

UNOMIG

(UN Observer Mission in Georgia)



(Figure 1. Map of Georgia/Abkhazia)

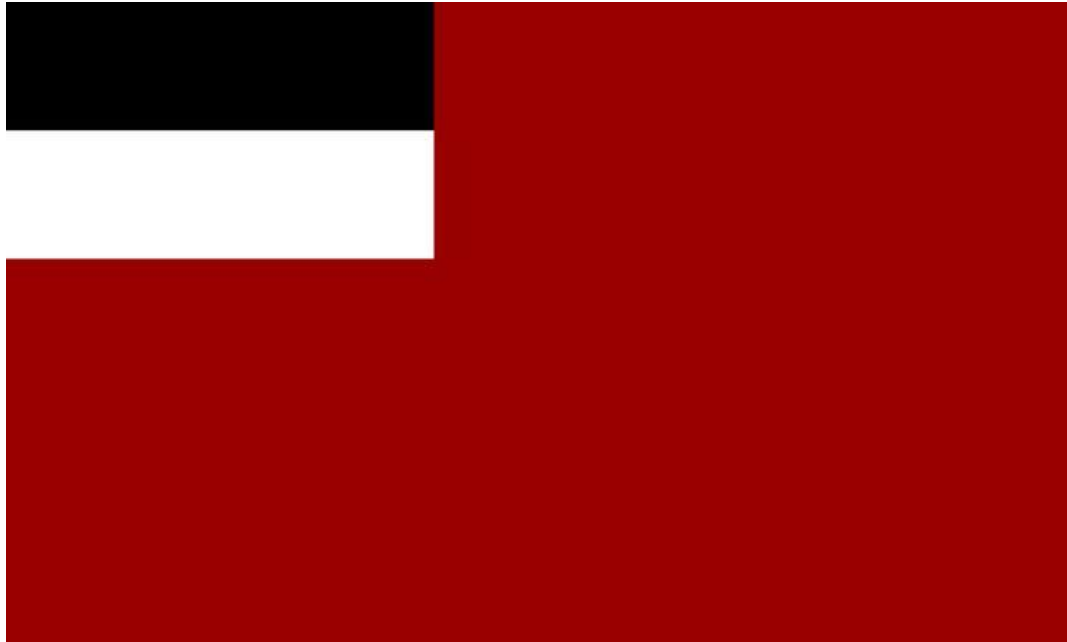
Map of Georgia highlighting the disputed territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region (South Ossetia), both of which are outside the control of the central government of Georgia.

Georgia

Georgia (Georgian: საქართველო) is a transcontinental country at the intersection of Eastern Europe and Western Asia.

It is part of the Caucasus region, bounded by the Black Sea (**Abkhazia - northwest**) to the west, by Russia to the north and northeast, by Turkey to the southwest, by Armenia to the south, and by Azerbaijan to the southeast.

The country covers an area of 69,700 square kilometers (26,900 sq mi), and has a population of 3.7 million people. Tbilisi is its capital as well as its largest city, home to roughly a third of the Georgian population.



(Figure 2. Flag of Georgia in 1994)

Georgian Abkhazian conflict

The Georgian–Abkhazian conflict is an ethno-political conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia, a de facto independent state in the South Caucasus, which is recognized by Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru, and Syria. The conflict is rooted in the late 19th century when the Russian Empire established control of the Caucasus region and its various peoples, including the Abkhazians. This led to the displacement of many Abkhaz from their ancestral lands and the formation of an Abkhaz diaspora.

The conflict escalated in the early 1990s, when Georgian and Abkhaz forces clashed over control of the region. In 1992, the Abkhaz declared independence from Georgia, and in 1993, a war broke out between the two sides. The conflict ended in 1994 with a ceasefire, but tensions have remained high, and the two sides have yet to reach a political settlement. Over the years, there have been several attempts to negotiate a settlement to the conflict, but these have all failed.

Moscow peace agreement 1994

The 1994 Moscow Agreement was a peace treaty between Georgia and Abkhazia, which ended the Georgian-Abkhaz War of 1992–1993. It was signed on 14 May 1994 in Moscow by the real

leader of Georgia, as Chairman of Parliament, Eduard Shevardnadze¹, and the Prime Minister of Abkhazia, Vladislav Ardzinba². The Agreement established a ceasefire and a monitoring mission of the United Nations, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). It also set up a tripartite mechanism involving Georgia, Abkhazia, and Russia to resolve the conflict.

