

# **Annex E.5.4**

## **Public**

# Georgia – Russia War, August 2008

November 11  
**2008**

These document contains interviews of with the victims and witnesses of the war crimes and crimes against humanity that allegedly took place during the Georgia Russia war in August 2008 and in the period following the secession of the hostilities

**Preliminary  
Findings**



Interviews about

War crimes and crimes against humanity in

Western and Central Georgia

During and after the armed conflict in August 2008

Based on field work 4 – 12 September, and 15 to 25 October

The Georgian Human Rights Center

The Austrian Helsinki Association

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee

Caucasia Centre for human rights and conflict studies



# **I Interviews from September 2008**

**(conducted by Aage Borchgrevink, Joachim Frank, Alik Mnatskanyan, Simon Papuashvili  
and Ramaz Rekkhviashvili)**

Interview: 1AaB, Gori, 6/9/08

Name: David Gyunashvili

Born. 14.11.1961 in Gori

Place of residence: Gori, Karaleti

Phone number: (to Arto, his son) 898 502007

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/hostage taking/inhumane treatment

Supporting evidence: yes (ICRC document, SMS message, photo of shrapnel wounds), HRC video footage of this interview

Other witnesses: Rezo Shavkani (app 25 years, from Gori), Gogita Kotuashvili (app 35 years, from Dirbi), Niko Darguashvili (app 59, from Megvrekisi)

Further steps: Get the medical documents from his examination in Tbilisi, ask him for drawing of third base detention center and SIZO

I arrived in Java on 23.07 for work. I am a construction worker and engineer. I was together with three other Georgians (see names above). On 06.08 Kokoyty ordered women and children out. We saw the buses pass us on the road. On 07 and 08.08 the bombing started.

I was working on the roof of a house, in the village of Sakire, right outside Java. About a kilometer away there was a power station. A plane attacked the power station with one bomb. Then it turned and dropped a second bomb on the village of Sakire, close by where I was working. I was wounded with shrapnel in the left leg. An ossetian child was also wounded in the attack, a boy of 8 or 10. I think it was a Georgian plane.

Our Ossetian boss advised us to run away, as both he and we were in danger. He explained how we could get back to Satchkere, Georgia on mountain paths and byways. We crossed two mountains and a river, but chose the wrong tracks and ended up in the village Znauri, where there are Ossetians. We were detained by local ossetians. They wanted to kill us, but women in the village said no.

A group of uniformed Ossetians arrived. They took us away in a big car, gave us water and food. We were blindfolded and taken to a pit in the ground somewhere. A guy wanted to kill us since his relative was killed, but the others refused. A man in a black uniform spoke to us in Georgian. He explained that we would be kept as hostages for exchange and had nothing to fear.

The next day we were taken to the camp of the 3<sup>rd</sup> brigade in Tskhinvali, blindfolded during transport. The local population wanted to hurt us, but the camp commander ordered his men to shoot any one who entered the camp, in order to protect us. There was any drinking water, but we got some water from the river, although it was muddy. The commander's nickname was 'Cobra', his accent was Ossetian.



We were taken to the SIZO, where the other hostages were. At the most, there were 170 people there -- mostly older people, but also women and children -- in a space which measured perhaps 10 by 10 meters. It was so crowded we could hardly stand, we slept in shifts. We got some bread and cereals, and tea without sugar. A doctor came and looked at my leg. The doctor and his colleague were attentive and gave me good treatment during the 18 days I stayed there.

There was a young boy of about 12 there. He got cookies and special attention from the guards. [Q: The government has stated that there was a case of rape there?] There was a girl of about 22, Shorena, who was regularly taken outside the cell for interrogation. She was away for an hour or two, and when she came back she seemed upset and wouldn't talk to anyone. An Ossetian policeman was also detained there. [Q: Torture?] No cases of torture as far as I know. From inside the SIZO we could hear the independence celebrations in the town, shooting, etc. I was interviewed by officers from the Russian General Prosecutor about one week before I was released. I think all of us were interviewed by them.

After I got better I was sent to work outside, cleaning up Tskhinvali. There was rubble and many bodies there.

I was released on 27 August. I had developed lung inflammation in prison, and was examined by doctors in Tbilisi. While detained I'd given the Ossetians three phone numbers to my relatives and to a friend of my son. I learned that he'd received the following message sent from my mobile: 'Zura perezvoni na etot nomer v Tskhinvali. Tebya vizivaet Dato Giunashvili on zalozhnik'. Later there was a phone conversation, and the demanded many ossetians in exchange for me.



Interview no: 2AaB. Place: Gori, tent camp

Name: Tamara Abramishvili

Age:

Place of residence: Variani

Phone number: 899889909

Type of interviewee: background information

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/destruction of civilian property

Supporting evidence: (Ask Russian Justice Initiative)

Interpreter: Soso Papuashvili

Other witnesses: (Ask Russian Justice Initiative)

Further steps:

I left Variani on 7<sup>th</sup> August, because of bombardments that morning. The bombardments continued after that date, as far as I know. There were Georgian positions near the village. I think 2 people were killed and 14 were wounded in the bombings, civilians, and I suppose it was done by the Russians. A few men remained in Variani, but I don't know what happened to them. There is a lot of UO in the village now.



Interview no: 3AaB. Place: Kindergarten No 2, Gori Time: 7 September 2008

Name: Jasha Toroshelidze

Age: 72 years old Born

Place of residence: Nuli

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Crimes: theft, assault, destruction of property, forcible displacement

Supporting evidence:

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Other witnesses: Margarita (his sister)

Further steps:

I was living ok in Nuli. Had 4 cows and some fields. Then my son died, he was a soldier. Apparently he died while clearing landmines in Kodori on 2 July. I just learned about this a few days ago.

I can't remember the date, but when the war started I stayed with my cows, while most of the neighbours fled. About a week later Ossetian paramilitaries arrived in the village. They drove various large and small vehicles. They were in uniforms without any insignias or distinctive marks. They approached me in the field, wanted to take my cows. I resisted, and they beat me with their rifle butts. They told me to leave, saying that their orders were to clean the village of Georgians: "You leave or you die." Then they poured gasoline on my house and burnt it. I still wanted to stay, but they threatened to kill me. So I left, on foot. Together with my sister, Margarita (who's 75) I walked to Kareli. My son had saved some 2000 Euro. He had hid it somewhere in the house, but the money burnt with the house. They also took my son's tractor, a DT75 Soviet model. We never saw any Russian soldiers, except once a Russian soldier searched my house and cut open a big bag with onions to see what was inside.





Interview no: 4AaB. Place: Kindergarten no 2, Gori, Time: 7 September

Name: Archil Razmadze

Age: 37 years old Born

Place of residence: Disevi

Phone number: 855419842

Type of interviewee: victim/witness

Crimes: destruction of property, forcible displacement

Supporting evidence:

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Other witnesses: Archil's father and mother were eyewitnesses

Further steps: Interview the mother and father

The Georgian soldiers staying in our village at the start of the war, said we had won. On 12<sup>th</sup> (or 11<sup>th</sup>?) I fell asleep, thinking we were safe. Then at 23 or 24 PM I woke up, and Russian soldiers were in the village. I fled out the backdoor with my family, didn't even manage to empty the safe.

We fled to Gori, but my father and mother stayed by the village, sleeping in caves at night. Four nights ago I walked back up there with bread. They told me that together with the Russian troops came Ossetian paramilitaries. They burned and looted the houses. My grandmother is about 90. She was chased out of her house in her nightgown, and watched it burn from the street. Most of the (Georgian) village is now burnt/severely damaged.

We had four houses in our family. They were all burnt. We had many cars and tractors, they were all taken. We still have the papers, dug down in the garden. My Kamaz was taken, another 6 wheel lorry, two Belarusian tractors and 4 smaller tractors. Many expensive things were taken from or destroyed in the houses.

My father buried our neighbour Nato Okropiridze. She was app 65 years old, I think. My father said she died trying to extinguish the fire in her house. Her husband was trying to put out the flames in another house, while she tried to save their home.

Our cows were taken yesterday. Somebody came to my mother in the field, threatened her so she ran away and took our animals.



Interview no: 5AaB. Place: Kindergarten no 10, Gori

Name: Neli Dadianidze

Age: 37 Born

Place of residence: Shertuli

Phone number: 899778760

Type of interviewee: Victim/background information

Crimes: Destruction of property

Supporting evidence:

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Other witnesses: Her husband

Further steps: identify other witnesses from the village

The Georgian army was stationed in our village. There was shelling in the area from about 5<sup>th</sup>, and we hid in the basement. On 8<sup>th</sup> we (husband, 3 daughters and mother in law) left for Gori by car.

I returned to the village for a visit yesterday, my husband's there today. Our house was burnt. I don't know if it burnt from bombing, shelling or arson. I don't know when it burnt. It seems all of the houses in the village were robbed, and at least five were burnt.

I don't know if there were any witnesses.



Interview no: 6AaB. Place: Kindergarten no 10, Gori Time: 8 September

Name: Manana Gogaladze-Ivanishvili

Age: 44 ys old Born

Place of residence: Dvani

Phone number: 898534942

Type of interviewee: Victim/background information

Willing to testify (Y/N): yes

Crimes: Killings, destruction of property, looting

Supporting evidence: Mobile phone footage of destruction

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Other witnesses: Temur Kopadze, Nunu Bezhanishvili-Bortishvili, Ragnar Skre (Journalist who went there on September 11<sup>th</sup>)

Further steps:

Before the war, there were 2 Georgian checkpoints in Dvani. On 6<sup>th</sup> the shelling started. On 7<sup>th</sup> the Georgian soldiers asked us to leave. We went by bus to Khashuri, then here.

I went back again four days ago. My house had been robbed, the doors and windows broken. But it was not burnt or destroyed. But the looting continues even now, animals are taken, etc.

The main crimes in the village was burning and looting. I think about 35 houses burnt. After the Russian advance, two guys were killed in our village (by Ossetians), Ervandi Bezhanishvili and Vasil Mekarishvili. I think Ervandi was killed (shot) trying to run away, while Vasil was shot when he refused to kiss the Russian flag. People in the village told me this.



Interview no: 7AaB. Place: Kindergarten no 10 Time: 8<sup>th</sup> September

Name: Imedi Kapanadze

Age: 34 years old Born

Place of residence: Nikozi

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/background information

Willing to testify (y/n): yes

Crimes: Destruction of property, theft

Supporting evidence:

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Other witnesses: Her husband

Further steps:

I fled on the 7<sup>th</sup> with our two children (16 and 11 years old). My husband stayed on until the 12<sup>th</sup>, and fled together with the Georgian army. My husband has gone back to visit the village, some people remained there during the war. He says that about ten houses have been destroyed by bombings and arson. My own house is ok, only the windows are broken by bomb blasts. Two cows are taken. The villagers say that Russian soldiers killed them in the shed.

If the Russians went away, the Ossetians wouldn't terrorize us. On the other hand, the Russian soldiers give food to the villagers that remained.



Interview no: 8AaB. Place: Kindergarten no 10, Gori Time: 8<sup>th</sup> September

Name: Nunu Mosiashvili

Age: 37 years old

Place of residence: Megvrekisi

Phone number: 855361740

Type of interviewee: Background information

Willing to testify (y/n): yes

Crimes: theft

Supporting evidence:

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Other witnesses: Husband

Further steps:

I fled on the 10<sup>th</sup>, when Georgians were still in the region. Some of the villagers stayed in the forest around the village, and observed what happened there. They say that some of the old people were beaten, for instance our neighbor Lili (app 70), whose house was looted. Ossetian gangs looted many of the houses, but I don't think any houses were burnt.



Interview no: 9AaB. Place: Kindergarten 16, Gori Time: 8<sup>th</sup> September

Name: Nikolaos Tshulukhadze

Age: 74 years old, Born

Place of residence: Kurta

Phone number: (899269586, belongs to wife Sophio Kandelaki)

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness/background information

Willing to testify (y/n): Yes

Crimes: Forced relocation, theft, assault

Supporting evidence:

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Other witnesses: Sophio Kandelaki (wife, 72 years), Ana Kandelaki (wife of NT's brother), both stayed in Kurta with NT until the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Both corroborated NT's testimony.

Further steps:

Most people in the village left on 8<sup>th</sup>. The war started on 9<sup>th</sup>, but we stayed in the village until 22<sup>nd</sup>, as we had animals. On the 9<sup>th</sup>, the Russians entered. There were many detachments, even Chechens, who were regular soldiers. There were also paramilitary formations of different nationalities. Some were Russian speakers from the North Caucasus, some were Ossetians – they spoke Georgian. One guy said he was from Java. Some had uniforms, some not. These people looted the houses.

Between 9 and 20 we hid in the basement, in the beginning there were still bombings. On 11<sup>th</sup> our neighbor (Ksenije Tsjiborov-Khotshishvili, ethnic Ossetian, married to a Georgian, app age 70) was killed during bombardment, probably by accident. We think it was an air defense (?) rocket. We found her and wanted to bury her, but the Ossetian paramilitaries came, put her in the house and burnt it. They threatened us, and made jokes: Go to Saakashvili for help, this is our land, etc. They took our animals, and everything from the house: TV, fridge, etc. They took our tractor.

