



საქართველოს საგარეო საქმეთა სამინისტრო Ministry Of Foreign Affairs Of Georgia

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia strongly condemns the alarming and unlawful act committed by the Separatist Regime of Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia on July 11, 2006 in the conflict zone when a group of armed South Ossetian militants detained at gunpoint unarmed military monitors from the OSCE Mission to Georgia.

The most disquieting fact is that such attack on OSCE observers by representatives of the so-called South Ossetian "law enforcement structures" has become an increasingly frequent occasion that once again demonstrates incapacity of the peacekeeping operation.

The end of such breaches of international law and the existing agreements is to hinder OSCE military observers to carry out their regular monitoring in the zone of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and is aimed at undermining the international monitoring process in the region, which represents the only instrument for coping with the illegal smuggling of arms, armed groups, counterfeit currency, narcotic drugs and other types of contraband. Such threat of smuggling practices has become dramatically more intense since the recent closure of the Kazbegi-Zemo Larsi border checkpoint by the Russian Federation and the attempts to redirect all traffic to the Roki-Kvemo Zaramagi illegal border crossing point.

It is a worrisome fact that such negative development of events in the Tskhinvali region creates the impression of well-connected consistent moves orchestrated by certain forces. Of particular concern in this context is the questionable 'acumen' of the Russian high-ranking officials predicting a 'continuing string of provocations' in the region.

We remain highly alarmed by the given situation of nearly no international monitoring on such crucial areas in the Tskhinvali region as the bridge at Gupta, or the so called "Dzara Road", which can provide an easy and fast way to bring armoured vehicles into the conflict zone as has often been the case; also causing concern is the heightened activity of separatists reflecting itself in the increased number of militia posts, newly dug trenches and fortifications.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia calls upon the international community to show increased alertness and undertake urgently a series of measures necessary to defuse the mounting tension.

Tbilisi, July 13, 2006