

PEACE & SECURITY - THIS IS OUR BUSINESS!

young experts from the South Caucasus



A woman drinking tea in the aftermath of a German bombing raid during the London Blitz. [1940]

EDITORIAL

It has been a while since our last edition was issued in November 2014. Time passes so quickly – it flies quickly often for good bringing hope and advancement, but very often it acts against groups of people, countries and the whole nations who turn to be unlucky to be in the hot spots of the globe where shelling and bombing never stops; where killing people, women, men and children becomes usual routine; where violence, death, exile, suffering and hunger is a norm and where no hope of ending of all this is seen in the horizons. There are a lot of armed conflicts going on in the world but Syria and Ukraine is on our mind constantly. We hope this nightmare will stop soon.

We continue our project in partnership with IGPB and with financial support of OSI. This is going to be the third and last phase of our project which will sum up the work of our network and answer the question whether we could manage to put at

least one brick to the walls of the very difficult construction which is called peace and stability in our community, in our country and the entire region.

In this issue and in the upcoming journal too our network members will talk about key stories that happened in Tbilisi, Armenia and Azerbaijan during this summer -Tbilisi catastrophic flood that took away 19 lives; Armenia Electricity protest that brought thousands of young girls and boys into streets of Yerevan to protest their governments unfair decision on electricity bill increase and finally Baku 1st European game that took place from 12 to 28 June and featured almost 6,000 athletes from 50 countries competing in 20 sports – and what is most remarkable, Armenians participated in this very important European sports event showing that cooperation is achievable only through friendship, solidarity, cultural exchange and sports.





In this issue we will speak about our cooperation with Tbilisi State University which now becomes regular. We will present some articles from the recent conference organized in partnership with this University.

Best essay presenters were awarded by our organization with various prizes and also given the opportunity to publish the articles in our e-journal.

In addition to this, our Network members participated in the elaboration process of the Youth Peace Plan of Georgia within the frame of the peace project supported by Canadian Government, so we decided to publish first part of it in this

issue and the final part in the upcoming issue, which is due in August -September 2015.

Our FB page and Blog Post has been regularly updated and we have got more and more visitors which is very welcoming. You can also visit the pages: <https://www.facebook.com/yweps> and <http://youngwomenexperts.blogspot.com/> and get more news on current peace and security situation in various regions and the world. You can always contact us with questions and proposals on various issues you would like we take into consideration. Best regards,

NINO LAGVILAVA



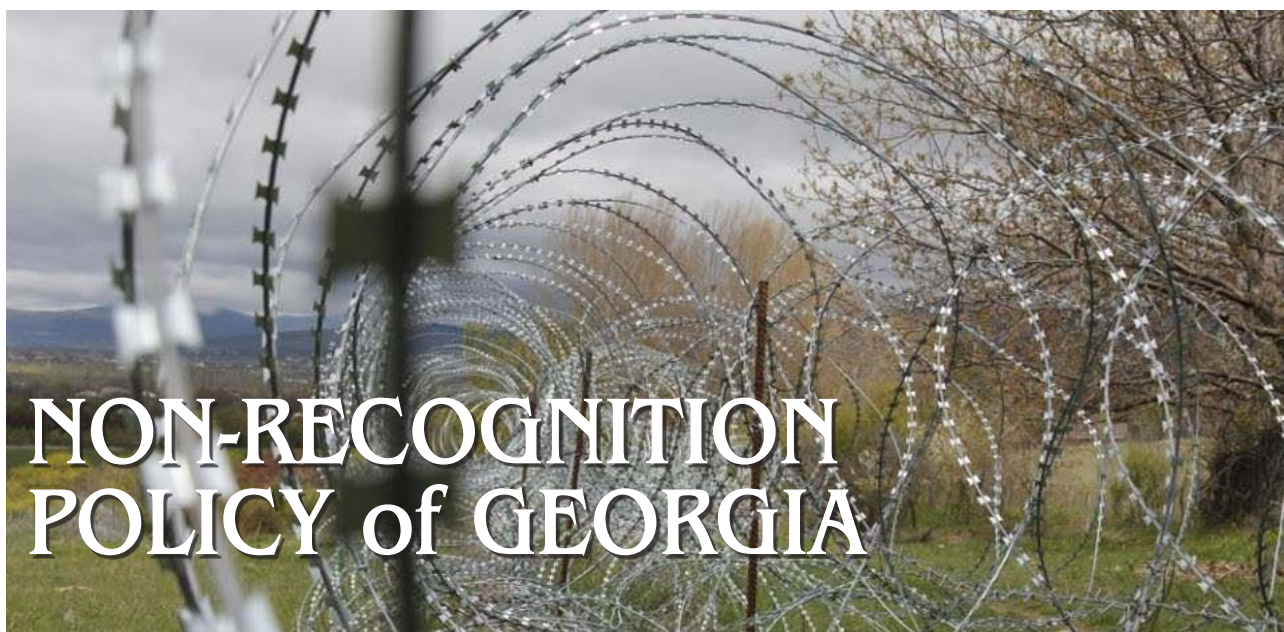
STUDENTS' CONFERENCE OF TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY

