

The President of Georgia addressed Abkhazian and Ossetian population with peace initiative

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My dear fellow citizens, during these days I have addressed you several times. Today I would like to address the ethnic part of our society - ethnic Abkhazs and ethnic Ossetians.

My dear Abkhaz sisters and brothers...

I know that very many residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as many others in the rest of Georgia have the same problem, the poverty, the level of unemployment is very high - have not even small incomes and find it extremely difficult to find the means to keep the family.

Our families from Psou to the Red Bridge from the Roki Tunnel to Sarpi have been facing poverty and hardship for already many years.

About 450,000-500,000 pride residents of Abkhazia live in exile in their own country. They cannot return to their homes, to their villages, to their family members and relatives, to the graves of their ancestors, to their friends, with whom they found their feet, with whom they were going to school, with whom they grew up.

If somebody in Georgia is suffering from poverty today, these are our refugees. But those families, whom the conflict left on the other side of the barricade and who live in Abkhazia and South Ossetia today, are not suffering less.

My brothers and sisters!

Confrontation and isolation is a common enemy of dignified life of our families. We, all, deserve much more. We can build our welfare together. We all are very tired and exhausted of this long enmity. I am sure that everybody in Georgia, and first of all you, our Abkhazian and Ossetian brothers, the populations of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region, want to live in much better conditions than today.

We are dreaming together that our children have normal living conditions, not like those we have today. We are dreaming together to have jobs, stable income, hope in future, still and normal life, not to be afraid of tomorrow, to live so that our dignity is not infringed.

My and my government's all efforts are directed just towards this purpose. Our action plan is not the war, but creation of new jobs; not the confrontation, but taking care of our elderly people and children, increasing pensions, construction of better schools and hospitals, development of tourism and agriculture, increasing people's incomes, creation of appropriate opportunities for successful life.

I am sure that jointly we will carry out this plan with more success. Our steady course is not destruction by enmity, but construction by love.

I know very well what is happening in Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region. I know those grave conditions in which your families have to live under the reign of separatist, corrupted and criminal groups. It was not your choice to live this way.

But today one large, outrageous and irresponsible force dares to make a decision instead of you. It does not care at all what you think about yourself and your future. It wants to make a choice instead of you and to constantly keep us in confrontation, which it has imposed on us has us from the very beginning and which has brought nothing but destruction and regress within past 15 years.

This outrageous and irresponsible force tries today to engage us in the confrontation, which will be destructive for us and profitable for it. It tries to convince us to build welfare through destruction and enmity. Maybe some of us really believed in it years ago, but today we all know very well that it is a lie. We know,

basing on 15-year experience that it is impossible to build happiness on the misfortune triggered by demolition and enmity.

The entire civilized world - and whatever false reports are being covered on your TVs, which you are forced to watch - the entire civilized world declares loudly today - and you probably have a possibility to watch other channels and Georgian channels cover such reports - that the project of disintegration of Georgia will never work.

In recent hours I have talked with several leading politicians of the world, with several world leaders. All of them repeat one and the same that the world will never recognize the state creations against the will of the Georgian people.

It [disintegration] means that our children will never be able to have a chance for full-scale development and they will continue living under conditions of constant war and fear. We should not allow it happen. We should stand together and say that we are not enemies, we have one common enemy and this is enmity in itself - enmity, which is not coming from our roots, it was imposed on us and we have never chosen it.

Therefore, in order to achieve our common goals - welfare of our families and overcoming poverty, we have only one way ahead - this is the way towards freedom and democracy, the way towards cooperation and building a strong state by joint efforts, which equally belongs to all ethnic groups, all free citizens.

This is the only way for development of our families and our children. These are not empty words.

For this purpose the Georgian government has developed a peace plan, which is unanimously supported by entire democratic world and which represents a guarantee that security of each Georgian citizen, the rights and freedoms of each ethnic group will be protected in united Georgia, cultural originality of South Ossetian and Abkhaz peoples, as well as their political and economic autonomy will be provided. Federal relations will be established.

I will once again unveil Georgia's peace initiatives, which envisage in respect of Abkhazia - vice-president's position for ethnic Abkhazians, who will have the right to veto all constitutional issues related with Abkhazia; guaranteed representation in the central authorities of Georgia; international guarantees regarding Abkhazia to provide wide federalism and unrestricted autonomy; guarantees for protection of culture, language and ethnical identity, security guarantees; creation of joint free economic zones under conditions of establishing joint customs and border spaces.

Our goal is not only to reintegrate the territories, but to restore and develop those relations, which linked our peoples for centuries and which were suspended temporarily as a result of destructive influence of an external force. Together we have a big future to restore the ruins.

We should work much but before talking about future, I want to say that today's Georgia, which is our native land, offers much to you.

Today's Georgia and our being together in it offers you is offering you calmness and protection, which you lack so much," he said, today's Georgia is offering you life without gangs and criminal authorities; today's Georgia is offering you life without corruption, wherein no one will ever be able to extort bribe from you, or shares from your businesses; today's Georgia is offering you opportunities for free and legal business activities, wherein no one will be able to restrict your initiative; we are offering you much better healthcare and education systems; today's Georgia is offering you real freedom of choice, wherein no one will force you to accept citizenship of this or that country and where you will not be arrested because you want to elect your country's parliament and president; today's Georgia is offering open economy and borders, rule of law and order.

Today's Georgia is offering peace and is extending hand of friendship.

But unfortunately there is one aggressive force, which declares that it can take a decision about your future instead of you.

Is this situation normal, when the lands in Abkhazia have completely been transferred to foreigners; when local residents are not allowed to reach the beaches privatized by foreigners; when they have no possibility to have elementary incomes; when they are no more patrons of their own land, which belongs to them legally and historically?

Today we should together manage to change this reality. We should achieve together that nobody ever dares to talk instead of you.

When we are speaking about peace, this force is speaking about war; when we are speaking about demilitarization, this force is speaking about militarization on behalf of you.

We are speaking about free economic zones, while this force is speaking about opening new military bases and checkpoints.

We are speaking about opening new economic links and opportunities, while this force is speaking about increasing its military contingent.

Why does it happen?

We cannot want the war and it is ruled out that you want it, because of your experience.

I am sure that Abkhaz and Ossetian peoples, as small nations - I do not think that there are small and big nations, there are big and relatively not big nations - which do not need confrontation, they only want protection.

Only that force needs confrontation, which does not leave you the right to make your own choice and speaks with us and the entire world instead of you. It needs it to ensure that we, the both sides, are constantly defeated.

Everybody should understand that the participation of this force does not mean assistance of Abkhazians and Ossetians against Georgians. The participation of this force means launching of enmity for defeating Georgians, Abkhazians and Ossetians together.

The Abkhazians are small nation with great traditions and great culture. These people need protection and development.

But it seems that there is the force, which needs to involve us in such a global confrontation, as a result of which the Abkhazians and Ossetians will appear in the most dangerous situation.

We do not want that even one Abkhazian and Ossetian is involved in the conflict.

We should not allow questioning existence of these nations. I want to promise you that I will not let it happen. We have been living together for so many centuries. Ossetians for many centuries were representing in the top level leadership of Georgia. Georgia's reunification historically launched for several times from Abkhazia. We have long tradition of brotherhood and friendship.

So we should not let anyone to let our homeland and our people in bloodshed and I pin hopes on you. Because today, when our joint ill-wisher tries to impose on us its wicked plans, it is time to take decision taking into account huge responsibility we have before our future generations. Standing together is now historic necessity. Building of our joint democratic and open society is the only way for survival and progress.

Thank you.

Press Office
of the President of Georgia