*Tbilisi, Georgia, 11 December 08*

# GEORGIAN PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL AID

## Executive Summary

On behalf of Transparency International Georgia, the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) program asked a representative sample[1] of 1,837 Georgians eight questions about international aid to their country. The questions were posed as part of a larger countrywide opinion survey conducted by CRRC in November 2008.

In face-to-face interviews, CRRC pollsters asked the following eight questions:

1. Why do western countries give aid to Georgia?
2. What are the top three priorities for spending aid money in Georgia?
3. What is the best way to help people in Georgia?
4. Who do you think will most benefit from this aid in Georgia?
5. What do you expect will happen with aid money in Georgia?
6. Who do you trust most to spend this aid money in Georgia?
7. What is the most effective way of making sure that aid money is not stolen or wasted in Georgia?
8. Does providing IDPs with permanent housing mean that IDPs will not be able to eventually return to their homes?

The survey yielded several interesting insights:

- Trust of foreign donors is relatively high. Only a quarter of respondents take an unambiguously negative view of donor motivations. Nearly half of Georgians identified foreign donor governments as the players they trusted most to spend aid money. Georgians prefer donor oversight over aid money to any other single form of control.
- Nevertheless, nearly half of Georgians are pessimistic about the use of aid money, thinking that most of it will not be well spent.
- For Georgians, helping IDPs and those directly affected by the conflict, and directly giving money to poor people, are the top priorities for aid. Most Georgians believe that the best way to help people is to directly give them money, rather than channel it through the hands of the government or independent experts.
- Over half of Georgians see no contradiction between building houses for IDPs now and their eventual return to their original homes.

*This study was produced as part of a project financed by the OSCE Mission to Georgia.*

[1] People living in the breakaway republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia were not polled in this survey. For methodological reasons, the questions on aid were only posed to ethnic Georgians; the views of ethnic minorities are therefore not captured in this survey. As the survey data has not yet been weighted, the figures presented here are not final, but CRRC is confident that these preliminary numbers are within a few percentage points of final weighted figures.
Figures in charts do not add up to 100% due to rounding and omission of the "answer refused" category.



თბილისი 0108, რუსთაველის გამზ. 26, III სართ. • 26, Rustaveli Avenue, Third Floor, Tbilisi 0108, Georgia
ტელეფონი/Phone: + (995 32) 92 14 03; 99 93 35; 93 21 29 • ფაქსი/Fax: + (995 32) 92 02 51
ელ-ფოსტა/E-mail: info@transparency.ge • www.transparency.ge

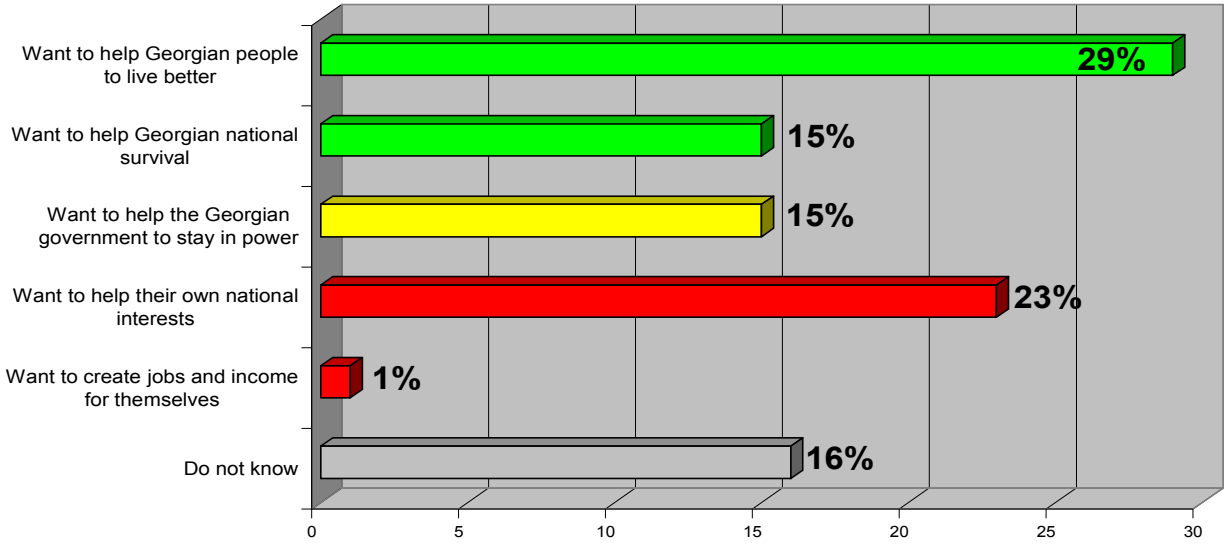
## 1. Why do western countries give aid to Georgia?

