

United Nations



Nations Unies

Executive Office of the Secretary-General
Cabinet du Secrétaire général

Georgia

To: Mr. Nambiar,

#1 PRIORITY

Please find attached, for your approval, the draft report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia.

The report notes, with concern, a resurgence of tensions, marked by a considerable number of security incidents, as well as the worsening political climate, in particular increasingly strained relations between Georgia and Russia. While assessment of the peace process is ongoing, the report calls upon all stakeholders to adhere to the ceasefire regime. It also emphasizes the importance of a coordinated international response to put the peace process back on track.

The Political Unit has already discussed the suggested revisions with DPKO.

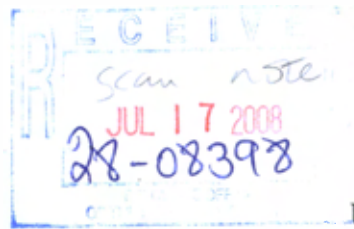
We make use of this opportunity to flag the fact that the SG had agreed to convene a meeting of the Friends on the margins of the GA Summit. We have reminded DPKO and DPA of this and asked for a preparatory note on the strategy and modalities of such a meeting.

Nicholas Haysom

21 July 2008

cc: Mr. Kim Won-soo

28-08398



Priority
Unclassified

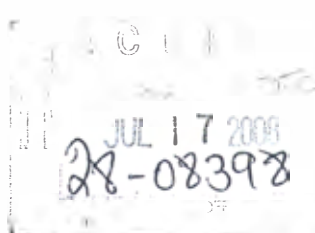
Note to Mr. Nambiar

Draft report on UNOMIG

1. Please find attached, for the Secretary-General's approval, the draft report on UNOMIG covering the period 1 April to 14 July 2008.
2. The report takes stock of the serious deterioration in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict over the past four months. It covers the considerable number of security incidents that have taken place, including the killing of a UNOMIG local staff member in a bomb explosion on 6 July, and expresses strong concern over the unpredictable consequences such incidents risk to incur. Emphasis is also given to the worsening political climate, in particular as concerns relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation.
3. Mention is made of the increasingly divergent views on the UN-led peace process and of Bertrand Ramcharan's ongoing assessment mission. At the same time, all stakeholders in the peace-process are called upon to adhere to the ceasefire regime and to respect the roles of both the CIS peacekeeping forces and UNOMIG. The report concludes that a coordinated international response to the ongoing deterioration will be key in putting the peace-process back on track.
4. This report is due to be issued on 22 July in preparation for the 29 July Council meeting. In light of this tight schedule, we would be grateful for your earliest possible approval.


Jean-Marie Guéhenno
16 July 2008

cc: Mr. Pascoe

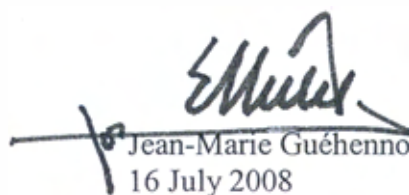


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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE SITUATION IN
ABKHAZIA, GEORGIA

Approved on behalf of the Secretary-General.


Vijay Nambiar

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1808 (2008) of 15 April 2008, by which the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) until 15 October 2008. It provides an update of the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia since my report of 2 April 2008 (S/2008/219).
2. My Special Representative, Jean Arnault, continued to lead the Mission. He was assisted by the Chief Military Observer, Major-General Niaz Muhammad Khan Khattak (Pakistan). The strength of UNOMIG on ~~30 June~~ ^{14 July} 2008 stood at ~~128~~ ¹³⁰ military observers (including 9 medical personnel) and ~~14~~ ¹⁵ police advisors (see annex).

II. Political Process

3. UNOMIG continued its efforts to help prevent the escalation of tensions in the zone of conflict and facilitate resumption of dialogue between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides against the background of a severely deteriorated situation on the ground both in political and security terms. In particular, the indiscriminate bombing at a public place in Gali that resulted in four fatalities, including one UNOMIG staff, represented a significant escalation in violence.
4. As to the overall approach to the settlement of the conflict, in view of the changing dynamics in the conflict settlement characterized by increasingly diverging views on the United Nations-led peace process, as mentioned in my January 2008 report (S/2008/38), I have asked Mr. Bertrand Ramcharan to undertake an assessment of the process, which includes consultations with the parties and the main stakeholders. I intend to report to the Council in due time on the conclusions of this exercise.
5. During my visit to Moscow on 8-9 April 2008, I discussed the situation in Georgia with the leadership of the Russian Federation. My Special Representative maintained, throughout the reporting period, regular contact with both sides and with the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, both in Tbilisi and their respective capitals. The Mission facilitated successive visits to Sukhumi by the United States senior representative in the Group of Friends, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, the United Kingdom senior representative in the Group of Friends, Danish Foreign Minister Dr. Per Stig Moller and German Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter

Steinmeier. My Special Representative participated in a meeting of the senior representatives of the Group of Friends, which took place in Berlin on 30 June.