Students' conferences are acknowledged by our Network as one of the best tools of raising youth awareness, promoting students participation and stimulating their involvement in expert and analytical works which further advances their active participation in political discourse including debates and discussion on peace and security, the state's domestic and external policies, the regional and global politics and so on.

This year Students' Conference on "Georgia's Current Politics – Problems and Challenges and the Ways for its Resolution" was organized in partnership with Tbilisi State University where 40 students from School of Politics and Social Science took part. Before the conference, the essay competition was announced and 40 essays on Georgia's domestic and external politics were submitted. Among 12 finalists 11 were girl students which once again proves young women's keen interest in their country's political and economic issues. Best essay writers got

the offer from our organization to publish their essays (changed into articles) in our e-journal which will be one more opportunity to support publicity of these students and their work at regional level.





NON-RECOGNITION POLICY of GEORGIA

In the aftermath of 2008 Russia-Georgian war Russia recognized the independence of Georgia's breakaway Regions - Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region. This eventually led to the establishment of Georgia's non-recognition policy.

In contemporary international system, the recognition is vital for the admission of a new state to the international community. Therefore it is extremely important for Georgia to limit and reduce the amount of states that recognize its breakaway regions. As of today only 4 out of UN's 193 member states acknowledge independence of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region and two more states Tuvalu and Vanuatu have withdrawn their recognition. Factors that influence Georgia's non-recognition policy as well as reasons of recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Nauru are discussed in the article below.

By recognition of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region, Russia and other states that also acknowledge the independence of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region have violated the principles of international law - particularly the inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity of states. Unlike of these states other states have resisted from actions that so evidently violate international law. As stated by E. H. Morgenthau "Like most laws, international rules are rarely enforced, but usually obeyed." According to Ralston Professor of Law Andrew T. Guzman it is so due to three factors: reputation (states are usually judged by their past behavior hence their compliance to the international law makes them more desirable partners), reciprocal non-compliance (other states may equally violate their own compliance) and retaliation (non-complying state may face a punishment even if it is costly for the punishing one).

Many states in contemporary international system experience significant political and economic influence from the West, consequently to any changes or attempts of these changes they respond after considering the Western position. Indeed support of the USA and EU guarantees non-recognition of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region among these type of states.

Considering the growing threat of separatism in the present-day world, it is very unlike for states to support independence of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region as this might become a valid precedent of international law and serve against their own territorial integrity.

Georgia has been rapidly establishing diplomatic relations

with various countries since 2010. Even though diplomatic relations do not guarantee non-recognition of Georgia's breakaway regions, it creates valuable basis, since states while establishing diplomatic ties recognize inviolability of each other's frontiers.

Since the dissolution of the USSR, Russia has aimed to maintain its influence on post-Soviet states. In case of Georgia, Russia used Abkhazia and South Ossetia as a means of control of Georgia's foreign policy. Georgia's aspiration to join EU and NATO as well as its participation in projects like Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (B.T.C.), Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (B.T.E.) pipelines and Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, that aim to reduce Russian influence on the region has largely contributed to Russia's decision to recognize Georgia's self-declared states.

Russia is believed to restrain influence of the USA in Nicaragua and Venezuela; they hence support Russia's foreign policy decisions. On the contrary, they oppose the West and may easily take steps to irritate them. Regimes in these countries are non-democratic, that makes their decisions less rational and increases influence of subjective factors.

Nauru, one of the smallest countries in the world, makes most of its foreign income from checkbook diplomacy, as noted by New York Times in exchange for recognition of independence of Georgia's breakaway regions Nauru requested 50 million USD for "urgent social and economic projects".

