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that the Supreme Council and Council of Ministers of the Abkhaz Autonomous Republic in Tbilisi were the sole legitimate organs of state power and administration and expressed the interests of the population of Abkhazia. The resolution recommended, inter alia, that Abkhazia be given far-reaching autonomy within the framework of a unified Georgian State, including its own constitution, parliament, higher executive and judiciary bodies, anthem, flag, coat of arms and other state attributes, as well as its own jurisdiction in economic, social, financial and tax questions.

10. The Abkhaz leader, Mr. Ardzinba, characterized this resolution as an attempt to disrupt the peace process, as in his view it contradicted the essence of the agreements already signed within the framework of that process.

11. The Council of Heads of State of CIS met in Moscow on 17 May 1996 and adopted a decision on the presence of the collective peace-keeping forces in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia (see S/1996/371, annex I), by which it, inter alia, decided to call upon the parties to the conflict to accelerate the negotiation process with a view to ensuring a political settlement with the Russian Federation acting as facilitator.

12. A memorandum on measures for establishing security and strengthening mutual confidence among the parties to the Georgian-Ossetian conflict was signed in Moscow on 16 May 1996 by the representatives of the Georgian and South-Ossetian sides, as well as by the representatives of the Russian Federation, OSCE and the representatives of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, acting as mediators. In substance, the memorandum establishes important confidence-building measures such as the speeding up of the return of refugees and displaced persons, the establishment of a demilitarized zone and the holding of bilateral meetings on a number of issues.

13. On 3 June 1996, the Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Russian Federation met at Kislovodsk, Russian Federation, and adopted a declaration entitled "For Inter-ethnic Accord, Peace, and Economic and Cultural Cooperation in the Caucasus" (see A/51/152-S/1996/425, annex), by which the signatories, inter alia, declared their firm resolve to promote lasting peace and stability in the Caucasus. The leaders of the North Caucasian republics of the Russian Federation also participated in the Kislovodsk meeting.

III. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

14. United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) continued to implement multisectoral humanitarian assistance programmes throughout Abkhazia. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has carried out vaccination and immunization programmes, and the World Food Programme (WFP) continued to address the food situation in the region.

15. On 31 May 1996, the United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for the Caucasus, covering the period June 1996 through May 1997, was launched. The appeal, which addresses the immediate needs of internally displaced persons, as

road (known as the M-27) crossing the sector. Some of the observers have been reassigned to other sectors within the Mission's area of responsibility. In all other respects, the Mission's deployment remains as described in my report of 15 April 1996 (S/1996/294).

20. The Mission continues to operate at its full authorized strength of 116 military observers drawn from 23 countries (see annex). Because of the effects of the mine problem on the Mission's activities and pending the arrival of the engineering equipment and personnel to deal with the mine threat (see para. 18 below), the normal rotation of the observers will be delayed slightly in the coming months.

21. The withdrawal of the team bases from the Gali sector has had a number of repercussions, the most serious of which has been that the Mission is now deprived of a source of reliable information and is incapable of verifying most of the incidents that take place in that sector. The Gali sector headquarters depends on the CIS peace-keeping force, the Abkhaz militia and the civilian administration for information about the situation in Gali. While it maintains good relations with these groups, information received from them is not always timely or fully reliable. It also has to be reported that a sense of insecurity and disillusionment has developed in the population of the nearby villages in the wake of the withdrawal of the Gali team bases. On the other hand, the transfer of observers from the Gali sector to the Zugdidi sector enables the Mission to cover additional unofficial crossing points over the Inguri river and to gain information from the local population about the situation on the west side of the river.

22. On 16 April, UNOMIG reopened the team base at Adjara in the Kodori valley, which had been closed during the winter months. Since then, patrols have been well-received by the local population. Because of the time required to reach the valley, these patrols operate for periods of between two to four days at a time.