6. During the reporting period, the negotiation process remained suspended. The Abkhaz side continued to insist on withdrawal of the Georgian forces from the upper Kodori valley and the signing of a document on non-resumption of hostilities as a precondition for re-engaging in negotiations with the Georgian side. The Georgian side focused on President Saakashvili's peace initiative of 28 March (see S/2008/219, para 18). It developed its various components, in particular the economic part, sought to acquaint the Abkhaz side with it, and shared it broadly with the international community. At the same time, the Georgian government continued to emphasize the need to change the negotiating formats, including by granting a prominent role to the EU, as a condition for substantial progress. The Abkhaz side remained opposed to any modification.
7. Two informal meetings between Georgian and Abkhaz representatives took place, respectively on 12-13 May in Sukhumi and on 15-17 June in Sweden. While the sides did not comment on their discussions, they publicly reiterated their firm positions on key issues.
- ✓ 8. ~~While the situation with regard to~~ negotiations between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides remained stalemated, a combination of developments brought about a dangerous dynamic in the situation around Abkhazia, Georgia. One month after the Russian Federation's decision to withdraw from the 1996 Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) restrictions on Abkhazia, Georgia (see S/2008/219, para 14), on 16 April the President of the Russian Federation issued an instruction authorising direct relations with ^{de facto} Abkhaz~~ia~~ and South Ossetia^{de facto} in a number of fields. The Russian Federation stated that this decision was aimed at supporting Russian citizens and the local population, and responded to what it called Georgia's aggressive intentions. de facto authorities
9. The Georgian side protested strongly what it considered a blatant violation of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, amounting to legalizing a factual annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It demanded the immediate revocation of both the March decision to withdraw from the 1996 CIS sanctions and the April instruction. With regard to its opposition to the April decree, Georgia received unequivocal support from NATO and the EU.
10. On 29 April, citing the possibility of an impending deterioration in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, the Russian Federation reinforced the Russian-manned CIS peacekeeping force with a 525-strong airborne battalion stationed in the Restricted Weapons Zone. UNOMIG established regular patrolling in the areas where this battalion was deployed. At the end of May, referring to the presidential decision on the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Abkhaz side, the Russian government also introduced a military railways unit to

rehabilitate the railways south of Sukhumi, outside the Area of Responsibility of UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force.

11. The Georgian side considered both measures as aggressive in nature, in particular vis-à-vis the upper Kodori valley, and demanded an immediate withdrawal of all additional Russian forces, including the railways troops. The Georgian side argued that these military steps confirmed that the Russian Federation was a party to the conflict and could no longer serve in either a mediating or a peacekeeping capacity. It intensified its calls for a change of the peacekeeping format. It proposed in particular to replace the current peacekeeping operation with a joint Georgian-Abkhaz police force under EU and OSCE supervision and training, without excluding that the Russian Federation may play a role. It announced that if a substantial change in the peacekeeping format was not achieved, it was ready to request formally the withdrawal of the CIS peacekeeping force.
12. For its part, the Abkhaz side insisted that the strengthening of the CIS peacekeeping force was carried out in response to Georgian plans to implement a military option in the period from April-May. It reiterated its opposition to any change in the peacekeeping format, and warned that a withdrawal of the CIS Peacekeepers would lead to a resumption of hostilities. The Abkhaz side also indicated that if the Georgian government should decide to withdraw its consent to the presence of the CIS peacekeeping force, it would propose an agreement of military cooperation with the Russian Federation to retain its military presence in Abkhazia.
13. Concerned over negative developments in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process, on 30 June senior representatives of the Group of Friends met in Berlin, with the participation of my Special Representative, to discuss ways and means to prevent further deterioration, in particular through the revitalization of the peace process. Unfortunately, the subsequent period saw a dramatic increase in violence, including indiscriminate bombing of public places in Gagra, Sukhumi and Gali on the Abkhaz-controlled side of the ceasefire line as well as roadside explosions on the Georgian-controlled side of the ceasefire line. The bombings resulted in a total of four fatalities and 18 injured, mostly civilians. Among the dead was one UNOMIG staff.

III. Developments in UNOMIG's Area of Responsibility

14. During the reporting period, the overall situation in UNOMIG's area of responsibility remained tense. One of the sources of this tension was the intensification of air activities over the zone of conflict. On 5 April, UNOMIG observers reported two Georgian jet fighters of the SU-25 type flying over the Abkhaz-controlled side of the zone of conflict. A **violation** report was issued. On 13 April, two jet fighters resembling SU-25s were reported by the local population to be flying along the ceasefire line. On 16 April, the Abkhaz side informed UNOMIG that its radar had detected an aircraft overflying the town of

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✓ Gali some minutes earlier; UNOMIG military observers heard the sound of jet aircraft at the northern edge of the security zone at approximately the same time. On 20 April, a jet aircraft was reported by several witnesses (see paragraph 17 below). On 17 May, two jet fighters were observed entering the Restricted Weapons Zone over the Senaki training area. UNOMIG was informed that on 3 April a C-130 transport airplane carrying an inspection team in the framework of the "Open Skies Treaty" flew along the ceasefire line without prior notification to UNOMIG and the CIS Peacekeeping force, therefore exposing the team and the crew to the hazards of the conflict zone.

