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Human Rights and the War on Terror: Georgia

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Georgia¹

by James Smithwick

The conflict between Chechnya and Russia combined with September 11 has focused more international attention on the Russian Caucasus. However, little has changed since America declared a War on Terror in the Republic of Georgia. The state turned a blind eye to religious persecution before September 11, and continues to do so. Multiple separatist movements persist in the same manner as they did prior to September 11.

Although very little has changed in the substance of these conflicts, all the disputants have attempted to label the other as terrorist since September 11. "In the context of a global war on terror, those who are successfully branded as terrorists by world opinion risk isolation and elimination" (Fawn, 2002). To date, the United has yet to find any separatist party in Georgia guilty of employing terrorism.

As a part of the War on Terror, the United States has expanded its role in the Caucasus. The primary vehicle for American military presence in Georgia is the Georgia Train and Equip Program (GTEP). Currently it is mostly focused on the perceived Chechen terrorist threat in the Pankisi Gorge in northeastern Georgia stipulates that "...trained units will not be used in domestic conflicts" (Chigorin, 2003). However, there are some in Georgia's separatist movement that fear an American trained and equipped Georgian army will be able to tighten its grip on breakaway regions. Government officials have gone so far as to announce that, "... Washington promised to help T'bilisi to sort things out in Abkhazia (a breakaway region) as soon as the problem of Iraq was sorted out" (Chigorin, 2003).

Background

This part of the bibliography provides the reader with a basic background on the Republic of Georgia. It was designed to orient the reader to the geography and history of the Russian Caucasus from the early 1600s, through independence in 1991, to the present. Also included are entries that specifically address religious persecution by the Georgian Orthodox Church against, among others, Jehovah's Witnesses. Many of the entries contained in this subsection are cross-referenced in other subsections.

Amnesty International. 2004. "Georgia".

<http://web.amnesty.org/report2004/geo-summary-eng>.

Report covers events from January to December 2003. Discusses religious persecution by members of the Georgian Orthodox Church and the extradition of Chechens accused of terrorism by the Russian Federation. Also presents information on the change of political power in Georgia in 2003, the Revolution of the Roses.

¹ This section has a supplement that begins on page S-33.

Human Rights Watch. 2004. "World Report 2003: Georgia". <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k3/europe7.html>.

Report on human rights developments in Georgia that focuses on abuses associated with the war on terror in the Pankisi Gorge region, home to thousands of Checheyan refugees. Report also analyzes the persecution of various religious groups in Georgia and concludes with the role of the international community in Georgia.

Human Rights Watch. 2004. "Georgia". http://hrw.org/doc/?t=europe_pub&c=georgi.

URL provides a link to eight Human Rights Watch publications addressing various human rights issues in the Republic of Georgia. Publications address topics including: landmines, the South Ossetia conflict, and the Georgian legal system.

Erika Dailey. 1996. *The Commonwealth of Independent States: Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation, and Tajikistan*. New York, N. Y. : Human Rights Watch/Helsinki: 8(7).

This report focuses on the plight of refugees in several former Soviet republics. Regional conflicts have created large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons. Within the framework of refugees and displaced persons, this report addresses human rights in several former Soviet republics.

Erika Dailey. 1994. *Georgia, Torture and Gross Violations of Due Process in Georgia: An Analysis of Criminal Case No. 7493910*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch/Helsinki: 6 (11).

Report analyzes the human rights abuses associated with criminal trial # 7493910. Nineteen men have been charged with a variety of crimes ranging from arms possession to murder, all crimes carry the possibility of a death sentence. Abuses include: coerced confessions, lack of due process, and denial of legal representation.

William A. Dando. 1995. *Russia and the Independent Nations of the Former USSR: Geofacts and Maps*. Dubuque, Iowa : Wm. C. Brown Communications, 1995.

This work provides basic geographic information about Russian Caucasus with both maps and geographic facts about the region. It is a good source for individuals looking for a place to start their research.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. 2004. Georgia. http://www.csce.gov/state_query.cfm?state_id=19.

URL link provides access to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe's findings on the republic of Georgia as of 2004. The CSCE is an independent agency of the United States Government. The press releases, hearings/briefings, reports, and congressional statements address topics including: terrorism, religious persecution, separatist movements, domestic politics, and foreign involvement in Georgia. This link is a great starting point for anyone interested in an overview of human rights issues facing the republic of Georgia.