During this time an Ossetian neighbor, Angelina Tedeev, app 55 years old, who'd left for Tskhinvali in the beginning of the war, returned to the village to look for her house. I can't remember the exact date. We met her when she fled again. She was in a terrible condition. Her face was covered with burn marks, she had haematomas and her dress was torn. She told us that paramilitaries had caught her. They beat her, she said, tied her to her bed by the arms, and put the house on fire. Sparks fell on her face from the roof, but she managed to free herself and run away. This is what she told us, before she warned us against staying in Kurta and left.



They entered our yard, poisoned our well with chemicals, and told my wife “grandma, drink!” Then they told her to undress. She said she was 72. They answered, well, bring the girls. One of them took an axe, pushed me to the ground and was about to strike me. My wife struggled with him and the other paramilitaries. They left without killing me. It was on 21 August. In the evening they returned to take the chickens from the hen house. We left the village at night on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. We could see that most of the houses were burnt by then. A Russian BTR drove us to the checkpoint by Brotsleti. Next day, Russian medics brought us to the village itself and from there we went to Gori.

Interview no 10AaB. Place: Kindergarten no 16, Gori Time: 8<sup>th</sup> September

Name: Giorgi Kasaradze

Age: Born: 13.07.1961 in Tskhinvali

Place of residence: Achabeti

Phone number: (use the number of Sophio Kandelaki, from Kurta, 899269586)

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Willing to testify (y/n): Yes

Crimes: Hostage taking, forced labour, assault, inhuman treatment

Supporting evidence: Red Cross ID, photo of damaged finger

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Other witnesses: See interview no AaB1, also the two men from his village who were detained with him on the 11<sup>th</sup>

Further steps: Identify and interview the two other men, get medical documents from his check-up in Gori hospital

Most of the villagers left in the period from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of August, on byroads to the south. I stayed with two other guys and some old people. On 11<sup>th</sup> a group of Ossetians came in an UAZ. They detained me and the two guys, at gunpoint, and brought us to the SIZO in Tskhinvali. They did not beat us.

There were about 80 people there, and every day there came more. I stayed there for 18 days, during which time I was beaten, including with rifle butts, kicked and humiliated. I had bruises and wounds on my face and hands. They beat me in the kidneys. [He had visible damage on finger, broken nail, which we photographed] There were only seven cells in the SIZO, very little room and some people slept in the corridor.

Red cross came, gave us medical assistance and blankets. I hardly slept during my time there, there was no place to sleep and conditions were awful. Only one toilet for all of us, both women and men.

From the beginning we were called out for labor duty. We buried people and cleaned up the streets of Tskhinvali. On 12<sup>th</sup> they took ten or fifteen of us out in the morning. Two policemen with guns led us out in the street. People spat at us. Spades and shovels were in a car, we received breathing masks, plastic gloves and were set to bury bodies. They were undressed and bloated. I don't know whether they were civilian or military, Georgian or Ossetian, but probably they were Georgian soldiers. In one day alone, on 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>, we buried 48 bodies. They were in plastic bags, and put in coffins. We buried them in one place in the suburbs. I don't know the address.





Only Ossetian police were dealing with us. I didn't see any Russian soldiers. I was not interrogated by officers from the Russian General Prosecutor, nor by anyone else. There were no messages sent to my relatives. In the end, 29 August, we were exchanged. I think there were 82 of us. I had pains in my stomach after being incarcerated, and I was brought by ambulance to Gori hospital for a medical check up. They gave me an injection there, and later I was interrogated by Georgian officials.



Interview no 11AaB. Place: Kindergarten no 13, Gori Time: 8<sup>th</sup> September

Name: Leidi Edisherashvili

Age: 60 Born

Place of residence: Tirdznisi

Phone number: 898913959 (belongs to a neighbour/friend Merab Buchukuri)

Type of interviewee: Victim/background information

Willing to testify (y/n):

Crimes: Killing, destruction of property and theft

Supporting evidence: See materials from Joachim and Alik after their visit to Tirdznisi

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Other witnesses: Tariel Samadashvili (age 62, husband)

Further steps: See materials from Joachim and Alik after their visit to Tirdznisi

When bombardments started on 7<sup>th</sup>, most people fled the village. We stayed until 11<sup>th</sup> when the Russian tanks came. We lived on the main road in the village and left in only our clothes. We went to Tbilisi, were told to go to Gori, were refused at the tent camp and ended up here.

Some neighbours stayed in the village. They told us that our animals were stolen and our house burnt. A neighbour told us that a guy came in a Niva jeep. He threw an incendiary grenade into our house. That man burnt at least three houses. We were also told that people were killed in the village, but we don't know their names except a deaf mute old woman, Natela Kaiderashvili (app 65 y o), The neighbors buried here. Unexploded ordnance killed one person and maimed a second.

We heard that about 30 houses were burnt, including those of Gia Buchukuri and Nikolos Khmiadashvili.

Interview no 12AaB. Place: Kindergarten 13; Gori Time: 8<sup>th</sup> September

Name: Irma Makhniashvili

Age: 37 y o Born

Place of residence: Vanati (Patara Liakhvi valley)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: (Victim) background information

Willing to testify (y/n): Yes

Crimes: Destruction of property, looting

Supporting evidence:

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

I was in the garden, with my mother, looking at the shelling in the morning on 7 or 8 August when it started. We left immediately, by car, with another family – almost in panic. It was a mixed village, and the Ossetians left, too.

We went to Gori, but some stayed behind, in the woods. We were in contact with the wife of my uncle, Nadia Ochiashvili (app 60). She told us that different cars came, over a period of I don't know how many days, with people who burnt houses. First they burnt the school where I taught Russian, which was just by my own house.



Interview no 13AaB. Place: Tkviavi Time: 9 September

Name: Zaza Razmadze

Age: Born 30.09.1972

Place of residence: Tkviavi

Phone number: 899414508

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness/

Willing to testify (y/n): yes

Crimes: Killings, destruction of property, attempted killings, looting

Supporting evidence: photographs, other witnesses

Interpreter: Alik Mnatskanyan

Other witnesses: His father (name??), (neighbor)Badri Melitauri (see interview no AaB14), Tengiz and Zaza Okruashvili (also from Tkviavi, see interview no AaB15)

Further steps: Speak to the wife of Misha Melitauri, identify and interview the neighbors Zaza Razmadze was visiting at the time the

When the others fled, I stayed in the village with my father. On 12<sup>th</sup> August I was visiting my neighbors across the road from my own house, on the main road of the village. Then the cars came. There were four persons that entered our yard. They were in uniforms, armed with automatic weapons. They did not have the white strips around the arms, and no insignias on the uniforms. They spoke Ossetian. In the next yard there were five other guys, busy looting and burning. All in all, they burnt our house, the one next to it and a third house, behind the second one. I thought my father was still in our house, that's why I didn't run away. The men in uniforms saw me, and started shooting, so I ran.

[His father told us that "he had run away in the other direction, and was hiding app 300 meters away, across the fields. There was a lot of shooting, so I stayed on the ground. There was no damage to the house before the paramilitaries came (from bombing/shelling) and we had good relations to our Ossetian neighbors. But now, how can I repair this?"]

[The house of the Razmadzes' house was seemingly completely destroyed by the fire. Although the walls were still standing, they were cracked and damaged, seemingly beyond repair. The roof had partly collapsed – see photographs]

While my father and I managed to get away, our neighbors Misha and Shakro Melitauri were killed by those guys. Misha's wife survived, she managed to hide, and together with her I buried the two men in the yard of their house. At that time they had been lying dead on the veranda for five days



Interview no 14AaB. Place: Tkviavi Time: 9<sup>th</sup> September

Name: Badri Melitauri

Age: Born

Place of residence: Tkviavi

Phone number: 899530480/897233242

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Willing to testify (y/n): Y

Crimes: Killings, destruction of property, looting

Supporting evidence: Testimony of AaB13, Zaza and Tengiz Okruashvili, photographs at the site of the killing, including of the type of weapons used, round from an AKS taken from the front yard

Interpreter: Aleksander Mnatskanyan

Other witnesses: Zaza Razmadze, Badri's mother (name??)

Further steps: Call Badri for clarification on what he himself saw, interview his mother who was there

My father and uncle were shot on the veranda (shows us the bloodstains) by the paramilitaries, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, as witnessed by Zaza Razmadze. My mother was able to hide, and told me what happened. At the time, I was not in the village. The paramilitaries sent a grenade through the gate, and another grenade exploded by the bodies on the veranda. But they were killed with gunfire (according to Zaza and my mother). The paramilitaries took our Zhiguli, after taking off the license plates and our tractor, and stole some of our liquor from the basement. The damaged things there, as well as in the kitchen and many other places in our house. They shot up doors, walls and even our kitchen clock – as if they wanted to stop time. Our animals are also gone, but I don't know who took them.

The bodies were lying on the veranda for five days, then my mother and Zaza dragged them into the kitchen, before dragging them down the stairs and burying them around the corner of the house, in the back yard.



Interview no 15AaB. Place: Tkviavi Time: 9<sup>th</sup> September

Name: Zina Merabishvili

Age: Born 28.10.1942

Place of residence: Tkviavi (IDP from Tskhinvali)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Willing to testify (y/n): Y

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing, destruction of property

Supporting evidence: Testimony of Zaza Okruashvili

Interpreter: Aleksander Mnatskanyan

Other witnesses: Husband, neighbour, Roza Okruashvili

Further steps: Interview Roza Okruashvili

We were in our yard when the bombs struck our neighbourhood and damaged our house. We were not hurt badly ourselves, but three of our neighbors were wounded. Many bombs hit our neighborhood, large explosions. [We photographed the destruction in the neighbourhood, including of the house of the Merabishvilis] I don't think there were Georgian soldiers here then.

We're refugees from Tskhinvali, and it's not really our house. It belongs to a relative who stays in Tbilisi.

After the bombardments, we slept for ten days in the garden. Russian troops were everywhere. They had a base nearby. In the meantime the Ossetian criminals came, robbed and burned our houses, and killed the Melitauri brothers, Koba Dzhashashvili (app 37), Shamil Okruperidze (app 65 – 70), Nodar Butauri (app 72 – 73), Gelani Chukhladze (app 60 – 65), and perhaps one more person.

The time of looting lasted about a week. The Russians were not in the village at that time. After it was over, the Russians returned and asked us if anybody had bothered us. They did not protect us.



Interview no 16AaB. Place: Orbi Café in Gori/Tkviavi Time: 9<sup>th</sup> September

Name: Zaza Okruashvili

Age: Born 5.06.1971

Place of residence: Tkviavi (currently IDP in Gori)

Phone number: 899756846

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness/background information

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing

Supporting evidence: Photographs, testimony of brother Tengiz O.

Interpreter: Aleksander Mnatskanyan

Other witnesses: Mother (Roza Okruashvili), brother Tengiz Okruashvili

Further steps: interview mother, get her medical documents, identify two other injured persons and interview them, find out about Georgian military positions in the afternoon of 11<sup>th</sup> August

I left the village on 9<sup>th</sup> of August with my children and wife. I returned only on 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> September. My mother, Roza Okruashvili, stayed on in our house. In the afternoon/evening she was watching TV when aviation bombs hit the village. Our house was completely destroyed [see photographs. Zaza met us in Gori and guided us through the village] by four bombs. My mother was hurt, received shrapnel in abdomen and thighs. Two other civilians were injured in the attack, a neighbour and some visitor from Eredvi. A neighbor/friend drove my mother to Gori, where she was hospitalized and operated on.

Criminals came, robbed and burned houses in the village. They killed the Melitauri brothers (Zaza Razmadze witnessed this), Koba Dzhashashvili (app 37), Shamil Okruperidze (app 65 – 70), Nodar Butauri (app 72 – 73), Gelani Chukhladze (app 60 – 65), and perhaps one more person. As far as I know, the criminals were Ossetians, but also North Caucasians – Chechens or Cossacks.



Interview no 17AaB. Place: Ganmukhuri Time: 10th September

Name: Roland Gigiberia

Age: Born 05.05.1955

Place of residence: Ganmukhuri

Phone number: 893372089

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Willing to testify (y/n): Yes

Crimes: Armed robbery

Supporting evidence: Testimony of Tsira Chamkhia

Interpreter: Aleksander Mnatskanyan

Other witnesses:

Further steps: Interview Gogi Kodua, who was also in the car

Most people fled from Ganmukhuri in the days 7 to 9 August, crossed the Inguri river and went to the Eastern bank. Women and children were placed in the cars, and then the families left. So did we. The Abkhaz soldiers came in force on 9<sup>th</sup> August, established hq in the house of Tsira Chamkhia, across the street from the Russian peacekeepers. The peacekeepers did not stop or intervene in what the Abkhaz did. In the first days they robbed and threatened the remaining villagers, but then Abkhaz police came and after that they behaved well. No houses were burnt here, no people killed, as far as I know. We just looked on from the other side of the river, and only returned here yesterday, after the Abkhaz left the village. Now Georgian police have returned.

