

APPEAL

to the Parliaments and Governments of the World, UN, OSCE, EU (Commission on human rights), EC department on refugees, repatriates and to the world community.

We, participants of the extended session of Executive Committee of International Association of Abkhaz- Abazin people (Abaza), held in Germany and Belgium on 18-21 May, 2007.

- respecting principles of international law;
- recognizing the right of nation to self-determination;
- considering domination of one nation over another unacceptable;
- rejecting any violence as means of forcing to live by laws, imposed from outside;
- expressing firm belief that only Abkhaz statehood is in the position to assure in the present and future, the safe existence of the Abkhaz people and representatives of others living in Abkhazia,
- on behalf of Abkhaz living on their historical land and dispersed all over the planet and Abazins we appeal for the support of Republic of Abkhazia as a subject of international law with all attributes of state sovereignty.

The Abkhaz statehood has a more than 1200-year continuous history. In the VIII century the Abkhaz statehood was formed as a result of centuries-old struggle of Abkhaz for free and independent existence.

Throughout centuries, the Abkhaz-Abazin people preserved and developed their culture, identity and rich language, thus contributing to the world civilization. Numerous cultural monuments testify that our nation has been involved in historical processes, taken place in Mediterranean, Europe, and Middle East and in the Caucasus.

In the XIX century, the Abkhaz had to experience severe hardship, as a result of which a majority of people were forced to leave their homeland. However, nobody has ever succeeded to suppress the aspiration of the Abkhaz people for freedom. In the course of their history, the Abkhaz were more than once when Abkhaz at the edge of abyss but they have always managed to return back to life. For example, in 1918, as a result of the collapse of the Russian Empire, when the Georgian state was established, it committed aggression against the Abkhaz. However, the enemy was defeated and the Abkhaz national liberation struggle led to the revival of the Abkhaz statehood. But, in 1921 after expulsion of the Georgian occupants Abkhazia was proclaimed as Soviet Socialist Republic. After 10 years, under the pressure of Stalin and Beria, Abkhazia was forcibly incorporated into the Georgian SSR. The communist leadership of Georgia committed genocide against the Abkhaz people, destroying its national- intellectual elite, closing Abkhaz schools, massively resettling Georgians in Abkhazia, replacing geographical toponymy by Georgian names and falsifying history. The Abkhaz people couldn't reconcile with such policy, and was the only one in the former USSR who organized mass demonstrations and strikes with political demands every 10 years.

Abkhazia has never been part of Georgia, except for the Soviet period. Having rejected its communist past, this country (Georgia) shouldn't have had any claims towards Abkhazia, as it was presented to it by Stalin's totalitarian regime. However, using the unawareness of the world community, the Georgians succeeded in convincing the "rightness" of their unfounded claims. In 1992 under the false slogan of defense of the territorial integrity of Georgia they launched a bloody war, which ended in the defeat of the occupying troops and their expulsion from the territory of Abkhazia.

Republic of Abkhazia has been existing for 14 years as a de-facto independent state. It develops its statehood in line with the generally recognized democratic principles, in accordance with the UN charter, international pact of economic, social and cultural rights and other international legal acts.

The use of double standards of a number of countries on the issue of the settlement of the Georgian- Abkhaz conflict heat up ambitions of the current Georgian leadership. In July 2006 in

violation of all existing agreements including international ones, Georgia deployed its armed forces to the Kodori valley of Abkhazia, which was under control of the CIS peacekeeping force and the UN observers.

The 14 year relative peace is under the threat. The brotherly people of the North Caucasus and the whole of many millions Abkhaz-Adyg Diaspora is worried by the aggressive actions of the Georgian side. The withdrawal of the Georgian armed formations from the Kodori valley and Georgia's rejection of its aggressive policy will have positive impact on the security and stability in Abkhazia and in the whole Caucasian region. It also will contribute to enhancing UN reputation as an organization protecting high moral principles in its activity.

Currently, we are concerned about the circumstances that the UN and other international agencies take decisions relating to Abkhazia on the basis information from the Georgian side only. It is very offensive that the Abkhaz Minister of Foreign Affairs was refused to get a visa, hence deprived the opportunity to bring the truth to the UN Security Council. It is not normal when only one side of the conflict has all opportunities to protect its interests. During the Georgian-Abkhaz negotiations under the aegis of UN, the Georgian side emphasizes on the preconditions of return of the so-called refugees, in order to achieve peace. The fact is that they have returned to their historical motherland- Georgia. Hundred of thousands of Abkhaz ancestors who were forced to leave Abkhazia in the XVIII century dream to return to their historical homeland. It is time for international community to understand that it is them who have the right to return to ancestor's homeland.

We call upon all nations of good will to support us in our just protest against blockade of Abkhazia, which violates the right of the Abkhaz people, runs counter to moral norms and humanity, deprives citizens of this country the right to freedom of movement and interaction with other people.

We are indignant with the US and the Turkish Republic policy of military support to Georgia which undoubtedly, will lead up to deterioration of the conflict in the whole Caucasus.

We are sure that soon all illegitimate and, discriminating sanctions imposed on the Republic of Abkhazia will be lifted, and it will be recognized as a sovereign, independent, democratic state.

On behalf of the participants of the extended session of Executive Committee of International Association of Abkhaz- Abazin People(Abaza).

President, Academic Taras Shamba
Wuppertal- Antwerpen, 19-20 May, 2007