

“There Is no Way to Peace; Peace Is the Way.”

An Appeal to the Georgian Nation

Today, Georgian society lacks the opportunity to speak with Abkhaz people directly and vice versa.

For many years certain authorities have been leading Georgian society in the wrong way and they have constantly sought and continue to seek the avoidance of direct and open dialogues between the sides of the conflict. Consequently negotiations are being artificially hindered in the process. People are being persuaded that peace-talks are deadlocked and that starting a war is the only option left to bring about a final resolution to the conflict. Nonetheless, it is most unfortunate that this comes at a time when peace talks have not even actually started or have time to take root in our hearts or minds.

Unfortunately, however, politicians either do not fully implement their responsibilities or they are unable to work effectively. As a result of a less than full effort, which equals a “bad job” - the situation has become extremely tensed and society, like many years ago, will suffer the most at the expense of innocent lives lost or destroyed. There is one key question: why should our people become victims of political and the nasty games of politicians?

Georgian and Abkhazian people want only peace and honest dialogue. Why cannot those officials realize this desire as they make the lame claim that they are representing the will of the people?

Politicians should be obliged to obey the desire of those that they represent; they must do everything in their power to offer people some way out from a complicated situation. It is only by finding the proper way out from a stressed situation will we overcome the deadlock, and then be able to start a new phase of Georgian-Abkhazian relations.

Today, we know much more what is happening in distant countries and continents. However, at the same time we do not know anything about each other. An information war is on-going against Georgian and Abkhazian people, and this has been continued for many years already. People received completely filtered information from the media and the leadership. Moreover, in most they are being delivered disinformation. Everyday, TV Companies are releasing a cycle of false and misleading news. They are endlessly creating so-called enemies for us. Unfortunately, many people, especially those who do not have alternative source of information, start to believe such black PR that is well-disguised as news. There are very few who can fully understand and appreciate that most of the delivered information is either completely, or at least partially false and misleading. Everybody should carefully consider the source and motivation before they believe in any story about the zone of conflict from most sources.

It is time to finish with the unabated policy of contradictions that is being so relentlessly used by the government. It is time to put an end to the confrontation that will only result in the violation of human rights of peaceful citizens.

We call upon everybody to respect and pay attention to each other and our shared needs. Georgian and Abkhaz people living in conflict zones have right to live and develop in a peaceful environment that is free from war.

There is a question how attentive and respectful Georgian Society is towards the Abkhaz nation? Are we sincere in our statements when we claim that we want to live together with Abkhaz people, and even when we cannot understand each other? We need to go beyond of Abkhaz people being considered as guests from the North “who live on our holy land and that they should be grateful for existing here and breathing our air.”

Many people detested when the Bible was translated into the Abkhazian language. Maybe, however, we should find out who was actually responsible for burning the Abkhazian State Archive and Scientific-Research Institute in Sokhumi to the ground in the early 90s. Let us come to terms and confess what we have done to save Abkhazian language and its rich culture. How much money we have spent in that direction? What have we done to really resolve the conflict? How can the fact be justified when in 2007 the budget of the Georgian Defense Ministry was 1, 494 billion GEL while the budget for the administration of the State Minister for Conflict Resolution (now Ministry of Reintegration) was just a mere 610 thousand GEL? What are we doing to maintain Abkhazia as Abkhazian and to develop the Abkhazian language?

Maybe we should turn our attention to why Abkhaz people are ready to seek help from the Russian Federation in the first place. They have turned to Russia, a nation which Abkhaz people have fought so severely several times in the 19th century. Russia, which exiled the majority of Abkhaz people to foreign land and killed off another part of their nation. Today nobody speaks about the genocide of Abkhaz people by Russia. Why? Today, we are not giving any other opportunity to Abkhaz people except Russian Federation. Descendants of Muhajirs are still refugees in foreign lands. Does anybody remember about them in Georgian society? Does anyone want to understand their problems and to open negotiations about their eventual return to their homeland? Are we Georgians ready for that? Are we prepared for the return of our own Georgian IDPs to Abkhazia? Or it is just another political game and only an integral part of some PR campaign that starts when somebody finds self-interest?

Are we asking any mother whether or not she wants to send her son to participate in this brother killing war? Such a war will have no winners, as all will be defeated in the end. This war will be the final chapter for the Abkhaz nation and it will bring about a final disaster for the Georgian state. Can we recall that nearly 5 % of Abkhaz people died in the last terrible war? And if the same happens again, the real winners of the war will be those who will follow after the hostilities and settle in the houses of Abkhaz and Georgian people who once lived together in Abkhazia.

Those who are unaware about war are the same people who are eager for war. However, they cannot or will not tell you who and why are we fighting. Why should we believe what they say and allow us to be provoked by the force which supplied Georgian and Abkhazian sides with arms in the last bloody war. It is this terrible force that only wants us to kill each other for their blood-soaked profits. And even now they are enthusiastically supplying us with weapon as they dream how we will kill each other in unabated carnage.

Much effort has gone into making us grow accustomed to hearing false information about each other from TV. We have been conditioned and taught to get used to living in a state of constant tension, fear and terror. We have grown used to acts of terrorism and staged performances on a constant basis. We were made to get used to live in the virtual reality that is neither war nor peace.

And actually what does the very famous slogan mean: “We Will Get Abkhazia Back”? Shall we get Abkhazian Land or Abkhaz People back? And do we need to return to the country that is identified with blood and death? What does Georgian society want - to seek revenge or to find the path to normal and close relations with the Abkhaz people?

And it is time to ask ourselves once more what do we want in Abkhazia-War or Peace? If we want war it is clear who we will be afterwards. And if we want peace then we should be now thinking about each other and our shared future.

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Maybe it will be better if we actually apologized to each other and start forgiving past mistakes and mutual sins. Perhaps it will be better to be more sensitive about each other's pains; make a concerted effort to understand one another. We should say once and forever that Georgian people will never start a war with the Abkhazian people. In addition, we IDPs from Abkhazia will promise that we will never urge our government to use military force to bring about our return to Abkhazia despite whatever difficulties we now face.

We know what the meaning of defeat, betrayal, and if we want good for the Abkhaz people, than we should never wish them to be defeated. We, Georgian and Abkhaz nations will win by all means and the victory will be ours together and this does not mean the defeat of one over the other.

Why is it so difficult for two nations to come together and to find common ways for shared interests?

The war initially starts in our minds and then follows in reality. The war that started years ago continues to this day. The hostilities must end someday and it will end initially in our mind. The war symbolizes defeat from the very onset.

We value peace as we choose only the path of peace. We cannot accept war, the appeal for the war and all the war-related propaganda: gun-blazing and military rhetoric. War can seem just and generous only at first sight.

Georgian and Abkhazian people demand only peace and open dialogue between the sides.

We appeal to all, including politicians, militants, media, civil society, religious organizations, and international bodies to come together and garner all their resources in bringing a stop to hostilities, rapid militarization and the never-ending propaganda of war.

Georgian and Abkhaz people have nowhere to go. Our children will continue living here after hundred years and they will maintain their language, culture, dignity and history.

Our peoples have a future and let's not destroy it!

Human Rights Center (HRIDC)
War Resisters' International – Georgian Section

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