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Abstract

Approximately six percent of Georgia's population (4.5 million) is Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The majority fled their homes during civil war between Georgia and Abkhazia in 1993 and remains unable to return. Amid privatization and government restructuring IDPs must navigate a confusing maze of policies in order to receive pensions, medical insurance, and other resources. This marginalization is instantiated, for example, in dilapidated living conditions and inadequate information about their rights. This paper provides a preliminary anthropological analysis of the health effects of displacement and of humanitarian aid in Georgia, highlighting changing government strategies for health care and IDP policies. I draw on interviews with IDPs and aid workers and on participant observation in collective centers to explore how IDPs are caught in a tension between social immobility and shifting cycles of bureaucratic upheaval and uncertainty in ways that exclude them from the programs that are designed to assist them.