15. Since August 2007 the Abkhaz side reported having detected a number of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) flights over Abkhaz-controlled territory. The Mission could verify five Georgian UAV flights over Abkhaz-controlled territory on 18 March, 20 April, 4 May, 8 May and 12 May 2008. The Abkhaz side claimed to have shot down a total of seven Georgian UAVs on these dates. For its part, the Mission has been able to ascertain the downing of three UAVs. After initial denials, the Georgian side admitted to losing a total of three UAVs.
16. After the Mission's Fact-Finding Team (FFT) investigated the first downing of a UAV on 18 March, UNOMIG informed the Georgian Ministry of Defence of its position that such flights constituted a violation of the ceasefire and separation of forces regime. Indeed, a military reconnaissance mission should be considered a "military action" and therefore contravenes paragraph 1 of the Moscow Agreement which stipulates that "the parties shall scrupulously observe the ceasefire on land, at sea and in the air and shall refrain from any military action against each other". UNOMIG also considers actions, whether by air-to-air missile or ground-based air defence systems, taken against Georgian UAVs over the zone of conflict – albeit in a defensive posture – to be violations of the ceasefire regime since the Moscow Agreement prohibits the introduction and operation of heavy weapons in the zone of conflict.
17. With regard to the second downing of a UAV on 20 April, based on the testimonies of witnesses and the analysis of a UAV camera and radar recordings provided by the Georgian side, the mission concluded that the recordings were authentic and that, absent compelling evidence to the contrary, the UAV was downed by a Russian aircraft. The Mission observed that enforcement of the ceasefire and separation of forces regime was the exclusive responsibility of the CIS Peacekeeping force, and enforcement action by third parties, in this case the Russian Federation, was inconsistent with the Moscow Agreement and undercut the ceasefire and separation of forces regime. The Mission also reaffirmed that UAV flights are a violation of the Moscow Agreement. The 20 April downing of a Georgian UAV was on the agenda of the Security Council in two sessions held on 23 April and 30 May.

Gali Sector

18. During the period under review, the situation in Gali sector remained tense, due in particular to the developments referred to above, but also to a general concern about an impending resumption of hostilities.
19. On 29 April an official statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that developments in the zone of conflict required an increase in the strength of the CIS Peacekeeping force, which would remain within the threshold of 3000 authorized by the CIS Heads of States Council in August 1994. The same day the CIS Peacekeeping force notified UNOMIG of the increase in general terms.
20. Simultaneously, UNOMIG observed an introduction of personnel and military equipment into the zone of conflict, which continued until 1 May. In accordance with its mandate to observe the operations of the CIS peacekeeping force, the Mission requested from the CIS peacekeeping force commander a detailed clarification about the increase. It was informed that the additional force included one airborne battalion group of 525 men tasked to increase monitoring in the Restricted Weapons Zone in the Tkvarcheli and Ochamchira areas, and 20 men attached to one of the existing CIS peacekeeping force battalions deployed in the Lower Gali area. The Mission was also assured that no element of the new forces had been deployed outside the zone of conflict. While UNOMIG was not in a position to verify information outside its Area of Responsibility, its observations on the deployment of forces in the zone of conflict were consistent with the information provided by the CIS peacekeeping force commander as to the airborne battalion group, its armament and operations.
21. The Georgian side stated that lack of advance notification and the introduction of an airborne battalion were a clear violation of a number of CIS regulations relating to peacekeeping and demanded an immediate withdrawal of the newly arrived forces and equipment (see paragraph 11 above).
22. During the reporting period, the Mission's freedom of movement was restricted on a number of occasions. UNOMIG's attempts to monitor the camp of the new CIS Peacekeeping contingent in the Restricted Weapons Zone were initially obstructed by the Abkhaz *de facto* militia and traffic police. UNOMIG patrols were prevented by the Abkhaz *de facto* law enforcement agencies and *de facto* officials from accessing the northern part of the Restricted Weapons Zone. Twice, *de facto* militia ^{police} confiscated cameras from UNOMIG patrols and returned them later. Unidentified local residents verbally abused patrols in the Restricted Weapons Zone and obstructed their movement on two occasions. Outside the conflict zone, a UN vehicle was confiscated by Abkhaz *de facto* Ministry of Defence personnel and later returned. After the Mission protested such actions, the *de facto* authorities issued instructions to heads of *de facto* law enforcement agencies to ensure cooperation with UNOMIG patrols. No similar incidents have occurred since.