- **Many Georgians ascribe positive motivations to countries that give aid to Georgia.**

Nearly a third of Georgians believe that western countries give aid to Georgia because they want to help Georgian people to live better. A further 15% think that donors want to help Georgian national survival.

Nearly one in seven Georgians believes that donors' primary motivation is to help the Georgian government to stay in power.

Only a quarter of respondents take an unambiguously negative view of donor motivations, suspecting that those giving funds want to help their own national or personal interests.




## 2. What are the top three priorities for spending aid money in Georgia?

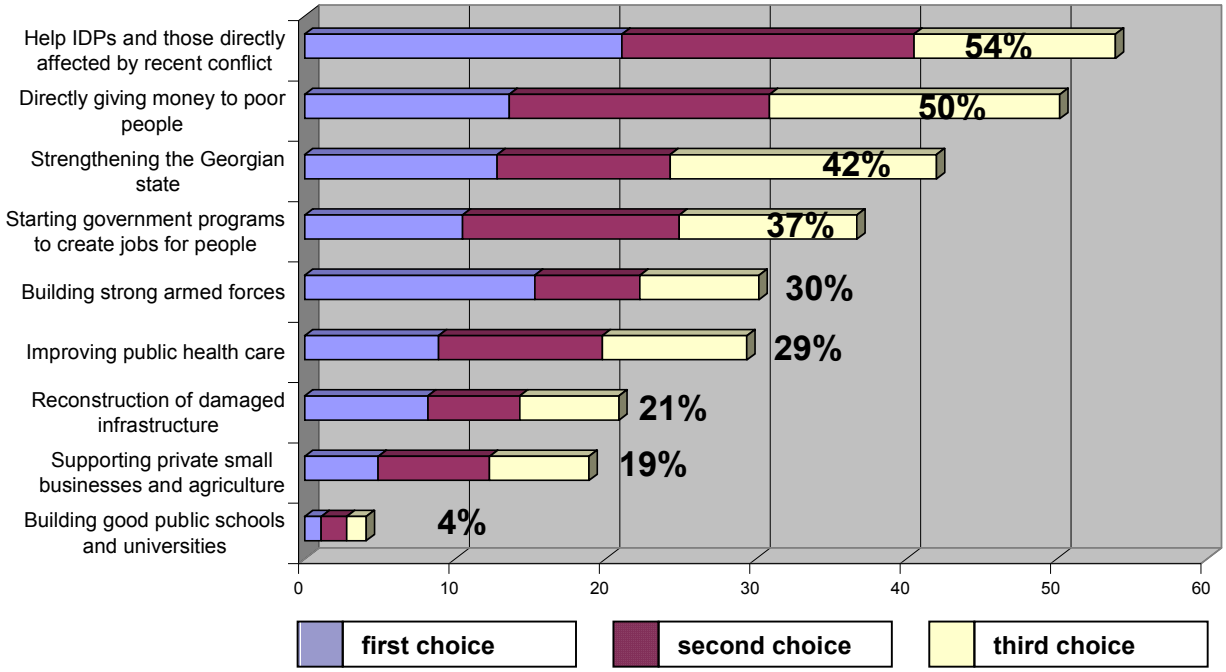
- **For Georgians, helping IDPs and those directly affected by the conflict, and directly giving money to poor people, are the top priorities for aid.**

Public opinion on what to spend aid funds on is highly fragmented. People were asked what the top three priorities for aid expenditure should be, allowing multiple choices out of a very limited menu. Nevertheless, even the two items that came out on top only have the support of half the population each – meaning that roughly as many Georgians disagree as agree on these priorities.

