



## IMPACT STORY



# ACCELERATING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN GEORGIA

Photo: Ministry of Defence of Georgia

“For me, 19 November 2020 marked 13 years of carrying the Georgian flag on my shoulders and bearing the huge responsibility in my heart and mind for my country and my cause,” said Major Zoia Kurtanidze, 34, who since 2007 has been serving in the Georgian Defence Forces.

Major Kurtanidze obtained her first military rank of officer in June 2008 and began her career as an engineer-operator at the air defence’s artillery branch when the August War, or Russo-Georgian War, broke out in 2008. “I went to war as a combat officer and came back with a lot of experience. After three years [in air defence], I became interested in HQ operations. I wanted to learn more, get an education in other areas and use my combat experience in making military decisions,” she explained.

UN Women has been working with the Ministry of Defence on mainstreaming gender in the security sector reform process and is supporting the implementation of the National Action Plan of Georgia for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security under the project “Accelerating Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Georgia,” generously funded by the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund of the British Government. The project’s focus is to enhance women’s full, equal, direct and meaningful participation in peace and security processes and to increase duty-bearers’ accountability in the implementation of

**Photo above:** Major Zoia Kurtanidze serves in the Georgian Defence Forces and is a gender advisor in the Ministry of Defence.

the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda in Georgia by addressing challenges at the individual, community, institutional and policy levels.

## PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

The UN Women project “Accelerating Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Georgia” (2020-2024) is generously supported by the **Conflict, Stability and Security Fund** of the **British Government** and is implemented in partnership with the **DCAF - Geneva Center for Security Sector Governance** and key security sector partners including the **Ministry of Defence of Georgia**, and other government entities responsible for the implementation of the commitments under the **National Action Plan of Georgia for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security** (NAP 1325).

UN Women has been providing technical support to the Government of Georgia in the development, coordination, and implementation of NAP 1325 while supporting the **Public Defender’s Office** and **civil society partners** to conduct external monitoring of its progress.

In May 2021, the Government of Georgia launched the drafting process of the fourth NAP 1325 with the support of UN Women.

“The military is a male-dominated field, so the experience and paths taken by women like me matters a lot for other women and girls,” shared Major Kurtanidze, adding, “With this lifestyle, I want to defy obsolete stereotypes that prevent women from pursuing military careers and achieving success in this field.” She noted that today the Ministry of Defence is exemplary as it prioritizes gender equality and the successful implementation of projects focused on women’s empowerment. In 2011, Georgia was the first country in the region to adopt a national action plan on Resolution 1325 and has since been working to meet the resolution’s commitments. “There is still a long way to go but achieving gender equality is an important part of the Ministry’s long-term plans, which is quite promising,” explained Major Kurtanidze.

**“I want to defy obsolete stereotypes that prevent women from pursuing military careers and achieving success in this field.”**

—MAJOR ZOIA KURTANIDZE

Currently, Major Kurtanidze serves as a career manager at the Ministry of Defence’s Military Personnel Management Centre, where she assists personnel with qualified advice for the planning and advancement of their careers in the military, and where she acts as gender advisor for the Gender Equality Monitoring Group. In July 2021 she obtained her master’s degree in gender studies from Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University. “Serving my country makes me proud, and I would like to be proud of being a gender equality advocate as well—proud that my contribution may help my peers or future military servicewomen to serve in the Georgian army without gender-based restrictions.”

The UN Women project also has a special focus on the needs and interests of internally displaced and conflict-affected women and youth. This is to address the protracted internal displacement due to the conflicts, which since the early 90s have turned nearly 300,000 Georgian citizens into internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia. Therefore, strengthening the capacities of women—especially young women and those in IDP settlements and communities near the Administrative Boundary Line—while harnessing their activism in the implementation of the WPS Agenda is central to the project’s activities.

“Available data and evidence show that integrating women and gender considerations into the peace and security

## WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN GEORGIA

The protracted nature of conflicts in Georgia and prolongation of their settlement phase has created unfavourable grounds for achieving durable and sustainable peace and development in the country. Altogether, these conflicts, including the one in 2008, have turned nearly **300,000** Georgian citizens into internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia. The constraints caused by the fragility of the unresolved conflict are extremely challenging for the IDPs and conflict-affected populations who live near the Administrative Boundary Line. Returning to areas of origin is not an option for the majority of IDPs.

UN Women has been systematically supporting the Government of Georgia to fulfil its commitments to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through the three iterations of the **National Action Plan (NAP) of Georgia for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security** (2012-2015, 2016-2017 and 2018-2020), and under the framework of the 2020-2024 project will support the development of the fourth NAP 1325 to ensure that it prioritizes the meaningful participation of grass-roots organizations, internally displaced and conflict-affected women and youth, as well as local governments.

processes helps promote democratic governance and long-term stability,” said Tamar Sabedashvili, UN Women Country Representative in Georgia ad interim, who also noted the setbacks of the COVID-19 pandemic on gains made in recent decades. “There may not be a better time than now to reduce pre-existing and persisting gender inequalities and accelerate efforts for women’s broader and meaningful representation and participation in forging transformative change and sustaining peace in Georgia.”

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