

*MORAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY OF  
GEORGIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL PARTICIPATING  
IN INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS ON THE EXAMPLE  
OF THE "SHAVNABADA" BATTALION*

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ABSTRACT

Georgian Defense Forces (GDF) has participated in the NATO international Counter-Terrorism Mission since 1999 in Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali, and the Central African Republic. Before the deployment to the mission, GDF units were trained under a pre-deployment exercise program at the National Training Centre. From the missions mentioned above, the already completed mission in Afghanistan should be singled out, as it was mainly a combat mission. From the Georgian commitment to the mission, thirty-two servicemen were killed in action, and many Georgians were maimed or wounded in Afghanistan. The military personnel were required to perform the task under challenging conditions, which always caused stress. The operational environment and mission conditions required psychological preparation before, during, and after the mission. This article covers the results of the surveys conducted at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan during the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) starting from June 2020, including January 2021, to assess the moral and psychological resilience of "Shavnabada" battalion personnel. The survey, conducted pre-, during, and post-deployment, indicated issues regarding personnel moral and psychological readiness and a requirement of retraining leadership to increase their understanding of possible existing problems. Furthermore, leaders and psychologists needed maximum involvement in international missions to sustain deployed personnel's moral and psychological well-being, fix problems, and enforce preventive measures.

*Keywords: mission, personnel, Afghanistan, missions, readiness, deployment, NATO, battalion, servicemen, Iraq*

## *Introduction*

Georgian Defense Forces participated in the fight against world terrorism in various conflict regions: Kosovo - since 1999, Iraq since 2004, and Afghanistan - since 2009. As a non-NATO member, Georgia has expressed its desire, along with other countries, to participate in the fight against global terrorism. Georgian Military service members have made a unique contribution to NATO International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) and Resolute Support Mission (RSM) (NATO, 2006).

The mission in Afghanistan was different from other missions with its wide-spread area of operation, the unstable operational environment, the high activity of the enemy forces, the improvised explosive devices, and the aggression of the local civilian population. Many Georgian and foreign military service members participated in this mission against aggressive and ruthless insurgents on foreign soil. The Georgian army service members were specially prepared to conduct such a challenging mission in varying rugged terrain and conditions (Rynning, 2012).

In addition to military training, the soldiers' morale, readiness, and preparation were critical before, during, and after the mission.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan began in 2001 and ended in 2014. In 2015, a new NATO Resolute Support Mission (RSM) began, which lasted until 2021. 32 Georgian military servicemen were killed, and 274 were wounded and maimed in the international mission (Bowman & Dale, 2009).

Under the agreement on the exchange of letters dated December 15, 2014, on Participation of the new NATO RSM Mission Georgia, from June 2020 to January 2021, the "Shavnabada" Battalion (BN CDR Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze) was in Afghanistan, Parvan province, at Bagram Air Base.

The battalion was mainly manned by young military personnel, sergeants, and officers aged 20 to 52. This unit was established in 1992 during the war in Tskhinvali region (the former South Ossetian Autonomous District) and Abkhazia. Historically, the unit gained experience in conflict and war in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali (the former South Ossetian Autonomous District) and international missions in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The battalion has changed personnel over the years, refreshed with new personnel, 30% of whom have combat experience from the Iraq mission, the 2008 Russia-Georgia conflict, and the Afghanistan mission. There were military service members of all ranks in the battalion, from Private to Lieutenant Colonel. One percent of the unit was female military personnel.

Defense Force units participated in the mission with pre-compiled and approved, rotationally defined unit schedules. From the beginning to the end of the mission, the unit went through six phases of activities: Phase one-Preparatory activities in the unit; Phase two - Redeployment training in the training center; Phase three-Mission Readiness Exercise; Phase four- Deployment to Afghanistan; Phase five-complete the mission and Phase six-Retrograde.

Phase I: The Battalion started preparatory activities at the dislocation site six months before being deployed in the mission. A mission-oriented temporary task organization was established in the unit due to various requirements such as infantry, intelligence, communications, engineering, medical, fire support, a group of military interpreters, and various military specialists. Military personnel's participation in the mission was both voluntary and contractual. They were selected through a health check, followed by preparatory training, certification of specialists, and logistical support facilities.

In parallel with the preparation for the deployment of the battalion, the main chain of command of the unit and US Marines, who were the liaison group of the Georgian unit in the mission, conducted a three-week pre-mission reconnaissance in Afghanistan with the Georgian unit being on a mission in Afghanistan in that time.

Phase II: The Battalion underwent a 2-week quarantine to limit the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic virus before entering the training center. Then, they entered the training center, meaning military personnel could not meet family members during the training and before being deployed in Afghanistan.