ABKHAZIA/Georgia



(Figure 3. Map of Abkhazia)

Abkhazia, officially the Republic of Abkhazia, is a partially recognised state in the South Caucasus, at the intersection of Eastern Europe and Western Asia. It lies on the eastern coast of the Black Sea in northwestern Georgia. It covers 8,665 square kilometers (3,346 sq mi) and has a population of around 245,000. Its capital and largest city is Sukhumi

¹ Eduard Ambrosis dze **Shevardnadze** (1928-2014) was a Georgian politician and diplomat who served as the country's second President from 1995 to 2003. He was previously the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, playing a key role in negotiating arms control agreements with the US and ending the Cold War. As president, he pursued economic development and closer ties with the West, but faced criticism for corruption and an inability to resolve conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. After facing mass protests and electoral fraud allegations, he resigned in 2003 and spent his remaining years as a writer and speaker.

² Vladislav **Ardzinba** (1945-2010) was a prominent Abkhazian politician who served as the de facto President of Abkhazia from 1994 to 2005. Ardzinba was a key figure in Abkhazia's separatist movement, which led to a violent conflict with Georgia in the early 1990s. After Abkhazia's victory in the conflict, Ardzinba was elected as President of the self-proclaimed Republic of Abkhazia. He faced criticism for his authoritarian rule and his handling of the conflict with Georgia, which remains unresolved. Ardzinba stepped down from office in 2005 due to declining health and passed away in 2010 at the age of 65.



(Figure 4. Official flag of Abkhazia)

The status of Abkhazia is a central issue in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict and in Georgia-Russia relations. Although Abkhazia is recognized as an independent state by Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru, and Syria, the Georgian government and most United Nations member states consider Abkhazia to be a part of Georgia. As a result, Georgia maintains an official government-in-exile despite lacking control over Abkhazia.

Name

The Republic of Abkhazia, locals call their homeland Аԥсны (Apsny, Aṗsny). It is popularly etymologized as "a land/country of the soul", yet literally meaning "a country of mortals (mortal beings)".

Politics of Abkhazia

Politics in Abkhazia is dominated by its conflict with Georgia. Abkhazia became de facto independent from Georgia after the 1992–1993 war, but its de jure independence has only been recognised by a few other countries.

Abkhazia is a presidential representative democratic republic with a multi-party system, wherein the President is both head of state and head of government.

Executive power is exercised by the government of the Republic of Abkhazia.

Legislative power is vested in both the government and the People's Assembly of Abkhazia.

Administrative divisions

The Republic of Abkhazia is divided into seven raions (districts) named after their primary cities: Gagra, Gudauta, Sukhumi, Ochamchira, Gulripshi, Tkvarcheli and Gali.

The President of the Republic appoints districts' heads from those elected to the districts' assemblies.

Economy

The economy of Abkhazia is integrated with Russia as outlined in a bilateral agreement. The country uses the Russian ruble as its currency, and the two countries share a common economic and customs union.

Ethnicity

The ethnic composition of Abkhazia has played a central role in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict and is equally contested. The demographics of Abkhazia were very strongly affected by the 1992–1993 war with Georgia, which saw the expulsion and flight of over half of the republic's population, measuring 525,061 in the 1989 census.

The population of Abkhazia remains ethnically very diverse, even after the 1992–1993 war. At present the population of Abkhazia is mainly made up of ethnic Abkhaz (50.7%), Russians, Armenians, Georgians (mostly Mingrelians), and Greeks.

Ethnic cleansing of Georgians

Before the 1992 War, Georgians made up nearly half of Abkhazia's population, while less than one-fifth of the population was Abkhaz. As the war progressed, confronted with hundreds of thousands of ethnic Georgians who were unwilling to leave their homes, the Abkhaz separatists implemented the process of ethnic cleansing in order to expel and eliminate the Georgian ethnic population in Abkhazia. About 5,000 were killed, 400 went missing and up to 250,000 ethnic Georgians were expelled from their homes.

Geography and climate

Abkhazia covers an area of about 8,665 km² (3,346 sq mi) at the western end of Georgia. The Caucasus Mountains to the north and northeast separate Abkhazia and the Russian Federation. To the east and southeast, Abkhazia is bounded by the Georgian region of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti; and on the south and southwest by the Black Sea.

Abkhazia's landscape ranges from coastal forests and citrus plantations to permanent snows and glaciers in the north of the region. Although Abkhazia's complex topographic setting has spared most of the territory from significant human development, its cultivated fertile lands produce tea, tobacco, wine and fruits, a mainstay of the local agricultural sector.

Abkhazia is richly irrigated by small rivers originating in the Caucasus Mountains. Chief of these are: Kodori, Bzyb, Ghalidzga, and Gumista.

The Psou River separates the region from Russia, and the Inguri serves as a boundary between Abkhazia and Georgia proper.

Because of Abkhazia's proximity to the Black Sea and the shield of the Caucasus Mountains, the region's climate is very mild. The coastal areas of the republic have a subtropical climate, where the average annual temperature in most regions is around 15 °C (59 °F), and the average January temperature remains above freezing.

Russian involvement

During the Georgian–Abkhaz conflict, the Russian authorities and military supplied logistical and military aid to the separatist side.

Today, Russia still maintains a strong political and military influence over separatist rule in Abkhazia.

Moscow, at certain times, hinted that it might recognise Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states.

International involvement

The UN has played various roles during the conflict and peace process:

- a military role through its observer mission (UNOMIG)
- dual diplomatic roles through the Security Council and the appointment of a special envoy, succeeded by a special representative to the secretary-general
- a humanitarian role (UNHCR and UNOCHA)
- a development role (UNDP)
- a human rights role (UNHCHR)
- a low-key capacity and confidence-building role (UNV)

The UN's position has been that there will be no forcible change in international borders. Any settlement must be freely negotiated and based on autonomy for Abkhazia legitimized by referendum under international observation once the multi-ethnic population has returned.

The OSCE³ (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) has increasingly engaged in dialogue with officials and civil society representatives in Abkhazia, especially from non-governmental organizations (NGO)s and the media, regarding human dimension standards in the region and is considering a presence in Gali.

Mandate of UNOMIG

UNOMIG was originally established on 24 August 1993 by Security Council resolution 858 (1993) to verify compliance with the 27 July 1993 ceasefire agreement between the Government of Georgia and the Abkhaz authorities in Georgia with special attention to the situation in the city of Sukhumi; to investigate reports of ceasefire violations and to attempt to resolve such incidents with the parties involved; and to report to the Secretary-General on the implementation of its mandate, including, in particular, violations of the ceasefire agreement. The authorized strength of the Mission was 88 military observers.

Following the signing, in May 1994, by the Georgian and Abkhaz sides of the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces, the Security Council, by its resolution 937 (1994) of 27 July 1994, authorized the increase in UNOMIG's strength to up to 136 military observers and decided that the mandate of an expanded Mission shall be as follows:

- To monitor and verify the implementation by the parties of the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces signed in Moscow on 14 May 1994
- To observe the operation of the peacekeeping force of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) within the framework of the implementation of the Agreement
- To verify, through observation and patrolling, that troops of the parties do not remain in or re-enter the security zone and that heavy military equipment does not remain or is not reintroduced in the security zone or the restricted weapons zone
- To monitor the storage areas for heavy military equipment withdrawn from the security zone and the restricted weapons zone in cooperation with the CIS peacekeeping force as appropriate
- To monitor the withdrawal of troops of the Republic of Georgia from the Kodori Valley to places beyond the boundaries of Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia
- To patrol regularly the Kodori Valley
- To investigate, at the request of either party or the CIS peacekeeping force or on its own initiative, reported or alleged violations of the Agreement and to attempt to resolve or contribute to the resolution of such incidents
- To report regularly to the Secretary-General within its mandate, in particular on the implementation of the Agreement, any violations and their investigation by UNOMIG, as well as other relevant developments

³ The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (**OSCE**) is the world's largest regional security-oriented intergovernmental organization with observer status at the United Nations. Its mandate includes issues such as arms control, promotion of human rights, freedom of the press, and free and fair elections.

