

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-428-3-22>

## **ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT DYNAMICS IN SOUTH CAUCASUS – GEORGIA, ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA**

**Țoca Constantin-Vasile**

*Doctor of Geography,  
Associate Professor at the Faculty  
of History International Relations Political  
Sciences Communication Sciences*

**Porombrica Andreea**

*BA Student – International Relations and European Studies  
at the Faculty of History,  
International Relations, Political Sciences  
and Communication Sciences*

**Dincă Marian**

*Doctor of Geography,  
Associate Professor at the Faculty of History  
International Relations Political Sciences Communication Sciences  
University of Oradea  
Oradea, Romania*

### **Introduction**

Global conflicts have undergone a notable evolution in recent decades, increasingly moving towards regional dimensions. In this context, the South Caucasus stands out as a territory full of tensions and conflicts, becoming a focal point in contemporary geopolitical dynamics.

Our case study focuses on this highly complex and contested region, where geopolitical, ethnic and economic interests have intersected to generate persistent and often emotionally charged conflicts. In light of recent events, such as the conflict in Ukraine, the need for careful analysis of this corner of the world, where borders and identities collide, leaving deep traces in history and painful imprints in the lives of local communities, becomes ever clearer.

Through this case study approach, we aim to reveal the roots, dynamics and impact of the conflicts in the South Caucasus on regional and global stability. The objectives of this study involve: understanding the causes and dynamics of the conflict, analysing the impact on the civilian population,

assessing resolution and mediation efforts, geopolitical impact and international relations, promoting dialogue and reconciliation.

Overall, the paper provides a comprehensive and well-informed analysis of this conflict to better understand its complexity and to contribute to the development of solutions and strategies to prevent and manage similar conflicts in the future.

Studying the Georgia-Abkhazia-South Ossetia conflict is important from several perspectives, both from a historical, geopolitical and humanitarian point of view. The South Caucasus has witnessed a complex maze of conflicts, centred mainly around Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

In 1990, South Ossetia proclaimed its independence from Georgia, triggering a war in 1991–1992. This dispute escalated in 2008 when Georgia launched an offensive in South Ossetia, giving the Russian Federation the opportunity to intervene in support of South Ossetia.

Abkhazia, on the other hand, sought independence in 1992 following ethnic tensions with Georgia. The ensuing war was also marked by Russia's military intervention. In 2008, Abkhazia was again involved in the regional conflict, supported by Russia against Georgia.

Georgia, in an attempt to preserve its territorial integrity, has been the main actor in these conflicts. The wars in South Ossetia and Abkhazia have had a significant impact on the Georgian state, generating substantial territorial losses and geopolitical tensions.

Overall, these conflicts have created a complex and tense situation in the South Caucasus with profound implications for regional security and international relations. Efforts to resolve these disputes remain a crucial aspect of diplomacy and conflict management in the region.

### **South Caucasus – a permanent source of instability in the region**

The conflict remains an unresolved issue and a source of tension in the South Caucasus region. The consequences of this conflict have been significant, affecting the lives of people on both sides of the border and having a significant impact on international relations. Abkhazia's declaration of independence, only partially recognised, has created a complex and unstable situation.

The importance of this conflict is underpinned by several factors. Firstly, it serves as an example of the ethnic and territorial tensions that can arise following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Secondly, the Russian Federation's involvement in supporting Abkhazia adds a geopolitical and geostrategic charge to this conflict, with direct implications for relations between Russia and Georgia, as well as for the balance of power and stability in the region.

Also, conflicts left unresolved for a significant period of time can affect regional security and stability, creating an environment for unpredictable developments and challenges. The international community remains concerned about this issue and is trying to mediate dialogue between the parties in order to reach a lasting solution, but the current conflict situation in the region, caused by the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, is practically blocking any hope of a peaceful resolution of these frozen conflicts. Therefore, careful monitoring and management of this issue remains essential to maintain stability and promote peace in the South Caucasus region.

The Georgian-Abkhaz conflict is one of the manifestations of inter-ethnic contradictions in the Caucasus region, which worsened in the late 1980s due to growing instability and the weakening of the central government in the USSR. In early August 1992, tensions between the leadership of Georgia, which gained its independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the leadership of Abkhazia (in Soviet times an autonomous republic in Georgia), which was fighting for independence from Georgia, led to open armed conflict, as a result of which Abkhaz forces in September 1993 established control over almost the entire territory of Abkhazia, and the entire Georgian population of Abkhazia, fleeing the fighting, was expelled from the area [2, p. 31–35].

According to official data, about 16 thousand people died during military operations in Abkhazia: 10 thousand Georgians, 4 thousand Abkhazians and 2 thousand volunteers from South Ossetia and the North Caucasus republics.

At the beginning of 1990, there were 537,000 people living in Abkhazia, of whom 44 percent were Georgians, 17 percent Abkhazians, 16 percent Russians and 15 percent Armenians. As a result of the fighting, 200–250 thousand of them (mostly Georgians) were forced to leave their homes. The economic and financial damage caused to the war zone economy and subsequent events has been estimated at \$10.7 billion.

According to a 2016 poll conducted by the Czech news agency "Medium Orient", about half of Abkhazia's population (45.2%) is in favour of maintaining the republic's independence, while a third is in favour of union with Russia [5, p. 3].

### **Involving the Russian Federation in resolving tensions**

Russia's presence in Abkhazia is invisible, explains Abkhaz historian Guram Gumba, although it is omnipresent in domestic politics, not to mention foreign policy. Every political decision in Abkhazia is taken through the prism of Russian interests.