Most exercises were conducted IVO of Vaziani airfield and other training areas in different environmental conditions resembling the operational area (Afghanistan) terrain characteristics. A significant amount of time was dedicated to unique weapon systems and equipment training, and the entire battalion was briefed in detail about Afghan religion, culture, and customs (CAOCL). Basic training packages include mounted and dismounted patrolling ops, cordon and search, critical leaders engagement (KLE), base defense ops, ROE/EOF, patrol base ops, command post ops, and other mission-oriented training with a program adaptable to past and present threats. In parallel with the exercises, preventive vaccinations were carried out throughout the peacekeeping mission to prepare for environmental conditions and avoid possible health issues. Lastly, all battalion personnel were checked on moral and psychological resilience.

Phase III: The battalion conducted training, which was evaluated externally. This evaluation lasted two weeks - 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The unit complet-

ed training objectives and tasks, passed the certification, and received deployment permission.

Phase IV: After completion of the external evaluation, the personnel of the unit and the cargo were prepared and palletized to be transported to Afghanistan. The battalion personnel started certifying the quarantine process of the entirely individual two-week COVID-19 pandemic in the hotels of Tbilisi.

Two weeks after the representatives of Lugar Laboratory carried out the PCR test, the test results were negative; the battalion was deployed to Afghanistan.

Phase V: The battalion was deployed on a mission for six months with 556 military personnel, including 11 female soldiers. The battalion was stationed entirely on Bagram air base, and soon after arrival, the RIP/TOA (relief in place/transfer of authority) process with the previous Georgian battalion began. The RIP/TOA process included an understanding of combat military missions and operational environment, meetings with partnering nation's commanders, and planning and execution of joint missions. After two weeks, the RIP/TOA process was fully completed, and the unit became fully responsible for mission execution. V. Natenadze conducted a pre- and during-deployment survey. The goal was to assess Georgian military personnel's moral and Psychological Sustainability.

Phase VI: The Battalion transferred authority to the next Georgian rotational unit, retrograded to the home station, and went through a month post-mission rehabilitation period and moral/psychological readiness check—a post-deployment survey conducted by V. Natenadze—the survey aimed to assess Georgian military Personnel's moral and Psychological Sustainability.

Bagram Air Base was the most significant military base in Afghanistan. It was located next to the capital city of Kabul. After the Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan, their military forces were also present on the dislocated Bagram airfield, which was the essential base for ISAF (since October 7, 2001) and RSM (December 2014 - August 2021) forces.

The first step to participating in the combat mission was to learn the area of operation (AO) and understand the operational environment (OE). That combines different domains: population, ethnicity, religion, communication means, agriculture and economy, urban area, history, ancient traditions, local tribe leaders, and other operational characteristics. While evaluating the environment, it was considered that, for the local population, we were representing the "Third force. By considering the local Afghan population's culture, mentality, and attitude, it did not matter how well we performed and what we did because, for them, we remained armed with foreign military forces on their consciousness and land.

The priority task was to prevent threat attacks on Bagram and, if attacked, to defend the base. 25,000 military personnel and contractors were on the base, and the base circumference was 24 kilometers. As Afghanistan's primary aviation base, Bagram was vital for coalition forces. The rotation of central military cargo transportation units and high-quality medical treatment occurred there. Leaving Afghanistan ended with the closing of the Bagram base. Defense of such a critical base was tasked to Georgian military personnel in 2014, which was a great honor and expression of trust from the NATO side. The "Shavnabada" battalion was the 11th rotation of the Afghanistan RSM mission. Each day was full of different news and challenges in 2020:

- COVID-19 regulations that were issued in April during the worldwide pandemic;
- In August, active reduction of military coalition forces, closing certain bases, reducing forces on certain bases, and gathering forces on Bagram base;
- Organizing a high flow of contractors' flights due to the closure of different bases;
- Since October, finishing battalion attached liaison officers' training before the date and giving their dedicated tasks to Georgian battalions;
- Participation of different countries in base defense operations under subordination of Georgian forces;
- Set up COVID-19 worldwide pandemic quarantine camps and provide food for infected personnel.

All the issues mentioned above during the mission stressed the battalion personnel and affected their moral and psychological condition. Stress is an accompanying element of our lives, and sometimes, it is beneficial because it encourages the mobilization of people and adaptation to variable environments. However, if stress is intense and lasts for a long time, people cannot get used /adapt to it. This process leads to physiological and mental problems in the human body. Acute stress reactions are developed in practically healthy people as a result of intense physical and mental stress over the days and possibly hours. Stress is caused by over-fatigue (long-term mission), combat stress, homesickness, financial issues, gambling, family issues, accidents, and so on, but stress is not immediately apparent in everyone, and some people cope with stress easily without even noticing it. Most personnel mobilize their psychological readiness: they work out, eat healthy, read books, are busy with art, have fun on social networks, watch videos and movies, etc.

Psychological trauma is not a sickness. It is a normal reaction to abnormal events. The chain of command should ensure psychological stress prevention and control,

and psychological preparation and integration should be conducted before and after mission deployment. Psychological preparation should be focused on mission tasks and length, in which all levels of the chain of command and chaplain should be involved.

