

South ossetia electricity distribution

BackgroundThe South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast consisted of the four districts of Tskhinvali, Akhagori (formerly Leningori), Java, and Znauri. Tskhinvali, the capital of the Oblast, is a half hour's drive north of Gori, the administrative centre of the Georgian region of Shida Kartli. In 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the Oblast declared its intention to raise its status to that of an Autonomous Republic within Georgia. The Georgian authorities annulled this decision and further revoked South Ossetia's status as an Autonomous Oblast. A conflict ensued during 1989-1991.

As a direct consequence of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, South Ossetia and adjoining regions of Georgia proper, including Gori, suffered substantial material damage, and over 60,000 individuals, mainly ethnic Ossetians, were displaced from their homes. Some 40,000 of these crossed into North Ossetia in the Russian Federation and became refugees. At the same time as the conflict, several violent earthquakes and aftershocks struck the region, causing significant damage, particularly in Java.

As early as the summer of 1992, an attempt was made to seek an amicable solution to the conflict and to establish an end to the hostilities. A cease-fire agreement was signed, leaving the authorities of the former Oblast in control of Tskhinvali, Java, Znauri and parts of Akhagori, and the central Government in control of Akhagori and several isolated ethnic Georgian villages. A peacekeeping force from the region was deployed. These forces consist of joint Russian, Ossetian and Georgian troops and are known as the Joint Peacekeeping Force or JPKF.

The JCC has three principal working groups: 1) On Military and Security Issues; 2) On Economic Issues; 3) On Refugees and IDPs. All four parties (i.e. Georgia, Russia, North Ossetia and South Ossetia) and the OSCE are represented on the JCC Working Groups. In addition, the JPKF is a participant on the working group on Military and Security Issues and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is a participant on the working group on refugees and IDPs.

No agreement has been reached concerning much needed rehabilitation projects in the region, since the two sides have failed to agree on the modalities of a EU grant of 2.5 million Euro. Moreover, at the JCC session in Moscow in July, both sides stood against the OSCE and EU in refusing to discuss the EU project to establish a freight and control centre in the zone of conflict.

On a political level, the Georgian and South Ossetian sides, through the JCC, in principle accepted OSCE's invitation to an expert meeting in Lisbon (or Vienna) in autumn 2002 for political talks, thus maintaining the momentum for the peace settlement process, following similar meetings in Vienna in 2000 and Bucharest in 2001. The Lisbon/Vienna talks will also include matters related to security and stability.

The JPKF, in cooperation with the local authorities, has continued the campaign on the voluntary handover of

illegally kept weapons. Thus far hundreds of small arms as well as munitions, grenades, landmines, and one 100mm gun have been collected.

During the time of the Soviet Union, the region was a relatively prosperous one. Its mines, factories, and farms supplied raw materials to markets across the Soviet Union, and the mountainous regions of Java were dotted with resorts and tourist bases. Since 1989, however, the collapse of the Soviet Union, compounded with effects of the ensuing civil war, and the powerful earthquake that hit the region all contributed to a grim economic climate. Poverty has become widespread and grows.

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