

Annual Report: 2021

1. Administrative Details

1.1 - Name of National Committee: Georgian National Committee of the Blue Shield

1.2 - Date Report Completed: 01.03.2022

1.3 - Reporting period covered: January 2021-January 2022

1.4 - Names, positions and emails of all those who were the governing body/ trustees / principal officers on the date the report was approved or who served during in the reporting period:

Manana Tevzadze – Chairperson

Rusudan Asatiani - President of the Georgian Library Association

Nato Tsintsabadze – President of ICOMOS Georgia Maryam Kalkhitashvili, Fine Art Conservation Specialist, GNCBS secretariat

Michael Davitashvili, Financial Manager, GNCBS secretariat

Tamar Sopromadze, Project Coordinator, GNCBS secretariat

1.5 - Address of the main office:

Akaki Tsereteli Ave. 72, Tbilisi, Georgia

1.6 - Website and social media (if applicable): <http://blueshield.ge>
<https://www.facebook.com/blueshieldgeorgia> <https://twitter.com/blueshieldgeo>
<https://www.instagram.com/blueshieldgeorgia/>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtP2IUqhywOKDrO5I53BxmA>

3.2- Education, training, and capacity building:

3.2.1. First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis training and practical exercise in Gori, 2021

Within the Aliph funded project “Planning for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage of Gori” a 3-day [training](#) was held in Gori during July 14th - 16th. The training targeted museum professionals from all regional museums from the Shida Karti region (12 museums) and included 25 participants. The training was led by museum professional Rebecca Kennedy (USA).

On the first day of the training, the issue of risk and damage assessment was discussed, after which the participants took part in three practical group exercises – they performed risk assessment for specific spaces in the museum, assessed the simulated damage to the artifacts and worked on the emergency documentation process. The next day the trainer focused on the salvage of the museum objects after the disaster, followed by wet and dry salvage demonstrations. The trainer introduced the participants to the necessary materials and actions for saving the artifacts through practical examples.

[On the last day](#) of the training a large-scale simulation evacuation exercise was performed. According to the scenario, the participants were instructed to save the museum objects damaged after the earthquake and to perform salvage and emergency evacuation. Participants worked in groups to perform different tasks, such as: emergency documentation, salvage, triage, packing and moving of the artifacts to a temporary storage facility.

3.2.2. Translation of FAC Handbook and Toolkit

GNCBS finalized the translation of the ICCROM FIRST AID TO CULTURAL HERITAGE IN TIMES OF CRISIS Handbook and Toolkit into Georgian, funded through the grant from the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia.

3.2.3 Conference about CPP in Georgia’s occupied territories

Together with Dr. Emma Cunliffe from the University of Newcastle and UKBS, the chair of GNCBS, Manana Tevzadze [presented a paper at the international conference](#) – *Cultural Heritage Preservation on Occupied Territories: Georgia and an International Experience* organized by The George Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation held (online) in Georgia during 24-15th of June, 2021.

3.2.4. Conservation and Management Plan

The printed version of the Conservation Management Plan of the Tbilisi Chess Palace and Alpine Club was published both in Georgian and English languages. The plan was written within the scope of the project "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Modernist Architecture in Georgia", funded by the Getty foundation Keeping It Modern Initiative. The plan was presented to the Municipality of Tbilisi at a meeting attended by the heads of the Architecture Division, Department for Culture,

Youth and Sports, Municipal Agency for Property Management and the Vice-Mayor, together with the users of the building - Chess Federation and the Alpinism Club.

3.2.5 International Seasonal (Spring) School "Abkhazia: From the Middle Ages to the Present (Historical-Cultural Aspects)"

On May 25-31, the National Center for Manuscripts hosted the International Seasonal (Spring) School "Abkhazia: From the Middle Ages to the Present (Historical-Cultural Aspects)"

Manana Tevzadze, Chairperson of the Blue Shield Georgia, presented a paper: "Protection of Cultural Heritage on the Occupied Territory of Abkhazia in Light of Implementation of the Hague Convention."

