

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*Focus Group
Report*

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INTRODUCTION

To cast greater light on the views of persons displaced from Abkhazia as a result of the 1992–1993 war, CRRC-Georgia, in cooperation with Conciliation Resources (CR) and with the financial support of the European Union, carried out focus groups (FGs) with internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently living in private accommodation in the Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Zugdidi areas. A qualitative tool for gaining deeper insight into public opinion, these FGs allowed IDPs in private accommodation to voice their thoughts on three key themes: return, conflict resolution and justice.

In total, six FGs were held, two in each city, in July 2010. Each FG had about ten participants. Participants were divided by location and age. The participants aged between 18 and 30 are referred to throughout this report as the **younger group**, while the second group, aged 31 and above, is called the **older group**.

The FG summaries, comparisons and discussions are based on the four themes held in the questions: an introductory question, followed by the Return, Conflict Resolution, and Justice sections. The report is divided into four main parts:

- The discussions on each of the four themes are summarized in detail, using selected illustrative quotes to emphasize some of the participants' answers.
- The comparisons between the two age groups and between the three cities highlight some of the visibly different answers people gave on specific questions during the discussions.
- The full discussions follow, with the question and the respective list of answers. The answers from all six FGs are combined under each question, and a short summary begins each list of quotes so as to contextualize the topics within each question.
- Methodological notes are given after the quotes, followed by the FG selection matrices in Appendix I and the full FG question guide in Appendix II.

These FGs are meant to complement the “IDPs in Georgia” survey, carried out by CRRC in June 2010, from which the FG discussion questions were developed. As such, CRRC and CR hope that this research will provide a better indication of the views and opinions of privately accommodated IDPs in Georgia.

FOCUS GROUP SUMMARIES

“Introduction” Summary

What people would change about their lives

As an introduction question to the FG discussion, the participants were asked about the one thing they would like to change about their lives in Georgia. Participants mentioned different aspects of IDPs’ specific situation, such as wishing for more systematic attention from the government, but also the need for IDPs’ own attitudes to change. Some FG participants would like to see changes in a range of policies, whilst several explicitly talked about a wish to see practical relations with Russia. Other requests included improvements in employment, education and healthcare.

“Return” Summary

Relations between peoples

Although most FG participants were disappointed with the state of personal relationships between Abkhaz people and Georgians, a few comments suggest that people are eager to rekindle or start up new ties. A few people stated that Georgian–Abkhaz relationships differ according to age. Younger people, some said, are more hostile towards each other, whereas the older generation still remembers in a positive light the ties they had with Abkhaz people in the past.

A few younger participants said that they had tried to befriend Abkhaz people via social networking sites online but were met solely with “aggressive” or “hostile” responses. Some older FG participants said Abkhaz people are subject to “propaganda” and are brought up to distance themselves from Georgians. Of the younger FG participants, a few said simply that Georgians and Abkhaz people have no relationships whatsoever.

Culture, values & mentalities

A shared history, homeland, similar lifestyles and mentality were mentioned in all FGs as cultural ties which Abkhaz people and Georgians have in common and can unite them. “We have similar traditions, like strong kinship, the *supra*, etc.,” claimed one participant. By contrast, politics, the 1992–1993 war and Russia as an antagonist were all said to have contributed to dividing people. Additionally, one participant explained that the divisive factors were “a different language, though only one per cent of population of Abkhazia speaks it, [and] a different psychology: they think that they are Abkhaz and we think we are Georgians.”

Chances for reintegration

In Tbilisi, the younger and older groups alike were clear that the August 2008 war has most likely ruined the chances for Abkhazia’s reintegration into Georgia. One participant stated: “Theoretically there may always be a chance, but, practically, we do not have a chance now.” The rest of the people in Kutaisi and Zugdidi had similar opinions, as a participant in Zugdidi explained: “Today we do not have a chance [for reintegration]. There was a period when we could have had some political dialogue with the Abkhaz people, but our incorrect approach ruined those chances.” A few younger participants in Zugdidi and Kutaisi, however, were slightly more optimistic on the idea of reintegration, with one participant saying that a positive outcome was “about sixty percent” likely.

Tbilisi and Kutaisi participants in both age groups said Georgia and its government should work to improve relations with Russia, which they claimed would help to increase the prospects for reintegration. As one participant stated matter-of-factly, “Only dealing with Russia will help us. Nothing else.” By comparison, no one in Zugdidi voiced any similar opinions on policy towards Russia.

Conditions for permanent return

When considering conditions for a permanent return to Abkhazia, most participants were primarily concerned with security and the restoration of Abkhazia to Georgian jurisdiction. Some participants remarked that they would only return if they could keep their Georgian

citizenship. Other conditions mentioned included Georgian-language schools and the availability of houses and employment.

Practical property arrangements

Some participants said the property arrangements made between IDPs and other people now living in IDPs' dwellings in Abkhazia were practical and acceptable if made with the original owner's consent. One participant said she had refused to make a similar arrangement when offered, but that "my neighbours have sold their house in Abkhazia and now they have a house here [and] I cannot criticize people who do this, because, I think, the chances of returning are nil."

Many people spoke of what had happened to their own property, and most knew it was now inhabited. A few, however, remarked that they did not know the current status of their house, or that house had been destroyed.

Feelings towards those now living in IDPs' houses

Most of the FG participants did not view those now living in IDPs' former homes in Abkhazia negatively. They explained that they felt better knowing their houses were being lived in and thus cared for. One participant summed up this sentiment: "Some acquaintances of mine are living in my house in Abkhazia and they promised to leave the house as soon as we go back. They even proposed to sell the house and send me money, but I refused that offer." Only a few participants were more negative and said that those living in IDPs' houses may not actually plan to give back the dwellings to the original owners when they to return.

“Conflict Resolution” Summary

Reasons for the outbreak of the 1992–1993 war

While discussing at length the reasons why the war broke out, many FG participants placed blame on Russia, Georgia, Abkhazia and combinations of the three. Russia was said to be interested in gaining territory and accused of seeking reasons to spark conflict and even, said one participant, of “purposefully [laying] traps for Georgia”, so that Russia can keep Georgia within its sphere of influence.

Many of the younger participants, notably in Tbilisi, explicitly blamed both Georgia and Abkhazia instead of Russia. Some said that it was Georgia’s fault for sending troops into Abkhazia, while others blamed the lack of understanding between the two peoples. One participant offered the thought that “There was always some kind of tension and misunderstanding: Georgians were always trying to impose ‘Georgianness’ on the Abkhaz people and to overshadow the distinctiveness of the Abkhaz, stressing their own superiority. If we had paid more attention to them, if we had been closer to them and respected their traditions more, I’m not saying that we would have averted the conflict, but maybe...”

Others in the older groups asserted that the civil war which began in Tbilisi led to the outbreak of the 1992–1993 conflict. A few participants in the Zugdidi older group, meanwhile, said international politics were at fault, with Georgia left to the whims of the great powers: the US and Russia.

How the government should resolve the conflict

Restoring relations between Georgians and Abkhaz people, engaging in dialogue, cultural exchanges and public diplomacy, and increasing the standard of living in Georgia to attract the Abkhaz people were all ideas the participants came up with for the government to pursue. One participant said that Georgia should not adopt such “hostile” attitudes towards Russia. Another participant continued, “I think the Georgian government’s efforts alone are insufficient. All the parties that are interested should take part in the conflict resolution. Alone, Georgia can do nothing.”

Most of the participants thought Georgia would do well to sign an agreement on non-use of force, provided that Russia and Abkhazia also sign. Only one participant disagreed, questioning what Georgia stood to gain from such an agreement.

Nearly all of the participants were categorically against recognizing Abkhazia's independence, though one of them said it should be recognized as an autonomous republic with broad rights.

Many participants said that both parties in the conflict should apologize to each other, since both had suffered during the war. One participant intimated that both Georgia and Abkhazia “should learn to forgive each other.” A few people supported the idea of an official apology from the Georgian side alone, suggesting that Georgia should apologize to everyone for what happened in 1992. However, a few others completely rejected the idea that Georgia should apologize.

