

Ossetians in Georgia: in the wake of the 2008 war

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Arbeitspapier / working paper

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Sordia, G. (2009). *Ossetians in Georgia: in the wake of the 2008 war*. (ECMI Working Paper, 45). Flensburg: European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI). <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-106939>

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Ossetians in Georgia

In the Wake of the 2008 War

Giorgi Sordia

ECMI Working Paper # 45

September 2009

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ECMI Working Paper # 45
European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)
Director: Dr. Tove H. Malloy

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Published in September 2009 by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI)

ISSN: 1435-9812

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Introduction

As a result of the August war of 2008, the demographic situation in South Ossetia has been entirely altered. After the Georgian authorities lost administrative-territorial control over the Didi and Patara Liakhvi gorges and Akhagori district, the majority of the population of these territories, including the entire population of Didi and Patara Liakhvi, were forced to leave their homes. The demographic structure of districts adjoining the conflict zones was also affected. As of September 2008, internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the conflict zone (including districts of Shida Kartli) numbered more than 127,000 in total.¹ After the ceasefire agreement between Russia and Georgia was signed and Russian troops removed from the region, a large number of those forcibly displaced outside the administrative borders of the former autonomous region of South Ossetia returned home. However, the entire ethnic Georgian population of Didi and Patara Liakhvi, as well as several thousand Georgians from Akhagori districts, remain displaced. The Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia has granted them the status of IDPs and housed them in 38 specially constructed cottage settlements. According to official figures from the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation, the number of IDPs from the August war (excluding those displaced from Upper Abkhazia) currently stands at 24,729.²

After the August war various mass media both in Georgia and abroad reported widely on the oppression of Ossetians and their eviction from their settlements, giving rise to much political speculation. The circulation of various contradictory accounts prompted ECMI to study this issue and conduct research that would provide answers to pressing questions about the influence of the August war on Georgian-Ossetian relations, how the demographic balance has changed in Ossetian-populated regions of Georgia, what demographic and migratory patterns prevail in the current political circumstances and how the August War affected the conditions of Ossetians in Georgia. In the initial stage of research we had planned to study interethnic relations in various regions of Shida Kartli adjoining the conflict zone. However, as the project developed, we expanded the geographical area to include all regions of Georgia where according to the most recent census (conducted in 2002), ethnic Ossetian populations reside. In addition to helping meet the goals outlined above, this also gave us the opportunity to define approximate numerical

¹ <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e48d2e6>

² http://www.mra.gov.ge/files/3_427_426374_devnilebi-Geo.pdf.

data on Ossetians by village and compare them to the data of the 2002 census. A map based on this latest data showing the current settlement of Ossetians in Georgia can be found as an annex to this paper (see Annex 3). We were also able to assess the level of integration of Ossetians in Georgia according to such criteria as knowledge of the Georgian language, knowledge of their mother tongue, self-identification, and family name endings (Ossetian or Russian). This and other information is structurally presented in a special table as an annex to this paper (see Annex 1). This paper is thus concerned with the current situation of the Ossetian population in Georgia proper and leaves aside questions of historical context.³

The research was conducted during the period November 2008 – June 2009. The research results are entirely based on information gathered during field trips. Such trips were conducted to all regions populated by Ossetians, including purely Ossetian villages, mixed population villages (Georgian-Ossetian, Georgian-Ossetian-Azeri) and adjoining Georgian and Azeri villages. A total of 46 villages were visited, namely, Kveda Shavshvebi, Tsitelubani, Didi Khurvaleti, Tedotsminda, Variani, Agaiani, Sakadagiano, Gamdlistskaro, Kvemo Rene, Karapila, Natsreti, Karaleti, Tkviavi, Kere, Brotsleti, Ergneti, Kvemo Nikozi, Zemo Nikozi, Kintsvisi, Zguderi, Elbakiani, Takhtisdziri, Dvani, Tvaurebi, Khviti, Goraka, Vake, Pantiani (Shida Kartli Region); Pichkhovani, Argokhi, Jugaani, Tsitsikaantseri, Kitaani, Areshperani, Pona (Kakheti Region); Kodistskaro, Kvemo Shuakhevi, Zemo Shuakhevi, Tsitsamuri, Karkushaani, Akhali Burguli, Dzveli Burguli, Lamovani, Kobi and Okrokana (Mtskheta-Mtianeti Region); Didi Mitarbi (Samtskhe-Javakheti Region).

A total of 250 persons were individually interviewed in the course of research. In addition five discussions were conducted in focus groups in the villages of Areshperani, Pichkhovani, Tsitelubani, Elbakiani and Zemo Shuakhevi. In order to define areas of field work in the early stages of research, relevant statistical information was obtained from the Department of Statistics about the resettlement and numbers of Ossetians in Georgia. Based

³ In relation to this topic see: Z. Chichinadze, *Resettlement of Ossetians in Kartli and Georgian input: A Historical Review*, (Tbilisi Khelovneba, 1990); V. Jaoshvili, *The Population of Georgia*, (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1996); A. Totadze, *Ossetians in Georgia: Myth and Reality*, (Tbilisi: Universal, 2006); G. Togoshvili and Vakhushti Bagrationi, *On Ossetians and Ossetia*. (Tbilisi Ivane Javakishvili Institute of History, Ethnography and Archeology: Metsniereba, 1977); G. Sosiashvili, *German Travellers on Ossetians*, (Tbilisi: Universali, 2007); Roland Topchishvili, *Georgian-Ossetian Ethno-Historical Essays*, (Tbilisi I. Javakishvili Institute of History and Ethnology, 2006); Yu. Gagloyti, *Alans and Issues of Ethnogenesis of Ossetians*. (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1966); Zamira Tskhovrebova, *Toponymy of South Ossetia in Written Sources*, (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1979).

on this data, targeted villages were selected according to different criteria: targeted villages included purely Ossetian, mixed Ossetian-Georgian, mixed Ossetian-Azeri, purely Georgian and purely Azeri villages. Informants from villages were selected randomly, subject to a minimum of five persons from each village, with different age and gender groups.