3.2.6. International Conference 'In Restauro: Post-War Heritage of Art and Architecture in Central and Eastern Europe'

The conference was held on 22-23 July, with a focus on Integrated approaches to dissonant monuments and sites. Manana Tevzadze, Chairperson of the Georgian National Committee of Blue Shield participated in the conference. She talked about the Tbilisi Chess Palace and the Alpine Club, and the project by GNCBS, a recipient of the Getty Foundation Keeping It Modern grant.

3.3 - Proactive protection and risk preparedness:

3.3.1. Documentation of Collections of the Gori Museum of History and Ethnography

As part of the Disaster Risk Preparedness component of the GNCBS implemented project "Planning for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage of Gori", about 3700 photo prints and negatives were scanned and 5000 inventory cards were completed and entered in the online database of the collection of Gori Museum. The team organized a one-day training in using the cultural heritage database management system and GIS portal led by National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia (NACHPG) staff.

3.3.2. Mycological study

Along with the other studies of the condition of the building and the collections of the Gori museum, a mycological study was undertaken by a specialist who took laboratory samples from the museum's storage spaces and exhibits for mycological testing. The results of the study will play an important role in the risk analysis document, which will form the basis of the disaster risk preparedness plan created for the museum.

3.3.3. Working on DRM plan

In 2021 GNCBS together with the museum team started to draft a DRM plan for the museum in Gori. Results of the various studies (structural engineering and geological study of the building,

assessment of the climate in the building, assessment of the collections of the museum, risk assessment, stakeholder questionnaire, etc.) are being gathered and analyzed together with the outcomes of the workshops and meetings held with local and national stakeholders.

3.3.4. Director's Field Fund (DFF) Grant

In collaboration with Penn Museum Cultural Heritage Center (CHC) GNCBS received Director's field fund grant in research funding, for use in the Penn CHC-Georgian Collaboration: Planning Phase project. Part of the project will be the creation and printing of the organization's 6 years' activity report. The goals of this project are: 1) to assess the results of completed and in-progress Blue Shield Georgia projects; 2) to prepare a completed report for next steps; and 3) to enhance the capacity of Blue Shield Georgia to undertake further collaboration with the Penn Cultural Heritage Center.

3.3.5. Implementing the 1954 Hague Convention and its two protocols to protect heritage sites in occupied territories of Georgia

3.3.6.

In 2021, GNCBS worked closely with the University of Newcastle in order to finalize the report on the occupied territories and the map of immovable cultural heritage of the occupied Tskhinvali region. The ongoing work is part of the project: *implementing the 1954 Hague Convention and its two protocols to protect heritage sites in occupied territories of Georgia* funded in 2019 by the ESRC IMPACT ACCELERATION ACCOUNT (IAA) Fund through the Newcastle University School of Arts and Culture.

The report aims to investigate the condition of cultural heritage in the Tskhinvali Region of Georgia since the 2008 war. The team of authors has compiled and verified the information from various sources: satellite imagery from google earth, comprehensive media monitoring (of Georgian, English and Russian sources) eye-witness reports and interviews.

3.4 - Emergency response in disaster, domestic emergencies, and armed conflict:

3.5 - Stabilisation, post-disaster recovery, and long-term/ongoing support:

3.6 - Co-ordination (of Blue Shield and with other relevant organisations):

3.6.1. Coordination with state authorities and founding organisations

In the context of the ongoing project in Gori, the GNCBS has been in close coordination with the relevant organisations directly or indirectly responsible for policy making and implementation of CPP during disasters and crises. Several meetings were conducted with the representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Emergency Management Agency and the National Guard of

Georgia in order to plan further cooperation.

3.6.1.1 Blue Shield participated in field training “Paldo-2021”

On July 2nd, GNCBS participated in [“Paldo-2020”](#)- a joint field exercise by the Georgian National Guard and the Emergency Management Agency of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. As part of the exercise, the team coordinated the emergency protection and evacuation of the imaginary cultural heritage (archaeological) site and moving monuments by the participants during the simulated forest fire. This event marked the start of collaboration which continues into 2022 and will include a joint civil-military training in CPP and a field exercise.

3.6.1.2 Museum of Fine Arts

Following the change of the statutes of the Georgian National Museum by the newly appointed Minister of Culture and the subsequent radical changes in the plans for rehousing of the collections and conservation of the building of Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts in Tbilisi, in July 2021, in collaboration with its founding organisations ICOMOS and ICOM Georgia, GNCBS prepared [a joint letter](#) regarding the building of the Museum and the collections preserved in it.

