

# Georgia in short

## Main Objectives

- Protect and assist Chechen refugees and support the Government in implementing the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol.
- Support the conflict-resolution process sponsored by the OSCE in Georgia/South Ossetia and facilitate the voluntary return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons from South Ossetia and Georgia proper.
- Support the conflict-resolution process sponsored by the UN in Georgia/Abkhazia; draw upon the Georgian Self-Reliance Fund to seek durable solutions for IDPs by promoting integration in their current places of residence (without prejudice to their eventual return); monitor the process of spontaneous return to Gali District and provide limited material assistance.
- Seek improvements to the refugee law and asylum procedures and help governmental and NGO structures build up sufficient resources and expertise to respond to involuntary displacement; promote accession to the conventions relating to statelessness.



## PLANNING FIGURES

Population	Jan. 2001	Dec. 2001
Chechen Refugees	7,000	7,000
Returnees and IDPs (Georgian-Ossetian conflict)	60,000	60,000
Returnees and IDPs (Georgian-Abkhaz conflict)	270,000	270,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>337,000</b>	<b>337,000</b>

**TOTAL REQUIREMENTS • USD 8,526,634**

## WORKING ENVIRONMENT

### Recent Developments

With the outbreak of hostilities in the Chechen Autonomous Republic of the Russian Federation in the second half of 1999, tension began to mount along the Georgian-Chechen border. In October 1999, about 7,000 refugees crossed into Georgia. Host families sharing the same linguistic and cultural background sheltered the majority of the refugees from Chechnya

in the Pankisi Valley (Akhmeta District). At the request of the Government, UNHCR took the lead role in assisting these refugees and in monitoring their protection. Due to continued instability and armed clashes, voluntary repatriation was not possible and UNHCR continued to assist the refugees in 2000.

In 2000, no progress was made towards a resolution of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The most significant development for IDPs from Abkhazia was the formal establishment of the Georgian Self-Reliance Fund (GSRF). Conceived as part of the new approach to IDPs (the gradual transition from humani-

tarian assistance to a more developmental and sustainable approach to promote self-reliance of IDPs, without prejudice to their eventual return home), the GSRF was launched and is co-owned by the World Bank, UNDP, UNHCR, OCHA, the Government of Georgia, and donor governments. The World Bank is responsible for the daily management of the Fund, with administrative support from OCHA, while a steering committee provides policy guidance and screens funding submissions. In October 2000, UNHCR made a first financial contribution to the Fund.

The situation in Abkhazia remains unstable, and discussions between the Georgian Government and the Abkhaz side have unfortunately not resulted in any security guarantees permitting UNHCR to promote voluntary repatriation. An estimated 40,000 IDPs have returned spontaneously to Abkhazia, mainly to the Gali District, and plan to stay there, security permitting.

The number of people returning voluntarily to South Ossetia and Georgia proper has been extremely small and UNHCR will gradually phase out its assistance programme. UNHCR

will continue to support the OSCE-sponsored Georgian-Osset conflict-resolution process to create conditions allowing the return of refugees and IDPs to South Ossetia and Georgia proper. Massive post-conflict economic and social rehabilitation is required, however, before the remaining refugees in North Ossetia (Russian Federation), and IDPs in Georgia proper and South Ossetia are likely to return. As such work is beyond UNHCR's capacity, it will continue to call for the participation of development agencies.

## Constraints

The past year has yielded little political progress on the outstanding conflicts, and durable solutions will not be possible without the significant contribution of several other key players. Meanwhile there is only extremely limited access to shelter, basic services and employment. This has perpetuated reliance on international humanitarian resources – a problem that the GSRF is designed to address.

Poor security – especially in the Gali District in Abkhazia, in the conflict zone of South Ossetia and in the multi-ethnic and potentially volatile Pankisi Valley – has restricted access and hampers the full effectiveness of interventions by UNHCR and others.