Most of the participants totally rejected the idea of a future Georgian military intervention. One participant objected on the grounds that “violence produces violence.” Some other people, however, did not entirely rule out the use of force, with one saying that a plan should be kept in reserve, and another that such a plan should be designed to be directed at specific individuals. And a FG participant in Zugdidi ventured rhetorically: “War is also possible if you are able to conduct it... Georgia is a country of war. How did we survive to this day?”

Most of the participants were clear that the Georgian government should negotiate with Russia, whom they perceive as the main actor in Abkhazia. One participant explained: “It seems that Russia is sponsoring – literally funding – the existence of Abkhazia’s state and military structures. It follows that this state, or whatever it is, is directed by Russia. In this case, we should talk to Russia rather than to the person whose behaviour depends upon his sponsor and backer.” By contrast, another participant said Georgia should negotiate with both the Abkhaz and the Russian sides.

Actors Georgia should negotiate with concerning Abkhazia’s status

Some participants said the Georgian government would be able to negotiate only with Russia on Abkhazia’s status. Others asserted that both the Russians and Abkhaz people needed to be included in negotiations, whereas some of the younger participants said Georgia should have only two-way negotiations with the de facto Abkhaz authorities.

Context in which to negotiate

A few participants claimed Abkhazia’s status should be of paramount importance in any negotiations, while others added that security was also significant. One in the younger group, though, said that the status of Abkhazia should be discussed last, after other topics such as crime and human rights are confronted. In addition, one participant offered the following opinion on strengthening ties between peoples: “We should talk about the rights of the Abkhaz people and the rights of Georgians. We should first make it clear how are going to live there, [otherwise] we can’t build a relationship with the Abkhaz people.”

Some participants said that the return of IDPs should be the most important issue during any kind of negotiations. One in the younger Tbilisi group and one in the Kutaisi older group said that a referendum should be held to decide Abkhazia’s status. Another person in the same Tbilisi younger group, however, disagreed, saying a referendum would only lead to further conflict. In Zugdidi, a few people focused their comments more on economic cooperation and on strengthening cross-border cultural ties.

Georgians’ & Abkhaz people’s roles in conflict resolution

Most of the FG participants agreed that contact between ordinary people was important, but opinions differed about the extent to which they could play a positive role in conflict resolution. Some claimed that citizen contact was a positive but not a decisive factor for conflict resolution without preconditions, such as a better economic situation in Georgia. A few of the younger FG participants also emphasized that meetings held abroad between

Georgians and Abkhaz citizens had fostered better attitudes towards each other, which creates the potential for future better relations.

“Justice” Summary

What justice means in relation to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict

Though a few FG participants felt it was difficult to define what was just and unjust, several others had clear ideas in mind. In Zugdidi, for instance, some in the younger group lamented the bloodshed during the war, with one saying that “brother shot brother.” Another participant in the same group went on to bemoan that “Basic relations [with Abkhazians] are forbidden. Not from Georgia’s side but from the Abkhaz side. This is the biggest injustice.” And for a few other participants, the greatest injustice was “that none of us lives in their own houses today.”

Suggestions for dealing with injustices

A few participants in the Zugdidi older group mentioned that both parties to the conflict need to take action. One participant said that both the Georgian and the Abkhaz sides should admit fault. Echoing this sentiment, another claimed that both sides’ interests should be taken into consideration, though he did not specify who should lead this process. A Kutaisi FG participant called for negotiations with Russia to be undertaken to help to address past injustices.

Legal or punitive approaches to be taken to address past injustices

Whereas the FG participants from Zugdidi and Kutaisi called for various people to be punished in order to right past injustices, only one person in Tbilisi, from the older group, agreed. The rest in Tbilisi asserted that it does no good to discipline anyone now. Several people said that former Georgian President Shevardnadze should be punished so that, as one participant put it, “others do not make the same mistakes.” Others stated that both the Georgian and Abkhaz sides should receive some form of punishment. In addition, one participant in Kutaisi called for “everybody who was in the government at that time, in Georgia and in Russia,” to be punished.

As regards specific measures to address injustices, some people said official apologies would not be helpful, since they “won’t raise our soldiers from the dead,” as a participant put it. But another participant said she would like to hear Russia apologize. In each city’s FGs, only a few in the older groups called for past injustices to be investigated and documented. No one from the younger groups in any FG did so, and some from the younger group in Kutaisi stated further that such an investigation would only “strain the situation and make it even more complicated.” Calls for the Georgian government to offer financial compensation to IDPs arose in each group, and were made by both older and younger participants.

COMPARISONS BY AGE & CITY

Overall, there were more differences of opinions between the two age groups than between the cities. The Conflict Resolution section seemed to produce the most differences in opinions between the age groups, while the Return section arguably saw the most divergence in views between the cities. These comparisons, should, however, be approached with caution, since focus groups are qualitative research and do not lend themselves to drawing reliable inferences.

Differences by age group included the question of who was to blame for the 1992–1993 conflict; whether the Georgian government should issue an official apology to the Abkhaz; Georgian–Abkhaz personal relationships; and the documentation of past injustices.

Divergent opinions by city included Georgian–Abkhaz personal relationships; reflections on the chances of Abkhazia being reintegrated with Georgia proper; the definition of justice and whether any people should be held personally responsible for the conflict; and the need for positive changes to the government–IDP relationship.

Below, the points on which answers differed are summarized, first by age group, which includes younger FG participants in each city’s FG answering differently than those in the older group. Second, the comparison goes by city, which includes splits in views between FG participants in the respective cities regardless of age. The points are cited with the question and page number in parentheses.

Age Group

Conflict resolution

The largest number of divergent views between the two age groups arguably arose in the Conflict Resolution section, i.e. questions 8 through 12. First, it was only some younger group participants who chose to lay blame with Georgia and Abkhazia, but, critically, not with Russia, when discussing the reasons for the outbreak of the 1992–1993 war (Q8, p. 24). By contrast, all older participants blamed Russia, Abkhazia, a combination of the two or other actors for instigating the conflict.

Some younger participants asserted that Georgia should enter into negotiations with the Abkhaz authorities, a move with which no older participants agreed. Otherwise, the majority in both age groups admitted the need to engage with Russia regarding Abkhazia’s status (Q10, p. 29).

Overall, the younger participants were more positive on the role ordinary Georgians and Abkhaz people can play in conflict resolution, compared with the older participants’ answers. They said that meetings held abroad in which Georgians and Abkhaz people mingled with each other had gone a long way in improving personal relationships, and that such relationships bode well for future ties (Q12, p. 31).

Return

The Return section produced two instances of opposing lines of thought between the older and the younger participants. First, with some citing their failed attempts to befriend Abkhazians via social networking sites online, younger participants said Georgians were less hostile toward relationships with Abkhaz than vice versa (Q2, p. 17). By contrast, older participants recalled past friendships between Georgians and Abkhaz, and said that younger people nowadays were more unfriendly towards each other compared with older generations.

Next, in assessing the idea of people living in IDPs' houses, only people in the younger groups did so negatively to any extent. By comparison, the FG participants in the older groups were largely positive on the idea, especially, as they said, it meant that someone was looking after their home (Q7, p. 22).

Justice

The justice section brought to the fore only one visibly different line of argument between the age groups. In each city's FG, a few in the older groups called for investigating and documenting past injustices. No one from the younger group in any FG asked for such an investigation (Q15, p. 34). Of course, there were fewer questions in this section (questions 13–15), but the divergent opinions were significant here nonetheless, and show that those who lived through the conflict may not always readily forget the injustices it caused before moving on.

City

Introductory section

In the opening section, some Tbilisi FG participants and one in Zugdidi were the only ones to state that the government–IDP relationship was the top issue to change in Georgia (Q1, p. 14). Others spoke of diverse issues such as tackling unemployment, improving health care and education, and changing the current political order. This was perhaps the only observable gap in the participants' views by city in this section, which comprised only one question.

Return

The Return section was where views differed by city more than in the other sections. For instance, a few participants in the Tbilisi and Kutaisi FGs claimed that Georgian–Abkhaz relationships differ according to one's age: older generations are more loyal and still remember friendships in the past. But the younger generations, as these respondents claimed, are more hostile towards each other (Q2, p. 17). No one in Zugdidi mentioned this generational-gap idea.

