

Statement by Eduard Shevardnadze

Published in September 1993 issue of "Sakartvelos Respublika" ("Republic of Georgia")

On September 23, at 13:00 the Sukhumi was attacked by Russian, Chechen and Abkhazian boeviks armed to the teeth, who occupied the practically defenseless city with tanks and armored vehicles. This time too, a temporary ceasefire agreement and initiation of negotiations preceded the barbaric act. The occupants deprived hundreds of people of their lives, ruined and burnt down their houses and residential blocks. The peaceful population could not be evacuated completely, and their lives are in danger. Long-suffering Georgia became a victim of another tragedy. Georgian population is mercilessly annihilated in Abkhazia. Georgia has lost the war with unequal forces, the war which, speaking the words of one of the largest countries, was broken up for securing the strategic interests of this country in Georgia. These imperial forces feigned the Abkhazian conflict, which resulted in the occupation of more than a half of the Abkhazian territory. It was possible to save Sukhumi yesterday, only Russia could have done it – and we referred to Moscow with this request. I have sent a telegram there with the consent that Georgia would join Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which I have been opposing to till the very last day. I agreed with the proposal of the Minister of Defense of Russia to take additional armed forces of his country to Abkhazia. In fact, Georgia was brought to the knees, but still, it turned out to be insufficient. This is very painful, but I have to say openly that external forces would not have overpowered us if not the internal disagreement and treason of some compatriots.

Time will come and everything will be called by their right names. One of the reasons of falling of Sukhumi is that internal forces successfully played the game of betrayal. I am shocked with this happening. God knows I did my best to escape this terrible day. I could not do it. Let my people and their generations forgive me this.