Demography and Areas of Settlement of Ossetians in Georgia

Ossetians were traditionally one of the most numerous ethnic groups in Georgia. According to the last Soviet census conducted in 1989, Ossetians numbered 164,055 persons, with 98,823 resident outside the former autonomous region of South Ossetia. This number significantly decreased as a result of the ethnic conflict which took place in the 1990s, when Ossetians living in different regions of Georgia were forcibly displaced or made to live in such conditions that they ultimately decided to leave their dwellings and resettle in Russia, mainly in North Ossetia. According to the 2002 census data, the number of Ossetians in Georgia, not including the territory of the former autonomous region of South Ossetia, stood at 38,028,⁴ residing in 132 villages⁵ in seven regions of Georgia (Shida Kartli, Kakheti, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Kvemo Kartli, Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi), though the main concentrations of Ossetians are found in Shida Kartli, Kakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti. Outside the villages, significant numbers of Ossetians live in various big cities and district centres in Georgia.⁶ According to our evaluation, the Ossetian population has significantly decreased even since 2002. According to the information received during interviews in Ossetian villages, the current Ossetian population in the villages is estimated not to exceed 10,000 individuals,⁷ while the 2002 census estimates 22,000 individuals. Unfortunately, it was difficult to make similar estimates for Ossetians residing in cities for whereas Ossetians in the villages establish compact settlements, in the cities they are rather more dispersed. Thus, with respect to urban

⁴ This number includes the data for the villages of Didi and Patara Liakhvi gorges included in Gori district and Akhgori district included in Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, at that time both under control of the Georgian government.

⁵ For a full list of Ossetian villages classified by number of residents, origin and level of integration see Annex 1.

⁶ For a list of district centres and towns with an indication of the numbers of the Ossetian population see Annex 2.

⁷ For a comparison of the population figures for Ossetian villages according to the 2002 census and our estimates for the same villages in 2009 see Annex 1.

populations, we can only base our estimates on the data of the official 2002 census, according to which Ossetians resident in cities number 16,000. We can assume that this number has not significantly changed since 2002, unlike the village population, since on the one hand, the social conditions of the city population are better than those of the village and correspondingly the population has less motivation to sell their houses and leave, and on the other hand, Ossetians leaving the villages have tended to resettle in the nearest town, replacing the Ossetian population which left the cities for Russia in the period 2002-2009. Thus, if we add our estimates for the village population to the number for the Ossetian city population provided by the 2002 census, we arrive at an estimated total number of 26,000 Ossetians residents in Georgia.⁸

Table 1: Ossetians in Georgia

1989 Soviet Census	2002 census	2009 ECMI estimate
164,055	38,028	26,000 ⁹

In the region of Shida Kartli, Ossetians reside in 59 villages in Gori, Kaspi, Kareli and Khashuri districts. However, based on our estimates and information gathered from the population, it can be concluded that Ossetians today live in significant numbers (60% or more) in 17 villages, namely, Kvemo Shavshvebi, Tsitelubani, Didi Khurvaleti, Natsreti (Gori district), Gamdlistskaro, Zadiantkari, Zemo Rene, Nigoza, Kvemo Rene, Karapila, Tvaurebi, Khviti, Goraka, Vake, Pantiani (Kaspi district), Elbakiani and Kintsvisi (Kareli district).

During the fieldwork it became clear that the 2002 census data in some cases does not reflect the real demographic picture. In various villages the number of Ossetians is underestimated. This is the case in, for example, Tsitelubani, Natsreti, Kintsvisi, Elbakiani, Gamdlistskaro among others. However, these cases should not be taken as the result of an intentional, deliberate policy to underestimate numbers of Ossetians. Family names of the absolute majority of Ossetians in Shida Kartli have Georgian endings, which could have been the reason for registering them in the census questionnaires as Georgians; in addition,

⁸ This number does not include the Ossetian population of Didi and Patara Liakhvi and Akhalgori districts.

⁹ In reading this number we rely on 2002 census figures for cities and towns and on our own estimates for rural areas

as a result of cultural assimilation, the majority of the Ossetian population do not seem to find it problematic to present themselves as Georgian. During the research we came across many cases where Ossetians had voluntarily registered themselves as Georgians out of a sense of cautiousness.

In Kakheti region, Ossetians reside in 37 villages. Our field research, however, has identified a significant concentration of the Ossetian population (60% or more) only in 12 villages, namely, Jugaani (Telavi district), Argokhi, Pichkhovani, Koreti (Akhmeta district), Kitaani (Gurjaani district), Areshperani, Zemo Bolkvi, Pona, Dona, Kvemo Khechili, Zemo Khechili (Lagodekhi district) and Tsitsikaantseri (Kvareli district). An Ossetian population was also traditionally present in various villages of the Pankisi gorge; Kvemo Khalatsani, Tsinubani, Dumasturi and Kutsakhta were always considered and are still talked of as Ossetian villages even though Ossetians almost completely left these villages during the 1990s; only a couple of families are left in the village of Kutsakhta.