Respondents named humanitarian themes most often amongst their top priorities. Maybe surprisingly, supporting the poor was cited nearly as frequently as helping IDPs and other victims of war. Strengthening the state came in a distant third.

Job creation, military expenditure and health care were embraced as high priority targets for aid by about one third of respondents each – or, read differently, two thirds of Georgians do not regard these issues as priorities.

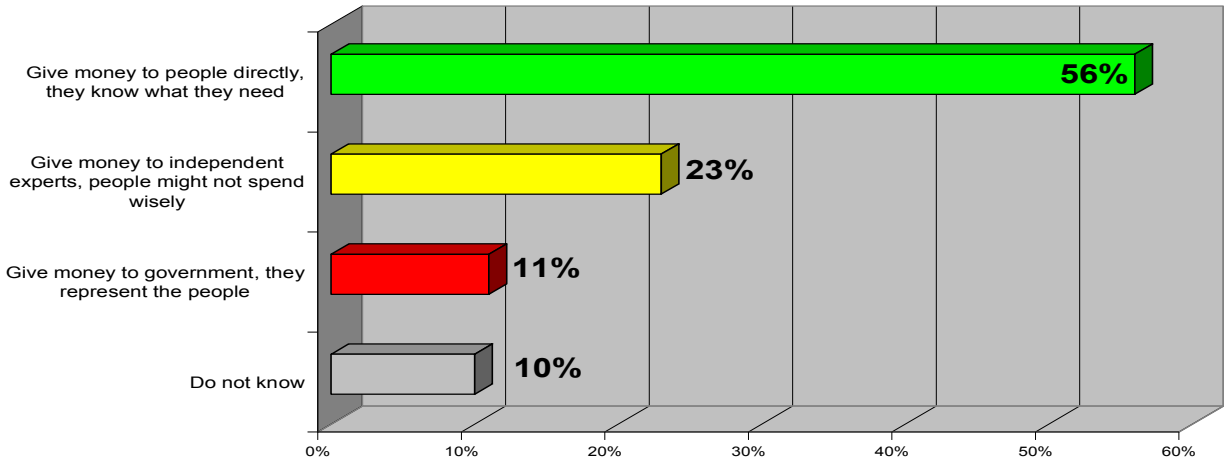

თბილისი 0108, რუსთაველის გამზ. 26, III სართ. • 26, Rustaveli Avenue, Third Floor, Tbilisi 0108, Georgia
ტელეფონი/Phone: + (995 32) 92 14 03; 99 93 35; 93 21 29 • ფაქსი/Fax: + (995 32) 92 02 51
ელ-ფოსტა/E-mail: info@transparency.ge • www.transparency.ge




## 3. What is the best way to help people in Georgia?

- **Most Georgians believe that the best way to help people is to directly give them money.**

A clear majority of respondents stated that the best way to help people would be to simply give them money. Just over one in five respondents preferred funds to be allocated by independent experts. Only one in ten Georgians thinks that the best way to help people is to give money to the government.