23. During the reporting period, in addition to the violations mentioned above in relation to the Mission's freedom of movement, UNOMIG issued a violation report to the Abkhaz *de facto* authorities over the presence of two military vehicles in the Security Zone on 20 April.
24. On 21 May, the day of the Georgian parliamentary elections, the Mission monitored movements across the cease-fire line at the Inguri bridge. Contrary to allegations at the time, the local population was not prevented from crossing the cease-fire line. However, following a series of bomb blasts in public places in Gagra and Sukhumi on 29 and 30 June 2008 resulting in 12 people injured, the Abkhaz *de facto* authorities, who blamed the incidents on Georgian special forces, ordered the closure of the ceasefire line from 1 July. The Georgian government denied any involvement in the incidents and protested the restrictions on the freedom of movement of Gali residents, and in particular that of school students who were to pass exams on the Georgian-controlled side of the ceasefire line.
25. The most serious incident in years in UNOMIG's Area of Responsibility happened late evening on 6 July when four people were killed and six injured following an explosion in a cafe in Gali town near UNOMIG's sector headquarters. Among the fatalities were a UNOMIG language assistant, the Head of the Gali *de facto* Abkhaz security service, another *de facto* ~~state~~ security officer and a young woman. A second UNOMIG language assistant was among the six wounded. Abkhaz *de facto* authorities have blamed Georgian security forces for the blast calling the incident "a terrorist attack". The Georgian government stated that this act of violence has been in "the interest of forces hoping to prolong the presence of illegally deployed Russian military forces in Georgia ...and those who want to derail Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations". Coming in the wake of the indiscriminate bomb blasts in Gagra on 29 June and Sukhumi on 30 June, the Gali bombing marked a new and worrying level of violence.
26. Criminal incidents reported to UNOMIG patrols during the period under review (without counting the casualties from the 6 July incident) included two killings, one robbery and two abductions.
27. The United Nations police continued to liaise with the Abkhaz *de facto* law enforcement agencies in Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli districts. 24 training courses for 216 Abkhaz *de facto* militia officers in traffic security, police tactics, forensics, police management, and other policing skills, in addition to donating police equipment and books.
28. From 2 to 5 June, the UN Police held a seminar in Ochamchira town on prevention of domestic violence and juvenile delinquency, bringing together sixteen participants from the Abkhaz *de facto* Supreme Court, State Security Service, General Prosecutor's Office, the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Health and Education, and NGOs. The seminar was conducted by an NGO "La Strada Ukraine", *de facto* Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Abkhaz NGO "Association

of Women of Abkhazia". UN Police also organized educational events and distributed learning materials to children on the subject of traffic safety.

29. The spring conscription in the de-facto Abkhaz armed forces started on 1 April 2008. No allegation of arbitrary recruitment came to the attention of the Human Rights Office during this period. The Office is providing legal advice in a previous case of alleged arbitrary recruitment of an ethnic Georgian from the Gali district.
30. The issuance of Abkhaz "passports" in the Gali district started formally at the end of March. It appears that during the following two months the issuance was put on hold. In June the *de facto* authorities in Gali district re-started the process with limited results due to the reluctance of Gali district residents to state in the application forms that they renounce their Georgian citizenship.
31. The Human Rights Office followed up on a case involving a Georgian priest who was sent from Tbilisi to Gali to conduct religious service in the Georgian language. Abkhaz religious authorities denied him authorization to do so, following which the priest was expelled from Gali. While unable to pronounce on issues of religious jurisdiction, the Human Rights Office found no confirmation of media allegations of physical abuse against the priest.

Zugdidi Sector

32. During the reporting period, the situation on the Georgian-controlled side of the ceasefire line remained generally tense due to the developments mentioned in the previous sections as well as a number of incidents that took place in the Zugdidi sector. These included several incidents involving ^{personnel of the} CIS peacekeeping force ~~personnel~~ and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, an alleged attack against two buses in the Khurcha ^{Georgian} area close to the ceasefire line on the day of Georgian parliamentary elections, and a number of explosions that took place on 2, 6 and 9 July. This tension notwithstanding, the observations posts of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs operated at usual personnel and alertness levels.
33. A number of tripartite meetings between UNOMIG, the Georgian side and the CIS peacekeeping force arranged by UNOMIG took place; and since late March, in coordination with the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs, the CIS peacekeeping force resumed its patrolling of the Georgian-controlled Ganmukhuri pocket north of the Inguri river.
34. In mid-April, the Abkhaz *de facto* authorities reported a Georgian build-up in Zugdidi district and along the ceasefire line. The CIS peacekeeping force also conveyed its concern to UNOMIG about a possible Georgian build-up in the Restricted Weapons Zone. UNOMIG carried out extensive patrolling of the security and restricted weapons zones, and while there was apprehension among

the local population of a possible conflict, there were no signs of substantial increases in the deployment of security forces in the zone of conflict.