Villages with large Ossetian populations are mainly found in Shida Kartli and Kakheti, where most villages have on average 200-250 residents, while in other regions villages with an Ossetian population do not generally exceed 50-150 inhabitants. Traditionally, Borjomi district stood out for the size of its Ossetian community. According to the 1989 census, there were eleven purely Ossetian villages in Borjomi district, while today there are only a few Ossetian families left in the village of Didi Mitarbi, as well as remaining communities in the settlement of Bakuriani (344 Ossetians) and the town of Borjomi (215 Ossetians).¹⁰ Another region of compact Ossetian settlement is Mtskheta-Mtianeti, where Ossetians reside in 26 villages, though the population of the biggest of these villages does not exceed 150. As in Shida Kartli, the census underestimates the number of Ossetians in some villages of Mtskheta-Mtianeti. This is particularly the case for the Ossetian villages of Dusheti district. The 2002 census data indicates that certain Dusheti villages are half Ossetian when according to our assessment the majority of these villages are either purely or majority Ossetian. This is true, for instance, of the villages of Kodistskaro, Zemo Shuakhevi, Kvemo Shuakhevi, Kvitkiristskaro and Tsitsamura, which form a fairly large cluster of Ossetian communities and another range of three Ossetian villages: Karkushaani,

¹⁰ Data based on the results of the 2002 census.

Akhali Burguli and Dzveli Burguli. In Kazbegi district meanwhile, the majority of Ossetian settlements are completely vacated; for example, on visiting the villages of the Truso gorge in Kazbegi district we found just one elderly Ossetian lady (in the village of Okrokana), the rest of the community having left for North Ossetia in the 1990s and early 2005. Hence, all villages of Truso gorge are today completely abandoned.

Much change since the 2002 census can also be observed in the Ossetian settlements of Kvemo Kartli. According to the census data, Ossetians were present in five villages in Tetri Tskaro district – Alekseevka, Arkhoti, Chinchriani, Gudarekhi and Vake. However, in the course of our research, we discovered that in recent years the entire Ossetian population of these villages has left the district. Some of their houses were bought by the government for ecological migrants from Svaneti and Adjara, while the rest have been bought by private individuals. However, Ossetians are still present in small numbers in urban areas, with 61 people living in the town of Tetri Tskaro.¹¹ Similar tendencies towards demographic change can be observed in several other districts: for instance, in the village of Tsitelubani, where about a year ago the government purchased houses and resettled five families of deported Meskhetians. Previously, at the end of the 1990s, ecological migrants from Adjara had been resettled to the same village. The tendency to resettle IDPs, refugees and migrants in Ossetian villages has become particularly marked in villages of Kakheti. For instance in the village of Pichkhovani (Akhmeta district), eleven houses were bought from Ossetians for Adjarian migrants, while in the village of Argokha, sixteen houses were purchased for Svan migrants. According to the local population, similar resettlements are also planned in other villages.

Integration into Georgian Society

From the Soviet period on, the Ossetians have been generally better integrated into Georgian society than any other ethnic group. If we take knowledge of the Georgian language, frequency of contact with Georgians and intermarriage as defining criteria for integration, it appears that the level of integration was equally high among both Ossetians living in the former autonomous region of South Ossetia and outside it in various regions of

¹¹ Data based on the results of the 2002 census.

Georgia. The early 1990s saw, as a result of conflict, an increasing degree of estrangement between Ossetians and Georgians living in South Ossetia; everyday interaction decreased, while the Georgian language was gradually replaced by Russian. However, in other regions of Georgia interethnic relations have not changed dramatically, despite the fact of significant outflow and mass oppression of Ossetians in the early 1990s (see below). The level of integration in some districts is so high that a process of linguistic and ethnic assimilation can be observed. In this regard, however, the picture varies across different districts and villages.

High levels of integration, and in some cases assimilation, can be found in Shida Kartli, the region with the highest concentration of Ossetians, probably a result of living in close proximity with the Georgian population. Knowledge of the Ossetian language, a key component in Ossetian self-identification, is found only among elderly people, who speak both Georgian and Ossetian equally well. In the majority of cases the younger generation also speak Ossetian but for communication with each other prefer Georgian. Some differences can be noticed from village to village, however. The Ossetian language, perhaps not surprisingly, is comparatively better preserved in the north of Kaspi district, in the villages bordering the Ossetian villages of Akhalkgori district (Pantiani, Vake and Goraka), and also in the oldest Ossetian villages in Gori district, Tsitelubani, Zadiantkari and Rene. The Ossetian language is also quite well preserved in the Ossetian villages of Kareli district, especially in the village of Elbakiani, which, probably thanks to its inaccessibility and isolated location, features comparatively well-preserved Ossetian cultural traditions. The village is also notable in that it offers a rare example of Georgian assimilation into an Ossetian cultural environment: the population of the village (the majority having the family name Elbakidze) who were originally from Racha, resettled to Kareli district in the mid-nineties century from the village of Tsera, and, by virtue of living in an Ossetian environment, came to identify as Ossetians, rather than with their historical Georgian origins.¹²

¹² This information is confirmed by Giorgi Melikishvili, Director of the Institute of History and Ethnography of the Academy of Science of Georgia in a research note issued after special research prepared on the request of the resident of Gori Kazbeg Elbakidze. The notice is dated 15 July 1991.

