



Delegation for relations with the South Caucasus

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 killing and abduction of Georgian citizens by Russian border guards in Kirbali

Brussels, 7 November 2023 - *“We strongly condemn the killing of a Georgian citizen, Tamaz Gituri, and the abduction of another one, Levan Dotiashvili, by Russian border guards in the vicinity of the Administrative Boundary Line with the occupied Georgian region of Tskhinvali / South Ossetia. The two villagers were attacked yesterday as they were heading for a local church that Russian occupation forces had denied ethnic Georgians access to earlier this year.*

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of the deceased and call for the immediate release of the illegally detained citizen.

This tragic event is yet another illustration of the Russian regime's blatant disregard for international law and human life and the perils faced by the Georgian citizens living along the occupied regions. It also a stark reminder of the context in which the 'pragmatic' engagement with Russia, advocated by some in the government and the ruling party, is taking place.

We reiterate our unwavering support to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgian within its internationally recognised borders. 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 in Georgia (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 of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali / South Ossetia, 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 region.”

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