R. G. Gachechiladze. 1995. *The New Georgia: Space, Society, Politics (Eastern European Studies, No 3)*. College Station, Tex. : Texas A&M University Press, 1995

ABSTRACT: Text provides a brief historical and geographical summary of the country followed by an examination of various aspects of the nation's general situation as of 1995, including problems generated by the shift to a market economy, regional variations in welfare, variations in levels of crime and drug use, and religious and ethnic tensions. [Edited from synopsis.]

Paul B. Henze. 1996. "Russia and the Caucasus". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. 19(4): 389.

ABSTRACT: This book is a general history of the turbulent relationship between Russia the Caucasus, beginning with Tsar consolidation at the end of the 16th century. Specific focus is paid to the Russian/ Chechnya conflict post 1991, although Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan are also discussed

Human Rights Watch. 2000. Georgia: Backtracking on Reform: Amendments Undermine Access to Justice: Human Rights Watch Publications on Europe and Central Asia. <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2000/10/02/georgi697.htm>.

Report on criminal procedure, justice, and investigation practices in the Republic of Georgia. Primary argument is that the Georgian government has taken steps to diminish Georgians access to justice through amendments to the constitution.

Antero Leitzinger. 1997. Caucasus and an Unholy Alliance. Helsinki, Finland: Kirja-Leitzinger.

Articles on the history and current political situation of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Chechnya and their relations with the "unholy alliance" of Russia, Iran and the West.

Dov Lynch. 2002. Russian Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS, 1992-1997: The Cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan. Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press in association with the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Russian and Eurasia Programme, 2000

ABSTRACT: This study examines the evolution of Russian policy towards conflicts in the former Soviet Union. This work underlines the mixture of defensive and offensive stimuli driving Russian "peacekeeping" strategies, and highlights the dangers that the new Russian Federation faces in undertaking these operations.

Tim Potier. 2001. Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia: A Legal Appraisal. The Hague; Boston: Kluwer Law International.

Article presents a legal analysis of the ongoing conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia and their respective struggles for autonomy. Article also presents a brief history of the entire Transcaucasus region with specific emphasis on independence movements.

Human Rights Watch. 1991. "Conflict in Georgia: Human Rights Violations by the Government of Zviad Gamsakhurdia." News from Helsinki Watch. New York, N. Y. : Human Rights Watch: 3(16).

Article focuses on human rights abuses in the Republic of Georgia with specific focus on the plight of political prisoners. Article also addresses the infringement of freedom of speech and freedom of the press in the newly formed independent republic as of 1991.

Human Rights Watch. 1995. Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict. Human Rights Watch: 7(7).

Report discusses the dynamics between Georgians, Abkhazians, and Russians in the ongoing independence movement in Abkhazia, a region in northeast Georgia. Addresses Georgian and Abkhazian forces violating rules of war during 1992 armed conflict; also analyzed is Russia's role in this conflict.

External Politics

The two largest sources of international influence in the Republic of Georgia are Russia and the United States. Former Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze once remarked that "...for Georgia the sun rose in the north" (quoted in Chigorin, 2003). This quip is illustrative of the power Russia exerts over the region. Likewise, Georgia has historically looked to the West as an important source of foreign aid. Through the War on Terror, the United States has developed a larger sphere of influence in the region, a growing concern to many in Moscow. Many analysts have noted compared the current situation in Georgia to the U.S. and Soviet Cold War. This subsection presents entries that address Russian and American foreign policies with respect to Georgia, including but not limited to, the War on Terror.

2004. "The End of the Affair?" *The Economist*. 372(8394).

Analyzes Russia's relationship with Europe and the United States after September 11. Argues that Vladimir Putin's domestic and foreign policies are damaging relations with the West. If Russia makes good on threats to launch pre-emptive strikes against terrorists in Georgia, for example, Putin runs the risk of alienating Western countries.

Human Rights Watch. 2004. "Georgia". http://hrw.org/doc/?t=europe_pub&c=georgi.

Provides direct links to thirty-seven reports, letters, and or memorandum addressing human rights abuses in Georgia from 1992 to 2004. Reports primarily focus on abuses related to war on terror and religious persecution.

Human Rights Watch. 2003. "In the Name of Counter-Terrorism: Human Rights Abuses Worldwide". <http://hrw.org/un/chr59/counter-terrorism-bck.htm>.

Report focuses on anti-terror measures around the world and subsequent human rights abuses. Page links to Georgia and anti-terrorism measures with specific focus on the Pankisi Gorge region, home to several thousand Chechen refugees. Also discusses several "disappearances" carried out by Georgian forces.