A mission can last seven months or more and generally impacts military personnel's psychological and moral behavior. Soldiers are dislocated on the territory of a foreign country, where there is martial law and no one knows what can happen and when. The culture and religion are different; soldiers must adapt to a different climate and are far from their families, which causes homesickness. Additionally, the soldiers may suffer from combat stress. To mitigate and control this, the participation of leaders was crucial. It is possible to plan and execute major and necessary events that the soldiers were familiar with and had previously experienced. These events positively affected battalion personnel's moral and psychological conditions: Conducting religious rituals together with the military chaplains, marathons, and mass sports events, providing a social network.

The psychological condition of the "Shav nabada" battalion was aggravated because the military personnel were quarantined for two months due to the pandemic. They left their families for the mission without farewell for seven months. COVID regulations and isolations were additionally affecting moral and psychological conditions.

In the "Shav nabada" battalion, three surveys were conducted to evaluate military personnel's moral and psychological condition pre-, during, and post-deployment NATO peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan. The survey and data analysis aimed to identify and improve flaws in the moral and psychological preparation of units pre-, during, and post-deployment.

Specific questionnaires were developed for these surveys, and the responses were anonymous. Analyzing the responses to the study will help military personnel (not only Georgian defense forces) who participate in multinational missions to deal with moral/psychological issues better. Preparing and then dealing with these issues is essential for accomplishing the mission.

1. To identify units' moral and psychological preparation before and during deployment, 162 military personnel (private, corporal, sergeant, officer) participated in the surveys. Of this number, 92 questionnaires were filled out on paper, and 70 were filled out digitally.

Ten females and 152 males (Military) participated in the questionnaire, including 160 Georgians and 2 Armenians. The respondents' education level

was as follows: middle school (1-10 grades) -2, high school -97, bachelor's degree -45, master's degree - 13, and professional college degree -2. The ages of military personnel participating in the survey ranged from 20 to 52; 7 participants did not specify their age. All 162 soldiers were from land forces. Respondents were asked to denote their central military role, which generated seven categories. The largest was Sergeant -59, Corporal -40, Private -19, First Lieutenant -16, Major -15, Captain -8, and Lieutenant-Colonel -4.

Personnel participated in NATO missions during different timelines: Kosovo-2, Iraq-14, ISAF-38, and RSM-162; 25 military personnel participated in the same NATO mission. The majority of the army personnel of the mission had 3-5 years of service experience, and all others had 5-10 years.

2. To assess the morale/psychological and physical condition of the Georgian Defense Forces after participating in the NATO-led International Mission in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, post-deployment, in total, 258 military personnel (private, corporal, sergeant, and officer) participated in the survey. All the questionnaires were filled out digitally.

Seven females and 151 males participated in the questionnaire, including 152 Georgians and 6 -Armenians. The respondents' education level was secondary education- 247, bachelor's - 9, master's - 2.

The ages of the personnel participating in the questionnaire ranged from 20 to 50 years; seven did not indicate age again. All 258 soldiers were infantrymen. Respondents were asked to denote their main military role, which generated seven categories. The largest of these was Corporal-205, followed by Private-29, Sergeant-9, Second lieutenant-6, Captain-2, Major-2, and Lieutenant Colonel-1.

Personnel has participated in NATO peacekeeping missions at various times: Iraq, MNF-I - 6 PAX; Afghanistan, ISAF - 6 PAX; Afghanistan, RSM - 258 PAX, including 42 military personnel already in the previous Afghanistan missions.

### *Moral and Psychological Sustainability of Georgian Military Personnel*

#### *1. Psychological support (pre-deployment)*

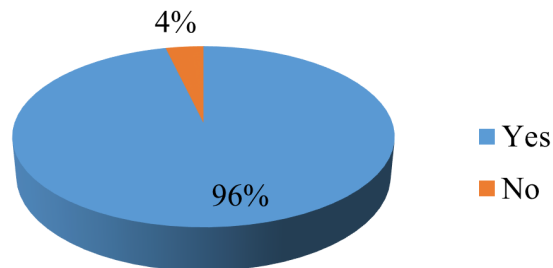
*1.1. Were you prepared psychologically before arriving in Afghanistan to deal with the psychological or stress-related problems that might arise during the mission?*

On average, 96 % of the respondents reported some form of pre-deployment prepa-

ration, and 4 % reported that they received no pre-deployment preparation.

Figure 1

Were you prepared psychologically before arriving in Afghanistan to deal with the psychological or stress-related problems that might arise during the mission?



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

1.2. What kind of psychological training did you go through?

41% of the respondents reported having short instructions, and 16% had meetings with military personnel with experience participating in the missions. 11% - Training. Other types of psychological training have been done through websites and the internet, brochures, short courses, and courses at the University/Military Academy.