It must be noted that in a number of villages, despite the fact that the characteristics of Ossetian identity are completely lost, knowledge of Ossetian ancestry is still preserved. Villagers are also perceived as Ossetians by the neighbouring Georgians and other ethnic groups,¹³ though if the existing integration processes continue, it could well be that the Ossetian population of Shida Kartli will soon lose entirely its distinctive Ossetian identity. Besides the clear decline in the use of the Ossetian language, a tendency to replace Ossetian family names with Georgian ones can also be observed, a process that began during the Soviet period but accelerated in the early 1990s. While during the Soviet period this process was mainly peaceful and voluntarily, in the 1990s, as politics took a nationalistic turn, more forceful measures were taken to encourage people to change Ossetian family names into Georgian ones. Today in all districts of Shida Kartli the absolute majority of resident Ossetians have family names with Georgian endings (-shvili/-dze/-uri), though there are rare exceptions: Ossetian family names with Russian endings (-ov/-ova) can be found in the villages of Tsitelubani, Gamdlistskaro, Zadiantkari, Kintsvisi, Akhali Khurvaleti, Patara Khurvaleti and Sakadagiano, though they are few in number. These are people who for whatever reason did not change their family names or relatively new (1980s) settlers from South Ossetia, who did not undergo assimilation into the Georgian cultural environment.

A slightly different situation regarding the level of integration of Ossetians exists in other regions of Georgia. Ossetians living in Kazbegi district, for example, have preserved to a much greater extent a distinctive Ossetian identity, reflected in their knowledge of the Ossetian language, even amongst the younger generation, and their preservation of Ossetian family names. Furthermore, in some villages the level of knowledge of the Georgian language is very low. The situation is similar in the Ossetian village of Didi Mitarbi, Borjomi district, in terms of knowledge of the Ossetian language, though unlike in Kazbegi district, Ossetians in Borjomi possess Georgian family names. The contrast with the Ossetian population of Shida Kartli is perhaps explained by the isolated location of the Ossetian villages in Borjomi and Kazbegi and lower levels of contact with the Georgian population.

¹³ Another ethnic group present compactly and in big numbers in Shida Kartli are Azeris. They are found in the following villages: Tedotsminda, Levitana (Gori district), Sakadagiano, Khidiskuri, Akhalsopeli, Kaloubani, Perma and Changilari (Kaspi district).

In Kakheti region the ethno-linguistic integration/assimilation of Ossetians proceeds differently in different districts. In the districts of Akhmeta, Telavi, Kvareli and Gurjaani a large number of Ossetians have, in a process that started in the Soviet period, been culturally and linguistically assimilated into a Georgian environment. As in Shida Kartli, the Georgian language is here gradually replacing the Ossetian language and Ossetian family names have been preserved only in certain villages (Jugaani in Telavi district and Tsikaantseri in Kvareli district), and even then only in insignificant numbers. By contrast, in the Ossetian villages of Lagodekhi district, Ossetian ethnic identity and distinctiveness is comparatively very well preserved: this is true for six Ossetian villages in Lagodekhi district (all villages in which the Ossetian population exceeds 80%) – Areshperani, Zemo Bolkvi, Pona, Dona, Kvemo Khechili and Zemo Khechili – where the Ossetian language is not only preserved among the older generation but is also the language of communication among young people. In this regard, the villages of Areshperani and Pona are of particular interest. In both these villages, Ossetian family name endings are preserved. One of the reasons for the preservation of the Ossetian element in these villages is the practice, originating in Soviet times, of teaching the Ossetian language in the local schools. The Ossetian language is still taught in public schools in both villages, where it is obligatory for all grades (four hours a week for the first-fourth grades and three hours a week for the fifth-eleventh grades).

The existence of Ossetian language classes in these two Lagodekhi district villages is exceptional, however, and it is obvious that in the near future, unless special measures are taken, the knowledge and use of the Ossetian language will disappear amongst the majority of Georgia's Ossetian population. In many Ossetian villages, the level of integration or assimilation within the Georgian cultural environment is so deep that the need for the preservation of the Ossetian language is not firmly expressed by the Ossetian community; as a result, it is perhaps incumbent upon the government to initiate special measures for the protection of Ossetian cultural heritage, particularly in the areas of education and language.

Migration Processes in the Ossetian Community and the Influence of the Russian-Georgian War of 2008 on Ossetian-Georgian Relations

Mass migration of Ossetians from Georgia started in the late 1980s, prompted by ethnic conflict and the nationalist politics that emerged in Georgia at that time. During the 1990s the migration of Ossetians from Georgia touched practically all Ossetian villages. In the process of research it became clear that 10-50% of the population of every village had migrated since 1990s,¹⁴ the majority resettling in North Ossetia. As seen in the first section, the out-migration of Ossetians has continued into the current decade and the Ossetian population has significantly decreased since the 2002 census. Unlike in the 1990s, however, the reason for the more recent outflow of Ossetians was not compulsion or any sort of pressure. The main reasons for out-migration, as explained by migrants' relatives, are difficult social conditions and unemployment; one way for Ossetians to overcome these difficulties was by resettling to North Ossetia. Prior to the Georgian-Russian border closure of September 2006, Ossetian seasonal migration to North Ossetia could be observed, but following the border closure those seasonal migrants chose for the most part to remain permanently in North Ossetia. More generally, Ossetians chose to move to North Ossetia because almost all Ossetians living in Georgia have relatives in North Ossetia and it is easier for them to start a new life in an already familiar environment.¹⁵ Those who have no relatives in North Ossetia try to improve their living conditions by resettling to various big cities in Georgia, if they do not emigrate to other parts of Russia. A similar tendency can also be observed among the Georgian village population, who, like the Ossetians, escape from difficult rural conditions by migrating to urban areas, and especially to Tbilisi. During field research and in interviews with local inhabitants, it became clear that in all the villages we visited the total population had decreased by approximately 10% or more as compared to the data of the 2002 census.¹⁶ This decrease includes not only Ossetians, but also Georgians.

Today a subject of interest for Georgian society, as well as international organizations and observers, is the issue of whether Ossetians residing in Georgia are being discriminated

¹⁴ See Annex 1.