Some Kutaisi younger FG participants and one in Zugdidi were the only people to express a slight hope for the chances of Abkhazian–Georgian reintegration, doing so in percentage terms, which ranged from 60 percent, for the most optimistic, to 10 percent, the least hopeful. By comparison, all of the Tbilisi participants suggested that the 2008 August war had ruined all but the slightest of chances for reintegration (Q4, p. 19).

Justice

In the Justice section, opinions differed by city in two clear cases. A few participants in Zugdidi offered what were arguably clearer answers on the idea of “justice”, citing that fellow citizens killed each other in the 1992–1993 conflict. As a consequence, they went on to say, people are unable to live in their own homes or have any kind of ties with one another (Q13, p. 33). Many others in Tbilisi and Kutaisi were, by contrast, less clear on how they would define “justice”, saying it was difficult for them to put it into words.

The FG participants from Zugdidi and Kutaisi called for various people – former President Shevardnadze, the Russians and members of the Parliament (MPs) in government at that time – to be punished in order to right past injustices. The majority of the Tbilisi participants, however, asserted that it would do no good to punish anyone now (Q15, p. 34).

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

FG Compositions: Tbilisi, Kutaisi & Zugdidi

Tbilisi FG Participants: Younger group (11 people; mixed gender).

- Male, 21, single, IT student, Tbilisi, younger group
- Male, 18, single, student, Tbilisi, younger group
- Male, 29, married, psychologist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group
- Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group
- Female, 30, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group
- Male, 28, married, economist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group
- Female, 28, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group
- Female, 25, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group
- Female, 23, single, sociologist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group
- Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group
- Female, 21, married, political scientist and Eastern languages specialist, unemployed, Tbilisi, younger group

Tbilisi FG Participants: Older group (9 people; mixed gender).

- Male, 42, single, economist, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group
- Female, 41, married, polygraphist, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group
- Female, 48, married, employed, Tbilisi, older group
- Female, 43, married, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group
- Female, 33, single, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group
- Female, 75, married, teacher, pensioner, Tbilisi, older group
- Female, 58, married, musician, employed, Tbilisi, older group
- Female, 40, single, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group
- Female, 54, single, doctor, employed, Tbilisi, older group

Kutaisi FG Participants: Younger group (9 people; mixed gender).

- Female, 21, single, lawyer, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group
- Female, 25, single, pharmacist and assistant, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group
- Female, 24, married, English teacher, Kutaisi, younger group
- Female, 19, single, cosmetician, Kutaisi, younger group
- Female, 28, married, technical education, Kutaisi, younger group
- Male, 23, single, economist, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group
- Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group
- Male, 26, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group

- Female, 23, married, secondary education, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group

Kutaisi FG Participants: Older group (11 people; mixed gender).

- Female, 49, married, businessperson, Kutaisi, older group
- Female, 36, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group
- Female, 48, married, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group
- Female, 47, married, businessperson, Kutaisi, older group
- Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group
- Female, 48, married, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group
- Female, 34, married, lawyer, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group
- Female, 44, married, businessperson, Kutaisi, older group
- Female, 44, single, accountant, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group
- Female, 44, married, teacher, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group
- Male, 63, married, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group

Zugdidi FG Participants: Younger group (9 people; mixed gender).

- Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group
- Female, 28, married, teacher, employed, Zugdidi, younger group
- Female, 25, single, office manager, employed, Zugdidi, younger group
- Female, 24, single, lawyer, unemployed, Zugdidi, younger group
- Male, 19, single, management student, Zugdidi, younger group
- Male, 21, construction student, unemployed, Zugdidi, younger group
- Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group
- Female, 20, single, dentistry student, Zugdidi, younger group
- Female, 22, married, lawyer, Zugdidi, younger group

Zugdidi FG Participants: Older group (11 people; mixed gender).

- Male, 46, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group
- Male, 55, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group
- Female, 46, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group
- Male, 42, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group
- Female, 42, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group
- Male, 50, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group
- Female, 43, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group
- Male, 55, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group
- Female, 50, single, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group
- Female, 39, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group
- Female, 44, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group

Section 1: Introduction

Q[1] - If you could change one thing about your life in Georgia, what would it be?

The government-IDP relationship was mentioned several times by those in Tbilisi's younger group, and by one in Zugdidi's older group. Similarly, a change in political relations towards Russia was brought up. People then named specific issues to be tackled in Georgia: the economic situation, unemployment and health care and education for all. Only one person in Kutaisi's younger group said that Abkhazia should be returned to Georgia.

- *"I would change the attitude of the government towards the people, and especially towards the IDPs. Today, IDPs are ignored." (Female, 30, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I would change the IDPs' attitude towards many issues. We always think that we have only rights and no responsibilities." (Female, 28, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"The government should pay equal attention to all IDPs. It shouldn't divide up its attention randomly between those in collective centres, or between old [sc. IDPs displaced after the 1992–1993 war in Abkhazia] and new IDPs [those displaced after the 2008 war in South Ossetia], or IDPs who still live in the conflict zones today for whatever reason." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I would not put IDPs into collective centres." (Male, 42, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group), (Female, 42, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"I would return Abkhazia to Georgia." (Female, 28, married, technical education, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"I would change the president." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"I would change today's politics." (Male, 50, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group), (Female, 21, married, political scientist and Eastern languages specialist, unemployed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Freedom of speech and a free court system." (Female, 33, single, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group), (Female, 25, single, office manager, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"There should be practical political relations with Russia." (Female, 58, married, musician, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"We say we want practical politics ties with Russia, but there should be practical politics from Russia's side too." (Female, 43, married, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"The [issue of] unemployment has to be tackled." (Male, 23, single, economist, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group), (Female, 28, married, teacher, employed, Zugdidi, younger group), (Female, 48, married, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"More jobs for people." (Female, 39, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group), (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"The economic situation has to be changed." (Female, 24, married, English teacher, Kutaisi, younger group), (Female, 42, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group), (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*

- *"The level of education should be higher in the universities and in schools." (Male, 21, single, IT student, Tbilisi, younger group), (Female, 48, married, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"Education should be available [for everybody]." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Health care should be available for everybody." (Female, 25, single, office manager, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*

Section 2: Return (Q2–7)

Q[2] - In general, how would you describe the relations between Georgians and Abkhaz people today?

Most in the Tbilisi and Kutaisi FGs thought that Georgian–Abkhaz relationships differ according to one’s age: older generations are more loyal and still remember friendships in the past. As for younger generations, respondents said, they are more hostile towards each other.

- *"I think we should differentiate between younger and older generations in this case. Older generations still have some ties with each other, which I cannot say about younger generations." (Male, 21, single, IT student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"The relationship between younger generations is more hostile. I can feel that my son is rather hostile towards Abkhaz people while, as for me, I don't feel this aggression towards them." (Female, 43, married, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"The younger generation in Abkhazia is quite hostile towards Georgians. My son tried to get in touch with them on social networking sites via the internet but he never got feedback. The older generation, who still have some ties with us and remember our friendship in the past, is more sociable." (Female, 48, married, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group)*

Two younger participants in the Tbilisi and Kutaisi, and one older participant in Kutaisi, claimed that Georgians’ attitudes to Abkhaz people is friendly and open, while Abkhaz people are aggressive towards Georgians and consider them as their enemies.

- *"I think that Georgians are friendlier towards Abkhaz people than vice versa. Abkhaz people are aggressive towards Georgians." (Female, 44, married, teacher, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"I have good relations with Abkhaz people and we have some projects with them in the NGO I work for. I have been to Gali and Tskhinvali [South Ossetia] and tried to have good relations with them but they were not enthusiastic. They want independence. And what astonishes me is that they can travel freely to Georgia and we cannot go to Abkhazia." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Georgians are friendly towards Abkhaz people. We want to be with them but their attitude towards us is more hostile. Many of them think that Georgians are their enemies." (Male, 23, single, economist, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*

Younger members of the Tbilisi and Zugdidi FGs who tried to get in touch with Abkhazians via social networks always received negative responses from them.

