

31. The situation in Georgia

Decision of 31 January 2000 (4094th meeting): resolution 1287 (2000)

At its 4094th meeting,¹ on 31 January 2000, the Security Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, dated 19 January 2000.² In his report, the Secretary-General observed that his Special Representative, with support from representatives of the Russian Federation, as facilitator, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, and with the good will of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, had tried to move the peace process forward by reviving the machinery created since 1997 in the framework of the Geneva process³ and formulating proposals addressing the distribution of constitutional competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi. The Secretary-General noted that the ultimate goal of the Geneva process was the comprehensive political settlement of the conflict, and that progress on the matter of status was an indispensable step towards that goal. In that regard, he expressed distress over the continuing reluctance of the Abkhaz side to discuss the matter.

The Secretary-General underlined that the critical issue of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, whose continued exile years after the cessation of hostilities remained an unacceptable tragedy, demanded to be addressed urgently. He urged both sides to put forward and implement new approaches to resolve the problem of displacement, continue steps towards the full implementation of confidence-building measures and called upon both sides to fully implement the measures on which they had agreed upon during the Athens and Istanbul meetings.⁴ In that regard, appreciation was expressed

of the invitation of the Government of Ukraine to host the third meeting on confidence-building measures.

Regarding the security situation, the Secretary-General expressed major concern at the prolonged absence of monitoring by the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) in the Georgian-controlled upper part of the Kodori Valley since the hostage-taking incident of 13 October 1999. He reaffirmed that the Georgian authorities were responsible for providing the necessary security conditions to enable the UNOMIG personnel to carry out their mandate in the Kodori Valley, and that they should take the necessary measures in that regard without delay. He recognized the continued efforts of UNOMIG as a central element in the efforts to stabilize the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, especially through its monitoring presence on the ground, and through its sustained efforts to further the peace process. The Secretary-General recommended that the Council extend the mandate of UNOMIG for a further six-month period.

At the meeting, the President (United States) drew the attention of the Council to a letter dated 26 January 2000 from the representative of the Russian Federation.⁵ The President then drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution;⁶ it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously and without debate as resolution 1287 (2000),⁷ by which the Council, inter alia:

Reiterated its call for the parties to the conflict to deepen their commitment to the United Nations-led peace process and display the necessary will to achieve substantial results on the key issues of the negotiations, in particular on the distribution of constitutional competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi as part of a comprehensive settlement, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders;

¹ During this period, in addition to the meetings covered in this section, the Council held a number of meetings in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B. The meetings were held on 24 January 2002 (4457th), 24 July 2002 (4586th), 17 January 2003 (4687th) and 25 July 2003 (4796th).

² S/2000/39, submitted pursuant to resolution 1255 (1999).

³ For details of the framework, see S/26875.

⁴ For details of the Athens and Istanbul meetings, see

S/1998/1012 and S/1999/805, respectively.

⁵ S/2000/52, transmitting a decision of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on further measures for the settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, including extending the presence of the collective peacekeeping forces of CIS for six months.

⁶ S/2000/743.

⁷ The representative of Jamaica subsequently indicated that she would have voted in favour had she been present at the time of the voting.

Considered unacceptable and illegitimate the holding of self-styled elections in Abkhazia, Georgia;

Called upon the parties to continue to enhance their efforts to implement fully the confidence-building measures on which they agreed at the Athens and Istanbul meetings of 16 to 18 October 1998 and 7 to 9 June 1999, respectively;

Reaffirmed the necessity for the parties to strictly respect human rights;

Reaffirmed the unacceptability of the demographic changes resulting from the conflict, and called upon the parties to address this issue urgently by agreeing and implementing effective measures to guarantee the security of those who exercise their unconditional right to return;

Demanded that both sides observe strictly the Moscow Agreement;

Welcomed UNOMIG keeping its security under constant review;

Decided to extend the mandate of UNOMIG for a new period terminating on 31 July 2000;

Requested the Secretary-General to continue to keep the Council regularly informed and to report three months from the date of the adoption of the resolution on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia.

**Decision of 11 May 2000 (4137th meeting):
statement by the President**

At its 4137th meeting, on 11 May 2000, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, dated 24 April 2000.⁸ In his report, the Secretary-General observed that, since the beginning of the United Nations-led peace process, the ultimate goal was the comprehensive settlement of the conflict, including defining the status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia, on the basis of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Georgia, and the imprescriptible right of refugees and displaced persons to return to their previous places of permanent residence. In pursuance of resolution 1287 (2000), work had continued on the question of the distribution of constitutional competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi. A revised draft paper on that issue had been distributed in mid-March 2000 to the Russian Federation, as facilitator, and to members of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, incorporating their comments on the original draft.

⁸ S/2000/345, submitted pursuant to resolution 1287 (2000).

Further discussions had been ongoing with a view to finalizing the draft in the near future and submitting it to the two sides of the conflict. While its basic position on the question of the status had not changed, the Abkhaz side had indicated its interest not to be excluded from the discussion.

The Secretary-General further noted that although confidence-building measures had continued to be facilitated by international and local non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and the United Nations Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, the process had somewhat lagged as a result of the mistrust engendered by the long delays in the exchange of detainees. He, however, expressed satisfaction over the good will demonstrated by the two sides that had brought about the successful exchange of hostages on 29 March 2000 and called for the two sides to actively consider the implementation of the confidence-building measures agreed on during the meetings held in Athens and Istanbul in 1998 and 1999.

The Secretary-General observed that the situation in the UNOMIG area of responsibility had remained generally calm although unstable during the reporting period, and there were no significant violations of the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces (Moscow Agreement) signed in Moscow on 14 May 1994.⁹ He noted that both sides should be reminded of their responsibility to provide a safe, secure and dignified return for all refugees and internally displaced persons. It was also noted that the two sides had the primary responsibility to ensure a proper security environment for the work of UNOMIG and other agencies and organizations.

At the meeting, the President (China) made a statement on behalf of the Council,¹⁰ by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Welcomed the efforts by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to enhance contacts at all levels between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, and called upon the parties to continue to expand such contacts;

Called upon the parties to finalize their work on and to sign a draft agreement on peace and guarantees for the prevention of armed confrontation and a draft protocol on the return of refugees to the Gali region and measures for economic rehabilitation;

⁹ S/1994/583 and Corr.1, annex I.

¹⁰ S/PRST/2000/16.

Noted with deep concern the continued failure of the parties to achieve a comprehensive political settlement, which included a settlement on the political status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia;

Called upon the parties to display the political will required for a breakthrough and to spare no efforts in order to achieve substantive progress without further delay;

Joined the Secretary-General in encouraging the parties to be ready to consider proposals, based on the Security Council decisions, to be presented in due course by the Special Representative on the question of the distribution of constitutional competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi;

Regretted that the Protocol of 3 February 2000 had not been implemented in full and, in particular, that the withdrawal of illegal armed groups had not been brought about;

Called on the parties to refrain from any actions which could increase tensions on the ground and to ensure the safety of the UNOMIG personnel.

**Decision of 28 July 2000 (4179th meeting):
resolution 1311 (2000)**

At its 4179th meeting, on 28 July 2000, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia dated 17 July 2000.¹¹ In his report, the Secretary-General observed, inter alia, that no major progress in the framework of the Geneva process had been achieved during the reporting period, but that the results of the session of the Coordinating Council held on 11 July 2000 had opened the prospect for constructive engagement between the parties, especially on security matters. The Special Representative had continued to work closely with the Group of Friends, whom he had met with at least once a month, to further refine the draft document dealing with the distribution of competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi on the basis of the principles of Georgian sovereignty. A version of the draft document, dated 25 May 2000, had been produced and circulated among the Group of Friends in the expectation that it might have served in the near future as a basis on which to open a political dialogue between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides. However, differences of views had since arisen among the Group of Friends themselves concerning both content and strategy. Thus the Secretary-General noted that strong concerted efforts

¹¹ S/2000/697, submitted pursuant to resolution 1287 (2000).

were urgently needed to produce a coordinated draft and approach.

During the period under review, one confirmed violation of the Moscow Agreement had occurred in which a UNOMIG helicopter patrol spotted an armoured vehicle at an Abkhaz observation post within the restricted weapons zone. Endemic organized crime throughout the area remained a serious problem whereby most violent incidents in the conflict area were products of power struggles or revenge among various criminal groupings. On 1 June 2000, in the Kodori Valley, a group of armed and masked men took hostage a UNOMIG foot patrol, the members of which were held for several days in the upper Kodori Valley. They were released unharmed on 5 June following consultations which included a high-level negotiating team of the Government of Georgia.