¹⁵ The presence of relatives across the border is mainly a result of resettlement in the 1990s.

¹⁶ See Annex 1

against or forced to leave as a consequence of the Russian-Georgian war of 2008. Concerns have been fuelled by the constant stream of contradictory reports (often from Russian sources) about oppression of Ossetians in Georgia on ethnic grounds, pressure on Ossetian communities and ethnically charged evictions. During our field work we specifically attempted to verify reports on cases of discrimination both among the Ossetian and Georgian population; however, in no cases could we find evidence of discrimination. The EUMM were similarly unable to confirm any such cases, as recorded in their observation report.¹⁷ Only in Kakheti were we told of several families that had left from the villages of Tsitsikaantseri, Areshperani, Argokhi, Pichkhovani and Koreti. However, the beginning of the military action was not cited as a major push factor and these families seem rather to have been acting on a previous decision to leave for North Ossetia, dating from before the war. In the village of Areshperani we also met two families who sold their houses in July 2008 (before the war started) and had been preparing to leave for Vladikavkaz, but as the result of the suspension of diplomatic relations between Russia and Georgia and ensuing difficulties with travel were forced to stay and find temporary shelter.

As far as interethnic relations are concerned, no significant changes have been observed since the war. On an everyday level, Georgian-Ossetian relations are as peaceful and friendly as they used to be. Representatives of both ethnic groups perceived the war in the same light – as an attempt by an aggressive Russian government to conquer and destroy an independent state. The only thing that differs in their approaches is the Ossetian's rather more moderate and cautious assessment of the subject of Ossetian relations with Russia. Until recently, Ossetians maintained both trading and social relationships across the Russian border. Thus, the deterioration of relations with Russia has meant for them both a decrease in income and increased difficulties in communicating with relatives and friends across the border.

However, though on an everyday level Georgian-Ossetian relations after the war continue to be close and friendly, the influence of war can clearly be felt in the atmosphere of cautiousness and fear that has settled on Ossetian communities. The majority of interviewees expressed uncertainty regarding the future; recalling the negative experience

¹⁷ EUMM Thematic Report on Ethnic Ossetian Minorities in GEO TAT and Ethnic Georgian Minorities in SO/ABK, February 2009.

of the early 1990s, a certain segment of the Ossetian population looks towards the future with trepidation and would not feel secure were military action to recommence. This uncertainty about the future strengthens the desire to resettle and unite with their relatives in North Ossetia. As a result, the trend for Ossetian out-migration will presumably increase even more in the event of a reopening of the border with Russia and the reestablishment of communication links.

ECMI action

The programmes of European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) in Georgia are generally aimed at promoting the integration of national minorities and enhancing their protection in society. Since 2004, when the Centre started its full-fledged activities in Georgia, its main priority has been to promote the integration of those regions compactly inhabited by national minorities, namely Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. Accordingly, the establishment of civil society networks has been supported, resulting in the emergence of the Javakheti Citizens' Forum in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Tsalka Citizens' Forum in Kvemo Kartli. With time these structures have developed into bridges connecting centre and region, becoming effective instruments for bringing local problems to the attention of the central government. The success of these fora has prompted ECMI to initiate similar activities in other regions, including regions with comparatively smaller populations of national minorities where the notion of civil integration receives little government attention. As seen in the previous chapters, there are fairly large Ossetian communities in Shida Kartli and Kakheti regions. In view of this fact, the European Centre for Minority Issues plans to support the development of national minority networks/councils in both these regions from 2010, in which not only Ossetians but also representatives of other ethnic groups will be encouraged to participate. Indeed, membership and active participation in such fora is especially important for the Ossetian community for despite the relatively large Ossetian population in these regions, levels of participation in civil society processes are extremely low; there are no Ossetian civil society organizations working for the preservation of their cultural distinctiveness. During meetings with the Ossetian community, ECMI has raised the issue of establishing such councils and the idea has been met with a great deal of interest and approval. Appropriately, such an initiative would also

comply with the concept and action plan for the integration of national minorities adopted by the government of Georgia in May 2009, according to which national minority councils should be established in six regions of Georgia (Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Kakheti, Shida Kartli, Imereti and Ajara). ECMI plans to actively cooperate with the Georgian government in the establishment and development of these councils.

Conclusion

The decline in the Ossetian population in Georgia has continued over the last decade. The population of 38,028 registered in the 2002 census had shrunk to an estimated 26,000 by 2009. This recent decrease in the Ossetian population is largely connected with migration to Russia caused by difficult social conditions rather than ethnic discrimination or oppression. Essentially the issue is one of difficult rural conditions; it is from the villages that most out-migration has occurred, generally to North Ossetia.

The level of integration among Ossetians residing in Georgia is generally very high, while part of the community has been assimilated. Unlike other national minorities, Ossetians have few difficulties regarding Georgian language skills. On the contrary, the problem is often an inadequate knowledge of the mother tongue and a lack of Ossetian-language education. Ossetian cultural and ethnic identity is comparatively better preserved in the villages of Lagodekhi district, as well as in the Ossetian villages of Kazbegi district and Borjomi.

Notwithstanding the stream of reports on the deterioration of Georgian-Ossetian relations after the Russian-Georgian war of 2008, no cases of mass outflow of Ossetians from Georgia or specific incidences of oppression in the aftermath of the conflict have been observed, though there have been several cases of resettlement to North Ossetia unconnected to the hostilities.