- *"I have tried to get in touch with Abkhaz people via social networks online and the only thing I saw was an aggression and hatred. My grandmother is Abkhaz and I really wanted to meet Abkhaz people, but I got very bad responses from them." (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"I really wanted to communicate with Abkhaz people via the internet and I came across an aggressive attitude from them." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*

Most of the participants in all the FGs believe that there is propaganda in Abkhazia and that the young Abkhaz generation is brought up to feel hatred towards Georgians. According to a Zugdidi FG participant in the younger group, Abkhaz people who live in Abkhazia are under terrible pressure from the government, and even if they wanted to, they cannot have friendly relationships with Georgians.

- *"There is a lot of propaganda in Abkhazia and the younger generation does not want to have anything to do with us." (Female, 49, married, businessperson, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"I agree with the idea that there is a lot of propaganda in Abkhazia and younger people hate us. People from our [i.e. the older] generation have warmer feelings towards us." (Female, 44, single, accountant, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"The new generation is brought up in Abkhazia so that they hate Georgians. They do not want to have anything to do with us. As time passes the distance between us grows bigger." (Female, 44, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"About four or five years ago I spend my holidays together with Abkhaz people in Turkey and we became great friends. But the Abkhaz government puts its citizens under pressure. Only if they travel to another country they can have a relationship with Georgians, otherwise there is no chance." (Female, 20, single, dentistry student, Zugdidi, younger group)*

Unlike the other groups, some younger members of the Tbilisi and Zugdidi FGs thought that Georgians and Abkhaz people have no relationships with each other at all.

- *"I don't think there are any relations between Georgians and Abkhaz people today." (Male, 21, single, IT student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Are there any relations at all?" (Female, 21, married, political scientist and Eastern languages specialist, unemployed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"[Relationships are] neither friendly nor hostile. There are no relationships at all." (Male, 21, construction student, unemployed, Zugdidi, younger group)*

Q[3] - Talking about culture, values and mentality, what would you say unites Georgians and Abkhaz people?

Similar traditions, mentality, lifestyle, history, homeland and kinship were factors said to unite Georgians and Abkhaz people.

- *"We have similar traditions, like strong kinship, the supra, etc." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Traditions and history." (Male, 23, single, economist, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"We have the same history that unites us." (Female, 21, married, political scientist and Eastern languages specialist, unemployed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"We have the same homeland." (Male, 26, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"Mentality and lifestyle." (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"We have the same land." (Female, 28, married, teacher, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"The most important thing that we have is our kinships." (Male, 42, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*

Q[3] Follow-up: And what would you say divides Georgians and Abkhaz people?

Language, politics, Russia and the war that happened in the 1990s are considered to be the main divisive factors by all participants.

- *"A different language, though only one per cent of population of Abkhazia speaks it. Also, a different psychology: they think that they are Abkhazians and we think we are Georgians." (Male, 28, married, economist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Politics divides us." (Female, 75, married, teacher, pensioner, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"Separatism divides us." (Female, 43, married, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"Hostile attitudes." (Female, 41, married, polygraphist, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"Russia." (Male, 26, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"Our main separator is Russia." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"Russian politics separates us." (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"The bloody war that was between us divides us. It is a very big barrier in our relationship." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"The war that should not have happened divides us." (Female, 24, single, lawyer, unemployed, Zugdidi, younger group)*

Q[4] - In your opinion, what are the chances of Abkhazia being reintegrated with Georgia proper? [+ Follow-Up: How have the prospects of Abkhazia being reintegrated with Georgia changed since the August 2008 war?]

Most of the Tbilisi FG participants were sceptical of the chances for Abkhazia to be reintegrated with Georgia proper, and, as some went on to say, if there were any prospects of this in the recent past, they have now all but disappeared following the 2008 August war.

- *"Until August 2008 I thought there was a chance, but now I know for sure that I will not be able to return there." (Female, 25, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I do not believe that there is a chance." (Male, 28, married, economist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I always had a hope before the August 2008 but now I am hopeless." (Female, 54, single, doctor, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"We have lost this chance after August 2008." (Female, 48, married, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"I think there may be a chance but this chance has diminished after the August 2008." (Male, 18, single, student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I do not see any prospects of Abkhazia being integrated with Georgia." (Female, 48, married, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"Theoretically there always may be a chance, but, practically, we do not have a chance now." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*

A few of the Kutaisi and Zugdidi FG participants were a bit more optimistic towards this issue.

- *"Maybe only ten per cent." (Male, 23, single, economist, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*

- *"To my mind, about sixty per cent." (Female, 25, single, pharmacist and assistant, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"It is hard to say, but I think there is a forty per cent chance." (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*

The rest of the participants in Kutaisi and Zugdidi, however, stated that the prospects of reintegration have been reduced following the August war, and are limited at best.

- *"The chances have been reduced after 2008." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"The August war had a very bad affect. We lost Kodori and Russian military bases were strengthened in Abkhazia. Before the war, Gali's population and Abkhaz people would come to Zugdidi if there was a concert, for instance, but now the border is closed." (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"Today we do not have a chance. There was a period when we could have had some political dialogue with the Abkhaz people, but our incorrect approach ruined those chances." (Female, 28, married, teacher, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"From my point of view there is no chance... only hope." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*

Tbilisi and Kutaisi FG participants assumed that the Georgian government should use diplomacy and work hard to change its policy towards Russia, thus increasing the chances of regaining the lost territories.

- *"To my mind, there are no chances at all. We always have hope for better, but we will not be able to achieve anything if we do not change our politics radically." (Female, 30, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I still have some hope, but if we do not change our politics we will not be able to go back." (Female, 58, married, musician, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"I think our government should be changed so that we have better contact with the Russian government. Or the current government should change its policy towards Russia." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"If the Russians agree, we would be able to go back today. Only dealing with Russia will help us. Nothing else." (Female, 44, married, teacher, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"In order to get this opportunity, we have to work towards it for at least fifteen years." (Male, 21, single, IT student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I think there is always a chance, but today this chance is very minimal. In order to regain this territory, we have to start slowly moving towards it but very seriously and diplomatically. This may not happen in five or ten years, but if we work towards this, eventually, it will happen." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*

One member of the Kutaisi and one of the Zugdidi FGs considered becoming member of NATO as the only solution of the problem.

- *"Maybe the chances would be higher if we join NATO." (Female, 36, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"If we become a NATO member, there might be a chance... but not today." (Male, 19, single, management student, Zugdidi, younger group)*

Q[5] - If IDPs were given the possibility to return to Abkhazia, which conditions would need to be in place for you personally to consider a permanent return?

Everybody was ready to return permanently to Abkhazia, under the following conditions: security, protection of human rights, maintaining Georgian citizenship, restoring Georgian jurisdiction, having Georgian schools, housing, and that Russian troops leave Abkhazia.

- *"First of all, security." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Security." (Female, 44, married, businessperson, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"The most important is security and the protection of our rights. The rest will be arranged later." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I will return only if I have guarantees that no one will kill me." (Female, 41, married, polygraphist, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"I will return there only as a Georgian citizen." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I will consider returning only if Abkhazia is under Georgian jurisdiction." (Male, 28, married, economist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Only after Georgian jurisdiction is restored." (Female, 48, married, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"If Abkhazia is under Georgian jurisdiction." (Female, 49, married, businessperson, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"I will not think about returning to Abkhazia if it is not under Georgian jurisdiction." (Female, 24, single, lawyer, unemployed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"I will return only if my rights are protected and I won't be afraid of the fact that I am Georgian." (Female, 28, married, teacher, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"People should be provided with houses and places to work." (Female, 28, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"When Russian troops leave Abkhazia." (Female, 30, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"When we return we need to have Georgian schools there." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*

Q[6] - Some IDPs have made property arrangements with the people now living in their houses in Abkhazia (e.g. sale, rent, allowing other people live there in exchange for looking after the property, exchange for other property). What is your opinion of these types of practical property arrangements?

Most of the participants spoke with a largely positive tone of these types of property arrangement, especially if they were done with the owner's consent.

- *"We also had such a proposal concerning our house, though my family refused. But I know that my neighbours have sold their house and now they have a house here. I cannot criticize people who do this because, I think, the chances of returning are nil." (Female, 25, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I think everybody should be able to decide for themselves what to do with their property. But if one sells one's house of their own volition, then even after returning to Abkhazia this house will have a new owner. If the house is sold by Abkhaz people without asking its*

owner, though, then this agreement should be annulled after the return." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)

- "Their life [circumstance] made them sell their house. They lost hope of returning and sold the houses." (Male, 23, single, economist, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)
- "If I had a chance I would sell my house and buy something here. But this does not mean that I wouldn't go back if I had a chance. I will definitely go back and buy a house there again." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)

The FG members revealed information about their own house in Abkhazia. Most of the participants had information about the people residing in their own houses today; however, some of them did not know what has happened with their houses.

