

B. On the Peacekeeping Battalion of North Ossetia-Alania

1. Was the North Ossetian PFK Battalion de facto a South Ossetian Battalion (personnel)?

The North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion was mostly manned by residents of Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. This has been confirmed on multiple occasions by the Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeepers Colonel **Kazbeg Friev**, as well as representatives of South Ossetian de facto authorities. See annex 1 for Russian media articles, in which the Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeepers, as well as representatives of the de facto regime admit this fact.

2. Was this PKF Battalion considered a unit of the Russian Federation or of South Ossetia?

The North Ossetian PKF Battalion was a unit of the Russian Federation. The material and financial support of the battalion was completely provided by the Government of the Russian Federation. The Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeepers was appointed from the staff of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation. See annex 2 for the official documents of the Joint Control Commission that substantiate this information.

3. What was the strength and armament of this battalion?

According to regulations of the Joint Control Commission, the personnel of this battalion amounted to 500 soldiers (in case of escalation, 300 more could have been added to the battalion by a special decision of the Joint Control Commission). Members of the battalion were armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles and machine guns, as well as with 42 armored vehicles: 24 Infantry Fighting Vehicles (BMPs) and 18 Armored Personnel Carriers (BTRs).

4. To what extent has the Ossetian PKF Battalion coordinated action with the South Ossetian militia – during the escalation and after the launch of full-scale hostilities?

The coordination between the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion and South Ossetian de facto regime irregular forces has a long history. Commanders and soldiers of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping contingent have always actively cooperated with the so-called “Ministry of Defense and Emergency Situations” and other bodies of the de facto regime.

The North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion often gave its armament, equipment and transport to the irregular forces, used the facilities of the JPKF to train the de facto regime irregulars in different military professions and provided intelligence to them on the location/coordinates of Georgian police and peacekeepers in the conflict zone. The North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion directly participated in the hostilities against Georgian government forces in 2004 and again in 2008.

Military observers of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion also frequently assisted South Ossetian de facto regime irregular forces in concealing armaments prohibited by the peacekeeping format. They usually did this by informing irregular units of the planned visits of the JPKF and OSCE monitoring groups, including places and objects, which were to be checked by the monitors, thus allowing the irregulars to hide from view together with their armament and military hardware.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia possesses a huge volume of information, including intercepted telephone conversations, on such cooperation between the North Ossetian PKF Battalion, the Russian PKF Battalion and South Ossetian de facto regime irregular forces since 2004. Here are several most evident examples that reveal the pattern of violations by Russian and North Ossetian peacekeepers over these years:

- On August 12 2004, at 15:51, Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeepers **Kazbeg Friev** called **Robert Kokoity**, brother of “South Ossetian” de facto president **Eduard Kokoity** and gave him 1 Armored Vehicle (BMP) with a crew belonging to the JPKF, 2 boxes of PG-7 grenades, automatic firearms and under-barrel grenade launchers (see annex 3, annex 3 audio);
- On August 14 2004, at 09:37, Special Tasks Minister of South Ossetian de facto authorities, **Boris Chochiev** called the Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeeping **Kazbeg Friev** and asked him to come to a meeting that would be attended by Commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces **Stanislav Nabdzorov**, de facto Minister of Defense of South Ossetia, **Anatoly Barankevich** and de facto Minister of Internal Affairs of South Ossetia (see annex 4, annex 4 audio);
- On September 15 2004, at 15:18, Chief military observer of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion **Alik Lagkoev** called his battalion commander **Philip Khachirov** and told him to warn the South Ossetian de facto MOD to hide their military hardware located in the direction of village Geri and the Dzari road (see annex 5, annex 5 audio);
- On January 13 2005, at 11:34, Chief military observer of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion **Alik Lagkoev** called South Ossetian de facto Deputy Defense Minister **Ibragim Gasseev** and warned him that a monitoring would be held at the Muguti mountain (see annex 6, annex 6 audio);
- On January 14 2005, at 10:52, Chief military observer of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion **Alik Lagkoev** called South Ossetian de facto Deputy Defense Minister **Ibragim Gasseev** and warned him that a monitoring would take place at 10:30 in the direction of the Dzari road (see annex 7, annex 7 audio);
- On April 7 2005, at 14:42, Counselor to the Chairman of South Ossetian de facto State Security Committee (KGB) **Sergei Guznov** called the commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces **Marat Kulakhmetov** and told him that at 18:00 people from Russia, about which the Chairman of the KGB had told before, would enter the region from the Roki tunnel and asked him to bring them on a JPKF transport to Tskhinvali. **Kulakhmetov** agreed (see annex 8, annex 8 audio);
- On March 1 2006, at 16:39, Chief military observer of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion **Alik Lagkoev** called his battalion commander **Philip Khachirov** and informed him that he had just received a call from Russian and Ossetian observers warning that they are going out on a monitoring together with the OSCE, therefore armed irregulars should not stand on the roads and the monitors must be kept away from weapons storages (see annex 9, annex 9 audio);
- On April 12 2007, at 11:47, Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeepers **Kazbeg Friev** called deputy commander of the 10th battalion of South Ossetian de facto MOD **Mairbeg Khuriev** and asked him to sign the document regarding the vehicle, which he had given to the 10th battalion.