Outside the former autonomous region of South Ossetia, there has been no souring of Georgian-Ossetian relations since the war; both communities share similar attitudes to the conflict. Despite all this, however, there is a visible a sense of fear and anxiety in the Ossetian population regarding their future prospects in Georgia and many are poised, in the event of a reopened border and renewed communication with Russia, to reunite with relatives in North Ossetia.

Annex 1

Ossetian Assessment Chart

2002 census data on villages with an Ossetian population according to region:

Region	Number of villages
Shida Kartli	59
Kakheti	37
Samtskhe-Javakheti	1
Mtskheta-Mtianeti (excluding Akhalgori district) ¹⁸	27
Kvemo Kartli	5
Imereti	1
Racha-Lechkhumi	2
Total number of villages with an Ossetian population (excluding Akhalgori district)	132

¹⁸ According to the current administrative-territorial division of Georgia Akhalgori district is included in Mtskheta-Mtianeti region, but after the August War the Georgian authorities lost control over the entire Akhalgori district, which makes it impossible to assess the situation there. Consequently, data on Akhalgori district is excluded from the chart, and the data in this paper covers only villages under the *de facto* control of the Georgian Government.

1. Shida Kartli

According to the 2002 census data, Ossetians live in 59 villages in the Shida Kartli region - 16 in Gori district, 18 in Kaspi district, 18 in Kareli district, 7 in Khashuri district. Though the majority of them are ethnically mixed, these villages are predominantly inhabited by ethnic Georgians. According to ECMI's assessment, ethnic Ossetians live in substantial numbers in 17 villages in Shida Kartli (60% or more of village population).

Villages with substantial numbers of Ossetians:

Village	District	Population (2002 census)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (2002 census)	Population (ECMI estimate)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (ECMI estimate)	Origin	Language	Surnames	Emigration from late 1980s	Emigration after recent war
Kvemo Shavshvebi	Gori	225	42%	150-200	60-70%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Older Generation.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20 %. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Tsitelubani	Gori	610	61%	450-500	80-90%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 40%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Didi Khurvaleti	Gori	379	28%	100-150	60-70%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 40%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Natsreti	Gori	564	28%	450-500	60-70%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Gamdlistskaro	Kaspi	103	47%	80-100	60-70%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 50 %. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Zadiantkari	Kaspi	61	80%	30-50	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual	Mostly Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N.	Not recorded

							Young: prefer Georgian		Ossetia	
Zemo Rene	Kaspi	319	75%	250-300	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Nigoza	Kaspi	171	91%	100-150	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kvemo Rene	Kaspi	319	75%	200-250	80-90%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Karafila	Kaspi	109	91%	50-100	100%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Tvaurebi	Kaspi	140	85%	100-120	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: Early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Khviti	Kaspi	275	88%	250-170	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: Early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Goraka	Kaspi	86	76%	50-80	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: Early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Vake	Kaspi	116	73%	100-110	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: Early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Pantiani	Kaspi	104	81%	80-100	90%	Java/Akhalgori: Early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

							Georgian			
Elbakiani	Kareli	116	60%	80-100	100%	Racha, v. Tsera: Mid. 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 40% Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kintsvisi	Kareli	219	48%	150-200	60%	Java/Akhalgori early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

Other villages with an Ossetian population:

Village	District	Population (2002 census)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (2002 census)	Population (ECMI estimate)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (ECMI estimate)	Origin	Language	Surnames	Emigration from late 1980s	Emigration after recent war
Tsedisi	Gori	277	29%	200-250	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Mumlaantkari	Gori	208	26%	150-200	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 30%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Tsitsagiantkari	Gori	345	40%	300-340	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Gagluentubani	Gori	23	52%	abandoned	-	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.				

Gaichaantubani	Gori	2	100%	abandoned	-	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.				
Tkhinala	Gori	2	100%	abandoned	-	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.				
Ormotsi	Gori	53	68%	20-30	30%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 30%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Akhalsheni	Gori	177	29%	120-150	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 40%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Koshkebi	Gori	196	77%	150-190	50%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Tedotsminda	Gori	541	Not indicated	350-400	15-20%	Java/Akhalgori: early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10% Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Akhali Khurvaleti	Gori	63	70%	30-50	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 20% Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Patara Khurvaleti	Gori	199	26%	100-150	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Mostly Georgian	About 30% Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Sakadagiano	Kaspi	1095	-	Census correct	10%	Java/Akhalgori: early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young:	Mostly Georgian	Not recorded	Not recorded

							prefer Georgian			
Tskhaveri	Kaspi	33	82%	abandoned	-					
Saribari	Kaspi	35	91%	abandoned	-					
Chobalauri	Kaspi	231	29%	150-200	50-60%	Java/Akhalgori: early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Mrgvali Chala	Kaspi	278	68%	200-250	50%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 40%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Togoinatkari	Kaspi	90	37%	50-80	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Sakorintlo	Kaspi	193	24%	150-190	1-10%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 40%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Apnisi	Kareli	55	67%	20-30	1-10%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Okrosopeli	Kareli	31	94%	10-20	50%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Leleti	Kareli	227	49%	200-220	40%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young:	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

							prefer Georgian			
Trekhvi	Kareli	20	70%	abandoned	-					
Kvenaplavi	Kareli	199	57%	150-190	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Gvlevi	Kareli	312	50%	280-300	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kheoba	Kareli	298	38%	250-290	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Zguderi	Kareli	283	43%	150-200	Census correct	Racha, v. Tsera: Mid. 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Imerkhevi	Kareli	47	70%	20-30	50%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Ortubani	Kareli	54	69%	30-40	50%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Tkemlovana	Kareli	21	48%	abandoned	-					
Tsitelsopeli	Kareli	13	38%	abandoned	-					
Vedreba	Kareli	217	29%	180-200	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N.	Not recorded