- "I have heard that my house is occupied by an Abkhaz family who spends summertime there." (Female, 41, married, polygraphist, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)
- "My house was behind a government building and it immediately became the property of people working for the TV station." (Female, 54, single, doctor, employed, Tbilisi, older group)
- "I know that an Abkhaz family is living in my house now." (Female, 24, single, lawyer, unemployed, Zugdidi, younger group)
- "In Abkhazia we had three houses. One is occupied by an Abkhaz family, another by a Russian family, and my grandmother, who is half Abkhaz, half Georgian, is living in the third house." (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)
- "My house in Gulripshi has been destroyed." (Female, 24, married, English teacher, Kutaisi, younger group)
- "I do not know anything about the status of my house." (Female, 25, single, pharmacist and assistant, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)

Q[7] - What are your feelings towards the people now living in IDPs' old houses in Abkhazia?

Participants in all the FGs did not feel any aggression towards the people now living in IDPs' old houses. They claimed that it is better if someone is living in them and taking good care of the property. Most of them know the people residing in their houses, and are sure that they will get the houses back as soon as they return to Abkhazia. There was one woman in the Tbilisi younger group, though, who knew of a family living in her cousin's apartment and was not planning to give it back.

- "My father's teacher is living in our house in Abkhazia, and I think it is good because someone is taking care of the house. I hope we will get our property back when we return." (Female, 19, single, cosmetician, Kutaisi, younger group)
- "As far as I know, my neighbours are living in my house and I really prefer someone living there than it being empty." (Male, 21, single, IT student, Tbilisi, younger group)
- "Some acquaintances of mine are living in my house in Abkhazia and they promised to leave the house as soon as we go back. They even proposed to sell the house and send me money, but I refused that offer." (Male, 29, married, psychologist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)

- *"There is a Russian family living in my apartment. We have been communicating with them and they promised to leave after our return." (Female, 30, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I know that an Armenian family is living in my house but I do not feel any aggression towards them. They promised to give us the house back as soon as we move there." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"My husband's former colleague is living in our house. He promised to look after the house carefully and give it back when we return." (Female, 75, married, teacher, pensioner, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"I think it is better when someone is living in your house and is taking care of it." (Female, 28, married, technical education, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"Somebody is living in my house and I cannot say that I like this fact but I do not hate them." (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"I do not know what to say. There are people who are living in IDPs' houses in Abkhazia but they are ready to leave the houses as soon as the real owners go back, but some are very aggressive and consider these houses as their own property, which they do not plan to give back." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"An Armenian family is living in my cousin's apartment and claim that this is their house and do not plan to leave it." (Female, 23, single, sociologist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*

Section 3: Conflict Resolution (Q8–12)

Q[8] - In your opinion, what were the main reasons for the outbreak of the war in Abkhazia in 1992?

Russia's role came up frequently, and in a rather negative light. One in the Kutaisi younger group also blamed the Abkhaz authorities along with Russia for instigating the conflict.

- *"Russia sowed the seeds of separatism in the 19th century when it gave the Abkhaz autonomy. The reasons run deep... This is not a crime of one side only." (Female, 43, married, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"Russia's interests in the territory." (Female, 30, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"The Russian factor." (Female, 23, married, secondary education, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"The main reason was that Russia needed our territory badly and the Georgian policy turned out to be weak in this case. It happened because of the very weak policy of Georgia and the very strong policy of Russia." (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"It was the idea of several Abkhaz big-wigs to separate from Georgia, and Russia also intervened." (Male, 26, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"They [the Abkhaz and Russians] were looking for a cause, and when you want to make war, there is nothing easier than finding a cause to do so... The country was in turmoil, and it's easier to do everything in such a situation. We spoiled everything, and Russia, which had had its eyes on Abkhazia, took advantage of this turmoil." (Female, 50, single, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"Russia. They were providing both the Abkhaz and Georgians with weapons. And at last we got this result." (Male, 55, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"The collapse of the Soviet Union." (Male, 28, married, economist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"In my opinion, Abkhazia and Samachablo are traps laid purposefully [by Russia] so that we do not get away. We are hooked. [It happened because of] the Russian policy and our unrefined policies. We let them do what was in their interests." (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*

Other participants focused on Abkhazia's and Georgia's roles in the conflict. One from the Tbilisi younger group, for example, said that Georgia had been trying to assimilate the Abkhaz people when they should have been respecting their traditions and identity instead. Another, by contrast, argued that Georgians had made too many unwarranted concessions to Abkhazia.

- *"The policies of the Georgian government were to blame." (Female, 21, single, lawyer, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"The military forces were sent from Tbilisi." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"[The war was caused by the Georgian government] deploying troops in Abkhazia. There was already tension between the Georgians and the Abkhaz people. The Abkhaz people said they were independent and wanted to remain so." (Female, 24, married, English teacher, Kutaisi, younger group)*

- *"There was always some kind of tension and misunderstanding. Georgians were always trying to impose Georgianness on the Abkhaz people and to overshadow the distinctiveness of the Abkhaz, stressing their own superiority... If we had paid more attention to them, if we had been closer to them and respected their traditions more, I'm not saying that we would have averted the conflict, but maybe..." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"The Abkhaz people was a minority [in the region]. I love the Abkhaz people. They are a strong people. They were fighting for independence. We have nothing against them; we just want to return to our homes. My parents had Abkhaz friends. They sometimes meet my father, and they have a good relationship. We have nothing against them. We want people to return." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, youngster group)*
- *"I think we made more concessions than we should have. We ourselves violated the balance. We gave them too much and, not receiving an adequate response, got angry and made a lot of mistakes... The war started because there was no understanding amongst the population, which was aggravated by the instability in Tbilisi." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*

Several participants in the three older groups argued that the war in Abkhazia was caused by the civil war that started in Tbilisi and the resulting turmoil and weakening of the state. They also blamed the Georgian "red intelligentsia" for betraying Georgia and selling it to Russia. Yet other participants named international factors, essentially saying Georgia was at the whim of larger powers, namely, the US and Russia. One of the participants named a possible trilateral deal between Russia, the Abkhaz side and President Shevardnadze as one of the reasons of the war.

- *"It is certain that our side made a mistake, but I cannot rule out that it was a trilateral deal between Russia, the Abkhaz side and Shevardnadze. Shevardnadze is one of the destroyers of Georgia." (Female, 58, married, musician, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"It was because of the civil war going on in Georgia... It all started following the civil war in Tbilisi." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"The state didn't exist; this was the main reason." (Female, 42, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"This had been in preparation for centuries. Independent Georgia suited neither America nor Russia. There was a script written and they fulfilled it. The final act was the overthrow of Gamsakhurdia." (Male, 46, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"Most probably international politics." (Female, 39, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"It was betrayal that contributed to the outbreak of the war. Those who shot the first bullet [in Tbilisi] were Georgians. It was in Tbilisi that the Abkhaz issue was decided, and it is still decided there... The red intelligentsia handed ravaged, destroyed and insulted Georgia over to Russia. It was a great betrayal by the red intelligentsia." (Male, 42, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*

Q[9] -What would you like the Georgian government to do in order to find a resolution to the conflict?

Restoring relations between Georgians and Abkhaz people, engaging in dialogue and cultural exchanges, public diplomacy and increasing the standard of living in Georgia to attract the Abkhaz were all ideas the FG participants came up with. One participant said that the conflict would not be resolved under Putin and Saakashvili, and a solution to the conflict required politicians from the younger generation.