On 8<sup>th</sup> I was driving on the road on the Eastern bank, just across from Ganmukhuri. A car crossed the bridge from the western bank. There were 5 people in the car. They stopped us, threatened us with automatics and told me to give them my car (Mercedes C, '94 mod, plate 721 NNN). They didn't have masks, they spoke Abkhaz and wore camouflage uniforms. My friend Gogi Kodua, who lives in Darcheli, was with me in the car. The car documents were in the car and disappeared with it across the bridge. "We'll give it back in three hours," they said. Humour, I suppose. Two days later I crossed the bridge to the Western side, as my car was standing outside the fence of the Abkhaz hq, just across from the peacekeepers. I asked for my car back, but they demanded a thousand dollars for it. I did not pay, went back and shortly afterwards the car disappeared.





Interview no 18AaB. Place: Ganmukhuri Time: 10 September

Name: Tsira Chamkhia

Age: Born 25.01.1978

Place of residence: Ganmukhuri

Phone number: (can be contacted on Gigiberia's cell, 893372089)

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness/background information

Willing to testify (y/n): yes

Crimes: Destruction of property, looting

Supporting evidence: testimony of Gigiberia, photographs

Interpreter: Aleksander Mnatskanyan

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

Georgian police left the village on 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup>, warned us that we should pack and leave as they could no longer protect us. My father came and picked me up with my two small children in his Zhiguli, and took us to his place ten kilometres away. We returned here yesterday.

My house was taken by the Abkhaz, and made into their HQ. Apparently about 30 troops stayed here, just across the road from the Russian peacekeepers. Most of our belongings stolen, the rest damaged or destroyed. They took the tv, freezer, fridge, gas stove, laundry machine – and about 25 chickens. My neighbour saw the soldiers, they were Abkhaz.

All the time the peacekeepers were there on the other side of the road.



Interview no 19AaB. Place: Gori Bus station Time: 11 September

Name: Nunu Bortishvili (nee Bezhanishvili)

Age: Born 26.01.1963

Place of residence: Bredza

Phone number: 899634360

Type of interviewee: Victim/background information

Willing to testify (y/n): Y

Crimes: Killing

Supporting evidence: Testimony of Temur Kopadze (AaB20), AaB6, and of Ragnar Skre

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Other witnesses: Temur Kopadze

Further steps: See AaB20, AaB6

I live in Bredza, and left from there on 10<sup>th</sup>, with my daughter in law and her two children. My brother, Ervandi Bezhanishvili (b 23.02.1958) lived in Dvani, and I heard from people there that he'd left Gori on the 9<sup>th</sup>, because of bombings and returned to Dvani where he was killed on 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup>. He's buried in the yard of his house.

Interview no 20AaB. Place: Gori Bus station Time: 11 September

Name: Temur Kopadze

Age: Born: 16 May 1953

Place of residence: Dvani

Phone number: 898962004

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness/background information

Willing to testify (y/n): y

Crimes:

Supporting evidence: Ragnar Skre's materials,

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Other witnesses: Manana Gogaladze-Ivanishvili, Nunu Bortishvili (nee Bezhanishvili)  
(Interviews AaB6, AaB19), Ragnar Skre

Further steps:

Our village is just on the border, not far from Nuli and Avnevi, where the Ossetians were shelling from 2<sup>nd</sup> of August. The Georgian soldiers passed by our village on their way to the front, but when they retreated – I think on the 9<sup>th</sup> – some of them went through our village.

Afterwards the village was shelled. The church was hit, and some houses were destroyed. In my neighbourhood, three houses were destroyed/badly damaged. It was artillery fire. The Russians should have known there were no military targets there. During the shelling, I stayed in the basement.

Then the Russians came. There were tanks, BTRs. They established positions in and outside the village. I have no complaints with them. However, together with them came paramilitaries. Some were in Russian uniforms, some in civilian clothing, they did not have white strips of cloth around their arms, as far as I know.

These people burned two houses. At that time, a man called Vazha Kokoshvili was in my house. He got a call saying that there was a fire in a house. So he left my house, to help extinguishing the fire. He later told me that when he came outside, he heard a woman crying and shouting. He went after the sound and found the married couple Nato and Ervandi Bezhanishvili. Ervandi was dead. According to his wife, who told Vazha, she saw that Ervandi was shot and killed by a group of Ossetians and Russians who came down the street after hoisting the Russian flag on the church there. The church was not far from where the house was burning, and the married couple were also on their way there. Vazha helped her carrying the body back to the couple's house. It was not clear why they killed him.



This happened on the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup>. Afterwards there were two days of quiet, and then the Ossetians came (looters). Day by day they looted and burnt houses. Women also came to loot.

On 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> a mentally handicapped man, Vasil Mekarishvili (b. app. 1964), was killed in the center of the village. Some men came there, Ossetian looters, I suppose, and while the others ran away, Vasil stayed. According to eyewitnesses, the men wanted him to kiss something (a flag, or something). Vasil probably did not understand what they wanted. They shot and killed him. Then they left.

Now, still the looting goes on, but it is our neighbors, Ossetians from nearby villages who steal. Just the day before yesterday (9<sup>th</sup> September) the Ossetians took my last pig, 150 kg, big one. All in all I've lost 3 cows, 2 calves, 5 pigs, tractor, and everything from the house – clothes, 2 tvs, videoplayer, etc.

On 21<sup>st</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> they took my cousin's Niva. His name is Nikolos Kopadze (app 30 years old). He was driving the car from the south, wanted to visit the village. He was stopped by an armed Ossetian whom he recognized as being from the village Tsuna. He had 2 or 3 others with him. They took his car. My cousin complained to the Russian soldiers nearby – they stayed by the village during this whole time – but they didn't react.

I think around 40 houses were burnt in Dvani. I left the village on 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>.



Interview no 21AaB, Kaspi 11/09/08

Name: Ketino Tchalidze (female)

Age: Born in Gori 04/05/1967

Place of residence: Ikot, Akhagori region

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness/background information

Crimes:

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Supporting evidence: yes

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

It was quiet until 18.00 on 15.08. Local official said we should leave because of Russian advance. Some went down, met the Russian forces, turned back and went by byroads to Tbilisi. With my family I stayed in the woods for one night, walked over the mountains by villages Derkani, Tsigiriani, Gremiskhevi and reached Dusheti region. From there by car to Tbilisi. We were seven, my husband, and 5 children.

Most of the villagers stayed for two nights in the woods, visiting their houses during the day. What I know is that the Russians dug in both in the village and outside. No lootings, no bombings, no burning of houses. No problems until recently. We have been bussing back and forth, from Tbilisi. At the checkpoints the men are registered. The soldiers are both Russian and Ossetians. The local head of administration stayed the whole time, Robinson Govrytishvili. He was apparently called by the new (Ossetian) Head of administration in Lenin Gori, but wouldn't deal with them.

The Ossetians and Russians come to our region through byways from Tskhinvali now, don't use the highway. They are distributing food and aid, inviting us back. But the brewery was robbed, Natakhtari, and with this going on we don't want to return. Some rumors that young people were beaten, about looting, an Ossetian suspected of spying for Georgians taken to Tskhinvali for interrogation. My husband is back there, but most of the women and children have still not returned to the region. We lost some of our harvest. Ikot is mixed village, 300 – 350 families all in all. Good ethnic relations. Some mines in the woods.



Interview no 22AaB, Kaspi 11/09/08

Name: Zinaida Dalakishvili (female)

Age: Born in Kaspi 11.01.1965

Place of residence: Tirdznizi, Gori region

Phone number: 8 55489276 (Temur Temurishvili, husband)

Type of interviewee: witness/background information

Crimes: Killing, destruction of property

Supporting evidence: Crosscheck w Joachim's interviews

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Other witnesses: Crosscheck w Joachim's interviews

Further steps:

We thought it was ordinary incidents, but from 6<sup>th</sup> there was escalation (Avnevi and Nuli bombings), first bomb killed two cows in Tirdznizi on 7<sup>th</sup>. Saak said on tv, don't worry, we won't fight. I have two children and husband, and w neighbor's children we left w car that night. The road was full of soldiers entering S-O. We went to Kaspi. Next day my husband went back and collected his parents. Next day again he went to collect some other family members. Heavy bombing then. Five or six older men stayed in the village, ie woods at night, the whole time.

My neighbour was killed about ten days ago. 4 or 5 of the men were sitting in centre of village, then a Niva arrived. They ran away. A man called Malkhasi, my neighbour, went out from hiding. The men were still there. They caught him and asked where the others were. He couldn't or wouldn't answer, so they shot him w one shot so he fell and killed him with automatic fire. The villager Givi witnessed this and told me.

Some of the villagers became hostages. My husband said that from the main road he counted 16 burned houses. He knows more from going back and forth. Our house is ok.

A plane came here to Kaspi about 11. Dropped 5 bombs/missiles. A bomb hit close by the railway and killed the guard of the turnpike on the road.



Interview no 23AaB, Kaspi 11/09/08, app 16.00

Name: Zozo (male)

Age:

Place of residence: Prizi, Gori region

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness/background information

Crimes: abduction, rape, destruction of property

Supporting evidence: yes

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Other witnesses: to the abduction, grandmother

Further steps:

(Father of the baby killed in cradle in 1991, interviewed w new wife)

07.08 they left by Mashrutka, went to Karaleti, stayed w friends there until 13, then Gori and region was being bombed, we walked six hours through woods to highway w neighbours, then by mashrutka to Tbilisi w wife and children.

My mother and my daughter went back to the village from Gori. He confirms story of grandmother. Seems she was raped. Two soldiers, Ossetian and Russian. On 14 they found the daughter in Tbilisi, by coincidence. She had haemotoma, marks after being abducted and maltreated, for instance on arms. The daughter says when she came there after abduction their house was burned. About five other houses burnt in their neighbourhood.



Interview 24JF, Gori, 8/9/08

Name: Marine Babutsidze

Age: 54

Place of residence: Achabeti (part of Georgian enclave north of Zkhinvali)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/looting/destruction of house

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

Already since the early nineties there was a permanent difficult situation in my village, with gunfire nearly every day, and people getting attacked and robbed. This valley was a kind of Georgian enclave with Ossetian villages around it. The local Georgians tried not to irritate the Ossetians. Sometimes there was also some light.

Recently Ossetians started to threaten us, shouting "This is South Ossetia. You have no right to live here." Then, in the beginning of August, some young villagers from our village were wounded by a shell explosion and gunfire, when they were driving along the round-about of Zkhinvali. This was a very bad signal for us. After that all the ways were locked and even the round-about was locked, too.

After a televised speech by Kokoity, the inhabitants of Zkhinvali were fleeing.

I left my village via the round-about on 6 August in order to buy food and other things in Gori. My two children (32 and 33 years old) had already left the previous day. We planned to stay with our relatives for some days. I had nothing with me than the clothes on my body and some money.

My husband, who had stayed in Adzhabeti, managed to leave only on 9 August with the tractor of another villager and together with around 10 other people. They took the normal route. He saw the bombardment of the village and also the passing-by of 150 Russian tanks. After the tanks had passed by, my husband and the group left. If looters came afterwards, he cannot say.

Now nobody is left in the village. Everything is destroyed, all houses are pulled down to the ground. Actually, from all the nine villages in this enclave everybody has fled.





Interview 25JF, IDP facility in Kindergarden No. 2, Gori, 7/9/08

Name: Tengis Okruashvili

Age: around 50

Place of residence: Tkviavi (south of Zkhinvali, on road between Zkhinvali and Gori)

Phone number: 9-95-32 23 34

Type of interviewee: Witness

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

On 8 August, at around 12 am Russian helicopters started the bombing of our village. I saw one bomb exploding at a place in Tkviavi, where houses stand very close to each other, destroying 10-15 houses. I think it was a 500 kg bomb.

Because events had already begun on 7 August we were prepared to leave. Most people from Tkviavi left the village on 8 August with separate cars, my family too. When we entered Gori there was already bombing there, too.

There has been a lot of looting in the village and some houses were set on fire. This looting happened mainly immediately after the bombing. The Russian troops did not do it, but covered and protected it. In my own house a tank entered the yard, broke the gate and shot with a machine gun at my house. The house of my brother, who is also in this IDP-camp, was completely destroyed.

Now it is quiet there, but nobody controls the village, there is no security.



Interview 26JF, big UNHCR IDP-camp in Gori, 8/9/08

Name: XXX

Age: around 50

Place of residence: Tirdznisi (south of Zkhinvali, on road between Zkhinvali and Gori)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim

Crimes: Looting

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

When on 7 August the shooting began from the Georgian side we realized that it was impossible to stay there. So we left the village already on 7 August, and only some elder persons stayed behind. First we went to Tbilisi and on 1 September moved to this camp.

Now it is quiet, and there is no shooting. I am not afraid from the Russians but from the Ossetians. The Russians even helped one Georgian who was bitten by a dog. Now some of the villagers go to our village during daytime while some stay here all the time.

What I know about my own house: doors and windows were broken, everything was turned upside down.

Altogether, out of the 300 houses in the village around 20 houses were completely robbed and burnt down. Also people were shot. As we understood, Ossetians had special lists of Georgians, whose houses were to be burnt. We had a very beautiful school in our village, but now it existed only for one year. Three classrooms were destroyed completely and everything was stolen from it.