The Secretary-General also reported that the plight of thousands of internally displaced persons, and of those thousands more who had chosen to return to their homes in the Gali district, had become increasingly desperate. He encouraged both sides to negotiate with a view to reaching agreement on measures aimed at achieving that return. Satisfaction was expressed that confidence-building measures in various fields had continued, often behind the scenes, and both sides were encouraged to engage with full seriousness and resolution by strengthening the depth and breadth of contact at all levels.

Despite the slow progress, the Secretary-General observed that UNOMIG continued to play an essential role in the search for a peaceful solution to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict through its sustained efforts to further the peace process. He also noted the Mission remained a central element in the efforts to stabilize the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, and recommended that the Council extend the mandate of UNOMIG for a further six-month period.

At the meeting, the President (Jamaica) drew the attention of the Council to several documents.¹² The

¹² Letter dated 16 June 2000 from the representative of Georgia, transmitting a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs related to the situation in Abkhazia (S/2000/594); letters dated 26 June 2000 from the representative of the Russian Federation transmitting decisions on the collective peacekeeping forces in Abkhazia, Georgia, and Tajikistan, adopted at the meeting of the Council of Heads of State of CIS, held in

President then drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution,¹³ it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously and without debate as resolution 1311 (2000), by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Deplored all violent incidents, as well as the development of criminal activities, in the conflict zone, and called on the two sides to take urgent measures to cooperate with each other in the fight against crime of all sorts and in improving the work of their respective law enforcement organs;

Demanded that both sides observe strictly the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces, signed in Moscow on 14 May 1994;

Decided to extend the mandate of UNOMIG for a new period terminating on 31 January 2001, subject to a review by the Council of the mandate of UNOMIG in the event of any changes that may be made in the mandate or in the presence of the collective peacekeeping force, and expressed its intention to conduct a thorough review of the operation at the end of its current mandate, in the light of steps taken by the parties to achieve a comprehensive settlement.

**Decision of 14 November 2000 (4221st meeting):
statement by the President**

At its 4221st meeting, on 14 November 2000, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia dated 25 October 2000.¹⁴ In his report, the Secretary-General observed, *inter alia*, that the general situation in the zone of conflict remained calm but unstable during the reporting period. Some improvement in the security situation might have been attributed in part to the reactivation of Working Group I (on security issues) of the Coordinating Council and the increasing cooperation of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides in implementing agreements reached within that format. Also, the heads of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Development Programme in Georgia, in their capacity as coordinators of Working Group II (on refugees and internally displaced persons) and

Working Group III (on social and economic questions), respectively, had held consultations with the Abkhaz side. Efforts of the Group of Friends, including visits by the Special Representative to capitals, to arrive at a coordinated draft document addressing basic principles for the distribution of competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi had not yet succeeded.

The Secretary-General noted that the late summer harvest season had brought with it what appeared to be the largest spontaneous return of population to the Gali district since the end of the war in 1993. He described it as disturbing that the substantial *de facto* returnee population continued to live in an undefined and insecure state, and that it should continue to endure daily social and economic hardship, insufficient protection of its human rights and a continuing lack of appropriate representation in local administrative structures. Thus he encouraged both sides to prepare actively for the event and to be ready to take decisions that would improve confidence and contribute to the overall peace effort.

At the meeting, the President (Netherlands) made a statement on behalf of the Council,¹⁵ by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Strongly supported the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, undertaken with the support of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, to address the issue of the future constitutional status of Abkhazia and, in particular, his intention to submit, in the near future, a draft paper containing proposals to the parties on the question of the distribution of competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi as a basis for meaningful negotiations on that issue;

Called upon the parties to agree upon and to take, in the near future, concrete steps towards implementing effective measures to guarantee the security of the refugees and internally displaced persons who exercised their right to return to their homes; and expressed the opinion that the status of spontaneous returnees to the Gali district was a matter that must be addressed urgently;

Strongly condemned the murder of Zurab Achba, legal assistant to the United Nations Human Rights Office in Sukhumi; recalled the commitment of the Abkhaz side to keep UNOMIG fully informed on the course of the investigation into that crime; and deplored the abduction of United Nations and humanitarian personnel.

Moscow, on 21 June 2000 (S/2000/629 and 630); letter dated 25 July 2000 from the representative of the Russian Federation transmitting a communiqué of the same date concerning remarks made by the head of the Georgian delegation at a recent meeting of one of the working bodies of the Economic and Social Council and rejecting the remarks as groundless and detrimental to Russian-Georgian relations (S/2000/742).