- To maintain close contacts with both parties to the conflict and to cooperate with the CIS peacekeeping force and, by its presence in the area, to contribute to conditions conducive to the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons

Establishment and Organizational structure of UNOMIG

- CMO - Brig. General John Hvidergaard (Denmark)
- DCMO/COS - Colonel Laszlo Forgacs (Hungary)
- Headquartel (HQ) initially was promptly established in a former Soviet and then Georgian resort site/compound in Sukhumi Abkhazia, protected and guarded by the Russian military at that time.
Later, in order to avoid even the appearance that UNOMIG is not sufficiently independent and neutral, the command was moved to a military compound offered by the Abkhazians, and part of the HQ was temporarily relocated in Pitsunda and later relocated back to Sukhumi.
- Strength
Maximum deployment:
459 total personnel including 129 military observers, 16 police officers, 105 international staff, 208 local staff and 1 UN Volunteer
- Contributors of military personnel:
Albania, Austria, Bangladesh, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, **Hungary**, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Lithuania, Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay and Yemen
- Contributors of police personnel:
Czech Republic, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, India, Israel, Philippines, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine
- Structure
 - Mission HQ in Sukhumi, Abkhazia
 - Two Sector HQs in Gali (in Abkhazia) and Zugdidi Sector HQ (in Georgia)
 - Mobile TS, collocated with Mission HQ for urgent, rapid investigation of alleged violations and patrol Kodori Valley
 - Liaison Office in Tbilisi, Georgia



(Figure 5. UNOMIG structure)

The patrols were always in radio connection with the sector (Gali Sector HQ, in Abkhazia or Zugdidi Sector HQ, in Georgia and Sukhumi HQ, in Abkhazia). There were radio devices for every observer and in the vehicles because of the safety. Along the cease-fire line (CFL) there were a lot of Security Posts (SP) and Observing Posts (OP) on both sides.

In the patrolling team only one person could be from one nation during the patrol. For example: 4 unarmed military observers were on the patrol from the next nations: Hungary, Egypt, Bangladesh, Argentina.

Colonel Laszlo Forgacs, 1994-95, UNOMIG, Georgia (Abkhazia)

Colonel Laszlo Forgacs was a Hungarian officer and United Nations military observer who served in the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and in Abkhazia during the Georgian–Abkhazian conflict.

In 1994 he joined the UNOMIG mission in Abkhazia as second-in-command, as Chief of Staff.

Col. Forgacs served as the Chief of Staff (COS) of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) from January 1994 to January 1995. As COS, he was responsible for the overall management and coordination of the mission, which was mandated by the UN Security Council

- To monitor the ceasefire agreement between the conflicting parties in Abkhazia, Georgia
- To ensure the mission was adequately staffed, supplied, and equipped to carry out its mandate
- To ensure that the mission had the necessary political support and resources to carry out its activities
- To develop and maintain relationships with the conflicting parties, as well as with the local population
- To enable the mission to fulfill its mandate
- To ensure the safety and security of the personnel of the mission, as well as the protection of its premises
- To help establish a peaceful resolution to the conflict between the Abkhazian and Georgian sides

He worked closely with both sides to build trust and develop meaningful dialogue. He also played a key role in the implementation of the 1994 Moscow Agreement, which brought a temporary ceasefire between the two sides.

Russian Peace-Keeping Forces

The Russian Peace-Keeping Forces (RPKF) as CIS Peace-Keeping Forces in Abkhazia in 1994 had the task of maintaining peace and security in the region. The RPKF was created by the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in accordance with the Sochi Agreement of July 27, 1994. As part of this agreement, the presence of Russian peacekeepers (only the Russian Military Forces was deployed in the region) was viewed as a necessary step in helping maintain order and security in the region.

The role of the RPKF was to monitor the ceasefire between the Georgian and Abkhaz forces, monitor the situation on the ground, ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid, and provide protection to civilians. The RPKF was also mandated to support the political process between the two sides and to help with the repatriation of displaced persons. In addition, the RPKF was responsible for the implementation of confidence-building measures between the two sides. In general, the goal of the RPKF was to foster conditions for the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Cooperation of UNMOs with regional peace-keeping forces in Georgia/Abkhazia

The United Nations Monitoring Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) had been in Georgia since 1993, working to promote peace and stability in the region. The mission had worked closely with the

Russian Peace-Keeping Forces (RPKF) to ensure that the ceasefire agreements in Abkhazia were respected.