Revocation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence by Tuvalu and Vanuatu is a successful outcome of Georgian diplomacy. However, most likely revocation was not a result of direct negotiations with these states, but rather of diplomatic efforts, that had been made by Georgia in EU. Vanuatu's Minister of Foreign Affairs during one of his interviews hoped for growth of EU support as an upshot of the decision.

Non-recognition policy of Georgia is important in reestablishment of Georgia's jurisdiction in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Thus Georgia has to continue to pursue policy of non-recognition by establishing diplomatic ties with states and further developing political, economic or cultural relations with them and by actively advocating issues of breakaway regions in international organizations in order to guarantee their engagement in promotion of Georgia's non-recognition policy.

MARIAM PATSATSIA
Student of Faculty of Social and
Political Sciences, Tbilisi State University
First Prize Winner of Essay Contest

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG and CAN REBUILD FASTER

Severe flooding in the Georgian capital left 19 people dead and three still missing on 13 and 14 June; tigers, a hippopotamus and other dangerous animals escaped from Tbilisi's ravaged zoo. Heavy rain caused serious flood in the city and destroyed and damaged hundreds of houses.

The floodwaters gouged huge chunks out of roads and swamped numerous homes. The next days saw unprecedented unification and solidarity of civilians - hundreds of volunteers, especially young girls and boys and rescue workers worked together to help residents despite the danger from the escaped animals. Not only Georgians stood to labor for removing debris, but foreign citizens too from Europe, USA, Africa. This once again gave us strength and confidence that together we are undefeatable against natural and man-made catastrophes and we can rebuild again and again much easier if the whole world stands with us. The images presented below are conveying so much emotions and context Tbilisi with its wonderful people so tirelessly working for its reconstruction.

ANI SPARSIAHVILI
Network Member



JUNE 2015 TBILISI





TOGETHER WE ARE STRONG and CAN REBUILD FASTER





ARMENIA ENERGY PROTESTS



Thousands of people in the Armenian capital Yerevan took part in protests against rising electricity prices. Protesters were opposing a decision to increase prices for households by 17-22% from 1 August. The protests began a few days after a 17 June decision by the state utilities commission to increase electricity tariffs from the beginning of August by more than 16%. The situation escalated when police used water cannon to disperse the crowd in the early hours of 23 June. More than 200 demonstrators were arrested, a number of local journalists mistreated, their equipment and phones smashed.

The heavy-handed reaction angered people and only strengthened their determination to stay in the streets. In daytime, despite the summer heat, a few hundred people were on site. By night the crowd grew bigger - in the thousands. This was a civil initiative, and the majority of demonstrators were teenagers and students mobilized through social media, among were young girls and women. Our organization's member - Shoghik Vardanian sends us her views on the situation in Yerevan.



Протесты в Ереване: «МАЙДАН», ПОПЫТКА РЕВОЛЮЦИИ или НОВАЯ КУЛЬТУРА ПРОТЕСТОВ НА ПОСТСОВЕТСКОМ ПРОСТРАНСТВЕ?

С самого первого дня внимание мировых СМИ было приковано к проходящим в армянской столице протестам против повышения тарифов на электроэнергию. Российские СМИ поспешили назвать происходящее попыткой «цветной революции», даже обвинив Госдеп в поддержке армянской оппозиции, а западные СМИ сразу же приписали протесту «анти-российский» характер.

Однако то, что началось в Ереване, нельзя подогнать ни под одну из произошедших заранее сценариев. Смело можно сказать, что группа молодых людей – образованных и смелых, положила начало качественно новой культуре социальной борьбы на постсоветском пространстве.

Если ответить на вопрос – кто же прав, российские или западные СМИ, то ответ – никто.

Правда в том, что с самого начала протест носил социальный характер, и у протестующих было конкретное требование. Конечно же, митингующие стремились к резиденции главы государства, чтобы выразить свой протест, однако на протяжении всего времени на проспекте Маршала Баграмяна в Ереване не прозвучал ни один политический лозунг. И даже тот факт, что компания «Электрические сети Армении» принадлежит России, не сделал протест антироссийским. Всем было понятно, что если власти Армении вступили в коррупционную сделку с властями другой страны, то проблема в первую очередь внутри страны.