Amnesty International. 2004. "Report 2004: Resisting Abuses in the Context of the 'War on Terror'". <http://web.amnesty.org/report2004/hragenda-1-eng>.

Several reports addressing the impact of the war on terror on human rights. Reports consistently argue that in the name of the war on terror, governments are eroding human rights principles, standards and values. Information specific to Georgia is contained in several of the reports.

Dov Lynch. 1998. "The Conflict in Abkhazia: Dilemmas in Russian 'Peacekeeping' Policy".

ABSTRACT: This paper examines the policy dilemmas for the Russian government created by the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and uncertain factors in Russian-Georgian military relations. It also suggests scenarios for future Russian engagement in the region.

Paul Starobin; Paul Magnusson and Rose Brady. 2002. "Is Washington Fighting Terrorism on Too Many Fronts?" *Business Week*. (3774).

Analyzes the military strategy of the U.S. in its war on terrorism, and provides details on troop movement into the Caucasus. With respect to Georgia, discusses the 200 trainers deployed to help the Georgian military combat militants in the Pankisi Gorge. Concludes with argument that the U.S. is overextending itself in its anti-terrorism efforts.

Richard Stone. 2002. "'Hot' Legacy Raises Alarm in the Caucasus." *Science*. 295(5556): 777.

Article focuses on the deployment of an international team to Abkhazia from the U.N. to assist local officials in obtaining radioactive objects. Also discussed is the impact of September 11 and the resulting fear of a possible terrorist attack utilizing radioactive materials. Article also discusses the potential liability of Russian authorities that were responsible for the dumping said materials.

Robert Wall. 2002. "Counterterror Combat Shrinks Special Ops Inventory". *Aviation Week & Space Technology*. 156(11).

Technically orientated, this article examines the role of the U.S. special operation force in the war against terrorism, and the strain on available military equipment because of the expansion of the operation into Yemen and Georgia. It also provides detailed analysis of the various U.S. helicopters.

Human Rights Watch. 1995. *Georgia/Abkhazia: Violations of the Laws of War and Russia's Role in the Conflict*. Human Rights Watch: 7(7).

Report discusses the dynamics between Georgians, Abkhazians, and Russians in the ongoing independence movement in Abkhazia, a region in northeast Georgia. Addresses Georgian and Abkhazian forces violating rules of war during 1992 armed conflict; also analyzed is Russia's role in this conflict.

Internal Politics

In November 2003 the political landscape of Georgia was fundamentally changed by a fraudulent parliamentary election, which led to the resignation of Eduard Shevardnadze. Mikhail Saakashvili was subsequently elected based on promises to restore good governance. Events starting with the parliamentary elections continuing through the ouster of Shevardnadze are known as the "Revolution of Roses." This peaceful change in power is a turning point in the internal politics in Georgia.

Human Rights Watch (Organization). 2004. "Georgia". http://hrw.org/doc/?t=europe_pub&c=georgi.

URL provides a link to eight Human Rights Watch publications addressing various human rights issues in the Republic of Georgia. Publications address topics including: landmines, the South Ossetia conflict, and the Georgian legal system.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. 2004. "Georgia". http://www.csce.gov/state_query.cfm?state_id=19.

URL link provides access to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe's findings on the republic of Georgia as of 2004. The CSCE is an independent agency of the United States Government. The press releases, hearings/briefings, reports, and congressional statements address topics including: terrorism, religious persecution, separatist movements, domestic politics, and foreign involvement in Georgia. This link is a great starting point for anyone interested in an overview of human rights issues facing the republic of Georgia.

Pamela Gomez. 2000. Georgia: Backtracking on Reform: Amendments Undermine Access to Justice: Human Rights Watch Publications on Europe and Central Asia. Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/georgia/>.

Report on criminal procedure, justice, and investigation practices in the Republic of Georgia. Primary argument is that the Georgian government has taken steps to diminish Georgians access to justice through amendments to the constitution.

Separatist Movements

Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Ajaria have all attempted to become autonomous states separate from the Republic of Georgia This subsection presents entries that look specifically at these separatist movements. Much of the literature contained here is cross-referenced in other subsections.

Maya Beridze. 2004. "South Ossetia: A Frozen Conflict Turns Warm". http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/tol/tol_2004/july7-12/july7-12h.html.

Article addresses the renewed violence in the South Ossetia region of Georgia. This north central area of the republic has struggled for independence since 1992. Many Ossetians fear a renewal tensions between themselves and the Georgians following the election of Mikheil Saakashvili as Georgia's new president.

