

## **PROTOCOL OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COORDINATING COUNCIL OF THE GEORGIAN ABKHAZ SIDES**

**Tbilisi, 11 February 1999**

The seventh session of the Coordination Council created pursuant to Final Statement of the Georgian and Abkhazian Sides (on 17-19 November 1997), took place on February 11, 1999 in Tbilisi under the auspices of the UN and under the chairmanship of Mr. Liviu Botta - the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and with participation of representatives of the Russian Federation as facilitator, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), member States of the Group of Friends of the UN Secretary General on Georgia Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and France in their capacity as observers.

The Georgian Side was represented by a delegation under the leadership of Mr. Vazha Lordkipanidze.

The Abkhaz Side was represented by a delegation under the leadership of Mr. Sergey Bagapsh.

Opening the session, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General pointed out that that bilateral contacts, that took place between the Georgian and Abkhazian Sides in the aftermath of the previous session of the Council, contributed to the cause of prevention of resumption of hostilities and represent the most effective tools in terms of achieving political progress in the negotiation process.

According to him, although agreements on principal issues like not resorting to military force, return of refugees and economic problems have not been reached, the existing difference on these issues are not insurmountable. The Special Representative called upon the Sides to resume the dialogue on all levels.

Evaluating the situation in the conflict zone as tense and unstable, Mr. Liviu Botta pointed out certain positive developments taking place after the previous session of the Coordination Council in terms of removing the tension in the village of Khurcha and welcomed a responsible stance assumed by the Sides on this particular issue.

Referring to the issue of return of refugees, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General confirmed the right of refugees and internally displaced persons to return to their places of permanent residence. Welcoming these recent initiatives relating to return of refugees and internally displaced persons to the Gali region within old administrative borders, he pointed out that in order to make sure that such initiatives are of practical importance, the return of refugees should be carried out in the conditions of security and with full respect for the relevant principles of the international law. The International community will render all the necessary assistance, provided the Sides reach an agreement on return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

The adopted agenda included the following issues:

1. Issues of sustainable non resumption of hostilities and security-related issues;

2. Refugees and internally displaced persons;
3. Economic and social problems.

Representatives of the Sides made statements.

Mr. Taric Gazi –Chief UNOMIG Military observer, General-Major Sergey Korobko-Commander of the CIS Peacekeeping forces, Mr. Ekber Memenjogly – representative of the UNHCR in Georgia, and Mr. Marco Borsotti – UNDP representative in Georgia took part in the discussions as well.

**The Coordinating Council decided:**

1. Within the framework of two weeks to convene, under the chairmanship of the Chief UNOMIG Military Observer, a meeting between the Parties to the conflict, UNOMIG, CIS Peace Keeping Forces, in order to elaborate instruments for functioning of the Group on investigation and prevention of terrorist acts and other manifestations of violations of provisions of the Moscow Agreement of 14 May 1994.

2. The Sides, together with representatives of UNOMIG and CIS Peace-keeping forces, shall work out and implement, until the end of February 1999, concrete steps aimed at securing non-resumption of hostilities any elimination of any threat of clashes, and separation of forces along the cease-fire line.

3. The representatives of law-enforcement bodies will analyze the available to them information on subversive actions that may lead to resumption of hostilities.

4. To continue bilateral negotiations on creation of mechanisms for return of refugees and internally displaced persons to the Gali region (within old administrative borders).

5. During the next Session of the Coordination Council, to hear information of Georgian and Abkhaz co-chairs of the Commission on Search for Missing Servicemen of the Abkhaz conflict in 1992-93.

(Abkhaz Issue in Official Documents, Legislative and Executive organs of Georgia, International Organizations, 1989-1999, part II, 1995-1999; authors: Vakhtang Kholbaia, Teimuraz Chakhrakia, Rafiel Gelantia, David Latsuzbaia, Tb., 2000, p. 279-280/in Georgan)

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