



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2018)0266

Georgian occupied territories 10 years after the Russian invasion

European Parliament resolution of 14 June 2018 on Georgian occupied territories 10 years after the Russian invasion (2018/2741(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008, mediated by the EU and signed by Georgia and the Russian Federation, and the implementation agreement of 8 September 2008,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2016 on Association Agreements / Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2017 on the Annual Report on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy²,
- having regard to the joint declarations of the Eastern Partnership Summits, notably that agreed in 2017 in Brussels,
- having regard to the joint communications from the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), notably the report of 18 May 2017 on the implementation of the ENP review (JOIN(2017)0018), the joint staff working document of 9 June 2017 entitled ‘Eastern Partnership – 20 Deliverables for 2020: Focusing on key priorities and tangible results’ (SWD(2017)0300), and the 2016 communication entitled ‘A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign And Security Policy’,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in the Eastern Neighbourhood and, in particular, its recommendation of 15 November 2017 to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS on the Eastern Partnership, in the run-up to the November 2017 Summit³,
- having regard to the deployment of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia on 15 September 2008,

¹ OJ C 11, 12.1.2018, p. 82.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0493.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0440.

- having regard to the report of the 2009 Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, headed by Heidi Tagliavini,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Georgia is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first Georgian democratic republic, founded in 1918, and rightly prides itself on its contemporary achievements;
 - B. whereas the EU strongly supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders;
 - C. whereas 10 years after the Russian military aggression in Georgia of August 2008, the Russian Federation still continues its illegal occupation of the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, undermining international law and the rules-based international system; whereas the so-called integration and alliance treaties signed between Russia and Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2014 and 2015 were clear violations of international law, OSCE principles and Russia's international commitments; whereas the European Union does not recognise the framework of the so-called elections and a referendum held by Russia-backed separatists in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2016 and 2017;
 - D. whereas the EU remains firmly committed to a peaceful resolution of the Russia-Georgia conflict in full compliance with the fundamental norms and principles of international law;
 - E. whereas Russia constantly reinforces its illegal military presence in Georgia's occupied territories by constructing new bases, bringing in new troops and equipment, and conducting military exercises;
 - F. whereas Russia continues to be in breach of its international obligations and refuses to fully implement the EU-mediated ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008;
 - G. whereas Russia continues to isolate Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia from the rest of the country by closing additional crossing points, putting in place physical barriers along the administrative boundary line (ABL) and conducting a campaign aimed at eradicating Georgian culture;
 - H. whereas this line is slowly but steadily being moved deeper into Tbilisi-controlled territory in a process known as a 'borderisation', in some places coming very close to critical infrastructure such as motorways and gas pipelines;
 - I. whereas hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons and refugees forcibly expelled from the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia as a result of several waves of ethnic cleansing continue to be deprived of their fundamental right to a safe and dignified return to their homes;
 - J. whereas basic human rights, including freedom of movement and residence, the right to property and the right of access to education in the native language, are being violated in the occupied regions of Georgia; whereas illegal detentions and kidnappings continue to take place;

- K. whereas the Russian Federation, as a power exercising effective control over the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, bears full responsibility for severe violations of human rights and for the humanitarian situation on the ground;
- L. whereas the 2008 invasion was Russia's first major open attack on the European order; whereas it was later followed by others, including the annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine;
- M. whereas the Georgian internally displaced persons Archil Tatunashvili, Giga Otkhozoria and Davit Basharuli were illegally deprived of their lives as a result of brutal actions by the occupying Russian regimes in Sokhumi and Tskhinvali;
- N. whereas the International Criminal Court (ICC) has opened an investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in the conflict;
- O. whereas a joint ad-hoc visit to Georgia on 12 August 2008 of Central and Eastern European leaders – Lech Kaczyński, President of Poland, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of Estonia, Valdas Adamkus, President of Lithuania, Ivars Godmanis, Prime Minister of Latvia and Viktor Yushchenko, President of Ukraine – is widely seen as a major factor that stopped the Russian advance towards Tbilisi when troops were only 50 km from the Georgian capital, and facilitated the brokering of the ceasefire by the French presidency of the Council of the EU;
- P. whereas the Russian Federation continues to deny the EUMM access to the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia in violation of the EU-mediated ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008, thus hampering the mission's ability to fully implement its mandate;
- 1. Reaffirms its unequivocal support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia; acknowledges that the principles enshrined in the UN Charter, the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1990 OSCE Charter of Paris represent the cornerstones of a peaceful European continent;
- 2. Reiterates that sovereignty, independence and the peaceful settlement of disputes are key principles of the European security order; stresses that the resolution of conflicts in Georgia is essential to enhancing the security and stability of the European continent as a whole; considers that these conflicts and the continuing occupation of Georgian territories remain a potential threat to the sovereignty of other European countries;
- 3. Demands that the Russian Federation reverse its decision to recognise the so-called independence of the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia; condemns the decision by Venezuela, Nicaragua, Syria and Nauru to recognise Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and calls for this recognition to be withdrawn;
- 4. Stresses the need for the Russian Federation to unconditionally fulfil all the provisions of the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008, in particular the commitment to withdrawing all its military forces from the territory of Georgia;
- 5. Demands that the Russian Federation cease its occupation of the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, as well as the inviolability of its internationally recognised