He also reminded that this vehicle needed a communications specialist and Khuriev could send someone to the North Ossetian PKF battalion for training (see annex 10, annex 10 audio);

- On May 7 2007, at 13:47, Chief military observer of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion **Alik Lagkoev** called his commander **Kazbeg Friev** and informed him that the monitoring revealed a South Ossetian anti-aircraft system in village Dzvileti, but the South Ossetian militiamen opened fire at the monitoring group. **Lagkoev** asked **Friev** to give a warning to those South Ossetians (see annex 11, annex 11 audio);
- On May 7 2007, at 14:04, Observer of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion **Fedia Jioev** called the chief military observer of the battalion **Alik Lagkoev** and told him to advise the de facto MOD to take away the revealed antiaircraft system as soon as possible (see annex 12, annex 12 audio);
- On May 7 2007, at 14:09, Chief military observer of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion **Alik Lagkoev** called the first deputy chairman of South Ossetian de facto authorities **Boris Chochiev** and told him that the monitoring group had found a South Ossetian anti-aircraft system near village Dzvileti despite the fact that he had warned the South Ossetian de facto MOD about the planned monitoring in advance. **Chochiev** instructed him not to speak about this topic over the phone anymore (see annex 13, annex 13 audio);
- On May 8 2007, at 08:47, Chief military observer of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion **Alik Lagkoev** called the first deputy chairman of South Ossetian de facto authorities **Boris Chochiev** regarding the incident that happened on the previous day. He told him that the report of the monitoring team was bad for the Ossetian side as it said that members of South Ossetian de facto regime irregular forces attacked the monitoring group. **Chochiev** instructed him to abstain from signing the report (see annex 14, annex 14 audio);
- On June 22 2007, at 21:55, Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeepers **Kazbeg Friev** called the deputy commander of the 10th battalion of South Ossetian de facto MOD **Mairbeg Khuriev** and told him that he had sent diesel fuel to the 10th battalion (see annex 15, annex 15 audio);
- On July 20 2008, at 10:48, Deputy commander of the 7th battalion of South Ossetian de facto MOD **Arsen Kvezerov** called **Edik**, an artillerist of the same battalion, and told him that they were going to dig entrenchments using a power shovel provided by the peacekeepers (see annex 16, annex 16 audio);

As already reported in the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions, during the escalation of conflict from July 29 through August 7 2008, Russian and North Ossetian peacekeepers were aware of violations committed in the conflict zone, but did not report them and on several occasions even collaborated to hide the evidence of these violations. Moreover, South Ossetian de facto regime irregular forces and North Ossetian peacekeepers coordinated their attacks on Georgian peacekeepers and police. Here we repeat the most vivid examples of those violations:

- On July 29, at 22:40, a duty officer of the North Ossetian peacekeeping battalion, **Ruslan Makeev** informed the Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeepers **Kazbeg Friev** that a unit of

the North Ossetian peacekeeping battalion had opened fire towards the Georgian peacekeeping battalion;¹

- On July 30, at 10:42, **Alik Lagkoev**, the chief military observer in the North Ossetian peacekeeping battalion telephoned a duty officer at the South Ossetian de facto Ministry of Defense and warned them that monitoring was going to be conducted by the JPKF in the area close to the Sarabuki heights;²
- On August 1, at 22:57, **Arsen Kvezerov**, deputy Commander of the 7th battalion of the South Ossetian de facto Ministry of Defense told **Philip Khachirov**, the commander of North Ossetian peacekeeping battalion to pass a request to some other military unit to support his fire and offered to give the coordinates of either Georgian police or Georgian peacekeepers;³
- On August 2, at 21:01, **Arsen Kvezerov**, Deputy Commander of the 7th battalion of the South Ossetian de facto Ministry of Defense and **Philip Khachirov**, Commander of the North Ossetian peacekeeping battalion discussed a scheme for the future shelling of positions of Georgian peacekeepers and police;⁴
- On August 4, at 14:44, the Senior Commander of Georgian peacekeepers, General **Mamuka Kurashvili** contacted the Commander of the JPKF General **Marat Kulakhmetov** on the phone and asked him to conduct additional monitoring of the places from where the Sarabuki heights might have been shelled since he was sure that the trace left by a 100mm shell on the Sarabuki heights could show the direction from where it originated. At 15:34, the de facto Defense Minister of South Ossetia, Russian Colonel **Vasily Lunev**, who was already informed that the shells were traceable, telephoned **Valeri Kokoev**, the Commander of the 7th battalion of the South Ossetian de facto Ministry of Defense that was responsible for the shelling, and instructed him to change something on the firing position in order to conceal the trace;⁵
- On August 6, at 11:58, a person named **Alan** reported to **Alik Lagkoev**, the chief military observer of the North Ossetian peacekeeping battalion that “their people” shelled the positions of either Georgian police or Georgian peacekeepers. **Lagkoev** has never reported this fact;⁶
- On August 6, at 19:06, **Alik Lagkoev**, the chief military observer in the North Ossetian peacekeeping battalion asked **Ibragim Gaseev**, the de facto Deputy Defense Minister of South Ossetia to report about the results of shelling of an armored vehicle of the Georgian peacekeeping battalion;⁷
- On August 6, at 21:18, **Valeri Kokoev**, the Commander of the 7th battalion of South Ossetian de facto Ministry of Defense informed the Senior Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeepers

¹ See annexes 2-3 of the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions

² See annexes 4-5 of the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions

³ See annexes 6-7 of the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions

⁴ See annexes 8-9 of the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions

⁵ See annexes 10-13 of the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions

⁶ See annexes 14-15 of the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions

⁷ See annexes 16-17 of the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions

Kazbeg Friev that during the night “something” was going to be brought into the area. **Friev** interrupted and warned him not to talk about this via Georgian mobile communications;⁸

- On August 7, at 00:22, **Alik Lagkoev**, the chief military observer in the North Ossetian peacekeeping battalion asked **Ibragim Gaseev**, the de facto Deputy Defense Minister of South Ossetia to correct their artillery fire at Georgian peacekeepers because some of the shells mistakenly fell near the location of Russian peacekeepers;⁹
- On August 7, at 06:51, **Philip Khachirov**, Commander of the North Ossetian peacekeeping battalion gave advice to **Arsen Kvezerov**, Deputy Commander of the 7th battalion of the South Ossetian de facto Ministry of Defense in choosing targets for their artillery attack.¹⁰

5. When and where did the Ossetian PKF Battalion see action – during escalation and armed conflict?

As already reported in the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions, according to an interview given by the Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeepers Colonel **Kazbek Friev** to the South Ossetian de facto regime’s radio, during the hostilities parts of the battalion under his command “had taken pre-planned positions and acted jointly with the battalions of the Ministry of Defense [of Russia]” and “were halting the advancement of Georgian troops.”¹¹ Colonel **Friev** also stated that the mission of the peacekeepers was “not to allow Georgians to pass through the town.” He had organized positions of his soldiers and armored vehicles (BMPs and BTRs) in Tskhinvali, namely, in Shanghai, Tsarz and the Mamisaantubani districts in the south of the town and acted jointly with Russian Ministry of Defense troops.¹²

Since late afternoon on August 7, 2008, part of the leadership of the de facto regime, particularly “all the power ministers” started to gather at the peacekeepers’ headquarters at “Nizhniy Gorodok.” Parts of the scattered irregular forces also gathered at this place, which was used as one of the centers for “coordinating the town’s defense effort.”¹³

The JPKF headquarters “Nizhniy Gorodok” was the place where **Anatoly Barankevich**, the Security Council Chairman in the South Ossetian proxy regime, appeared to request help.¹⁴ According to Barankevich, he “proposed to **Kulakhmetov** [the Commander of the JPKF] to hold the circle of defense together, and to stand until Russian troops approached.” Simultaneously, on the territory of the peacekeepers’ base he was provided with a mobile phone by which he contacted the Russian leadership and demanded “the promised reinforcements.” **Barankevich**, aided by a number of South Ossetian militants, also decided to secure the roads to the JPKF headquarters. For that purpose, they occupied the surrounding houses, from where they ambushed and attacked Georgian police and military moving around the town.¹⁵

⁸ See annexes 18-19 of the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions

⁹ See annexes 20-21 of the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions

¹⁰ See annexes 22-23 of the answer to question 3 of the military set of questions

¹¹ See annex 91 of the answer to question 1 of the military set of questions.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See annexes 93 and 94 of the answer to question 1 of the military set of questions.

¹⁵ Ibid.

In a recent interview, the Commander of North Ossetian Peacekeepers Colonel **Kazbeg Friev** reaffirmed that the battalion under his command directly participated in the hostilities against Georgian government forces. He stated that in 100 meters from the location of his peacekeeping battalion in Tskhinvali, 50 Ossetian peacekeepers were fighting against Georgians and they were defending that district of the town (see annex 17);

The Commander of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion Vice-Colonel **Philip Khachirov** recently stated that on August 8 2008, he was giving bullets for automatic firearms, anti-tank grenade launchers and other weapons from the storage of the North Ossetian PKF Battalion to employees of different law enforcement bodies of South Ossetian de facto regime and that they were together fighting against Georgian government forces in the town (see annex 18);

The head of the physical training and sports section of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion **Soslan Tasoev** said in a recent interview that on August 7 2008, at 14:00, the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion handed over its infantry fighting vehicle (BMP) to the division of the South Ossetian de facto MOD located in villages Dmenisi and Sarabuki and that later he himself brought them antitank guided missiles (see annex 19);

The Deputy Commander of the North Ossetian Peacekeeping Battalion Major **Anatoly Bibilov** said in a recent interview that on August 8, he and other members of the North Ossetian PKF Battalion were fighting against Georgian government forces in Tskhinvali, shooting RPG-6 anti-tank rockets at Georgian tanks and holding positions on the roofs and top floors of the apartment buildings in different parts of the town (see annex 20).