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35. The period under review has been marked, since mid-May, by a number of incidents involving the personnel of the CIS PKF and the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs. In most cases, the Georgian media were present during those incidents, which were later broadcast. On 17 May one Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) that was part of a convoy moving towards its headquarters in Urta village was reported to have been involved in a traffic accident with a civilian vehicle; on 17 June, four CIS peacekeeping force personnel travelling in a truck transporting anti-tank missiles were stopped. In both cases, CIS peacekeeping force personnel were forcefully disarmed and detained by a large contingent of heavily armed law enforcement agency personnel, and brought to a police station in Zugdidi for investigation. They were released later. Representatives of UNOMIG Zugdidi Sector Headquarters were present at the police station until the release of the detainees.
36. In both cases, the Georgian side complained that the CIS Peacekeepers had not coordinated its move with the MIA and, in the second case, it claimed that anti-tank missiles were inconsistent with a peacekeeping mission. The CIS Peacekeeping force denounced the arrest and detention of its personnel as provocations and gross violations of the Moscow Agreement. It should be noted that an anti-tank sub-unit is an integral part of the motorized rifle battalion of the CIS Peacekeeping force's Southern Operation Group. The type of missiles transported by the CIS PKF is compatible with the anti-tank systems held by the sub-unit. These incidents raised the tensions between the CIS peacekeeping force and the Georgian side. In the course of July, a variety of incidents involving the CIS PKF and the Georgian MIA continued to take place. Albeit of a less serious nature, they reflect a state of tension which has the potential to further deteriorate.
37. The most serious incident in the Zugdidi area during the period occurred on 21 May, the day of the Georgian parliamentary elections, in the vicinity of Khurcha village located near the ceasefire line. On that occasion, heavy firing took place around a football field where a number of people, mainly from the Gali district, were requested to gather to be transported by bus to the town of Zugdidi in order to vote. The account of the event showed that after an initial burst of small arms fire by the unidentified attackers, people assembled on the field fled; the empty buses were then hit by RPGs and caught fire. Three persons were brought to the hospital, one severely injured. The Georgian security forces rapidly arrived at the scene and fired for a protracted period in the direction of the ceasefire line. The entire incident was recorded by the Georgian media. The Georgian side immediately accused the Abkhaz side of being responsible for the incident. The Abkhaz side denied any involvement.

38. UNOMIG's investigation into this incident was able to establish the locations from which the attackers fired, approximately 100 meters from the buses, on the Georgian-controlled side of the ceasefire line. While no hard evidence was found so far regarding the identity of the perpetrators, inconsistencies in the circumstances surrounding the incident, in particular the fact that the way in which the incident was filmed appeared to be in anticipation of events rather than recording them as they were happening, require UNOMIG to continue its investigation.
39. On 2 July an explosion occurred in the early morning hours next to the M-27 road, near the CIS peacekeeping force Check Point at the Inguri river bridge crossing on the Georgian-controlled side of the ceasefire line. The Abkhaz side had closed the bridge to movement by persons since 1 July. On 6 July a series of four explosions took place along the M 27 road between the village of Rukhi and the Inguri river bridge crossing within a span of about 250 meters. On the same day, another explosion was reported in a corn field along the ceasefire line approximately 400 meters northeast of a Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs Observation Post. No injuries were reported in any of the explosions. UNOMIG is investigating the incidents.
40. On 9 July an incident took place on the ceasefire line when allegedly two RPG rockets and small arms were fired by unknown perpetrators at former Ministry of Internal Affairs Observation Post 217 near Akhali Abustmani on the Georgian-controlled side ~~causing~~ slight damage to the structure of the post. No casualties were ~~involved~~, and an initial assessment indicates that the attack might have been ~~executed on the Georgian-controlled side of the river bank. The Abkhaz side denied any involvement. Directional antennas erected on the post may point to the motivation behind the attack, but UNOMIG was denied admission into the post.~~ The incident is also under ~~the~~ further investigation.
41. From 27 May to 2 June, the CIS peacekeeping force conducted the yearly rotation of the Southern Operational Group. The 526 motorized rifle battalion (553 personnel and 49 armoured personnel carriers) replaced the 529 motorized rifle battalion (414 personnel). Overall, the withdrawal of CIS peacekeeping force's equipment as part of the rotation was transparent and well-coordinated with the Georgian authorities and UNOMIG.
42. In June, UNOMIG patrols noted an increase in the frequency of training conducted by the Georgian side, in terms of both the number of trainees and the number of training areas. The training was conducted either in the Security Zone, for the personnel of law enforcement agencies, or in the Restricted Weapons Zone for the personnel of the Ministry of Defence.
43. During the reporting period, UNOMIG continued to observe routine movements towards the upper Kodori Valley by personnel and mostly logistical vehicles belonging to the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs. These movements were

generally rotations of personnel conducted overland and represented a significant increase compared to the previous reporting period due to the improvement of weather conditions. The number of flights observed slightly decreased. The procedures agreed by the Georgian side for notification and verification of movements through the security zone to and from the upper Kodori Valley were generally not followed.

44. Criminal incidents reported to UNOMIG patrols during the reporting period included two killings, one attempted killing, eight robberies and seven abductions.
45. The UNOMIG police component implemented a systematic advisory programme with the Georgian police. A total of 35 joint patrols with the local police were also carried out. In addition, 23 training courses in police tactics, self-defence, forensics, community policing, traffic police matters, and other policing skills for 247 police officers were conducted. UN Police also facilitated participation by 10 Georgian police officers in a modern policing training course at the Police School of the Estonian Public Service Academy, which took place from 16 May to 14 June.
46. On 28 May, a model police station with a training facility, which was planned and overseen by UN Police in accordance with European standards, was inaugurated in Lia village (see para. 63).
47. UN Police conducted 10 public surveys on public security matters in 16 communities within the security zone. UN Police also organized educational events and distributed learning materials to children on the subject of traffic safety.

