

## **Q5 Humanitarian / Reference 48: Witness statement**

### Declaration of Tskhaloba Khutsinashvili

My name is Tskhaloba Khutsinashvili. I am 79 years old. Until my home was burned down I was a farmer living in the village of Kurta. Most of the people who lived in Kurta were Georgians. In addition, there were some mixed families in Kurta.

Shortly after the conflict broke out I was hiding in my garden when a group of 4 Ossetians, Cossacks and Russians arrived. They were joined by another 5 Ossetians. I could tell which ethnicities they belonged to by the accents they spoke with. They wore dark green military fatigues and had caps with stars on them. They saw me and demanded that I give them all my valuables. They specifically demanded that I give them my mobile phone. They broke down the door of my house and stole many things, including a generator, a computer and wine. They believe that one of the bottles of wine actually contained poison, and demanded that I drink it. Because the bottle in fact contained wine, and not poison, I was not harmed by drinking from this bottle.

They placed me in handcuffs and then burned down my house. I also saw them throw things onto my Georgian neighbors' houses that caused these houses to burn as well. While my house was burning they said to me "look at this!" One of the Ossetians said "let's kill him," but they decided not to kill me when another one said that my corpse would smell.

I lived near a house that belongs to an Ossetian family who had not lived in the house for a long time. I believe that the people who burned down my house and those of my Georgian neighbors knew this house belonged to an Ossetian family because it was spared.

The group that burned down my house noticed that I have 2 cows. I begged them to leave one of the cows. When I said this they beat me with the butt of a gun and stole both of my cows.