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Lavrov, Kokoity Discuss South Ossetian Conflict

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By Civil Georgia (<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=14479>)

Tbilisi, 20 January 2007 - Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with South Ossetian leader Eduard Kokoity in Moscow on January 19 to discuss the current situation in the South Ossetian conflict zone, the Russian Foreign Ministry reported.

"The sides stressed the need for urgent and effective measures that would help find a way out of the deadlock in the process of [Georgian-Ossetian] negotiations. The lack of positive dynamics in this issue could become a destabilizing factor for South Ossetia and the entire region, and lead to aggravated confrontation, including armed, in the conflict zone," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in an information note.

The sides expressed concern over Tbilisi's unwillingness to sign a document on non-resumption of hostilities with the South Ossetian side, confirmed their readiness for close cooperation in frames of the Joint Control Commission (JCC) and called on the Georgian side to resume joint activities in the current negotiating format, according to the Russian Foreign Ministry.



საქართველოს საგარეო საქმეთა სამინისტრო Ministry Of Foreign Affairs Of Georgia

On 29 June 2007, the Press and Information Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs disseminated information on a meeting held between Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Lavrov and E. Kokoity.

The very fact of this meeting, as well as the tone of the reported information causes concern. We regret to note that the Russian side continues its uncovered support of separatism.

While Tskhinvali speaks with the language of ultimatums with the Georgian authorities, deliberately uses the existing tense situation in the region to save its own regime, uses water supply problems for political objectives at the expense of the rights of local population, artificially hinders free movement of civilian transport, resorts to obvious provocations both against the Georgian side and international observers, the Russian side's accusations that Georgia allegedly tries to escalate the situation in the region are counter-productive and directed against the peace process. This approach and the fact of referring to E. Kokoity as 'president of South Ossetia' represent yet another attempt to mislead the separatist regime, the region's

population and the international community as a whole.

What causes serious confusion is that the Russian Federation that used to and still continues to fight against separatism on its own territory supports the same phenomenon on the territory of the neighbouring states.

The Russian side's diplomatic steps and efforts, rather than supporting the criminal separatist regimes should be directed towards developing with Georgia partnership and result-oriented relations based on the universally recognised principles of international law and respect of territorial integrity. In our opinion this would be Russia's most rational choice in the context of finding the formula for the improvement of its relations with the neighbouring countries.

29 June 2007

Press and Information Department