- *"It [the Georgian government] decides nothing." (Female, 25, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I think, now, public diplomacy should be the priority, but the government mustn't use this for PR purposes... Relations between peoples should be restored in order for them to trust one another... We have no idea of the Abkhaz culture today and of what is going on there. Neither do they know anything about us... There should be a dialogue involving youth cultures and a cultural exchange as happens between other countries. " (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Georgia should first increase its standard of living so that they [the Abkhaz people] ask us to be integrated." (Male, 21, single, IT student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I think the Georgian government's efforts only are insufficient. All the forces that are interested [should take part in the conflict resolution]. Alone, Georgia can do nothing." (Female, 43, married, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"It should act diplomatically, without using force." (Female, 21, single, lawyer, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"It should recover Abkhazia." (Male, 19, single, management student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"Some kind of solution can be found, but this won't happen under Putin and Saakashvili. It seems that this requires a politician from the younger generation." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"I think the internal policies and, in general, international relations between states should change. Our attitudes towards Russians are a bit too hostile. That's why the situation is like this." (Female, 22, married, lawyer, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"Reconciliation." (Male, 50, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*

Q[9] Follow-up: Should the Georgian government sign a non-use of force agreement with Abkhazia/Russia?

Most of the participants considered signing such an agreement desirable, stressing that Russia and Abkhazia should also sign it. One participant, though, expressed scepticism towards such an agreement, asking what Georgia would gain from it.

- *"Sure, it should do it." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"If Russia also signs it." (Female, 21, married, political scientist and Eastern languages specialist, unemployed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"If all parties sign it." (Female, 43, married, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*

- *"In this case, all the three parties should sign it." (Female, 21, single, lawyer, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"If Russians agree to sign a non-use of force agreement with Georgia, why shouldn't they [the Georgian authorities] agree?" (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"What do we gain from this?" (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)Q[9]
Follow-up: Should Georgia recognize the independence of Abkhazia?*

Q[9] Follow-up: Should the Georgian government recognize independence of Abkhazia?

The FG participants were categorically against recognizing Abkhazia's independence, though some of them also said it should be recognized as an autonomous republic with broad rights.

- *"Georgia should recognize Abkhazia not as an independent state but as an autonomous republic, like Adjara." (Female, 25, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"No." (Female, 48, married, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"No, [Georgia should] give them a broad autonomy." (Female, 43, married, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"I certainly disagree." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"What else do they [the Abkhaz people] want?! (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"It's ruled out." (Male, 55, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*

Q[9] Follow-up: Should the Georgian government issue an official apology to the Abkhaz people?

Many said that both sides should apologize to each other, since both had suffered during the war, while several others flatly rejected this option. Three participants supported a one-sided apology from the Georgian side, saying that the Georgian government should apologize to everyone for what happened in 1992-1993. It was also pointed out that Georgians and Abkhaz people should learn to forgive one another.

- *"Both sides should apologize, because both Georgians and Abkhaz people died and suffered during the war." (Male, 18, single, student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Yes, why not? It's possible." (Female, 47, married, businessperson, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"It wouldn't be bad if Georgia apologizes to everyone for what happened in 1992-1993." (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"We should forgive each other. We should learn how to forgive." (Female, 25, single, office manager, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"When both sides are guilty, apologies are not needed." (Male, 29, married, psychologist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Georgia should take responsibility for what was done wrong and try to correct it. But making apologies won't change the situation and is too demeaning." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"We have done things to apologize for. Apology, to begin with, is good form; everyone should be able to apologize... but they [the Abkhaz side] should apologize, too." (Female, 58, married, musician, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*

- *"But the Abkhaz side should also apologize for their part. They have done quite a lot of bad things to us." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"Apologize? For what?" (Female, 21, married, political scientist and Eastern languages specialist, unemployed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Apologize? For what? What sense does it make? If they [the Georgian government] apologize, then both sides should apologize." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"No." (Female, 36, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"This is all nonsense. Who will apologize to Georgians, then? Let both side apologize." (Male, 42, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*

Q[9] Follow-up: Should the Georgian government conduct a military intervention in Abkhazia?

The majority of the participants rejected the idea of a military intervention in Abkhazia, saying that they wanted no more wars. Others, however, didn't exclude the military option.

- *"For me, the entire Abkhazia isn't worth a single person's life." (Female, 28, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"We don't want so much war." (Female, 25, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"No." (Female, 58, married, musician, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"No more use of force... Because the results will be the same as we got twice. We don't want this for a third time." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"No, by no means." (Female, 44, married, teacher, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"It's ruled out." (Female, 20, single, dentistry student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"By no means." (Male, 55, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"Oh, no!" (Female, 39, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"Violence produces violence." (Female, 42, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"It means fighting with Russia. Are we able to do that?" (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"It shouldn't, but it should have such a plan in reserve. There should be a military alternative in reserve. If peaceful methods do not bring any results, there should be a guarantee for something." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"It won't work without a military operation. It shouldn't be like the one in August; it should be a small special operation directed against several specific persons." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"[A military operation] should be designed more to establish order." (Female, 21, single, lawyer, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"War is also possible if you are able to conduct it... Georgia is a country of war. How did we survive to this day?" (Male, 46, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*

Q[9] Follow-up: Should the Georgian government commence negotiations with Russia & the de facto Abkhaz authorities?

Most of the participants agreed that the Georgian government should negotiate with Russia, whom they perceive as the main player in Abkhazia. One in the Tbilisi younger group said Georgia should negotiate with both the Abkhaz and the Russian sides, while one person in the Zugdidi older group claimed Georgia was better-off speaking with the Abkhaz authorities alone.

- *"It seems that Russia is sponsoring – literally funding – the existence of Abkhazia's state and military structures. It follows that this state, or whatever it is, is directed by Russia. In this case, we should talk to Russia rather than to the person whose behaviour depends upon his sponsor and backer." (Male, 28, married, economist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"It is a fact that Abkhazia plays a small role... Even if Abkhazia were on our side, Russia plays the main role." (Male, 23, single, economist, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"We should struggle for results with Russia." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"With Russia." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group), (Female, 36, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"We should mainly talk with Russia, because the puppet government [is directed] by Russia." (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"What can you talk about with [the Abkhaz President] Bagapsh? What can you achieve if you talk about the sale of my apartment with my 11-year-old child? (Male, 46, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"I think we should talk to both [Russian and the Abkhaz authorities]." (Male, 29, married, psychologist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"With the Abkhaz authorities." (Female, 43, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*

Q[10] - With which actors would you like to see the Georgian government have direct negotiations about Abkhazia's status?

Some participants said the Georgian government would be able to negotiate only with Russia on Abkhazia's status. Others asserted that both the Russian and Abkhaz sides need to be included in negotiations, whereas some in the younger FGs said Georgia should have only two-way negotiations with the de facto Abkhaz authorities. One, however, stated that unspecified international organizations should be consulted instead.

- *"With international organizations." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"It should conduct negotiations with Russia. This is the main thing." (Female, 21, single, lawyer, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"Of course, with Russia, because Russia rules [Abkhazia] today." (Female, 22, married, lawyer, Zugdidi, younger group)*

- *"Georgia may not want to negotiate with Russia, but it won't be able to start these negotiations without the Russians." (Female, 44, married, teacher, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"With the de facto authorities of Abkhazia, too, but without Russia it doesn't make sense. They are instigating the Abkhaz authorities." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"We should negotiate with both, because conducting diplomatic relations with the Abkhaz government means recognizing that government, and we can never exclude the Russian factor." (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"With the Abkhaz side." (Female, 36, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"With the Abkhaz side." (Female, 30, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"Only with the de facto authorities, not with the Abkhaz government-in-exile, because it just does not represent anything in reality. It's just an artificially created group, nothing more." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*

Q[11] - Within which fields would you primarily like to see the negotiations?

A few participants claimed Abkhazia's status should be of paramount importance in any negotiations, while others added that security was also significant. One in the younger Tbilisi FG, though, said that status should be discussed last, after other topics such as crime and human rights are brought up. One Tbilisi woman in the older FG offered the opinion that the rights of both peoples should be discussed in order to build a stronger relationship between them.