UNOMIG and the RPKF coordinated closely on matters such as patrolling the conflict zones, monitoring compliance with the ceasefire, and facilitating the return of refugees. UNOMIG and RPKF had also worked together to facilitate dialogue between the local government and the Abkhaz authorities.

The cooperation between UNOMIG and RPKF had been essential in helping to maintain the peace and stability in the region. Both forces had worked together to prevent further violence and protect civilians, and their cooperation was key in helping to facilitate progress in the peace process.

Innentől kellene (jobban) átnézni

Curiosities and specialties from Abkhazia/Georgia, UN and UNOMIG:

(The following is a non-exhaustive summary of Mission's peculiarities, difficulties, interesting cases and situations.)

1. Accommodation, living conditions, security, support, food, healthcare:
 - Accommodation, living condition: After arriving in Sukhumi, the Hungarian UN Military observers and members of the UN preparatory group were lodged at a ten-story abandoned Soviet/Russian/Georgian holiday complex. Although the average temperature was just above freezing, January posed to be exceptionally cold. Additionally, there was no heating in the complex and the elevator only operated intermittently, but each floor was monitored by a guard, an elderly woman referred to as “dezurnaja” («дежурная»).
 - Mission HQ and Staff: The UNOMIL HQ, the mission's command, leadership and staff, as well as a mobile patrol group, were also installed in the same building. The mission's headquarters and staff operation, duty room were located on one floor, while the health department, storage rooms, warehouses, kitchen and canteen were on another floor. The staff's rooms were on the upper floors, with no other location options available.
 - Security of Mission HQ in the Complex: The resort complex was technically located in Abkhazia, yet because there was Russian involvement in the area—such as a communication sub-unit, warehouses, etc.—a guard sub-unit was established to monitor the premises' entrances and exits. UNOMIG was not impeded in its movements and its vehicles were not searched. But, at least, we were located inside a relatively safe area, considering that there were random firings in the town as well.
 - Food supply, shopping, support: Due to the armed conflict, the public supply was interrupted, leading to deserted shops in the Abkhaz area, specifically in the city of Sukhumi. Consequently, UNOMIG took the responsibility of organizing its own supplies. Since the closest place to purchase goods was in Russia, specifically

the city of Sochi, a "patrol" was dispatched once a week to do the shopping for essential items such as flour, rice, sugar, meat, eggs, among others. This way, the helpers, who were local residents, could prepare meals in the kitchen. Bread could be bought locally, but not every day. Sometimes we were embarrassed when we took a lot of bread from the local bakery while elderly people, mostly women, were standing in a long queue.

- Healthcare: Our medical care was overseen by a German team, helmed by an accomplished physician. The indispensable equipment, medication, and immunizations, alongside the provision of an ambulance, were all facilitated by the German government.

2. Mines and security of patrolling:

- Mines: Abkhazia was plagued with an abundance of unmarked minefields, a lamentable consequence of the combative methods employed by Caucasian militants, which often took on partisan and terrorist-like characteristics. These minefields, primarily intended to harm foot soldiers, also contained anti-tank mines, perilously positioned along roadways, representing a significant hazard to UNOMIG patrols.
- Security of UNOMIG patrolling - specialties: Given the circumstances outlined, our initial reaction was one of surprise, but we quickly adapted to the new reality of our situation. The standard-issue equipment of our patrol vehicles, while satisfactory in ordinary circumstances, was supplemented with sandbags - one for every seat, one under each seat, one for the footwells, and one for each side door. Although this arrangement resulted in a cramped ride, we remained hopeful that it would enhance our safety while on duty.
Regrettably, despite our utmost vigilance, one of our patrol cars struck an anti-tank mine, leading to a devastating outcome. As such, we now realize the paramount importance of utilizing this additional safety measure.