[Joint appeal](#) by the Georgian National Committee of Blue Shield, ICOMOS Georgia and ICOM Georgia to the following international organizations: ICOMOS, ICOM, Blue Shield International, Europa Nostra, Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative and the World Monuments Fund was prepared in the following months.

3.6.2. Cooperation with Research Institutions

3.6.2.1. Cultural Heritage Preservation on Occupied Territories

GNCBS served as a partner and co-organizer of an international conference – *Cultural Heritage Preservation on Occupied Territories: Georgia and an International Experience* It was held online in June 2021 and was organized by The George Chubinashvili National Research Center for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation.

The two-day conference presented international examples of cultural heritage protection in the occupied territories from Georgia and Ukraine. The topics of the first day’s session were: cultural heritage, armed conflict and occupation. The panel was opened by Prof. Peter Stone, President of Blue Shield International, who spoke about the organization, its strategic priorities and aspirations and the notion of the protection of cultural heritage in the occupied territories.

Researchers from Ukraine discussed the current developments in the annexed Crimea, as well as the experience of saving museum collections during the “Euromaidan” in Kiev. The Georgian specialists spoke about the problems related to the protection of cultural heritage in occupied Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali regions.

At the end of the session, a representative of the Center for Cultural Heritage of the Museum of

Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania spoke about the mechanisms for stronger international cooperation in the protection of Georgia's cultural heritage.

The second day of the conference was dedicated to the review of the ethno-cultural context of the heritage in the occupied territories of Georgia and the speakers were Georgian scholars. The conference was attended by about a hundred Georgian and foreign listeners. A discussion was held at the end of each session. Participants and organizers unanimously noted the need to turn such a conference into a regular event.

Conference proceedings were published online as well as in print <https://bit.ly/35esBgR>

3.6.2.2. Cooperation with Penn Museum CHC

Penn Cultural Heritage Center designated Manana Tevzadze as one of its consulting [scholars](#) and invited her to hold a public lecture. In her lecture Manana [spoke about](#) her work with Blue Shield Georgia to strengthen the cultural heritage community in Georgia and preserve cultural heritage.

3.6.3.1 Cooperation with European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM)

GNCBS has had several meetings with the monitors of EUMM field offices in charge of the human security issues regarding the heritage in the Tbilisi controlled as well as the occupied territories and about the possibilities for future collaborations.

3.6.4. Cooperation with other NGOs

GNCBS has been active in advocating for protection of several cultural heritage sites in collaboration with multiple NGOs. These campaigns include: Khada valley, [Alaverdi Monastery](#) and Kutaisi historic center.

GNCBS has been a member of the Cultural Heritage Civil Society Platform together with other NGOs and Cultural Heritage protection professionals.

4. Main issues faced:

What are the main issues faced by your committee?

GNCBS is facing a lack of qualified and motivated specialists to engage in its activities, help with the fundraising, research, training and voluntary activities.

Due to the lack of structural funding, GNCBS is not able to maintain regular staff.

In the reporting year, one of the main issues has been the lack of communication with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Georgia which has not been answering any of our correspondence.

5. Future goals

Describe future plans to achieve strategic goals

- Continue fundraising for future activities in the six areas of activity;
- Collaborate with existing partners and donors and seek further partnership for developing a curriculum for cultural heritage management study course

In the longer term, GNCBS plans to continue existing as well as build new partnerships both locally and internationally in order to cooperate on topics of relevance for the organization:

- Improving Disaster Risk Management System for cultural heritage in Georgia;
- Support implementation of the Hague Convention and its protocols in Georgia

6. Other

Through its connection to Newcastle University, BSI is sometimes able to access funding that can be shared with research institutions to further the work of Blue Shield. Does your national committee have any connections with research institutions interested in its work (e.g. in risk management, heritage protection, etc.). If yes, please supply the names and contact details here.

61. George Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation, Dr. Tsitsino Chachkhunashvili, Senior Researcher,
62. Iliia State University (there are many different research centres within the university that we cooperate with, so depending on the topic of research, we can liaise with the respective centre or faculty and provide more detailed contacts.)