



SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT UPDATE REPORT



30 March 2006 No. 5

GEORGIA

The Council will adopt a draft resolution renewing the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) until 15 October 2006 tomorrow.

The Group of Friends – comprised of France, Germany, Russia, Slovakia in the Council, the UK and the US – was finally able to agree on the language of the resolution. Previous opposition by the Russian Federation – to traditional Council language reaffirming the territorial integrity of Georgia and previous Council support for the paper on “Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competencies between Tbilisi and Sokhumi” – led to a two-month technical rollover in January.

At high-level meeting on 22 February, the Friends agreed on a document listing elements for the peaceful settlement of the conflict that eventually became the basis of the present resolution. While the document returns to previous Council language, it also seeks to present a balanced view between the concerns of both parties. This is reflected in the draft resolution when it calls for the finalisation of documents on non-use of force (one Sokhumi’s main concerns) and on the return of refugees and IDPs (one Tbilisi’s main concerns).

The new Council resolution also continues to mention past Council language that recognises a need to review UNOMIG’s mandate in the event of changes to the mandate of the CIS/Russian contingents.

It seems that Russian opposition may have been partially linked to the situation of its troops in Abkhazia (under a mandate from the Commonwealth of Independent States, or CIS). Tensions started when the Georgian parliament – after consistent complaints from Tbilisi against Russia’s involvement in the conflict – decided in October 2005 to set deadlines to review the consent to Russian troops in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, another breakaway region. The parliament adopted a resolution on 15 February recommending the internationalisation of peacekeeping in South Ossetia, widely seen as a preview of the position it may take when it reviews the case of Abkhazia by 15 July.

However, the agreement among the Friends indicates that Russian concerns have now diminished. Observers note that subdued international support for the parliamentary decision has led Tbilisi to adopt a cautious approach to the issue, and no request has been made so far for Russian troops to leave South Ossetia.

Concerns still remain regarding the upcoming decision of the Georgian parliament in July. The link in

the resolution between CIS and UNOMIG mandates will be an important aspect in the event of an eventual negative decision from the Georgian government. The 2,000 CIS troops operate checkpoints in the demilitarised security zone and provide security for UN personnel, while the 122 UNOMIG observers patrol that zone, the restricted weapons zone and other areas.

See our previous reports and updates on Georgia:

- Georgia (UNOMIG) (January 2006 *Forecast*)
- Update Report on Georgia (2 February 2006)
- Georgia (March 2006 *Forecast*)