23. The scheduled weekly meetings, chaired by the Chief Military Observer of UNOMIG, between the Chief of the Zugdidi police and the Head of the Gali militia (see S/1996/294, para. 29) have led to an increased willingness by both sides jointly to fight criminality. Similarly, the weekly quadripartite meetings, chaired by the Force Commander of the CIS peace-keeping force, between the Chief Military Observer and the heads of the Zugdidi and Gali administrations (ibid., para. 30), have served to build confidence and permit discussions on common problems of security and exchange of hostages, as well as on humanitarian issues.

24. UNOMIG has continued to cooperate with UNHCR and ICRC and other non-governmental organizations. Regular meetings with these organizations facilitate the exchange of information regarding both the security situation in the area of operation and the Mission's activities. In addition, UNOMIG continues to forward to relevant organizations information on cases that require these organizations' assistance and provides them with support as necessary. UNOMIG medical teams have continued to provide their services to the local population throughout the Mission area, including the town of Gali.

25. The aircraft made available by the Government of Switzerland (S/1996/284, para. 27) is now operational and is being used to transport observers, civilian staff and cargo to and from the Mission area.

V. SITUATION ON THE GROUND

A. General

26. The situation has remained unsettled in the Gali sector and generally calm in the Zugdidi sector. In the former, UNOMIG is still reporting lawlessness, including acts of murder, armed robbery, looting, extortion and intimidation, which are clearly not conducive to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. The Abkhaz militia has little control over this region, and the lack of visible authority and effective policing enables various criminal groups to operate with a large measure of impunity. This general lack of security is reported to have led to the establishment of unofficial "self-defence groups" in some villages. Because of its present inability to patrol the Gali sector, UNOMIG does not have detailed knowledge about these groups, but it is making every effort to obtain additional information.

27. None of the UNOMIG military observers was a victim of violent crime during the reporting period. However, it is the Chief Military Observer's assessment that this is due more to the reduced level of patrolling in the Gali sector than to a general improvement in security.

B. Security and restricted weapons zones

28. The security and restricted weapons zones on each side of the Inguri river continue to be affected by different sets of problems. In the Gali sector, violent crime remains the principal issue of concern, while in the Zugdidi sector the main problem has been the continuing plight of internally displaced persons in the six main camps and in local villages. While many hundreds of internally displaced persons cross the Inguri river during the day in order to tend their fields or maintain their houses on the other bank, they generally return to the comparative security of the Georgian side at night.

29. Members of the Council will recall that, at the time of my last report, UNOMIG was involved in protracted negotiations for the exchange of hostages (see S/1996/284, para. 33). On 8 April, the Abkhaz side exchanged 28 hostages and 4 corpses for 2 soldiers held by the Georgian side. A second exchange on 26 April involved five Georgian fishermen arrested for straying into Abkhaz "territorial waters", who were exchanged in return for five Abkhaz citizens who had been taken in retaliation.

30. During the reporting period, both sides violated the Moscow agreement of 14 May 1994. There were 5 violations by the Abkhaz side and 42 by the Georgian side. The majority of the Georgian violations were committed by off-duty and unarmed soldiers who entered the security zone for private purposes. In all but two cases, these violations were protested on the spot.

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sides have expressed concern about the observers' security, it is clear, for the reasons I stated, that neither has the capacity to assist the Mission substantially. As the Council is aware, the Head of Mission has also had meetings with the relevant authorities in Moscow to see whether the assistance of the CIS peace-keeping force could be enlisted to improve the security of UNOMIG personnel in the area where that force is deployed. These authorities have expressed willingness to assist UNOMIG provided that their services are paid for by the United Nations. Bearing in mind the requirement that a commercially contracted mine-clearing unit should be under the command and control of the Head of Mission and in view of the nature of the mandate of UNOMIG, it was decided to pursue other arrangements.

38. A team of demining experts from the Secretariat visited the area between 23 April and 8 May to train the observers in mine awareness and the use of mine-detection equipment. On the basis of the team's recommendations and in light of the Head of Mission's discussions, it has now been decided to provide the Mission with both mine-protected vehicles and some engineering support. It is anticipated that the engineers, whose task will be to undertake daily road clearing, will be accommodated within the authorized strength of the Mission and that they will be deployed with their own mine-detection vehicles and related equipment. A concept of operations can be finalized only when it has been agreed which Government will contribute the engineering support and mine-detection equipment. This arrangement, when fully operative, should enable UNOMIG to resume patrolling the Gali sector at almost the same level of operational effectiveness as previously and should remain in effect for the long term. However, I do not wish to conceal from the Council that while it will substantially improve the security of the observers, some risk will continue to exist.