Kodori valley

48. Over the reporting period, the general situation in the Kodori Valley was calm until 9 July when a serious incident was reported in the Achamkhara area in the lower Kodori valley area (see para. 51).

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49. UNOMIG's team returned to its team base in Adjara in the upper Kodori valley on 9 April, after six weeks of absence due to winter weather conditions. Upon return, the team did not observe any visible change or increase in the strength of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs personnel compared to the number of 578 personnel that was provided to UNOMIG by the Georgian authorities on 23 June. However, during the period under review, the team was not allowed access to some areas, in particular the Kvabchara valley, which made it impossible for UNOMIG to verify the official figures. While the Abkhaz side and the CIS Peacekeeping force expressed their concerns regarding an alleged introduction of additional personnel, including from the Ministry of Defence, and of heavy military equipment into the upper Kodori valley, the Mission did not observe signs of a large-scale induction of security forces. However, UNOMIG requested

the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs to ensure more transparency, especially in those areas that have been inaccessible so far, in order to enable UNOMIG to ascertain fully the factual situation on the ground.

50. UNOMIG observed new infrastructural development in the upper Kodori valley, including a road network, accommodation, logistic installation and the storing of fuel. These infrastructural facilities would seem to exceed the requirements for the declared strength of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs personnel. Air transportation to the upper Kodori Valley has remained the prevalent mode of transport to the valley as the Kalamri Suki and the Khida Pass did not allow for continuous traffic. Some ground movements observed by the UNOMIG post co-located with the CIS peacekeeping force post at the northern edge of the zone of conflict on the way to the Kodori Valley were not accounted for as arriving in the upper Kodori Valley. This suggests that some convoys deviated to other destinations between this position and the upper Kodori Valley.
51. As weather conditions improved, the Georgian security forces re-occupied their summer positions at the Maruky Pass north of the Kodori Valley, at the border with the Russian Federation. The Abkhaz side has reportedly done the same at the Adanga Pass in a neighbouring area. These positions, located away from the Kodori Valley, are beyond UNOMIG's ~~usual~~ schedule of monitoring. The relative closeness of these positions to each other can result in skirmishes between the sides, especially due to differing interpretations of the delimitation between Georgia- and Abkhaz-controlled areas in the Kodori valley.
52. On 9 July, a clash took place between the Abkhaz and Georgian sides on the Achamkhara heights in the lower Kodori valley area. The Abkhaz side claimed that an Abkhaz *de facto* Security Post was raided by the Georgian side, resulting in two Abkhaz reservists being injured. The Georgian side stated that one of its patrols was attacked while securing the Achamkhara heights in anticipation of a UNOMIG visit to the Kvabchara Valley. It reported that three Georgian MIA personnel were injured. It may be recalled that in June 2007 the Georgian side occupied the Achamkhara heights; it created a potentially serious stand-off between the sides that was de-escalated when the Georgian side subsequently withdrew its personnel. An investigation by UNOMIG is in progress.
53. Despite repeated calls by UNOMIG on both sides to cease aerial activity in the zone of conflict, overflights were also observed in the Kodori Valley. The Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Abkhaz side and the CIS peacekeeping force personnel reported observing UAV flights above the lower and upper Kodori Valley on 8 and 22 April, 22 and 24 May, 6 and 30 June and 4 and 5 July. None of the sides admitted to flying UAVs in the Kodori Valley.

Mission-wide developments

54. Weekly quadripartite meetings remained suspended since 2 November 2006. UNOMIG's Fact-Finding Team (FFT) completed the draft report on the Joint Fact Finding Group (JFFG) investigation into the disappearance of David Sigua and submitted it to the members of the JFFG for their consideration.
55. With regard to the explosion that occurred in Nabakevi village on 29 February 2008 (see S/2008/219, para. 19 and 30), the FFT's investigation was inconclusive with regard to the identity of the perpetrators. The investigation will resume if new evidence becomes available. The FFT also concluded its investigation into the events surrounding the operations of UAVs within UNOMIG area of responsibility, which is summarized in paragraphs 15-17.
56. With regard to the strengthening of UNOMIG's observation capability, the Mission intends to continue consultations with the two sides concerning the acquisition of UAVs with a view to improving transparency in the Mission's Area of Responsibility.

IV. Cooperation with the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States

57. UNOMIG and CIS peacekeeping force continued to maintain close cooperation in fulfilling their respective mandates. Since mid-February, the CIS peacekeeping force has been informing UNOMIG of its plans to rectify the insufficient number of APCs and other vehicles in both the Northern and Southern Operational Groups. In total, 81 APCs and 26 miscellaneous vehicles were ~~scheduled~~ to be replaced with similar vehicles or, in the case of trucks, replaced by APCs. UNOMIG was unable to monitor precisely the vehicle ~~movement~~ *replacement*.
58. The CIS peacekeeping force continued to escort UNOMIG through the lower Kodori Valley during regular rotation of personnel for its Kodori Team Base. The CIS peacekeeping force also provided assistance to UNOMIG forward bases, which were established periodically adjacent to the CIS peacekeeping force checkpoints or observation points on both sides of the ceasefire.