¹³ S/2000/743.

¹⁴ S/2000/1023, submitted pursuant to resolution 1311 (2000).

¹⁵ S/PRST/2000/32.

Decision of 31 January 2001 (4269th meeting): resolution 1339 (2001)

At its 4269th meeting, on 31 January 2001, at which a statement was made by the representative of Georgia, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, dated 18 January 2001.¹⁶ In his report, the Secretary-General observed, *inter alia*, that the continued lack of progress on the fundamental issue of the future political status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia was regrettable and had the potential to jeopardize the whole peace process in the future. No substantive progress had been made on the draft document for the distribution of competencies between Tbilisi and Sukhumi. The Group of Friends of the Secretary-General had yet to arrive at a coordinated position. Meanwhile, the Abkhaz side had continued to refuse to discuss any document that would address the status issue. As such, the Secretary-General urged both sides to show a stronger political will in order to overcome that impasse.

The Secretary-General further noted that the human rights situation of returnees in the Gali district remained precarious and several human rights violations had been registered. For the third time in four months, two UNOMIG military observers had been abducted and held hostage for three days. The absence of effective law enforcement and the continued extreme economic hardship in the UNOMIG area of operations contributed to the overall volatility of the situation, which, if not remedied, had the potential to deteriorate. Two violations of the Moscow Agreement had been reported, one of which involved the use of heavy weapons in a training exercise where the Abkhaz authorities prohibited UNOMIG as well as the collective peacekeeping force of the Commonwealth of Independent States from flying over the area. The Secretary-General expressed hope that the third meeting on confidence-building measures planned for March 2001 in Yalta, Ukraine, would facilitate the much-needed process of reconciliation and strengthen the ongoing positive trend towards the establishment and development of mutual contact at various levels between the two sides and as such contribute to mutual understanding and confidence.

Since the Secretary-General remained convinced that UNOMIG, through its monitoring presence on the

¹⁶ S/2001/59, submitted pursuant to resolution 1311 (2000).

ground, had played a crucial role in the stabilization of the zone of conflict, and its sustained efforts to further the negotiation process also represented a central element in the search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict, he recommended that the mandate of UNOMIG be extended for a further six-month period.

The representative of Georgia stated that the reference in paragraph 4 of the draft resolution before the Council to the draft protocol and the draft agreement on peace and guarantees [for the prevention and non-resumption of hostilities], which had not been referred to in the report of the Secretary-General or been discussed by the members of the Council, was unacceptable to the Government of Georgia. As the parties to the conflict had already signed several agreements on renouncing the use of force in the settlement of the conflict, the representative of Georgia opined that the emphasis should be placed on the necessity of accelerating work on the issues of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to the Gali district, the economic rehabilitation of the region and guarantees of the non-resumption of hostilities.¹⁷

At the meeting, the President (Singapore) drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution,¹⁸ it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously as resolution 1339 (2001), by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Decided to extend the mandate of UNOMIG for a new period that terminated on 31 July 2001, subject to a review by the Council of the mandate of UNOMIG in the event of any changes that may be made in the mandate or in the presence of the collective peacekeeping force.

Decision of 21 March 2001 (4300th meeting): statement by the President

At its 4300th meeting,¹⁹ on 21 March 2001, in which the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia was invited to participate, the Council included in its

¹⁷ S/PV.4269, p. 2.

¹⁸ S/2001/93.

¹⁹ At its 4299th meeting, held in private on 21 March 2001, the Council was briefed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia, the Special Representative and Head of UNOMIG and the representative of Ukraine on the outcome of the third meeting on confidence-building measures between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, held at Yalta, Ukraine, on 15 and 16 March 2001, and had a constructive discussion.

agenda a letter dated 17 March 2001 from the representative of Ukraine.²⁰ At the meeting, the President (Ukraine) made a statement on behalf of the Council,²¹ by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Welcomed the successful holding of the third meeting on confidence-building measures between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides in Yalta on 15 and 16 March 2001 and the resumption of dialogue between them, and noted the documents signed there;

Hoped that action flowing from the Yalta meeting would lead to a narrowing of the positions of the two sides and stimulate further constructive dialogue aimed at achieving a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict;

Underlined the unacceptability of the holding of self-styled local elections in Abkhazia, Georgia, on 10 March 2001, which it deemed illegitimate and unhelpful; and stressed the importance of negotiations on the core political questions of the conflict.

