

# The Russian-Georgian armed Conflict

# Background information



Population  
• 142 mil.

Population  
• 4,4 mil.

# Background information: breakaway regions

Abkhazia  
• 216,000

Ajaria  
• 376,000



South  
Ossetia  
• 70,000

## Background information: history of conflict

- Late 18<sup>th</sup> century – Ossetia was incorporated into the Russian Empire and divided into northern and southern regions
- 1918-1921 – Georgian independence from Russian Empire
- 1921 - Georgia was annexed by the Soviet Union
- 1922 - South Ossetia was established as an autonomous region of the Soviet Republic of Georgia

# Background information: history of conflict

- 1989-1990 - South Ossetia tried to gain independence from Georgia
- April 1991 - Georgia received independence
- 1991-1992 - brutal clashes between South Ossetians and Georgians, 1,000 dead\*
- 1992 – Ceasefire agreement brokered by Russia

# Background information: history of conflict

- 2003 – “Rose Revolution” in Georgia
- 2004 – fighting broke out in South Ossetia
- 2007 – Georgia calls for internationalization of peacekeeping force in the region
- August 2008 – Georgia attacks Tskhinvali followed by a Russian counter-offensive

# South Ossetia



- In July 2005, President Saakashvili announced a new peace plan for South Ossetia that offered substantial autonomy and a three-stage settlement, consisting of demilitarization, economic rehabilitation, and a political settlement.
- South Ossetian “president” Eduard Kokoiti rejected the plan.

# South Ossetia

- In March 2007, President Saakashvili proposed another peace plan for South Ossetia that involved creating “transitional” administrative districts throughout the region.
- In July 2007, President Saakashvili decreed the establishment of a commission to work out South Ossetia’s “status” as a part of Georgia.
- The JCC finally held a meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia, in October 2007, but the Russian Foreign Ministry claimed that the Georgian emissaries made unacceptable demands in order to deliberately sabotage the results of the meeting. No further meetings were held.



## Roki Tunnel – Only road passage from Russia to South Ossetia



[http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2008/09/16/world/16georgia\\_600.jpg](http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2008/09/16/world/16georgia_600.jpg)

# Convoy of Russian soldiers by the Caucasus mountains



[http://cache.boston.com/universal/site\\_graphics/blogs/bigpicture/georgia\\_08\\_11/georgia1.jpg](http://cache.boston.com/universal/site_graphics/blogs/bigpicture/georgia_08_11/georgia1.jpg)



# Russian forces in Goergia



# The 2008 South Ossetia war



	Railroad		Airport		Road		6000 m
							1000 m
							0 m
	Georgian offensive (August 7-10)		Russian counteroffensive (August 8-16)		Area shelled by the Georgian artillery		Russian air attacks
	Russian naval movements		Georgian naval movements		Russian airborne forces		Naval engagement
	Territory controlled by the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia prior to the war						
	Abkhazian and South Ossetian territory loyal to the Georgian government that was lost to the separatists and Russian forces						
	Georgian territory (outside Abkhazia and South Ossetia) occupied by the Russian army						
	Georgian defensive position after August 11						



# Conflict Analysis: Interests

Stakeholder	Interests
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Return breakaway regions</li><li>• Display that territorial integrity is under threat</li><li>• Promote NATO membership</li><li>• Demonstrate Russia's aggressiveness</li></ul>
South Ossetia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate violation of human rights</li><li>• Show that Georgia is aggressive state</li><li>• Get international recognition of their plight</li><li>• Desire for independence or incorporation into Russian Federation</li></ul>
Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Undermine Georgia's territorial integrity</li><li>• Prevent Georgia from joining NATO</li><li>• Send strong message to Ukraine</li><li>• Protect its sphere of influence</li><li>• Control of the Caucasus and its energy resources</li><li>• Promote "regime change" in Georgia? West's recognition of Kosovo? U.S. Missile Defense Shield?</li></ul>

# Conflict Analysis: Interests

Stakeholder	Interests
EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Human rights protection</li><li>• Observance of international law</li><li>• Access to energy resources</li></ul>
NATO/US	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Security and stability in the region</li><li>• Observance of international law</li><li>• Energy security</li><li>• Commitment to idea of democracy</li><li>• NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP)</li></ul>