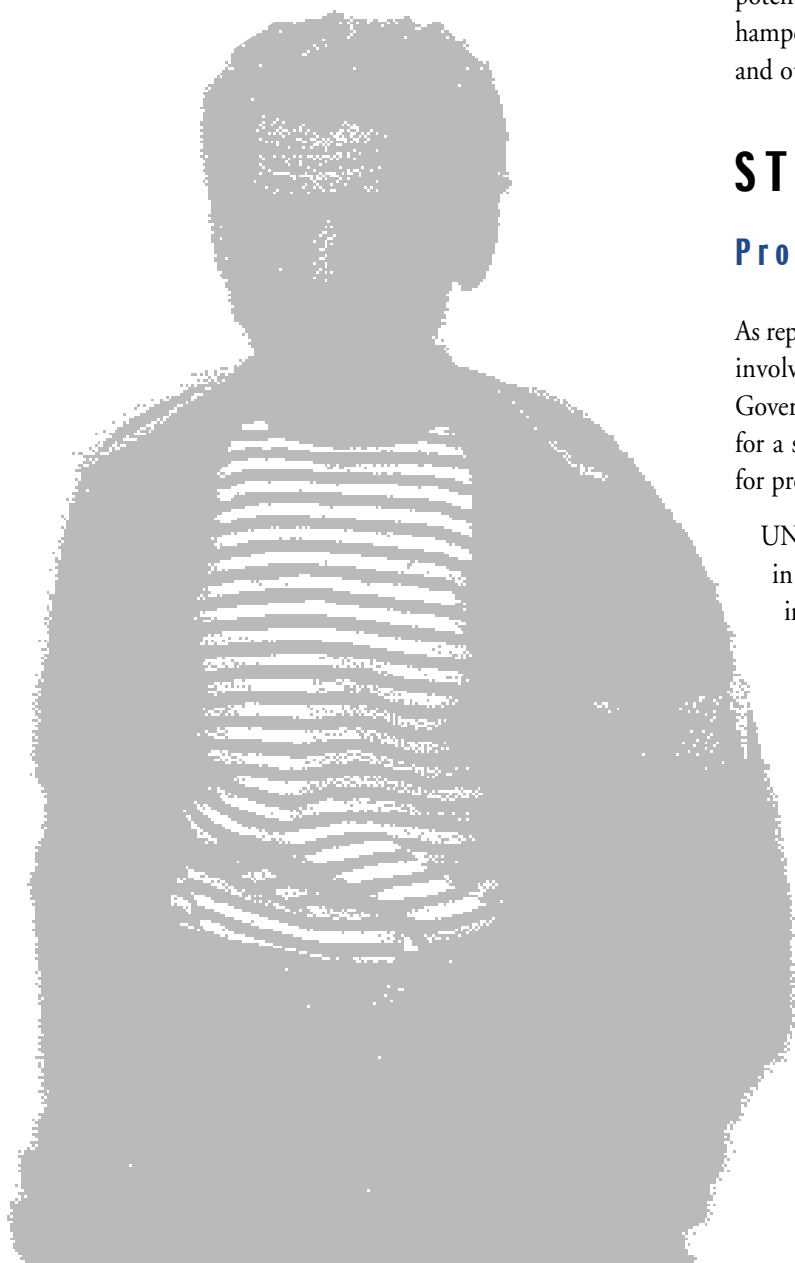
## STRATEGY

### Protection and Solutions

As repatriation was not possible in 2000, UNHCR will remain involved in 2001 with refugees from Chechnya as the Government and local communities prepare to host this group for a second year. This will involve both monitoring of needs for protection and continued material assistance.

UNHCR will continue to support the UN and the OSCE in their attempts to broker negotiations over the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Security in Abkhazia is insufficient to permit large-scale voluntary repatriation, but UNHCR will continue to monitor the safety and well-being of an estimated 40,000 spontaneous returnees – and the local population – in the areas of return. It will also implement modest assistance measures to hasten the reintegration of returnees.

UNHCR and its partners will continue to promote accession by Georgia to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, as well as other related international legal instruments. UNHCR will also continue to support the recommendations made by the Council of



Europe that Georgia pave the way for the repatriation of the formerly deported Meskhetians. To this end, UNHCR will continue to support NGO capacity building and public awareness raising activities.

## Assistance

In 2001, UNHCR will continue to assist refugees from Chechnya through a broad spectrum of activities designed both to meet their basic everyday needs (shelter, food, etc.) and the wider need for education, health and community services. This effort will effectively compensate the host community for its hospitality, in the form of renovated school buildings and health facilities, water and drainage works, or reforestation. To alleviate the burden on the host families, UNHCR will provide complementary food and domestic supplies when needed. In 2000, a modest level of assistance was offered for the repair of host-family houses. In 2001, some refugees may require alternative shelter when host families are no longer able to extend their hospitality.