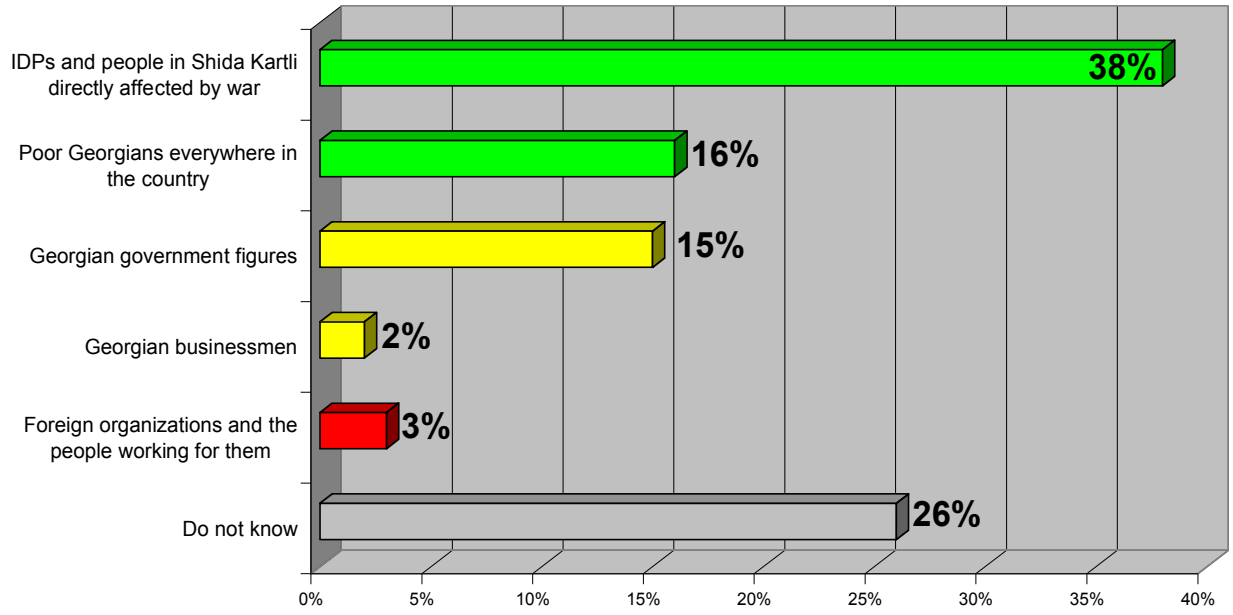

თბილისი 0108, რუსთაველის გამზ. 26, III სართ. • 26, Rustaveli Avenue, Third Floor, Tbilisi 0108, Georgia
ტელეფონი/Phone: + (995 32) 92 14 03; 99 93 35; 93 21 29 • ფაქსი/Fax: + (995 32) 92 02 51
ელ-ფოსტა/E-mail: info@transparency.ge • www.transparency.ge

## 4. Who do you think will most benefit from this aid in Georgia?

- **Nearly forty percent of Georgians think that those directly affected by the war will most benefit from foreign aid.**

An unusually high 26% of respondents answered this question with “do not know”, maybe indicating a wait-and-see attitude.

One in six Georgians named the poor in general as the likely prime beneficiaries of aid; just as many people suspect that government figures will usurp that role.



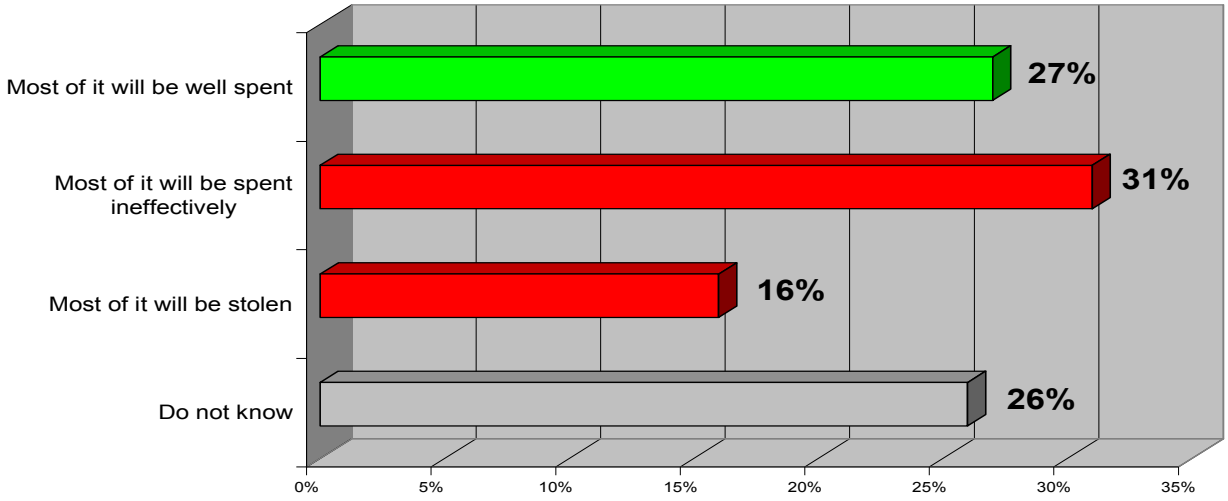

## 5. What do you expect will happen with aid money in Georgia?

- **Only 27% of Georgians believe that most aid money will be well spent.**

Nearly half of Georgians are pessimistic about the use of aid money, thinking that most of it will not be well spent. Ineffective spending of aid is a far larger concern than outright corruption.