Interview 27JF, big UNHCR IDP-camp in Gori, 8/9/08

Name: XXX (group of 4 men in front of tent 84, incl. Georgi Mzdnarashvili from Ditsi)

Age: all around 50

Place of residence: Tirdznisi, Meghvrekisi, Ditsi, Disevi

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/rape/looting/burning down houses

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

In Tirdznisi, 15 houses were burnt. On the road between Gori and Zkhinvali there were also some killings. In one case of a killing of a civilian they could not appear there and were so hindered to remove the dead corpse and to bury it. Russians and Ossetians shot with machine guns when they moved forward together.

In Meghvrekisi there was first the attack by the Russian military followed by a group of young paramilitary Ossetians, assaulting and robbing houses. One 14-year old girl was raped. The Russians watched when they were doing this. Around 90 % of the houses are burnt down.

In Avnevi and Nuli, from where the war started, no building is still there.

In Disevi 90 % of the houses are burnt, my house as well. We go there regularly. Three days ago his wife returned, there are no more checkpoints there. When the looters came, they came with trucks, took out everything and then burned the houses.



Interview 28JF, big UNHCR IDP-camp in Gori, 8/9/08

Name: Tomas Tsenashvili

Age:

Place of residence: Pkhvinis (south of Zkhinvali)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Indirect witness

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/extrajudicial killings

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

When the counter-attack of the Russian troops brought them to Tskhinvali on 8 August, they also started to bomb our village. Our village was mixed with some houses having old walls and others having new walls. The old walls were destroyed immediately by the explosion wave. After the destruction of our home we stayed with the family of my sister in the same village.

When the Russian troops came on 11 August 2008 we quickly left the village and first went to Tbilisi.

What we know from some old people, who remained in the village is the following: When the Russian army entered the village, there was a Cossack and a Chechen regiment – the Chechen one was “Vostok” - just behind them, and then came the Ossetian paramilitary, all in masks. The Russian troops checked all houses, and when they saw men who could wear guns they killed them.

Around 10-12 civilians were killed by Russian forces. They were buried by the Russian forces themselves and they showed the places to some old people. Among the killed are for example my neighbour, 60 years old Amiran, and another neighbour, 35-years old Gacha.



Interview 29JF, IDP-camp "Kindergarten Nr. 16" in Gori, 8/9/08

Name: Nikolaos Kasradze

Age: around 45

Place of residence: Ergneti (south of Zkhinvali)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/Indirect witness

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/looting/burning down houses

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

Me and my family live in the village Ergneti, but I work in Gori. And just to note: I am Georgian married to an Ossetian woman.

On 8 August, when the Russian army entered Ergneti I had just come back to check the situation with my house. I have 18.000 bushes of tomatoes there and many potatoes as well. When I came with my car through the village Tkviavi there was some bombing, and so I had to stop my car and continued on foot to Ergneti. Then, when being in Ergneti, I saw 150 motor-vehicles in the village, machine guns were shooting at all buildings. That is why all people ran away. Some members of the Chechen Vostok-unit let our people go and even helped us. When I saw all the shooting I also started to flee the village. I saw one house burning but this could be from the battle. The neighbours let their animals free. At the checkpoint of the former Russian peacemakers, one of them asked me for a cigarette. When I said "Look at the shooting", he answered "None of my business."

On my way back to Gori, in the village Brutsleti, 2 km from Ergneti, a military plane dropped some bombs. I continued to walk along the street with my hands up. Our Georgian soldiers jumped out of their cars as well and hide behind trees. Planes bombed them, turned around and bombed again. Many soldiers were killed.

Some people remained in Ergneti, hiding in the ceilings. The Ossetians were going to kill them all, letting them stand in front of a wall. An Ossetian woman, married to a Georgian, courageously walked there, stood in front of them and said "Shoot me first". She saved them. However, several civilians were killed, for example my neighbour, a very old and unarmed man. This was told to me by other neighbours, when I visited the village together with his wife at the end of August. Now there are only around 5 old women left. There was a lot of looting. During this visit I saw that everything was burnt in Ergneti with only a few houses being exempted. To our house the looters came, too. They were in camouflage uniforms and then burnt the house. They also burnt the bushes with tomatoes. Now there is no light and no water in the village, the hens are running around freely, the ripe plums and apples fall on the ground.



When the Russians came we all were very frightened. If the Russians would have wanted to do it normally then they would not have let the looters operate, and instead of bombs they should have thrown leaflets. Now we don't know how to make peace with them.

When I was in Gori I saw a white jeep with several looters in strange uniforms without stripes sitting in it. They stopped another car, also a jeep, and demanded in Georgian with Ossetian accent "Documents and the keys of the car, you damned Georgians." When a young lady in the back of the car was trying to make a phone call they turned to her, beat her and took away the phone. I saw this and was afraid they were going to do something worse. I saw then how a jeep with a Russian general stopped there, but did not stay long enough to see whether the general stopped the robbery.

On 14 August, when all the bombing and shooting had stopped, one of my relatives in Khashuri was stopped with his BMW car somewhere around Gori by people in Russian uniforms and with machine guns. They pulled him out of the machine, beat him, took the papers and keys of the car. Then one of them exchanged his military uniform with civilian clothes and drove away with the car.



Interview 30JF, IDP-camp "Kindergarten Nr. 13" in Gori, 8/9/08

Name: XXX

Age: around 40

Place of residence: Village Tsevera (near Karaleti)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

I am refugee here in Gori already since 6 August. My wife in the meantime visited our house and said that almost everything is OK. The roof is broken and some windows, too, but the house was not even looted. My wife told me that out of the 600 houses some 3-4 houses were burnt down.



Interview 31JF, IDP-camp "Kindergarten Nr. 13" in Gori, 8/9/08

Name: XXX

Age: Old couple (around 65)

Place of residence: Village Vanati (east of Zkhinvali)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/looting/burning down houses

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

I am myself Ukrainian and my husband is Georgian. Through this war we became refugees a second time. The first time it happened 1991, and we did not receive any kind of compensation for the destroyed home. In 1991 we moved from Zkhinvali to Vanati, and started to build our own house. After an earthquake in October 1992 we lived in a tent and then received some help by a Tbilisi Building Organisation to rebuild it.

Now planes bombed our village very severely. A lot of people ran away when the bombing started but we were hiding in the ceiling and did not see them leaving. So we were the last to stay. On the 9 or 10 August my husband said "Wife, it is time to leave." And so we did, but it was already when Russian and Ossetian troops entered the village. It was thirteen battle tanks and six trucks full of Cossacks. We ran into the forest and stayed for fourteen days, but from there we could see what happened to our village. There were several people in the woods, from our village there were nine.

Immediately after the troops the looters came. The first ones had four cars, one Opel, one old and one modern Russian military jeep and one truck. They moved from house to house, entered every building, shot first and then began to loot. They filled the truck. Then they came with petroleum and burnt the house. This was repeated day by day. The first houses that were burnt down was the police, the village administration and the school. Usually, the robbery began after 1 pm and lasted till 8 or 9 pm. All robbed houses were burnt the same evening. The groups consisted of around 15 persons. One of the looting groups was very big. This group took the main valuables, while the little things were left to others. They also ordered to different soldiers to burn this or that house, but mainly it was another paramilitary group that burnt the houses. The only houses exempted were some Ossetian houses where they had fixed some white stripes.

We had 10 acres of land, peaches, pears, apples. To steal everything from our house they used several days. What was stolen: the tractor, the refrigerator, the TV set, furniture and carpets from the living and sleeping room, all clothes and one pig and 30 chicken. On the third day of the looting our house was set on fire, too.



What did the Russian military do? The Russian checkpoints were at the beginning and end of the village, and as this is a chain of villages, the same repeated in the next village. When it began, the first looters were Ossetians. Two days later around 150 Russian APCs and tanks came from the mountain-road through our village. Then a stream of Russian infantry, all going through our village. They all did not care about the looters.

At night Russian troops spotlighted the forest and shot in order to frighten people.

Our village, Vanati, had 500 houses. Our village, as well as the other villages along the Patara Liakhvi river, Satskheneti, Beloti, Atsrishevi, and Gojiani, do not exist any more, they all were burnt to ashes.

Finally, a priest from Tbilisi named Konstantin, helped us to flee from there, but all we could take with us was the clothes on our body. When we left, we saw that also the village Eredvi was completely filled with paramilitary and Russian military.

Interview 32JF, UNHCR IDP-camp in Gori, 9/9/08

Name: Mariam Nikolashvili

Age: 70 years

Place of residence: Village Prisi (south of Zkhinvali)

Phone number: 8.951 647 11 (daughter Mzia Nikolashvili)

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/kidnapping

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

The bombing of my village Prisi started on 13 August. When my house was bombed, too, I and my granddaughter, Mariam Nikolashvili (17 years old), left too. We came with a big truck to Gori. But as all the places were full and we were not accepted anywhere, we decided to go back. We walked for nine hours. When we were walking through the village Kidznisi, an old broken Zhiguli car, maybe stolen, stopped in front of us. Two young blond Ossetians in paramilitary uniform (with white stripes at the arm) got out of the car, took my granddaughter Mariam and kidnapped her.

I then spent 25 days in the village Tkviavi with Suliko Koshuarshvili, all the time trying to find a sign of life of my kidnapped granddaughter. I walked around in the village and neighbouring villages and asked many villagers as well as Russian soldiers, but to no avail.

Today, 9 September, I came to this IDP camp.



Interview 33JF, UNHCR IDP-camp in Gori, 9/9/08

Name: Nadia Terashvili (or Teretashvili)

Age: 75

Place of residence: Village Beloti (east of Zkhinvali)

Phone number: 8.98 77 9006 (granddaughter Natia Zgriashvili)  
8.95 33 9408 (daughter Ira Teretashvili in Tbilisi, she was the local governor of the village)

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Crimes: Looting/Burning down houses

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses: Tengiz Terashvili (78), her husband  
Sograti Demetrashvili (75), came together with Nadia on 8 September  
Valia Demetrashvili

Further steps:

After the war had begun, Ossetians came every day to our village Beloti and took everything of value. In our village they took 200 cows and many pigs. The houses of 60 families were completely burnt.

As I am myself Ossetian - while my husband Tengiz is Georgian – I remained in our house for a long time. I offered the looters to take everything but not to destroy the house. So far it is not destroyed, but maybe the reason is that there are still things to be stolen. Nobody abused me, but they were entering the house several times and took what they wanted.

My sister and husband are still there, they did not want to leave their property. Their house is damaged.

About the looters: some of them were wearing uniforms, others not. Often I could recognize that they were from the Ossetian village, Elturna, which is next to our village. Their leaders were two brothers, Siuhaev, both between 30 and 40 years old. They control everything in the region.

They also burnt the house of my daughter, Ira Teretashvili. Ira was the local governor of our village. The older Siuhaev brother, Robe Siuhaev, came to me and told me that they were angry about my daughter Ira and that is why they would burn down her house. They had had a business conflict, when my daughter was forbidding them to sell pork at a time, when there was a disease regarding pork meat in our region.

I came to the IDP-camp on 8 September.

Interview 34JF, UNHCR IDP-camp in Gori, 9/9/08

Name: Sograti Tevetrashvili (or: Demetrashvili)

Age: 75

Place of residence: Village Beloti (east of Zkhinvali)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Indirect witness

Crimes: Looting/unlawful detention

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

About 10 days ago, my son Kotcha Tevetrashvili, who lives in Gori and owned a little mini-bus (marshutka) tried to drive to our village. He thought we might be dead.

In the village Tvenizi his car was stopped, and his mobile phone and minibus taken away. He was also beaten up and detained in Zkhinvali for three days.

To earn his living he has now rented a marshutka from a friend.



Interview 35JF, UNHCR IDP-camp in Gori, 9/9/08

Name: Tengiz Terashvili (or: Teretashvili)

Age: 78

Place of residence: Village Beloti (east of Zkhinvali)

Phone number: 8.98 77 9006 (granddaughter Natia Zgriashvili)  
8.95 33 9408 (daughter Ira Teretashvili in Tbilisi, she was the local governor of the village)

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Crimes: Looting/Burning down houses

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses: Nadia Terashvili (75), wife  
Sograti Demetrashvili (75), came together with Nadia on 8 September  
Gemal Rtveladze (60), came together with Tengiz on 28 August, his house was burnt, too  
Zareta Teladze (80)

Further steps:

When the Ossetians came the first time, it was 9 August, I was working in the field, cutting grass. It was around twenty Ossetian men from the neighbouring village, Eltura. They stopped in front of me and beat me heavily on the hands. They asked for different names, for example for one Ossetian man married with a Georgian woman. They shot around and then robbed the kiosk and bombed it with a grenade. One local policeman, Zurab Chipchuri, was wounded by the shooting.

The looting happened for two weeks, some groups came with trucks, some others came with cars. One group took bees, another took cheese, nuts, etc. Often they took mountain-roads as their way out, so as not to pass a Russian check-point. Most of the groups were led by the Siuhaev brothers, Robe Siuhaev (the older) and Abe Siuhaev (the less old) from the neighbouring village, Eltura. Their brother Artur is prosecutor in Zkhinvali and protects them. Their father is named Khetaga (75) And their mother Ira.

After this incident we fled to the wood, together with my daughter. Four other villagers were with us. In the night we came secretly to the village, to visit my Ossetian wife and to pick up food. Sometimes we also met in the wood.

