

## **Georgia: Special Peace Prize Winner Announced**

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Winning article follows the struggles of an ethnically-mixed village.

A young journalist from a town on the front line of the South Ossetian conflict zone has won Georgia's Special Prize for Peace Journalism for his article about a village divided by war.

Nika Gablishvili, who works at a regional TV station based in Gori, will now receive a one-month fellowship in IWPR's London office.

The award is a joint initiative by the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and IWPR, and part of the EU Prize for Journalism project. It is implemented through the financial support of the European Union.

"I am overwhelmed by emotions, I find it difficult to describe them. It is the most important achievement I have ever had in my life," Gablishvili said at the award ceremony this week. "When I saw my name among the finalists on the screen, I froze momentarily and all the reports I produced throughout these years passed in front of my eyes. That strong desire to do something to help restore the broken bridges between the Ossetian and Georgian families has been always chasing me."

The EU Prize for Journalism, launched in 2012, has become the most prestigious annual award in Georgian media. The Peace Journalism category was established in 2013 by EUMM in partnership with IWPR and seeks to reward the best conflict-sensitive journalism contributing to confidence-building and peaceful dialogue in the context of armed conflicts in Georgia.

Gablishvili's winning article, titled Zardo and its Hope Luda, focusses on an ethnically-mixed Georgian-Ossetian village where despite being split by the Russian army, people still struggle to maintain relationships across the divide.

(See also **[Georgian Journalists Report from No Man's Land](#)**).

"The prize is a great incentive for me, to learn more, work better and continue reporting on soring issues of conflict," Gablishvili continued. "I believe that the fellowship at IWPR's London office will be a game changer in my professional development. As an ordinary citizen who lives near the line of occupation, I view the work of bias-free independent journalists as a key to understanding the origins and consequences of armed conflicts."

Other finalists included Kristina Marabyan from the Javakheti Information Centre, a bilingual online outlet based in Georgia's southern town of Akhalkalki. Her multimedia piece highlighted the stories of mixed Georgian-Armenian families forcibly displaced in Abkhazia in the early 90s.

Zura Balanchivadze produced an in-depth analysis of school textbooks on conflicts in Georgia for the regional multimedia platform Chai Khana.

Carlo Natale, deputy head of the EU delegation to Georgia, told the event that media development was key to democracy, highlighting the recent turbulence over Georgia's election as an example.

(See also **[Georgia's Toxic Presidential Run-off](#)**).

"Without proper information, our societies cannot make reasoned decisions nor hold those in power to account, leading to uncertain scenarios and profiting of a few at the cost of many. Polarisation and partiality of the media is also a challenge," he said. "Unfortunately, we observed these drawbacks during the recent presidential elections."

"The EUMM Special Prize for Peace Journalism as an important part of our overall Confidence Building programme. I believe that this important competition plays its part in bringing people from different divides together and makes a significant difference," added Erik Høeg, the EUMM head in Georgia.

The EUMM Special Prize for Peace Journalism was previously awarded to Olesya Vartanyan (2013), Gogita Aptsiauri (2014), Nino Chipchiuri (2015), Gvantsa Doluashvili (2016) and Nino Gogua (2017).

**Location:** [Georgia](#)

**Topic:** [Journalism](#)

[Media Development](#)

**Focus:** [From the Borderland to the Steppes](#)

## Project Highlight

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