V. Human Rights issues

59. During the reporting period, the United Nations Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, continued its efforts to promote human rights and to provide support to local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As mandated, the Office carried out its activities throughout Abkhazia, Georgia.
60. The Office continued its regular visits to detention facilities, monitored court trials and provided legal advisory services to the local population. The Sukhumi city office received 38 visitors over the reporting period, with the majority of

claims relating to property rights and to the treatment of detainees. The Office followed up on alleged violations of the right to freedom of movement and continued discussions with the *de facto* authorities about the fate of the last remaining death row inmate in Abkhazia, Georgia.

61. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) began the implementation of two projects. One supports the Human Rights Centre at Sukhumi University and is aimed at raising awareness about human rights issues. The other one provides assistance to school teachers and students in training on project proposal preparation, implementation and reporting in order to facilitate participation in mini-grant competitions in schools organized by the OSCE. The OSCE also conducted a two-day media training in freedom of the media for the Abkhaz journalists.

VI. Humanitarian and rehabilitation activities

62. During the reporting period, through its trust fund, the Mission continued to implement projects focusing mainly on the health sector and electrical energy distribution lines. The Mission also continued working on the rehabilitation of a hospital, a dispensary and a youth house in the Gali sector, and the rehabilitation of a hospital in the Zugdidi sector. *on the rehabilitation of the*
63. A new police station was constructed in the village of Lia, with the Mission's support and funding from the European Commission, to replace the old one destroyed in an attack in January 2004. It was inaugurated on 28 May. The second phase of a training project for 24 detainees at Dranda prison aimed at facilitating their future reintegration into society began in May.
64. In April, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) began the rehabilitation of the water supply systems in Gali, Tkvarcheli and Ochamchira districts, with funding from UNDP. During the reporting period, UNDP also initiated a project on assisting female entrepreneurs, providing training on business management, business plan development and organizing a workshop on gender issues. UNDP also continued supporting local farmers by strengthening local pest management capacity. It provided farmers' groups in Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli districts with knapsack sprayers, bio pesticides and relevant information.
65. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with the support of its partners, the Danish and Norwegian Refugee Councils and the Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency, continued to implement the "Strategic Directions for Abkhazia" project, including community-based protection and confidence-building activities, education-related projects, basic shelter repair, income generation, agricultural support and training activities. UNHCR also initiated preliminary discussions on and received positive indications from the sides regarding a profiling exercise aimed at better understanding the problems and needs of the people living in Gali, Ochamchira *enhancing the*

and Tkvarcheli districts. In April, UNHCR held a three-day planning workshop in Gali and Zugdidi with the participation of representatives of seven donor countries. Donors had an opportunity to visit project sites and beneficiaries on both sides of the ceasefire line and understand that humanitarian needs in the zone of conflict require a much broader support from the international community. UNHCR's Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. Craig Johnston, visited Georgia in May and discussed the situation of returnees and prospects for further returns with high-level representatives from both sides.

66. During the first half of May, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) organised a series of trainings on immunization management for health care practitioners throughout Abkhazia, Georgia. The trainings will enable the participants to coordinate the implementation of a mass-immunization campaign against measles and rubella scheduled for October 2008. UNICEF also provided technical and material assistance in support of the vaccination campaign including support to local community-based organizations to raise awareness about the benefits of vaccination.
67. The World Food Programme (WFP), in collaboration with World Vision International, continued to assist the most vulnerable categories of the population through food-for-work and food-for-education programmes. Food-for-work projects aim at rehabilitating agricultural infrastructure, reclaiming abandoned land and planting crops benefiting 9,400 persons in Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli districts. In view of the impending phasing out of WFP activities in the region, it continued to explore partnership possibilities with other UN agencies and with NGOs to ensure the sustainability of its projects. Within the scope of the food-for-education programme, take-home rations were provided to over 1,050 most at-risk schoolchildren in 71 schools in Ochamchira, Tkvarcheli, Gali, Gulripsh, Sukhumi and Gagra districts, while also ensuring the children's school attendance. In cooperation with Médecins Sans Frontières, food was also provided to 70 tuberculosis patients undergoing treatment in the Gulripsh hospital.

VII. Support issues

68. During the reporting period, UNOMIG continued its HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention campaign. The Mission held training sessions for all mission personnel. Materials were distributed and displayed in the Mission area.
69. UNOMIG continued to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 dated 31 October 2000 (Woman, Peace and Security), and welcomed the expansion of the role and contribution of women among military observers.

70. UNOMIG implemented ST/SGB/2008/5 "Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority" by circulating the bulletin to all Mission personnel in April. The corresponding mandatory online training programme was completed by all civilian staff in June. In addition, the UNOMIG conduct and discipline refresher briefing was delivered to all categories of Mission personnel, focusing on recent policy developments and other conduct issues, such as prostitution and pornography.
71. In response to recent misconduct incidents linked to illegal narcotics, UNOMIG is implementing a zero-tolerance policy.
72. Following recent updates in the contents of the online training course, the mandatory "Integrity Awareness Initiative" was re-launched in UNOMIG in March. All civilian Mission staff were requested to complete by 31 May three mandatory conduct and discipline online training courses (Standards of Conduct, Integrity Awareness Initiative, and Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment and Abuse of Authority).