As with the previous question, an unusually high proportion of respondents – over a quarter of the total – answered this question with “do not know”.


თბილისი 0108, რუსთაველის გამზ. 26, III სართ. • 26, Rustaveli Avenue, Third Floor, Tbilisi 0108, Georgia
ტელეფონი/Phone: + (995 32) 92 14 03; 99 93 35; 93 21 29 • ფაქსი/Fax: + (995 32) 92 02 51
ელ-ფოსტა/E-mail: info@transparency.ge • www.transparency.ge



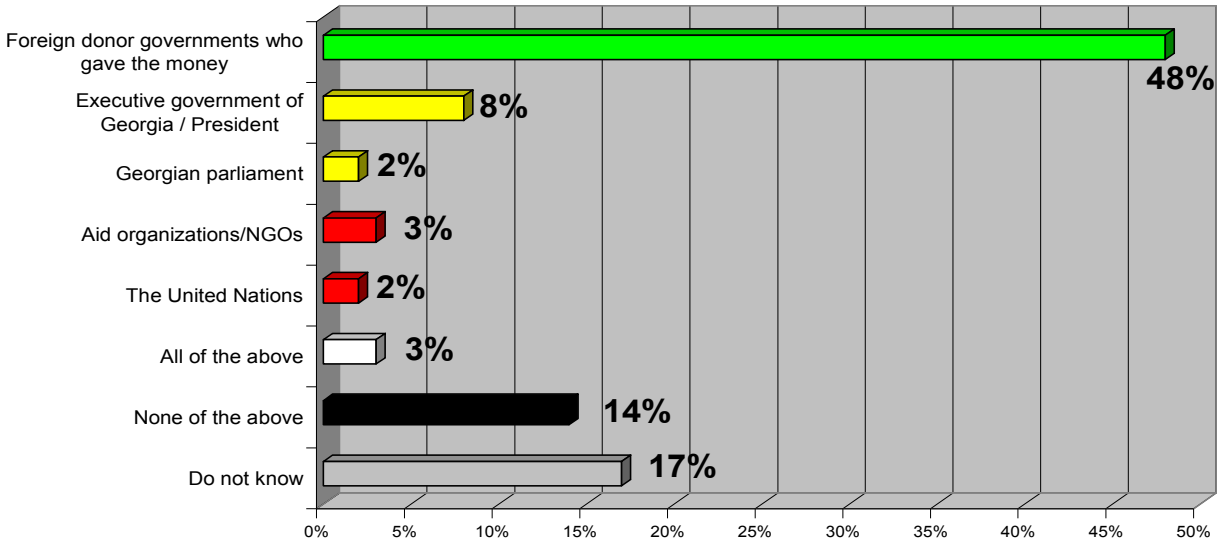

## 6. Who do you trust most to spend this aid money in Georgia?

- **Where the spending of aid money is concerned, Georgians trust foreign donors far more than their own institutions.**

Nearly half of Georgians identified foreign donor governments as the players they trusted most to spend aid money.

The executive government / president ranks a distant second, with less than ten percent of citizens expressing their trust where spending aid is concerned. Aid organizations, NGOs and the United Nations fare even worse, with just five percent between them. (However, three percent said that they trusted all players; arguably, adding this to each of the individual scores might improve the picture somewhat.)

Over fourteen percent of Georgians flatly stated that they trusted “none of the above” to spend the aid money, and 17% do not know who to place their trust in.