В Армении, по сути, нет оппозиции как таковой. Есть отдельные личности, в разное время попытавшиеся консолидировать вокруг себя молодежь, однако все попытки закончились провалом. Важно заметить, что участники этой многотысячной акции были не те люди,



которые до сих пор собирались на митинги разных оппозиционеров. Это были интеллектуальные, образованные парни и девушки, хорошие разбирающиеся в экономике, которых просто так не заставишь платить за роскошную жизнь коррумпированных чиновников.

Смело можно сказать, что в Армении уже никогда не будет как прежде. Наивно предполагать, что отныне чиновники не будут воровать, и все вопросы будут решены. Но «поколение независимости» заставило считаться с собой: в компании «Электрические сети Армении» пройдет международный аудит. Каковы будут результаты, покажет время. Возможно, власти хотели таким образом отправить протестующих домой. Однако очевидно, что активная молодежь при надобности соберется снова. Опыт уже есть.

ШОГИК ВАРДАНИЯН,
журналист, Ереван





YOUTH PEACE PLAN

In February-March 2015 YWEPS under the mentorship and consultancy of Nino Lagvilava participated in the process of drafting Youth Peace Plan of Georgia which was produced within the framework of the project - "Support Democratic Participation of Young Women in Building Peace and Stability in Georgia" implemented in Georgia by International Network for Civil Development - INCD with the financial support of the Embassy of Canada through Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI).

The document is an attempt of Georgian young women from various parts of Georgia including those areas bordering conflict divided lines and directly affected by armed conflicts to create a plan for peacebuilding to help move forward rapprochement process with their peers in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Within the framework of the project mentioned above around 30 young women came together to think how to build peace in their country and move on the reconciliation process with break-away regions of Georgia so that the existing conflicts are mitigated through various confidence building measures and this way to make peaceful coexistent become more plausible and realistic.

In the following issues of our e-journal we will be presenting to your attention the chapters from the Peace Plan and this way share our approaches on building peace and confidence which can be used in all conflict-divided communities to bring together young girls and boys who think about peaceful developments and man-

agements of existing conflicts in their respective countries and regions.

POLITICAL SPHERE

The youth's and especially young women's participation at political decision making level is a vital factor to hear the youth's voice. Irrespective that at this stage it is denied from the Abkhazia and South Ossetia to accept any offers about political decision on the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and on cooperation at the political levels, it is quite possible that young politicians lobby the government programs that will facilitate deepening relations and cooperation between young women and men from both sides of conflict divided lines; they can think over more effective rapprochement mechanism within their capacities, for e.g. Ministry of Youth and Sports of Georgia can have its share in developing and implementing many interesting initiatives that will attract the inter-

est of young women and men from Abkhazia and South Ossetia and make them more active to participate in various joint projects. It is also possible to elaborate a holistic approach if in partnership with donors and international organizations the Government of Georgia for e.g. creates a special fund for the youth's confidence building initiatives where various joint programs and projects will be developed in the field of education and science; culture and sports and recreation; health care and social issues; economic relations, trade and employment and many other fields which would bring the Georgian, Abkhazian and Ossetian young people closer to each other and give chance to them study and work together and think about future perspectives.

It is clear that offering changes in political system such as form of decentralization/broader autonomy, distribution of powers, sharing authorities and so on is not realistic at this current moment because the Abkhazia and South Ossetia decision to stay independent; the reality is also quite obvious for e.g. in Abkhazia related to citizenship issues when Georgians living in Abkhazia and whose number is equal to 50 thousand, having both Georgian and Abkhazian passports are now put against the dilemma, to choose either Abkhazian citizenship and stay in Abkhazia or turn down their Georgian passports, which allows them to move freely on entire Georgian territory and enjoy all the privileges that the Georgian Government offers them in terms of education, health care and social issues. In this presented document many activities are directly linked to Georgian Government's proposed preferential programs and projects. If the youth from Abkhazia were not be able to move freely in any area of Georgia, then this peace plan would not be able to implement fully; However, the projects participants hope that these administrative-legal issues soon will be resolved and Georgian, Abkhaz and Ossetian young people will be able to jointly engage in many interesting humanitarian and development programs and projects, which will contribute to strengthened cooperation and rapprochement.