# Oil and Gas pipeline that pass through Georgia





# Conflict Analysis: Actions

Stakeholder	Actions
Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accusing Russia of supporting separatist movements</li><li>• Military attack on Tskhinvali, capital of South Ossetia</li><li>• Accusation of violation of human rights and ethnic cleansing</li><li>• Attack South Ossetian-populated villages in S.O.</li></ul>
South Ossetia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encouraged support from Russia</li><li>• Militias attack and loot Georgian-populated villages in S.O.</li></ul>
Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disproportionate counter-offensive attack</li><li>• Invasion of Georgian cities and ports</li><li>• Accusation of violation of human rights and ethnic cleansing</li><li>• Recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states</li></ul>
EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shuttle diplomacy between Russia and Georgia</li><li>• Signing ceasefire agreement, ambiguity</li><li>• Accusing Russia of disproportionate response</li><li>• Appeal of use of diplomatic means to resolve conflict</li><li>• Suspension of EU-Russia Partnership talks</li></ul>
NATO/US	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accusing Russia of disproportionate response</li><li>• Suspension of NATO-Russia Council</li></ul>

# Conflict Analysis: Stages

- 1992-2008 – Frozen Conflict  
(Summer 2004 – Active)
- 2008 – Re-activation of Conflict
- 2009 – Conflict Unresolved

# Conflict Analysis: Consequences

- Deterioration of peace, stability and security in Europe and beyond
- Dramatic shift in Russian-Western relations
- Energy security
- Disregard for and enforcement of international law
- 158,000 displaced people (according to UNHCR)
- Reconstruction and Reconciliation

# Georgian soldiers in Gori



# Conflict Analysis: Concerns

- How can EU security policy be improved in order to prevent, respond, and resolve regional ethnic conflicts?
- Can Russia be a partner in ensuring peace and security in Europe?
- What is the status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia?
- How to ensure Georgia's territorial integrity?

# Tskhinvali: the Aftermath



[http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/44920000/jpg/\\_44920204\\_01\\_ap.jpg&imgrefurl=http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7559270.stm&usg=\\_\\_ysJudalHL6N7Bj8K9Np-gwFy92E=&h=300&w=466&sz=40&hl=en&start=4&sig2=K1A5s04k5Jq31E9eG7G2PA&um=1&tbnid=uBm0Nj3JYMtQLM:&tbnh=82&tbnw=128&ei=vRmLSbKFD4naMLfQodoH&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dtskhinvali%2Bcivilian%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official%26sa%3DG](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/44920000/jpg/_44920204_01_ap.jpg&imgrefurl=http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7559270.stm&usg=__ysJudalHL6N7Bj8K9Np-gwFy92E=&h=300&w=466&sz=40&hl=en&start=4&sig2=K1A5s04k5Jq31E9eG7G2PA&um=1&tbnid=uBm0Nj3JYMtQLM:&tbnh=82&tbnw=128&ei=vRmLSbKFD4naMLfQodoH&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dtskhinvali%2Bcivilian%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-US:official%26sa%3DG)

# Six-Point Ceasefire Plan

- 1. Not to resort to force;
- 2. To end hostilities definitively;
- 3. To provide free access for humanitarian aid;
- 4. Georgian military forces will have to withdraw to their usual bases;
- 5. Russian military forces will have to withdraw to the lines held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Pending an international mechanism, Russian peace-keeping forces will implement additional security measures;
- 6. Opening of international talks on the security and stability arrangements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

# Geneva talks

- In the aftermath of the Georgian-Russian war in August 2008, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) called for the establishment of a mediation forum aimed at security and stability in the South Caucasus. The initiative goes back to the “Six-Point Ceasefire Plan” reached by French (and then EU) President Nicolas Sarkozy and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev, which brought to an end the military confrontation between Moscow and Tbilisi.



# Geneva talks



# Geneva talks

- Initially Georgia urged the forum to include also the replacement of Russian military forces with international peacekeepers, EU monitoring within the separatist entities (i.e. an extension of EUMM); and the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity.
- By contrast, Russia insisted on modifying the mandates of the OSCE and UN missions in the region. The parties failed to reach an agreement and the OSCE as well as the UN were forced to leave.

# Recommendations

- Establish an international peace mediation and monitoring process
- Encourage dialogue and reconciliation
- Aid the return of displaced persons
- Reconstruct areas damaged or destroyed by the conflict

# Challenge for the International Community

How to establish a mechanism or process to hold Georgia, Russia and South Ossetia accountable for their actions, but without isolating them from the international community in order to prevent such aggressive actions from happening in the future?

A LITTLE  
WAR  
THAT SHOOK  
THE WORLD



**GEORGIA, RUSSIA, AND THE FUTURE OF THE WEST**

RONALD D. ASMUS

PREFACE BY STROBE TALBOTT

# Consequences



- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4P4nePpBHKc>

# References

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