**Decision of 24 April 2001 (4314th meeting):
statement by the President**

At the 4314th meeting,²² on 24 April 2001,²² in which the Minister for Special Affairs of Georgia was invited to participate, the President (United Kingdom) made a statement on behalf of the Council,²³ by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Underlined the decisive importance of early negotiations on the core political questions of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia;

Strongly supported, in this context, the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to promote the achievement of a comprehensive political settlement based on the resolutions of the Security Council, which must include a settlement of the political status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia;

²⁰ S/2001/242, transmitting final documents signed at the outcome of the third meeting on confidence-building measures between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides, held at Yalta, on 15 and 16 March 2001, namely, the Yalta Declaration of the Georgian and Abkhaz Sides, and the Programme of Action on Confidence-building between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides.

²¹ S/PRST/2001/9.

²² At its 4313th meeting, held in private on 24 April 2001, the Council was briefed by the Special Representative and Head of UNOMIG, with the participation of the Minister for Special Affairs of Georgia, and the representative of Sweden (speaking on behalf of the European Union and associated States), and had a constructive discussion.

²³ S/PRST/2001/12.

Strongly supported, in particular, the intention of the Special Representative to submit, in the near future, his draft paper containing specific proposals to the parties on the question of the distribution of constitutional competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi;

Welcomed the intention of the Special Representative to submit the draft paper to the parties soon, as a starting point for negotiation, and not as an attempt to impose or dictate any possible solution; and called upon the parties constructively to accept the paper in that light and work towards a mutually acceptable settlement.

**Decision of 31 July 2001 (4353rd meeting):
resolution 1364 (2001)**

At its 4353rd meeting, on 31 July 2001, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, dated 19 July 2001.²⁴ In his report, the Secretary-General observed, *inter alia*, that the interruption of negotiating activities following the killings and hostage-taking incidents over the past four months demonstrated that the overall peace process remained fragile. Also related to the fragile peace process was the fact that meaningful negotiations on the future political status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia had not yet begun, and in the absence of such negotiations the entire peace process remained in jeopardy. The Group of Friends of the Secretary-General, in close cooperation with the Special Representative, had intensified its efforts to finalize the draft paper on the distribution of competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi. In this regard, the Abkhaz authorities had reiterated their well-known position that any discussion of the status issue was obsolete because, in their view, the political status of Abkhazia was conclusively decided upon with the Act on State Independence of the Republic of Abkhazia of 1999.²⁵

Furthermore, the Secretary-General noted that the increasing number of violations of the Moscow Agreement in the period under review gave rise to grave concern. The same applied for the restrictions of movement imposed on UNOMIG, which prevented the Mission from carrying out its mandate to the full. Since UNOMIG had continued to play a crucial role in the stabilization of the zone of conflict, and its efforts to advance the negotiation process constituted a central

²⁴ S/2001/713, submitted pursuant to resolution 1339 (2001).

²⁵ S/2001/713, para. 5. See also S/1999/1087, para. 7.

element in the search for a peaceful settlement, the Secretary-General recommended that the mandate of UNOMIG be extended for a further six-month period.

At the meeting, the President (China) drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution,²⁶ it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously and without debate as resolution 1364 (2001), by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Strongly supported the sustained efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, with the assistance of the Russian Federation, in its capacity as facilitator, as well as of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General and of OSCE, to promote the stabilization of the situation and the achievement of a comprehensive political settlement, which must include a settlement of the political status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia;

Deplored all violations of the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces, and noted with particular concern the military exercises conducted by both parties in June and July 2001 in violation of the Moscow Agreement; reminded the Georgian side in particular to uphold its commitment to put a stop to the activities of illegal armed groups crossing into Abkhazia, Georgia, from the Georgian-controlled side of the ceasefire line; decided to extend the mandate of UNOMIG for a new period that terminated on 31 January 2002, subject to a review by the Council of the mandate of UNOMIG in the event of any changes that may be made in the mandate or in the presence of the collective peacekeeping force.

**Decision of 31 January 2002 (4464th meeting):
resolution 1393 (2002)**

At its 4464th meeting,²⁷ on 31 January 2002, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, dated 18 January 2002.²⁸ In his report, the Secretary-General observed, *inter alia*, that the past three months had seen progress in the political process. After two years of discussion, the finalization of the paper entitled “Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi” was a significant step forward. Furthermore, on the basis of the finalized paper, the Special

²⁶ S/2001/747.