39. In their démarches of May 1996 to President Shevardnadze and Mr. Ardzinba (see para. 6 above), the representatives of the group of "Friends of Georgia" in Tbilisi conveyed their respective Governments' concerns at the deterioration of security conditions in the Gali region and demanded that the parties take steps to prevent mine-laying.

40. As already reported (see para. 11 above), the Council of Heads of State of CIS adopted on 17 May 1996 a decision on the presence of the CIS peace-keeping force in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia (see S/1996/371, annex I). By that decision, the Council decided that, with the consent of the parties, the "demarcation of minefields and mine clearance in the territory of Abkhazia, Georgia, with the assistance of the United Nations and in cooperation of the local authorities" should be added to the mandate of the CIS peace-keeping force. In discussions with relevant authorities in Moscow, the Head of Mission has ascertained that the phrase "assistance of the United Nations" should be understood to refer to the financial assistance of the United Nations. The Council furthermore decided to instruct "the parties to the conflict, with the assistance of the [CIS peace-keeping force] in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia, to take additional measures to ensure the safety of the personnel of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia in the performance of their duties". The Head of Mission has been informed that the "conflict zone" relates only to the security zone in the UNOMIG area of responsibility.

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draft protocol, and consider ways of moving the peace process forward. The resident Deputy will intensify his discussions with both sides in the hope that it will then become possible for my Special Envoy to convene discussions with them

55. The mine threat in the Gali sector is serious and is not confined to a limited area. Not only is it preventing UNOMIG from implementing its mandate fully, but it could also have grave humanitarian consequences when the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons finally resumes. Although arrangements are being made to improve the observers' security so that patrolling can be resumed, this will not prevent the laying of new mines. I therefore appeal urgently to all concerned to put an end to a practice that jeopardizes the lives of the local population and of international civilian and military personnel and prevents the Mission from carrying out its mandate to the full.

56. As I have said repeatedly in previous reports, it is only the parties that can establish peace, and they must do it through dialogue and mutual accommodation. The current lack of progress calls into question how serious they are in their search for peace. Nor are additional measures by the United Nations to improve conditions in the security and restricted weapons zones likely to prove effective unless the parties demonstrate the necessary will to cooperate. It must also be pointed out that the financial situation of the Organization is such that I cannot continue to request resources for peacemaking and peace-keeping in situations where there is little prospect of making progress.

57. In the hope that the parties can still be persuaded to help reactivate the peace process, I recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNOMIG until 31 January 1997. Since, however, the mandate of the CIS peace-keeping force will expire on 19 July 1996, the extension of the mandate of UNOMIG should be subject to an early review by the Council. If decisions are taken to change the mandate of that force, I shall, of course, keep the Security Council informed of developments in this regard.

58. In conclusion, I should like to take this opportunity to thank my Special Envoy, Ambassador Edouard Brunner, his Deputy and the Head of Mission of UNOMIG, Mr. Liviu Bota, and the Chief Military Observer, Major-General Per Källström, as well as all the military and civilian personnel under their command, for their continued dedication and perseverance in carrying out, under difficult conditions, the tasks entrusted to them by the Security Council.

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AnnexComposition of the United Nations Observer Mission
in Georgia at 24 June 1996

<u>Country</u>	<u>Military Observers</u>
Albania	1
Austria	4
Bangladesh	11
Cuba	4
Czech Republic	5
Denmark	5
Egypt	5
France	5
Germany	9
Greece	3
Hungary	7
Indonesia	6
Jordan	8
Pakistan	8
Poland	5
Republic of Korea	6
Russian Federation	3
Sweden	5 + (1)
Switzerland	5
Turkey	5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	10
United States of America	2
Uruguay	2
Total	125 a/

a/ The deployment of military observers may vary owing to rotations.