UNHCR will strongly support the GSRE, which is expected to improve the lives of IDPs as a result of activities planned in the areas of income-generation and shelter. Considerable efforts will be made to include IDPs in national development strategies and programmes. UNHCR will initially continue to assist some successful pilot programmes (begun in 1999 and 2000) such as those for micro-credit, the creation of co-operatives, and activities geared towards policy priorities (gender awareness, special programmes for children/adolescents and the vulnerable elderly). However, implementing agencies should eventually submit their proposals directly to GSRE.

Some 40,000 persons are estimated to have returned spontaneously to the Gali District. Contrary to previous years, when the number of persons returning to the area fluctuated with the planting and harvesting seasons, the present number intend to stay during the winter. Security permitting, and with the agreement of the parties to the conflict-resolution process, UNHCR will provide limited basic assistance to returnee families.

Some activities will also be implemented in the Sukhumi area, where UNHCR plans to renovate a number of schools and health facilities.

UNHCR plans to consolidate the return of some 5,500 returnees to South Ossetia by supporting self-reliance programmes delivered through local NGOs. In addition, the homes of potential returnees will be identified and damage will be assessed for subsequent rehabilitation. One crucial issues is the return of property to returnees. UNHCR will continue to advocate amendments to Georgian property restitution legislation in order to ensure fair treatment of returnees. UNHCR

will also keep up its hitherto successful persuasion of development organisations to engage in long-term projects in South Ossetian communities.

## Desired Impact

UNHCR's operation is designed to provide the necessary protection and assistance for refugees from Chechnya, while inducing the authorities to extend protection to refugees in Georgia. It also aims to reduce the dependency of refugees on host families and thereby reduce tension in the area. Support for the new approach through the GSRE will permit IDPs from Abkhazia to function as ordinary citizens in all spheres of life. UNHCR will contribute to the reintegration and self-reliance of those who return spontaneously to Gali District. Activities in the Georgian-Osset arena are designed to help refugees to return, and returnees to stay, by improving the local infrastructure and increasing their ability to look after themselves.

# ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

## Management

UNHCR will function with 19 international staff, 52 national staff and one Junior Professional Officer. In South Ossetia and areas of return in Georgia proper, a Mobile Team augments the Office's ability to monitor protection and assistance. A second Mobile Team is based in Akhmeta.

### OFFICES

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Tbilisi

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Gali

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Sukhumi

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Zugdidi

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## Co-ordination

UNHCR is part of a co-ordination structure, which functions smoothly under the guidance of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Co-ordinator. The structure gathers together representatives of all UN agencies, OSCE, ICRC, IFRC, key NGOs, donors and the Government to meet and exchange information, co-ordinate activities and liaise on issues of joint or common concern. As a member of a special committee of governmental representatives and local and international NGOs, UNHCR has been asked by the Georgian Government (by Presidential Decree) to determine and co-ordinate the types of humanitarian assistance entering the Pankisi Valley (in close co-operation with the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation).



## PARTNERS

### Government Agencies

Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation  
 Ministry of Internal Affairs  
 South Ossetian Committee on Migration and Nationalities

### NGOs

*Acción Contra el Hambre*  
 Agency for Community Motivation and Social Development  
 Agency for Community Rehabilitation and Social Development  
 Agency for Social, Economic and Cultural Development  
 Children's Fund of South Ossetia  
 Charity Humanitarian Centre Abkhazeti

### Constanta

Dawn Foundation  
 International Rescue Committee  
 Georgian Young Lawyers' Association  
 Norwegian Refugee Council

### Samani

Technical Assistance in Georgia  
 UN Association of Georgia

WomenAid Georgia

### Other

United Nations Volunteers

## BUDGET (USD)

Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	2,560,725
Community Services	320,000
Crop Production	70,000
Domestic Needs/Household Support	345,000
Education	240,000
Food	252,300
Forestry	35,000
Health/Nutrition	800,000
Income Generation	599,700
Legal Assistance	610,000
Operational Support (to Agencies)	470,000
Sanitation	180,000
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	360,000
Transport/Logistics	392,000
Water (non-agricultural)	70,000
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>7,304,725</b>
Programme Support	1,221,909
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,526,634</b>