თბილისი 0108, რუსთაველის გამზ. 26, III სართ. • 26, Rustaveli Avenue, Third Floor, Tbilisi 0108, Georgia
ტელეფონი/Phone: + (995 32) 92 14 03; 99 93 35; 93 21 29 • ფაქსი/Fax: + (995 32) 92 02 51
ელ-ფოსტა/E-mail: info@transparency.ge • www.transparency.ge

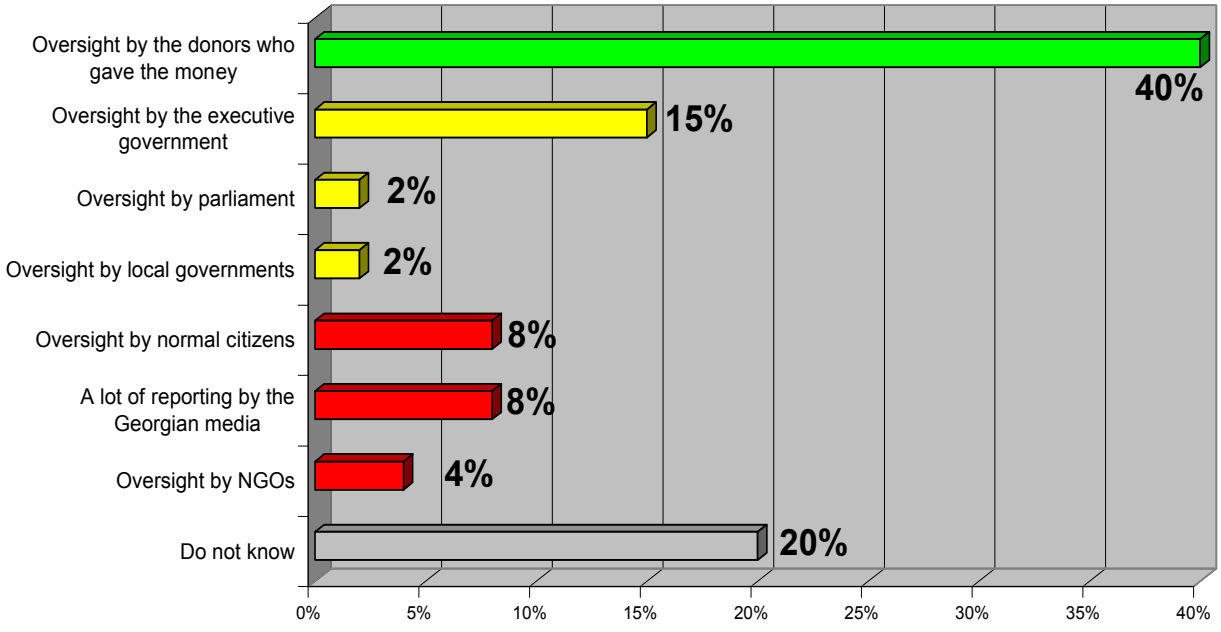
## 7. What is the most effective way of making sure that aid money is not stolen or wasted in Georgia?

- **Georgians prefer donor oversight over aid money to any other single form of control.**

Echoing the theme of trust in donors, forty percent of respondents thought that donor oversight is the best antidote to potential theft and waste of aid money. The executive government comes a clear but distant second with 15%.

Oversight by ordinary citizens, the Georgian media and NGOs combined – the "civil society option" – is thought to be most effective by only one in five Georgians. A further twenty percent "do not know" what the most effective oversight mechanism might be.

Confidence in the ability of parliament or local governments to oversee aid effectively is very low (4% together).