Many Abkhazians justify the Russians in the war between Russia and Ukraine, says Liana. They don't know what's going on. My sister, who lives in Abkhazia, agrees. I tell her on the phone to listen to what's happening in Ukraine. It's all a lie, she says. I can't prove anything, they don't show what we see, and I don't want to lose my sister because of this dispute" [3, p. 21].

Only through Russia do we have access to the outside world, Gumba says. This gives Russia the chance to pursue its own policy in Abkhazia, using the vast array of tactics and technologies of influence at its disposal.

As Russia is Abkhazia's main supplier of resources, this undoubtedly influences current policy. According to Gumba, policies are often pursued against national interest or consensus in order to instead conform to the demands and expectations of Russian economic and financial institutions. On 26 August 2008, Russia recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

After recognising the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Russia blocked the extension of the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, which expired in December 2008. Moscow has said the OSCE should have two separate missions in South Ossetia and Georgia. Similarly, in June 2009, Russia rejected the extension of the mandate of UN observers in Abkhazia under the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), which included more than 120 military observers and had played a leading role in international efforts to resolve the conflict for 16 years. Russian border guards replaced Russian peacekeepers from the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces. The Georgian and Abkhaz sides have continued contacts in Geneva, but so far the Geneva meetings have not brought any serious results.

### **ONU's Security Council interventions**

At the beginning of the war, representatives of several UN special bodies were monitoring the situation in Georgia. UN involvement in attempts to resolve and manage the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict is multilateral and complex. The leading role is taken by UNOMIG, which is composed of a Chief Military Observer and up to 130 subordinate observers from a large number of UN member countries. The mission also includes some 95 international civilian staff and 175 local civilian staff.

The first emergency meeting of the UN Security Council was convened at the request of the Russian Federation "in connection with the threatening situation around South Ossetia" on 8 August, just hours after the Georgian army's massive artillery shelling of the South Ossetian capital Tskhinvali and the positions of Russian peacekeepers, followed by an assault on the city.

The prevailing Georgian view of the conflict, especially in the early years, was that it was the result of a provocation by the Russian Federation, which intended to retain a high degree of control over Georgia. Some observers even argued that the conflict was between Georgia and Russia, with the Abkhazians serving only as pawns in the struggle. More nuanced views can be heard from some Georgian and Russian scholars, such as Ghia Nodia or Alexei Zverev, but the attribution of the conflict to the behaviour of the Russian Federation remains quite widespread in some academic and many political circles.

The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) was established in August 1993 by UN Security Council Resolution 858, just as the war between Georgia and Abkhazia was coming to an end. UNOMIG's mandate was initially limited to verifying compliance with the ceasefire agreement reached between the Georgian government and the Abkhaz authorities on 27 July 1993 [4, p. 1–2].

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this review of the Security Council's mediation failures is that the UN and the Russian Federation are competing for a leading role in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict settlement process [1, p. 13]. This competition in mediation activities makes it extremely difficult to reach a settlement.

### **Conclusion**

Through detailed analysis of the causes, evolution and implications of conflict, we gain a deeper understanding of its dynamics.

Complex history, ethnic factors, and political changes have contributed significantly to the emergence and intensification of inter-ethnic conflict in the South Caucasus region. Their evolution has been marked by critical moments and periodic escalations, such as the 1992–1993 war and the 2008 conflict.

A crucial aspect of the conflicts is the devastating social impact on the population, including massive displacement of refugees, loss of life and destruction of infrastructure of all kinds. These humanitarian implications leave a deep imprint on affected communities.

The research highlighted the importance of the international community's involvement in mediating and resolving the conflict. Diplomatic efforts and reconstruction plans have made significant contributions, but the continuing challenges and lack of definitive solutions remain critical issues on the international agenda.

### References:

1. Bruno Coppieters, The Georgian – Abkhaz conflict, JEMIE, 2004, 30 p. <http://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-61974>
2. Thomas de Waal, The Caucasus: An Introduction, Oxford university Press, 2018. 320 p. <http://global.oup.com/academic/product/9780190683092>
3. Markedonov Sergey, în publicația cehă *Medium Orient*, 2013. 134 p.
4. United Nations Security Council. "Resolution 858 (1993) Adopted by the Security Council at its 3256th meeting, on 24 August 1993".
5. Ana Kikaleishvili, Georgian-Abkhazian Relations and the "Protracted Conflict Syndrome", article produced in the project "Unprejudiced", 2022. <https://www.goethe.de/ins/ro/ro/kul/sup/unp/24512020.html>

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-428-3-23>

## INTERMARIUM ASPIRES TO BECOME AN INTEGRATIVE SOLUTION FOR THE WHOLE AREA SURROUNDED BY THE ADRIATIC SEA, THE BLACK SEA AND THE BALTIC SEA

**Feier Eduard Ionuț**

*Doctor in International Relations and European Studies  
University of Oradea  
Oradea, Romania*

The overall purpose of this paper is to explore the dynamic character of the Eastern Partnership concept, which evolved from the old *Intermarium* to the new *Intermarium* (the Three Seas Initiative). It also aims to identify the roles undertaken by this system of security in Central and South-Eastern Europe. In addition, we shall refer to the method of circumscribing political communities and to the exchanges and relations that are established within borders as a result of the development of the above-mentioned defence plan. We shall also look at the means whereby the Eastern European countries fend off Russian aggression, thus forming a buffer zone, a bridgehead.

The association of states that form the *Intermarium* can be interpreted from the perspective of institutionalist neo-liberalism. Theorists belonging to this current focused their research on analysing elements of political economy. The *Intermarium* states identified a common economic source –