3. Meeting with Authorities:

- Meeting with the Presidents: In order to facilitate the work of UNOMIG, there were regular meetings between Vladislav Ardzinba, Abkhaz President, and the leaders of the mission (CMO, COS) in order to discuss current issues and investigate ceasefire violations. On several occasions, only Colonel Forgacs (COS) was called for urgent discussions, as he could also negotiate in Russian, because if the CMO went, an interpretation was needed.
- (Unfortunately, but postponed) meeting with the President of Georgia: COS, Colonel Forgacs undertook a brief, two-day mission to Tbilisi, where he skillfully engaged in talks with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defense's high-ranking officials. Such was the success of his diplomatic efforts that the Georgian leadership deemed them worthy of a summit with their esteemed President, Eduard Shevardnadze. Despite the President's eagerness to meet, the proposed rendezvous was postponed until the following day. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, Colonel Forgacs was compelled to return to Sukhumi, thereby necessitating the cancellation of the meeting.

- Frequent interactions with the Abkhaz authorities were commonplace, and these gatherings were typically characterized by a convivial atmosphere, brimming with mutual respect and constructive dialogue. Their cordial nature was emblematic of their appreciation for the involvement of an international organization such as the UN and UNOMIG, whose active oversight of the ceasefire was essential to the maintenance of regional stability.
- 4. Diplomatic status of UNOMIG: The Abkhaz leadership and state bodies were so pleased with the UN (UNOMIG) supervised and assured "security" and hoped for international recognition (which only partially materialized) that they granted diplomatic status and immunity to the Mission. Diplomatic identification cards were issued to its leaders (including Colonel Forgacs).
- 5. Exodus of Georgians and non Abkhasians: The ethnic cleansing of Georgians in Abkhazia, also known in Georgia as the genocide of Georgians in Abkhazia, refers to the ethnic cleansing, massacres, and forced mass expulsion of thousands of ethnic Georgians living in Abkhazia during the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict of 1992–1993 at the hands of Abkhaz separatists and their allies. Armenians, Greeks, Russians, and opposing Abkhazians were also killed.
In 2007, 267,345 Georgian civilians were registered as internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- 6. Animal diseases, rabies:
 - Since the population belonging to the Georgian and non-Abkhaz population had to flee - in a relatively short time, under terrible conditions - they could only take the most necessary with them, they basically saved their lives - their animals and chattels were left behind. Thus, they wandered in their hundreds, looking for food, mainly bone-thin cattle, but also horses and donkeys. The smaller livestock (poultry, goats, sheep) were eaten by the Abkhazians during the war.
 - **Rabies**⁴: The perilous threat of rabies loomed large for the MILOBs amidst the hordes of dogs that roamed about in packs, often displaying aggressive behavior. Our knowledge indicated that these canines were primarily carriers of this deadly disease.
However, the UNOMIG staff is indebted to the German health team who astutely recognized the gravity of the situation and took proactive measures to combat it. They sourced the requisite medication and enforced a rigorous vaccination regimen, comprising of three doses per individual, for which we remain deeply grateful.
- 7. Sukhumi monkey nursery:
 - Sukhumi Monkey Nursery - almost unique in the world - was a sanctuary located in Abkhazia, dedicated to the rehabilitation and conservation of primates. The

⁴ **Rabies** is a viral disease that affects the nervous system of mammals, including humans. It is usually transmitted through the bite or scratch of an infected animal, with dogs being the most common source of human infection. The virus travels to the brain and spinal cord, causing inflammation and damage to the nervous system, which can result in a wide range of symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle weakness, paralysis, and hallucinations. Once symptoms appear, rabies is almost always fatal, which is why it is important to seek medical attention immediately if you suspect you have been exposed to the virus. Vaccines are available to prevent rabies, and it is recommended that people who work with animals or who travel to areas where rabies is common get vaccinated.

sanctuary has provided a safe and natural environment for various species of monkeys. The sanctuary was home to over 100 monkeys, including rhesus macaques, baboons, and capuchin monkeys. The Sukhumi Monkey Nursery also serves as a research center for primates, providing valuable insights into primate behavior and conservation efforts.

- Freeing the Monkey Nursery: The Abkhaz and allied Caucasian fighters, as a sideline of their great freedom struggle, also "liberated" the "residents" of the Monkey House, i.e. released them from their cages so that "they too could be free"! As a result, the animals (in the absence of regular feeding and care) soon died.