## 8. Does providing IDPs with permanent housing mean that IDPs will not be able to return to their homes?

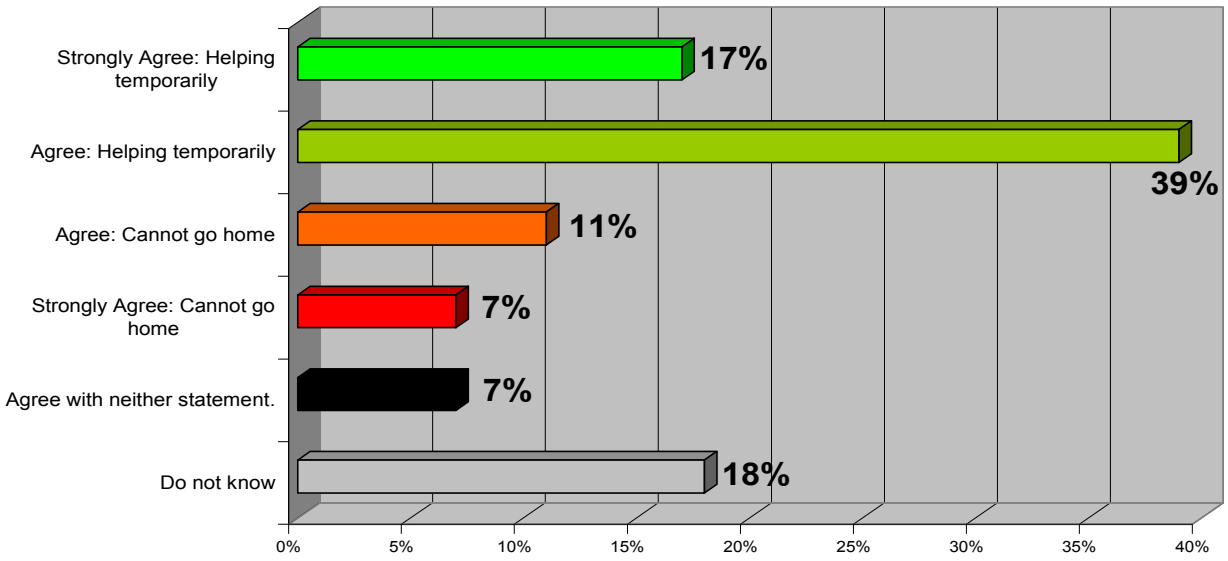
- **Over half of Georgians believe that there is no contradiction between building houses for IDPs now and their eventual return to their original homes.**

In the aftermath of the war, the Georgian government with donor support decided to provide durable housing not only for the recent IDPs, but also for those displaced in 1992. This decision, while no longer a secret, has not fully hit the public radar yet.

Respondents were asked to asked to evaluate two opposed statements on IDP housing:

1. Building houses for IDPs is helping IDPs temporarily until they can go home.
2. Building houses for IDPs means that they cannot go home.


თბილისი 0108, რუსთაველის გამზ. 26, III სართ. • 26, Rustaveli Avenue, Third Floor, Tbilisi 0108, Georgia
ტელეფონი/Phone: + (995 32) 92 14 03; 99 93 35; 93 21 29 • ფაქსი/Fax: + (995 32) 92 02 51
ელ-ფოსტა/E-mail: info@transparency.ge • www.transparency.ge




Survey results suggest that most Georgians do not view the building of houses for IDPs as an acknowledgement that they will not be able to go home, but rather see it as a temporary measure to improve their lives until return is possible – which is the line taken by the government, and supported by international law, which clearly states that the right to return is unaffected by circumstances of life in exile.

Only 18% of Georgians think that housing construction means that IDPs will not be able to return to Abkhazia or South Ossetia, and only seven percent “strongly agree” with this view.

A quarter of people hold no clear opinions on the issue, responding either that they “do not know” or that they “agree with neither statement”.

***TI Georgia will continue mapping, monitoring and evaluating international aid to Georgia over the coming years.***

***To subscribe to future TI Georgia reports, please visit our website: www.transparency.ge***



თბილისი 0108, რუსთაველის გამზ. 26, III სართ. • 26, Rustaveli Avenue, Third Floor, Tbilisi 0108, Georgia
ტელეფონი/Phone: + (995 32) 92 14 03; 99 93 35; 93 21 29 • ფაქსი/Fax: + (995 32) 92 02 51
ელ-ფოსტა/E-mail: info@transparency.ge • www.transparency.ge

## Project Background

This study was produced in the framework of the project "Effective Aid through Public Participation", a two-month TI Georgia project financed with 14,620 Euros by the OSCE Mission to Georgia. It has been distributed to over 2,000 people in Georgia and abroad.

CRRC Georgia
Caucasus Research Resource Centers

The Caucasus Research Resource Centers program (CRRC) is a network of research, resource and training centers established in the capital cities of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia with the goal of strengthening social science research and public policy analysis in the South Caucasus.



თბილისი 0108, რუსთაველის გამზ. 26, III სართ. • 26, Rustaveli Avenue, Third Floor, Tbilisi 0108, Georgia
ტელეფონი/Phone: + (995 32) 92 14 03; 99 93 35; 93 21 29 • ფაქსი/Fax: + (995 32) 92 02 51
ელ-ფოსტა/E-mail: info@transparency.ge • www.transparency.ge