							Young: prefer Georgian		Ossetia	
Krobani	Kareli	29	28%	abandoned	-					
Sanebeli	Kareli	233	27%	180-200	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kobesaantubani	Kareli	214	27%	180-200	Census correct	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Didi Keleti	Khashuri	60	48%	40-50	20%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Only Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Didi Khavleti	Khashuri	35	51%	20-30	40%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Only Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Imerliantkari	Khashuri	15	40%	10-15	30%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Only Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Didi Khalebi	Khashuri	28	54%	15-20	30%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Only Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Sartkela	Khashuri	21	38%	10-15	30%	Java/Akhalgori, early 19 th C.	Only Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Garta	Khashuri	37	57%	25-30	40%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Only Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kriskhevi	Khashuri	78	63%	50-70	50%	Java/Akhalgori: early 19 th C.	Only Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

2. Kakheti

According to the 2002 census data, Ossetians live in 37 villages of Kakheti region – 1 in Telavi district, 16 in Akhmeta district, 1 in Gurjaani district, 15 in Lagodekhi district, 3 in Sagarejo district, 1 in Kvareli district. According to ECMI's assessment, ethnic Ossetians live in substantial numbers in 12 villages (60% or more).

Villages with substantial numbers of Ossetians:

Village	District	Population (2002 census)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (2002 census)	Population (ECMI estimate)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (ECMI estimate)	Origin	Language	Surnames	Emigration from late 1980s	Emigration after recent war
Jugaani	Telavi	241	88%	120-150	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 30%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Argokhi	Akhmeta	329	92%	150-200	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	3 families, To N. Ossetia
Pichkhovani	Akhmeta	300	89%	150-200	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	2 families, To N. Ossetia
Koreti	Akhmeta	125	92%	50-100	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	1 family, To N. Ossetia
Kitaani	Gurjaani	333	83%	150-200	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer	Only Georgian	About 20%. Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

							Georgian			
Areshperani	Lagodekhi	218	68%	100-150	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G/Young: Bilingual	Only Ossetian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	2 families, To N. Ossetia
Zemo Bolkvi	Lagodekhi	422	85%	250-300	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G/Young: Bilingual	Ossetian/Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Pona	Lagodekhi	341	91%	100-150	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G/Young: Bilingual	Only Ossetian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	1 family, to N. Ossetia
Dona	Lagodekhi	84	84%	50	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G/Young: Bilingual	Ossetian/Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kvemo Khechili	Lagodekhi	124	94%	50-100	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G/Young: Bilingual	Ossetian/Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Zemo Khechili	Lagodekhi	90	92%	50-90	Census correct	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G/Young: Bilingual	Ossetian/Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Tsitsikaantseri	Kvareli	528	69%	300-350	80-90%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	1 family, to N. Ossetia

Other villages with an Ossetian population:

Village	District	Population (2002 census)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (2002 census)	Population (ECMI estimate)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (ECMI estimate)	Origin	Language	Surnames	Emigration from late 1980s	Emigration after recent war
Akhaldaba	Akhmeta	26	62%	abandoned	-					
Chareqauli	Akhmeta	15	80%	abandoned	-					
Dumasturi	Akhmeta	231	55%	100-150	10-15%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kvemo Khalatsani	Akhmeta	122	21%	50-100	1-5%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 40 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kutsakhta	Akhmeta	103	23%	20-50	1-5%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Arashenda	Akhmeta	180	74%	20-50	10-15%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Akhalsheni	Akhmeta	351	83%	100-150	20-30%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Akhnisvelebi	Akhmeta	209	61%	100-120	10-15%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly	Not recorded

							Young: prefer Georgian		to N. Ossetia	
Kojori	Akhmeta	38	68%	abandoned	-					
Osiauri	Akhmeta	8	88%	abandoned	-					
Naduqnari	Akhmeta	25	60%	abandoned	-					
Sabue	Akhmeta	24	88%	abandoned	-					
Chachkhrial a	Akhmeta	53	30%	abandoned	-					
Kevkhiani	Lagodekhi	96	52%	20-50	5-10%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kvemo Bolkvi	Lagodekhi	56	61%	40-50	40-50%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Khoshatiani	Lagodekhi	197	71%	100-150	50-60%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Gujareti	Lagodekhi	49	65%	20-30	10-15%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 30 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Verkhvis mindori	Lagodekhi	256	48%	150-200	20-30%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 40 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Lafniani	Lagodekhi	137	57%	50-100	20-30%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young:	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N.	Not recorded

							prefer Georgian		Ossetia	
Pichkisbogiri	Lagodekhi	123	77%	50-100	40-50%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kalkva-Namesrali	Lagodekhi	249	25%	150-200	5-10%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Ganatleba	Lagodekhi	293	22%	150-200	5-10%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Oturaani	Sagarejo	8	63%	abandoned	-					
Sasadilo	Sagarejo	104	27%	50-100	1-5%	Akhalgori/Kazbegi: Early 20 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Paldo	Sagarejo	25	32%	abandoned	-					

3. Samtskhe-Javakheti

According to the 2002 census data, Ossetians live in one village in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region, located in Borjomi district.¹⁹

Village	District	Population (2002 census)	Number of Ossetians in per cent 2002 census	Population (ECMI estimate)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (ECMI estimate)	Origin	Language	Surnames	Emigration from late 1980s	Emigration after recent war
Didi Mitarbi	Borjomi	48	38%	20-30	20%	Akhalgori/ Java: 19 th C.	Georgian/ Ossetian	Georgian	About 60%, mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

4. Mtskheta-Mtianeti

According to the 2002 census data, Ossetians live in 26 villages in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region – 3 in Mtskheta district, 18 in Dusheti district, 1 in Tianeti district, 4 in Kazbegi district.²⁰

Village	District	Population (2002 census)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (2002 census)	Population (ECMI estimate)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (ECMI estimate)	Origin	Language	Surnames	Emigration from late 1980s	Emigration after recent war
Ufureti	Mtskheta	43	53%	30-40	60%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Older Generation.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

¹⁹ In Borjomi District, the 2002 census indicates 10 additional villages marked as empty, though in the previous 1989 census all these additional villages appear as purely Ossetian. Most Ossetian villagers left the villages during ethnic cleansings carried out by Gamsakhurdia military units in early 1991.

