

## Photo Essay: Unsettled

In 2008, 28,000 people were ethnically cleansed from the breakaway province of South Ossetia during a brief but brutal war between Georgia and Russia. Their villages were bombed, burned, and in some cases bulldozed to ensure they could never return, and the entire province was occupied by Russia's 58th Army. Because return soon was unlikely, the Georgian government, acting in concert with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and more than ninety-five nongovernmental organizations and donor governments, chose to resettle them in thirty-six hastily built settlements in which they were to rebuild their lives. However, because the aid system was so chaotic, and because most aid agencies were acting in improvised ways, the internally displaced persons were housed in bleak and isolated settlements, unemployed and left to sit in poorly built homes that soon began to decay. Hannah Mintek's photographs offer a window into this scenario.



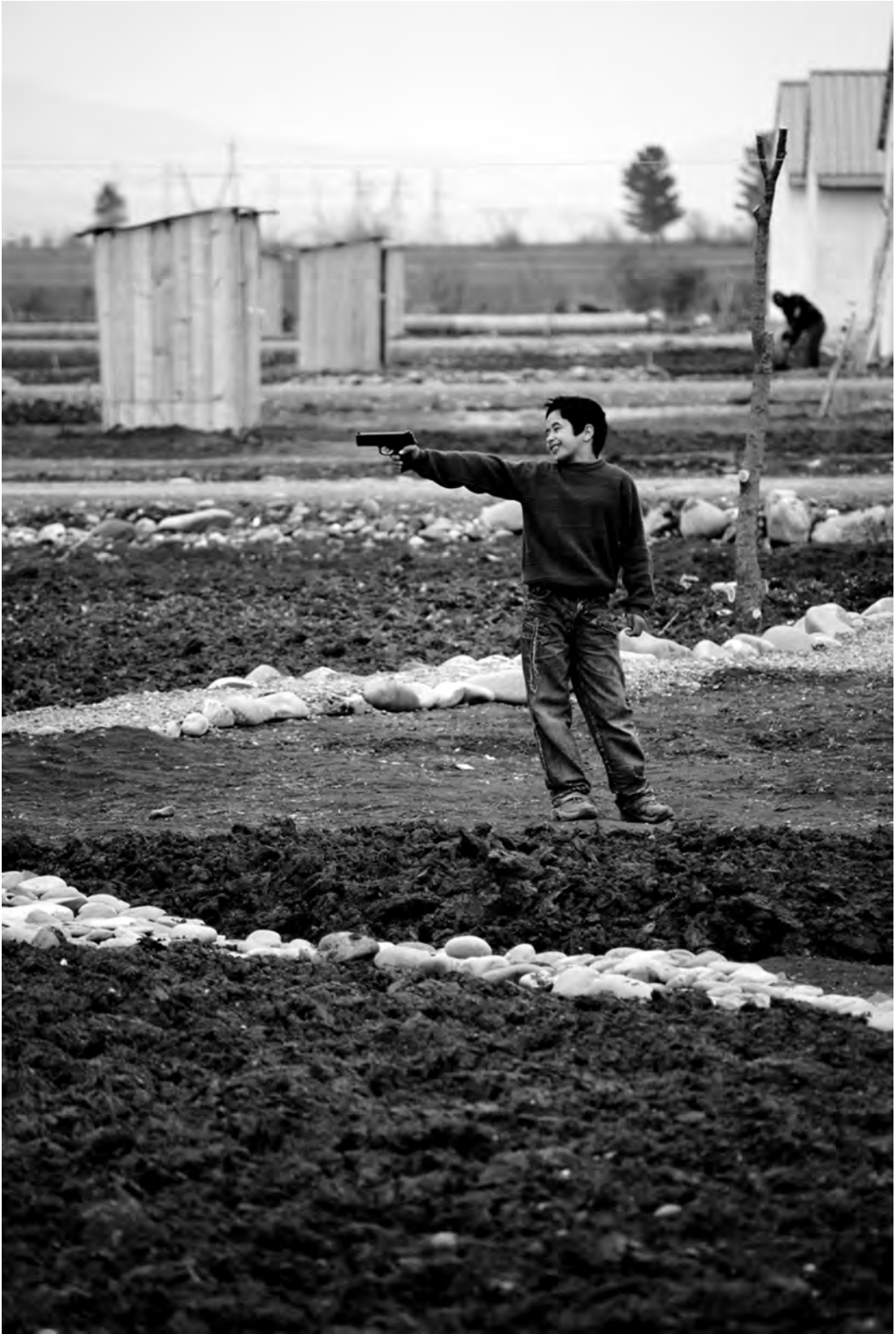
Tserovani settlement, one of thirty-six new camps for victims of ethnic cleansing in South Ossetia.



Skra settlement. Despite aid agencies' intermittent delivery of firewood, the trees have been chopped down for fuel.



Skra settlement. This woman lost her son in the 1993 war in Abkhazia, another breakaway province, and her husband in the 2008 war in South Ossetia.





Prezeti settlement, where, in the absence of quality infrastructure, IDPs must rely on makeshift and possibly dangerous solutions.





Metekhi settlement, where Georgian families traditionally live in multigenerational households, but where resettlement into different camps has broken many IDP families apart.



Berbuki settlement, where the feeble heaters installed in the cottages were no match for the cold seeping through gaps in the floorboards.





Tserovani settlement, where the confusion and stress of the aid process was bewildering to many IDPs.



Prezeti settlement, where the chaos of aid appeared in material form, as the newly built cottages began disintegrating almost immediately.