Aleksandr Chigorin. 2003. "Russian-Georgian Relations". *International Affairs: A Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy & International Relations*. 49(4): 125.

This article focuses on two issues in Georgian/Russian relations. This first is Russian insistence on eliminating the Chechen terror threat in Georgia, the second is the Georgian desire for Russia to exert pressure on Abkhazia to rejoin the former. The article concludes with an analysis of the current social, economic, and political situation in Georgia. Also discussed is how the United States factors into the Georgian political sphere

Bruno Coppieters; David Darchiashvili and Natella Akaba, eds. 2001. "Federal Practice: Exploring Alternatives for Georgia and Abkhazia". http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/orderbooks/federal_practice_contents.html.

The contributors to this volume analyze the historic roots of the conflict between Georgians and Abkhazians and explore the relevance of practical federal experience from various parts of Europe in the regulation of ethnic conflicts. [Editorial review.]

Svante E. Cornell. 2002. *Autonomy & Conflict: Ethnoterritoriality & Separatism in the South Caucasus - Cases in Georgia* (Uppsala University Department of Peace & Conflict Research, Report_No. 61). Uppsala University Press.

This work addresses the idea of granting minority populations autonomy as a means of ameliorating ethnic conflict. With specific focus on Georgia, it advances the argument that territorial autonomy was a contributing factor to the violent ethnic conflicts taking place since the 1980s (edited from publisher review).

Svante E. Cornell. 2002. "Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective." *World Politics*. 54(2): 245-276.

Presents a rudimentary theoretical framework identifying qualities of autonomy solutions increasing in the likelihood of conflict. Article also discusses the role of autonomy in the escalation of conflicts and the mitigation of separatist and secessionist sentiments in the absence of autonomy (taken from existing abstract).

Rachel Denber. 1992. *Bloodshed in the Caucasus: Violations of Humanitarian Law and Human Rights in the Georgia-South Ossetia Conflict*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch.

This article focuses on the conflict in the South Ossetia region of Georgia. This north-central region has been attempting to unify with North Ossetia, an area in the Russian Federation, to become an independent state. Also discussed are ethnic relations between Ossetians, Georgians, and Russians and how they contribute to the struggle for Ossetian autonomy.

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. 2004. "Georgia". http://www.csce.gov/state_query.cfm?state_id=19.

URL link provides access to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe's findings on the republic of Georgia as of 2004. The CSCE is an independent agency of the United States Government. The press releases, hearings/briefings, reports, and congressional statements address topics including: terrorism, religious persecution, separatist movements, domestic politics, and foreign involvement in Georgia. This link is a great starting point for anyone interested in an overview of human rights issues facing the republic of Georgia.

Rick Fawn. 2002. "Russia's Reluctant Retreat from the Caucasus: Abkhazia, Georgia and the Us after 11 September 2001". *European Security*. 11(4): 131.

Discusses Russia's strategic interests in the Caucasus before and after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. Strategic significance of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict; Implication of the U.S. involvement in Georgia on the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict; Impact of the September 11 incident on the conflict.

Zaza Gachechiladze. 1995. "The Conflict in Abkhazia: A Georgian Perspective". <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/forum21.html>.

Article focuses on the independence movement Abkhazia from the Georgian perspective. This northwestern region of Georgia represents a strategically important position along the Black Sea and the southern Russian Federation border. Also discussed are the specifics of the major fighting that took place in the region in 1993 between ethnic Abkhaz and Georgian troops.

Vladimir Novikov. 2004. "Strasbourg Sides with Georgian President ". *Current Digest of the Post Soviet Press*. 56(15).

Focuses on the decision of the international court of human rights in Strasbourg to order the release of Tengiz Asanidze, opponent of Aslan Abashidze, head of the Adzhar Autonomous Republic. Article analyzes the recognition of the existence of political prisoners in Adzharia, and effect of the court's decision on the Georgian government.

Overland. 2004. "Georgia's "Rose Revolution"". *INTERNASJONAL POLITIKK*. 62(2): 219.

Article discusses the Rose Revolution and subsequent change of leadership in Georgia. New President Mikheil Saakashvili faces several pressing problems such as widespread corruption and the possible disintegration of the Georgian state with separatist movements existing in several regions.

Tim Potier. 2001. *Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia: A Legal Appraisal*. The Hague; Boston: Kluwer Law International.

Article presents a legal analysis of the ongoing conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia and their respective struggles for autonomy. Article also presents a brief history of the entire Transcaucasus region with specific emphasis on independence movements.