

## **Caucasus: April '07**

### **Author: IWPR**

Collaborative regional reporting project starts producing stories.

The Cross Caucasus Journalism Network, which is building a network of more than 50 journalists representing two-dozen newspapers in all corners of the North and South Caucasus, began generating editorial output in April.

Over the next three years, participants in the project plan to meet on a regular basis at various locations in the region and conduct six major journalistic assignments. The idea is to use IWPR's unique regional capacity to build up enduring links which will enhance the media's capacity to tackle sensitive cross-border issues, in particular those of minorities and conflict.

Thirteen journalists - from Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, North Ossetia, Dagestan and Nagorny Karabakh - attended the inaugural meeting in Tbilisi, in March.

They received journalistic training from IWPR editors Shorena Ratiani and Seda Muradian. Guest Paul Quinn-Judge, formerly Moscow bureau chief of Time magazine, talked to them about working across the former Soviet Union. Conflict expert Paata Zakareishvili discussed conflict sensitivities.

The group were given an opportunity to have meetings with Georgian government and opposition parliamentarians and experts.

There is a strong practical focus to the project, with participants encouraged to develop collaborative articles. In this regard, the first meeting got off to a flying start. There have already been no fewer than four joint pieces, none of which would have been possible without the Tbilisi meeting.

Dmitry Avaliani and Alan Tskhurbayev wrote an authoritative piece on Georgia's plans for compensation for refugees from the South Ossetia conflict. Dmitry spoke to Georgian politicians and Alan to the refugees themselves.

Idrak Abbasov and David Akhvlediani collaborated on an article on the controversy over the David Gareji monastery that straddles the border of Georgia and Azerbaijan. Idrak was interviewed on Georgian television, following the article.

A three-country effort dealt with the pollution of the River Kura. And an Armenian-Azerbaijani assignment covered both sides of a dispute about where the two country's football teams will play their two scheduled qualifying matches for the 2008 European Championship.

Following the Tbilisi meeting, Azerbaijani journalist Idrak Abbasov, said, "The seminar was good, above all because I acquired many new friends there. Besides, we met Georgian politicians, human rights activists and so on, which was also a new thing. I think the seminar aimed to bring us together. This is good."

Lusine Musaelian from Stepanakert, Nagorny Karabakh, said, "I've kept constantly in touch with seminar

participants. I often ask my friends in Tbilisi or Azerbaijan for information on this or that issue. This is a great project, as we will be able to cooperate and visit various regions together.”

**Location:** Caucasus  
Stavropol  
South Ossetia  
North Ossetia

**Topic:** Project Highlight

**Focus:** Caucasus

---

**Source URL:** <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/caucasus-april-07>