On 28 August we walked away and were finally picked up by te Red Cross and brought here to the IDP camp.



Interview 36JF, UNHCR IDP-camp in Gori, 10/9/08

Name: Isolda Avtshvadse

Age: 67

Place of residence: Village Kitsnisi (south of Zkhinvali)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Crimes: Looting/Burning down houses

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses: Maia Avtshvadse (daughter)

Further steps:

Our village, Kitsnisi, is a mixed village, with around 1.500 families / houses.

On 8 August 2008, just before and after the Georgian army had retreated, our village was bombarded. Two houses were totally destroyed.

Most people left together with the Georgian army and only some older people stayed behind because of the stock in the house. Altogether around 50 persons stayed behind. I also stayed there until recently, and my husband is still there. All the time we were hiding in the garden, watching what happened. We were also sleeping in the corn-field.

The Russian army came together with the Ossetian paramilitary, maybe some 50 tanks. Some Chechens were trying to help us. The gates to the houses were broken with the tanks. Looting happened during the course of two weeks by the Russian military as well as by the Ossetian paramilitary. When they were looting, they sometimes made some marks to show to which formation this house "belongs".

In our village not so many houses were burnt, only two, but looting happened to 30-50 % of the houses. They are still coming on a daily basis. Also our house was looted. They came several times and took a lot of clothes from our house. From the daughters house they took many different goods, even bed blankets.

The main perpetrator in our village was the criminal gang of the village Ardzevi, led by Erik Dudaev, who drives a white Niva. We know him by face, and he and his gang came every day. The gang consists of around 18-20 people. Erik is the younger brother of Marek Dudaev, who was an infamous paramilitary / robber during the first Ossetian war and was imprisoned for 15 years. They are selling the stolen goods at an open market between the villages Ardzevi and Mejvrishkevi.

I came to this IDP-camp on 6 September. My son had picked me up with the marshutka (little mini-bus)



Interview 37JF, UNHCR IDP-camp in Gori, tent 85, 11/9/08

Name: Vakha Okroperidse

Age: 51

Place of residence: Village Disevi

Phone number: 8.98.17 20 04

Type of interviewee: Victim/indirect witness

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/ Looting/Burning down houses/Extrajudicial execution

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses: Nanuli Okroperidse (51, his wife)

Further steps:

We heard some bombing already at 7 August, but our village was not bombed then. There was some shooting in the neighbouring Ossetian village, Khelchurche. In the morning of 8 August 2008, our neighbour was coming to us and told us that Russian tanks are coming to Zkhinvali and that we should run away together. We left our village, Disevi, the same morning with a car. We only took some clothes and simple documents with us. The same day the bombing of our village began.

Only some old men and some Ossetian women who are married to Georgians, stayed behind, altogether around 20 persons. They are the source of our information about what happened after we had left. Additionally, four days ago my wife Nanuli was there to see everything with her eyes and to speak with neighbours. But our neighbours, who are more than 70 years old, are of course frightened and only dare from time to time to watch. Therefore they did not recognize any perpetrator. But they did hear the Ossetian marauders threatening "We don't allow you to stay here. It is our territory. Get out of here." So nobody knows what will happen in the coming night, what in the next night.

Some other people from our village also fled to the forests in the hill and watched what further happened.

On 9 August the Russian army with many tanks came to our village and set up checkpoints. The Ossetian paramilitary gangs came with them and started to burn down houses and loot the village. They came practically every day. As far as I know, from the around 300 houses in our village only 20-25 houses remain unburnt. Even yesterday three houses were burnt down. The first time, that the paramilitary came, was already in the evening of 9 August, when a group of 20 Ossetian people entered the village, moved from yard to yard. In the first two days they did not rob, but only burnt houses. Our house was also not robbed, only burnt down. In the case of our house I was told that it was done by Ossetian, but there were also teams of Cossacks active. Our neighbours, who are still there, told us that three days ago Ossetians came into my orchard and gathered / stole 150 boxes of peaches.



The Russian army checkpoint easily could see everything. They let the marauders through and saw the houses burning. Our house for example is only 200 or 300 meters away from the checkpoint. And also the houses immediately next to the check-point were set on fire. The Russian army did not control anything. Only now, when 90-95 % of the houses are burnt, they begin to make controls.

One civilian from our village, 70-years old Elgutch Okroperidse, was killed on 9 or 10 August. His dead corpse was lying there and could not be buried for a full week. And on 11 or 12 August, one very old woman, Nato Okroperidse, when seeing that her house was set on fire, refused to leave the house and was burnt alive. Some old women saw the burning.





Interview 38JF, Village Ditsi, 12/9/08

Name: XXXX

Age: around 50

Place of residence: Village Ditsi

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/looting/burning down houses

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

The Georgian army was here several days. They behaved correctly, but as they did not have enough water, they drank all the water I had, 400 litres. We have a water problem here, because we used to get it via an Ossetian village in the mountains and they blocked it for a long time. The Georgian army left the village in the early morning of 12 August. I thought that I would not going to leave our house, but when a bomb exploded nearby, and I was even thrown to the ground by the shockwave I changed my mind. The planes that bombed us at about mid-day, were so far away that the bombs fell for a minute before they hit the ground. I think they did not bomb the houses on purpose, but wanted to threaten the local population so that they leave. Nobody was killed by the bombs.

I left my village with our little tractor on 12 August. It seemed I was in the last wave. Everybody after me was detained by the Russian army. Near Gori the Russian army stopped us and robbed the tractor.

I came back to Ditsi only four days ago. It is a shame that we cannot leave our orchards, because they hunt women, it does not matter if young or old. There are regular Russian patrols with tanks, trucks, normal cars and even with helicopters. When they see women they wave with their hands.

My husband came back already on 15 August. Sometimes Russian troops asked him for a meal. When we left the village, we had to leave everything behind, the cows, pigs and hens. After our return they all were not here any more, but we do not know if they were stolen or ran away.

As to my knowledge, the Russian army did not allow Ossetians, Chechens and Cossacks to loot in the village. When some Ossetian tried to steal a turkey, the Russian army nearly killed him.

Altogether two houses were burnt down. Both are in the centre of the village. The Ossetians who burnt it said that the owners were 'sinners'. One family had sold their truck to an

Ossetian three or four years ago, and after the family had found out that they were paid in counterfeit Dollars they unsuccessfully protested demanding to be paid in real Dollars. Now, on 14 August, their house was burnt down because of this.

Maybe the situation in Ditsi was better regarding looting and setting on fire of houses, because it is a purely Georgian village with practically no contact – and conflict – with Ossetians. In villages with mixed population there were conflicts and there was revenge.

In Mereti and Kordi, both mixed villages, a lot of Georgian houses were burnt. Also the Georgian army threw some bombs there.



Interview 39JF, Village Tirdznisi, 12/9/08

Name: Robert Akhmedishvili

Age: born 1945

Place of residence: Village Tirdznisi (south of Tzkhinvali)

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Crimes: Indiscriminate bombing/hostage taking/inhumane treatment

Supporting evidence:

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

The Russian army came to our village on the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> August, but they just went through. There was some bombing in the village, but the bombs fell only on orchards not on houses. Only in Tkviavi and Brutsleti houses were hit by bombs. (Mr. Akhmedashvili shows us a bomb crater in his garden stemming from a 250 kg bomb. He also shows us something in his garden that he claims could be an unexploded device.) All the windows in my house and many other houses were broken by the shockwaves.

The Russian army set up a checkpoint at the entrance of the village.

The next day, the Russians came to me to ask for vegetable oil. In the neighbours garden they saw a young woman. A Russian officer asked her for cigarettes. She said she had none, upon which the officer answered that if she had any she should come to their checkpoint. At 12 pm the same night, two a little bit drunken Chechens in an APC came directly to my neighbour to look for her. After him they came to my house also to look for anybody young. I pretended that I do not know her. They asked for cigarettes and I gave them a package. They paid with some ammunition.

Two or three days later, when we harvested our potatoes I heard some Cossack voices. A woman who does not live far from here shouted to me to turn around. Four Cossacks had put their machine-guns against me. They had broken the fence and asked me if I had a pig. I answered in the negative. Then they asked for wine. I had a 5-litre can and two mugs of wine. They said "This we take for a good memory" and took it. Later they also took a 20-litre can from the basement. In each case they forced me to drink first, before they took it away.

During the first weeks after the Russian army was here, I was hiding in the orchard and never used the roads. Still today we are hiding our valuables (the tea set and other porcelain) in the orchard and the carpets in the cow-shed.

One day two youngsters, who also were hiding in the orchard, shouted "Robert, Robert. The house of your brother is burning." I immediately ran there. There were two women standing



there, looking at the fire. Me, these two women and the two youngsters caught five or six baskets of water and extinguished it. We ran several times with the baskets. Would I have come 5 minutes earlier, the house would not have been damaged at all. Then they checked the house. The marauders had first broken all doors, turned everything upside down but did not take anything (as there was nothing valuable). When the fire stopped, I was really frightened that if they would come back and see what I did, they would kill me. But they did not come back. Who did it? For sure it was Ossetians, one of the women watching the fire heard Ossetian voices. But who exactly I do not know. (Mr. Akhmedashvili later shows us the house and introduces us to his brother. He came back 3 or 4 days ago. The living room on the ground floor is indeed severely damaged by the fire.)

The next day again a group of Ossetians came. This time I heard their voices when they were breaking a water melon into pieces and then eating it. They went again to the house of my brother, but it seems that when they saw the marks of fire they decided that it had been burnt already.

From all the Akhmedashvilis who live in Tirdznisi, and it is around 100, five or six stayed behind to watch the village. For this part of the village I was "responsible". And they managed only to set the house of one brother on fire.

The main problem here in Tirdznisi is the lack of water. The main water pipe is in Vanati but it does not work because of lack of electricity.

## **II Interviews from October 2008**

**(Conducted by Aage Borchgrevink, Simon Papuashvili, Ramaz Rekhviashvili)**



Interview 1 AaB,

Time: 20.10.2008

Place: Disevi Village (South Ossetia)

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Name: Valiko KHILASHVILI

DoB: 22 March 1947

PoB: Tbilisi

PoR: Disevi

Profession: Artist (Graduate of Theatrical Institute, Tskhinvali)

Tel:

Other: One of the last remaining Georgians in the village

Supporting evidence: Photographs, interviews 4, 37 and 2,3 and 7 from October interviews

I've been building this house for 20 years. My family (wife and grown kids) visit sometimes, but mostly I stay here alone, womanless.

I've stayed here the whole time, watching the whole village burn. Because I was here, I didn't see who burnt the houses or how.

I don't remember dates, don't care for the calendar, but I remember I saw Georgian paramilitaries going up the road here, retreating. Where you going, I asked. To Snekhvi, they said [village deeper in South Ossetia]. They told me that their commanders had told them to save themselves and run away. I guess they were heading home.

One day, Chechen soldiers came. They wanted to kill the dog, but I said they should not kill my old hunting dog. So they let the dog live, inspected the house, including the theatre I've made on the ground floor. Then they left. My neighbour later told me they were Chechens.

People were killed in the village. An old guy was shot, and a man in his fifties was beaten. They poured gasoline on his clothes and lit them. He had a heart attack and died, according to what the neighbours told me. Nato OKROPERIDZE, died in her burning house. Her husband told me the story.

Every day I saw more houses burn, especially at night. There was also shooting every day. Because my house is far from the others, people from the village came to stay here. They were in shock, telling stories about relatives killed and burnt houses.

[Takes us up the hill to his brothers house, we pass a house still smoldering] The house of my neighbour Dariel Tragamagidze was burnt four days ago, in the evening.

I think only four houses are left untouched in Disevi.

[On our way out of the village, several villagers tell fo shooting in the village that morning and vehicles, incl BTR, stopping in the streets, in a manner they thought meant that Ossetians or Russians were robbing the houses.]



## Interview 2 AaB,

Time: 20.10.2008

Place: Koshka Village

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Name: David (Dato) KREKHALASHVILI

DoB: 11 June 1963

PoB:

PoR: Disevi

Profession:

Tel:

Other: Most of the villagers afraid to be interviewed with full name

Supporting evidence: Photographs, interviews 4, 37 and 1,3 and 7 from October interviews

I stay as a refugee in Koshka. Disevi is very close, and we go there to rescue what we can, and look after the harvest. It's dangerous, because the looting and the burning still go on. Old people are beaten and evicted. Some neighbours saw a big car outside in their street, and people searching the yard for loot today. There was shooting here in the morning, I don't know what happened, but here in Koshka we don't feel protected. The bandits are only a hundred meters away, and there is no Georgian police or international monitors here.

There are two groups of Ossetians robbing the village. One of them is from the village Khelchua (next village to the north), the other from Ortevi (village south of Disevi). The Khelchua group is headed by a guy nicknamed 'Toto' or 'Totra', he's married to an OKROPERIDZE from Disevi. Several people have seen him in the village.

About a week ago I was rescuing some plastic containers from the house of my son's father in law. Outside in the street, I met a white UAZ. The guys in the car saw me, hooted and drove against me very fast. I threw away the containers and ran away. I've seen this car many times in the village. It comes regularly to 'collect' stuff from the houses and yards. It comes from the Otrevi direction.