Figure 2

What kind of psychological training did you go through?



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

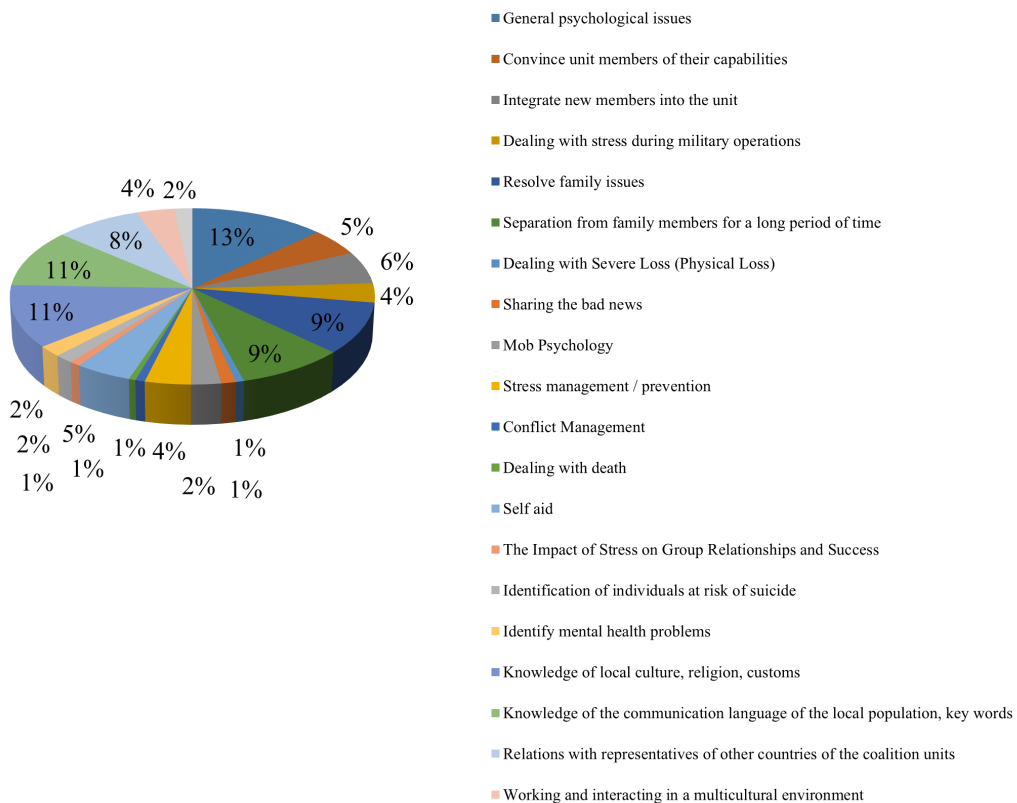


### 1.3. What topics did the training or other activities cover?

The topics covered in the pre-deployment training and education programs included General psychological issues; knowledge of the local culture, religion, and customs; knowledge of the communication language of the local population and keywords; Integrate new members into the unit; relations with representatives of other countries coalition units, Dealing with stress during military operations, Dealing with family issues, long separations from family members, Dealing with death, Conflict management, Stress management, Self-aid, Identify mental health problems, Sharing the bad news, etc.

Figure 3

*What topics did the trainings or other activities cover?*



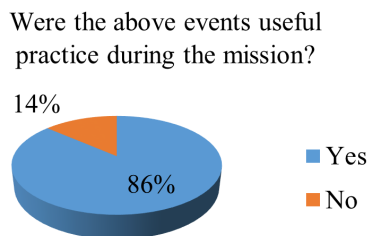
Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

*1.1. Were the above activities helpful practice during the mission?*

On average, 86 % of the respondents were satisfied with their pre-deployment psychological preparation, and 14 % reported that their pre-deployment psychological preparation was not helpful during the mission (Figure 4).

Figure 4

*Were the above events useful practice during the mission?*



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

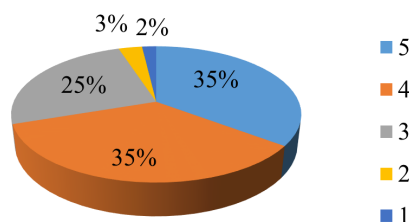
*1.5. Level of satisfaction with pre-deployment psychological preparation*

*How satisfied were you with the pre-deployment psychological preparation provided?*

Overall, 70% of the respondents responded that they were satisfied with the psychological preparation provided at pre-deployment. Only 2% of respondents showed any sign of dissatisfaction.

Figure 5

Please rate your pre-deployment psychological training with 5 points.



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

1.6. To the question: *On what issues do you think it is necessary to focus on and conduct pre-deployment training*, the following problems were identified by the military personnel:

- a. 28 military personnel believe that psychological training should be more thorough;
- b. Be focused on Stress management, Dealing with stress during combat operations, and Identifying mental health problems.

