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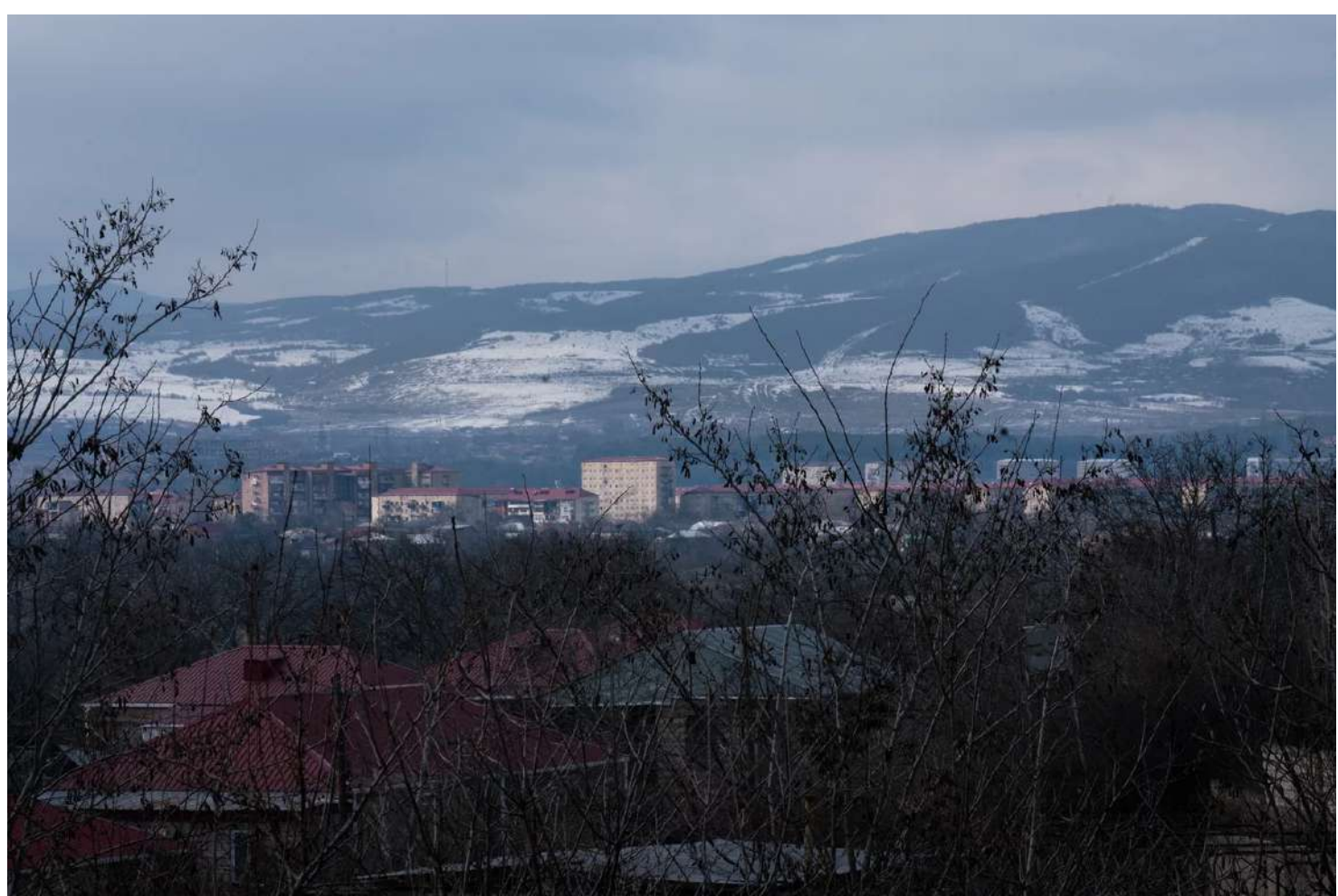The **Picture Show**

UKRAINE INVASION — EXPLAINED

Russia's war in Ukraine reminds Georgians of what they survived in 2008

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Sunlight hits buildings the Tskhinvali Region, just across the boundary of South Ossetia, a Russian-occupied part of Georgia.

Claire Harbage/NPR

GORI, Georgia — It was 14 years ago when Russia launched air strikes, sent in troops and declared war on Georgia.

Apartments and businesses were bombed, several hundred people were killed and hundreds more were displaced. The fighting lasted for five days. In the end, Russia gained control of two breakaway regions, Abkhazia and so-called South Ossetia, which Georgians refer to as the Tskinvali region. They are now separated by checkpoints and barbed wire from the rest of Georgia.

People who live in this part of Georgia are anxiously watching what's unfolding in Ukraine, because it reminds them of Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008. Many here worry that they could be next if Putin is successful.

Left: A sign about the occupation of Georgia hangs in the home for the elderly in Khurvaleti, Georgia. Right: A cat sits on a heater in the home.

Claire Harbage/NPR

"We don't know when Russia will decide to launch another provocation against Georgia," says Natia Seskuria, a Georgian security expert. "I think that our fate, in a way, is being decided in Ukraine right now. And given how things will go in Ukraine, we might be facing much more serious security threats in the future."

Located about an hour northwest of the country's capital city of Tbilisi, Gori became known around the world amid Russia's 2008 invasion as one of the nation's larger cities that took the brunt of the fighting. The assault only complicated the city's complex relationship with Russia further — it was the birthplace of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin. Tourists from all over the world flock to a museum dedicated to the leader, who presided over widespread famine and brutal killings, to wander galleries filled with portraits and mementos from the leader's life.