## Interview 3 AaB, Disevi

Time: 20.10.2008

Place: Mereti Village

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Name: RAZMADZE, Otar

DoB: 10 December 1945

PoB: Atseriskhevi

PoR: Disevi

Profession: Carpenter

Tel: 899617140 (son)

My wife's from Disevi, so that's where we stayed. By the money from my trade and from my work, I built and furnished our houses – basically from scratch. First I built one house, then from trading apples I could educate my children and save money. Then I reconstructed the old house of my in-laws.

There were around 300 houses in Disevi.

I have three sons. So I built two more houses to have for all of us. Three were together. One in upper Disevi. All four were furnished and ready. We had a Kamaz, a Zil gruzovik, another Zil, two Belarusian tractors, three small tractors (motobloki). We had 18 tires for the gruzoviki in store (each worth app 300usd), six beehives, two cows, hens, turkeys. I had four loads of wood, 2500 wooden crates for apples, sheds, etc.

From early August there were shootings. Around 12<sup>th</sup> August the Russians came, at ten o'clock in the morning. Immediately there came Ossetians. All had masks. They spoke Russian, all of them. They came in BTRs, BTVs and on foot. They were shooting when they came. My wife and I collected some food and clothes and immediately left for the woods. My mother in law stayed. First they burned the houses, and they have continued until today. I heard the engine of my Kamaz start, and said to my wife I wanted to go there. She fainted, and I stayed. From where we were we could see the houses burn.

In the evening we went back to our houses (also our neighbours returned) and my mother in law told me she'd been beaten.

Death of Nato Okroperidze, app 75, wife of Grisha O. Around 13 August, the Russians/Ossetians were shooting. The men fled to the woods. Also Grisha. When he returned he found his house burning with the body of his wife inside. The body was destroyed. We don't know how she died.. She was completely burnt when we found her in the house. Suliko Okroperidze, another man and I, we buried her in her yard. We wrapped her in blankets and sheets, and dug a hole in the ground.

I was rich and well-known, that's why they came down hard on us. Most of the people had left already, but I stayed in the village. When the Russians came, I ran to the forest, and watched that my three houses burned the first day. I saw them take a BTR to my Kamaz in order to start it, as it had weak accumulator. My fourth house was burnt on the day after (13<sup>th</sup>). The sheds were burnt a few days after. Everything we had was taken or destroyed.





They took our metal doors and metal construction materials. They filled a truckload of apples from my garden. All we did, we did for nothing.

The looters came in Urals, Zhigulis, Nivas, BTRs. Some of the people in the BTRs spoke Georgian, so they must be Ossetians. Three people died in the village: 1) woman burnt in her house, 2) man who was shot, 3) man who was beaten and suffered a heart attack.

I made a hole in the ground and stayed for a month in woods w my wife and some neighbours, afterwards I tried to stay in the village.

My wife was beaten four days ago. She's in Disevi now. She's cancer, and is weak. They beat her with the butts of the guns, Ossetians, in Disevi. She's staying in the small bread house w her mother who's 98. They came there and beat her in the yard. She lost consciousness. Her mother tried to help her, but she was kicked and pulled to the ground. She was on the ground when the neighbours came. Venera Okroperidze was the name of the neighbour who helped them. I was in the forest when she was beaten, when I returned she told me they said they would kill me. So I went here to Mereti.

Property documents must be in the civil registry, our cars were registered, too.

Interview no 4AaB. Place: Tkviavi Time: 21 October

Name: Zaza RAZMADZE (Interviewed before, on 9<sup>th</sup> September – see 13AaB)

Age: Born 30.09.1972

Place of birth: Gori

Profession: Mechanic

Place of residence: Tkviavi

Phone number: 899414508

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness/

Willing to testify (y/n): yes

Crimes: Killings, destruction of property, attempted killings, looting

Supporting evidence: photographs, other witnesses, sketch made by himself

Interpreter: Alik Mnatskanyan

Other witnesses: His father (Mirian RAZMADZE), (neighbors) Badri and Kulo MELITAURI (see interview no AaB14), Tengiz and Zaza OKRUASHVILI (also from Tkviavi, see interview no AaB15)

Further steps: Speak to the wife of Misha Melitauri, identify and interview the neighbors Zaza Razmadze was visiting at the time the

I live in Tkviavi with my wife Nino Razmadze and children Gvanca 8 Ana 6 and Giorgi 4. I have lived in Tkviavi most of my life. My main source of income is agriculture. I mainly have gardens with apple trees which is my main source of income.

I share the house with my parents, and my brother, and his family. Parents: Mirian Razmadze (1937, 15 January) and Galina Razmadze (1942, 9 February). Brother: Mamukha R (1971, 22 January). We do agriculture together, all of us.

Beginning of August was peaceful in our village. I saw some Georgian soldiers moving up the road but there were no shootings here at that time. On 10 August, I saw Georgian forces coming down the road, retreating. On the same day, most of the villagers left and people from the neighbouring villages also fled. My brother left w his family and my mother.

When the others fled, I stayed in the village with my father. I think perhaps 50 people were left out of 2500 people in Tkviavi.

On 12<sup>th</sup> August I stayed in my house. Around noon I heard a noise. Together w my father I went out in the street to find out what happened. We saw 16 tanks, I think T72s, w Russian



flags, and 8 Urals. These were immediately followed by Ossetian cars, mainly Nivas and Vilis.

Three guys went out of the cars and approached me and started talking in Russian w Ossetian accent. They were dressed in military uniform, I cannot remember any insignias or distinctive features. Eventually, they wanted to take my Lada '07, than I replied in Georgian and asked for some documents I had in the car. Eventually they gave me the keys back and told me to leave the village.

I drove the car into our apple garden, two kilometres away toward Gori, and hid it under cut grass.

After hiding the car, I went to the neighbours' garden (Zura KAPANADZE), across the road from my own house, on the main road of the village. There was nobody there.

Then the cars came and stopped in the street outside our house. It was about 18 or 18.30. Two cars. One was a white Zhiguli (probably an '06). The second was a green Niva. There were nine people in the cars.

Four persons from the car entered our yard. They were in uniforms, armed with automatic weapons. They did not have the white strips around the arms, and no insignias on the uniforms. They spoke Ossetian. They had a 20 l gasoline tank, which they used to put our house on fire. They went up on second floor and doused it. Then they put fire to our house.

They waited some time to make sure the fire was strong enough. Then they left our yard and went out in the street.

In the next yard there were five other guys, busy looting and burning the house. All in all, they burnt our house, the one next to it and a third house, behind the second one.

I thought my father was still in our house, that's why I didn't run away. I was lying on the ground, looking through the fence. When the fire was becoming strong, I stood up to see better. At that exact time, the four guys came out of the yard. The first guy saw me. He took his AK 47 from his shoulder. I ran immediately around the corner of the cow shed. I heard bursts of automatic fire, probably aimed at me, but I was not hit.

I ran away in my slippers. I lost them and my socks, and I was running barefoot. I ran towards my car. I got thorns in my feet from running. I took a pair of pincers from the car and pulled the thorns from my feet. I returned back to house, taking hidden paths, and came home at app 22.00.

While I was returning, I met Gulo MELITAURI in front of her house. She was totally in shock, and said that her family was killed. The bodies of Misha and Shakro MELITAURI were lying side by side on the veranda. She asked me to help bring the bodies inside the house. They had multiple bullet wounds in the body, none in the head as I could see. Together with neighbours Tamaz KAPANADZE and Roin KORINTELI, I took the two bodies from the veranda and brought them into the room nearby.

Then I left and went to look for my father. Gulo didn't explain anything, but apparently the guys who were at our house, went to her house afterwards and shot the two brothers.



The house was still burning. There was nobody in the village at the time. I was looking for my father in the house, and I was calling for him. I had no response, so I took some water and tried to extinguish the flames. When the fire was put out, I again started searching for my father, called for him. I even looked in the toilet in the yard. Afterwards I went further down in our garden.

I couldn't find my father, and again went back towards the car. It was app midnight. Then by accident, on the way, I met my father. We hid that night in the gardens.

On 13<sup>th</sup> we saw some other houses burn in this part of the village. In the late evening, I left the village w my father and my neighbour Givi KAPANADZE, and his father in law, Dzhora (age app 84), and headed south east. Dzhora was walking w a stick, very slowly. We went all night and reached Igoeti in the morning. We stayed by the road until a bus picked us up and brought us to Tbilisi.

We went to School 184 in Gldani. And stayed there for about two weeks before returning. The rest of my family went to Western Georgia, to relatives of my wife, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August. My father and I returned here at app 28 August.

In my opinion, after the Russians took control of this region, they gave a green light to the Ossetians to loot and burn the houses.

[His father told us that "he had run away in the other direction, and was hiding app 300 meters away, across the fields. There was a lot of shooting, so I stayed on the ground. There was no damage to the house before the paramilitaries came (from bombing/shelling) and we had good relations to our Ossetian neighbors. But now, how can I repair this?"]

[The house of the Razmadzes' house was seemingly completely destroyed by the fire. Although the walls were still standing, they were cracked and damaged, seemingly beyond repair. The roof had partly collapsed – see photographs]

I'm now staying in the one room that survived the fire with my father and mother. My wife and three children are staying in kindergarten no 12, Gori.

Interview no 4AaB. Place: Tkviavi Time: 21 October 2008

Name: Mirian RAZMADZE (Partly interviewed before, on 9<sup>th</sup> September – see 13AaB)

Age: Born 15 January 1937

Place of birth: Tkviavi

Profession: Farmer

Place of residence: Tkviavi

Phone number: 899414508 (to son, Zaza RAZMADZE)

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Willing to testify (y/n): yes

Crimes: Killings, destruction of property, attempted killings, looting

Supporting evidence: photographs, other witnesses

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Other witnesses: His son Zaza RAZMADZE, neighbors Gulo and Badri Melitauri (see interview no AaB14), Tengiz and Zaza Okruashvili (also from Tkviavi, see interview no AaB15)

Further steps: Speak to the wife of Misha Melitauri

I've been living in Tkviavi since my birth. First in my fathers' small house, five hundred meters away from here. When he went to WWII, three sons remained. One was 15, one was 10 and disabled, and I was 5. My mother died before the war, and the three of us stayed together. My father was killed in Kertch.

After graduating school, I served in the Soviet army in Leninakan (Armenia) for three years. After the army, in '62, I went back to Tkviavi and started to build the house in '67. It was finished in 1968. I got married in 1969, to Galina. In the seventies we had the two boys.

I worked in the collective farm, while also taking care of my own land. I share my house with the families of my two boys. I am the owner of the house.

In early August the Georgian army went up the road, on 10 August they returned down the road. The village was bombed in the days 9 to 11 August, four or five people injured.

When the Georgian forces retreated, most of the villagers left and people from the neighbouring villages also fled. My son Mamukha RAZMADZE left w his family and my wife.

When the others fled, I stayed in the village with my son.



On 12<sup>th</sup> August I stayed in my house. Around noon I heard a noise. Together w my son I went out in the street to find out what happened. We saw 16 tanks, I think T72s, w Russian flags, and 8 Urals. These were immediately followed by Ossetian cars, mainly Nivas and Vilis.

After the incident with the three guys demanding my son's car, he left the village with the car in order to hide it. I also left our house around 15.00, because of all the shooting. I ran away into the garden in the direction west. Suddenly there was shooting on all four sides. I found a hole in the ground and stayed there to avoid the bullets, which were flying around. The hole is about 300 meters away from my house.

I heard some screams, but could not tell who was screaming or why.

I stayed in that hole until it was dark. When I went up I saw houses burning in the village. I couldn't see if it was my own house. I started walking south. Then by accident I met my son. That night we stayed in the apple orchards.

On the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>, I left the village together with my son and two other neighbours. We went to Igoeti, etc ...

Property lost, tentative, non-exclusive list:

- House (cannot be repaired), est 50 000 – 100 000 USD
- Furniture, est 15 000 – 25 000
- LG TV, 21" screen, est 100 USD
- Fridge, est 100 USD
- Dishwasher, est 100 USD
- Stereo, est 500 USD
- Kitchenware, est 500 USD
- 2 bulls, est 1000 USD
- Six wooden wine barrels a 200 l, empty, est 350 USD
- VAZ '01 (looted), est 1000 USD
- Perm Tractor (looted), est 1500 USD

Interview no 6AaB. Place: Tkviavi Time: 21 October

Name: Kulnara (MGEBRISHVILI) MELITAURI

Born: 4 November 1934

Place of birth: Tskhinvali

Place of residence: Tkviavi

Phone number: 899530480/897233242 (to Badri, her son)

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Willing to testify (y/n): Y

Crimes: Killings, destruction of property, looting

Supporting evidence: Testimony of AaB13, Zaza and Tengiz Okruashvili, photographs at the site of the killing, including of the type of weapons used, round from an AKS taken from the front yard

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Other witnesses: Zaza Razmadze, Badri's mother (name??)

Further steps:

Other: Problems with memory

I went to school and then the institute of philology in Tskhinvali. My mother was from Tkviavi. She had 4 children, when my father went to war. Then we came here for four years, and this is where I met my future husband, Mikheil (Misha) MELITAURI (born 21 December 1931). My marriage was arranged by my parents, in 1955.