## 2. Psychological support (during deployment)

### 2.1. Which aspects were the most difficult during the deployment?

The majority of respondents - 35% reported that the most challenging and complex issue during the deployment was the adaptation period (adaptation to environmental conditions); for 23% of the respondents – Psychological issues; for 18% - Relations with representatives of the countries of the coalition units.

Some respondents reflected on issues: Relationships with local people, Military Operations, COVID regulations, and the Language Barrier were the most difficult only for 3% of the respondents.

Figure 6

*Which aspects were the most difficult during the deployment?*



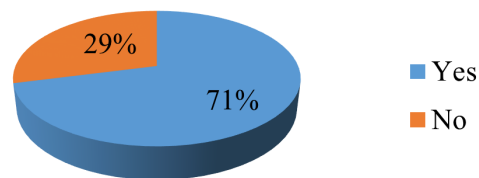
Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

*2.2. During your mission in Afghanistan, were you undergoing psychological training to deal with the psychological or stress-related problems that arose during the operation/mission?*

On average, 71 % of the respondents reported receiving different kinds of support during deployment, and 29 % reported not receiving any psychological training during the mission.

Figure 7

During your mission in Afghanistan, were you undergoing psychological training to deal with the psychological or stress-related problems that arose during the mission?



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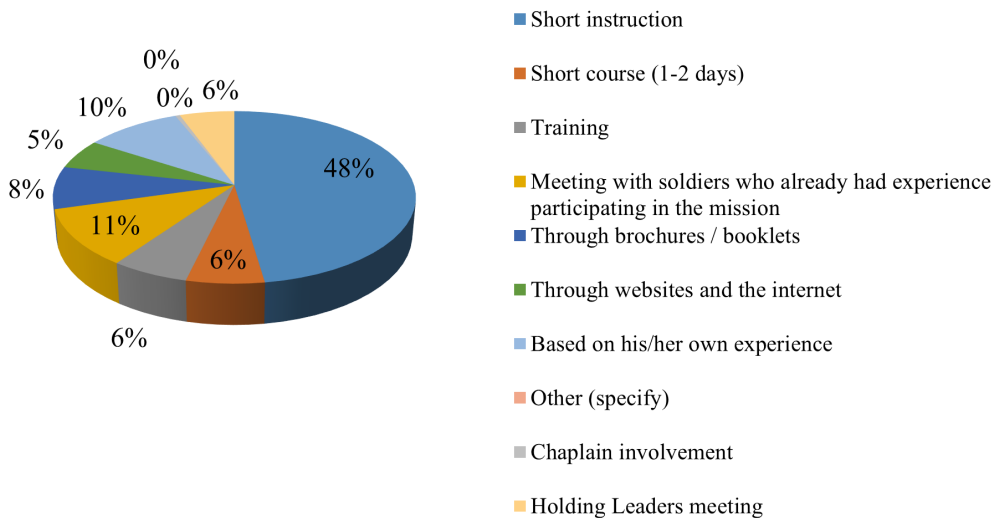
Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

*2.3. What kind of psychological training did you go through?*

48% of the respondents reported having Short instructions, and 11% had meetings with military personnel with experience participating in the missions. Other types of psychological training have been done through websites and the internet, brochures/booklets, and short courses. However, the minority stated that they obtained some information under the Chaplain's involvement and Based on their own experience.

Figure 8

*What kind of psychological training did you go through?*



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

*2.4. What topics did the training or other activities during the mission cover?*

