

Protocol of the fifth session of the Coordinating Council of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides

Sukhumi, 2 September 1998

The fifth session of the Coordinating Council, established on the basis of the concluding statement on the outcome of the meeting of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides (Geneva, 17 to 19 November 1997), was held in Sukhumi on 2 September 1998 under United Nations auspices and was chaired by Mr. Liviu Bota, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The agenda contained the following items:

1. Questions relating to the sustained non-resumption of hostilities, and security issues;
2. Refugees and displaced persons within the country;
3. Economic and social problems.

The Georgian side was represented by a delegation headed by Mr. Vazha Lordkipanidze.

The Abkhaz side was represented by a delegation headed by Mr. Sergei Bagapsh.

Opening the session, Mr. Liviu Bota, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, said that the participants in the session should focus their attention on three issues:

1. Full implementation of the Gagra Protocol;
2. Establishment of a mechanism to investigate and prevent violations of the Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces;
3. Response of the sides to protests by the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) and the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

Statements were made by the representatives of the sides, the Russian Federation in its capacity as facilitator, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the group of Friends of the Secretary-General.

General Sergei Korobko, Commander of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces, and General Harun ar-Rashid, Chief Military Observer of UNOMIG, provided information about the current situation in the conflict zone.

The Coordinating Council adopted the following decisions:

1. Considering the need to halt the dangerous escalation of tension, which threatens to lead to a resumption of armed clashes, the sides must:

(a) Take effective steps to halt the skirmishes that are continuing to occur after dark across the line separating the sides;

(b) Take measures to halt terrorist and subversive groups, armed formations and individuals from crossing the line separating the sides;

(c) The Abkhaz side shall take measures to protect civilians living in Gali district from unlawful acts involving the use of force.

2. The sides shall establish a joint group to investigate and prevent terrorist acts and other of fences. The group shall consist of representatives of the sides, UNOMIG and the CIS Peacekeeping Forces. Under the direction of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the group shall, within two weeks' time, draw up a statute on the operation of the group and transmit it to the members of the Coordinating Council for approval. The statute shall contain rules of procedure, including: composition of the group, procedure for convening meetings, directives on the conduct of investigations, and proposals on the implementation of conclusions reached by the group in the course of its work.

3. The sides pledge to examine and respond to the protests made by UNOMIG and the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces concerning violations of the Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces. If the sides continue to ignore the protests made by UNOMIG and the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces, the Secretary-General shall report on this matter to the Security Council.

4. To request the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to resume negotiations between the sides on the elimination of the consequences of the May events, the safe return of refugees and measures to rehabilitate Abkhazia's economy.

5. To amend the first sentence of the second paragraph of point 2 of the of the Coordinating Council to read as follows: "The Council shall of four representatives each from the Georgian and Abkhaz sides."

6. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, representatives of the Russian Federation in its capacity as facilitator, the States members of the group of Friends of the Secretary-General and OSCE have adopted the decision annexed hereto.

ANNEX

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, representatives of the Russian Federation in its capacity as facilitator, the States members of the group of Friends of the Secretary-General and OSCE urgently appeal to the sides to refrain from any actions that might exacerbate the situation in the conflict zone and lead to a resumption of armed clashes.

This pertains, first of all, to both sides' halting construction of military-engineering installations and their destruction, within 30 days, by the forces of the sides under the supervision of UNOMIG and the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces.