



# Georgia



## Quick facts

Number of IDPs	Up to 258,000
Percentage of total population	Up to 6.1%
Start of current displacement situation	1992, 2008 (South Ossetia); 1994, 2008 (Abkhazia)
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	Undetermined
New displacement	0
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	74

People in Georgia have been displaced by several waves of conflict. Fighting erupted in the early 1990s in the autonomous areas of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, displacing some 273,000 people within Georgia. Ceasefire agreements were signed by 1994, but hostilities continued sporadically before conflict broke out again in 2008 between Georgia and the Russian Federation over South Ossetia. Around 128,000 people were internally displaced, some for a second time. While the fighting quickly ended and negotiations have continued, all of the conflicts remain unresolved.

At the end of 2010, the government reported that there were still about 236,000 IDPs displaced since the 1990s and about 22,000 IDPs displaced since 2008. Around 60 per cent of them were living with relatives or friends or in dwellings that they rented or owned, while 40 per cent were in collective centres in former hospitals, hotels, schools and other buildings offered as temporary housing upon their displacement.

Most collective centres had not been renovated for nearly 20 years and were crowded and dilapidated, with outdated water and sewerage systems. Surveys of IDPs living in private accommodation showed that many of them were also enduring crowded conditions in run-down buildings which sometimes needed major repairs and in which they had limited security of tenure.

In the aftermath of the 2008 conflict, the government showed a greater willingness to improve the situation of IDPs. It mobilised significant resources and made a serious commitment to implement its strategy on IDPs, including by coordinating activities with the international community. The Public Defender also engaged actively in monitoring the situation of IDPs and advocating for them.

During 2009 and 2010 the government continued to provide housing solutions to IDPs displaced in the 1990s and 2008. It refurbished collective centres, offered IDPs ownership of their assigned collective centre space, built new housing and offered cash in lieu of housing. It also sent contractors to new settlements built for IDPs displaced in 2008 to address reported housing defects. By late 2010, about 6,800 families displaced in the 1990s had signed purchase agreements in around 330 collective centres, and 8,000 families displaced in 2008 had received a house, apartment or cash. However, most of the progress was in 2009, and the momentum had slowed in 2010.

While the living conditions of many IDPs improved, the impact of the government's efforts differed: the quality of re-

furbishment varied, the criteria to select collective centres where residents could become owners were unclear, many IDPs who signed purchase agreements had not received their ownership documents by the end of the year, and many IDPs could not make an informed choice between the options open to them since they were provided only sparse and inconsistent information. Many IDPs who had opted for cash were still waiting to receive it at the end of 2010. Meanwhile, IDPs who were renting housing or living with relatives or friends had so far been excluded from this housing support.

In the summer of 2010, over 1,000 internally displaced families were evicted from collective centres and other temporary shelters not destined for privatisation in Tbilisi. Depending on their status, some were offered alternative accommodation or cash. However, according to observers, IDPs were given insufficient notice or information on alternative accommodation, and the latter was often of a worse standard and in areas offering few livelihood opportunities. The process was soon halted so that procedures could be developed to improve the protection of IDPs' rights; these procedures were in place at the end of the year.

The Ministry for IDPs has generally been left to implement plans without much engagement from other ministries. It has sought to meet ambitious targets, but at the expense of planning and the full participation of IDPs. Standards, which it developed with international partners, have not been comprehensively applied.

Representatives of international organisations enjoy quick and meaningful access to government officials on internal displacement issues. The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights and the RSG on IDPs visited Georgia in 2010 and both expressed concern about how evictions were carried out, in addition to other issues facing IDPs. Meanwhile, the access of humanitarian agencies to South Ossetia has remained obstructed except in the case of the ICRC, while access to Abkhazia is increasingly challenged.

Georgia continues to enjoy significant donor support, but emergency funds will not be able to cover the full needs of IDPs. The conflicts must be resolved if IDPs are to achieve durable solutions, while the government, development organisations and donors should allocate funding for programmes to improve housing, and access to livelihoods and services.