

## **Women and Displacement in Georgia**

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IWPR/UN Women event focuses on areas with high numbers of refugees from Abkhazian and South Ossetian conflicts.

Female activists from communities displaced by war had an opportunity to explain key concerns to Georgian officials and journalists at two discussion events hosted by IWPR and UN Women on October 26.

Meetings took place simultaneously in Zugdidi in the western Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region, and in Gori in the central Shida Kartli region. Both were attended by local NGOs and activists representing internally displaced persons, IDPs, and staff from the refugees ministry.

Zugdidi is close to Abkhazia and Gori is next to South Ossetia, so both have high numbers of IDPs from the conflicts that took place in those territories. Years of displacement have created social problems in IDP communities, aside from the practical difficulties of continuing to live near the front lines of frozen conflicts.

“Increasing the rights and opportunities of this [female] half of the population to take part in political discussions and decision-making may reduce their sense of marginalisation, and help them build relationships with their peers on the other side of the conflict divide,” said Beka Bajelidze, director of IWPR’s Caucasus Programme.

As well as telling journalists and officials about challenges facing IDPs, activists were able to find out what others were doing in the same area of work.

“Our network has long worked on women’s rights issues in this region,” said Nana Todua of the Gender Network in Samegrelo. “At this meeting, I have discovered several projects and organisations that are working in this area but are new to me. This kind of exchange of information is very helpful.”

Tsitsino Biblaia, originally from Abkhazia and now a civil society activist in Samegrelo region, said IDPs needed to help themselves.

“It’s important for people to try to resolve their problems themselves, and not just wait for someone to come along and help them,” she said.

After the formal discussion, journalists and activists sat together in workshops on how to report on women’s rights and run advocacy campaigns.

Some of the reporters came up with ideas for articles and video reports on IDP matters, for publication on the **Women Connecting for Peace** website.

“The representatives from women’s organisations told us about the specific problems facing women in this region... and I am now much better informed as a journalist,” Ketevan Khubulava, a refugee from Abkhazia who reports for Radio Atinati in Zugdidi, said. “I will definitely use this information in my output.”

The event, funded by the Norwegian foreign ministry, was part of the project **Women Connecting for Peace - The Voice of Change** project, a partnership between IWPR and UN Women.

**Location:** [South Ossetia](#)  
[Georgia](#)  
[Abkhazia](#)

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

**Focus:** [Caucasus](#)

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