



Joint statement by:

- the Chair of the Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus, MEP Marina KALJURAND, and
- the European Parliament's Standing Rapporteur on Georgia, MEP Sven MIKSER

on the 15th anniversary of the Russian aggression against Georgia of August 2008

Brussels, 7 August 2023 – "Fifteen years have passed since the Russian aggression of August 2008 against Georgia. Since then, tens of thousands of Georgian citizens – no matter their ethnicity – have been obliged to live under Russia's yoke, deprived of their fundamental rights and in impoverished conditions.

Today, we reiterate our unwavering commitment and support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

In light of the Kremlin's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and its hybrid destabilisation manoeuvres against many other countries, including NATO and EU Member States and our Eastern Neighbours, we see how the international community's fainthearted response in 2008 has emboldened the Kremlin to further violate international law with a view to preventing other countries from choosing freely their own destiny.

In blatant violation of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the Russian Federation continues to occupy 20% of Georgia's territory, where it has established puppet statelets.

We commend Georgia for its laudable readiness for dialogue, as illustrated by the pragmatic 'A Step to a Better Future' peace initiative, and note with deep concern the further aggravation of the human rights situation in the occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia. We remain convinced that there is no alternative to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, including through the Geneva International Discussions, the activities of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) and the efforts of the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia. We reiterate our call on the Russian Federation, as the country exercising *de facto* control over the occupied regions, to reverse its illegal recognition of the so-called 'Republics', to halt the rampant 'borderisation' process, to see that the perpetrators of serious human rights violations are brought to justice, and to fulfil its obligations under the 2008 EU-mediated ceasefire agreement, notably by withdrawing its forces back to the pre-conflict positions and to grant the EUMM unfettered access to the occupied regions.

Today, we remember the sacrifices made by Georgia's military personnel and civil population in 2008 and the lingering painful effects of the war. As the Russian Federation continues its illegal presence in and occupation of Georgia's territory, it is imperative to focus on the strategic goal of Euro-Atlantic integration, overwhelmingly supported by the Georgian people, instead of courting Moscow in the pursuit of short-term economic opportunities that aim to

distract the country from its chosen path. We would like to see Georgia strengthen its bonds with the European Union and other like-minded partners based on our common values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights.

We reiterate our call on Georgia's political and institutional stakeholders to unite their forces in implementing the key reforms in line with the twelve priorities identified by the European Commission, which are necessary not only for Georgia's continued European integration, but also a peaceful, stable and prosperous future for its people."

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