²⁰ In Kazbegi District, the 2002 census indicates 17 additional villages as empty, though in the previous 1989 census all these additional villages appear as purely Ossetian. Presumably, most Ossetians in these villages left Georgia during the 1991-92 Georgian-Ossetian war.

Shankevani	Mtskheta	95	71%	70-80	Census correct	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20 %,	Not recorded
Chardakhi	Mtskheta	829	31%	780-800	Census correct	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 30 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Dzveli Sakramulo	Dusheti	42	21%	30-40	Census correct	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Chontili	Dusheti	13	85%	5-10	Census correct	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 30%, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Arboeti	Dusheti	12	83%	5-10	Census correct	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Older Generation.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 20 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Akhali Burguli	Dusheti	55	76%	30-40	90%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Karkushaani	Dusheti	78	27%	40-50	60%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Dzveli Burguli	Dusheti	32	38%	10	90%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Akhali Osebi	Dusheti	10	60%	5	90%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Akhali Kadoeti	Dusheti	76	93%	60-70	Census correct	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Older Generation.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Zemo Kodistskaro	Dusheti	53	70%	40-50	90%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

Zemo Shuakhevi	Dusheti	144	66%	120-140	90%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Lamovani	Dusheti	183	66%	160-180	Census correct	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Milistskaro	Dusheti	2	50%	2	Census correct	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kvemo Kodistskaro	Dusheti	30	93%	25-30	Census correct	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Older Generation.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kvemo Shuakhevi	Dusheti	193	56%	170-180	90%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Kvitkiristskaro	Dusheti	39	92%	25-30	Census correct	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Tsikhevdavi	Dusheti	144	60%	120-140	90%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Tsitsamura	Dusheti	62	77%	50-60	90%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Chasha	Dusheti	69	87%	Abandoned , Population moved to Odisi village		Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Older Generation.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Bochorma	Tianeti	188	52%	160-180	60%	Akhalgori: 18 th C.	Old G.: bilingual Young: prefer Georgian	Only Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Ganisi	Kazbegi	4	50%	Abandoned						
Kobi	Kazbegi	25	100%	10	Census	Akhalgori/N	Georgian/	Ossetian/	About 10 %,	Not recorded

					correct	Ossetia: 18 th C.	Ossetian	Georgian	Mostly to N. Ossetia	
Ukhati	Kazbegi	9	100%	2	Census correct	Akhalgori/N Ossetia: 18 th C.	Georgian/ Ossetian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Almasiani	Kazbegi	13	85%	5	Census correct	Akhalgori/N Ossetia: 18 th C.	Georgian/ Ossetian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

5. Kvemo-Kartli

According to the 2002 census data, Ossetians live in 5 villages in the Kvemo Kartli region, all of them located in Tetri Tskaro district.

Village	District	Population (2002 census)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (2002 census)	Population (ECMI estimate)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (ECMI estimate)	Origin	Language	Surnames	Emigration from late 1980s	Emigration after recent war
Alexeevka	Tetri Tskaro	105	15%	80-100	No Ossetians					
Arkhoti	Tetri Tskaro	20	90%	10-20	No Ossetians					
Chinchriani	Tetri Tskaro	29	72%	15-20	No Ossetians					
Gudarekhi	Tetri Tskaro	10	20%	5-10	No Ossetians					
Vake	Tetri Tskaro	12	17%	5-10	No Ossetians					

6. Imereti

According to the 2002 census data, Ossetians live in 1 village in the Imereti region, located in Sachkhere district.

Village	District	Population (2002 census)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (2002 census)	Population (ECMI estimate)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (ECMI estimate)	Origin	Language	Surnames	Emigration from late 1980s	Emigration after recent war
Jalabeti	Sachkhere	55	91%	40-50	Census correct	Java: 19 th C.	Ossetian/ Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

7. Racha-Lechkhumi Kvemo Svaneti

According to the 2002 census data, Ossetians live in 2 villages in the Racha-Lechkhumi region, both located in Oni district.

Village	District	Population (2002 census)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (2002 census)	Population (ECMI estimate)	Number of Ossetians in per cent (ECMI estimate)	Origin	Language	Surnames	Emigration from late 1980s	Emigration after recent war
Gadamshi	Oni	34	79%	25-30	Census correct	Java: 19 th C	Ossetian/ Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded
Chveberi	Oni	30	73%	25-30	Census correct	Java: 19 th C	Ossetian/ Georgian	Ossetian/ Georgian	About 10 %, Mostly to N. Ossetia	Not recorded

Annex 2

Number of Ossetians in Cities and District Capitals According to the 2002 Census

Tbilisi	10268
Gori	1500
Kaspi	694
Khashuri	349
Kareli	484
Mtskheta	235
Dusheti	50
Telavi	92
Kvareli	84
Gurjaani	72
Akhmeta	264
Borjomi	215
Bakuriani	344
Tetri Tskaro	61
Kutaisi	245
Batumi	142
Poti	62

Annex 3

Map of Ossetians in Georgia