VIII. Observations

73. I have consistently stressed the need for strict observance of the ceasefire and separation of forces regime in the Area of Responsibility of UNOMIG in order to prevent a resumption of hostilities and create a climate conducive to dialogue between the two sides. Unfortunately, after a period of relative stability in the winter, the last four months have witnessed a resurgence of tensions, *inter alia* stemming from clear disagreements as to what constitutes observance or violation of the ceasefire regime. Taking into account the terms of the Moscow Agreement and the volatility of the overall situation in the Georgian-Abkhaz ^{peace} process, I underline the need for all involved to observe the most rigorous separation of forces on land, at sea and in the air, with the CIS peacekeeping force having responsibility for the enforcement of that separation. I am aware of the repeated calls by the Georgian side for a change in the peacekeeping mechanism. But while this and other discussions with respect to the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process are ongoing, I call upon every stakeholder in this process to preserve the integrity of the ceasefire regime. Following a number of incidents in the recent period, I appeal to the Abkhaz side to observe the freedom of movement of UNOMIG and to the Georgian side to observe the freedom of movement of the CIS Peacekeeping force in their respective Area of Responsibility.
74. The increase in tensions during the period under the review did not only involve the ceasefire regime. I have condemned the bombings and roadside explosions that have taken place from 29 June to 6 July on both sides of the ceasefire line, with the indiscriminate bombing in public places on the Abkhaz side ^{leaving four} fatalities, including one UNOMIG staff, and 18 wounded. While investigations by UNOMIG into the incidents that have occurred in Gali and elsewhere in the

zone of conflict are still ongoing – the bombings in Gagra and Sukhumi took place outside the Mission's Area of Responsibility - I am deeply concerned by this resort to indiscriminate violence, an unprecedented development with unpredictable consequences for a fragile peace process.

75. In addition, against the ^{accelerated} background of already strained relations between the Russian Federation and Georgia, developments during the period under review have brought differences between the two countries to a new level, with Georgia blaming Russia for "~~creeping~~" annexation" of Abkhazia and Russia accusing Georgia of preparing for the imminent implementation of a military option in Abkhazia. While UNOMIG's mandate is limited to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, both the conflict prevention and conflict resolution dimensions of ~~this~~ ^{its} mandate are significantly affected by this deterioration in the relationship between key actors in the process and the polarizing effect it has on the broader international context. By many accounts, the chain of events that unfolded beginning in March 2008, brought the Georgian, Abkhaz and CIS peacekeeping forces close to major confrontation in the second half of April.
76. This bears out the relevance of the assessment of the peace process that is currently being undertaken, which includes consultations with the two parties and those international organizations and member states, including the Group of Friends, that have been most directly involved in the peace process. The assessment will, *inter alia*, explore the possibility of a coordinated international response to avert further worsening of the political and security situation. International consensus remains key if the peace process is to be put back on track.
77. I conclude by expressing my thanks to my Special Representative and the staff of UNOMIG for their persistent efforts in an increasingly difficult environment as illustrated by the death of a UNOMIG staff in Gali on 6 July 2008. I convey my condolences to his family, and I wish prompt recovery to our UNOMIG staff injured during the same incident. I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to Major General Niaz Muhammad Khan Khattak, who is leaving the Mission after completing three years ^{as} ~~at~~ the head of UNOMIG's military contingent; and who has served with great distinction as the Mission's Chief Military Observer during a very challenging period. My thanks also go to the members of the Group of Friends and those member states and ~~international~~ organizations that continue to contribute to the peace process.

Annex

Countries Providing Military Observers (as of 14 July 2008)

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Military Observers</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Albania | 3 |
| Austria | 3 |
| Bangladesh | 8 |
| Croatia | 3 |
| Czech Republic | 5 |
| Denmark | 5 |
| Egypt | 5 |
| France | 3 |
| Germany | 12 (3 x UNMO 9x Medical Team) |
| Ghana | 1 |
| Greece | 4 |
| Hungary | 7 |
| Indonesia | 4 |
| Jordan | 7 |
| Lithuania | 2 |
| Moldova | 1 |
| Mongolia | 0 |
| Nepal | 1 |
| Nigeria | 1 |
| Pakistan | 11(Including CMO) |
| Poland | 2 |
| Republic of | 7 |
| Korea | 7 |
| Romania | 2 |
| Russia | 4 |
| Sweden | 3 |
| Switzerland | 4 |
| Turkey | 5 |
| Ukraine | 5 |
| United Kingdom | 5 |
| United States of America | 3 |
| Uruguay | 3 |
| Yemen | 1 |
| Total | 130 |

Countries providing civilian police personnel (as of 14 July 2008)

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Civilian police personnel</i> |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Czech Republic | 1 |
| Germany | 4 |
| Ghana | 1 |
| Israel | 1 |
| Poland | 2 |
| Russian Federation | 2 |
| Sweden | 1 |
| Switzerland | 2 |
| Ukraine | 1* |
| Total 15 | |

* Including the Senior Police Adviser.