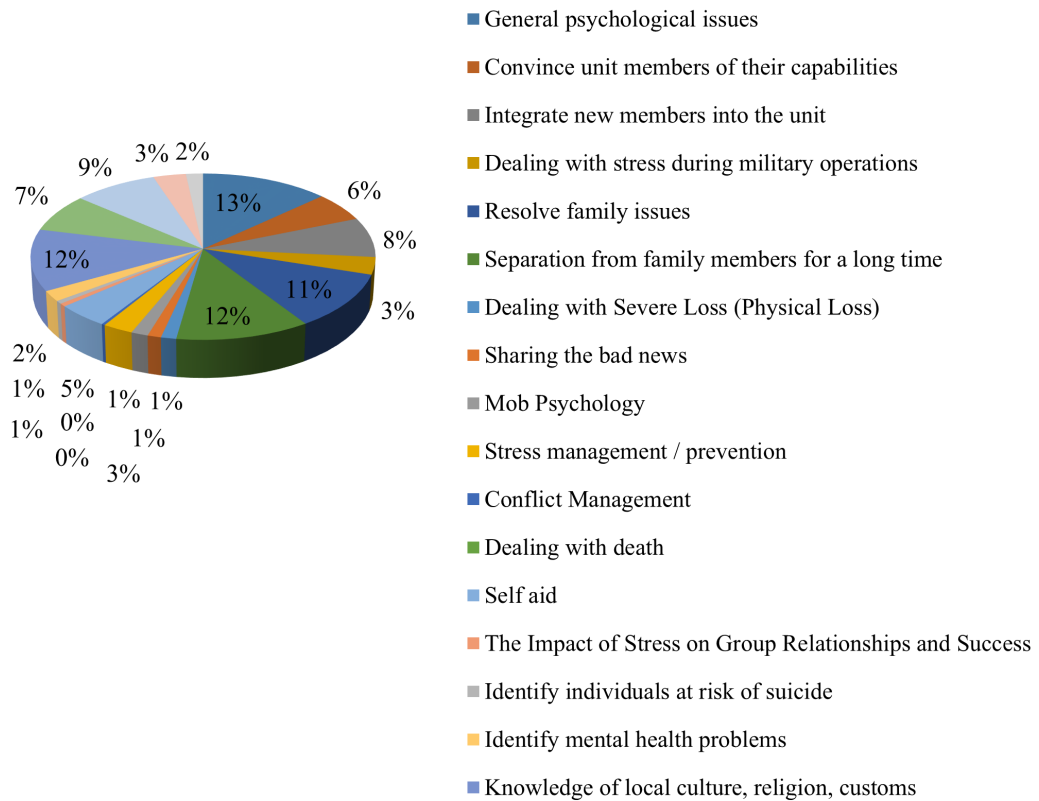
The topics covered during the mission training were the same. They included General psychological issues, Dealing with stress during military operations, Dealing with family issues: long separations from family members, Dealing with death, Conflict management, Stress management, Self-aid, Identifying mental health problems (risk of suicide), Sharing the bad news, etc., but several different themes emerged: Integrate new members into the unit, Convince unit members with their capacities, Knowledge of the local culture, religion, and customs (Figure 9).

*2.5. Were the above activities helpful practice during the mission?*

On average, 81 % of the respondents were satisfied with their psychological preparation during the mission, and 19 % reported that their psychological preparation was not helpful while completing the mission (Figure 10).

Figure 9

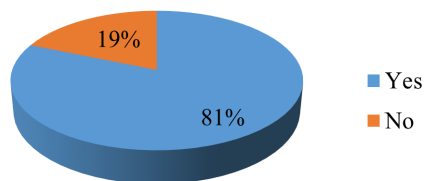
*What topics did the trainings or other activities during the mission cover?*



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

Figure 10

*Were the above events useful in practice - while completing the mission?*



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

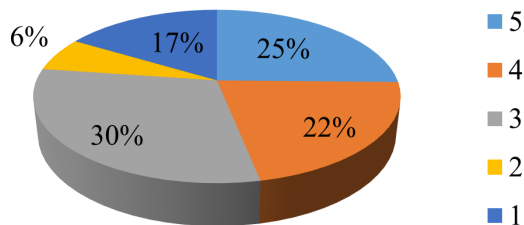
## 2.6. Level of satisfaction with psychological preparation during deployment

*How satisfied were you with the psychological preparation provided during the mission?*

This level of satisfaction differed from pre-deployment satisfaction. On average, 55% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the psychological preparation provided during the mission, and 6% showed any sign of dissatisfaction.

Figure 11

*Evaluate the psychological training conducted during the mission with 5 points*



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

2.7. On the question: *If there are any issues that you think need to be addressed and trained during the mission*, the overall analysis identified the following issues:

- Psychological training should be continued during the mission;
- A staff position and the position of a military psychologist should be added to the mission;
- If pre-mission psychological training involved experienced military personnel, it would be better;
- Carry out frequent port activities in the mission;
- An active involvement of the priest (military chaplain) in the readiness/maintenance of the morale of the army personnel;
- The psychological training conducted before and after the mission was not sufficient;

- Conducting psychological surveys of military personnel after the mission and refining the training plan based on the analysis results.

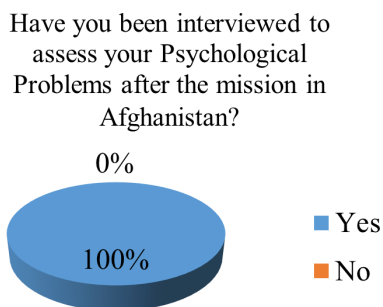
As the survey showed, even though military personnel go through multiple trainings and different types of psychological training before and during missions, they still think it is insufficient.

## 2. Psychological support (post-deployment)

### 3.1. Have you been interviewed to assess your Psychological Problems after the mission in Afghanistan?

100% of respondents reported that they had been interviewed to assess psychological problems after the mission.