I have three children. Tamila MELITAURI (b. 1956), Badri MELITAURI (1959) and Ekaterine MELITAURI (?).

First we lived in Gori. After Eka was born, we moved to Tkviavi – this house, actually. We built two rooms here first, then a proper house. My husband went to Ordzhonikidze and studied agriculture for 4 years. Then he returned and worked as an agronom on the kolkhoz.

Our additional source of income was our apple garden and some other cultivation our family was responsible for.

In the beginning of August, my husband and I were staying here. I was always here, didn't go out. I could only hear the bombs, occasionally.



Regarding what happened on 12 August, I can't remember anything. Only my neighbors told me later my husband and brother in law were killed. I can only remember there were two bodies in the house, and I was wondering that nobody showed up to give their condolences.

[Answering questions first, then gradually remembering some bits of info:]

I can't remember when Badri left. But my brother in law, Shokra MELITAURI, came that day (12 August) in the morning from Tbilisi, because he couldn't stand the conditions there. His house is a hundred meters down the road, and I remember seeing the two brothers sitting at the veranda there.

Also, when Shokra left early August, he told my husband to come, too, as life is most important and other things less so. But my husband wanted to stay, and in the end Shokra came back to.

I remember the bodies were covered with flies. So I came with vodka and vinegar, soaking sheets and wrapping the bodies in them to stop the smell.

I also remember the bodies lying on the balcony. I wanted to bring them inside, but they were too heavy. Neighbour Roin KORINTELI passed by on the way, and he helped to bring them inside with two other guys, I can't remember whom.

Afterwards I tried to get rid of the flies. I went many times down in the basement to get the vinegar and drench the sheets, but it was very hot and everything dried quickly. The smell of the bodies became very strong. During that time (I now know) that my children were trying to reach the village as they knew their father was dead and I was alive.

I took a big carpet from my room. I wanted to make a hole in the yard, put the carpet in and then the bodies. There were some people coming here and handing out medicines. They had cars and generators. They had Russian translators. I don't know who they were. I asked them to help me with the grave. They came. They buried my husband and his brother in the yard.

Kakha Lomaia came here with Badri and many guards, and I'm very grateful to him. Badri was screaming when he entered the yard -- he thought I was dead, too. Then they found me and brought me to Tbilisi. I was treated with a lot of medicines, and slept a lot.

I know the bodies were taken to Gori and buried there again.

I'm ready to forgive the Ossetians -- there are bad people in all nations. And we cannot continue to live like this. Those who came here and did these things were evil, and them I cannot forgive. But the Ossetians I'm ready to forgive. We should be together because this earth has place for all of us.

My husband was wearing usual clothes that day. He'd been working in the garden. He was buried in these clothes.

In the morning of 12<sup>th</sup> there was a knock on the door, I went down to open, but my husband said no, maybe they'll just go away. But then suddenly there was a burst through the door, an explosion. Then the people came through the door. Two guys entered, speaking Ossetian -- I know the language as I grew up in Tskhinvali. I told them in Georgian I was daughter of





Sosiko, who was in his time respected in Tskhinvali. They could understand Georgian, of course.

These guys behaved very aggressively. They asked for money and valuables. Asked me to open basement garage. I said I had no key, but gave them a big piece of metal with which to open the door. They took our blue lada '06, but left the plates.

When I returned to the balcony the bodies of my husband and brother in law were already lying there in pools of blood. My husband was lying closest to the door, and my brother in law close to the garden. The bodies were covered with bruises, and they had bullet wounds in the neck.

During their exhumation, I remember people were using facial masks.

My father and uncle were shot on the veranda (shows us the bloodstains) by the paramilitaries, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, as witnessed by Zaza Razmadze. My mother was able to hide, and told me what happened. At the time, I was not in the village. The paramilitaries sent a grenade through the gate, and another grenade exploded by the bodies on the veranda. But they were killed with gunfire (according to Zaza and my mother). The paramilitaries took our Zhiguli, after taking off the license plates and our tractor, and stole some of our liquor from the basement. The damaged things there, as well as in the kitchen and many other places in our house. They shot up doors, walls and even our kitchen clock – as if they wanted to stop time. Our animals are also gone, but I don't know who took them.

The bodies were lying on the veranda for five days, then my mother and Zaza dragged them into the kitchen, before dragging them down the stairs and burying them around the corner of the house, in the back yard.



Interview no 7AaB. Place: Kere Time: 21 October

Name: Gennady Mikhailovich OKROPERIDZE

Born: 2 January 1929

Place of birth: Disevi

Place of residence: Disevi

Phone number: 895434541 (Valeri, grandson)

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Willing to testify (y/n): Y

Crimes: destruction of property, looting, beating, forced displacement

Supporting evidence: Testimony taken by Jeffrey Silvermann

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvili

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

Other: Almost blind, but his wife.

I was born and grew up in Disevi. My parents are buried there. I went to school there. I served in 1949 to 1954, in Dnepropetrovsk, and studied in the military academy in Chernygorsk for one year.

When I returned I bought a small house, and a plot where I build a second house. I got married in 1957, on 9 March, to Klara Elizbarashvili (now OKROPERIDZE, 15 October 1933). First son born in 1957, Dariel. In 58, Marine, daughter. In 59, Nino. (We're now in her house in Kere). Temur was born in 1960.

I worked 18 years in Tskhinvali as electrician. I also worked for the Kolkhoz in Disevi.

I was staying in the house together with my wife. I'm the owner. The documents were burned, but the civil registry has the title to the land and house.

In the beginning of August there were shootings and planes flying over, and occasionally bombing/shelling.

The village was first occupied by Russians, I can't remember the date. Some Ossetian bandits also came along. The Russians didn't do anything much directly, but the Ossetian paramilitaries did a lot of damage – supported by the Russians.



One day. I was in my house. Don't know the date. An ossetian guy with the nickname "Totra" GOBOSOV, who has a Georgian wife from Disevi, an OKROPERIDZE, relative of us, came to me with an automatic and asked me first for the tractor and then for money. I said I didn't have any money, so he beat me in the face with fist. I fell and then he kicked me very hard. I still have pains in my back, but the bruises are gone. They shot in the ground close to me, so dirt hit my face. Three other guys were with him. They spoke Ossetian together, but Georgian to me.

My wife was there, she asked them to let me be and uncovered her breasts, saying they too could be her sons. She fainted on top of me. They took my small Perm tractor, my Viliz (car), and all valuables from the house.

Klara: I recognized him by his face. We know him.

Before they entered they had thrown a handgrenade into the yard and killed three cows.

After four days they returned and looted some other agricultural stuff that they didn't touch the first time, the spraying instruments for instance. Then they burned the house. It was the same four guys.

Five days after Jeffrey's visit they returned again and burnt the small wooden house in the yard where we were staying. There were still a few rooms in the house that were not destroyed, so we hid there afterwards. But they saw my wife, they told her to go the center of the village. Then they put fire to the house again, perhaps with gasoline, and burnt it down completely together with the sheds and storing houses. I hid in the basement, and survived the fire.

[As I know: In the beginning these guys did not burn the houses of Ossetians. But they had a fight between themselves, one guy was killed and brought close to where Otar Razmadze was living. After this the Ossetians' houses were also burnt.]

They stopped beating me, and went into the house to search it.

Klara: When they chased me away, in order to burn the house, I sat in the nearby garden. I returned, believing my husband was killed. I called his name and he replied from the basement, and we met again.

Then we hid in the basement together, I also have poor eyesight. We stayed the night there, very afraid, even at the sounds of the cats.

Gennady: Next day, my wife was losing her mind, talking nonsense, and I decided it was time to go. She lost consciousness, had seizures. We contacted an Ossetian neighbour, a woman, who lent us her telephone. We called Temur, said we needed to leave, and he came by car, they let him in for 15 minutes, so he collected us and we left Disevi on 14 October.

Klara: The Russian soldiers often came around gave me bread and said kind things to me.



Klara: When my husband was beaten, the guys forced the door open, shouted and swore at my husband. Then they beat him and kicked him, while I was begging them to let him live. They were lead by "Totra". All in all those guys came to us three or four times.

Three people killed in our village. One guy killed in his yard, one woman burnt in her house, and one guy died after being beaten.

Property lost, not exclusive list:

House

Tractor

Vilis

Furniture

Various sheds and storing houses

5 cows (two were looted)

Interview no 8AaB. Place: Brotsleti Time: 22 October

Name: Akaki KHMIADASHVILI

Born: 25 October 1930

Place of birth: Brotsleti

Place of residence: Brotsleti

Phone number: 899227270 (son, Iosip/Soso)

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Profession: Farmer

Willing to testify (y/n): Y

Crimes: destruction of property, looting,

Supporting evidence: Testimony of wife

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Other witnesses:

Further steps:

Other:

I would like to say first, there were no Ossetians in this valley before. My mother is from the Georgian village Kurta, and Tskhinvali was Armenian, Jewish and Georgian. There were no Ossetians here.

I've lived in this house since 1967. I'm the owner. I live here with my wife, Lili KHMIADASHVILI (b. ), and my two sons, Nugzar KHMIADASHVILI(1956) and Iosip KHMIADASHVILI (1961). Both have wives and two children each.

The bombardment started August 8. Nugzar was in Tbilisi. We were afraid. My sons brought the children and wives to the basement. Soso brought the 2 wives and 4 children to the Gori highway the next day. They went by bus to Gori.

The bombardment continued, and bombs hit many places in the neighbourhood. There were many planes in the sky above us. Soso went back and forth with car, trying to hide and save our things. On 11 August Soso left with my wife, who just had an operation and could not bear the noise. They went to Gori. The car a LUAZ had a problem in Tkviavi, so he left the car there and now it's gone. Afterwards Soso did not return here.



At about the same time the Georgian soldiers left, I think. They had been based above the village, but during retreat they came close to our village. Three soldiers were killed in the village, I think, and six wounded.

I closed everything – gate and house – in order to pretend the house was empty. Then I went out. But afterwards I changed my mind. I even opened the gate in order to show them I would give them everything they wanted. Soso had told me to give them anything they wanted if they came. I was alone in the neighbourhood, since the road is here and it's dangerous. The others who stayed were hiding in other parts of the village.

First came the Russians on the 12<sup>th</sup>, searching for Georgian soldiers and military equipment. One Dagestani officer stayed with me, while the others searched the house. I told the guy they could take whatever they like, but he said they were not like the Ossetians and that they wouldn't touch anything. They left the neighbourhood without finding either Georgian soldiers or equipment, as far as I know, and without taking anything from us.

In the evening of the next day, it was getting dark, but I saw a Niva car coming with plates w "YuOR" on them. I was on the street at the time, returning from a neighbour, and saw that it stopped by my gate. People entered through the gate, I don't know how many. Some of our things, plates, sheets and various other things from the house were packed already, as we were preparing to flee. They took this. I hid further down the road while they took our things. As I knew they would kill witnesses, I stayed away. The car then went back to Ossetia.

Some days later a neighbour told me somebody was stealing my harvest. During four days the emptied my peach orchard. Last year it grew 27 tons of peaches, worth 27 000 lari. This year it would have yielded at least 20 tons. They took the wooden boxes I had stored there, and came with Urali to take away the fruit. They brought Ossetian people there by UAZ cars. I saw them from our neighbours' garden, but I left not to be seen. I saw that there were even women among the fruitpickers.

I stayed here all the time.



Interview no 9AaB. Place: Dvani Time: 23 October

Name: Does not want to give name, his house is 100 m from the border (He's mentioned in testimony of Temur KOPADZE)

Born:

Place of birth:

Place of residence: Dvani

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Victim/witness

Profession:

Willing to testify (y/n): N

Crimes: destruction of property, looting,

Supporting evidence: Testimony of Temur KOPADZE

Interpreter: Ramaz Rekhviashvili

Other witnesses: AaB6, KOPADZE

Further steps:

Other:

On 12th of August, I think, the day after Georgian soldiers retreated from Dvani during the bombardment, which lasted from the 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Russians came first on 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> looked through the village, took some Georgian munitions and left. Afterwards the looters came. My sister's house was the first to burn, it's close to the entrance to the village from the north side. Two houses were burnt on the 12<sup>th</sup>, they were not looted, I think. I did not see who did it, and my sister and her family had already fled.

After burning the houses in the periphery, the guys went to the center. I tried to save things from my sister's car. Some things I managed to take out and place in the neighbour's garden, but later this was also taken. I heard some shooting from the center of the village. When the looters returned, I saw them, not their faces only their URAL car. I, and some of the other villagers helping me there, we hid in the bushes.

When were sure the Ural had left, I heard the screams of a woman. I went in the direction together with some neighbours. We found the couple. The wife was crying and the husband was dying. They were just outside their own house, they had been on their way toward my sister's burning house when the looters saw them on their way out of the village. I saw at least



two bullet wounds in his chest. He was lying in the stairs/path up to the main road, swimming in blood. We carried him into the house, put him on the couch and he died there. He was born in 1960, Ervandi (Ermali) Bezhanishvili. They had no children.

His wife, Nato BEZHANISHVILI, said that they'd been at home. He wanted to help with the burning houses, and she tried to stop him as she was afraid Ossetians were in the village. He still went out of the house, and up toward the main road. The looters shot him, probably from the car or outside, and he was lying 20 or 30 meters from the main road.