borders and that it stop the de facto integration of both regions into Russian administration;

6. Confirms the EU's strong commitment to contributing to the peaceful resolution of the Russia-Georgia conflict, by using all the instruments at its disposal as part of a comprehensive approach, including its Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, its co-chairmanship of the Geneva International Discussions, the EUMM in Georgia and the policy of non-recognition and engagement;
7. Urges the Government of Georgia to continue to cooperate with the ICC by facilitating investigations by the ICC Office of the Prosecutor, as well as ensuring that the ICC Registry can fulfil its mandate in terms of outreach and victim participation;
8. Calls on the Russian Federation to allow the EUMM unconditional access to the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia as per its mandate; recalls that the EUMM is the only permanent international presence on the ground, providing impartial information on the situation along the ABL, and calls for the extension of its mandate beyond 14 December 2018;
9. Calls on the Russian Federation to cease further borderisation of the ABL, which it is seeking to achieve by installing barbed wire fences and other artificial barriers; calls also for an end to the encroachment into territory controlled by the Georgian Government and further extension of the ABL, intentionally hindering people-to-people contact and isolating the population of both occupied regions;
10. Condemns the deliberate destruction of dozens of Georgian villages and Georgian churches in the occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, as well as the deliberate attempt to erase traces of Georgian culture and history in the occupied territories, and condemns contrary and divisive initiatives such as the so-called referendum of 2017 approving a name change of Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia;
11. Calls on the Russian Federation to adhere to the principle of peaceful conflict resolution, by reciprocating Georgia's unilateral commitment to the non-use of force, as affirmed by the President of Georgia in his speech to the European Parliament of 23 November 2010;
12. Welcomes the new peace initiative of the Government of Georgia entitled 'A Step to a Better Future', aimed at improving the humanitarian and socio-economic conditions of people residing in the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and fostering people-to-people contact and confidence building between divided communities;
13. Reminds the Russian Federation, as an occupying power, of its obligations towards the population and that it must cease violations of human rights, restrictions on freedom of movement and residence, discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, and infringement of the right to property and access to education in the native language in the occupied territories of Georgia;
14. Moreover, calls on the Russian Federation to end impunity and ethnically motivated crimes in the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and to remove any obstacles to ensuring that the perpetrators of the illegal killing of Georgian

internally displaced persons Archil Tatumashvili, Giga Otkhazia and Davit Bashari are brought to justice;

15. Welcomes the adoption by the Parliament of Georgia of the bi-partisan resolution which establishes a blacklist of perpetrators and persons responsible for the cover-up of such violations (Otkhazia-Tatumashvili list) and calls on the Member States and the Council to blacklist and impose national and EU-wide sanctions on those who appear or who may appear on the Otkhazia-Tatumashvili list;
16. Urges the Russian Federation to allow the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes and to ensure unimpeded access on the ground for international human rights monitoring mechanisms;
17. Reiterates its condemnation of the subversive policies of propaganda, disinformation and social media infiltration aimed at weakening democracy and society in Georgia by discrediting institutions, manipulating public opinion, spreading false narratives, feeding social tensions and fostering a general mistrust of the media; denounces, in this context, the information warfare being conducted by Russia, using its state controlled media outlets to deliberately plant false news in order to influence domestic politics and undermine the European integration processes;
18. Stresses that the international community must take a consistent, coordinated, united and firm stance against Russia's occupation and annexation policy as the only means to ensure peaceful conflict resolution in Georgia and prevention of similar conflicts in the neighbourhood;
19. Calls for the EU institutions to adopt an approach consistent with that of the European Parliament and the policies of the national parliaments of the Member States by using clearer and more precise terms in defining Russian aggression in Georgia as occupation by the Russian Federation of the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the governments and parliaments of the Eastern Partnership countries and the Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation.