

PROTOCOL OF THE EIGHTHS SESSION OF THE COORDINATING COUNCIL OF THE GEORGIAN AND ABKHAZ SIDES

Sukhumi, April 29, 1999

The Eighth session of the Coordination Council created pursuant to Final Statement of the Georgian and Abkhaz Sides (on 17-19 November 1997), took place on April 29, 1999 in Sukhumi 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 as a result of steps taken by the Parties, in accordance with the bilateral agreements and decisions taken by the Coordination Council, the situation along the cease-fire line became stable and calmer.

He pointed out, that recently active consultations, on Joint Group on identification of facts of violations of the Moscow Agreement of 14 May 1994 and terrorist acts, were held. By doing so, the Sides displayed constructive approach and attitude on this issue. The Special Representative expressed his hope that in the course of that session, draft protocol of the Joint Group would be endorsed.

The Special Representative emphasized that currently the most acute problem was to address the issue of safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons to the Gali region in old administrative borders. He pointed out with satisfaction that stances of the Parties with regard of creation of conditions for safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons have come substantially closer to each other. The Special Representative called upon the Sides to reach an agreement on the Protocol of return of refugees and internally person to the Gali region and economic recovery as soon as possible. The Special Representative and representative of the Russian delegation, acting as facilitator to the settlement process of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, will continue to render support and assistance to these endeavors.

Taking into account the importance of the Joint Coordination Commission on practical issues and necessity of further activation of direct contacts between the Sides, the Special Representative welcomed the process of improvement of the work of that commission, including the creation of permanent working group under the leadership of the secretary of bilateral coordination commission and put forward a proposal to render material support to that group.

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.
4. Information of co-chairs of the Commission from Georgian and Abkhaz Sides on Search for Missing Servicemen in the Abkhaz conflict in 1992-93.

Representatives of the Sides made statements.

Mr. Taric Ghazi –Chief UNOMIG Military observer, General-Major Sergey Korobko-Commander of the CIS Peace Keeping forces, Representatives of the Russian Federation as facilitators of the peace process, Mr. Ekber Memenjigly – representative of the UNHCR in Georgia, Mr. Z. Lakerbaia –Secretary of the bilateral coordination commission, Mr. A.Ioseliani and Mr. O. Kakalia- co-Chairs of the Commission on Search for Missing Servicemen in the Abkhaz conflict in 1992-93 took part in the debates as well.

The Coordinating Council decided:

1. To activate the work of working Groups set up within the framework of the Coordination Council.
2. To continue further deliberation on the draft of the Protocol of Joint Group on Identification of facts of violation of provisions of the Moscow Agreement of May 14, 1994 and committed terrorist and subversive acts (the draft is attached).
3. To continue bilateral negotiations on the issues of creation of safe conditions conducive to return of refugees and internally displaced persons to the Gali region in old administrative borders and economic recovery.
4. To ask the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Group of Friends of the UN secretary General on Georgia to render material assistance to the bilateral coordination commission in order to solve practical issues.

To take note of information provided by co-Chairs of the Commission on Search for Missing Servicemen in the Abkhaz conflict in 1992-93 and promote the work of the commission.

(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. 292-294/in Georgan)