Next day I left for Khashuri. Later I heard that the cousin of Ermali helped burying him in the yard. Nato is from Batumi, and she left to her relatives there, although she still returns, now and then, to the grave.

A house was burned one week ago, but after the Georgian police came things have been ok. All in all, I think 48 houses were burnt in the village, three of them less damaged, while three more houses were bombed. There were about 350 houses in this all-Georgian village. The Georgian villages above us, Nuli and Avnevi, are deserted and destroyed. I think no Georgians are left there, maybe one or two houses with Ossetians.





Interview no 10AaB. Place: Dvani Time: 23 October

Name: Giorgi Megarishvili

Born: 6 September 1959

Place of birth: Dvani

Place of residence: Dvani

Phone number:

Type of interviewee: Witness

Profession: n/a Disabled

Willing to testify (y/n): Y

Crimes: Killings,

Supporting evidence: Testimony of Temur KOPADZE

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvil

Other witnesses: AaB6, KOPADZE, October AaB9

Further steps:

Other:

We were sitting here in the square, I think it was about 13.00 on the 13<sup>th</sup>, when Vasiko was killed. Just a few people left at the time, mostly the old. I couldn't leave because I'm disabled, problem w leg, therefore I stayed in the village.

Three armed guys came, in mil uniforms w white armbands. They approached us from three sides, perhaps in order that we could not run away. On guy with an AK47 came forward and asked me to kiss the crosses on his chest, one white, one red, one black, I think. Her put them forward and I kissed them. They spoke in Georgian but with an Ossetian accent. Then they asked Vasiko Mekarishvili, 44 ys old, but he would not. He was mentally ill, and got up and swore at them. He went out of the metal grid we're sitting in, and behind were you're sitting.

Vasiko took one of the guys at the neck and pushed him. The guy responded by putting his AK47 to the throat of Vasiko. He fired one shot, and Vasiko died immediately in the spot we've marked behind you. They were drunk. It was first and last time I saw them. I don't think they were from the neighbouring villages, about 40 – 50 years old.

Then they ran away, and came across Alyosha Kokoshvili, as he told me. He was also told to kiss the cross, and they put the rifle muzzle in his mouth to scare him. We took the body to his house and he was buried there.



Interview no 11AaB. Place: Pkhevinisi Time: 23 October

Name: Nunu CHELAIDZE

Born: 25 February 1952

Place of birth: Tskhinvali

Place of residence: Pkhevinisi

Phone number: 898157338

Type of interviewee: Witness/Victim

Profession: Teacher

Willing to testify (y/n): Y

Crimes: Killings,

Supporting evidence:

Interpreter: Simon Papuashvil

Other witnesses: Durmiskhan BEDIANASHVILI

Further steps: Get medical documents

Other: GYLA/Russian justice initiative is working w the case re ECHR (they will have the explanation in more detail)

My husband and I, our son and a granddaughter (child of my daughter Shorena RAZMADZE, 2 October 1975) live here. On 11<sup>th</sup> the bombing started. We were here, although most of the women and children had left at that time.

At around 17.00 there was panic in the village as people said the Ossetians and Russians were coming. We (us + old couple, Rusiko and Avto BIBILURI) wanted to take the normal road, but some Georgian soldiers retreating told me that the Russians were already there.

So we went by byways south. Many Georgian soldiers there, many of them wounded. There were both civilians and military there, lot of chaos, and bombings and shootings. But we went all the way to Gori, but were told it was not safe there. We went to a village Khidistavi 3 km to the south, but felt unsafe even there. So all four of them went to Igoeti to stay w the relatives of the two old people.

In Igoeti all the houses were crowded because of all the IDPs, even this house we wanted to go to was full. So we called a couple who had remained in Pkhevinisi, and they told us it was more or less safe and peaceful in the village.



So we left from Igoeti after midnight on 12<sup>th</sup>, my husband, our neighbour Durmiskhan BEDIANASHVILI and I, in order to go back. Our car was a Volga. We went first to Gori, and then through Variani, heading home. No cars on the road in the dark. On the way home from Gori we met two guys who said it was calm, so we decided to continue. We approached Variani. Some children and women were leaving. We asked what was happening. They said it was still unsafe and wanted to leave. Still we continued.

Then we came to the turn of the road by Sakasheti. I cannot remember clearly, but I think we made a stop there, because I remember seeing a hand coming through the window. Something fell down in the front of the car, by my husband. There was an explosion. I remember my husband saying, I can't feel my legs.

When I woke up, I was outside the car, in the shade of a tree. I saw my husband a few meters away from me, moaning. I tried to reach him but couldn't, as I could not use my legs. I later learned I had a bullet wound in my right leg, above the ankle which went through without touching the bone-. A Georgian hostage with the Russian soldiers afterwards told me that our car had been fired upon first, and forced to stop.

I remember a young Russian soldier approaching us, asking who was the third man in the car. Our neighbour, I answered. He fled during the night, he said. I asked for help, medical assistance, and for my husband as well, because he had bloodstains on his clothes. The soldier said, your husband is already dead. But I didn't believe him.

Then they carried me close to some tanks. They wanted to put me on the tank to carry me. There were some civilians there, and I thought they were Ossetians. The Russians asked them to help putting me on the tank. They spoke Georgian, but I still thought they were Ossetians and screamed at them not to touch me. Later I learned they were Georgians, detained as hostages.

I asked the Russian soldiers why they shot at us, but they answered it was Saakashvili who killed your husband

I was taken to a small field hospital together with a heavily wounded Russian (chest wounds) soldier who was already on the tank. They treated me there with first aid. I wanted to go to my husband, who was lying behind the tree, but my legs wouldn't carry me. I had some rings, necklaces, documents and money (12 000 GEL) in my bag. I asked for it, and saw that it was turned inside out. The Russian soldier put the documents back, but the valuables and money were gone.

The field outside of the hospital was full of military vehicles, tanks, soldiers and equipment. Then they moved in the direction of North East, there were planes above us, bombing some places. Later I learned they moved to destroy a Georgian unit that was left in Shindisi. I went with them, by foot. In Sakasheti I went to people and asked for help in getting my husband. But the people there were afraid, as a young guy had been shot there in the morning.

I got a stick and a bottle of water and walked toward Shindisi, where I have relatives. In the evening I reached the railroad station in Shindisi. The military operation was finished there. A military vehicle was on fire and the bodies of Georgian soldiers were inside. Also a pick up with Georgian soldiers was on fire nearby.



I saw an old man inside the yard of the house, and he told me about the operation against the unit. I asked for a cell phone, to call my children, but he didn't have one, and so I continued walking. Then I met two younger men who had phones, and I called my daughter. When I called her she'd received news that we were both killed, and she was hysterical w mixed emotions when I called. I asked for help w my heavily wounded husband.

I was taken to some family in Shindisi and they treated me for four days. My host was Dzhudzhuna Patsinashvili. I felt bad. Four ribs were broken, and one of them pushed on my chest, in the region of the heart. It was painful breathing, I had bruises on other parts of my body and the bullet wound in the leg.

There were also 6 heavily wounded Georgian soldiers staying in Shindisi w a family, undercover. I treated them. I was taken to Gori hospital w an ambulance. My daughter had arranged this with some women in Gori hospital. After one night there I was transferred to Gudushauri hospital in Tbilisi. After 40 days my family told me that my husband was dead. I later learned that his body stayed behind the tree for four days before the reps of the Georgian patriarchy who took the body and buried it in Tbilisi.

There were similar incidents in Khviti and Shindisi. Two women were killed in an attack on the car they were sitting in in Shindisi.

[The daughter of one of the killed women (the killed woman's name is Dodo Gaksevanishvili) later told us that Mamukha Berekatsashvili, from Variani, was the driver of the car fired upon in Shindisi, with the result that two female passengers were killed.]



Interview 12SP, Place: Dvani Time: 23 October

Joint statement of Zakaria Mamagulashvili Akaki Mamagulashvili

Date and place of birth: 1958 9 April, Dvani (Zakaria)

Permanent Address: Kvemo Ponichala, Soganlugi, Giganti Settlement Flat No2 Apt. 32

Tel: 891 244 579

Profession: Mechanic

Willingness to testify: Y

I was born in Dvani and went to school here. When I became 16 I went to Kareli I studies on Mechanic Faculty and studied 3 years there. After completed my studies I worked as a tractorist in Dvani. I went to Krasnokamenst Russia to serve my military service. I stayed there for two years.

After completing military service I returned back to Georgia and stayed in Tbilisi. I forked on construction for 7 years. After that I worked as a tractorist until today. I also have some land which I take care of. My main source of income is income that I generate by working as a tractorist.

My father Tariel Mamagulashvili, 1934 14 February, was working as a post man of our village for the most part of his life. My mother Mariam Mamagulashvili, (1936 2 February) died in 1990 because of diabetis. My father stayed with my brother Akaki Mamagulashvili, 1961 6 July, and his family.

After the death of my mother, my father met a woman in Tskhinvali. We do not know the name of that woman (probably Rosa, she is Jewish), but we know that she was kind of a girl friend of my father. Father was traveling to Tskhinvali quite often to meet his girl friend. He would usually stay there for five days one week and than come back to the village again.

Father went to Tskhinvali on 6 of Agugust just before the war has begun. He took a public bus which was working at that time. We did not have any contact with father during the war, and family was worried about his destiny.

On 13 of September, some man called on my brother's phone and said that our father was dead asked him to take the body of our father. My brother was stayed in Dvani at that time and the village was still controlled by the Russian and Ossetian Forces. Later on the same day, Rosa called on my brother's phone and said that she would try to arrange transfer of the body to the village. Brother was told that the body would be trainferred to the naighboing willage Muguti to Zaur Tataev, who knew the family very well. At around 15:00 I went together with three of my neighbours, TEngiz Kopadze, Muraz Mamagulshvili, Tengiz Mamagulashvili, to collect the body of my father. We went to Muguli and took the body on our hands.

The body had clear signs of violence. We did not undress him because the body was already rotting, but the broses were clearly visible on his face and on the neck, which had dark blue dots and dry blood on it. I did not see any signs of shooting on his body.

We buried the body on the yeard of our house on the same day. It was not safe to go to the cemetery, because there were drunk Russian and Ossetian Soldiers all over and I wanted do avoid any kind of confrontation.



We have not heard anything from Rosa. She did not say anything about how my father died. We do not have her contacts either to clarify something. There were no medical certificates or any kind of document stating the cause of death.

Our neighbor Vasia saw my father approximately five days before we learned about his death on Russia channel Vesti. It is not clear what he spoke about on the interview but we presume that through that interview Ossetians and Russians learned about my father staying in Tskhinvali and killed him.

Interview 13 SP, Place: Brotsleti, Time: 22 October

**Statement of Vladimer Arkhipov and Nanuli Arkhipova**

Date of Birth Vlad: 1946 16 August, City of Ribinsk

Date of Birth: 1941 25 September, Brotsleti

Place of residence: Brotsleti

Profession: Vadim- Mechanizator. Wife – Housewife

Number of Daughter Valentina – 891 16 61 02/898 70 93 92

Willingness to testify: Y

1. We met in Senaki in 1970. We got married there and our daughter Valentina Arkhipova was born there on 1975 December 4. We lived in Senaki for 10 years and in 1980 we moved to Brotsleti;
2. My husband was working in Kolkhoz as a mechanizator so did I. My husband had stroke during first Ossetia war because of the emotional distress that he had to undergo at that time. He was afraid that Georgians will discriminate him because he was Russian. After experiencing stroke my husband was unable to work. He received very small amount of pension which was not sufficient for his treatment. We had to spend all our savings for his treatment. This savings amounted to 8 000 GEL. He undergone major treatment after the stroke in Tbilisi republican hospital;
3. Since that we do not have any income. We feed ourselves by growing crops and fruits in our garden. Also we receive pension 59 GEL me and Vladimer 55. Our daughter is unable to help us because she does not work and she has three small children.
4. On approximately 7<sup>th</sup> of August we heard shootings in the morning. Shootings were coming from the West side. There were some planes flying over the village and they started firing at the village. There were not military in the village at that time. Me and my husband were hiding in the Garden. Something fell on our house and made a fire. I went bit close to the house to see the fire from the close distance and at the same time I heard a bang behind my back. After the bang I heard my husband screaming. When I approached him I saw that he was all bleeding and his leg was a meter away from him. I started to call for help. My husband was unconscious. The ambulance arrived from Tkviavi I think after 10 minutes and they took us together to Tkviavi we they made a bandage on his leg that was cut by a bomb. Then we were taken to Gori to see a doctor. A doctor named Lia told us that situation was difficult and that my husband had to taken to Tbilisi immediately. We were taken to Tbilisi to Gudushauri hospital. Then my husband was operated by Doctor called Levan Nachkepia. The leg was cut on 16<sup>th</sup> of August. On 19<sup>th</sup> we were taken to Sepsis Center where we stayed until 30<sup>th</sup> of August.
5. We stayed at brother Roberti Purichamiashvili apartment in Tbilisi for three days. Then we returned to the village and are staying at my brothers house now. We have



no money to buy medicine. My husband has strong pain, especially in the night and I do not have any painkillers to give to him.

6. While we were away a bomb hit our house, which is completely destroyed now.