

## **The influence of peacekeeping initiatives on the capacity of rethinking the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict**

**Natalia Lazba**

Associated Professor, Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University

### **Abstract**

The purpose of the article is to "measure" the capacity of understanding and rethinking the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict through the prism of peacekeeping initiatives and to analyze the reaction of civil society and the political elite to these initiatives in both societies.

Hypothesis: the more effective the initiation of peace initiatives is, the greater the opportunity to discuss taboo topics is in both local communities, thereby facilitating dialogue between them, preventing the popularization of radicalism and resolving the frozen conflict by force.

Despite the inefficiency (fuzziness) of peacekeeping at this stage, the efforts expended represent an investment in public capital, which may be used in the future to build trust and achieve sustainable peace.

The article deals with one of the most pressing security issues - peacebuilding. Today, more than ever, interest in this problem is due to the growing importance of peacebuilding to solve the serious task of launching a peace process for states that have survived an armed conflict (in our case, the Georgian-Abkhaz confrontation).

The breakdown of the USSR provoked ethno-territorial contradictions in the territory of the South Caucasus. The collapse of a powerful system with strong destructive shocks swept through the problem areas of the region, causing a severe surge of violence.

Based on a reflexive analysis of the past, rethinking the stereotypical approaches existing in both societies, we try to "measure" the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of peacekeeping initiatives in order to prevent a relapse of a violent conflict. We also try to identify ways to change the attitude from confrontation to cooperation on a number of pressing issues (pandemic, energy / energy resources / energy security, control of border areas, uncontrolled trade, etc.), which contribute to integration, rapprochement of both societies, at least in the field of confrontation common threats.

The research has been aimed at studying the reactions to peacebuilding initiatives both within local communities and between societies. It is necessary to understand the extent to which initiatives involving civil society actors can influence the political decision-making process in both societies, which in essence is a strategy that involves the transformation of the conflict.

This approach is able to expand the circle of actors in conflict resolution, including officials, ex-combatants, refugees, independent experts, local and international non-governmental organizations, the public, media representatives and scientists, who often become at the head of nationalist movements, can manipulate historical facts citing historical evidence, incite hatred and even provoke society to violence as a means of restoring historical justice.

Unfortunately, at this stage, even minor shifts in approaches to the political settlement of the Abkhaz conflict are perceived as a problem in both societies, which hinders any prospects for development and building constructive relationships.

**Keywords:** Political Elite, Conflicts, Peacekeeping, Radicalism