Figure 12



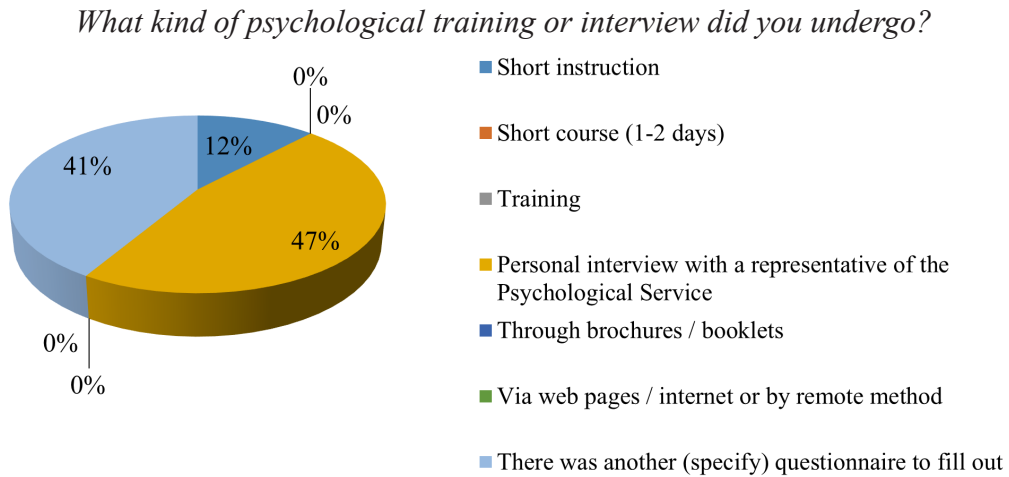
Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

### 3.2. What kind of psychological training or interview did you undergo?

The majority of the respondents - 47%, reported that they gained information through a Personal interview with a representative of the Psychological Service, 41% - through training; however, the minority- 12%, stated that they obtained some information under the Short Instructions.



Figure 13



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

*3.3. What topics did the post-deployment training or other activities cover?*

Identifying health problems (44%) and dealing with health problems (20%) were the most typical topics of post-deployment training. On average, 20% of the respondents reported General psychological issues.

Other topics covered in the post-deployment training programs included Dealing with the stress after a mission, Identifying mental problems and individuals at risk of suicide, Family issues: long separation from family members, and Dealing with severe loss (Physical loss) (Figure 14).

*3.4. Were the above activities beneficial practice after the mission?*

The research results show that the above activities were beneficial after completing the mission 100% mark (Figure 15).

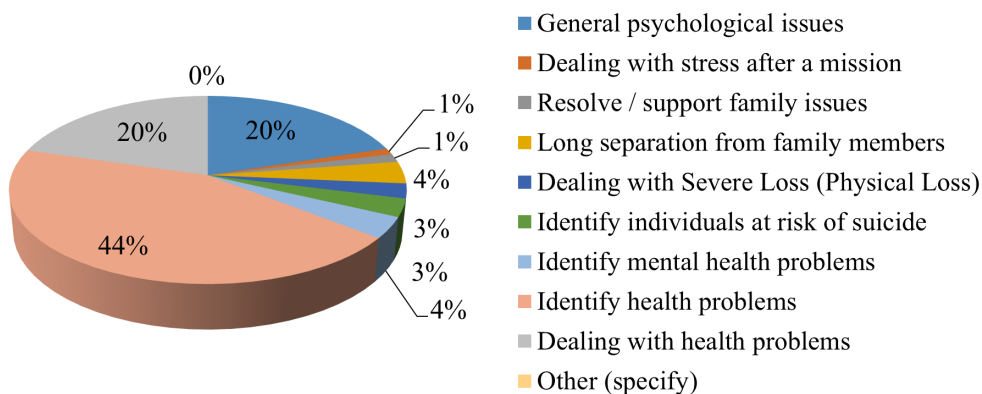
*3.5. Level of satisfaction with post-deployment psychological preparation*

*How satisfied were you with the post-deployment psychological preparation provided?*

Overall, 91% of the respondents responded that they were satisfied with the psychological preparation provided to them post-deployment. Only 1% of respondents showed any sign of dissatisfaction. This level of satisfaction is close to pre-deployment satisfaction (Figure 16).

Figure 14

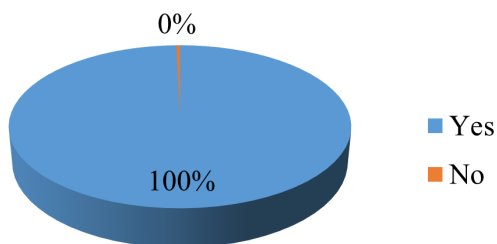
*What topics did the post-deployment trainings or other activities cover?*



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

Figure 15

*There were the above mentioned events after the completion of the useful mission*



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

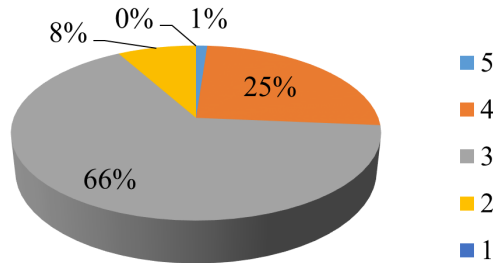
### 3.6. Post-deployment assessment of the moral/psychological and physical condition

*How would you assess the moral/psychological and physical condition after the mission in Afghanistan?*

96% of the respondents responded that nothing has changed in their moral-psychological state. Some of the respondents stated that it is hard to adapt to family members after a long separation to deal with severe loss (physical loss) (Figure 17).

