

RMS⁺



REVUE MILITAIRE SUISSE INTERNATIONALE : GEORGIA





OSCE observers have played an essential role in the monitoring of actions and cease-fires in Georgia in 2008.

Editorial

Small States and Security

COL (GS) Dr. Alexandre J. Vautravers
Editor in Chief, RMS+

In today's New World 'Disorder', small states have much more to fear than larger and more powerful ones. Their posture and their autonomous defense against military great powers is delicate. They often have only very little to offer in exchange for their "protection" by states or alliances.

Georgia gained its independence in 1991, in a time of great hopes but also great instabilities. Like many other states, security came second to the priorities of economic transformation and development.

Many small states typically suffer from a near-complete lack of hard power. This may be attributable to a lack of investment, but is also often due -at least in part- to internal political divisions and inhibitions.

Small states, by nature, often have hybrid geography or populations, which may become fault lines and liabilities in times of crisis, or conflict.

For all these reasons, the *Swiss Military Review* (RMS+) has published a dossier on Georgia in its No. 3/2023 edition, released in May of the same year. These articles are published here in their original form.

The realization of this first RMS+ International (RMSINT+) and English language special edition is an attempt to develop and grow our traditional French-speaking audience and readership. We can only hope that this will spark curiosity, reactions, contributions, and that it will encourage authors and contributors to submit many more.

We would like to thank Mrs. Sophia Babunashvili as well as the Georgian Ministry of Defense for their help in the realization of this edition.

A+V

The publication RMSINT+ is supported by the Swiss Officers Society :

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Schweizerische Offiziersgesellschaft
Société Suisse des Officiers
Società Svizzera degli Ufficiali

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IBAN: ARMS, 1009 Pully PostFinance CH84 0900 0000 1000 5209 7

Print: PCL Presses Centrales SA, chemin du Chêne 14, 1020 Renens, SWITZERLAND

ISSN 0035-368X

Revue Militaire Suisse (RMS+) is an official publication organ of the Swiss officers society. It belongs to the cantonal sections of Romandie and Berne. It is edited by the Association de la Revue militaire suisse (ARMS). The goal of RMS+ is, among others, to facilitate exchanges on military matters and develop the knowledge and general education of officers. The texts published reflect only the opinions of their authors. RMS+ is open to all contributors or those wishing to work constructively in order to improve Switzerland's security and defence.

MAJOR GENERAL Mathias Tüscher, President, ARMS



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International

Georgia's Defense Organization

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Since the independence of Georgia in 1991, the defense organization has changed constantly. The formation of the Georgian Defense Forces took place as the country suffered several wars. Security structures were gradually changed from the Soviet to the Western model, although these reforms lacked consistency.

On April 30, 1990, the National Guard of Georgia was established, laying the foundation for the formation of the Defense Forces of Georgia. Georgia's independence was declared on April 9, 1991. Soviet troops were to withdraw from the territory of Georgia and create an army based on state interests. In 1991, the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Georgia was established, along with the creation of the institutional mechanisms for the management of the Georgian Defense Forces. At the same time, in 1991-1993, among a financial and economic crisis, military actions were taking place - civil war, war in the Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia. During the 1990s, there was no strategic vision for the development of Georgian defense forces. Processes were mainly conducted in accordance with the established practice in former Soviet army.

A new stage of the development of the Georgian Defense Organization and the Georgian Defense Forces began after outlining international cooperation with the USA, NATO, and EU member states. Taking into account the experiences and recommendations of the Western countries, the processes and management culture of the defense forces have also changed.

Georgia's cooperation with NATO began in 1992, when Georgia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). The country's aspiration to join the Alliance began in 2002, when it declared interest to join the Alliance at the NATO summit held in Prague. Since 2018, this aspiration has been enshrined with the Constitution. In terms of compatibility with NATO, at the initial stage, in 2003, the main issue was the establishment of democratic control over the defense forces, which was made possible by

the minister as a political figure and the civilian office of the ministry - since 2003, the management of the Ministry of Defense changed: the military and civilian components were separated - the defense forces are now headed by a military and a civil Office. Current defense management is Western in nature. Since 2005, it has become especially important for the Alliance to develop the mechanisms for long-term planning of policies and resources and to use them to consistently increase the country's defense and combat capabilities of its units.

The management and control systems are becoming similar to Western ones, as well as the budget - as a result of the reforms carried out by the Ministry of Defense, all the main financial tools are in line with NATO standards and best practices of the Allies. However, today's defense budget is one billion two hundred and sixty million GEL, which may require further increase in the light of the challenges facing the country and the dynamics of global and regional threats.

The USA and other strategic partners have made a significant contribution to Georgia's defense transformation process. The strategic framework of US-Georgia cooperation in the field of defense is the Charter on Strategic Partnership signed in 2009.

US support is focused on such directions as equipment modernization, special operations forces, cyber security, increasing deployment capabilities in international operations, support for wounded servicemen and their families, as well as educational programs. Since 1997, Georgia has received approximately 600 million USD as part of US foreign military financing.

With the continuous assistance of the French Government, the air defense capabilities of Georgia have increased. The Ministry has signed an important agreement, which ensures the continuation of the acquisition of air defense systems. In the process of introducing the risk manage-