8. «Long Lived» People - "долгожители":

- Many very «long-lived» people over 100 lived in this part of the Caucasus - probably due to the climate and natural conditions, among other things. They even founded a singing group, a choir and a dance group, which gained world fame.
- One of the consequences of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict (armed clashes) was that the life expectancy was radically reduced (well, not because of climate change, but because of exodus and fightings) and the people living there were already called "short-lived" - "короткожители"! Unfortunately, this is not a joke or a pun...

9. Kodori Valley - special case:

- Kodori Valley, also known as the Kodori Gorge, is a river valley in Abkhazia, is a narrow and remote valley located in the northwestern part of Georgia, Abkhazia. The valley stretches for about 30 km and is surrounded by the Caucasus Mountains, making it a beautiful and picturesque destination. The region has a diverse and unique culture, and the valley is home to several ethnic groups, including Georgians, Abkhazians, and Svans (Georgian nationality). The valley's upper part, populated by Svans, was the only corner of the post-1993 Abkhazia, directly controlled by the central Georgian government
- One day we received an alarming report that the Svanetians were firing shells in the Kodori valley, which was retaliated by the Russian Peacekeeping Forces (RPKF). Immediate measures, instruct, request the parties to cease the firing and an helicopter patrol as an investigation committee to send to the scene. The RPKF commander, a General Major and Colonel Forgács were members of this committee.
- Upon arrival, everything was quiet and the Svanetians welcomed us in a friendly manner. They said that they did not commit any ceasefire violation, they only fired a cannon three times, because according to Svan tradition, if the wife of the chiefs gives birth to a boy, this is the way to let everyone know that he has been born.
- It was with great relief that we found out!

10. Symbolic systems of Abkhaz independence:

Since Abkhazia as an independent state has been recognized by very few countries and the UN and the vast majority of states consider it a part of Georgia (even in the name of

the mission only Georgia is mentioned, UNOMIG, UN Observer Mission in Georgia), that is why Abkhazia somehow wanted to express its independence state existence. One very interesting part of this is the start of the postal service and the issuing of stamps.



With this 100 Ruble stamp, you could post the letter in Abkhazia and get it to Russia (Sochi Post Office), but only there nowhere with these Abkhaz stamps - from it can be forwarded only (should be an additional Russian stamp).

The envelopes with this beautiful stamp could no longer be obtained by stamp collectors, because they could no longer be forwarded outside Russia.

It deserves to be mentioned only because of its uniqueness and interest.

11. Stalin's Black Sea dacha, country house/summer cottage:

- Abkhaz state bodies ("Ministry of Foreign Affairs", Tourism Directorate) invited members of the UNOMIG command (including CMO, COS) to visit one of Stalin's former favorite resorts, his dacha. Accepting the invitation, we were taken to Stalin's most favorite dacha, which is still relatively intact (as well as the building and the furnishings and equipment).
- We were surprised and struck by the Dictator's way of life, the spirit of the 40s and 50s! Almost everything remained - in the presentation picture - the dining table was set with the cutlery of the time. They still looked very precious and rich. The whole served and reflected Stalin. Since he was a short person, he did not like spacious and tall rooms, his furniture reflected him, his bed was short, his chair was raised, and his table and billiard table legs were shortened. There were no paintings in the rooms, only his picture in a few places.
 - Stalin's dacha in Abkhazia was one of his several vacation homes where he spent time away from Moscow. He had five dachas in Abkhazia, all built on similar architectural projects.

- At one time he possessed 78 such objects throughout the Soviet Union. In most of them he never was. Joseph Stalin was very fond of the Caucasus, perhaps, therefore, in Abkhazia he had already five dachas.
- It was one of the few places in the world where he could be a normal person," says Mr. Sebag Montefiore, recent caretaker of the house (summer cottage). "He could stroll around, do some gardening, have songs with his mates -- the kind of thing he used to do as a young man." Abkhazia's steamy climate also worked wonders on the rheumatoid arthritis that plagued him later in life.

Col. Forgacs was noted for his dedication to his work and his efforts to create a lasting peace in Abkhazia. He received commendations from both sides for his efforts during his time in Abkhazia/Georgia, and was awarded a UN Peacekeeping Medal.



Next

In January 1995 Col. Forgacs was transferred from the UNOMIG mission, from Georgia (Abkhazia) to Tajikistan to help to establish and run a new UN Military Observer mission (UNMOT - UN Military Observers in Tajikistan).