Figure 16

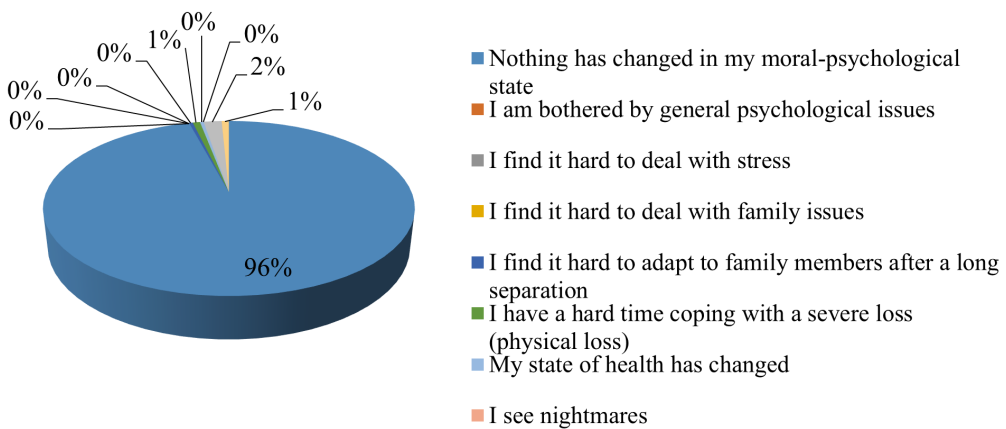
*Evaluation of psychological support after the mission with 5 points*



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

Figure 17

*How would you assess the moral-psychological and physical condition after the mission in Afghanistan?*



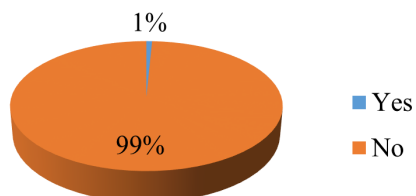
Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

### 3.7. Psychological Support

On the question – *Do you need psychological support after the mission* - 99% of the respondents say they do not need it.

Figure 18

*Do you think you need psychological support?*



Source: Survey, by Lieutenant Colonel V. Natenadze (Bagram air base, Afghanistan, RSM Mission, June 2020 - January 2021)

3.8. *On the question – If there are issues that require specific attention and training after the deployment mission is over, the following issues were identified based on analysis of the survey results:*

- Some respondents mentioned that in past years, after deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan, no psychological surveys or interviews were conducted, and this survey post-deployment in Afghanistan is very useful;
- Importance of short-term courses, psychological interviews, informal team discussions, or questionnaires to monitor and assess post-deployment moral-psychological sustainability and to identify problematical issues for post-deployment rehabilitation;
- Military personnel need more activities regarding moral-psychological rehabilitation after deployment missions;
- Military personnel do not fully understand the meaning of psychological support, and all military personnel should have psychological training whether they need it or not;
- It is desired to conduct short-term psychological stress control courses with a chain of command to gain the ability to identify psychological issues in

subordinate personnel and cope with them. Psychological problems can arise anytime, but the chain of command might not be able to identify the issue in a timely fashion. A problem can worsen or become more complicated over time. If the commander knows how to identify and manage the situation, he can eliminate the problem promptly.

### *Conclusions*

Military personnel undergo the best training and gain unique military experience by participating in deployment missions in the most challenging conflict zones. Participation in deployment missions, together with NATO partner nations' military forces, significantly contributes to the development of Georgia's military capabilities and increases compatibility with NATO. By participating in international missions, Georgia established itself as a reliable and competent partner of NATO and a fully-fledged member of international security. Gaining and consolidating the international community's support is essential for achieving Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration goals. Georgia has already proved it is a reliable NATO partner, and the alliance and member nations also stated it.

Georgian military personnel gained significant achievements under a stressful combat environment, which reflects credit upon all of them. The survey findings have emphasized the importance of moral-psychological support at pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment. One hundred percent of military personnel indicate the need for psychological preparation and mitigating measures. By comparing questionnaires before, during, and after the mission, it appeared that.

- Chaplains need retraining in psychological direction. In those three phases, the level of moral and psychological readiness of soldiers should be checked/maintained constantly;
- Leaders need retraining in psychological awareness;
- Leaders and professionals must be involved in detecting issues and taking prevention measures;

Finally, another issue arose: It is necessary to conduct a survey of military personnel or have informal group interviews after the mission to increase the involvement of military personnel and encourage open conversations with each other. In this way, it is more likely that real problems will surface.

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