- *"About [Abkhazia's] status, by all means." (Male, 28, married, economist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"We should first of all negotiate the status... No one ever talks about how we will recover Abkhazia." (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"Status, security [along the boundary line], and return." (Female, 36, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"Why do I need security along the boundary line on the Enguri? What can I gain from it?" (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"We should talk about the rights of the Abkhaz people and the rights of Georgians. We should first make it clear how are going to live there.... If we claim everything there, we can't build a relationship [with the Abkhaz people]." (Female, 43, married, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"We could first talk about environmental protection, ecology, criminal situation, and human right protection. These are the topics that are common for us whether we like it or not. We shouldn't talk about the status of Abkhazia directly. This should happen in stages... Status should be discussed last." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*

Some participants said that the return of IDPs should be the most important issue during any kind of negotiations. One in the younger Tbilisi group and one in the Kutaisi older group said that a referendum should be held to decide Abkhazia's status. Another person in the same Tbilisi younger group, however, disagreed, saying a referendum would only

lead to further conflict. Others focused their comments more on cooperation, in economic terms, for instance, as well as the return of IDPs.

- *"About the return of IDPs... Talking about the status is of course most important, but we have spent so many years arguing about the status. The return should be accompanied by a referendum which should determine the status... which will probably never happen." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I think that if the population returns, and the international forces create a democratic environment, it will make a decision about the status through a referendum." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"A referendum would become another cause for conflict." (Female, 30, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group.)*
- *"The status and IDPs." (Female, 54, single, doctor, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"The return of IDPs, security, status..." (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"About the return of IDPs." (Female, 23, married, secondary education, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"About the status of Abkhazia, of course... about everyone having equal rights in case of return. For example, both Georgians and Abkhaz people should have the right to work in the police or in other positions. No one should have privileges." (Female, 21, single, lawyer, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"A common economy." (Female, 25, single, office manager, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"About developing common policies in general... Safe return." (Female, 25, single, office manager, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"We should create some zones in which relationships between the Abkhaz people and Georgians can develop. In them, young [Abkhaz] kids who have never had a Georgian friend or a classmate should see that we are not going to kill them, like they are told now." (Male, 46, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*

Q[12] -Which role do ordinary Georgians and Abkhaz people play in the conflict resolution process?

The FG participants agreed that contacts between ordinary people were important, but opinions differed about the extent to which they could play a positive role in conflict resolution. Some attached a great importance to it, while others said they were a positive but could not be a decisive factor for conflict resolution without preconditions, such as better economic situation in Georgia. Two Kutaisi younger group participants also emphasized that meetings held abroad between Georgians and Abkhaz citizens had fostered better attitudes towards each other, which creates the potential for future better relations.

- *"We ordinary people are never consulted... but ordinary people can play a tremendous role." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"I agree. It's very important to have positive relations with the Abkhaz people so that our arriving there becomes desirable for them... But, first of all, it's probably necessary that our country improve its economic situation so that they will want us to go there and make investments and so they can then view the future in a positive light." (Female, 25, single, pharmacist and assistant, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*

- *"I think public diplomacy plays a big role. For example, when I move to a new district, if I don't say 'hello' to my new neighbour and don't introduce myself, our relationship will not develop. We should both take steps. However unwilling your neighbour is to be friends with you, when you meet him several times and he sees that you are a normal person and that you treat him well, he will start thinking about making friends with you... There are meetings abroad in which I have also taken part. They play a big role. We [Georgian and Abkhaz participants of above-mentioned meetings] always spent time together. That's why one of the Abkhaz girls taking part in these meetings was surprised, saying she didn't expect us to want to play cards or go to a disco with her... Their impressions changed and our relationships developed. Later, these people may become members of the government and we won't find it so hard to have a relationship with them." (Male, 23, single, economist, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"At one such meeting abroad, one of the participants turned out to be an employee of the Bagapsh presidential office... Several young people also turned out to be working in that government. And you know what? Such meetings also influence older people." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"But there are people [in Abkhazia] who will support our living together, and I think they will achieve this. I consider [public diplomacy] very important." (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"Generally, very much depends on public opinion." (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"If we want to return, we should first of all find a common ground with Abkhaz people. We should talk to them, there is no other alternative." (Female, 24, single, lawyer, unemployed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"Public diplomacy is very important, but it's not decisive. Public diplomacy can't change anything." (Female, 42, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"It would be better if Georgians and the Abkhaz people had closer relationships, but, in my opinion, it wouldn't change much." (Female, 25, single, office manager, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*

Section 4: Justice (Q13–15)

Q[13] - In your opinion, what is justice in relation to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict?

Some participants found it very hard to talk about justice in this situation. They thought it is very much unfair that people are not living in their own houses today. The war itself was called unfair by a Zugdidi man in the younger group, and one woman in the Kutaisi younger group decried the fact that Russia continues to intervene in relations between Abkhazia and Georgia.

- *"It is very hard to establish what is 'just'. Because what is unjust for me could be 'just' for others." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group), (Female, 25, single, office manager, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"It is impossible to say." (Female, 30, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"There is no one truth. There isn't just a 'Georgian' truth; the other side also has its own truth." (Female, 43, married, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"That none of us lives in their own houses today, that's the biggest injustice." (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group), (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"First of all, it is unjust that Russians are intervening and deciding on relations between Georgians and Abkhaz people." (Female, 25, single, pharmacist and assistant, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"The civil war." (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"That brother shot brother." (Female, 28, married, teacher, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"Basic relations [with people who live in Abkhazia] are forbidden. Not from Georgia's side but from the Abkhaz side. This is the biggest injustice." (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group)*

Q[14] - In order to resolve the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, how would you suggest dealing with injustices?

FG participants agreed that it will be very difficult to resolve the Georgian–Abkhaz conflict and deal with all the injustices that happened during and after the war. One woman in the Zugdidi older group said that both sides should admit fault. Echoing this, a man from the same group said that both sides' interests should be taken into consideration. A woman from the Kutaisi younger group called for negotiations with Russia to be undertaken to help to address broadly all injustices.

- *"This is a very hard path to take. Really very hard." (Female, 47, married, businessperson, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"It is very hard to say who is wrong and who is right in war." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"I cannot say anything. This is a very hard topic." (Female, 75, married, teacher, pensioner, Tbilisi, older group)*

- *"There is no situation which does not have a way out. And it is not possible that there is no way out from this situation — we have to find it." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"Both sides should admit their fault." (Female, 39, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"Both sides' interests should be taken into consideration, not only ours. And then it will be fair." (Male, 55, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"This should be resolved by law, not according to justice, because these are different things." (Female, 27, married, lawyer, employed, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"We should have negotiations with Russia about Abkhazia, if we want all the injustices to be eradicated." (Female, 25, single, pharmacist and assistant, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*

Q[15] - Let's assume we would decide to address somehow injustices that happened in the past. What legal and/or punitive approaches would you like to see in order to feel that injustices from the past have been addressed?

Whereas the FG participants from Zugdidi and Kutaisi called for various people to be punished — namely, former President Shevardnadze, the Russians and both the Abkhaz and the Georgian sides — in order to right past injustices, only one person in Tbilisi, from the older group, agreed. The rest in Tbilisi, young and older alike, asserted that it would do no good to punish anyone now. One Kutaisi woman called for all who were government at that time to be punished.

- *"[Punishing somebody] does not make sense." (Female, 23, single, sociologist, employed, Tbilisi, younger group), (Male, 23, single, economist, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group), (Male, 25, single, employed, Zugdidi, younger group), (Female, 42, married, unemployed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"Eduard Shevardnadze should be punished, so that others don't repeat [same mistakes]." (Female, 54, single, doctor, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
- *"Shevardnadze should be punished." (Male, 24, married, economist, employed, Kutaisi, younger group), (Female, 47, married, businessperson, Kutaisi, older group), (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"What sense does it make punishing Shevardnadze today? It won't bring back my house and won't raise my grandfather from the dead." (Male, 22, single, MA student, Tbilisi, younger group)*
- *"The Russians should be punished." (Female, 20, single, dentistry student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
- *"Both sides [Abkhaz and Georgians] are guilty." (Male, 42, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group)*
- *"Both sides should be punished." (Male, 48, married, employed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"Everybody who was in the government at that time, in Georgia and in Russia." (Female, 25, single, pharmacist and assistant, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*

Q[15] Follow-up: Official apology, Financial reparations, Investigating and documenting past injustices, Reintegration of Abkhazia into Georgia proper.