Irrespective many challenges and problems, the Georgian government should offer cooperation to Abkhazia and South Ossetia at some level and though various mechanisms including the youth confidence building plans and strategies. It can also cooperate on human rights, technology development and democratic processes, such as sharing knowledge on democratization of institutions; human rights protection; development of effective and viable civil society; development of educational system of European standards; development of economic relations; development of information and computer technologies; supporting preserving cultural heritage; preserving native languages and ethnicity and many other issues where the youth from both sides of ABL can participate equally and effectively contributing to improved relations and establishing closer ties.



EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

Peaceful and Inclusive Education is estimated as the most important aspect for building confidence among the youth; Educational opportunities and exchange programs within the country and outside it will give an excellent opportunity to young women and men from both sides of ABL to study together and think together about various interesting or problematic issues.

- The government should invest more in formal and informal peace education which will diminish war rhetoric which is especially manifest in youth's behaviour; these special programs at schools and beyond will increase a culture of dialogue and ability to handle conflicts peacefully; it is recommended that students at the universities can major in security studies and peace and conflict resolution issues and all students including those from Abkhazia and South Ossetia are able to study these programmes;
- The Government should allocate special number of places at various universities of Georgia in various fields of studies, especially in peace and security studies, which will be fully financed (both tuition and living costs). This will inevitably attract the interest of young people from Abkhazia and South Ossetia to study in the universities of Tbilisi and other cities of Georgia;
- The Government should do so that the various educational grants including the President's Grant is equally accessible the girls and boys who live in Abkhazia and South Ossetia;
- If there are not enough Governmental funds available for inviting Abkhazian and South Ossetian students to get education in Georgia proper, then a special educational fund which will be created in partnership with donors organizations and/or business should be created so that all students from Abkhazia and South Ossetian willing to study in Georgia proper are able



to enroll any universities and faculties they would love to continue their studies –studying together with Georgian students in Georgian universities will help strengthen closer relationship and establish friendship;

- International students' exchange programmes are very popular among young people; this should be also promoted and the access to the education abroad becomes easy to especially those students living beyond the conflict divided lines - they should be informed, be able to participate in educational fairs, get systematically the information online, be part of various exchange programmes and so on. The benefit from the international exchange programmes may double if the students from Abkhazia and South Ossetia as well as the young people from Georgia proper participate in the same exchange programme, this will help increase contacts and communication; exchange of knowledge, interests and possibly new ideas on future cooperation;
- For unimpeded and effective mobility it would be appropriate the students from Abkhazia and South Ossetia who are involved in educational programmes both in Georgia and abroad obtain a special travel document/ exchange programme students' passport which she or he can use when travelling within or outside Georgia;
- A special vocational training infrastructure should be created especially across ABL for vocational education, training and re-training so that more segment of youth, all girls and boys willing to get knowledge and skills in various necessary fields are covered in order to increase opportunities to work, to self-employ and

get jobs. The infrastructure should be ready to accept conflict affected young women and men including students from Abkhazia and South Ossetia who should have all opportunities and conditions including grants to study and travel to participate in such educational activities;

- A special training programmes may be offered by business as well; The young women and men from Abkhazia and South Ossetia may get on-job training in various businesses they express interest to improve their skills and this way improving their employability and capacity to create similar businesses in future;
- Internship opportunities may be offered also both by Georgian government institutions as well as the business and civil organizations; This will increase their trust and credence to not only Georgian government institutions but to Georgian civil society and human beings;
- More libraries, cinema halls, spaces for exhibition, public areas for discussions should be opened especially across the conflict divided lines so that the youth from conflict affected areas and those beyond ABL are able to meet frequently, discuss various issues, read and review books and films, get to know and discuss new trends in literature, culture, art, etc.;
- Special free of charge Art Schools should be opened for Georgian as well as Abkhazia and South Ossetia talented children and young people so that they together are able to study free of charge art, music, performing, etc. If they don't speak Georgian, they should be given the opportunity to study in their native languages; this will increase number of participants and also the trust to the programs;
- Systematically organize youth concerts, youth theatres and operas, youth summer and winter camps, youth olympiads, where young women and men from Abkhazia and South Ossetia will be invited and have opportunities to reveal their talents and also communicate with their Georgian peers with similar talents too. The youth representatives from Abkhazia and South Ossetia should have all opportunities including financial resources to participate in these events without any obstacles;
- Systematically organize joint sport events and competitions, sports camps and training spaces; The youth representatives from Abkhazia and South Ossetia should have all opportunities including financial resources to participate in these events without any obstacles.

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