²⁷ At its 4400th meeting, held in private on 30 October 2001, the Council was briefed by the Special Representative and Head of UNOMIG; the Minister for Special Affairs of Georgia and the representative of Belgium participated, and a constructive discussion was held.

²⁸ S/2002/88, submitted pursuant to resolution 1364 (2001).

Representative had held consultations in Sukhumi and Tbilisi to prepare the ground for substantive negotiations. The situation remained calm but tense due to, *inter alia*, the continuing presence of the Georgian troops in the upper Kodori Valley. In his report, the Secretary-General welcomed the agreement reached on 17 January 2001 on the withdrawal of the Georgian troops from the Kodori Valley and stated that it should be implemented expeditiously and fully. He also recommended the two sides to implement the Yalta Programme of Action on Confidence-building,²⁹ as agreed during the meeting held at Yalta in March 2001, as well as the recommendations of the joint assessment mission to the Gali district.³⁰ Since UNOMIG had continued to play an important role in the stabilization of the zone of conflict and in the search for a political settlement, the Secretary-General recommended that the mandate of UNOMIG be extended for a further six-month period.

At the same meeting, the President (Mauritius) drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution;³¹ it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously and without debate as resolution 1393 (2002), by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Decided to extend the mandate of UNOMIG for a new period terminating on 31 July 2002, and to review the mandate of UNOMIG unless the decision on the extension of the presence of the collective peacekeeping force was taken by 15 February 2002, and noted that on 31 January 2002 the Georgian authorities agreed on the extension of the mandate of the collective peacekeeping force until the end of June 2002;

Requested the Secretary-General to continue to keep the Council regularly informed and to report three months from the date of the adoption of the resolution on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, and decided to remain actively seized of the matter.

**Decision of 29 July 2002 (4591st meeting):
resolution 1427 (2002)**

At its 4591st meeting,³² on 29 July 2002, in which Georgia was invited to participate, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia,

²⁹ See S/2001/242.

³⁰ See S/2001/59, annex II.

³¹ S/2002/133.

³² At its 4590th meeting, held in private on 29 July 2002, the Council and the Minister for Special Affairs of Georgia had a constructive discussion.

dated 10 July 2002.³³ In his report, the Secretary-General observed, *inter alia*, that there was a regrettable lack of progress on the initiation of political status negotiations between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides as the latter side continued to reject any discussion of the paper entitled “Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi” on the grounds of Abkhazia’s self-declared independence. However, the Georgian and Abkhaz sides continued practical work within the framework of the Coordinating Council’s working groups. As the Secretary-General remained convinced that the presence of UNOMIG continued to be essential for creating the conditions for a political process towards a settlement of the conflict, and for moving that process forward, he recommended that the mandate of UNOMIG be extended for a further six-month period.

At the meeting, the President (United Kingdom) drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution;³⁴ it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously and without debate as resolution 1427 (2002), by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Commended and strongly supported the sustained efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, with the assistance of the Russian Federation in its capacity as facilitator, as well as of the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General and of OSCE, to promote the stabilization of the situation and the achievement of a comprehensive political settlement, which must include a settlement of the political status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia;

Underlined further that the process of negotiation leading to a lasting political settlement acceptable to both sides would require concessions from both sides;

Deeply regretted, in particular, the repeated refusal of the Abkhaz side to agree to a discussion on the substance of the document entitled “Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi”, again strongly urged the Abkhaz side to receive the document and its letter of transmittal; condemned any violations of the provisions of the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces and demanded that they cease immediately;

Urged once again the parties to implement the recommendations of the joint assessment mission to the Gali district, called in particular on the Abkhaz side to improve law enforcement involving the local population and to address the lack of instruction in their mother tongue for the ethnic Georgian population;

Reminded the Georgian side in particular to uphold its commitment to put an end to the activities of illegal armed groups.

**Decision of 30 January 2003 (4697th meeting):
resolution 1462 (2003)**

At its 4697th meeting, on 30 January 2003, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, dated 13 January 2003.³⁵ In his report, the Secretary-General observed, *inter alia*, that after one year of strenuous efforts by his Special Representative, the two sides had not moved much closer to the start of negotiations with regard to the document entitled “Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi”. The Abkhaz side refused to even enter into discussions on the principles on which negotiations should be based. The return of internally displaced persons to their homes in safe and secure conditions remained a burning issue and no progress had been made in the implementation of the Quadripartite Agreement on the Voluntary Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons of 4 April 1994.³⁶ The Secretary-General underlined that the resumption of sessions of the Coordinating Council, which had not met since January 2001, was essential for further progress to be made in the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. He noted that the prompt convening of the next session of the Coordinating Council would allow a timely decision to be made on a fourth meeting on confidence-building measures and for preparations to commence accordingly. The Secretary-General recommended that the mandate of UNOMIG be extended for a further six-month period.