Some said official apologies would not be helpful, though one woman in the Zugdidi younger group said she would like to hear Russia apologize. In each city's FGs, there were only a few in the older groups who called for investigating and documenting past injustices. No one from the younger group in any FG did so, as they stated that it would not make sense. Calls for financial compensation arose in each group, and were made by older and younger participants alike.

- *"An official apology won't help us." (Female, 54, single, doctor, employed, Tbilisi, older group)*
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- *"It would be very good to hear an apology from Russia, but it won't change anything." (Female, 19, single, international relations and psychology student, Zugdidi, younger group)*
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- *"It [an investigation] will strain the situation and make it even more complicated." (Male, 23, single, economist, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group), (Female, 25, single, pharmacist and assistant, unemployed, Kutaisi, younger group)*
- *"Documenting everything is very necessary for history's sake. Everybody, Georgians and Abkhaz people, should know exactly what happened and who is guilty." (Male, 55, married, employed, Zugdidi, older group), (Female, 44, married, teacher, unemployed, Kutaisi, older group)*
- *"Yes [agreeing with the two above-participants]." (Female, 48, married, employed, Tbilisi, older group), (Female, 40, single, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*

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- *"Yes [agreeing with the two above-participants]." (Female, 48, married, employed, Tbilisi, older group), (Female, 40, single, unemployed, Tbilisi, older group)*

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Age

In total, six FGs were held, two in each city, in July 2010. Each focus group contained around 10 participants. Half of the FG participants were aged between 18 and 30, and the other half was aged 31 and above. The division of FG participants into age groups is based on the assumption that IDPs who left Abkhazia at a younger age have different opinions and views about the key themes than do IDPs who spent a significant part of their lives in Abkhazia.

Geography

The three geographical locations were selected based on the assumption that IDPs in the capital have different opportunities in life, especially with regard to economy, than IDPs in other areas. Moreover, people in Samegrelo, here represented by IDPs from the Zugdidi area, are expected to have different opportunities because of their geographical proximity to Abkhazia. Being near the territory from which they were displaced, it is expected that they would have stronger social networks and more frequent opportunities to visit Abkhazia. These are factors that are assumed to influence opinions and attitudes toward return, conflict resolution and justice.

Gender

Gender was not a selection criterion for the FG participants. As the FG composition shows, there were more female than male participants. Based on CRRC's previous experience with FGs, women are more ready to participate in discussions.

Participating organizations & complementary research

The FG participants were recruited with the assistance of local NGOs working on IDP issues. The FG guide was developed from the questionnaire used in the survey "IDPs in Georgia", which targeted the old caseload IDPs from Abkhazia currently living in collective centres. The findings from the FG discussions cannot be generalized to the whole IDP community living in private accommodation, but they can serve as a complement to the survey of IDPs in collective centres and give a general indication of the views and opinions of privately accommodated IDPs.

APPENDIX I: FG MATRICES

Table 1: Tbilisi Matrix

Groups selected on the basis of age	
FG 1	FG 2
IDPs from Abkhazia	IDPs from Abkhazia
Age group: younger (18-30)	Age group: older (31 +)
Residence: Tbilisi	Residence: Tbilisi
Gender: Mixed	Gender: Mixed

Table 2: Kutaisi Matrix

Groups selected on the basis of age	
FG 3	FG 4
IDPs from Abkhazia	IDPs from Abkhazia
Age group: younger (18-30)	Age group: older (31 +)
Residence: Kutaisi	Residence: Kutaisi
Gender: Mixed	Gender: Mixed

Table 3: Zugdidi Matrix

Groups selected on the basis of age	
FG 5	FG 6
IDPs from Abkhazia	IDPs from Abkhazia
Age group: younger (18-30)	Age group: older (31 +)
Residence: Zugdidi	Residence: Zugdidi

Gender: Mixed

Gender: Mixed

APPENDIX II: FG QUESTION GUIDE

DISPLACEMENT IN GEORGIA

Welcome to our group discussion about your opinions on displacement in Georgia. We appreciate you taking the time to share your valuable insights with us.

My name is [name/surname]. I represent the Caucasus Research Resource Centers, a non-profit, independent research center, which is a program of the Eurasia Partnership Foundation in Georgia. I will be moderating our discussion today.

Today's discussion is part of a project that the Caucasus Research Resource Centers is conducting together with the non-governmental organization Conciliation Resources, based in Great Britain. The project seeks to gain a better understanding of the opinions and perceptions of people who became displaced from Abkhazia. The results of these discussions will be used with the objective to inform future policies on IDPs and displacement in Georgia.

Before we begin our discussion, I would like to ask you to sign a confidentiality agreement.

[Go over/have people sign the agreement]

Thank you!

Before we begin our group discussion, I want to establish some guidelines for how we will speak. Each of your thoughts are valuable to us and we want to hear them. Please help us do so by following these guidelines:

1. Please speak one at a time.
2. Please keep your responses as brief as possible. I will ask you to finish your comments if we need to move on.
3. Please do not dismiss or judge what other people say. Focus instead on your own experience and opinion.
4. Please avoid profanity or derogatory terms.
5. Please be candid.

6. Please remember that what is said in this room is confidential.

Do you have any questions?

Let's begin!

INTRODUCTION

1. If you could change one thing about your life in Georgia, what would that be?

RETURN

2. In general, how would you describe the relations between Georgians and Abkhaz people today? (Friendly / Hostile)

3. Talking about culture, values and mentality, what would you say unite Georgians and Abkhaz people?

- And what would you say divide Georgians and Abkhaz people?

4. In your opinion, what are the chances of Abkhazia being reintegrated with Georgia proper?

- How have the prospects of Abkhazia being reintegrated with Georgia changed since the August 2008 war?

5. If IDPs were given the possibility to return to Abkhazia, which conditions would need to be in place for you personally to consider a permanent return?

Why?

(If the participants have problems mentioning conditions, probe...)

- Status of Abkhazia (Reintegrated with Georgia, Independent, Part of the Russian Federation)
- Citizenship
- Full local rights (e.g. voting in Abkhaz elections)
- Possibility to travel freely between Georgia and Abkhazia
- Georgian language schools
- Russian troop withdrawal
- Protection against discrimination
- Possibility to regain old real estate

6. Some IDPs have made property arrangements with the people now living in their houses in Abkhazia (e.g. sale, rent, letting other people live there in exchange for looking after the property, exchange for other property). What is your opinion about these types of practical property arrangements?

7. What are your feelings toward the people now living in IDPs' old houses in Abkhazia?

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

8. In your opinion, which were the main reasons for the outbreak of the war in Abkhazia in 1992?

9. What would you like the Georgian government to do in order to find a resolution to the conflict?

(If the participants have problems mentioning actions that the Georgian government could take, probe...)

- Sign a non-use of force agreement with Abkhazia / Russia
- Recognize independence of Abkhazia
- Official apology to the Abkhaz people
- Military intervention in Abkhazia
- Negotiations with Russia
- Negotiations with the de facto Abkhaz authorities

10. With which actors would you like to see the Georgian government have direct negotiations about Abkhazia's status?

(If the participants have problems mentioning actors, probe...)

- Russia
- The de facto Abkhaz authorities
- The Abkhaz government-in-exile

11. Within which fields would you primarily like to see the negotiations?

(If the participants have problems mentioning fields, probe...)

- Security along the boundary line
- Development of trade between the two sides
- Unrestricted travel between Abkhazia and Georgia proper

- Political status of Abkhazia
- IDPs' return to Abkhazia

12. Which role do ordinary Georgians and Abkhaz people play in the conflict resolution process?

- If no role: Should they play a role? Which role?

JUSTICE

13. In your opinion, what is justice in relation to the Georgian–Abkhaz conflict?

14. In order to resolve the Georgian–Abkhaz conflict, how would you suggest dealing with injustices?

Why?

15. Let's assume we would decide to somehow address injustices that happened in the past. What legal or non-punitive approaches would you like to see in order to feel that injustices from the past have been addressed?

(If the participants have problems mentioning legal/non-punitive approaches, probe...)

- Official apology – From whom to whom?
- Financial reparations – Who should get financial reparations and who should be responsible for the financial reparations?
- Prosecution of people suspected of war crimes – Who should be prosecuted?
- Symbolic gestures
- Investigating and documenting past injustices
- Reintegration of Abkhazia into Georgia proper