At the same meeting, the President (France) drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution;³⁷ it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously and without debate as resolution 1462 (2003), by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Strongly urged the parties involved in the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia, to ensure the necessary revitalization of the peace process in all its major aspects;

Stressed the urgent need for progress on the question of refugees and internally displaced persons;

³³ S/2002/742, submitted pursuant to resolution 1393 (2002).

³⁴ S/2002/845.

³⁵ S/2003/39, submitted pursuant to resolution 1427 (2002).

³⁶ S/1994/397, annex II.

³⁷ S/2003/102.

Decided to extend the mandate of UNOMIG for a new period that terminated on 31 July 2003 and to further review that mandate unless a decision on the presence of the collective peacekeeping force was taken by 15 February 2003.

Decision of 30 July 2003 (4800th meeting): resolution 1494 (2003)

At its 4800th meeting,³⁸ on 30 July 2003, in which the representative of Georgia was invited to participate, the Council included in its agenda the report of the Secretary-General concerning the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, dated 21 July 2003.³⁹ In his report, the Secretary-General observed, *inter alia*, that the United Nations-led peace process had received a welcome boost following the brainstorming session of the Group of Friends held at Geneva in February 2003, at which it was recommended that the two sides work on three sets of issues, namely, economic cooperation, the return of internally displaced persons and refugees and political and security matters, and the Sochi summit.⁴⁰ The United Nations strongly supported these activities which had been aimed at enhancing cooperation between the two sides on matters of mutual concern and advancing, ultimately, towards a comprehensive political settlement. However, the Secretary-General regretted that the core political issue — the future status of Abkhazia within the State of Georgia — still had not been addressed, despite the renewed opportunity to do so within the framework of the recommendations made by the Group of Friends in February 2003.

The Secretary-General noted that the recent initiative by Georgia and the Russian Federation to start a dialogue on the process of refugee return, on the basis of the Quadripartite Agreement of 1994, was most encouraging. In the light of the recommendations of the joint assessment mission to the Gali district of November 2000,⁴¹ and the recommendations

formulated by the security assessment mission of October to December 2002,⁴² the Secretary-General recommended that a civilian police component of 20 officers be added to UNOMIG to strengthen its capacity to carry out its mandate and, in particular, to contribute to the conditions conducive to the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees. Noting that UNOMIG continued to play an essential role in stabilizing the situation in the conflict zone and in providing a framework within which the sides could advance towards a comprehensive settlement, the Secretary-General recommended a further extension of the mandate of UNOMIG for six months.

At the meeting, the President (Spain) drew the attention of the Council to a draft resolution;⁴³ it was put to the vote and adopted unanimously and without debate as resolution 1494 (2003) by which the Council, *inter alia*:

Endorsed the recommendation of the Secretary-General in his report of 21 July 2003 that a civilian police component of 20 officers be added to UNOMIG;

Condemned any violations of the provisions of the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces;

Strongly condemned the abduction of four UNOMIG personnel on 5 June 2003, deeply deplored that none of the perpetrators had ever been identified or brought to justice, and supported the Secretary-General's call that that impunity must end;

Called on the Georgian side to continue to improve security for joint patrols of UNOMIG and collective peacekeeping force in the Kodori Valley; decided to extend the mandate of UNOMIG for a new period terminating on 31 January 2004, subject to a review, as appropriate, of its mandate by the Council in the event of changes in the mandate of the collective peacekeeping force;

Requested the Secretary-General to continue to keep the Council regularly informed and to report three months from the date of the adoption of the resolution on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia; and decided to remain actively seized of the matter.

³⁸ At its 4799th meeting, held in private on 30 July 2003, the Council heard a briefing by the Head of the United Nations Mission in Georgia, and had a constructive exchange of views.

³⁹ S/2003/751, submitted pursuant to resolution 1462 (2003).

⁴⁰ See S/2003/412 paras. 3 and 5.

⁴¹ See S/2001/59, annex II.

⁴² S/2003/412, para. 16.

⁴³ S/2003/771.